

Va'Etchanan: Nachamu Nachamu Ami (Isaiah 40:1-26)

Words of Consolation

<p>(1) Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, Saith your God. (2) Bid Jerusalem take heart, And proclaim unto her, That her time of service is accomplished, That her guilt is paid off; That she hath received of the Lord's hand Double for all her sins.</p>	<p>(א) נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. (ב) דַּבְּרוּ עַל לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם וְקִרְאוּ אֵלֶיהָ כִּי מְלָאָה צָבָאָה כִּי נִרְצָה עֹנָהּ כִּי לָקְחָה מִיַּד יְיָ כַּפָּלִים בְּכָל חַטָּאתֶיהָ.</p>
--	---

בראשית נ (כא) וְעַתָּה אֵל תִּירְאוּ אֲנֹכִי אֲכַלְכֵּל אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת טַפְכֶם וַיִּנַּחֲם אוֹתָם וַיְדַבֵּר עַל לָבָם:

רות ב (יג) וַתֹּאמֶר אֶמְצָא חַן בְּעֵינֶיהָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי נַחֲמַתֵּנִי וְכִי דַבַּרְתָּ עַל לֵב שִׁפְחָתְךָ וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אָהִיָּה כְּאֶחַת שִׁפְחָתְךָ:

בראשית לד (ג) וַתְּדַבֵּק נַפְשׁוֹ בְּדִינָה בֵּת יַעֲקֹב וַיֶּאֱהַב אֶת הַנַּעֲרָ וַיְדַבֵּר עַל לֵב הַנַּעֲרָ:
 שמואל א א (יג) וְחֲנָה הִיא מְדַבַּרְתָּ עַל לָבָה רַק שִׁפְתֶיהָ נְעוּת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע וַיִּחַשְׁבֶהָ עַלֵּי לְשָׁכָרָה:

איוב ז (א) הֲלֹא צָבָא לְאֲנוּשׁ עַל עַלְי אֶרֶץ וְכִימִי שָׁכִיר יָמָיו:

שמות פרק כב (ב) אִם זָרְחָה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַלְיוֹ דָּמִים לוֹ שְׁלֹם יִשְׁלֹם אִם אֵין לוֹ וַיִּנְמָכֵר
 בְּגִנְבָתוֹ: (ג) אִם הִמְצָא תִמְצָא בְּיָדוֹ הַגְּנֵבָה מִשׁוֹר עַד חֲמוֹר עַד שֶׁה חַיִּים שְׁנַיִם יִשְׁלֹם:

מלבי"ם ביאור הענין ישעיהו מ'ב':

כמשל מי שנגזר עליו שישב במאסר עשר שנים וירדוהו בכל יום עשר מלקות, ושר הסוהר רדהו בכל יום מאה מלקות, שאז קבל ענשו לעומת חטאתיו בשנה אחת, ויצא לחפשי. וכן היה במצרים, שקושי השעבוד השלים מנין ארבע מאות שנה, ברד"ו שנה.

Preparing the Way for God's Appearance

<p>(3) Hark! one calleth: 'Clear ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, Make plain in the desert A highway for our God. (4) Every valley shall be lifted up, And every mountain and hill shall be made low; And the rugged shall be made level, And the rough places a plain; (5) And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'</p>	<p>(ג) קוֹל קוֹרָא בַּמִּדְבָּר פְּנוּ דֶרֶךְ יְיָ יִשְׂרוּ בְּעֵרְבָה מַסְלָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ. (ד) כָּל גֵּיא יִנְשָׂא וְכָל הַר וְגִבְעָה יִשְׁפָּלוּ וְהָיָה הָעֵקֶב לְמִישׁוֹר וְהַרְכָּסִים לְבִקְעָה. (ה) וְנִגְלָה כְבוֹד יְיָ וְרָאוּ כָל בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי יְיָ דָּבָר.</p>
---	--

God's Word is Eternal

<p>(6) Hark! one saith: 'Proclaim!' And he saith: 'What shall I proclaim?' 'All flesh is grass, And all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; (7) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; Because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it— Surely the people is grass. (8) The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; But the word of our God shall stand for ever.'</p>	<p>(ו) קוֹל אֹמֵר קוֹרָא וְאֹמֵר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל הַבָּשָׂר חֲצִיר וְכָל חֲסֵדוֹ כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה. (ז) וַיֵּשׁ חֲצִיר נִבֵּל צִיץ כִּי רוּחַ יְיָ נִשְׁבָּה בּוֹ אֲכֹן חֲצִיר הָעָם. (ח) וַיֵּשׁ חֲצִיר נִבֵּל צִיץ וַדַּבֵּר אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְקוּם לְעוֹלָם.</p>
--	---

