

הַפְטָרָה וַיֵּצֵא

HAFTARAH FOR VA-YETZEI

HOSEA 12:13–14:10 (*Ashk'nazim*)

The opening of this *haftarah* recounts Jacob's flight to Aram after deceiving his brother Esau. The first verses (12:13–15) are actually the end of a larger section of Hosea dealing with the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim), the patriarch Jacob, and similarities between events in the patriarch's life and current national life (during the reign of King Jeroboam II, 784–748 B.C.E.).

Originally this *haftarah* consisted of distinct and unrelated units, as we can see from the diversity of content, theme, and literary form in its verses. In their present form these units nevertheless have a certain cohesion, because they reflect a sequence of events from the patriarchal period to the monarchy. Thus the recollection of Jacob's flight to Aram and his labors there is followed by references to the Exodus, divine sustenance in the wilderness, and the sin of Baal worship. This is succeeded by the worship of idols and calves (in Bethel and Samaria) and the people's desire for a king. The people of the nation, having substituted a subversive religious history for God's providential guidance, are threatened with dire punishments unless they repent.

The effect of concluding these proclamations of doom with an exhortation to repent is to reverse the tone of the *haftarah* and inject a mood of hope into the cycle of sin and punishment. The freedom for new spiritual possibilities erupts unexpectedly through a proclamation of repentance. In turning from the false gods of nature and politics, the people are promised renewal and revival from the divine source of life.

A series of verbal echoes dramatizes this. The divine "plagues" (*d'varekha*) of death for sin (13:14) will be reversed when Israel takes "words" (*d'varim*) of confession and returns to God alone (14:3). Then Israel will not be destroyed "Like dew (*tal*) so early gone" (13:3) but will be nourished by God, who "will be to Israel as dew (*tal*)" (14:6).

The concluding call to heed the prophet's message (14:10) reinforces the need for spiritual awareness and humility. For Hosea, sin arises through pride and forgetting one's divine roots (13:6). This folly is resisted by the religiously alert, who follow the path of piety and are renewed in the shade of God's sustenance (14:7–8). The presumptions of self-sufficiency are rejected when the people renounce calling "our handiwork our god" (14:4). "He who is prudent will take note." This ringing conclusion to the *haftarah* calls out to all who hearken to Hosea's words.

RELATION OF THE HAFTARAH TO THE PARASHAH

The *haftarah* refers to the flight of Jacob to Aram and his service there for a wife. The vocabulary of the *parashah* recurs in the prophet. In the Torah, Jacob "served" (*va-ya-avod*) for Rachel (Gen. 29:20,30) by "guarding" (*eshmor*) Laban's sheep (Gen. 30:31). Hosea states that Israel (i.e., Jacob) "served" (*va-ya-avod*) for his wife by guarding (*shamar*) sheep (Hos. 12:13).

This verbal connection may be extended in two directions. First, the prophet uses the theme of Jacob's guarding to emphasize the theme of divine care. God's providence is first directed to the patriarch and then to the entire nation through a prophet who helped deliver the nation from servitude and guarded (*shamar*) them during their wilderness sojourn (12:14). Indeed, God's care for the person Jacob/Israel during his servitude in Aram is a prototype for God's protection of the people Israel in Egypt. Similarly, the patriarch's act of guarding is a prototype for God's providence for the people through Moses in the wilderness; and Jacob's flight from Aram prefigures the Israelite exodus from Egypt. The deeds of the fathers anticipate the history of their descendants in unexpected ways.

12 ¹³Then Jacob had to flee to the land
of Aram;

There Israel served for a wife,
For a wife he had to guard [sheep].

¹⁴But when the LORD
Brought Israel up from Egypt,
It was through a prophet;
Through a prophet they were guarded.

¹⁵Ephraim gave bitter offense,
And his Lord cast his crimes upon him
And requited him for his mockery.

13 When Ephraim spoke piety,
He was exalted in Israel;
But he incurred guilt through Baal,
And so he died.
²And now they go on sinning;
They have made them molten images,
Idols, by their skill, from their silver,
Wholly the work of craftsmen.
Yet for these they appoint men to sacri-
fice;

They are wont to kiss calves!

³Assuredly,
They shall be like morning clouds,

Hosea 12:14. Through a prophet Namely, Moses. This is the first attribution of the title to him. The designation of Moses as the prophet who brought Israel from Egypt and guarded (*nishmar*) it in the wilderness may be a polemical rejection of the Torah tradition that God sent an angel to guard the people (*lishmorkha*) in their wanderings (Exod. 23:20).

