

Haftarah Helper 5781: Simchat Torah/V'zot Haberachah

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Joshua 1:1-18

The Haftarah picks up immediately after Moses's death in today's Torah reading. Joshua takes the reins of leadership with multiple tasks before him, including crossing the Jordan River and conquering the land of Canaan. He must also ensure that the two and a half tribes whom Moshe permitted to settle the East Bank of the Jordan keep their promise to first conquer the land, as recounted in Numbers, chapter 32. In these endeavors, God gives Joshua His support, as do the people, and commands him to be "strong and resolute."

Haftarah Breakdown

Verses 1-6: God promises Joshua that his leadership will be as strong as Moses's, especially in the conquest of the Land.

Joshua 1:5	יהושע א:ה
No man shall stand up before you all the days of your life: as I was with Moses, so shall I be with you. I will not fail you, and I will not abandon you.	לֹא-יִתְיַצֵּב אִישׁ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיִיתִי עִם-מֹשֶׁה אֹהֶיָה עִמָּךְ לֹא אֲרַפֶּךָ וְלֹא אֶעְזָבְךָ:

Verses 7-9: To succeed in his missions, Joshua must continuously study the Torah and observe it completely.

Joshua 1:8	יהושע א:ח
This book of the Torah shall not leave your mouth; you shall meditate therein day and night in order for you to carefully do all that is written in it. For [only] then will you succeed in all your ways and [only] then will you prosper.	לֹא-יִמּוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּי יָךְ וְהָגִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל-הַכְּתוּב בּוֹ כִּי-אֵז תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת-דְּרָכְךָ וְאֵז תִּשְׁכִּיל:

Verses 10-11: Joshua commands the people to prepare to cross the Jordan.

Joshua 1:11	יהושע א:יא
Go through the midst of the camp and command the nation saying: "Prepare provision for yourselves, for in another three days you will cross this Jordan to enter and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit."	עֲבְרוּ בְּקֶרֶב הַמַּחֲנֶה וְצַוּ אֶת-הָעָם לֵאמֹר הִכִּינוּ לָכֶם צִידָה כִּי בְעוֹד שְׁלֹשַׁת יָמִים אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה לְבוֹא לְרִשְׁתׁ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נֹתֵן לָכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:

Verses 12-15: Joshua reminds the two and a half tribes to keep their promise to Moses.

Joshua 1:13	יהושע א:יג
Remember the word that Moses, servant of the Lord, commanded you, saying: "The Lord your God is giving you rest, and has given you this land."	זְכוֹר אֶת-הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֶתְכֶם מֹשֶׁה עַבְד־ה' לֵאמֹר ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מְנִיחַ לָכֶם וְנָתַן לָכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת:

Haftarah Breakdown (cont.)

Verses 16-18: The tribes commit to fulfilling their promise, and to fully serve Joshua.

Joshua 1:16	יהושע א:ט"ז
They answered Joshua, saying: "All that you have commanded us, we shall do; and wherever you shall send us, we shall go."	וַיֵּעֲנוּ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֵאמֹר כָּל אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתָנוּ נַעֲשֶׂה וְאֵל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁלַחֵנוּ נֵלֶךְ:

Parashah Connections

Among all Haftarot of the year, this Haftarah features the **most explicit connection** to its Torah reading. The conclusion of the Torah reading...

Deuteronomy 34:5	דברים ל"ד:ה
Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, by the mouth of the Lord.	וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבְד־ה' בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב עַל־פִּי ה'

... leads directly into the Haftarah opening verse:

Joshua 1:1	יהושע א:א
It happened after the death of Moses, servant of the Lord, that the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying...	וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד ה' וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון מִשְׁרֵת מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר...

Other Connections

The **requirement of daily Torah study** is derived from the Haftarah across halachic literature, including here:

Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 27:2	קיצור שלחן ערוך כ"ז:ב
Every Jew must study the Torah, no matter whether he is poor or rich, whether he is healthy or suffering pain, whether he is young or very old. Even a beggar who goes from door to door must set aside a certain time for Torah study during the day and night, as [Joshua 1:8] is written: "You shall meditate therein day and night."	כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל חַיֵּב לְלַמֵּד תּוֹרָה, בֵּין עֲנִי בֵּין עָשִׁיר, בֵּין שָׁלֵם בְּגוֹפוֹ בֵּין בְּעַל יִסּוּרֵי, בֵּין בְּחוֹר בֵּין זָקֵן גָּדוֹל. אֶפְלוּ עֲנֵי הַמְחֲזִיר עַל הַפֶּתַחַיִם, חַיֵּב לִקְבֹּעַ לוֹ זְמַן לְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְהָיִיתָ בּוֹ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה.

God's grant of **absolute power** to Joshua is accorded to **every Jewish king over his subjects**.

Mishneh Torah, Kings and Wars 3:8	משנה תורה, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות ג:ח
A king may execute anyone who rebels against him. Even if the king decreed that someone must go to a particular place but he did not go there; or, that he may not leave his house, but he left - [such a rebel] is liable to the death penalty. If [the king] wishes, he must be executed, as [Joshua 1:18] states, "Any man who rebels against [commands issued by] your mouth [...shall be put to death.]"	כָּל הַמוֹרֵד בְּמֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לְמֶלֶךְ רֶשֶׁת לְהַרְגוֹ. אֶפְלוּ גָזַר עַל אֶחָד מִשְׂאָר הָעָם שִׁילַךְ לְמָקוֹם פְּלוּנִי וְלֹא הֵלֵךְ אוֹ שְׂלֹא יֵצֵא מִבֵּיתוֹ וַיֵּצֵא חַיֵּב מִיָּתֵהּ. וְאִם רָצָה לְהַרְגוֹ יַהַרְגֵהוּ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (יהושע א יח) "כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִמְרָה אֶת פִּיךָ".

With emendations, biblical translations are by Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg and other translations are from Sefaria.org.

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