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שבת נחמו

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Consoling His People

Contents:

Part I. Worldly Consolations - 1

Part II. National Consolations - 4

Part III. Otherworldly Consolations - 7

Part I. Worldly Consolations

A Commandment

When Yeshayah Hanavi made that famous statement **נְחַמוּ נְחַמוּ עַמִּי** - *You should doubly console My people*, he was not saying it of his own mind; it says at the end of that *possuk*: **יְאָמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** - *Your Elokim is saying this*. It means that Hashem is the One commanding us to perform this service of consoling.

And who are we commanded to console? *Ami* - My nation. The Am Yisroel are the ones who deserve

an especial measure of encouragement. He adds a reason there: **כִּי לְקָחָה מִיַּד הַשָּׁם כְּפָלִים בְּכָל הַטְּאוֹתֶיהָ**. It means that the Jewish nation has suffered much. Not only the *churban*. Even today we know that the gentiles do not love Jews; and if you look like a Jew, they surely don't love you. The Jew is surrounded by gentiles who often cause trouble and the Jew is constantly struggling against that.

It's Not Easy

Besides, in order to be an observant Jew a certain amount of sacrifice is always required. To raise a *frum* family certainly takes work. A Jewish mother is especially busy. The children are climbing the walls and she's haggard and tired. And her husband is out in the factory working long hours so that he could pay *schar limud* and rent for his big family.

And of course everybody has some *pekel*; everybody has some troubles in life. There is no such thing as a human being who doesn't need consolation; even a millionaire, a billionaire, he has some difficulties in life. Some have more than you think.

And therefore Hakodosh Boruch Hu is commanding us through the mouth of the Navi that we should always consider it our function in life to console the Jewish people. Every *frum* Jew deserves the greatest amount of help and compassion and encouragement. And the Navi is talking to us; it says **נְחַמוּ** - plural - *everybody* has to console My people.

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A New Attitude

Now again, let's not live merely by superficiality, by words without thinking what we're saying. This statement of Yeshayah Hanavi actually means what's being said here. And so when it comes to how one *frum* Jew deals with another *frum* Jew, what should be the attitude? נְחַמוּ – Console!

And not only once. נְחַמוּ נְחַמוּ! Console and console some more! The fact that the word is repeated comes to emphasize that this should be done constantly. “Console and console again” means that always, *tamid*, you should continue to cause consolation to My people. Not once a year on Shabbos Nachamu because of the Churban Bais Hamikdash. All year round, all our lives, we should listen to the Will of Hashem to comfort the Jewish nation.

And not only people in general, but every *yachid*. Every individual we encounter, it's a *chiyuv* upon us to try to make him happy. Of course you have your own worries too; you don't have time to spend at length with everyone but as much as possible you have to do that. It's a *chiyuv*, a big responsibility, and it's something to think about because you're hearing now about a new career for the *frum* Jew; to make it an ideal to encourage our fellow Jews and to make them happy.

Of course the preface to that career is *sur meira*, to turn away from bad. It means that as much as possible we should make it our business never to cause any sadness to a fellow Jew. No quarreling. Quarrels make people unhappy and that's the direct opposite of what's expected of you. To be cold *chas veshalom*; to say the wrong words to a fellow Jew that's not called *nachamu nachamu ami*. It's the opposite of *tanchumim*. We have to console. That's what Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants.

The Lollipop Cure

Now, exactly how to do that requires study. You have to be trained for that, but in many cases it's not difficult at all. You'll be surprised but you want to

know what kind of consolation is needed most? In most cases it's a lollipop. A lollipop! I'll explain that.

Here is a man walking with his little boy in the street, and the boy is weeping and howling as if the worst thing just happened to him. What is it? He lost his little toy, a plastic whistle let's say from the Five and Dime discount store.

Now, what does the father do? The father could tell him, “My son what are you crying for? Aren't you happy that you are alive? Aren't you happy that you are wearing *tzitzis*, that you're a Jew? Aren't you happy that Hashem gave us the Torah and that כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא?