15. cast his crimes upon him Literally, “held him liable for his blood guilt.” Presumably, the prophet means that God will leave the blood on the guilty one, thereby holding him accountable.

Hosea 13:1. When Ephraim spoke The prophet surveys the history of the northern kingdom, from its powerful rise to pre-eminence among all the Israelites to its physical and spiritual collapse. Through seduction to Ca-

יב ¹³וַיִּבְרַח יַעֲקֹב שָׂדֵה אַרָם
וַיַּעֲבֹד יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאִשָּׁה
וּבְאִשָּׁה שָׁמֵר:
וּבְנָבִיא ¹⁴
הָעֹלָה יְהוָה
אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם
וּבְנָבִיא נִשְׁמָר:
¹⁵הַכְּעִיס אֶפְרַיִם תְּמָרוּרִים
וַדְּמִיו עָלָיו יָטוּשׁ
וְהִרְפָּתוֹ יִשִּׁיב לוֹ אֲדָנָיו:

יג כַּדְבַר אֶפְרַיִם רִיתָהּ
נִשְׂאָה הוּא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיֵּאָשֶׁם בַּבַּעַל
וַיָּמָת:
²וַעֲתָה | יוֹסֵפוּ לַחֲטֹא
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם מִסְכָּה
מִכֶּסֶפֶם כְּתַבּוּנִם עֲצָבִים
מִמַּעֲשֵׂה חֲרָשִׁים כָּלָה
לָהֶם הֵם אִמָּרִים זִבְחֵי אֲדָם
עֲגָלִים יִשְׁקֹון:
לָלֶן ³
יִהְיוּ כַּעֲנַן־בֹּקֵר

naanite worship and pride in their own accomplishments, the people of Ephraim rejected their divine savior and faced destruction.

piety The word translated “piety” (*retet*) occurs only here. The Hebrew has the sense of trembling.

2. kiss calves At the division of the United Monarchy, Jeroboam I had golden bulls made and placed in the shrines of Bethel and Dan, where he urged that they be venerated through liturgical proclamations (1 Kings 12:28–29) and sacrifices (v. 32; cf. Hosea 11:2). Kissing the image of the bulls was undoubtedly an act of ritual piety in Hosea’s day, as was the act of kissing images of Baal in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 19:18). It is condemned.

3. morning clouds This image signals the swift extinction of Israel for their unfaithful-

Like dew so early gone;
Like chaff whirled away from the threshing
floor.

And like smoke from a lattice.

⁴Only I the LORD have been your God
Ever since the land of Egypt;
You have never known a [true] God but
Me,
You have never had a helper other than
Me.

⁵I looked after you in the desert,
In a thirsty land.

⁶When they grazed, they were sated;
When they were sated, they grew haughty;
And so they forgot Me.

⁷So I am become like a lion to them,
Like a leopard I lurk on the way;

⁸Like a bear robbed of her young I attack
them

And rip open the casing of their hearts;
I will devour them there like a lion,
The beasts of the field shall mangle them.

⁹You are undone, O Israel!
You had no help but Me.

¹⁰Where now is your king?
Let him save you!

Where are the chieftains in all your towns
From whom you demanded:
“Give me a king and officers”?

¹¹I give you kings in my ire,
And take them away in My wrath.

וּכְטֹל מִשְׁפִּים הַלֵּף
כְּמִץ יִסְעַר מִגֶּרֶן
וּכְעָשָׁן מֵאַרְבָּה:
⁴וְאַנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וְאֱלֹהִים זִוְלָתִי לֹא תָדַע
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ אֵין בְּלָתִי:
⁵אֲנִי יִדְעָתִיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר
בְּאֶרֶץ תְּלָאבוֹת:
⁶כְּמִרְעִיתֶם וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ
שָׁבְעוּ וַיִּרְם לָבָם
עַל־כֵּן שָׁכַחוּנִי:
⁷וְאֵהִי לָהֶם כְּמוֹשֶׁחַל
כְּנֹמֵר עַל־דֶּרֶךְ אֲשׁוּר:
⁸אֶפְגָּשֶׁם כְּדָב שׁוֹבֵל
וְאֶקְרַע סְגוֹר לָבָם
וְאֶכְלֶם שֵׁם כְּלָבִיא
חַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה תִּבְקַעֵם:

⁹שָׁחַתְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
כִּי־בִי בְעִזְרָךְ:
¹⁰אֵהִי מִלְכְּךָ אִפּוּא
וַיּוֹשִׁיעֶךָ
בְּכָל־עֲרִיף וּשְׁפֹטֶיךָ
אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ
תִּנְהַלֵּי מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים:
¹¹אֶתְּוֹלְךָ מֶלֶךְ בְּאַפִּי
וְאֶקַּח בְּעִבְרָתִי: ס

ness. It ironically echoes Hos. 6:4, where the people fail in their efforts to repent and are mocked by God, who states that Israel’s “goodness is like morning clouds, / Like dew so early gone.”

4–5. I the Lord This emphasis on the Lord as the historical redeemer from Egyptian bon-

dage is an important theme in early classical prophecy and an early witness to the theological and historical assertion embodied in the opening words of the Decalogue (Exod. 20:2).

7–15. Verses 7–11 contain a series of images projecting retributive doom on Israel. Punishment is also delineated in 13:15–14:1.

¹²Ephraim's guilt is bound up,
His sin is stored away.

¹³Pangs of childbirth assail him,
And the babe is not wise—
For this is no time to survive
At the birthstool of babes.

¹⁴From Sheol itself I will save them,
Redeem them from very Death.
Where, O Death, are your plagues?
Your pestilence where, O Sheol?
Revenge shall be far from My thoughts.

¹⁵For though he flourish among reeds,
A blast, a wind of the LORD,
Shall come blowing up from the wilder-
ness;
His fountain shall be parched,
His spring dried up.
That [wind] shall plunder treasures,
Every lovely object.

¹²צָרוֹר עֵוֹן אֶפְרַיִם
צְפוּנָה חַטָּאתוֹ:

¹³חֶבְלֵי יוֹלְדָה יִבְאוּ לוֹ
הוּא־בֵן לֹא חָכֵם
כִּי־עַתְּ לֹא־יַעֲמֹד
בְּמִשְׁבַּר בְּנִים:

¹⁴מִיַּד שְׂאוֹל אֶפְרַיִם
מִמּוֹת אַגָּאִלִּים
אֵהִי דְבַרְיָךְ מוֹת
אֵהִי קִטְבְּךָ שְׂאוֹל
נָחֵם יִסְתַּר מֵעֵינַי:

¹⁵כִּי הוּא בֵּין אֲחִים יִפְרִיא
יָבֹא קָדִים רוּחַ יְהוָה
מִמִּדְבָּר
עֲלֶה וַיְבוֹשׁ מְקוֹרוֹ
וַיִּחַרֵּב מֵעֵינָו
הוּא יִשְׁטֶה אוֹצֵר
כָּל־כְּלֵי חַמְדָּה:

14 Samaria must bear her guilt,
For she has defied her God.
They shall fall by the sword,
Their infants shall be dashed to death,
And their women with child ripped open.

²Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God,
For you have fallen because of your sin.

³Take words with you
And return to the LORD.
Say to Him:

יָד תִּאָּשֵׁם שְׁמִרוֹן
כִּי מָרַתָּה בְּאַלְהֵיךָ
בַּחֲרֵב יִפְלוּ
עַל־לִיָּהֶם יִרְטְשׁוּ
וְהָרִיתִינִי יִבְקְעוּ: פ

²שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעוֹנֶךָ:
³קַחוּ עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים
וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה
אִמְרוּ אֵלָיו

Hosea 14:2–4. Hosea calls on the nation to repent, counterpointing the preceding oracles of doom and concluding the *haftarah* (and the entire book) on a note of hope. The elements include recognition of guilt (vv. 2,4), repentance (v. 2), confession and an appeal to mercy (v. 3), and rejection of past practices and the

decision never to engage in them again (vv. 4,9).

