

TLATA DEPURANUTA & SHIVA DENECHEMTA

Three Haftarat of Punishment,
Seven Haftarat of Consolation

Rani Akara: The lead-in to Aniyya So'ara

This week we return to chapter 54 to read the part we skipped two weeks ago.

PART 1. PROCLAMATION OF RESTORATION (Isaiah 54:1–8)

The prophecy opens with an exhortation to personified Zion to rejoice, “for the children of the wife forlorn shall outnumber those of the espoused [*be‘ulah*]” (v. 1).² With the expansion of Zion’s population will go the expansion of her dwelling and territory. A glorious transformation will replace the shame of widowhood, as the Holy One of Israel will again “espouse you [*bo‘alayikh*]” (v. 5). “Anger [*ketzef*]” will be replaced with “kindness [*hesed*] everlasting” (v. 8).

PART 2. THE OATH (Isaiah 54:9–10)

The affirmation that anger has passed is now reinforced by a vow. The permanence of God’s oath, that He will nevermore “be angry [*mi-ketzof*]” with Israel (v. 9), is compared to His oath after the Flood, when He swore never again to destroy the world. The people may thus trust that the promise of divine “loyalty [*hesed*]” will similarly endure (v. 10).

54 Shout, O barren one,
You who bore no child!
Shout aloud for joy,
You who did not travail!
For the children of the wife forlorn
Shall outnumber those of the espoused
—said the LORD.

2 Enlarge the site of your tent,
‘Extend the size of your dwelling,’^a
Do not stint!
Lengthen the ropes, and drive the pegs firm.

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.”

3 For you shall spread out to the right and the left;
Your offspring shall dispossess nations^a
And shall people the desolate towns.

4 Fear not, you shall not be shamed;
Do not cringe, you shall not be disgraced.
For you shall forget
The reproach of your youth,
And remember no more
The shame of your widowhood.

5 For He who made you will espouse you—
His name is “LORD of Hosts.”
The Holy One of Israel will redeem you—
He is called “God of all the Earth.”

6 The LORD has called you back
As a wife forlorn and forsaken.
Can one cast off the wife of his youth?
—said your God.

7 For a little while I forsook you,
But with vast love I will bring you back.
8 In slight anger, for a moment,
I hid My face from you;
But with kindness everlasting
I will take you back in love

—said the LORD your Redeemer.

9 For this to Me is like the waters^b of Noah:
As I swore that the waters of Noah
Nevermore would flood the earth,
So I swear that I will not
Be angry with you or rebuke you.

10 For the mountains may move
And the hills be shaken,
But my loyalty shall never move from you,
Nor My covenant of friendship be shaken
—said the LORD, who takes you back in love.

prophet comforts Zion. Due to the exile, Zion seemed empty and in ruins. Deutero-Isaiah assures Zion that not only will she have a tent to live in, she will need to enlarge it to accommodate her abundant

We saw this in
Vatomer Tziyon

offspring. The theme of Zion abundantly repopulated also appears in 49.17–21. This passage is based on Jer. 10.17–25, where the Judeans who are about to be exiled lament the loss of their children and the destruction of their tent (symbolizing the Temple), their city and kingdom, and their social structures generally. **6–10:** God addresses Zion directly. **6–8:** God assures Zion that He has not divorced her (cf. 50.1–3). God's anger was brief and brought about a temporary separation; the reconciliation will last forever.

9–10: God switches from a marital metaphor to a simile based on the story of Noah (Gen. chs 8–9). The former metaphor implied that the covenant between God and Israel is one of mutual obligation; the allusion to Noah recalls the notion of a covenant of grace, which God unilaterally grants to human beings. Deutero-Isaiah often moves back and forth between portrayals of Israel as God's spouse and God's child, hence insisting that both covenant models are valid; see 49.14–21; 50.1–3. **10:** On the steadfast nature of the covenant, see also Jer. 31.33–35, whose vocabulary and ideas Deutero-Isaiah