That is what the father could say – that would be *tanchumim* of *seichel* after all – but he doesn't say that because it wouldn't help. It wouldn't help at all. What helps? A lollipop, that does the trick. If it has different colors, even better! And so the father gives him a lollipop to suck on and the little boy is consoled now. Aha! *Nachamu nachamu ami*. You were *menachem* a fellow Jew!

Twisted Minds

That's what the *possuk* says עַם עִקְשׁ תִּתְּפֹתֵל – *with somebody whose mind is crooked we have to deal crookedly* (Tehillim 18:27). Now some people misunderstand that; they think it means you can cheat a crooked man. No, it doesn't mean that. עַם עִקְשׁ – With a man whose mind is crooked, you can't talk straight things to him but you want to put into his mind a straight idea. How do you put a straight idea into a twisted box? So תִּתְּפֹתֵל – you take your idea and twist it so it should fit into his crooked mind. After a while the idea straightens itself out and his mind will straighten out too. But you have to get it into his mind, even in a twisted form.

When you talk to the child, you can't talk straight; he is an עִקְשׁ – a child's mind is עִקְשׁ; and by giving him a lollipop you are twisting your mind for him. What is a lollipop after all? Is that any consolation for weeping in this world? No; it's twisted. Never mind! עַם עִקְשׁ תִּתְּפֹתֵל, twist yourself to fit in. And after a while, when

his mind is calm, you might go over to him and say, “My little boy, isn’t it a nice sunny day?” So now you introduced a higher *madreigeh* to him; to appreciate a nice day is a big *madreigeh*. A little later you can talk to him about higher things, about the greatness of being from the Am Yisroel, the greatness of Olam Habo.

The Smile Lolly

And therefore, when you are dealing with people, you can’t always talk to them *inyanim* of *emes*, of *ruchniyus* and *seichel*. You can’t tell them about the ideals of great achievements in this world, how glorious it is to live in this world where you can do *mitzvos* and *maasim tovim*; how it’s all a hallway to the Next World. הַתְּקַן עֲצֻמָּךְ בְּפִרוּזְדוֹר בְּדֵי שְׂתַבְּנִים לְטָרְקִלִין. You can’t tell that to people who are sad; sometimes you have to give them something, a lollipop, to suck on.

Now, there are various ways of giving candy to a person. You can’t give a grown person a lollipop, but there are various other substitutes that take its place. Here’s one that works for adults – a smile! Showing a friendly face is one form of consolation that’s always available. And even though you don’t know the man, but he’s a fellow Jew; so remind yourself about what Yeshayah Hanavi said and console him by showing him a friendly face, a smile.

Encourage your fellow Jew. Let’s say you’re sitting on the bus or on the subway; all the seats are occupied and a *frum* Jew comes in – nobody looks at him with a friendly face. What do you do? You get up and say *shalom aleichem* and shake hands with him demonstratively. After that you could sit down on your seat again, but at least you have shown that you’re honoring this man. That’s what we have to do. Not just sit and ignore him. How could you ignore a *frum* Jew who walked into the bus or into the subway? Our job is to get up, say *shalom aleichem* and greet him. Let the world see that he is important.

Let *him* know he’s important! He’ll be happier. It makes him more healthy. It changes his entire day and he will never forget it.

Be An Actor

It takes a little training, a little practice, but once you get the hang of it, you’re on your way. Otherwise, you’re a *golem*, an untrained fellow. Some people pass you on the street. They know you but they barely acknowledge you. A smile, surely not. That shows he’s not *mechunach*. He’s not trained. You have to greet a fellow Jew *besimchah*. A *frum* Jew especially. A black hat Jew, you should greet him with *simchah*. Even no black hat. Any Jew with a *yarmulke*, you should greet him with a smile.

Does it cost money to smile? And it’s an obligation. It’s not *midas chassidus*; it’s not doing beyond the line of duty. So he says, “But where does it say that?” *Nachamu nachamu ami* means that! And therefore we must learn that attitude, at home, in business, on the street, in the *beis haknesses*, in the *yeshivah*; wherever we are we must learn to make other Jews happy. And even though you don’t love him, *act* like you love him. Make him feel good! It’s an obligation.