3. Take words with you The prophet instructs the people with appropriate words of confession (Ibn Ezra, Radak), appealing that they ask God to “Forgive all guilt” (*kol tissa avon*). This phrase alludes to the same attribute

“Forgive all guilt
 And accept what is good;
 Instead of bulls we will pay
 [The offering of] our lips.
 4 Assyria shall not save us,
 No more will we ride on steeds;
 Nor ever again will we call
 Our handiwork our god,
 Since in You alone orphans find pity!”
 5 I will heal their affliction,
 Generously will I take them back in love;
 For My anger has turned away from them.
 6 I will be to Israel like dew;
 He shall blossom like the lily,
 He shall strike root like a Lebanon tree.
 7 His boughs shall spread out far,
 His beauty shall be like the olive tree’s,
 His fragrance like that of Lebanon.
 8 They who sit in his shade shall be re-
 vived:
 They shall bring to life new grain,
 They shall blossom like the vine;
 His scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
 9 Ephraim [shall say]:
 “What more have I to do with idols?
 When I respond and look to Him,
 I become like a verdant cypress.”
 Your fruit is provided by Me.

כִּלְתִּשָּׂא עֵוֹן
 וְקַח־טוֹב
 וְנִשְׁלַמְהָ פָּרִים
 שְׁפִתֵינוּ:
 4 אַשּׁוּר | לֹא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ
 עַל־סוּס לֹא נִרְפָּב
 וְלֹא־נֹאמַר עוֹד
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ
 אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ יִרְחַם יְתוּם:
 5 אֶרְפָּא מְשׁוּבֹתֵם
 אֲהַבֵּם נְדָבָה
 כִּי שָׁב אִפִּי מִמֶּנּוּ:
 6 אֶהְיֶה כְּטֵל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
 יִפְרַח כְּשׁוֹשְׁנָה
 וְיִרְחַב שָׂרְשָׁיו כְּלְבָנוֹן:
 7 יִלְכוּ יִנְקוּתָיו
 וְיִהְיֶה כְּגִיַת הַדּוֹד
 וְרִיחַ לוֹ כְּלְבָנוֹן:
 8 יֵשְׁבוּ יֹשְׁבֵי בְצֵלוֹ
 יַחֲיוּ דֶגֶן
 וְיִפְרָחוּ כַּגֶּפֶן
 זְכוֹר כְּנֵזֶן לְבָנוֹן: ס
 9 אֶפְרַיִם
 מִה־לִּי עוֹד לְעַצְבִּים
 אֲנִי עָנִיתִי וְאֲשׁוּרֵנוּ
 אֲנִי כְּבָרוֹשׁ רַעֲנָן
 מִמֶּנִּי פְרִיָהּ נִמְצָא:

of divine mercy known from Exod. 34:7 (“forgiving iniquity,” *nosei avon*).

And accept what is good Hebrew, *v'kah tov*. The meaning is obscure. It may indicate a request that God accept the good deeds done (Kara), or the good heart (Radak), or even the words of contrition (Ibn Ezra).

5-9. I will heal their affliction Or “their backsliding.” In response to Israel’s confession, God forgoes His wrath. Sensuous images of earthly bounty replace images of rapine and drought in Hos. 13:7-15. Israel will be restored to renewed vigor. This renewal is as much spiri-

tual as it is physical. The double restoration balances that which is announced at the beginning of the book (2:20-25).

The language of repentance or return dominates the passage. Thus the prophet twice calls on Israel to “return” (*shuvah* and *shuvu*) to the Lord (vv. 2-3). In response to this act, God promises that He will heal their affliction, “for My anger has turned away (*shav*) from them” (v. 5). The consequence will be total renewal: “They who sit (*yosh'vei*) in his shade shall be revived (*yashuvu*)” (v. 8).

9. Ephraim [shall say] The last part of verse

¹⁰He who is wise will consider these words,
 He who is prudent will take note of them.
 For the paths of the LORD are smooth;
 The righteous can walk on them,
 While sinners stumble on them.

מִי חָכָם וְיָבִין אֵלֶּה¹⁰
 נָבוֹן וְיִדְעֵם
 כִּי־יְשָׁרִים דְּרָכַי יְהוָה
 וְצַדִּיקִים יֵלְכוּ בָּם
 וּפְשָׁעִים יִבְשְׁלוּ בָּם:

9 brings the confession to a climax. The verse is a fitting conclusion to the prophet's call. In it, the main point is affirmed: Spiritual fidelity leads to a thorough transformation of earthly life.

10. consider . . . take note A concluding exhortation.

these words . . . of them If "these" refers to the preceding counsel to repent (Rashi), then v. 10a is the rhetorical conclusion to the unit

14:2–9. Alternatively, if "these" refers to the "paths of the LORD" in the following phrase (Ibn Ezra), then the reference is to the justice of God ("path," or "way," indicates divine providence; cf. Exod. 33:13). By contrast, Radak understood "these" as referring to the prophet's earlier words of reproof. By this view, the exhortation calls on the people to take heed of God's judgment.