Fishbane

Figures of assurance dominate the prophet's style. On the one hand, assurance in God's word is underscored by the divine oath of an everlasting covenant of *hesed*. In the first part of the haftarah, the people are promised "kindness everlasting [*hesed 'olam*]" (Isa. 54:8), while in the second part God promises them that neither "My loyalty [*hesed*] . . . nor My covenant [*bent*] of friendship [shall ever] be shaken" (v. 10). Assurance is also conveyed by a series of dramatic imperatives ("shout," "enlarge," "lengthen") and by an exhortation "Fear not!"—followed by an announcement that Zion's fortunes shall be reversed. The barren one, "who bore no [*lo'*] child" and "did not [*lo'*] travail" (v. 1), is now told that she will "not [*lo'*] be shamed" or "disgraced" and that she will "remember no [*lo'*] more the shame" of her past (v. 4). The concluding verse reinforces this counterpoint with the statement that God's covenant shall "never [*lo'*] move from you" (v. 10). The valences of the particle *lo'* thus mark the transformation of national destiny.

Fishbane, continued

Another stylistic feature of the haftarah is the use of comparisons. The prophet begins by comparing the exile and national restoration of Israel with a marriage relationship. God will take back Fair Zion just as an angry husband will restore the bride of his youth. The simile derives from an older prophetic tradition, in which God's relationship to His people is likened to a groom and his bride. Close analysis also shows that the terms and themes used in Isa. 54:6–8 occur in a more elaborated form in Hosea 2, Jeremiah 3, and Ezekiel 16 and 23 (see Text and Comments). In this connection, the prophet's reference to "kindness everlasting" and "love" in Isa. 54:8 recalls the terms of espousal in Hos. 2:21 and must therefore also be understood as indicating a covenant renewal.³ The notable difference is that here the marriage bond is between God and the city of Jerusalem.

The marriage motif allows the prophet to focus on the dynamics of love and rejection, and on anger and its assuagement. God is presented here as a faithful bridegroom who is able to overcome betrayal and anger. Two cases of divine commitment emphasize this very point. In the first instance, the oath of God to Noah and his descendants provides a model of God's everlasting stability. Never again will there be anger and destruction (Isa. 54:9). In the second case, natural imagery is used to highlight God's future steadfastness with Israel. "For the mountains may move and the hills be shaken, but My loyalty shall never move from you, nor My covenant of friendship be shaken" (v. 10). A similar motif occurs in Jer. 31:35–36, also after a promise of covenantal renewal. But whereas in the latter case the promise of covenantal constancy is equated with the duration of the cosmos, in the text of the haftarah God promises that His *hesed* toward Israel will even exceed the existence of the natural order.

Fishbane on word issues here

7. *For a little while* Hebrew *be-roga' katon*. The brief (*katon*) abandonment is juxtaposed to the length (*gedolah*) of reconciliation (Kimḥi). But this leaves a broken parallelism (“little while” / “vast love”). Possibly the word should be read *be-roga'*, “with anger.” Ibn Ezra supported this solution on the basis of the resulting parallelism: “with a little anger” contrasted to “vast anger.”⁷ This would yield a symmetry between verses 7 and 8, in accord with Kimḥi’s sense that in verse 8 the prophet “repeated the theme in different words.”

Should
say
shetzef

8. *In slight anger, for a moment*. The Hebrew *be-shetzef ketzef* is difficult. The word *ketzef* is unknown and interpreted by context. “Slight anger” follows the Targum. Rashi adduces R. Menahem ben Helbo’s interpretation of “fury”⁸ and the rendering of Dunash ibn Labrat as “for a moment,” which is “just like ‘for a little while I forsook you.’” The same point is made by Kimḥi.⁹ NJPS produces a double rendition.

9. *like the waters of Noah* This follows the received text, which has two separate words: *ki mey*. Kimḥi notes that other manuscripts read one word, *ki-ymey*, “like the days of [Noah].” This reading is presupposed by the Targum and Septuagint. Ibn Ezra and Kimḥi blend both readings when they observe that the oath refers to the Flood in the days of Noah. Rashi correctly notes that the second half of the verse is explanatory. This understanding supports the Masoretic reading.

Ibn Saruq not ben
Helbo

What is shetzef (not ketzef)?

English

Concordance – Dictionary

Basic

Root

שָׁצַף (שם עצם)

Search!