Take a Nosh

Now before I go on with the subject – I haven’t started yet – I want to add a very important point. And that is the following: included in *nachamu nachamu ami* is yourself. Why only others? Hakodosh Boruch Hu says to you, נְחַמְנוּ נְחַמְנוּ עַמִּי - console others and console yourself. After all, when we say *עַמִּי*, you are also included; you are also Hashem’s people and so you have to console yourself. You have to learn how to cheer yourself up.

And so if you are sad and you don’t know why you are sad, then you had better get busy with fulfilling that obligation. Maybe you are that little boy who is crying over nothing. So Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “Take a lollipop.” Just like you have to give lollipops to others, sometimes you have to give to yourself as well.

Sometimes a candy or a piece of cake is important to give you a lift. Many times people are down and they need a lift and then it’s recommended that they

take a nosh and enjoy life a little bit more than the regular routine. It doesn't mean you have to run after *nosherei*, snacks, good times, no. It doesn't mean you have to drink *shnapps*. But sometimes that's also a way of being *menachem* yourself. Anything that won't harm you, that won't enslave you into wrong habits, you are *mechuyev* to do.

Get Rosy Glasses

However the best way for a person is to learn the art of optimism; to put on rosy glasses and look at the world and see everything in a rosy light. That's the real happiness, the real consolation, that Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants you to do. A Jew should try to be happy in this world, in Hashem's world, because it's a *mitzvah* to make himself, a Jew, happy. Be happy with your feet. Be happy with your lungs. Your kidneys are working? Your heart is pumping? Oh wah, is that a *nechama!*

Other things too. Go to sleep on time by all means. Make sure this Jew over here (*the Rav pointed to himself*) goes to sleep on time. It's very important. It will make you happy. 'Early to bed' is very important. Tell this Jew to eat his meals on time: "Eat breakfast every day."

But most important is to teach others and yourself to live a life of appreciation. All the things that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is doing for you are included in the *mitzvah* of *nachamu nachamu ami* – Hashem made those things cheer us up and the more you focus on them, the more you talk about them to yourself and others, the more you are fulfilling the *mitzvah* of "Console My people."

Part II. National Consolations

Some Lomdus

But when we look at this *haftorah*, when Yeshayah starts explaining, we notice that he doesn't give any such examples that you just heard now; he speaks of entirely different things, a higher form of consolation.

Now we shouldn't make any error. Although Yeshayah Hanavi doesn't talk about enjoying the pleasures of life, of being happy and optimistic by means of *gashmiyus*, nevertheless he certainly intended that. Only that he goes on and he's talking to us on a higher level.

If you study the *haftorah*, you'll see that the entire *haftorah* is talking about the greatness of Hashem. Take a look at the *pesukim* inside and you'll see that it's so. Now what does that have to do with the consolation of *nachamu nachamu ami*? It's a *lomdishe* question I'm asking now.

You know, if Yeshayah would have said, "My people! Be consoled because I'm going to rebuild Yerushalayim once again. You will come back to Eretz Yisroel and live in the shadow of the Beis Hamikdash," so we would understand that. But Yeshayah Hanavi is instead consoling us with the great thought that Hashem is the Power that rules the universe. We have to understand that.

The Terrible Tragedy

In the *haftorah* of the week after *Shabbos Nachamu*, Yeshayah Hanavi begins with the words *וַתֹּאמֶר צִיּוֹן עֲזַבְנִי הָשֵׁם וְהַשֵּׁם שָׁכַחַנִּי* – *Tzion says 'Hashem forsook me and Hashem forgot me'*.

What was the occasion for these words? One of the most tragic events in our history transpired at that time. It was the beginning of the Churban. The ten tribes that had separated from Yehudah and Binyomin and formed a kingdom to themselves, were now carried off into captivity.

The division, the separation, was a tragedy of such terrible dimensions that no one could even think of it. But now came the finale of that tragedy – the nation of Assyria, Ashur, made an invasion and carried off the ten tribes. Our brothers went lost.

