



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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Who Shapes History?

YIRMIYAHU 46:13-28

At first glance, Yirmiyahu's vision of Egypt reads like a familiar story of empires and war - the rise and fall of nations throughout history. But beneath the military imagery, the Navi is asking a far deeper question: what actually governs the course of history?

Rashi sharpens the point. Egypt's downfall is not accidental; it is timed. "That day belongs to Hashem" — a phrase that strips Egypt of the illusion that history bends to military strength or political calculation. This is not a lucky victory or a strategic failure. It is a moment of moral accounting.

Yirmiyahu insists that history is not chaotic. It does not lurch forward at the whim of empires, even when they believe themselves to be directing its course. There are days that are claimed — moments when Hashem asserts

that force alone does not confer legitimacy, and that dominance without moral grounding cannot endure. Egypt's confidence collapses not because it misjudged Babylon, but because it misunderstood the nature of power itself.

And then, against this thunderous backdrop of empires rising and falling, the haftorah pivots — suddenly and gently — to Israel.

“וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִי יַעֲקֹב... כִּי אֶתֶּךָ אֲנִי”

Do not fear, My servant Yaakov... for I am with you.

The shift is almost disorienting. From nations to a name. From armies to a single servant. From spectacle to intimacy.

The contrast could not be sharper. Egypt is expansive, dominant, self-assured — a civilization that defines itself by visibility, scale, and control and it falls. Yaakov is diminished, scattered, vulnerable, exiled, corrected, uncertain — and yet, he endures.

Nations rise through force and disappear into history; Israel remains not because it dominates, but because it is bound — to Hashem, to responsibility, and to a destiny shaped not by spectacle, but by endurance. ■

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