Re'eih: Isaiah 54: 11-55:5

Zion Rebuilt

Unhappy [or: impoverished], storm-tossed one, uncomforted! I will lay carbuncles as your building stones and make your foundations of sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, Your gates of precious stones, The whole encircling wall of gems.

(יא) עֲנִיָּה סְעֲרָה לֹא נֵחָמָה הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי מַרְבִּיץ <mark>בַּפּוּךְ</mark> אֲבָנַיִךְ וִיסַדְתִּיךְ <mark>בַּסַפִּירִים</mark>. (יב) וְשַׁמְתִּי <mark>כַּדְכד</mark> שִׁמְשׁתַיִךְ וּשְׁעָרַיִךְ לְאַבְנֵי אֶקְדָּח וְכָל גְבוּלֵךְ <mark>לְאַבְנֵי חֵפֶץ</mark>.

We can discern a progression:

- In *Nachamau Nachamu*, the prophet promised comfort, but gave no indication of whether/how the people reacted.
- That was followed by Vatomer Tziyon, indicating that the people rejected the words of comfort and insisted that God had abandoned them, forcing the prophet to reissue his words of comfort.
- Now, in *Aniyah So`arah*, we get the sense that even the reiteration of consolation hasn't succeeded and that they are still shell-shocked, as it were, on account of their exile.

Exile (like either banishment of a child or divorce of a spouse) produces two states of being: A physical one that imposes the burden of finding the means of elemental sustenance, and an emotional one as a consequence of the realization that an intimate relationship has been severed and possibly may not be restored. The first is reasonably objective, the latter is subjective. They are also mutually independent; the former can be resolved (e.g., U.S.) while the latter languishes.

Hence, the current haftarah addresses the physical dilemma, promising Israel sufficient wealth to sustain themselves and relieve the distress of exile. Next week's haftarah (*Anokhi Anokhi hu m'machemkhem*) will address the spiritual malaise they suffer.

- ח.[m.] antimony, stibium
- ספיר n.[m.] sapphire, perhaps also lapis lazuli
- נדכֹד n.[m.] a precious stone, perhaps ruby
- אַקְדַּח n.[m.] perhaps fiery glow, sparkle

Peace and Tranquility Reign

And all your children shall be disciples of the LORD, and great shall be the happiness of your children; You shall be established through righteousness. You shall be safe from oppression, and shall have no fear; from ruin, and it shall not come near you. Surely no harm can be done without My consent: whoever would harm you shall fall because of you.

(יג) וְכָל בָּנַיִךְ לִמּוּדֵי י"י וְרֵב שְׁלוֹם בָּנַיִךְ. (יד) <mark>בְּצְדָקָח</mark> תִּכּוֹנָנִי רַחֲקִי מֵעשֶׁק כִּי לֹא תִירָאִי <mark>וּמִמְּחִתָּה</mark> כִּי לֹא תִקְרַב אֵלָיִךְ. (טו) הֵן גּוֹר יָגוּר אֶפֶס מֵאוֹתִי מִי גָר אִתָּךְ עָלַיִךְ יִפּוֹל. Previously, the promise of ultimate redemption was given solely on the strength of God's relationship to the people and their ancestors, or because of His desire to preserve His own respect. Cf. Isaiah 44:21-22:

זְּכֶר־אֵלֶה יֵעֲלֶב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי עַבְדִּי־אֶתָּה יְצַרְתִּיךְ עֶבֶד־לִי[ּ] אֵׁתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְֹא תִנָּשֵׁנִי: מָחָיתִי כָעָב*ׁ* פָּשַׁעֵּיךְ וְכֶעַנֵן חַטּאותֵיךְ שׁוּבָה אֵלִי כִּי גָאֵלְתִּיךְ:

Remember these things, O Jacob for you, O Israel, are My servant: I fashioned you, you are My servant— O Israel, never forget Me. I wipe away your sins like a cloud, your transgressions like mist— come back to Me, for I redeemed you.

Note that the redemption preceded the return.

Here, for the first, we have an indication that it is not a gift given gratis but something to be earned through repentance and improvement.

Invulnerability to Destruction

It is I who created the smith to fan the charcoal fire and produce the tools for his work; So, it is I who create the instruments of havor. No weapon formed against you Shall succeed, and every tongue that contends with you at law You shall defeat. Such is the lot of the servants of the LORD, such their triumph through Me —declares the LORD.