Consolation redux

<p>(9) O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, Get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, Lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid; Say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your God!' (10) Behold, the Lord God will come as a Mighty One, And His arm will rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His recompense before Him. (11) Even as a shepherd that feedeth his flock, That gathereth the lambs in his arm, And carrieth them in his bosom, And gently leadeth those that give suck.</p>	<p>(ט) על הר גבה עלי לך מבשרת ציון הרימי בכח קולה מבשרת ירושלים הרימי אל תיראי אמרי לערי יהודה הנה אלהיכם. (י) הנה אדני יהוה בחזק יבוא וזרעו משלה לו הנה שכרו אתו ופעלתו לפניו. (יא) כרעה עדרו ירעה בזרעו יקבץ טלאים ובחיקו ישא עלות ינהל. מלשון "עוללים ויונקים"</p>
---	---

God's Strength and Wisdom

<p>(12) Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, And meted out heaven with the span, And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, And weighed the mountains in scales, And the hills in a balance? (13) Who hath meted out the spirit of the Lord? Or who was His counsellor that he might instruct Him? (14) With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of right, And taught Him knowledge, And made Him to know the way of discernment?</p>	<p>(יב) מי מִדד בשעלו מים ושמים בזרת תכן וכל בשלש עפר הארץ ושקל בפלס הרים וגבעות במאזנים. (יג) מי תכן את רוח י"י ואיש עצתו יודיענו. (יד) את מי נועץ ויבינהו וילמדו בארץ משפט וילמדו דעת ודרך תבונות יודיענו.</p>
---	--

במדבר כז (טו) וידבר משה אל יקוק לאמר: (טז) יפקד יקוק אלהי הרוחת לכל בשר איש על העדה: (יח) ויאמר יקוק אל משה קח לך את יהושע בן נון איש אשר רוח בו וסמכת את ידך עליו:

The Nations are Insignificant in His Sight

<p>(15) Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; Behold the isles are as a mote in weight. (16) And Lebanon is not sufficient fuel, Nor the beasts thereof sufficient for burnt-offerings. (17) All the nations are as nothing before Him; They are accounted by Him as things of naught, and vanity.</p>	<p>(טו) הן גוים כמר מדלי וכשחק מאזנים נחשבו הן איים כדק יטול. (טז) ולבנון אין די בער וחיתו אין די עולה. (יז) כל הגוים כאין נגדו מאפס ותהו נחשבו לו.</p>
---	---

No Comparison with Idolatry

<p>(18) To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? (19) The image perchance, which the craftsman hath melted, And the goldsmith spread over with gold, The silversmith casting silver chains? (20) A holm-oak is set apart, He chooseth a tree that will not rot; He seeketh unto him a cunning craftsman to set up an image, that shall not be moved.</p>	<p>(יח) ואל מי תדמיון אל וימה דמות תערכו לו. (יט) הפסל נסך חרש וצרף בזהב ירקענו ורתקות נספ צורף. (כ) המסכן תרומה עץ לא ירקב יבחר חרש חכם יבקש לו להכין פסל לא ימוט.</p>
--	---

Creation vs. Incapacity

<p>(21) Know ye not? hear ye not? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood the foundations of the earth? (22) It is He that sitteth above the circle of the earth, And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; (23) That bringeth princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as a thing of nought. (24) Scarce are they planted, Scarce are they sown, Scarce hath their stock taken root in the earth; When He bloweth upon them, they wither, And the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble. (25) To whom then will ye liken Me, that I should be equal? Saith the Holy One. (26) Lift up your eyes on high, And see: who hath created these? He that bringeth out their host by number, He calleth them all by name; By the greatness of His might, and for that He is strong in power, Not one faileth.</p>	<p>(כא) הָלוֹא תִדְעוּ הָלוֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ הָלוֹא הִגַּד מֵרֵאשִׁית לָכֶם הָלוֹא הַבְּיֻנוֹתֵם מוֹסְדוֹת הָאָרֶץ. (כב) הַיֵּשֶׁב עַל חוּג הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁבֶּיהָ כַּחֲגָבִים הַנוֹטָה כְּדִקְ שָׁמַיִם וַיִּמְתַּחֵם כְּאֹהֶל לְשֶׁבֶת. (כג) הַנוֹתֵן רוֹזְנִים לְאֵין שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ כְּתָהוּ עֵשָׂה. (כד) אִף בֵּל נִטְעוּ אִף בֵּל זָרְעוּ אִף בֵּל שָׂרֵשׁ בְּאֶרֶץ גְּזָעִם וְגַם נִשֵּׁף בָּהֶם וַיִּבְשׂוּ וּסְעָרָה כָּקֶשׁ תִּשְׁאֵם. (כה) וְאֵל מִי תִדְמִיּוּנִי וְאִשׁוּהָ יֹאמֶר קְדוֹשׁ. (כו) שָׂאוּ מַרְוֶם עֵינֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ מִי בָרָא אֵלֶּה הַמוֹצִיא בְּמִסְפָּר צְבָאִם לְכֹלֵם בְּשֵׁם יְקָרָא מְרַב אוֹנִים וְאִמְיץ כַּח אִישׁ לֹא נֶעְדָר.</p>
---	--