הַפְּטָרָה וַיֵּצֵא

HAFTARAH FOR VA-YETZEI

HOSEA 11:7–12:12 (*S'fardim*)

This *haftarah* is dominated by the recurrent denunciation of the religious and moral behavior of Ephraim (a designation for the northern tribes). Ephraim is judged for continuous defection from God. Counterpointing this human trait, God's love for His people is proclaimed (11:8–9): He cannot and will not destroy them like the ancient cities of the Plain (Admah and Zeboim, ruined along with Sodom and Gomorrah in ancient times, although not mentioned in Gen. 19:23ff; cf. Deut. 29:22). The vaunted mark of divinity is the ability to transcend wrath, to love with an unrequited and unconditional grace. Yet in a later passage (Hos. 12:7), reconciliation with God depends not on God's unilateral grace but on the people's transformation of their moral and spiritual lives.

The *haftarah* begins in the middle of chapter 11, with a proclamation of Ephraim's defection from God (v. 7). It is part of the prophet's overall rebuke of Israelite behavior during the reign of King Jeroboam II (784–748 B.C.E.).

The prophet's words begin and end with condemnations of Ephraim's ongoing sins. The guile of father Jacob in the past provides a pivotal perspective. The nation is reminded of their ancestor's deeds and of how he was requited for his acts. This historical reference serves to warn the descendants of Jacob/Israel that they will also suffer punishment if they do not change their ways and return to a life of goodness and trust in God.

God's attitude is not in doubt. Despite the people's sinful behavior, divine punishment is aborted: "I will not act on My wrath," says the Lord, "Will not turn (*lo ashuv*) to destroy Ephraim" (11:9). Indeed, God's love will prevail; He will "roar like a lion" and will "settle" (*v'bo-shavtim*) His people "in their homes" (11:11). This promise precedes God's second rebuke of Ephraim and His call that they "return (*tashuv*)

to your God" (12:7). It also precedes the ensuing (third) denunciation of Ephraimite overreaching (12:8), and God's declaration in judgment that He will "let you dwell (*oshiyv'kha*) in your tents again as in days of old" (12:10). The linguistic play on the verb *shuv* (return, repent) and the variations on the verb *yashav* (dwell, settle) point to the positive and the negative consequences of Israel's behavior.

As for the return itself, the prophet is direct and precise: "Practice goodness (*hesed*) and justice (*mishpat*), / And constantly trust (*kavveh*) in your God" (12:7). The first part articulates the social-moral dimension of the covenant, enacting on the human plane precisely those values articulated by God Himself in His promised betrothal of the people: "And I will espouse you with righteousness and justice (*mishpat*), / And with goodness (*hesed*) and mercy" (2:21). Israel's covenantal actions thus mirror God's constancy, but inevitably they are expressed through human fulfillment of His just and good laws.

The second part of Hosea's demand transcends the human realm and has an exclusively transcendent focus. Trust in God is an entirely theological attitude, a commitment to a source of power and truth beyond human calculation. But it does not cancel the activist demands of justice, even as goodness in the social realm does not invalidate a theological orientation toward reality.

RELATION OF THE HAFTARAH TO THE PARASHAH

The *haftarah* illustrates various episodes in the Book of Genesis, beginning with Jacob's birth and continuing through his return to the land and the shrine of Bethel. Hosea emphasizes the theme of strife: Jacob's struggle with his brother Esau and his night combat with the angel at the

Jabbok ford. These actions follow a denunciation of the Israelites as a people surrounding God with “guile” (*mirmah*, Hos. 12:1). This term recalls Isaac’s use of it to describe Jacob’s act of deceit, when he stole Esau’s blessing (Gen. 27:35). Jacob also alludes to it when he reproves Laban for deceiving him with Leah, but the patriarch was reproved in turn (Gen. 29:25–26). Given this strategic recurrence, one may conclude that the term “*mirmah*” (and its derivatives) is used to suggest the continuity of Jacob’s deceitful character. A relationship is thereby es-

tablished between the acts of the patriarch and of his descendants. The intergenerational continuity of guile thus underscores an ancient flaw in father Jacob and its disastrous ramifications for later generations. Such a family trait must be confronted, to be halted or removed. Toward this end, the prophet calls on the people to repent and perform good deeds. The *haftarah*, however, leaves little hope that self-examination will result. The reader thus confronts the destructive possibilities of unexamined character traits and their insidious effect on later generations.

