

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Va'etchanan, 5784
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** ה"י
Shgalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
 ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shgalov

DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיי
Shgalov

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 e-mail: yys@torah4blind.org

Rabbi Yosef Y. Shgalov,
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by
Rabbi Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann, Ph.D

Va'eschanan

COMFORT FOR THE FIRST, COMFORT FOR THE SECOND

The Haftorah after Tisha B'Av is always Nachamu, Nachamu – Comfort, Comfort. The doubled expression refers to the first Two Temples. As each possessed an advantage over the other, the Jewish people needed to be comforted for the destruction of each. These represent two forms of Divine service: actions inspired from Above, and actions inspired from within. In the times of the First Temple, the Jewish people were like tzaddikim; in the times of the Second Temple, they were like baalei teshuvah. This parallels the two times the Ten Commandments were given. The times of the Third Temple will have the advantages of both.

A section from the Prophets – the Haftorah – is read each week following the Torah reading. The prophetic selection is based on the content of the weekly Torah reading. For example, the first Torah reading is *Bereishis* – the first section of Genesis which describes creation. The Haftorah for that week is from Isaiah, chapter 42, which begins, “Thus says G-d, the L-rd who created the heavens . . . who spread forth the earth.”

This general rule holds true until the 17th of Tammuz. From that date, which falls sometime in mid-summer, until Rosh Hashanah, the Haftorah is based on historical events. From the 17th of Tammuz until Tisha B'Av – the ninth of Av – the Haftorahs concern punishment and the impending destruction of the Temple. After Tisha B'av until Rosh Hashanah – a period of seven weeks – the Haftorahs offer comfort and consolation to the Jewish people, predicting the future rebuilding of the Temple, the coming of Moshiach.

Nevertheless, each of these special Haftorahs, connected as they are to the historical theme of consolation and Redemption, occurs on a specific Shabbos. The Torah reading for the Shabbos after Tisha B'av is always Va'eschanan – the second portion of the book of Deuteronomy. The Haftorah for the first Shabbos after Tisha B'av is always *Nachamu* – the prophecy of consolation from Isaiah, chapter 40. Therefore, it seems obvious that there must also be a connection between the weekly Torah reading – Va'eschanan – and the Haftorah – *Nachamu*.

The Haftorah begins with the words, "*Nachamu, Nachamu Ami*" – "Comfort, Comfort, My people, says your G-d." In this moving prophecy, G-d offers consolation to the Jewish people for the destruction of the Temple.

Why is the word "*nachamu*" – "comfort" – doubled? The Midrash offers the following explanation: the verse begins "*Nachamu, nachamu*" – comfort, comfort – because of the two Temples. The first "*nachamu*" is for the first Temple, and the word is repeated to provide comfort for the destruction of the second Temple.

However, this doesn't seem to quite fit with the idea of providing comfort. If an individual suffers two losses, one greater than the other, the comfort for the greater loss naturally includes and provides comfort for the lesser. For example, if someone loses a car, replaces it, and then loses the second car, to comfort that person, you only have to restore one car, the nicer and more expensive of the two.

In our situation, the comfort is an assurance that there will be a Third Temple, that of Moshiach, which will never be destroyed. This is the comfort for the destruction of the first Temple. Since the second Temple was inferior to the first, any comfort offered for the destruction of the first Temple will automatically include comfort for the destruction of the second. That is, once the prophet says,

Nachamu – be comforted, for there will be consolation for the great loss of the first Temple, in the times of Moshiach when the third, permanent Temple will be built – there is no need for a second *Nachamu* – be comforted for the smaller loss of the second Temple. The comfort offered for the first Temple includes consolation for the second.

The second Temple lacked five things found in the first: the ark of the covenant, the heavenly fire on the altar, the Divine Presence, Divine Inspiration, and the Urim and Tumim – the prophetic part of the high priest’s garments. These, of course, are largely spiritual in nature.

Nevertheless, the second Temple had two advantages over the first: it was greater in size and in years. The second Temple was bigger and lasted longer than the first. It had a physical superiority. There is thus a need to offer comfort for that which existed in the second Temple, but not the first.

Therefore, the prophet said, “*Nachamu, Nachamu,*” – “Comfort, Comfort.” In the Third Temple, both the spiritual advantages of the first Temple and the physical superiority of the second will be restored.

Each of the Temples represent a different approach in the way human activity – a Jew’s performance of mitzvos – refines and purifies creation. In the first approach, an individual possesses the ability to elevate himself and his environment because there has been an illumination from above. For example, a teacher can instruct a student in such a way that he will be able to learn on his own afterwards. Still, he possesses that ability to learn because of the way he was taught; his future learning depends on his inspiration from the teacher.

The second approach comes from an inner illumination, so to speak. The individual is motivated not from above, but from within.

For example, *teshuvah* – repentance – results from the innate nature of a Jew. An individual who has sinned has distanced himself from G-d and cannot receive a revelation of Divine Light. But, because the essence of a Jew is part of the essence of G-d, he inherently wants to fulfill G-d's will, and so is instinctively compelled to do *teshuvah* – to return to G-d, perform the mitzvot, transform his sins into merits, and so elevate the world.

During the time of the first Temple, the Jewish people were in the category of *tzaddikim* – righteous individuals – and so followed the first approach. The Divine Presence dwelled in the Temple and Divine inspiration was clearly manifest and readily acknowledged. The Light of G-dliness filled the land, preparing the people to observe the commandments through *kabbolos ol malchus shamayim* – acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. The people – more directly connected to the Divine Light – were vessels for G-dliness. The first Temple's higher level of holiness reflected this.

During the time of the second Temple, the Jewish people were in the category of *baalei teshuvah* – individuals who had sinned and returned. The transgressions of the people caused the destruction of the first Temple. These same transgressions broke their connection with the Light of G-dliness. Indeed, a transgression, a violation of a commandment, is the total opposite of *kabbolos ol* – the contrary to a complete submission to the Will of G-d.

In order to re-establish their connection with the Divine Light, the Jewish people had to act on their own, so to speak. They could not rely on Divine inspiration, for they had broken that channel. They had to do *teshuvah*. And when the Jewish people did do *teshuvah*, they were able to elevate not just themselves, but also their environment. This elevation included their transgressions. Through the *teshuvah* of the Jewish people, even deliberate sins were transformed into merits. Through *teshuvah*, the physical, with all its

imperfections, became permanently imbued with the spiritual. The second Temple's greater size and duration reflected this.

The Third Temple will contain both advantages: the Jewish people will be vessels for and directly receive the Light of G-dliness and the world will be elevated, permanently infused with holiness. Both aspects of the Jewish people, that of the *tzaddik* – the righteous individual – and the baal *teshuvah* – the one who has sinned and returned – will be openly revealed.

This difference is reflected in the Torah itself. The first time the Ten Commandments were given, the Jewish people were like *tzaddikim*. Indeed, the Tablets were made by G-d Himself. The second time the Ten Commandments were given – after the sin of the Golden Calf, when the first tablets were broken – as the first Temple was broken – the people were like baalei *teshuvah*. Then Moses made the tablets. But with the second Tablets came also the traditions, explanations and laws that have defined Judaism for the past three thousand plus years.

The first time the Ten Commandments were given parallels the period of the first Temple, and the second time the second Temple.

And now we can understand as well the connection between the Haftorah – *Nachamu, Nachamu* – Comfort, Comfort – and the Torah reading of Va'eschanan. For the Ten Commandments are recorded for the second time in the portion of Va'eschanan.

The Ten Commandments recorded in the book of Exodus were said before the sin of the calf, when the Jews were in the category of *tzaddikim*. In the portion of Va'eschanan, the Ten Commandments are said not only after the sin of the calf, but also after all the other sins and transgressions that occurred during the forty years in the wilderness.

In fact, this Torah reading begins as a continuation of the rebuke of the previous one.

Nevertheless, the entire story of the giving of the Torah, just as it was before the sin, is retold in the portion of Va'eschanan. Precisely in Va'eschanan is the unity of both aspects of the Jewish people revealed. In this Torah reading, the people are both *tzaddikim* – the Ten Commandments are given again as they had been before any transgression – and *baalei teshuvah* – the Ten Commandments are given after the *teshuvah* for all the transgressions.

Similarly, the opening words of the Haftorah indicates the unity of the first Temple and the second Temple. *Nachamu* – Comfort – for the first Temple; *Bachamu* – Comfort – for the second Temple.

When will the inner unity of the Jewish people be revealed? When will the advantages of both Temples be combined? When the Third Temple is built, with the coming of Moshiach, imminently and immediately.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 9, pp. 61-70)

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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It has been said often of late that according to all the signs we are situated in the "year that the King Moshiach will be revealed."¹ (This is in addition to the calculation that we are in the afternoon of the eve of the Sabbath, which began in the year 5751.²) These signs are represented by the widely known initials of this year, "It will be a year when I will show him wonders," particularly since throughout this year we have seen (and we will continue to see) many incidents that can be characterized as "wonders." Moreover, each one of these wonders could be described as a "wonder" even in relation to the preceding "wonder," that is, a wonder which continues to evoke a new sense of amazement as compared to the previous wonder.

Among the wonders there is also a "wonder" that has occurred in these last few days: A gathering of Chassidim and emissaries in Russia! People gathered from various places and countries in the city of Lubavitch, with the intention, among other things, to make a pilgrimage to the holy resting places of our Rebbes and leaders there, including the holy graveside of my father, master and teacher, of blessed memory (whose yahrtzeit is the 20th of Av, a day blessed from this Sabbath). Additionally, they will be convening in Moscow, the capital of Russia, to discuss and consult with one another ("Each man will assist his fellow,"³ imbued with the spirit of love and unity, "as one person with one heart"⁴), and to pass resolutions to increase with greater intensity and vigor in the dissemination of Torah and Judaism and the wellsprings of Torah to

1. *Yalkut Shimoni* 499.

2. See *Sefer HaSichos*, 5750, vol. 1, p. 254. See there for cross references.

3. *Yeshayahu* 41:6.

4. *Rashi*, *Yisro* 19:2.

the farthest reaches of that country and the entire world. May it be G-d's will that the convention should be blessed with outstanding success, endowed with an exponential increase⁵ of infinite proportions. That this country that waged an incessant struggle against the activities of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of this generation (as well as the activities of my father, whose yahrtzeit is the 20th of Av) to disseminate Torah and the wellsprings of Torah, should now host and honor his disciples and emissaries and those who follow in his path in the dissemination of Torah and the wellsprings of Torah to the remotest reaches, must be classified as a "wonder."

These "wonders" awaken us and underscore that imminently we will see the greatest wonder, the true and complete Redemption, "As in the days of your departure from Egypt I will show him wonders."⁶ This will be a "wonder" even in comparison with the events of the Exodus from Egypt.⁷

In practical terms:

Since we are standing on the threshold of the true and complete Redemption where everything will manifest itself in an unbounded manner, one must have a "foretaste" (as is the custom to "taste a little of every dish"⁸ on the eve of Sabbath) of the infinite nature of the revelations of Redemption, by a commensurate unrestrained increase in matters of Torah and Mitzvos.

More specifically, there should be an increase in the study of Torah (to "augment the nights to the days in the preoccupation with

5. "One who increases, shall be increased" - *Ta'anis*, at the end.

6. Michah 7:15.

7. See *Or HaTorah*, Nach on this verse (p. 487). See there for cross references.

8. *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe, Orach Chaim*, end of sec. 250

Torah⁹). This includes both the revealed as well as the inner dimensions of Torah, including the study of Ein Ya'akov, an anthology of the Aggadic¹⁰ parts of Torah, in which "the majority of the Torah's secrets are hidden."¹¹ The greatest emphasis should be placed on the study of the inner dimension of Torah, in accordance with the teaching of the Arizal (whose yahrtzeit is on the fifth of Menachem-Av) that "in these later generations, it is permissible and even mandatory that we reveal this [esoteric] wisdom."¹² This is particularly true now that once these heretofore-secret teachings were elucidated and made accessible to each and every Jew in the teachings of Chassidus.

There should be an even greater emphasis on an increase in the study of matters concerning **the Redemption**, in both the revealed parts of the Torah, especially Rambam's work which comprises all the laws relating to Redemption, e.g., the laws of the Temple (which is studied currently in the period of the Three Weeks) as well as the laws of The Kings and their Wars and the King Moshiach - and the inner dimension of Torah. Study of the inner dimension of Torah in general hastens the Redemption: "With this work of yours (the teachings of R. Shimon Bar Yochai - the author of the *Zohar*)... they will emerge from exile with mercy."¹³ However, study of the inner dimension of Torah's treatment of Redemption has an added advantage.

Ideally, these learning sessions should be conducted in a manner of "Ten people (a quorum) sitting (i.e., they are established)

9. *Rashi*, end of *Ta'anis*.

10. [*Aggadah is the non-legal, inspirational portions of the Talmud. Translator's note.*]

11. *Tanya*, *Igeres HaKodesh*, sec. 23.

12. *Op cit.*, sec. 26 (142).

13. *Zohar III*, 124b, in *Raya Mehemna*, cited and elucidated in *Igeres Hakodesh*, *ibid*.

preoccupied (in a manner of one conducting "business") in the study of Torah."¹⁴

...An additional lesson and directive concerning Redemption can be derived also from the beginning of the **third** chapter of Pirkei Avos: "Look at **three** things:"

The term "three things" standing by itself can be a suggestion of the third Redemption and the third Holy Temple, a threefold Redemption and a threefold Holy Temple, because they comprise the virtues of both the first Redemption and the second, the first Temple and the second. Furthermore, the twosome features will be combined as one.

The imperative, "look," implies gazing intently, by deeply reflecting and contemplating¹⁵ matters concerning the third Redemption and the third Beis Hamikdash ("three things"), imbued with feelings of anticipation and exceptional yearning, "I anticipate his coming every day,"¹⁶ implying that he will come every day, this day, literally. How much more so, now that we stand on the threshold of Redemption, that the gazing at these three matters is increased and done with more vigor.

The suggestion can be made that the one's reflection on matters of the third Redemption and third Holy Temple ("three matters") has the capacity to effect completeness to all of our efforts within the "three pillars" - the three modes of expression, Torah, service (prayer) and loving-kindness¹⁷ whose fulfillment is through the

14. *Avos* 3:6.

15 See *Shulcahn Aruch, Admor Hazaken, Orach Chaim*, sec. 128:36, and in other places.

16. The text of "Ani Ma'amin" published in prayer books etc. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 23, p. 394.

17. *Avos* 1:2.

three "garments" of the soul, thought, speech and action. When one's thoughts are directed towards the three redemptions one's Divine service is unbounded and therefore beyond division. Without the limits and boundaries which delineate and divide, one attains perfection in all of the three modes.¹⁸

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vo'eschanan,
Shabbos Nachamu, 16 Menachem Av, 5751)*

18. In a similar vein, with regard to "keeping from evil" one is precluded from evil, as a matter of course, without a need to actively engage in negating evil, as the Mishneh continues: "And you will not come to the hands of sin." The expression "**and you will not come**" implies that it will not take effort. The usage of the term "**hands of sin**," implies further, that even matters that are not inherently sinful, but could lead to sin (such as satisfying permissible desires), are automatically dismissed because of one's reflection on matters of Redemption. This is analogous to the way things will be in the Messianic Era. As the Rambam rules (in the end and seal of his work "Mishneh Torah") that "in that time ... all delights will be as abundant as the dust of the earth." His choice of the word "dust" implies that it will have no significance to us, inasmuch as "all of the preoccupation of the world will be exclusively to know G-d."

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FREIND
Reb Yosef Yisroel ben Reb Sholom ע"ה Rosner
Passed away on 7 Menachem-Av, 5777

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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Passed away on 14 Menachem-Av, 5742

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