We can't even begin to understand what a blow this was. We had been in the land since we came out of Mitzrayim, and we were together, all the *shivtei Kah*, one nation together, and it never occurred to anyone that we would ever be separated from our

land. Today we're accustomed to "the wandering Jew", but at that time it was fixed in the Jewish concept that we're here forever. It would never occur to us that a tribe could go lost.

Shaking The Foundations

This tragic episode rocked the nation to the foundations. Of course, they believed implicitly in Hashem. There was no question that Hakodosh Boruch Hu had been guiding them since the days of the beginning of the nation. They couldn't forget the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim, all the wonders that Hashem had done for them. Their great-grandfathers were witnesses.

But now all of a sudden it seemed like Hakodosh Boruch Hu was tired of them and He had forgotten about them. That was the conclusion to which many came. Otherwise it couldn't be that such a tragedy could take place. Some people become very angry at Hashem because of that. And some who were more charitable said, "Hashem forgot about us."

So the Navi tells us, "Impossible! הַתְּשִׁיבָה אִשָּׁה עוֹלָהּ – Can a woman forget her baby? It's impossible. Hashem is always thinking about you."

Immense Numbers

Now the Gemara (Brachos 32b) goes on and explains what it means that Hashem doesn't forget about His people, what it means that He thinks about them always.

אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא – Listen to what Hashem says. Now the following is just a picturesque language. But it's not an exaggeration; it's an understatement. Remember. It may seem like an exaggeration but it's an understatement.

בְּתִי – "My daughter," Hashem says to the Jewish people, מְזוֹלוֹת בְּרָאֲתִי בְּרִקְיָע – "I created twelve constellations in the sky." The sky is divided up by the astronomers of ancient times into twelve areas called twelve constellations. וְעַל כָּל מְזוֹל וּמְזוֹל בְּרָאֲתִי לוֹ שְׁלֹשִׁים אַרְבָּעִים – "And I created thirty armies of stars on each constellation, – and

וְעַל כָּל מְזוֹל וּמְזוֹל בְּרָאֲתִי לוֹ שְׁלֹשִׁים אַרְבָּעִים – and every legion has thirty regiments of stars, וְעַל כָּל קְרִטוֹן וְקְרִטוֹן בְּרָאֲתִי לוֹ שְׁלֹשִׁים גְּסְטָרָא – and in every regiment there are thirty squads of stars, וְעַל כָּל גְּסְטָרָא וְגְסְטָרָא תְּלִיִּיתִי בּוֹ – and every squad has thirty detachments of stars. Now pay attention to this: וְעַל כָּל גְּסְטָרָא וְגְסְטָרָא תְּלִיִּיתִי בּוֹ – And for each detachment I have put in 365,000 times 10,000 of stars."

You, Yes, You!

Now, that's already many millions and billions of stars! And Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, וְכֵן לֹא בְּרָאֲתִי אֶלָּא בְּשִׁבְלֶיךָ – "All of these millions of stars I created only because of you." We have to get that in our minds. The millions of stars in space – by the way there are more than millions and billions. There are trillions of stars. And some of them are very big, much bigger than the sun. "And all of them have been created only because of you," Hashem says. "So how can you say I have forsaken you and forgotten you?"

The truth is it's a possuk in Chumash. In the Chumash it says as follows – they are words we have to study and remember. When you go home tonight, take out a Chumash and memorize this possuk. If you can't say it in the original, memorize the English: הֵן לְהַשֵּׁם לְאֵלֶיךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם – Behold to Hashem belongs the heavens and the heavens above the heavens. It means "All of space is Mine, and everything in all of space is Mine." But רַק בְּאַבְתֵּיךָ חֶשֶׁק הַשֵּׁם לְאַהֲבָה אוֹתָם – only in your forefathers did Hashem delight to love them.

Hashem turned His back on the trillions of huge heavenly bodies and loved our forefathers. He loved Avraham. "Avraham, you're everything to Me." He loved Yitzchak. "Yitzchok, you're everything to Me." He loved Yaakov. "Yaakov, you're everything to Me."