11 ⁷For My people persists

In its defection from Me;
When it is summoned upward,
It does not rise at all.

⁸How can I give you up, O Ephraim?

How surrender you, O Israel?
How can I make you like Admah,
Render you like Zeboiim?

I have had a change of heart,
All My tenderness is stirred.

⁹I will not act on My wrath,
Will not turn to destroy Ephraim.

For I am God, not man,
The Holy One in your midst:
I will not come in fury.

¹⁰The LORD will roar like a lion,
And they shall march behind Him;

Hosea 11:7. When it is summoned upward
The word translated “summoned” (*yikra-uhu*) is a plural verb with the literal meaning of “they have summoned him.” Presumably this refers to the prophets who have called Israel to heed their message (Rashi).

8. Ephraim This common designation for the northern kingdom of Israel stands in con-

tradistinction to Judah, a designation for the south.

10. The LORD will roar An abrupt shift to the third person, with the unexpected use of an image of terror. The verse presumably refers to God’s awesome manifestation to the nation in exile, inspiring them with terror and the urge to follow Him (Rashi, Ibn Ezra).

יא
וְעַמִּי תְלוּאִים ⁷
לְמַשׁוּבְתִי
וְאֶל־עַל יִקְרָאֵהוּ
יַחַד לֹא יִרְוּמִם:

⁸ אֵיךְ אֶתְנֶנָּה אֶפְרַיִם
אֶמְגַּנְנֶנָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֵיךְ אֶתְנֶנָּה כְּאַדְמָה
אֲשׁוּימָה כְּצִבְאִים*
נִהְפָּר עָלַי לְבִי
יַחַד נִכְמְרוּ נַחוּמִי:
⁹ לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה חֲרוֹן אַפִּי
לֹא אָשׁוּב לְשַׁחַת אֶפְרַיִם
כִּי אֵל אֲנֹכִי וְלֹא־אִישׁ
בְּקִרְבִּי קָדוֹשׁ
וְלֹא אָבוּא בְּעִיר:

¹⁰ אֶחְרִי יְהוָה יִלְכּוּ
כְּאַרְיֵה יִשְׂאָג
ו. 8. יתיר א'

When He roars, His children shall come
Fluttering out of the west.
11 They shall flutter from Egypt like sparrows,
From the land of Assyria like doves;
And I will settle them in their homes
—declares the LORD.

כִּי־הוּא יִשְׁאַג
וַיִּחַרְדּוּ בָנָיִם מִיָּם:
11 וַיִּחַרְדּוּ כַּצְּפּוֹר מִמִּצְרַיִם
וּכְיוֹנָה מֵאַרְץ אַשּׁוּר
וְהוֹשַׁבְתִּים עַל־בְּתֵיהֶם
נְאֻם־יְהוָה: ס

12 Ephraim surrounds Me with deceit,
The House of Israel with guile.
(But Judah stands firm with God
And is faithful to the Holy One.)
2 Ephraim tends the wind
And pursues the gale;
He is forever adding
Illusion to calamity.
Now they make a covenant with Assyria,
Now oil is carried to Egypt.

יב סִבְבֵנִי בְּכַחַשׁ אֶפְרַיִם
וּבְמַרְמָה בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיִּהְיֶה עַד רֹד עִם־אֵל
וְעִם־קְדוֹשִׁים נֶאֱמָן:
2 אֶפְרַיִם רֹעֵה רוּחַ
וְרֹדֵף קָדִים
כָּל־הַיּוֹם
כְּזָב וְשֹׂד יִרְבֶּה
וּבְרִית עִם־אַשּׁוּר יִכְרְתוּ
וְשֶׁמֶן לְמִצְרַיִם יוּבַל:

3 The LORD once indicted Judah,
And punished Jacob for his conduct,
Requited him for his deeds.
4 In the womb he tried to supplant his
brother;
Grown to manhood, he strove with a di-
vine being,
5 He strove with an angel and prevailed—
The other had to weep and implore him.
At Bethel [Jacob] would meet him,
There to commune with him.
6 Yet the LORD, the God of Hosts,
Must be invoked as “LORD.”
7 You must return to your God!
Practice goodness and justice,
And constantly trust in your God.