במדבר יג (לג) וְשָׂם רְאִינוּ אֶת הַנְּפִלִים בְּנֵי עֲנָק מִן הַנְּפִלִים וְנָהִי בְעֵינֵינוּ כַּחֲגָבִים וְכֵן הֵיינוּ בְעֵינֵיהֶם:

Ibn Ezra (40:1)

<p>This chapter has been placed here for the following reason: in the preceding chapter it is predicted that all the treasures of the King, and even his sons, will be carried away to Babylon; this sad prediction is properly followed by the words of comfort.</p> <p>These first comforting promises, with which the second part of the book of Isaiah begins, refer, as R. Moses Hakkohen believes, to the restoration of the temple by Zerubbabel; according to my opinion to the coming redemption from our present exile; prophecies concerning the Babylonian exile are introduced only as an illustration, showing how Cyrus, who allowed the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem, About the last section of the book there is no doubt, that it refers to a period yet to come, as I shall explain.—It must be borne in mind, that the opinion of the orthodox, that the book of Samuel was written by Samuel, is correct as regards the first part, till the words And Samuel died (1 Sam. 25:1); this remark is confirmed by the fact that the book of Chronicles contains the names (of the descendants of David) in genealogical order down to Zerubbabel.—The words Kings shall see and arise, princes and shall worship (49:7) support this view, though they might also be explained as follows: Kings and princes will arise, etc., when they hear the name of the prophet, even</p>	<p>נחמו נחמו עמי – נדבקה זאת הפרשה בעבור שהזכיר למעלה כי כל אוצרות המלך גם בניו יגלו לבבל, על כן אחרי זאת הנחמות.</p> <p>ואלה הנחמות הראשונות מחצי הספר על דעת רבי משה הכהן על בית שני, ולפי דעתי הכל על גלותינו, רק יש בתוך הספר דברי גלות בבל לזכר, כי כורש ששלח הגולה, ואולם באחרית הספר דברים הם לעתיד כאשר אפרש, ודע כי מעתיקי המצות ז"ל אמרו כי ספר שמואל כתבו שמואל והוא אמת עד וימת שמואל (שמואל א כ"ה:א'), והנה דברי הימים יוכיח ששם דור אחר דור לבני זרובבל, והעד "מלכים יראו וקמו שרים וישתחוו" (ישעיהו מ"ט:ז'), ויש להשיב כאשר ישמעו שם הנביא, ואם איננו.</p>
--	---

after his death. The reader will adopt the opinion which recommends itself most to his judgment.

והמשכיל יבין.

ישעיהו מ"ד:כח

הָאֵמַר לְכוֹרֶשׁ רַעִי וְכָל-חֲפָצַי יִשְׁלַם וְיֵאמַר לִירוּשָׁלַם תִּבְנֶה וְהִקְלַ תְּנוֹסֵד:

Am the same who says of Cyrus, "He is My shepherd; He shall fulfill all My purposes! He shall say of Jerusalem, 'She shall be rebuilt,' And to the Temple: 'You shall be founded again.'"

ישעיהו פרק מה

(א) כֹּה אָמַר יְקֹזֵק לְמִשְׁיחוֹ לְכוֹרֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הִחְזַקְתִּי בְיָמֵינוּ לָרֶד לְפָנָיו גּוֹיִם וּמִתְנֵי מַלְכִים אֶפְתַּח לְפִתְחֵהּ לְפָנָיו דְּלֵתִים וּשְׁעָרִים לֹא יִסְגְּרוּ: (ב) אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֵלֶּךָ וְהִדּוּרִים אוֹשֵׁר אֵיִשָׁר דְּלֵתוֹת נְחוּשָׁה אֲשַׁבֵּר וּבְרִיחֵי בְרֹזֶל אֲגַדֵּעַ:

Thus said the LORD to Cyrus, His anointed one— Whose right hand He has grasped, Treading down nations before him, Ungirding the loins of kings, Opening doors before him And letting no gate stay shut: I will march before you And level the hills that loom up; I will shatter doors of bronze And cut down iron bars.

Antiquities of the Jews — Book XI

*Containing the Interval of 253 Years 5 Months.
[From the first of CYRUS to the death of ALEXANDER the Great.]*

CHAPTER 1.

