

TLATA DEPURANUTA & SHIVA DENECHEMTA

Three Haftarat of Punishment,
Seven Haftarat of Consolation

Consolation, week 3: Aniyya So'arah Lo Nuchama

Yeshayahu 54:11 - 55:5

“Poor, uncomforted storm-tossed one”

(IF you don't mind darshening א\ע, you can imagine this as אנייה סוערה - a battered, diminished, storm-harried lone ship on a harsh and unforgiving sea; that is already what's being evoked by So'ara anyhow, so enjoy the drush I say)

We read this portion of chapter 54 two weeks BEFORE we read the first part of chapter 54 (“Rani Akara”)

No wonder our tradition applied mnemonics to this sequence of haftarot!

Bear in mind, for what it's worth, that the scheme which divides the sefer into *three* parts regards chapter 55 as the end of the “Second” part, with the “Third” part starting in 56.

Fishbane; Childs

PART 1. RENEWAL AND PROTECTION (Isaiah 54:11–17)

This unit promises a spectacular rebuilding of Zion and the religious devotion of its inhabitants. “Righteousness [*tzedakah*]” will be the basis of renewal (v. 14), and God’s own protection will be His servants’ “triumph [*tzidkatam*]” (v. 17).

PART 2. GOD’S CALL AND NEW PROMISE (Isaiah 55:1–5)

A call to the people to “heed” (v. 2) the Lord and partake of His sustenance; to “hearken” and be revived with the covenantal “loyalty promised to David [*hasdei David*]” (v. 3).

[11–17] The concluding section describes in enthusiastic exuberance the rebuilding of a new Jerusalem both from an external and internal perspective.

Although a few modern commentators have joined 55:1–5 to the preceding chapter, this division seems inappropriate for several reasons, particularly since 54:17 provides a conclusion to the thematic movement of chapter 54. A new subject begins in chapter 55, even though admittedly it is closely related to chapter 54. [REDACTED] with

- 11 Unhappy, storm-tossed one, uncomforted!
I will lay carbuncles^a as your building stones
And make your foundations of sapphires.
12 I will make your battlements of rubies,
Your gates of precious stones,
The whole encircling wall of gems.

54:11-17

Some words about words

^a *I.e., the foreigners who had occupied regions from which Israelites had been exiled; cf.*

² *Kings 17-24.*

^b *Other Heb. mss. and the ancient versions read "days."*

^c *Taking pukh as a byform of nophek; so already Rashi.*

← (you can ignore notes a and b)

—893—

ISAIAH 54.13–55.5

NEVI'IM

- 13 And all your children shall be disciples of the
LORD,
And great shall be the happiness of your children;
14 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.
15 Surely no harm can be done
Without My consent:
Whoever would harm you
Shall fall because of you.
16 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 havoc.
17 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

13: As in Jer. 31.33–35, the people in the restored community will learn God's teaching successfully, thus ensuring the eternal nature of the covenant. *All your children . . . your children*, alternatively: "All those who build you [O Zion] will be learned in the ways of the LORD, and great shall be the well-being of your inhabitants, endowed with understanding." The Heb letters "bnyk" appear twice in this verse, implying at once the idea of "children," "builders," and "those who understand," each of which fits the context of ch 54 (cf. b. Ber. 64a). Deutero-Isaiah frequently puns on various meanings of a single word.

- 11 O afflicted city, buffeted by storm, and without relief,
I will set your stones in antimony,
and make your foundations of sapphires.^d

The old city is now portrayed as afflicted and storm-tossed, but the new is depicted in extravagant, joyful language. Her stones will be set as precious stones in antimony. (Many commentators have identified the noun with a black powder used by oriental women to blacken the eyelids in order to enhance the eyes' appearance.) Her foundation made of sapphires is often identified with lapis lazuli. Her battlements will be decorated with rubies, her gates set in precious stones, and the entire encircling wall constructed with costly gems. Some

Childs ↑

Fishbane ↓

13. *And all your children shall be disciples* Hebrew *limmudei* means "disciples" (cf. Isa. 8:16). The ensuing promise, "and great [רַב] shall be the happiness of your children [*banayikh*]" bears comment. A well-known rabbinic midrash on this verse puns on the assonance between *banayikh*, "sons," and *banayikh*, "builders." On this basis, it was taught that knowledgeable children are the culture builders of the next generation (B. Berakhot 64a). In fact, the word's original sense may have been "your learned ones" (from the verb *byn*, "to know").² It would thus have paralleled "disciples" in the first line.

More word issues

15^a Surely no harm can be done
Without My consent:
Whoever would harm you
Shall fall because of you.

a Meaning of verse uncertain.

15 If anyone does stir up trouble,^c it will not be my
doing.
Whoever will harm you will fall because of you.

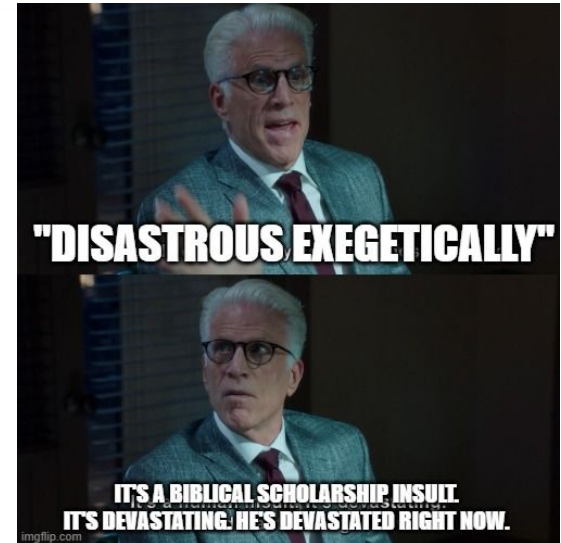
e. The interpretation of v. 15a is difficult and controversial. The issue turns on whether the root *gûr*, which occurs twice in the verse, has the same meaning of “attack” in both cases, or is an intentional play on a homonym with the meaning of “sojourn” (cf. Torrey, 425–26).

15. Surely no harm can be done Understanding Hebrew *gor yagur* from the root sense of *gur*, meaning “be afraid.” Alternatively, “Behold they may gather together, but not by Me” (OJPS), understanding *gur* in the sense of “to gather” (cf. Hab. 1:15). See the paraphrase of Ibn Janah⁵ and the comment of Ibn Ezra.

Tzidkatam, plural - servantS of the Lord

17. their triumph Hebrew *tzidkatam*. The force of the noun is justification in court and counterpoints the opening clause (cf. Exod. 23:7; 2 Sam. 15:4; Isa. 5:23; Prov. 17:15). God is the vindicator of Israel and thus the One who brings them triumph. Both senses recur in 40–66 (cf. 42:21; 45:25; 50:8; 58:2, 8; 63:1).

The divine oracle concludes with a summary formula, delivered not by God but by the prophet in God's name: "Such is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me." It has long been observed that the expression "servant of the LORD" is unique in Second Isaiah. Elliger succinctly summarizes the issue (162): Second Isaiah never uses the plural form, but names the servant always in the singular. Conversely, Third Isaiah never uses the singular, but always speaks of "servants" (54:17; 63:17; 65:8, 9, 13, 14, 15; 66:14). However, Elliger then draws a false implication by suggesting that 54:17 must therefore by necessity be ascribed to the author of Third Isaiah. As a result, he fails to understand the true significance of the use of v. 17 as a conclusion to chapter 54. Even more disastrous exegetically is the move of Watts (241) who designates v. 17b as the introduction to chapter 55, thus cutting the crucial link of the "servants" with chapter 54.



Actually this verse serves a double function. On the one hand, it forms a crucial link between chapters 53 and 54, which has been largely lost by those commentators who suggest that chapter 53 is a later interpolation into the corpus of Second Isaiah. Earlier, notice had been taken of the continuation of certain terms from chapter 53 into chapter 54 (e.g., seed, the many, righteous, and peace). Now v. 17b provides the explicit motivation for this connection. The suffering servant of chapter 53 had been promised a posterity and the fruit of his labor. On his account many were to be accounted righteous (v. 11). Isaiah 54:17 builds on this promise. The suffering innocent one of chapter 53 is seen as having his life, in some way, extended and incorporated through his suffering by those who are now designated “the servants of the LORD.” They are the

On the other hand, 54:17b serves as an organic link to the ensuing chapters of Third Isaiah, and demonstrates that these chapters are integrally related to the preceding chapters, the prophetic vision of chapters 40–55. Indeed, in Third Isaiah the question of how God’s promised salvation was received and fulfilled is addressed in terms of the communal heirs of the servant. Although many of the promises offered to Zion in chapter 54 had been given earlier, the special role of chapter 54 emerges when they are joined to the heritage of the servants of the Lord, which could only occur after chapter 53 within the continuing narrative depiction.

55:1 Attention, all you who are thirsty,
 come to the waters.
 Even you who have no money,
 come, buy and eat.
 Come, buy^a wine and milk
 without money or cost.

2 Why spend money for what is not bread,
 and your earning for what does not satisfy?
 Listen carefully to me,
 and you will eat what is good,
 and enjoy the richest diet.

3 Pay attention and come to me.
 Listen and you will be revived.
 I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
 my enduring mercies promised to David.

4 Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
 a ruler and leader of peoples.

5 Behold, you will summon nations you do not know,
 and nations that do not know you
 will come running to you,
 because of the LORD your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.

Literality can
 change a lot!

MERCIES vs
 LOYALTY

WITNESS vs
 LEADER

55 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.

2 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.

3 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.

4 ^aAs I made him a leader^c of peoples,
 A prince and commander of peoples,

5 So you shall summon a nation you did not know,
 And a nation that did not know you
 Shall come running to you^b—

For the sake of the LORD your God,
 The Holy One of Israel who has glorified you.

3. *The enduring loyalty promised to David* The royal covenant given to David (2 Samuel 7) is now transferred to the entire people. The phrase employs *hesed* in the sense of covenant faithfulness (see Comment to Isa. 54:6–8 in the haftarah for Noah). The divine pact with David promised unconditional commitment.⁶

4. *a leader of peoples* Hebrew *‘ed*, “witness.” The figure combines images of Israel’s mission as a “light of nations” and “witnesses” to God’s power for all (cf. Isa. 42:7; 43:10).⁷

Let's go back to the start of the section

[55:1–3] A series of imperatives give the passage an immediate heightening of intensity: come, buy, eat, pay attention, listen. Who then is the addressee and to what end is this divine invitation to enter into such abundance? Some take the invitation as yet another general appeal to the people of Israel to share in the promised gifts of God, but this broad interpretation misses the specific nature both of this appeal and of the content of what is being offered. Far more likely is an interpretation that relates chapter 55 to chapter 54, and thereby sees the recipients of the invitation to be the “servants of the LORD” (54:17).

The invitation is for those to whom the heritage of the suffering servant falls, to embrace to the full the new divine world order that had just been described in 54:9ff. In the past, commentators have debated at length whether the blessings, which are portrayed by Second Isaiah as a form analogous to that used by a rowdy street hawker, are of a material or a spiritual nature. But surely to formulate these two dimensions in a dichotomy is a false way to state the question. Much like the book of Deuteronomy, which describes the joy of Israel's inheritance (*nahālāh*) as eating and drinking before the Lord in sheer delight (8:7ff.; 12:15), so also for Second Isaiah the material and spiritual gifts for Israel are closely fused and cannot be torn apart.

Very shortly it becomes fully clear that the goal of the invitation is the obtaining of life (v. 3), and this is only possible because of the “covenant of peace” through God's compassions (54:10). Israel is invited to come and listen. What then brings life is the divine word (55:11), which causes the earth to sprout forth in creative abundance. Again the parallel with Deuteronomy is close: “one does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (8:3).

Isaiah 55:1. all who are thirsty The appeal is either to those of Israel who yearn for the Lord or to the nations who desire God's teaching (Ibn Ezra). The imagery of hunger and thirst indicates a state without divine instruction, as in Amos 8:11 (cf. Kimḥi).

הִנֵּה | יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֵם [redacted] 11 A time is coming—declares the Sovereign GOD—when I will send a famine upon the land: not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of GOD.

וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעָב בָּאָרֶץ לֹא-רָעָב לֶלֶחֶם
וְלֹא-צָמָא לַמַּיִם כִּי אִם-לִשְׁמָע אֶת
דִּבְרֵי [redacted]

וַיַּעֲנֵה וַיִּרְעַבְךָ וַיֹּאכְלֶךָ אֶת-הֶמָּן אֲשֶׁר
לֹא-יָדָעַת וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לִמְעַן
הוֹדִיעֶךָ כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יַחְיֶה
הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי [redacted] יַחְיֶה
הָאָדָם: 3 [God] subjected you to the hardship of hunger and then gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your ancestors had ever known, in order to teach you that a human being does not live on bread alone, but that one may live on anything that GOD decrees.

הָאָדָם: 3

I have found David, My servant;

anointed him with My sacred oil.

My hand shall be constantly with him,
and My arm shall strengthen him.

No enemy shall oppress him,^c
no one vile afflict him.

I will crush his adversaries before him;
I will strike down those who hate him.

My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;
his horn shall be exalted through My name.

I will set his hand upon the sea,
his right hand upon the rivers.

He shall say to Me,
'You are my father,^d my God, the rock of my deliverance.'

I will appoint him first-born,
highest of the kings of the earth.

לְעוֹלָם (אֲשֶׁמֶר) לִּי חֶסֶד וְבְרִיתִי נֶאֱמַנְתָּ לִּי: 29

I will maintain My steadfast love for him always;
My covenant with him shall endure.

