

The Weekly Haftorah

by Reuben Ebrahimoff - The Haftorahman

The Haftorah for the First Day of Rosh Hashanah

The Haftorah is read from the book of Shmuel Aleph or the 1st Book of Samuel Chapter 1:1-2:10.



Samuel with his instructor Eli

The Storyline of this week Haftorah: Hannah's Prayer - The Haftorah opens with the introduction of Elkanah, who, at the time was not yet the father of Samuel. He had two wives, Hannah and Peninah. Peninah had children but Hannah did not. Every year Elkanah would take his family up to Shilo on the Shalosh Regalim, or the three Holiday Festivals, namely Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot. Shilo was the city that preceded Jerusalem as the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments. People would travel to Shilo in order to pray and give burnt offerings to Hashem, since Shilo also had an alter which was permissible to use. One day after sacrificing an animal to Hashem, Elkanah offered Peninah and each of her children a portion of food to eat from the sacrifice. He gave a double portion to Hannah because he really loved her and he felt sorry for her since she had no children. Peninah used to try to annoy Hannah because she hadn't yet had a child. This happened year in and year out when they would go up to the temple. It would upset Hannah so much that all she would do is cry, and would not even eat any part of the sacrifice. One day Elkanah asked her "Why are you so upset? Why aren't you eating something?" but Hannah was too upset to tell him. Then Hannah went to the Holy Temple where Eli the Cohen was seated by the doorpost. She was weeping bitterly and prayed "If you give me a son

I will give him to Hashem, all his life a razor will not touch his head". This promise shows the devotion Hannah had for Hashem, since that is not an easy vow to make. Eli noticed Hannah's lips moving and thought that she was a drunk. When he inquired Hannah replied "I am not mumbling because I am drunk, my lips are moving because I was praying to Hashem". Eli then asked Hannah what she had praying for, and she responded "A CHILD!" Eli took Hannah's words to heart and he replied "May Hashem bless you with a child". After hearing this blessing, Hannah felt relieved and very happy and she regained her appetite. The next day Elkanah and his family rose up early and prayed to Hashem, they then returned to their home in Ramah. Hashem remembered Hannah's request and they were granted a baby that they named Samuel since Hashem had heard her prayers, Shamu Kel. **Samuel Is Brought to Shilo** - Hannah's husband Elkanah was preparing for his next trip up to Shilo and requested that Hannah join him with their son Samuel. Hannah said, "I'm not going, until Samuel is of age to be brought to the temple, since I wish to leave him there permanently". Hannah stayed back with Samuel and the rest of the family went up to Shilo. Hannah brought Samuel to the temple when he was two years old, where he stayed. **Hannah's Prayer of Thanks**. Hannah brings her son Samuel to Shilo and offers sacrifices and also sings a song of thanks to Hashem for having given her a son.



Samuel's tomb

The Connection from the Haftorah to the Parasha: The Torah Portion is connected to the Haftorah reading in the following way: The Torah portion we read for Rosh Hashanah is the story of how after many years being barren,

Abraham's wife Sarah was given a blessing that she would have a child soon. The Haftorah similarly tells the story of Hannah who was barren as well and then similarly blessed with a son who became one of the greatest prophets of the Nation of Israel. There is a Midrash that says that both Sarah and Hannah's prayers are remembered on Rosh Hashanah.

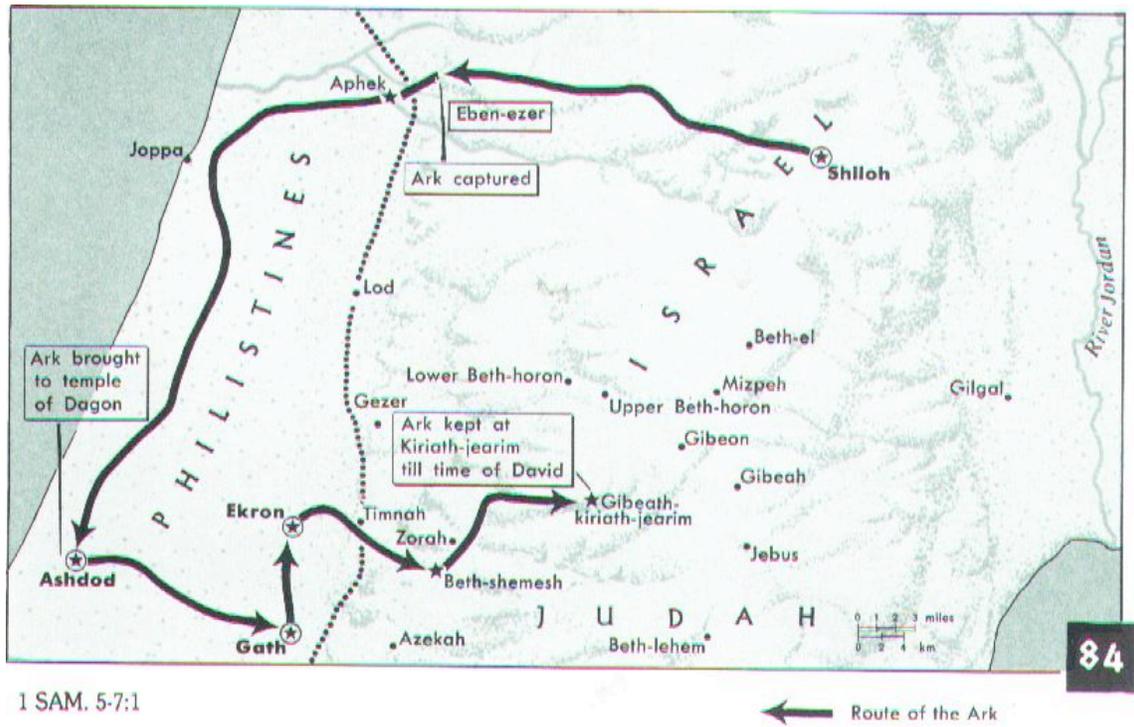
Haftorahman's thought of the week: All of us can learn from Hannah that genuine prayer can bring heavenly mercy that overcomes all adversity, a theme that is at the essence of Rosh Hashanah. May we all be able to pray with the same devotion that Hannah had, so all of our prayers can be answered just as Hannah's was.

Famous Phrases from the Book of Samuel: Taken from the first book of Samuel, Chapter 7 Verse 23 - "Umi che'amcha k'Yisrael goi echad ba'aretz." "And who is like your people, Israel, a unique nation on earth". This passuk is read during the Minchah service on Shabbat, in the Shemona Esrai. Atah Echad Veshimcha Echad, Umi che'amcha k'Yisrael goi echad ba'aretz.

Shmuel's Biography: The meaning of the name Shmuel is "The Lord heard her". Samuel was the sixteenth and the last of the Shoftim, or Judges. Eli the Kohen Gadol, or High Priest, raised him in the Holy Temple. His book spans one hundred and twenty years. Hannah was his mother and Elkanah was his father. Samuel was strong and unwavering. He established the school for the prophets. He was known as "The Reluctant King maker", since he was forced to appoint Saul as the first King of Israel. Samuel later anointed King David as Saul's successor to the throne, to rule over the Nation of Israel. Samuel was born in Ramat-Tzofim in the hill country of the tribe of Ephraim. He wrote his own book.

Timeline: This story: took place 2930 years ago in the Jewish year 2830, 931 B.C.E.

Map: The story took place in Shilo a city in the tribe of Ephraim's territory. Shilo is notable as the center of worship in the time of the Judges. It housed the Ark of the Covenant until its capture by the Philistines in the time of Samuel's adult life.



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