[הִנֵּה] (הן) אָנֹכִי בָּרָאתִי חָרָשׁ נֹפֵחַ בְּאֵשׁ פֶּחָם וּמוֹצִיא <mark>כְלִי</mark> לְמַעֲשֵׂהוּ וְאָנֹכִי בָּרָאתִי <mark>מַשְׁחִית לְחַבֵּל</mark>. (יז) כָּל <mark>כְּלִי</mark> יוּצַר עָלַיִךְ לֹא יִצְלָח וְכָל <mark>לָשׁוֹן</mark> תָּקוּם אָתָּךְ לַמִּשְׁפָּט תַּרְשִׁיעִי זֹאת נַחֲלַת עַבְדֵי י"י <mark>וְצִדְקָתָם</mark> מֵאִתִּי נְאֶם י"י.

The battle takes place on two fronts:

- One of actual warfare: the "instruments of havoc"
- One of spiritual conflict: the "contentious tongues"

Only by virtue of their proven righteousness can they be certain of victory in the spiritual conflict.

ילקוט שמעוני (רמז תע"ח)

כבר בשרני ע"י ישעיה הנביא ואמר "<mark>עניה</mark> סערה לא נחמה" וגו^י, <mark>עניה</mark> מן הצדיקים <mark>עניה</mark> מן התורה <mark>עניה</mark> ממצות ומעשים טובים.

I was so informed by the Prophet Isaiah who said: "Impoverished, storm-tossed one, uncomforted." Impoverished of righteous people, impoverished of Torah, impoverished of fulfilling the commandments and [performing] good deeds.

Eat, Drink, and ...

Ho, all who are thirsty, come for water, even if you have no money; come, buy food and eat: buy food without money, wine and milk without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, your earnings for what does not satisfy? Give heed to Me, and you shall eat choice food and enjoy the richest viands.

(א) הוֹי כָּל צָמֵא לְכוּ <mark>לַמַּיִם</mark> וַאֲשֶׁר אֵין לוֹ כָּסֶף לְכוּ <mark>שָׁבְרוּ</mark> וָאֱכֹלוּ וּלְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ בְּלוֹא כָסֶף וּבְלוֹא מְחִיר <mark>יִין וְחָלָב</mark>. (ב) לָמָּה תִשְׁקְלוּ כָסֶף בְּלוֹא <mark>לֶחֶם</mark> וִיגִּיעֲכֶם בְּלוֹא לְשָׁבְעָה שָׁמְעוּ שָׁמוֹעַ אֵלֵי וְאִכְלוּ <mark>טוֹב</mark> וְתִתְעַנַּג <mark>בַּדֶּשֶׁן</mark> נַפְשְׁכֶם.

תענית ז ע"א

אמר רבי חנינא בר אידי למה נמשלו דברי תורה למים, דכתיב "הוי כל צמא לכו <mark>למים</mark>"? לומר לך מה <mark>מים</mark> מניחין מקום גבוה והולכין למקום נמוך, אף <mark>דברי תורה</mark> אין מתקיימין אלא במי שדעתו שפלה. ואמר רבי אושעיא למה נמשלו דברי תורה לשלשה משקין הללו, <mark>במים וביין ובחלב</mark>, דכתיב "הוי כל צמא לכו <mark>למים</mark>," וכתיב "לכו שברו ואכלו ולכו שברו בלוא כסף ובלוא מחיר <mark>יין וחלב</mark>"? לומר לך, מה שלשה משקין הללו אין מתקיימין אלא בפחות שבכלים, אף <mark>דברי תורה</mark> אין מתקיימין אלא במי שדעתו שפלה.

R. Hanina b. Ida said: Why are the words of the Torah likened unto water-as it is written, 'Ho, everyone that thirsts, come ye for water'? This is to teach you, just as water flows from a higher level to a lower, so too the words of the Torah endure only with him who is humble. R. Oshaia said: Why are the words of the Torah likened unto these three liquids, water, wine and milk—as it is written, 'Ho, everyone that thirsts come ye for water'; and it is written, Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price? This is to teach you, just as these three liquids can only be preserved in the most inferior of vessels, so too the words of the Torah endure only with him who is humble.

A (Re)New(ed) Covenant

Incline your ear and come to Me; hearken, and you shall be revived. And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the enduring loyalty promised to David. As I made him a leader of peoples, a prince and commander of peoples, so you shall summon a nation you did not know, and a nation that did not know you shall come running to you— for the sake of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel who has glorified you.

