

נחמו נחמו עמי – The Divine Consolation

(א) נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אלהיכם: (ב) דברו על לב ירושלים וקראו אליה כי מלאה צבאה כי נרעה עונה כי לקחה מיד ה' כפלים בכל חטאתיה: (ג) קול קורא במדבר פנו דרך ה' ישרו בערבה מסלה לאלהינו: (ד) כל-גיא ינשא וכל-הר וגבעה ישפלו והיה העקב למישור והרכסים לבקעה: (ה) ונגלה פבוד ה' וראו כל-בשר יחדו כי פי ה' דבר: (ו) קול אמר קרא ואמר מה אקרא כל-הבשר חציר וכל-חסדו כצנין השדה: (ז) יבש חציר נבל צנין כי רוח ה' נשבה בו אכן חציר העם: (ח) יבש חציר נבל צנין ודבר-אלהינו יקום לעולם: (ט) על הר-גבה עלי-לך מבשרת ציון הרימי בפה קולך מבשרת ירושלים הרימי אל-תיראי אמרי לערי יהודה הנה אלהיכם: (י) הנה אדני ה' בחזק יבוא וזרעו משלה לו הנה שחרו אתו ופעלתו לפניו: (יא) ברעה עדרו ירעה בזרעו יקבץ טלאים ובחיקו ישא עלות ינהל: (יב) מי-מדד בשעלו מים ושמים בזרת תזן וכל בשלש עפר הארץ ושקל בפלס הרים וגבעות במאזנים: (יג) מי-תבן את-רוח ה' ואיש עצתו יודיענו: (יד) את-מי נועץ וביניהו וילמדוהו בארח משפט וילמדוהו דעת ודרך תבונות יודיענו: (טו) הן גוים כמר מדלי וכשחק מאזנים נחשבו הן איים כדק יטול: (טז) ולבנון אין די בער וחייתו אין די עולה: (יז) כל-הגוים כאין נגדו מאפס ותהו נחשבו-לו: (יח) ואל-מי תדמיון אל ומה-דמות תערכו לו: (יט) הפסל נסך חרש וצור בזהב ירקענו ורתקות כסף צורף: (כ) המסכן תרומה עץ לא-ירקב ובחר חרש חכם ובקש-לו להכין פסל לא ימוט: (כא) הלוא תדעו הלוא תשמעו הלוא הגד מראש לכם הלוא הבינתם מוסדות הארץ: (כב) הישב על-חוג הארץ וישביה פחגבים הנוטה כדק שמים וימתחם כאהל לשבת: (כג) הנותן רוזנים לאין שפטי ארץ פתהו עשה: (כד) אף בל-נטעו אף בל-זרעו אף בל-שרש בארץ גזעם וגם-נשף בהם ויבשו וסערה פקש תשאם: (כה) ואל-מי תדמיוני ואשוח יאמר קדוש: (כו) שאומרום עיניכם וראו מי-ברא אלה המוציא במספר צבאם לכלם בשם יקרא מרב אזנים ואמין פח איש לא נעדר:

Questions:

- 1) Who is saying "נחמו" and to whom is it being said?
- 2) What does it mean – "comfort (others)" or "be comforted"?
- 3) How do these words – however they are read – lead to the creation theme?
- 4) Why is there an emphasis on קריאה only at the beginning of the passage – and then, at its coda?

(1) "Comfort you, comfort you, My people", says your God. (2) "Bid Jerusalem take heart and proclaim to her that her time of service is accomplished, that her guilt is paid off, that she has received of Hashem's hand double for all her sins." (3) "Hark!" one calls. "Clear in the wilderness the way of Hashem. Make a level highway in the desert 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 Hashem shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of Hashem has spoken it." (6) "Hark!" one says, "Proclaim!" And he says, "What shall I proclaim?" "All flesh is grass, and all its goodness is as the flower of the field. (7) The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of Hashem blows upon it. Surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God shall stand forever." (9) O you that tell good tidings to Zion, get up into the high mountain. O you that tell good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength. Lift it up, do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" (10) Behold, Hashem 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 feeds his flock, that gathers the lambs in his arm and carries them in his bosom and gently leads those that give suck. (12) Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out heaven with the span, comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? (13) Who has meted out the spirit of Hashem? Or who was His counselor that he might instruct Him? (14) With whom did He take 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? (15) Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold he lifts the isles like fine dust. (16) And Lebanon is not sufficient fuel, and its beasts are not sufficient for burnt-offerings.

(17) All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are accounted by Him as things of naught and vanity. (18) To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? (19) The image perchance, which the craftsman has melted, and the goldsmith spread over with gold, the silversmith casting silver chains? (20) A holm-oak is set apart; He chooses a tree that will not rot. He seeks to him a cunning craftsman to set up an image that shall not be moved. (21) Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood the foundations of the earth? (22) It is He that sits above the circle of the earth whose inhabitants are like grasshoppers, that stretches out the heavens as a curtain and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in, (23) that brings princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth as a thing of naught. (24) Scarce are they planted. Scarce are they sown. Scarce has their stock taken root in the earth. When He blows upon them, they wither, and the whirlwind takes them away as stubble. (25) "To whom then will you liken Me, that I should be equal?" says the Holy One. (26) Lift up your eyes on high and see. Who has created these? He that brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name. By the greatness of His might and because He is strong in power, not one fails.