I will establish his line forever,

אֲשֶׁר יָדִי תִּכְזָּב עִמּוֹ אֶחָד־וְרוּעִי תִּאֱמָצֵט: 22

לֹא־יִשְׂאֹ אֹיֵב כּוֹ וּבֹרְעֻלָּה לֹא יַעֲנֶנּוּ: 23

וְכַתּוּתִי מִסְּפָנָיו צָרָיו וּמִשְׁנָאָיו אֶגְדֹּף: 24

וְאַמּוּנָתִי וְחֶסֶדִי עִמּוֹ וּבִשְׁמִי תְרוֹם קָרְנוֹ: 25

וְשִׁמְתִי בָּם יָדָי וּבִהְרָרוֹת יִמִּינוּ: 26

הוּא יִקְרָאֵנִי אֲבִי אֶתָּה אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲרֹר יִשׁוּעָתִי: 27

אֶחָד־נֶגְבֹר כְּבוֹד אֶתְּנוּ עָלָיו לְמַלְכֵי־אֲרָצוֹ: 28

וְשִׁמְתִי לְעֵד זִרְעוֹ וְכִסְאוֹ כִּימֵי שָׁמַיִם: 30

Intertextuality with Tehillim 89

הִטּוֹ אָזְנוֹכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלַי שְׁמָעוּ וּתְחִי נַפְשְׁכֶם
וְאֶכְרַתָּה לָכֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם חֶסֶדִי דָוִד
הַנֶּאֱמָנִים:

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.

of 1962, O. Eissfeldt pointed out the close relationship between Isa. 55:3–4 and Psalm 89. He developed a strong case for seeing here a preexilic origin for a Davidic tradition of an everlasting dynasty, a tradition found elsewhere in other forms (2 Samuel 7; Jer. 33:20–22; Ps. 18:51; 2 Chron. 6:42).

Particularly significant is the form of the Davidic tradition in Psalm 89. The psalmist speaks of “a covenant with my chosen one,” “sworn to David my servant,” “to establish your descendants forever.” The choice of vocabulary in v. 29(28) is especially close to Isaiah 55: “steadfast love . . . forever . . . standing firm.” However, the main purpose of Psalm 89 is not simply to recall an ancient promise, but rather to sound a heartrending cry of complaint to God: “You have renounced the covenant with your servant. . . . Where is your steadfast love of old . . . sworn to David?”

In the light of this background, the use of the Davidic tradition by Second Isaiah receives its special role. The prophet takes up the selfsame promise, but he has reinterpreted it in a strikingly new fashion. Some have spoken of a prophetic “midrash” on Psalm 89, but it would be perhaps more accurate simply to describe the persistent usage of intertextual reference to components within this psalm according to a manner that goes beyond a common oral tradition.

In Tehillim 89, the promise is the basis for “a heartrending cry of complaint to God”

Here in Yeshayahu 55, the promise is reaffirmed in language evoking Tehillim 89

If you read with JPS maintext (Fishbane, etc) “עַד” in v4 means “leader.” But for Childs and the JPS footnote’s literal reading “witness” what’s going on here?

[4-5] The central issue at stake is the manner in which the analogy between the promise to David is now related to the role of those Israelites now being addressed. In v. 3 the everlasting covenant made with David is explicitly transferred to the people. The promise is no longer tied to David and assigned to the past, but is renewed as a present, active reality. The contrast is continued further in vv. 4 and 5, in which both referents are introduced by an interjection—”behold”—first, in respect to David: “I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and leader of peoples.” The sense of both of these cola is difficult to interpret. J. H. Eaton (32) has explored several possible meanings of the king as witness within the royal psalms, and he ultimately concludes that the king’s witness to God’s incomparability is the main sense. In addition, the usual title of David as “ruler (*nagîd*) of his people” (1 Sam. 13:14; 25:30) has been expanded to become “ruler and leader of peoples.”

The problem, however, in these designations is that, historically speaking, David was neither an example of a witness, nor a prince for peoples. At most,

a ruler

for the prophet's formulation. Actually, what emerges in v. 4 is a prophetic construct used to depict David's true vocation according to the original, theological purpose of God for his anointed one. Like the servant Israel (Isa. 43:9–10) who was appointed to bear witness, so David's true role as God's chosen is presented as a witness to God's wonders (Ps. 89:6–7). Moreover, David's office as divinely appointed leader has now been extended to encompass not just Israel, but, in a positive sense, also the nations.

