

Dear Chavraya,

I have a very deep personal attachment to this week's Torah portion, Parashat Balak. It is my Bar Mitzvah portion. More than the Torah portion itself, it is the haftorah from the prophet Micah that has informed my life since that moment on the bimah in the shul where I grew up. Micah asks how we shall come before God. It is not the gifts of field and flock that God seeks, but the gifts of heart and deed; "It has been told to you O mortal what is good and what God seeks of you, only to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

Completing my haftorah, once again daring to breath, soaring with accomplishment, I turned to face the holy ark, standing between my parents. My mother, may her memory continue to be a blessing, offered a personal prayer whose teaching has become a life-long commentary to me on the words of Micah. In her own ever so humble way, just wanting to be sure that we knew what Micah meant, and even to be sure that Micah himself knew what he meant, my mother added to walking humbly with God, "and to walk humbly with all people." To walk humbly with people is the way to walk humbly with God.

May we be guided along all the paths of life by the words of Micah, and of my mother, walking humbly with God and with each other.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Victor