



The Fascinating Connection between Parshas Vaeschanan and the Haftarah of “Nachamu”

The Burning Desire of Moshe Rabeinu to Build the Beis HaMikdash and the Double Consolation Related to the Churban of the Two Batei Mikdash

Next Shabbas Kodesh, which approaches auspiciously, we read parshas Vaeschanan. Without exception, this parsha always falls on the first Shabbas after Tishah B’Av. It is referred to universally and affectionately as “**Shabbas Nachamu**,” because we read for the Haftarah the words of consolation of Yeshayahu HaNavi (Yeshayah 40, 1): **נַחֲמוּ** “**נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֵאמֶר אֱלֹקֵיכֶם**” —“**comfort, comfort My people,**” says your G-d. It is the first of the seven **Haftarot of Consolation**—“**Sheva D’Nechemta**”— read between Tishah B’Av and Rosh HaShanah, aimed at consoling Yisrael in the aftermath of the churban. Hence, it is fitting that we establish a connection between the Haftarah and the parsha, which opens with Moshe Rabeinu’s plea to enter Eretz Yisrael (Devarim 3, 23):

“וַתַּחֲנֹן אֱלֹהֵי הַיָּם בַּעַת הַהִיא לֵאמֹר. ה’ אֱלֹקִים אַתָּה הַחֲלוֹת לְהַרְאוֹת אֶת עַבְדְּךָ אֶת גְּדֻלָּךְ וְאֶת יַדְךָ הַחֲזָקָה, אֲשֶׁר מִי אֵל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה כַּמַּעֲשִׂיךָ וְכַגְּבוּרוֹתֶיךָ. אֶעֱבְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הַהַר הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהַלְבַּנוּן. וַיִּתְעַבֵּר ה’ בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי, וַיֹּאמֶר ה’ אֵלַי רַב לָךְ אֵל תּוֹסֵף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדְּבַר הַזֶּה.”

I implored Hashem at that time, saying, “Hashem-Elokim, you have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand, for what power is there in the heaven or on the earth that can perform according to Your deeds and Your mighty acts?! Let me now cross and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan—this good mountain and the Lebanon.” Hashem became angry with me because of you, and He did not listen to me; Hashem said to me, “It is too

much for you! Do not continue to speak to Me further concerning this matter.”

Rashi clarifies: “**This good mountain**” refers to **Yerushalayim**; “**the Lebanon**” refers to the **Beis HaMikdash**. Thus, it is apparent that Moshe’s appeal had a threefold purpose—to see Eretz Yisrael, the holy city of Yerushalayim, and the Beis HaMikdash.

Moshe Yearned to Build the Beis HaMikdash

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing the sacred words of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Nasan Nata Shapira, zy”a, whose yahrzeit is this Wednesday, the thirteenth of Menachem Av. In his sefer, the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan, he elucidates the opening verse of parshas Vaeschanan in **252** different ways—equivalent to the numerical value of the words **ר”ב ל”ך**, which are part of Hashem’s response to Moshe’s heartfelt pleas. As the name of the sefer implies, Megaleh Amukos, he reveals profound, heavenly insights contained (a) within the **515** supplications formulated by Moshe Rabeinu—the gematria of **וַתַּחֲנֹן**—imploping Hashem to permit him to enter the promised land, and (b) within **HKB”H**’s response: **רַב לָךְ** “**רַב לָךְ**—אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה” **It is much for you! Do not continue to speak to me further about this matter.**

In the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (#20), he teaches us that Moshe Rabeinu longed to enter the land so that he, himself, would build the Beis HaMikdash in a glorious and exalted manner. This is implicit in his plea: **ה’ אֱלֹקִים**

comfort My people,” says your G-d. “Speak consolingly of Yerushalayim and proclaim to her that her period (of galus) has been completed, that her iniquity has been forgiven; for she has received double for all her sins from the hand of Hashem.

Chazal expound in the Midrash (ibid. 1, 57): **”חטאו בכפליים, דכתיב (איכה א-ח) חטא חטאה ירושלם, ולקו בכפליים, דכתיב כי לקחה מיד ה' כפליים בכל חטאותיה, ומתנחמים בכפליים, דכתיב נחמו.”** **They sinned doubly, as it is written (Eichah 1, 8): “Yerushalayim has sinned a sin.”** (This elucidation is based on the fact that the passuk uses the word for “sin” twice.) **They were punished doubly, as it is written (Yeshayah 40, 2): “For she has received from the hand of Hashem double for all her sins.” They are comforted doubly, as it is written (ibid. 1): “Comfort, comfort My people,” says your G-d.”** The commentaries discuss at length the meaning of the statement that they sinned doubly, they were punished doubly, and they are comforted doubly.