So you might think it's only our forefathers. Hashem says no, בְּכֶם – all of you! And your children too, בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה, as of this day. Whatever day you might be listening to these words it won't ever change. Hashem loves every Jew with such an intensity that

it's remarkable. And He's thinking about all of us more than trillions of stars, more than anything else in the universe.

The Adopted Princess

And now we can understand what He's telling us in the *haftorah*. The whole *haftorah* goes on to speak about the greatness of Hashem because that's our greatness, that's our true *nechamah*. Because the more we understand the vastness, the infinity of Hashem, His wisdom and His kindness that have no end, the more consoled we are. The greater Hashem becomes in our mind then the greater becomes our understanding of what it means that Hashem loves us. The greater You are, Hashem, the more honored we are.

Here's a *mashal*. Suppose you got a letter from the king of England informing you of the good news that he has adopted you as his son. You're a prince now! Such a letter, you might have a *yetzer hora* to visit him; you'll be able to tell people about your new patron. It sounds like a very a big *kavod* after all.

Trust me, however, the king of England is a very small *kavod*, a very small honor. It's almost nothing. The fact that so many people would like that *kavod* is meaningless. Who is he? He's a *shiker*. He's a *goy*. Sometimes he's an adulterer too. I say "sometimes" because I'm considerate. Whatever he is, he's a nobody. He's not a *chochom* or a scientist. At least if he was a scientist, maybe. But he's a nobody.

And therefore it's important to know *who* is adopting you as his son. When the *Melech Malchei Hamlachim Hakodosh Boruch Hu* says *banim atem laHashem Elokeichem*, you're My children, it means that the King of All Kings is saying, "I'm adopting you as My son." Oh, that's the greatest honor that you could ever think of.

"You have to know who I am," Hashem says. "I am everything. If I love you then there's nothing bigger in the world than that." And so when He says, "I'm more interested in you than anything else in the

universe," that's the only thing that counts – that's the great consolation of *Olam Hazeh*.

Ethnocentricity in The Bible

We have to study that. You know today you come into a place full of *frum* Jews, *boruch Hashem*. *Boruch Hashem!* But because there are so many of them, they become unimportant to you. "It's just *frum* Jews," you think. Oh no! When you look at even one Jew, when you see one Jew walking in the street, he's more important than anything else in the world. Not the Jewish nation; a single Jew walking in the street! A little *yeshivah* boy. A *Beis Yaakov* girl. You have to know that one Jew is more important than billions of stars. Every individual Jew! Man or woman, boy or girl, is more important to *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* than all the stars in space.

I remember when that Arab killed Kahane so a certain gentile writer was making fun of Kahane. He was ridiculing him and he accused him of ethnocentricity. Ethnocentricity means he was interested so much in the Jewish people; *ethno*, his own nation, *centricity*, is the center of everything.

Now I was thinking how silly that is. Why blame Kahane? Hashem said that already. And so every Jew has to be ethnocentric; otherwise he's not a Torah Jew – he's rebelling against the Torah. Every Jew has to think that. But not only that the center of *our* thoughts is the Jewish people. No, that's not it. Hashem says "It's the center of My thoughts! Can I forget you? Could be I'll forget the stars. I don't forget anything but if I would forget, I would forget the stars and the planets and everything else. But I wouldn't forget you."

More Than Trillions

And that brings us to the higher level of *nachamu nachamu ami*. My people should be consoled just because of that, just because of that word: *Ami* – "They are My nation. That's the consolation, that you're My people."

And so we begin to see a new way to console ourselves. We have to practice up this idea that

Part III. Otherworldly Consolations

Hakodosh Boruch Hu is trying to hammer into our minds that He loves every one of us more than any amount, more than trillions and trillions of huge worlds in space.

It's not a *guzma* like people who never study this will think. They go through life never thinking about this subject so they think I'm just talking; that I'm just saying words so that we could have a lecture. No, no; I'm saying it because we have to practice it. As you walk in the street and you see a *frum* Jew walking over there – you don't know him but one thing you do know; to Hashem he is more important than the entire universe.