(ג) הַטּוּ אָזְנְכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלֵי שָׁמְעוּ וּתְחִי נַפְּשְׁכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלֵי שָׁמְעוּ <mark>עוֹלָם</mark> חַסְדִי דָוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים. (ד) הֵן עֵד לְאוּמִים נְתַתִּיו נְגִיד וּמְצַוּה לְאֵמִים. (ה) הֵן גּוֹי לֹא תֵדַע תִּקְרָא וְגוֹי לֹא יְדָעוּךְ אֵלֶיךְ יָרוּצוּ לְמַעַן י״י אֱלֹהֶיךְ וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׁרָאֵל כִּי פַאֲרָךְ.

וְכָל בָּנַיִךְ לְמוּדֵי י"י

What does it take to become "disciples of the Lord"?

תרגום יונתן וְכַל בַּנַיִרְ אַלְפִין בִּאוֹרַיִתַא דַייַ וְסַגֵּי יִהֵי שָׁלַם בִּנַרְ.

ר' יוסף קרא למודי י"י – מלומדים ללכת בדרכיו.

אבן עזרא וכל בניך למודי – כמו תלמידי, והנה המלה תאר השם.

רד"ק וכל בניך למודי י"י – למודי תאר, כמו שפירשנו "<mark>לשמוע בלימודים</mark>" (נ:ד). וזה כענין שאמר ירמיהו הנביא "ולא ילמדו עוד איש אל רעהו, ואיש את אחיו, לאמור דעו את י"י כי כולם ידעו אותי למקטנם ועד גדולם" (לא:לג).

"The Lord GOD gave me a skilled tongue, to know how to speak timely words to the weary. Morning by morning, He rouses, He rouses my ear to give heed like disciples" (Isaiah 50:4).

"No longer will they need to teach one another and say to one another, "Heed the LORD"; for all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall heed Me..." (Jer. 31:33).

אבן עזרא וטעם יעיר וגו^י – כי י"י יעיר אותי בבקר בבקר, ופירוש יעירני שיעיר אזני שאהיה שומע כלימודים, והנה אני <mark>תלמיד לשם</mark>.

The Lord stirreth me up every morning; he stirreth up my ear that I may listen as pupils do; for I am a pupil of the Lord.

מלבי"ם שידבר דבריו במראה ולא בחידות, ויוכל לכלכל דבריו <mark>לפי שכל השומעים והבנתם</mark>. ועז"א "יעיר לי אזן לשמע כלמודים," ששמעתי הנבואה מפיו כפי כח הלמודים והתלמידים וכפי השגתם.

[A prophet must] speak clearly and not cryptically and must be able to illustrate his thoughts according to the intelligence and comprehension of his audience. Hence, he said "He rouses my ear to give heed like disciples." I heard the prophecy from His lips according to the ability of pedagogues and students, [each] according to his comprehension.

שד"ל למודי ה' – תלמידי ה' ויודעיו, כטעם "וְהָיֶה אַחֲבִי־כֵּן אֶשְׁפְּוֹךְ אֶת־רוּחִיּ עַל־כָּל־בָּשָּׁר וְנִבְּאָוּ בְּנֵיכָם וּבְנוֹתֵיכֶם זִקְנֵיכֶם חֲלֹמָוֹת יַחֲלֹמוּן בַּחַוּרֵיכֶּם חֶזְיֹנָוֹת יִרְאָוּ:" (יואל ג':א').

"After that, I will pour out My spirit on all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."

מלבי"ם וכל בניך יהיו למודי ה' – שיקבלו הלימוד והאמונה מה' עד שלא יהיה מחלוקת ביניהם בדברים כאלה, וממילא "ורב שלום בניך."

They will receive instruction in faith from God to the extent that there will be no disagreement amongst them in these matters. Inevitably, "Your children shall be exceedingly peaceful."

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף סד עמוד א אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא: תלמידי חכמים מרבים <mark>שלום</mark> בעולם, שנאמר "וכל בניך למודי ה' ורב <mark>שלום</mark> בניך." אל תקרי בניך אלא <mark>בוניך</mark>. "<mark>שלום</mark> רב לאהבי תורתך ואין למו מכשול." "יהי <mark>שלום</mark> בחילך <mark>שלוה</mark> בארמנותיך." "למען אחי ורעי אדברה נא <mark>שלום</mark> בך." "למען בית ה' אלהינו אבקשה <mark>טוב</mark> לך." "ה' <mark>עז</mark> לעמו יתן ה' יברך את עמו <mark>בשלום</mark>." הדרן עלך הרואה וסליקא לה מסכת ברכות.

R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Hanina: The disciples of the wise increase peace in the world, as it says, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Read not banayikh [thy children] but bonayikh [thy builders]. "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and there is no stumbling for them." "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces." "For my brethren and companions' sake I will now say, Peace be within thee." "For the sake of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good." "The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace."