

Nachamu, Nachamu
Haftara of Parshat Re-eh
Week #3 of "Shiva D'Nechamasa", Part 2

Nechama from HaShem:

- The ability to process the positive and negative storms through HaShem's special gifts of "twenty-four and more".

This part of the Third Haftara is about "The Inconsolable Storm"

The Inconsolable Storm?

Isaiah 54:11

עֲנִיָּה סְעָרָה לֹא נִחְמָה הִנֵּה אֲנִי מִרְבִּיץ בְּפוּר אֲבִנֵיךָ וְיִסְדֵּתִיךָ בַּסַּפִּירִים

O afflicted storm-buffeted, inconsolable one. Behold I shall lay your floor stones upon your pearls, and your foundation of sapphires.

"עֲנִיָּה סְעָרָה" --- Is not only that you feel "storm buffeted". Sometimes that same idea of סְעָרָה doesn't necessarily have to be because of the affliction, עֲנִיָּה, it could be because of all the Tov, the flood of Goodness that is overwhelming.

Therefore, you would read "לֹא נִחְמָה" as "There is no time for *Menucha*" because you're constantly growing.

What you are saying is that sometimes what you're experiencing is the positive of "לֹא נִחְמָה" of *Torah, Chesed, Insights*, that are "storming", so to speak. The "עֲנִיָּה" is, like saying, "I don't even have chance to savor this great gift, because it then leads into the next thing. And so therefore, it's not just a negative "לֹא נִחְמָה" it's actually also possible for it to be favorable.

For example, something that helps you manage everything that's on your plate in a calmer way is a form of Nechama. The *Bais Hamikdosh* served this function.

When we feel that life is overwhelming, we could go bring a *Karban*, an offering, and then we were guided in how to process everything that was happening to us. That guidance is actually a form of *Nechama*.

In the *Bais Hamikdash*, *Klal Yisroel* would stand crowded, packed together shoulder-to-shoulder, and yet when they bowed down, there was a miracle that superseded physical space: the people had the extra room to bow down.

עוֹמְדִים צְפוּפִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים רְחִים

The people stood pressed together, yet bowed down and had room enough

That is what the *Bais Hamikdash* allows us to do – transcend physical reality -- which is another form of *Nechama*. This is a comfort because this transcendence provides us ways to not drown in the Infiniteness of Hashem. This is the mechanism that allows a physical human being to attach to unlimited levels of living, despite the seemingly physical confines of space and time. This is the gift of the “twenty-four” that will be developed.

The *Bracha* of rebuilding Jerusalem in the *Amida* prayer contains twenty-four words.

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב. וְתִשְׁכַּן בְּתוֹכָהּ כְּאִשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ. וּבְנֵה אוֹתָהּ בְּקִרְוֹב בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנֵן עוֹלָם. וְכֹסֵא דָוִד מְהֵרָה לְתוֹכָהּ תִּכְנֶן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

To Jerusalem Your city may You return with mercy and dwell in the midst of it as You have spoken and build it soon and in our day as an eternal structure. The throne of David quickly establish. Blessed are You, O [Hashem], the Builder of Jerusalem.

Do You know why this blessing contains 24 words?

There were twenty-four *mishmarot* of Kehuna. The kohanim were split into twenty-four groups called *mishmarot* (watches).

How many marketplaces were there in Yerushalayim? Twenty-four

There is a *pasuk* in Eicha, Lamentations (1:1) that says "הָעִיר רַבַּתִּי עִם". The city once great with people

אֵיכָה יִשְׁבָּה בְּדָד הָעִיר רַבַּתִּי עִם הַיְתֵה כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבַּתִּי בְּגוֹיִם שָׂרְתִי בְּמַדְיֹנוֹת הַיְתֵה לְמַס

Alas! Lonely sits the city once great with people! She that was great among nations has become like a widow; The princess among states has become a thrall

Eicha Rabba (1:2)

הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עִם הַיְתֵה כְּאַלְמִנָּה רַבָּתִי בְּגוֹיִם שְׁרֵתִי בְּמִדְיָנוֹת הֵּ. "הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עִם" תֵּנִי רַבִּי שִׁמוּאֵל: עֲשָׂרִים
וָאַרְבַּע פְּלִטוֹת הָיוּ בִירוּשָׁלַיִם וְכָל פְּלִטָּה וְפְלִטָּה עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע מְבֹאוֹת וְכָל מְבוֹי וּמְבוֹי עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע
שׁוּקִים וְעַל כָּל שׁוּק וְשׁוּק עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע שְׁקָקִים וְעַל כָּל שְׁקָק וְשְׁקָק עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע חֲצוֹת וְעַל כָּל חֲצַר
וְחֲצַר עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע בָּתִּים

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| עשרים וארבע פלטיות היו בירושלים | Twenty-four major cities were in Jerusalem. |
| וכל פלטיה ופלטיה עשרים וארבע מבואות | Every single major area in the city had how many major streets? Twenty-four. |
| כל מבוי ומבוי עשרים וארבע שווקים | Every one of those streets had how many marketplaces? Twenty-four. |
| ועל כל שוק ושוק עשרים וארבע שקקים | In each marketplace, how many different professions? Twenty-four. |
| ועל כל שקק ושקק עשרים וארבע חצרות | And how many courtyards? Twenty-four. |
| ועל כל חצר וחצר עשרים וארבע בתים | and how many houses and each courtyard? Twenty-four. |
| That is ... הָעִיר רַבָּתִי עִם ... | City once great with people |

So how is this known?

Look at the verse that follows the verse in Isaiah 54:11 about the "עֲנִיָּה סְעָרָה" the "storm buffeted one".

Isaiah 54:12

וְשִׁמְתִי כְּכֹדֶד שְׁמֵשֵׁתֶיךָ וְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לְאַבְנֵי אֶקֶדָח וְכָל גְּבוּלְךָ לְאַבְנֵי חֶפֶץ

I will make your כְּכֹדֶד rubies your שְׁמֵשֵׁתֶיךָ , Your gates of precious stones, The whole encircling wall of gems.

If you break up כְּכֹדֶד into two words what do you have?

Each represents the numerical equivalent of twenty-four!

The *Migale Amukos* (1637 work by *Rabbi Nathan Nata Spira* who lived in Poland 1585-1633) says that Hashem says, "I will make the whole world the twenty-four steps of *Yerushalayim!*"

That's the whole idea of that *Pasuk*.

How many *brachos* (blessings) are there in the *Amida* Prayer? There are nineteen, and when you include the introductory words of “*Ado-nai Sifasai Tiftach*”, and the three steps you take into the *Amidah*, and the closing verse of “*Elokai Nitzor Lishonicha Mayra*” you have the sum of twenty-four.

One should picture oneself entering the twenty-four major areas of *Yerushalayim*, so by the time you reach “*Elokai Nitzor Lishonicha Mayra*” you are entering the *Bais Hamikdosh*.

Therefore, when one says the introductory words of “*Ado-nai Sifasai Tiftach*”, it is basically asking Hashem to be able to take this journey through the different parts of *Yerushalayim* understanding that you have the capacity to travel there with your mouth and your prayer.

Let's say I'm overwhelmed. “I have all sorts of problems in front of me”!

“עָנִיָּה סְעָרָה לֹא נִחַמָּה”.

But, now suppose that I could map out all the different issues I have to face. Additionally, I understand that because *Yerushalayim* itself, and the *Bais Hamikdosh* specifically, and the *Avoda* in the *Bais Hamikdosh*, actually gives me a way to manage everything in front of me. But, don't suppose because this is the truth! Therefore, if I use the *Shmone Esray* properly I can figure out a *Messila L'elokaynu*, a defined path through all the issues I'm dealing with, until I can articulate it well -- which would be *The Journey... our journey*. This is the *Nechama* that can come from every time I *daven Shmone Esray*.

The way I articulate to express myself is so important in the same way that it is so important when listening to someone to carefully hear how they are phrasing and describing something... until you really understand and therefore can guide them on a path to be able to deal with whatever it is they are feeling.

That's what *Yerushalayim* does. And, that's what the *Shmone Esray* is supposed to do for us.

This is the very same thing that we ask for when we say, “*Ado-nai Sifasai Tiftach*” -- to give us the means to articulate our issues in such a specifically understandable way and therefore be better equipped to figure out each issue.

There have been times when I have asked a parent who's desperately davening for a child, what they are davening for. I get these non-specific answers like, “Oh, just to help her”. And I have to ask, “But **how** do you want Hashem to help her? What do you want HaShem to do?”

But, somehow, some parents cannot articulate the help that they want. They can't even say it. They can't even *imagine* a path through a situation. Have you ever seen someone so overwhelmed by a problem that they cannot even imagine any way out?

Part of the *Shmoney Esray's* function is to help someone articulate and specify what his or her issues are, and that is starting point from where to then figure out a path.

Therefore, what we are asking for when we say "*Hashem!*", *Sifasay Tiftach*" is, "let me open gates!" It is almost like saying, "open this gate!"

That is why one of the systems of *Kavanos* for *Davening* the *amidah* is that you picture a bunch of courtyards, and that you go step by step, and open these huge gates. As you open these gates (in *Yerushalayim*, in your mind) you get closer and closer to the King with each gate through which you pass.

Ultimately, there are 24 gates and the *Migaleh Amuka* speaks about it when talking about this *Pasuk* וְשִׁמְתִי קָדֶכֶד (I will make a precious stone)

"Learn how to use the twenty-four, find ways to go on the journey of the twenty-four, especially if you're in a situation of "*Aniya Soara*" ... when you are feeling like, "I'm in a storm of suffering".

The way I do it -- and it's not authoritative -- is that I take one step; and I picture myself about to enter the palace. I have to have the courage to push open that first gate. And I understand that this means there's responsibility that comes with stepping through the open gate, which is the responsibility to face my Creator, to face myself, to face my inadequacies, to face my confusion. But, I'm making a decision --I can't live without this contact with my Creator! So, I push open that first gate, I pause, and then say, " ... I have to get closer I'm still not close enough..."

After the third step, I stop, and I understand that the only way to open the fourth gate is almost to call out to the gate Master, so to speak. "*Ado---Nai* (My Master) "*Sifasay Tiftach*" (Open my lips)... And the gates begin to open."

That "simple thing" that the gate is open *Ufee Yagid Tehilasecha*, (and my mouth will tell your *Tehillos* , *praises*) ... these are the personalized expressions of light and praise of Hashem we created by having a relationship with Him! What a feeling this is.... I am being granted this access , *Ufee Yagid Tehilasecha*.

Now I'm ready for the next gate.

I say, "*Ado- nai Sifasay Tiftach*" and then in my mind I see the next gate opens with the blessing of the Patriarchs, and I say, "*Baruch Atah...*" It's an incredible feeling because now I'm connected to *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*, ... and then I'm ready for the next gate.

And I stop.

I find myself in a situation where I don't have clarity because I'm dealing with so many different issues. I am dealing with so many different people, and davening for them and all of their various concerns. How do you daven for this one with the Parnassa issues, that one with the

health issues, and the other one with the children issues, and all the issues all of us know about, including for ourselves?

If I have one of “Those Days” , I can use the courtyard approach of “*Hashem, Sifasay Tiftach*”, the “Open The Gates” technique that I use to open the “many different” gates to first, help me articulate what I need, in order to be specific which is the a way that I need to discuss my concerns in order to have clarity. Articulating includes the skill of learning how to ask my questions, how to talk, in order to find my answers.

When you have that powerful experience of “*Hashem Sifasai Tiftach*” -- of being able to articulate an issue ... notwithstanding all you are dealing with... so by the time you arrive at the 24th gate, the final thing you want from HaShem before you leave His palace is “*Nitzor Lishonee Mayra*”, -- “*Guard my tongue from limitations*” -- because then you discover that you are not limited, because you now begin to see what you **can** do.

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