Start Preaching

That's part of the function of *nachamu nachamu ami*. We have to preach to the Jewish nation how important they are. You can't put it in the newspapers but Jews should preach it to themselves. You must talk again and again and again about this great point. There's nothing in the world except the Jewish people! Every observant Jew is of vast importance and we have to talk to our children about it. Talk to your neighbors. They'll laugh at you? Say it anyhow. Find different ways to say it; one day you present it like this, one day like this. It goes in. It goes in and it's a consolation.

And like we said earlier, it's not enough to tell others. *Nachamu nachamu* means ourselves. We have to console ourselves and teach this to ourselves. So continually you should say, "Hashem loves me more than He loves the entire universe. Of course He loves me more than all the trees; He loves me more than all the mountains and the oceans, more than all the animals. He loves me more than all the Italians. He loves me more than all the Irishmen; more than anybody else in the world, He loves me. He loves me more than even the whole world. If the whole universe was populated with nations and I was the only Jew, He loves only me more than all of them." That's how we fulfill *nachamu nachamu ami*.

Servants in This World

And now we come to the final word in this subject of *nachamu nachamu ami*. Actually it's the most important, the most genuine, consolation we can give the Am Yisroel. I'm talking about the *nechamah* of Olam Habo, the consolation of the World to Come. Olam Habo, that's everything! And any consolation in this world pales in comparison to the *nechamah* of Olam Habo.

Now, the truth is that even in this world we do see a great deal of consolation for the Jewish people. Don't we see that in many places there are gentile servants in the Jewish homes? In this neighborhood many people have gentile servants. But nowhere will you find a Jew working as a servant in a gentile home. You don't see that. Never is there a Jew who works for a gentile as a domestic in the house.

Even in *golus* we're superior in our physical lives, above all the other nations. Even in Lithuania and Poland where the Jews were pretty poor, they had peasant women, servant girls working in their houses. I remember when I was in Lithuania in *yeshivah* a *goy* once said to me, "I wish you Jews would have your own country and we'd go there to live and you'd work in *our* houses!"

The Kuzari when he's talking about how Hashem takes care of us in *golus* he says like this: *Ki avadim anachnu*, it's true we are servants. To a certain extent, we are subject to the nations, and yet even in our servitude, Hashem didn't forsake us. And he explains that our economic status among the nations has always been better than that of the majority of the people. We're always a little lower than the nobility than the aristocracy, but we're superior to the majority of the people. It's something that's true everywhere. Wherever you go the Jew lives a better physical life than most of the people.

Satisfaction in This World

So even in this *golus*, we see that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is consoling us. The Jew who is a *frum* person lives a happier life than others. Even the olden day gentiles who lived more decently than today, yet they never lived as happily as the Am Yisroel. I remember the old gentiles, the decent ones.

They were *shikurim*. Saturday night, there was wife beating all over the whole city. The *goyim* got their week's pay and they went to the bars and got drunk and they used to come home and hit their wives and beat them. From all over the city you could hear the wailing of beaten women. Some of them – their wives were lucky – didn't even make it home. You walked in the streets early Sunday morning you could see *goyim*, well-dressed *goyim*, lying dead drunk on the street. I remember that. *Goyim* lying dead drunk on the street. But not among Jews. Not among Jews.

Of course by the *goyim* there always was infidelity; always there were shootings. The better ones only stabbed but there was always violence. Not among Jews however.

And of course today it's a hundred times worse among the gentiles. They don't have children. Their children are bums. It's a tragedy what happens to their children; drugs, accidents, violence. The children die early. Meanwhile in the Jewish home there's *nachas* from children. And then from the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And therefore even in this world, the satisfaction of being a *frum* Jew is evident. It's Hashem's *nechamah*, absolutely.