Perhaps we can better comprehend this statement by referring to another Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayah 40, 445): **”נחמו נחמו עמי... לפי שכתוב שתי בכיות בכו תבכה, על בית נחמו נחמו עמי.”** **“Comfort, comfort My people” . . . because the passuk mentions two bouts of weeping (Eichah 1, 2): “She weeps repeatedly”—for the first “bayis” and for the second “bayis.” Therefore, the passuk says: “Comfort, comfort (twice) My people.”** In other words, the people wept twice, over two churbans—the churban of the first Beis HaMikdash and the churban of the second Beis HaMikdash. They will be consoled and comforted for those two churbans at the time of the geulah when the third Beis HaMikdash will be built.

Along these lines, we can explain what is meant by the statement that they sinned doubly. For, we have learned in the Gemara (Yoma 9b): **”מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב, מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו, עבודה זרה וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים... אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב, מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חינום, ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חינום כנגד שלש עבירות, עבודה זרה גילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים.”** The first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because the people were guilty of the three cardinal sins—avodah zarah, immorality and murder. These sins were not prevalent during the times

of the second Beis HaMikdash; the people of that period engaged in Torah-study and performed mitzvos and acts of kindness. It was destroyed because of “sin’as chinam”—baseless hatred. This teaches us that “sin’as chinam” is equivalent to the three cardinal sins.

Let us apply this fact to interpret the Midrash. They sinned doubly: (1) They were guilty of transgressing the three cardinal sins in the period of the first Beis HaMikdash and (2) they were guilty of “sin’as chinam” in the period of the second Beis HaMikdash. Although Yirmiyahu was prophesying about the churban of the first Beis HaMikdash in Megilat Eichah, it is clear from the Midrash cited above that the two episodes of weeping he mentions--**”בכו תבכה”**—relate to both churbans.

Hence, the Midrash goes on to say that they **“were punished doubly,”** because they were held accountable for the sins committed during the periods of both Batei Mikdash. Then, the Midrash concludes by saying that **“they will be comforted doubly”** for the destructions of both Batei Mikdash with the building of the third Beis HaMikdash at the time of the future geulah. Hence, it says: **“Nachamu, nachamu.”**

The Third Beis HaMikdash Will Incorporate Both of the Previous Batei Mikdash

It is with great pleasure that we will now join together to address the conclusion of the Midrash: **They are comforted doubly, as it is written (ibid. 1): “Comfort, comfort My people,” says your G-d.** At first glance, we have a difficulty here. Clearly, they were punished twice; after all, there were two churbans. But how does the third Beis HaMikdash constitute a double consolation? Seemingly, it is a single, huge consolation for the two previous churbans combined.

To decipher our sages puzzling words, we will refer to the Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 221a). Concerning the third Beis HaMikdash, the passuk says (Tehillim 147, 2): **”בונה—ירושלים ה'—the Builder of Yerushalayim is Hashem.** This indicates that it will not be built by man but by HKB”H. Furthermore, the third Beis HaMikdash will incorporate both of the previous Batei Mikdash. The second Beis

HaMikdash will stand upon the ground in its full glory and splendor in full view, while the first Beis HaMikdash will stand on top of it concealed—like clouds of glory surrounding and illuminating it.

Let us now address the continuation of the passuk cited by the Zohar hakadosh: **“בונה ירושלים ה' נדחי ישראל—יכנס—the Builder of Yerushalayim is Hashem; the outcasts of Yisrael, He will gather in.** In keeping with the interpretation just presented, this implies that the third Beis HaMikdash will **“gather in”**—i.e., incorporate—the two Batei Mikdash, the “outcasts,” that preceded it and were destroyed. In other words, the third Beis HaMikdash will be all-inclusive.

At this point, it behooves us to introduce a wonderful insight from the Kedushas Levi: **“מקדש ראשון היה נגד תורה ומקדש שני נגד תורה שבעל פה, ומקדש שיבנה במהרה בימינו יהיה—כלול משניהם—the first Mikdash corresponded to Torah she'b'chsav; the second Mikdash corresponded to Torah she'b'al peh; the Mikdash that will be built soon, in our times, will be comprised of both of them.** Undoubtedly, this notion is supported explicitly by the passage from the Zohar hakadosh cited above stating that HKB”H is destined to incorporate the first two Batei Mikdash in the third Beis HaMikdash.

It appears that we can explain the teaching of the Kedushas Levi based on an elucidation in the Midrash (V.R. 13, 3) related to the statement of HKB”H in the Navi (Yeshayah 51, 4): **“כי תורה מאתי תצא, אמר הקב”ה תורה חדשה מאתי: תצא—“For Torah will come forth from Me.” HKB”H said: “A new Torah will come forth from Me.”** According to the sefer Ba'al Shem Tov (Bereishis 35), this means that in the future, HKB”H will reveal secrets of the Torah that the world was not yet worthy to receive; hence, He stored them for tzaddikim le'asid la'vo.