3 וְרִיב לִיהוָה עִם־יְהוּדָה
וּלְפָקֵד עַל־יַעֲקֹב בְּדַרְכָּיו
כִּמְעַלְלָיו יָשִׁיב לוֹ:
4 בְּבֶטֶן עָקַב אֶת־אָחִיו
וּבְאוֹנוֹ שָׁרָה אֶת־אֱלֹהִים:
5 וַיִּשְׂר אֶל־מַלְאָךְ וַיִּכָּל
בְּכָה וַיִּתְחַנֵּן־לוֹ
בֵּית־אֵל יִמְצְאוּנוּ
וְשֵׁם יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ:
6 וַיִּהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי הַצְּבָאוֹת
יְהוָה זָכְרוּ:
7 וְאַתָּה בְּאַלְהֵיךָ תָּשׁוּב
חֶסֶד וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁמוֹר
וְקוּהָ אֶל־אַלְהֵיךָ תִּמְיֵד:

Hosea 12:5. commune with him Literally, “commune with us” (*immanu*). The Hebrew form may be influenced by the preceding *yim-tza-ennu* (would meet him).

7. Practice goodness and justice The call for repentance is followed by an exhortation to “Practice goodness and righteousness” (*besed u-mishpat*). These traits of human allegiance cor-

⁸A trader who uses false balances,
 Who loves to overreach,
⁹Ephraim thinks,
 “Ah, I have become rich;
 I have gotten power!
 All my gains do not amount
 To an offense which is real guilt.”
¹⁰I the LORD have been your God
 Ever since the land of Egypt.
 I will let you dwell in your tents again
 As in the days of old,
¹¹When I spoke to the prophets;
 For I granted many visions,
 And spoke parables through the prophets.
¹²As for Gilead, it is worthless;
 And to no purpose have they
 Been sacrificing oxen in Gilgal:
 The altars of these are also
 Like stone heaps upon a plowed field.

⁸כְּנֹעֵן בְּיָדוֹ מֵאֲזֵנֵי מְרָמָה
 לַעֲשֹׂק אָהֵב:
⁹וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶפְרַיִם
 אֲנִי עֲשֵׂרְתִי
 מִצָּאתִי אֲוֹן לִי
 כִּלְיָגִיעֵי לֹא יִמָּצְאוּ לִי
 עֲוֹן אֲשֶׁר־חָטָא:
¹⁰וַאֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 עַד אֹשִׁיבֶךָ בְּאֹהֶלִים
 כַּיְמֵי מוֹעֵד:
¹¹וְדִבַּרְתִּי עַל־הַנְּבִיאִים
 וְאֲנֹכִי חֲזוֹן הַרְבִּיתִי
 וּבִיד הַנְּבִיאִים אֲדַמָּה:
¹²אִם־גִּלְעָד אֲוֹן
 אֲנִי־שָׂוָא הָיוּ
 בְּגִלְגַל שׁוֹרִים זִבְחוֹ
 גַּם מִזְבְּחוֹתָם
 כַּגְּלִילִים עַל תְּלָמֵי שָׂדֵי:

v. 9. סביריו ומטעין לשון רבים

respond to God's own promise of covenantal commitment in Hos. 2:21, “I will espouse you with righteousness and justice (*mishpat*), / And with goodness (*hesed*) and mercy.”

10. I will let you dwell in your tents again

The verse may be translated, “I will yet again make you to dwell in tents.” This verse thus may be speaking less of a reward than of a reversal of fate, given Hosea's condemnation of Ephraim's greed. It restores Israel to its ancient desert condition when it depended on God.

11. When I spoke to the prophets One may construe the passage to mean, “I also spoke to the prophets.” This rendition has the advantage of separating the period of the wilderness

(when God spoke from the tent) from the subsequent times of prophecy. It further suggests that Hosea mentions the prophets because they (like him) brought God's word of judgment to the people. This reading also provides a transition to the judgment in verse 12.

spoke parables Hebrew: *adammeh*. This passage played a central role in Jewish philosophical arguments that the prophets spoke of God figuratively—in ways that do not depict His indescribable essence (cf. *Guide*, Intro.)

12. As for Gilead, it is worthless The concluding verse, taken literally, articulates a strong judgment.