Happiness in The Next World

And on a national level too. Don't you see that we have rebuilt a great deal of what we lost in Europe; six hundred *yeshivos ketanos* and *mesivtas*, boys and girls schools, in America alone! And in Eretz Yisroel too; the New York Times had a big article recently with a headline all across the page. They were unhappy about the growing power of the ultra-

orthodox in Eretz Yisroel; they were gnashing their teeth. Let them gnash till they fall out. *Boruch Hashem!* *Frum* Jews are increasing everywhere, *boruch Hashem*. We have *nechamos*, no question about it.

But all this is nothing compared to the real *nechamah*. You might be surprised to hear this but the real *nechamah* is that everything in this world comes to an end! Even the greatest success in this life won't be forever. Sooner or later there comes an end to this life and that's when the real *nechamah* begins.

The great success, the great happiness, is *Olam Habo*, the afterlife. That's the *nechamah* for the Am Yisroel! Hakodosh Boruch Hu has declared “*Kol Yisrael yesh lahem chelek leolam habo*” and He'll keep His word. We'll come together with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the Next World. And that's the great *tanchumin*; to be together with Hashem.

The Ultimate Consolation

And so included in *nachamu nachamu ami*, is that we should think about *Olam Habo* constantly. Speak about it. If they don't want to listen then think about it yourself, console yourself with the biggest of all *tanchumin*. After all, what benefit is there if you're a millionaire and you have fame and you live long but finally you end up in the grave? Is that the happiness that we're looking forward to?

There's no such thing as real *nechamah* unless a person reinforces all of his thoughts with the very great *tanchumin* that Dovid spoke about to himself when he saw difficulties coming on him: **בְּרַב שְׂרָעָפַי בְּקִרְבִּי** – *In the multitude of my thoughts; whatever thoughts I have in my mind, whatever is bothering me, תְּנַחֲמֵנִי יְשַׁעְשְׁעוּ נַפְשִׁי* – *Your consolations were the delight of my soul.* Your consolations, that's what brings me the real joy.

Which consolations? What was Dovid talking about? He was thinking about *Olam Habo*! That's the ultimate consolation. And it's only the man with an *Olam Habo'dikeh* mind who can weather the storms of this world.

The Great Banquet

And so when you say *nachamu ami*, you're thinking "Be consoled my people. But we should be doubly consoled, *nachamu nachamu*, because not only in this world are we the fortunate ones but in the Next World too we are the ones singled out for Olam Habo."

Yeshayah tells us what's going to happen in Olam Habo. הִנֵּה עֲבָדַי יֹאכְלוּ - Behold My servants will be eating, וְאַתֶּם תִּרְעָבוּ - but you, the enemies of My people, will be hungry. There'll be a big ballroom and we will be enjoying the meal to no end. Don't ask me to describe it to you because I can't. But that's what's going to be - only much better than you can imagine. We'll be eating and enjoying, and our enemies will be standing and their mouths will be watering. They'll be hungry, but nothing can be given to them. They're standing and looking around at the Am Yisrael who are enjoying the great pleasures, and their mouths will be watering with starvation. Their eyes will almost fall out of their sockets in jealousy. And it will last forever and ever.

And that's part of our *nechamah*; the word נָחַם, *nun ches mem*, is related to the word נָקַם, *nun kuf mem*; *nachem* and *nakam*, to console and take revenge. *Al pi dikduk* it's the same word, to console and to take revenge. And therefore *nachamu* means there's going to be a very great vengeance in the World to Come.

No Seats for Nazis

All the nations, those that disparaged us and those that insulted us and those that persecuted us, all of our enemies - they won't be invited to sit down. Seats are only for the Am Yisrael.

All those who were anti-Semites will be standing there and they'll be crying out with their broken hearts. And that means a vast majority of nations. Maybe some Chinese won't. Maybe some Koreans won't. I don't know. But the ones who came to America and became anti-Semites, absolutely. Many blacks in Africa are probably innocent, but the ones that came

to America and made trouble for the Jews, no question they're going to supply a very big part of the population there; no question about that. And the Hispanics in South America had they remained there, it could be they wouldn't have to suffer as much. They wouldn't be in Gan Eden, but they wouldn't have to suffer. But now that they came to America and they persecuted the Jews then they're going to get. They'll be there too. Oh yes, they'll be there too. No question about it.

