

Haftarah for

Yom HaShoah

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• Haftarah for Yom HaShoah: Introduction •

FROM HOLIDAY TO HAFTARAH

Connecting the Text with the Occasion

Yom HaShoah is a day of remembrance for the millions of Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust. This haftarah likewise honors the memory of beloved leaders of our people, as it expresses deep grief over their loss.

(Some congregations also read Deuteronomy 4:30–40 from the Torah, in memory of those who perished.)

THE PROPHET

Samuel was the last of the so-called judges, or chieftains, and also an early prophet. The book that bears his name does tell stories about him, yet it was written by someone anonymously, hundreds of years after the time in which those stories are set. According to our book, one of Samuel's most significant acts was to anoint David ben Jesse to be the second king of Israel's people. But before David became king, he served in King Saul's court and


fought in many battles alongside the king and his son Jonathan.

Much more recently—only about five hundred years ago—Hebrew printers divided the long Book of Samuel into two parts, calling them First and Second Samuel. This haftarah is taken from Second Samuel, whose stories revolve around King David's reign.

OVERVIEW

The setting of this haftarah is just before David becomes king of Israel. The Philistines have attacked and badly defeated the Israelites on Mount

Gilboa. David and his men did not take part in that battle. They learn later that among those killed were King Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua; the king himself committed suicide rather than be captured alive (I Samuel 31:1–7). When David hears this disastrous news, he is deeply upset (II Samuel 1:11–12).

This haftarah is David's lament—a poem that is composed and sung while grieving a loss. This 

“How have the mighty fallen
in the thick of battle—
Jonathan, slain on your heights!
I grieve for you,
My brother Jonathan,
You were most dear to me.”

II Samuel 1:25–26

lament is for King Saul and also for his son Jonathan, who had been extraordinarily loyal to David.

CONSIDER THIS

1. How does David's lament for Saul and Jonathan express the feelings we might have when we recall the outcome of Hitler's war against the Jews (1933–1945)? How do we mourn for the millions of Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust?

2. David's lament indicates that he finds the sad news to be almost unspeakable (verse 20). In the years immediately following the Holocaust, many people who survived were unable to speak of their experience. Why is it important for survivors of the Holocaust to tell their stories? Why is it important to remember the tragic events in our history?



• Haftarah (II Samuel 1:17-27) •

א 17 וַיִּקְנֶן דָּוִד אֶת־הַקִּינָה הַזֹּאת עַל־
 שָׂאוּל וְעַל־יְהוֹנָתָן בְּנוֹ: 18 וַיֹּאמֶר לְלַמֵּד
 בְּנֵי־יְהוּדָה קִשֶׁת הַנָּה כְּתוּבָה עַל־סֵפֶר
 הַיָּשָׁר:

19 הַצְּבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עַל־בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חֲלָל
 אֵיךְ נָפְלוּ גְבוּרִים:
 20 אֶל־תִּגִּידוּ בְּגֵת
 אֶל־תִּבְשְׂרוּ בְּחוּצוֹת אֲשַׁקְלוֹן
 פֶּן־תִּשְׂמַחַנָּה בָּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים
 פֶּן־תִּעֲלֶזְנָה בָּנוֹת הָעַרְלִים:

21 הָרִי בַּגְּלֹבַעַ
 אֶל־טַל וְאֶל־מָטָר עֲלֵיכֶם
 וּשְׂדֵי תְרוּמֹת
 כִּי שָׁם נִגְעַל מִגֵּן גְּבוּרִים

1:17] And David intoned this dirge over Saul and his son Jonathan—**18]** He ordered the Judites to be taught [The Song of the] Bow. It is recorded in the Book of Jashar.

19] Your glory, O Israel,
Lies slain on your heights;
How have the mighty fallen!

20] Tell it not in Gath,
Do not proclaim it in the streets of Ashkelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistine rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

21] O hills of Gilboa—
Let there be no dew or rain on you,
Or bountiful fields,
For there the shield of warriors lay rejected,

מִגֵּן שָׂאוֹל
בְּלִי מְשִׁיחַ בַּשָּׁמֶן:

22 מִדָּם חֲלָלִים
מִחֶלֶב גְּבוּרִים
קֶשֶׁת יִהְיֶהנָתַן
לֹא נִשּׁוּג אַחֲוֹר
וְחָרַב שָׂאוֹל
לֹא תִשׁוּב רִיקָם:

23 שָׂאוֹל וַיִּהְיֶהנָתַן
הַנְּאֻהָבִים וְהַנְּעִימִם
בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וּבְמוֹתָם
לֹא נִפְרְדּוּ
מִנְּשָׁרִים קָלוּ
מֵאַרְיֹת גְּבֹרוֹ:

24 בְּנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶל-שָׂאוֹל בְּכִינָה
הַמִּלְבָּשִׁכֶם שְׁנֵי עַם-עֲדָנִים
הַמַּעֲלָה עֲדֵי זֶהָב עַל לְבוּשְׁכֶן:

The shield of Saul,
Polished with oil no more.

22] From the blood of slain,
From the fat of warriors—
The bow of Jonathan
Never turned back;
The sword of Saul
Never withdrew empty.

23] Saul and Jonathan,
Beloved and cherished,
Never parted
In life or in death!
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions!

24] Daughters of Israel,
Weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in crimson and finery,
Who decked your robes with jewels of gold.

25 אֵיךְ נִפְּלוּ גְבוּרִים

בְּתוֹךְ הַמְּלַחְמָה

יְהוֹנָתָן עַל־בְּמוֹתֶיךָ חָלַל:

26 צַר־לִי עֲלֶיךָ

אָחִי יְהוֹנָתָן

נְעַמְתָּ לִי מְאֹד

נִפְּלֵאתָ אֶהְבֶּתְךָ לִי

מֵאֶהְבֵּת נָשִׁים:

27 אֵיךְ נִפְּלוּ גְבוּרִים

וַיֵּאבְדוּ כָּלֵי מְלַחְמָה:

25] How have the mighty fallen

In the thick of battle—

Jonathan, slain on your heights!

26] I grieve for you,

My brother Jonathan,

You were most dear to me.

Your love was wonderful to me

More than the love of women.

27] How have the mighty fallen,

The weapons of war perished!

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