



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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Not by Might, Not by Power

At the first *yahrzeit* shiur in memory of Marcy Stern a"h, Mrs. Shira Schiowitz shared a thought that added a dimension to the Chanukah Haftorah by placing two familiar *pesukim* in conversation with one another.

Zechariah is shown a vision of a menorah that burns without human tending. No oil is poured, no hand steadies the flame. When the Navi struggles to understand what he is seeing, the message is clarified, *לא בְּחֵיל, כי אם בְּרוּחִי*, *not through might and not through power, but through My spirit*. The menorah's endurance is not fueled by strength, strategy, or force, but by *ruach Hashem*. Redemption, Zechariah teaches, is not driven by dominance but rather by Hashem's will.

Moshe uses the same language, but as a warning. As the people stand on the brink of

prosperity, he cautions them against the quiet danger that accompanies success, *כְּחֵי וְעֶצֶם, הָיָה לִי אֶת הַחֵיל הַזֶּה*, *my strength and the might of my hand made this success*. Moshe is not denying human effort; he is warning against misreading and misapplying it. *כח* becomes corrosive when it forgets its source and turns inward.

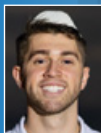
Chanukah lives precisely between these two *pesukim*. The Chashmonaim fought bravely, yet the miracle we preserve is not a battlefield victory but a menorah that burned beyond expectation. Zechariah teaches how light is sustained through spirit. Moshe warns how it is extinguished through arrogance.

We light the Chanukah candles to hold both truths at once. We act, we strive, we commit — and we remember that the flame endures only when our strength makes space for Hashem. ■

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