10 אֲתֵם עֲדֵי נְאֻם-יְהוָה וְעַבְדִּי אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּי
לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ וְתֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְתִבְּיֹנוּ כִּי־אֲנִי הוּא
לִפְנֵי לֹא־נִוצַר אֶל וְאַחֲרָי לֹא
{ס} יִהְיֶה:

My witnesses are *you*
—declares GOD—
My servant, whom I have chosen.
To the end that you^b may take thought,
And believe in Me,
And understand that I am the One:
Before Me no god was formed,
And after Me none shall exist—

4 כָּרַתִּי בְרִית לְבַחֲרִי לְשָׁבַעַתִּי לְדָוִד עַבְדִּי:

"I have made a covenant with My
chosen one;

I have sworn to My servant David:

5 עַד־עוֹלָם אֶכֶּן זִרְעֶךָ וּבְנֵי־יָדְךָ
כִּסְאֶךָ סֵלָה:

I will establish your offspring
forever,

I will confirm your throne for all
generations." *Selah.*

6 וַיִּוְדוּ שָׁמַיִם פְּלִאָתְךָ אֶף־אֱמוּנָתְךָ בִּקְהָל
קְדָשִׁים:

Your wonders, O ETERNAL One, are
praised by the heavens,

Your faithfulness, too, in the
assembly of holy beings.

7 כִּי מִי בְשָׁחַק יַעֲרֹךְ לִי־יְהוָה וְדָמָה לִי־יְהוָה
בְּבָנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

For who in the skies can equal GOD,
can compare with GOD among the
divine beings,

8 אֵל גָּעָרָן בְּסוּד־קְדָשִׁים רַבָּה וְנוֹאָא עַל־כָּל־
סְבִיבָיו:

a God greatly dreaded in the council
of holy beings,
held in awe by those all around?

Childs concludes

If v. 4 speaks prophetically of David's role in the past as God's witness, v. 5 picks up the theme of the continuation of the promise into the present, but placed within the context of an actual transference. The recipients of the address, the servants of 54:17, are now given their calling within the everlasting covenant. They are to call nations, not previously known, who will respond to this invitation, not because of Israel's power or intrinsic worth, but because of the glory of God that they now reflect. It comes as no surprise that the ser-

convenantal tradition. Certainly the prophet does not envision a restoration of a Davidic rule according to the pleas of the psalmist. Nor does Second Isaiah share the same eschatological hope found in Jer. 23:5, "I will raise up for David a righteous branch," or in Ezek. 34:23, "I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David." However, it is also the case that there is a continuity between the original promise to David and the new purpose envisioned for the prophetic community of faith in Isaiah 55, which contradicts the opinion expressed by some that the former was only warlike and the latter only peaceful. Rather, the covenant of David, which has been sustained by the eternal loyalty of God, was seen as continuing in the new people of Israel, but in a form that fulfilled the original purpose of David's rule in the glorifying of God by all the nations of the world. The

// Isa. 42:1), among others (cf. Eissfeldt's complete text, 199–200). It is most important to see in this relation that the promise to David has not been repudiated by Second Isaiah, but extended and transferred to the mission of the servants of the Lord in the new world order depicted by the prophet.

In a word, Second Isaiah has incorporated the messianic promise to David in First Isaiah into a new version of God's future rule. In Isa. 65:25 (Third

Here we leave Yeshayahu 55, but we'll be back...

The chapter continues with the haftara of Dirshu Hashem Behimatz'o, which will be read on Tzom Gedaliah.

There are some traditions that read part of it now, as well!

המנהג הנפוץ

- **ההפטרה** – "עֲנֵה סֶעֱרָה" (ישעיהו נ"ד:א-י"ז – ישעיהו נ"ה:א-ה') מופיעה בכמה קטעי גניזה¹ וברוב הגדול של חומשים בכתב יד ובדפוס.
- **סיבת בחירת ההפטרה** – ההפטרה השלישית של נחמה². מקורה בפסיקתא דרב כהנא י"ח ואינה קשורה לפרשת השבוע.

וריאציות של המנהג הנפוץ

- **סידור רש"י ת"ד**, ספר המככים³ ספר השולחן⁴ – ההפטרה מסתיימת בישעיהו נ"ו:ה'.
- קטעי גניזה⁵, כמה חומשי אשכנז–צרפת⁶ ספרד⁷ ורומניוטי⁸ בכתב יד – ההפטרה מסתיימת בישעיהו נ"ה:י"ג.
- חומש אחד בכתב יד⁹ – קוראים עד ישעיהו נ"ה:י"ג ומדלגים ומוסיפים ישעיהו נ"ו:ז'.
- מנהג ארץ ישראל הקדמון לשבת עניה סערה¹⁰ – ההפטרה מסתיימת בישעיהו נ"ד:י"ז.