

## מחר חדש

*First Samuel, chapter 20, verses 18 to 42*

### **Introduction**

#### *Connection of haftarah and festival:*

Whenever Rosh Chodesh (the festival of the New Moon) falls on Sunday, this haftarah is read on the day before, for its first sentence contains the words "Tomorrow is the New Moon." While this is the obvious reason for choosing the selection, the Sages may also have felt that the content of the haftarah speaks of true friendship, the ultimate harmony of human life. Similarly does the recurrence of the new moon bespeak the harmony of the heavens.

#### *The setting:*

Saul, Israel's first king, lived in the second half of the 11th century B.C.E. He was a forceful and intelligent ruler, but he was also possessed by an increasing sense of insecurity. He became jealous of the success of his eldest son, Jonathan, and especially of Jonathan's friend David, the rising star of the land. Saul determined to eliminate him and would have succeeded had Jonathan not protected his friend.

The haftarah begins in the middle of the 20th chapter of the First Book of Samuel. David and Jonathan are meeting, and both are aware that on the morrow, which is Rosh Chodesh, the king will hold a festive meal and will expect David to be in his customary seat at the table. David and his friend concoct a scheme by which David will learn whether Saul still seeks his life or whether he has relented. Meanwhile, David will stay in hiding.

For more on the book of Samuel, where this story appears, see our *General Introduction*.

#### *The story:*

1. The scheme. (20-23)
2. David is missed and Jonathan tries to explain his friend's absence. (24-29)
3. It becomes clear that Saul will try to kill David. (30-34)
4. David and Jonathan play out their charade and part tearfully. (35-42)