How Cyrus, King of the Persians, (1) delivered the Jews out of Babylon, and suffered them to return to their own country, and to build their temple: for which work he gave them money.

1. [An. 536.] IN THE FIRST YEAR of the reign of Cyrus; which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon; (2) God commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people: according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the Prophet, before the destruction of the city; that after they had served Nebuchadnezzar, and his posterity; and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers; and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity. And these things God did afford them. For he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write thus throughout all Asia: "Thus saith Cyrus the King: since God Almighty hath appointed me to be King of the habitable earth, I believe that He is that God, which the nation of

the Israelites worship. For indeed he foretold my name by the Prophets, and that I should build him an house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea.”

2. This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which **Isaiah** left behind him of his Prophecies. For this Prophet said, that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: “My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be King over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple.” This was foretold by Isaiah **one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished.** Accordingly when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and an ambition seized upon him, to fulfil what was so written. So he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that “He gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, (3) and the temple of God; for that he would be their assistant; and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver, for the building of the temple; and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices.”

Ben Sira 48:22-25

Hezekiah and Isaiah^[d]

- ¹⁷ HEZEKIAH fortified his city
and had water brought into it;
With bronze tools he cut through the rocks
and dammed up a mountain site for water.^[d]
- ¹⁸ During his reign Sennacherib led an invasion
and sent his adjutant;
He shook his fist at Zion
and blasphemed God in his pride.
- ²¹ God struck the camp of the Assyrians
and routed them with a plague.
- ²² For Hezekiah did what was right
and held fast to the paths of David,
**As ordered by the illustrious prophet
Isaiah, who saw truth in visions.**
- ²³ In his lifetime he turned back the sun
and prolonged the life of the king.
- ²⁴ By his powerful spirit he looked into the future
and consoled the mourners of Zion;
- ²⁵ **He foretold what would happen till the end of time,
hidden things yet to be fulfilled.**

ישעיהו ח'

וְכִי־יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֵיכֶם דְּרֹשׁוּ אֶל־הָאֲבוֹת וְאֶל־הַיְדְעָנִים הַמְצַפְצָפִים וְהַמְהַגְּגִים הַלֹּא־עִם
אֶל־אֱלֹהֵיו יִדְרֹשׁ בְּעַד הַחַיִּים אֶל־הַמֵּתִים:

And when they shall say unto you: 'Seek unto the ghosts and the familiar spirits, that chirp and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living unto the dead.

רש"י ישעיהו פרק ח

(יט) וכי יאמרו אליכם - אמר רבי סימון בארה אביו של הושע בן בארי נבא שני מקראות הללו ולא היה בהם כדי ספר **ונטפלו בישעיה**. וניבא אותם לגלות עשרת השבטים, כשהגלה סנחרב לראובני ולגדי (והגלוהו עמהם) כמה שנאמר (ד"ה א ה) "בארה בנו נשיא לראובני, ההוא אשר הגלה תגלת פלאסר":

Said Rabbi Simon: Beeri, the father of Hosea son of Beeri, prophesied these two verses, but, since they were not enough for a Book, **they were attached to "Isaiah."** And he prophesied them concerning the exile of the ten tribes, when Sennacherib exiled the Reubenites and the Gadites, and he exiled him with them, as it is said (I Chron. 5:6): "Beerah his son, whom Tilgathpileser exiled; he was the prince of the Reubenites."

שד"ל ישעיהו מ':א'

פרקים מ' - נ"ב:י"ב - נבואות ונחמות על גאולת בבל על ידי כורש.

(א) נחמו נחמו עמי - מכאן עד סוף הספר נבואות אשר נבא ישעיהו לעתים רחוקות, ולא אמר הנבואות האלה בקהל עם, אלא כתבם בספר לדור אחרון.

וראב"ע ורבים מהאחרונים חשבו כי אין הנבואות האלה לישעיה, ושלא נכתבו עד ימי כורש, וכבר סתרת בנינים בכרם חמד ז' מן עמוד 225 עד 242.

“On his first Saturday in the country H.E. again disregarded any possible danger, and walked from Government House [on the Mount of Olives], to the large synagogue in the Old City, accompanied by Norman and other senior Jewish officers in the government. I went with them, and it was most moving to see the great crowds of Jews lining the narrow alleyways inside the walls, overwhelmed with joy at greeting this fellow-Jew who represented the King of England and held the highest position in the land. They were silent, as it is not the custom in Jerusalem to cheer, but they clapped their hands, and many of the older men, looking like the patriarchs with their long beards and the sidecurls hanging each side of their foreheads, were openly weeping.
 “H.E. held his first official ceremony at the synagogue on the 14th of the month.”