Now, we are familiar with the truism (Ta'anis 9a) that there is nothing that is not alluded to in the Torah. For, all the interpretations, all the Derashos, all the allusions, all the esoterica of Torah she'b'al peh, they are all concealed and stored in the letters, words, crowns, and adornments of Torah she'b'chsav, which were given from Heaven. They cannot be added to or detracted from; they can only be expounded with the thirteen hermeneutic principles.

This explains very nicely the structure of the future, third Beis HaMikdash, in which HKB”H will incorporate the first two Batei Mikdash. The second Beis HaMikdash corresponding to Torah she'b'al peh will be down below on earth. The first Beis HaMikdash corresponding to Torah she'b'chsav will stand above it. From the latter, HKB”H will illuminate and project the new, all-inclusive version of the Torah to the second Beis HaMikdash below. Thus, Yisrael down below on earth will receive the illumination of the new Torah emanating from HKB”H.

HKB”H Lit Tziyon on Fire and He Will Rebuild It with Fire

Let us now delight in the wonders of the Torah. Based on our current discussion, we can begin to comprehend what they expounded in the Gemara (B.K. 60b) in relation to the passuk (Shemos 22, 5): **“כי תצא אש ומצאה קוצים, תצא מעצמה שלם ישלם המבעיר את הבערה, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא עלי לשלם את הבערה שהבערתי, אני הציתי אש בציון, שנאמר ויצת אש בציון ותאכל יסודותיה, ואני עתיד לכנותה באש, שנאמר ואני אהיה לה [נאום ה'] חומת.”** **“When a fire will go forth and find thorns.” “Will go forth” implies on its own. Yet, “the one who kindled the blaze shall surely pay”** implies that there is someone who actually ignited the blaze in the other person’s property. (This is interpreted as an allusion to the fire of sin and destruction that burned Yerushalayim. Rashi explains that even though we caused the churban, HKB”H promised to pay as if He ignited the fire.) **HKB”H said, “It is incumbent upon Me to pay for the blaze that I kindled. I lit the fire in Tziyon,”** as it says (Eichah 4, 11): **“He lit a fire in Tziyon which consumed its foundations.” And I will build it again in the future with fire, as it says (Zechariah 2, 9): “And I will be for it . . . a wall of fire all around and for glory will I be in its midst.”**

We will attempt to explain the matter based on a fascinating idea brought down by the great Rabbi of Shinova, zy”a, in Divrei Yechezkel (Selichot) in the name of his elder, the Yismach Moshe, zy”a. He says that at the time of the churban, HKB”H elevated the two Batei Mikdash to the heavens in a blaze of fire. It only appeared to those down below on earth as if they were consumed and destroyed in the fire.

This explains the statement of HKB”H very nicely: **“It is incumbent upon Me to pay for the blaze that I kindled. I lit the fire in Tziyon,”** because HKB”H elevated the two Temples to the heaven in blazes of fire to prevent them from falling into the hands of our enemies. Thus, He concludes: **“And I will build it again in the future with fire,”** implying that HKB”H will return them both down to earth with a heavenly blaze of fire—one atop the other as described by the Zohar hakadosh. This goes hand in hand magnificently with a statement from the Midrash cited by Rashi and Tosafos (Succah 41a): **The future Mikdash that we are awaiting, will appear and descend from the heavens fully built, as it states (Shemos 15, 17): “A Mikdash, Hashem, that Your hands established.”**

We now have cause for celebration, since we can shed some light on the statement of the Midrash above: **They sinned doubly, as it is written: “Yerushalayim has sinned a sin.”** As explained, this refers to the sins of the people during the times of the first Beis HaMikdash—the three cardinal sins—and the prevalent sin of the people during the times of the second Beis HaMikdash—sin’as chinam. **They were punished doubly** by having both Batei Mikdash destroyed. **They will be comforted doubly** with the building of the third Beis HaMikdash which will contain both of the first two Batei Mikdash. Hence, it says: **“Nachamu, nachamu”;** for there is no greater comfort and consolation to Yisrael for the previous two churbans than to see the first two Batei Mikdash contained within the third Beis HaMikdash.

The First Two Batei Mikdash Were a Preparation for the Third Beis HaMikdash

Let us embellish this thought. The Midrash says: **“נחמו נחמו . . . because the passuk mentions two bouts of weeping: “She weeps repeatedly”—for the first “bayis” and for the second “bayis.” Therefore, the passuk says: “Comfort, comfort (twice) My people.”** We will refer to a precious insight from the Yismach Moshe (Tetzaveh). He comments on the following passuk (Tehillim 127, 1): **“שיר—A song of ascents for Shlomo: If Hashem will not build the house, the builders will have labored in vain.** Note that initially

the word **“יבנה”**—**“He will build”**—in the future tense is used; whereas, later in the passuk, the word **“עמלו”**—**“they labored”**—in the past tense is used.

