

Haftarah for Elul Week 4: Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-16

In this final week of the month of Elul, on the Shabbat preceding Rosh Hashanah, we return to the words of the prophet Jeremiah, who calls us to do what is just and right. We are reminded that justice requires us to take action. In the second section, Jeremiah calls to those of us who frequent beautiful environs (a home paneled in cedar, for example!) are not exempt from doing justice: it is up to us to ensure that the people who build and create are treated fairly. Taking a close look at ourselves and our society: this is the work of the High Holy Day season.

Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-16

ירמיהו כ"ב

(1) Thus said the Eternal: Go down to the palace of the king of Judah, where you shall utter this word. (2) Say: “Hear the word of the Eternal: king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne, and your courtiers and your subjects who enter these gates! (3) Thus said the Eternal: Do what is just and right; rescue from the defrauder the one who is robbed; do not wrong the stranger, the orphan, and the widow; commit no lawless act, and do not shed the blood of the innocent in this place. (4) For if you fulfill this command, then through the gates of this palace shall enter kings of David's line who sit upon his throne, riding horse-drawn chariots, with their courtiers and their subjects. (5) But if you do not heed these commands, I swear by Myself—declares the Eternal—that this palace shall become a ruin.” ...

(13) Ha! One who builds their house without righteousness and their upper chambers without justice, who makes their fellow work without pay and does not give them their wages, (14) Who thinks: I will build me a vast palace with spacious upper chambers, provided with windows, paneled in cedar, painted with vermilion! (15) Do you think you are more a king because you compete in cedar? Your father ate and drank and dispensed justice and equity— Then all went well with him. (16) He upheld the rights of the poor and needy— Then all was well. That is truly heeding Me — declares the Eternal.

(א) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה רֵד בַּיַּת־מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וְדַבַּרְתָּ שָׁם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה: (ב) וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמַע דְּבַר־יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד אַתָּה וְעַבְדֶּיךָ וְעַמֶּיךָ הַבָּאִים בְּשַׁעְרֵים הָאֵלֶּה: (ג) כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה עֲשׂוּ מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה וְהִצִּילוּ גְזוּל מִיַּד עֹשֵׂי־רָעָה וְאִלְמָנָה אֲלִיתְנֹו אֶל־תַּחֲמֹסוּ וְדָם נָקִי אַל־תִּשְׁפְּכוּ בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה: (ד) כִּי אִם־עָשׂוּ תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וּבָאוּ בְּשַׁעְרֵי הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה מְלָכִים יֹשְׁבִים לְדָוִד עַל־כִּסְאוֹ רֹכְבִים בְּרֶכֶב וּבִסּוּסִים הוּא וְעַבְדוֹ [וְעַבְדָּיו] וְעַמּוֹ: (ה) וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי־לֹא־יִהְיֶה כִּי־לֹא־יִהְיֶה הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה:

(יג) הוּי בְנָה בֵּיתוֹ בְּלֹא־צְדָק וְעֲלִיּוֹתָיו בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּט בְּרֵעָהוּ יַעֲבֹד חַנּוּם וּפְעָלוֹ לֹא יִתְּרוּ לוֹ: (יד) הָאָמַר אֲבָנָה־לִּי בַּיִת מִדֹּת וְעֲלִיּוֹת מְרוּחִים וְקָרַע לוֹ חֲלוּנֵי וְסָפוּן בְּאֶרֶז וּמִשׁוֹחַ בְּשֵׁשׁ: (טו) הִתְמַלֵּךְ כִּי אַתָּה מִתַּחַרָּה בְּאֶרֶז אֲבִידָה הָלוֹא אֲכַל וְשָׁתָה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצְדָקָה אֲזוּ טוֹב לוֹ: (טז) הֲיֵן דִּיר־עֲנִי וְאֲבִיּוֹן אֲזוּ טוֹב הָלוֹא־הִיא הַדַּעַת אֲתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

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