The Nazis? Of course! But not only the soldiers; Hakodosh Boruch Hu is punishing all the Germans who voted Hitler to power. Every German is standing on his feet and he's looking on how the *frum* Jews are seated at the table and singing in great happiness; and the Germans are being tortured by the pangs of starvation and crying out from the bottom of their heart. But nothing will help them; they're going to continue like that forever and ever.

Imagine That!

הִנֵּה עֲבָדַי יִרְנֹו מִטוֹב לֵב - My servants will sing from happiness. The Am Yisroel, we'll all sing together. It will be a tremendous choir of happiness and gratitude to Hashem. וְאַתֶּם תִּצְעַקוּ מִכָּאֵב לֵב - And you, our enemies, will cry out from the pain of the heart.

Now don't think it's a *mashal* because whatever it is it's much less than the truth. The truth is so immense that it cannot be described with words. And therefore the pinnacle of *nachamu nachamu ami* is this attitude of the mind, an Olam Habo mind, that we have to give to ourselves and to everyone else. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "I'm going to offer to you Myself as the ultimate consolation. Because I am so great, if you'll be with Me it will be the greatest happiness."

And that's why Yeshayah Hanavi is telling us that it's a good idea from time to time to take a look and see this picture in your mind of how we're all sitting around the tables eating and enjoying the happiness of the afterlife. We have to labor in our minds to get a concept that the Klal Yisrael is now in Olam Habo - right now they're enjoying a very great happiness

that is beyond the ability of words to describe. We have to train ourselves to think that way because that's also included in the commandment of *nachamu*.

And Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives us a reward just for that. It's a *mitzvah* to think that way. Even if it doesn't cause you to become a more *frum* person, even if it doesn't cause you to do more *mitzvos* and it doesn't cause you to learn more Torah, this itself is an achievement. You're fulfilling the Word of Hashem by consoling the Am Yisroel. *Yomar Hashem* – It's the Word of Hashem: "I am commanding you to learn this great function of *nachamu nachamu ami*; the consolation of the happiness in this world, the consolation of the happiness of being the Am Hashem, and the consolation of the happiness of being together with Hakodosh Boruch Hu in the Next World forever.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Learning to Console

We have a Mitzvah to console Hashem's people. This week I will *bl"n* practice all three aspects of *nechamah* each day. 1. Once a day I will smile at someone and make them feel comfortable. 2. Once a day, when I see a fellow Jew, I will reflect on the fact that he or she is more important to Hashem than the entire universe. 3. I will spend thirty seconds each day remembering that this is not our final station and that this world is merely an entryway to the world of Truth and Goodness.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך



If a boy takes a girl to dinner for a *shidduch* and it doesn't work out, does he have a *mitzvah* of doing *gemilus chasodim* because he gave her a free meal?



That's a *pilpul*, a *lomdishe kasha*. And the answer is, certainly. Even though you did it with the *kavanah* not for the purpose of *gemilus chasodim*, but *b'dieved*, if looking back you're not sorry, then certainly you get a certain merit for that. If you're sorry, you won't have any *mitzvah*. But if you're satisfied that you gave her a meal, then you have a certain *zechus*.

Because there's a certain *ma'amar* in the Yerushalmi; it says there that if you lost a dollar in the street – it shouldn't happen – but let's say you lost a dollar and you're thinking, "If a poor man will find that dollar, I'm willing he should have it," so you have a certain *zechus* of *tzedakah*. Of course, it's better to give it directly. But *b'dieved*, looking back, you can assign that dollar in your mind for *tzedakah*. If you're satisfied that a poor man should find it, you have a certain element of *tzedakah*. So if you look back and think, "I'm sorry it didn't work out, but I'm happy that I gave a fellow Jew a free meal," it's still something.

Any kind of thing that you did *shelo l'shem Shomayim*, if later you look back and you put some thought into it – you want that it should be done for a good purpose, you get a certain merit for that.