?

Concordance

Graph

Older Lexicons

Dictionary

***שָׁצַף, שָׁצַף n.m.** Na 1:8 **flood**; – abs. שָׁצַף Na 1:8 + 3 t.; cstr. שָׁצַף Pr 27:4, שָׁצַף Ps 32:6; – *flood*, fig. of יי's judgment, עֲבָרָה Na 1:8, cf. Dn 9:26, זְרָעוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם 11:22 (cf. Dr); of calamity, מִיָּסַד רַבִּים Ps 32:6; אָף שָׁצַף Pr 27:4 *a flood of anger*; so שָׁצַף קֶצֶף Is 54:8 (צ for ט bef. foll. צ Ew Di; > Du Che Marti del. שָׁ as dittogr.); שָׁצַף lit. of rainflood, Jb 38:25.

This dictionary is a modified version of: F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1906). Comments and corrections can be sent to us at: support@alhatorah.org

ערכים קשורים:
קֶצֶף (שם עצם)
שָׁטַף (פועל)

between the sheepfolds; so without cj. Albright loc. cit. and Dahood loc. cit.; so also NRSV, REB, NEB; sheepfolds). †

*שָׁצַף, by-form of שָׁצַף: (perhaps this root occurs in the Punic sbst. *šsp* (Jean-Hoftijzer *Dictionnaire* 317; Hoftijzer-Jongeling *Dictionnaire* 1185; Donner-Röllig *Inschriften* 69:11; Tomback *Lexicon* 330); see Donner-Röllig *Inschriften* 2: p. 86: an unexplained feature of sacrificial procedure, a certain type of sacrifice; it should probably be associated also with the Punic n.m. *šsp*, see Benz *Names* 185; for further personal names which preserve this sbst. see p. 425.

Der. *שָׁצַף.

*שָׁצַף: שָׁצַף, cf. Bauer-Leander *Heb.* 458s; MHeb. שָׁצַף = סָפַח (Levy *Wb.* 4: 601; rag-

שָׁצַף
flowing anger), cf. Sept. ἐν θυμῷ μακρῷ (mild, weak, so Tg. on Is 54s and Ibn Janāh); cstr. שָׁצַף: *flowing, streaming* Is 54s, in the collocation שָׁצַף קֶצֶף Pr 27:4; it is then probably not necessary to change שָׁצַף into שָׁטַף, on which see Dieter Baltzer *Ezechiel und Deuteriosaja* (BZAW 121; 1971) 172¹⁶⁶. †

שָׁקַד: MHeb.: 1) to be eager (Dalman *Wörterbuch* 433a); 2) to watch, DSS (Kuhn *Konkordanz* 228); 1QS vi:7 and the many should watch together, see Lohse *Texte*³ 22/23; Sir 34₁, (Smend *Sir.* p. 24; cf. Vattioni *Ecclesiastico* 31: 1, variant) sbst. שָׁקִיד = 38₃₆ שָׁקִיד worry (Smend *Sir.* 81); JArm. שָׁקַד to watch; Punic *šqd* to take care, be concerned.

It's not a slight moment of anger, it's a sudden flood of anger. Matches the Noah theme!

Fishbane, just about saying it all

This haftarah is the fifth prophecy in the cycle of seven weeks of consolation that follow Tisha b'Av and its public recitation of Lamentations (see the haftarah for Va-'ethannan). The promise of Zion's renewal in the preceding week is now dramatically reemphasized. God's word of hope counterpoints the lament of decimation, solitude, and destruction in Lam. 1:1 and 4. In particular, Zion, who became like a "widow [*'almanah*]" (Lam. 1:7), will overcome the "shame" of her "widowhood [*'almanutayikh*]" (Isa. 54:4). The theological assertion of the ancient elegist, that "the Lord does not reject forever, but first afflicts, then pardons [*ve-riham*] in His abundant kindness [*hasadav*]" (Lam. 3:31–32), is now assured by the divine statement that though He "forsook" the people "for a little while," now "with kindness [*hesed*] everlasting I will take you back in love [*rihamtikh*]" (Isa. 54:7–8).