



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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When It Becomes Whole Again

SHABBAT HAGADOL - MALACHI 3:4-24

There is a pasuk from this week's Haftorah that we say every day:

וְעִרְבָה לָהּ מִנְחַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם כִּימִי
עוֹלָם וּכְשָׁנִים קִדְמֹנִיּוֹת

Then the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to Hashem, as in the days of old and former years.

At the close of Shemoneh Esrei, the words come quickly — familiar, almost automatic. But when we slow down, a single word emerges: וְעִרְבָה - a word that captures the vision of avodat Hashem.

We often translate וְעִרְבָה as “pleasing.” But as Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains, the root ערב does not simply mean pleasant. It describes the bringing together of distinct elements into a unified whole. ערב



is the meeting of opposites - day and night, light and dark—held together without losing their identity. It is not sameness; it is harmony.

From this same root comes ערבות—the idea that individuals are bound to one another in shared responsibility. We are not separate parts, but interconnected pieces of a larger whole.

The Haftorah closes with the prayer that Eliyahu HaNavi will restore hearts: הַשֵּׁב לֵב אָבוֹת עַל בְּנֵים וְלֵב הַיְשִׁיב לֵב אָבוֹתָם עַל בְּנֵים We ask not only that our avodah be accepted, but that it be integrated - that what we say and who we are begin to meet. When hearts begin to turn, when connection is restored, something within us comes back into alignment.

וְעִרְבָה...

May what we bring in our tefillah, in our relationships, in our lives be gathered, aligned, and whole, and in that wholeness, truly pleasant before Hashem. ■

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