

Micah 5:12 – 6:8

(In the Jewish translation, the first verse in the Haftarah, **Micah 5:11** is equivalent to the KJV **verse 12**.)

The Haftarah reading for **Deuteronomy 18-19** is concerned with justice. Specifically **Micah 6:8** - "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

But the first verse condemning idolatry and sorcery also fits with the prohibition against sorcery in **Deuteronomy 18:14**.

The setting for chapter 6 is a law court in which God brings a plea against his people, resonating with the calls for true witnesses, equity and justice in **Deuteronomy 18-19**.

Micah 5:11-14 - "And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities."

NET - "I will remove your idols and sacred pillars from your midst; you will no longer worship what your own hands made. I will uproot your images of Asherah from your midst, and destroy your idols."

Compare **2 Corinthians 10** where Paul may have **Micah 5** in mind - Spiritual warfare, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" and toppling idols and high places.

Micah 5:15 - "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard."

Compare **2 Corinthians 10:6** - "And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

Micah 6:1 - "Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice."

Rashi - "with the mountains": with the Patriarchs. "the hills": the Matriarchs. i.e. call them as witnesses against God's people in his suit.

Targum: "judge or contend with the fathers, and let the mothers hear thy voice"

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah would be "rolling over in their graves" to hear what their children have been up to!

Micah 6:2 - "Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations

of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel."

"controversy" = *riyb* - legal cause or dispute, strife

As a Legal Argument:

- **Deuteronomy 17:8** - "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy (*riyb*) within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose..."

In **Deuteronomy 18-19** God has set up a fair judicial system with safeguards for truth and equity in dispensing justice. As we see in this chapter, justice has not been held in esteem. This setting is now a metaphor for God's legal plea against His people.

The Lord condescends to submit Himself to this procedure of justice - to have the case fairly debated, and everything said that could be said in their favor, or against Him.

God first asks for proof of how He has harmed or "wearied" them with demands.

Micah 6:3 - "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me."

"testify" is a judicial term.

Targum: "O my people, what good have I said I would do unto thee, and I have not done it?"

Compare **Jeremiah 2:5** - "This is what the LORD says: "What fault did your fathers find in Me that they strayed so far from Me, and followed worthless idols, and became worthless themselves? "

As long as justice, mercy, and humility are present, God asks no more (**Micah 6:8**).

- **Matthew 11:28-30** - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

(on the contrary if you want to talk about "wearying" - **Isaiah 43:24** - "But you have burdened Me with your sins; you have wearied Me with your iniquities...")

Next God briefly outlines what He has done for Israel:

Micah 6:4 - "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."

Targum of Jonathan: "I sent before thee three prophets, Moses to teach the tradition of the judgments, Aaron to make atonement for the people, and Miriam to instruct the women."

(This recalls the promise of "the Prophet" like unto Moses, given in **Deuteronomy 18**)

Micah 6:5 - "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD."

Balaam, who meant to curse them, prophesied blessings on the tribes of Israel at God's command (**Numbers 22**)

While Israel was encamped at Shittim, Balaam's prophecy and also the whoredoms with Moab and Midian and Phinehas' zeal occurred. Balaam conspired against Israel, and a plague killed many of them. Joshua sent out spies to Jericho from Shittim. When they finally crossed the Jordan they encamped at Gilgal, where the Covenant was renewed, and "the reproach of Egypt was rolled away" **Joshua 5:9**.

God wants them to remember everything that happened between Shittim and Gilgal

Targum: "were not great things done for you in the plain of Shittim unto the house of Gilgal, that the righteousness of the Lord might be known?"

Or it might all refer to Balaam, as in the Syriac version's translation:

"remember how Balak consulted Balaam from place to place, and what answers he returned him; all which was done, that "he (Balak) might know the righteousness of the Lord"

Micah 6:6-7 - "With which shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

Some adopt the view that **Micah 6:6-7** represent the question of Balak, and **Micah 6:8** the answer of Balaam. But more probably it is the whole people of Israel speaking, still wearied by God's requirements of worship, with the attitude of "what more do you want!"

Micah 6:8 - "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

NET - "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD really wants from you: He wants you to promote justice, to be faithful, and to live obediently before your God."

Rashi adds that "to walk humbly" this can be translated "to walk discreetly."

The standard of flesh and blood is not like the standard of the Holy One, blessed be He. The standard of flesh and blood is: If one man embarrasses his fellow and comes to placate him, the fellow says to him, "I will not accept your apology until so and so and so and so, before whom you disgraced me, come." But the Holy One, blessed be He, desires only that the man's return to Him be between the two of them. [from Pesikta d'Rav Kahana 163b]

But "to promote justice" is the key phrase for this Haftarah.