In his own, sacred, inimitable way, he explains that the world was incapable and not ready to receive the immense kedushah of the third Beis HaMikdash. Hence, it was necessary to pave the way for it with the respective kedushahs of the first two Batim.

This then is the message conveyed by Shlomo HaMelech: **“If Hashem will not build the house”**—it is preposterous and inconceivable to think that Hashem will not build the third Beis HaMikdash in the future. For, if that were the case: **“The builders will have labored in vain”**—the existence of the first two Batei Mikdash will have been for naught. Hence, HKB”H will undoubtedly build the third Beis HaMikdash in the near future, and it will be evident that the first two Batei Mikdash were merely preparations for the third Beis HaMikdash.

Now, if we add the teaching of the Zohar hakadosh—that the third Beis HaMikdash will contain the first two Batei Mikdash—to the incredible insight of the Yismach Moshe, the message is even more powerful. The world was not capable of receiving the phenomenal light of the new Torah that HKB”H will reveal at the time of the future geulah. Therefore, He first instructed us to build Him the first Beis HaMikdash corresponding to Torah she’b’chsav and then, subsequently, the second Beis HaMikdash corresponding to Torah she’b’al peh. Since the world has already been illuminated by their incredible teachings, the stage is set for the building of the third Beis HaMikdash. This is the revelation to which HKB”H attests: **“A new torah will come forth from Me.”**

This then is the message of the Midrash: **“נחמו נחמו . . . because the passuk mentions two bouts of weeping: “She weeps repeatedly”—for the first “bayis” and for the second “bayis.” Therefore, the passuk says: “Comfort, comfort (twice) My people.”** Le’asid la’vo, when we are privileged to see the third Beis HaMikdash fully built—housing the first two Batei Mikdash—it will be apparent to us that we would not have merited the third Beis HaMikdash without its two predecessors. This is

the significance of the Navi's prophetic words: "נחמו נחמו עמי". When we are privileged to witness the third Beis HaMikdash in its full glory, we will be comforted doubly for the two Batei Mikdash that were destroyed.

32 Paths of Chochmah Are Torah She'b'chsav 50 Gates of Binah Are Torah She'b'al Peh

Following this sublime path, we will now proceed to clarify the sacred teaching of the Megaleh Amukos. Moshe Rabeinu longed to enter Eretz Yisrael, so that he could build the Beis HaMikdash. He referred to it as לבנו"ן, because it is comprised of two distinct types of kedushah—the "paths of chochmah" and the "gates of binah." In Iggeret HaKodesh (29), the author of the Tanya writes that chochmah is Torah she'b'chsav that emanated from the chochmah of HKB"H; binah is Torah she'b'al peh, whose teachings clarify all the details of the halachos by means of the thirteen hermeneutic principles. The Pri Tzaddik writes something similar (Bamidbar 6): "שתורה שבכתב שרשה מבחינת: חכמה, ותורה שבעל פה מבחינת בינה שמבין דבר מתוך דבר"—Torah she'b'chsav is rooted in chochmah, while Torah she'b'al peh is based on binah, understanding and systematically deducing one thing from another.

This enlightens us as to why Moshe Rabeinu yearned to build the Beis HaMikdash and called it לבנו"ן. He intended

to enter Eretz Yisrael and provide the complete tikun necessary for the ultimate future. He intended from the get-go to build a Beis HaMikdash comprised of the two Batei Mikdash corresponding to Torah she'b'chsav and Torah she'b'al peh.

This prompted HKB"H to intervene and say to him: "רב לך"—your kedushah is too great. If you build the Beis HaMikdash, Yisrael's enemies will have no power over it. Therefore: "אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה"—desist, let matters be; otherwise, HKB"H will not be able to pour out His wrath on the wood and stones when Yisrael sin. Instead, He will be compelled to take out His wrath, chas v'shalom, on Yisrael themselves. This dialogue supports the contention of the Yismach Moshe that the world was not yet ready to receive the combined kedushah of the two Batei Mikdash.

In conclusion, it is incumbent upon us to believe sincerely and trust the nevuah and words of comfort of Yeshayahu HaNavi: "נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אלקיכם". We will be comforted doubly at the time of the future geulah. For, the third Beis HaMikdash will be comprised of the first two Batei Mikdash representing Torah she'b'chsav and Torah she'b'al peh. At that time, HKB"H will enlighten us with the new Torah that is destined to come forth from Him, swiftly in our times! Amen.



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