



HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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Climbing the Ladder of Redemption

YESHAYAHU 51:12–52:12

What does it mean to wait for redemption? Is waiting an act of patience, or does it demand something from us?

Our Haftorah offers consolation to a nation that has endured exile and suffering. Hashem promises that the oppression will end, the captives will be released, and Yerushalayim will be restored. Yet embedded within these promises is a striking series of commands:

הַתְּעוֹרְרִי הַתְּעוֹרְרִי — Awaken, awaken.

עוֹרִי עוֹרִי — Arise, arise.

הַתְּנַעֲרִי מִפֶּחַר — Shake yourself free from the dust.

קוּמִי שְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם — Rise and take your place, Yerushalayim.

הַתְּפַתְּחִי מִזְרָרְךָ — Release the bonds from your neck.

These phrases form a kind of ladder.

Yerushalayim moves from sleep to wakefulness, from the dust to an upright position, and from captivity to freedom. Redemption is not described as a single dramatic leap. It unfolds step by step.

But the Malbim adds a profound dimension to this progression. Earlier, in the previous perek, the Jewish people cry out: עוֹרִי עוֹרִי לְבָשִׁי, עוֹרִי עוֹרִי ה', *Awaken, awaken, arm of Hashem!* (Yeshayahu 51:9) We call upon Hashem to awaken, to reveal His strength, and to intervene in history. But in our Haftorah, Hashem turns those very words back toward us: עוֹרִי עוֹרִי לְבָשִׁי עֲזֵרְךָ צִיּוֹן, *Awaken, awaken; put on your strength, O Zion.* (Yeshayahu 52:1)

The Malbim explains Hashem's response: "You awaken; the matter depends upon you." We ask Hashem to awaken — and Hashem tells us to awaken. Hashem is, of course, the Redeemer. The Haftorah repeatedly assures us that He will comfort His people and restore Yerushalayim. But redemption does not leave us entirely passive. Hashem's promise calls for a human response. We must awaken, shake off the dust, rise, and release the bonds that hold us back.

Each rung of the ladder requires movement. First, we must awaken enough to recognize that change is possible. Then we must shake off the accumulated weight of disappointment, fear, and spiritual exhaustion. We must rise from the ground and begin to loosen the bonds that keep us tied to a galus identity.

These words are deeply familiar because they became part of the song with which we

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welcome Shabbos each week. *Lecha Dodi* does not merely describe a future redemption. It trains us to become ready for it. Every Friday night, we rehearse the movements of the Haftorah: awaken, shake off the dust, rise, and free ourselves from what holds us down. Before welcoming the Shabbos bride, we remind ourselves that renewal requires both Divine promise and human response. We do not merely wait for Shabbos to transform us; we prepare ourselves to receive it.

Perhaps this is also how we must wait for redemption. We pray for Hashem to awaken His strength, but we must be prepared to hear His answer: *אֵת עוֹרִי* — You awaken. Take the next step. Loosen one bond. Shake off some of the dust. Recover the strength that has always been yours.

Redemption begins with Hashem’s promise, but it advances when we begin to climb. ■

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