

YESHAYAHU 40:1-26

This week's *haftorah* is the first of a series of seven "*haftarot* of Consolation." These seven *haftarot* start on the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

This section of Yeshayahu begins with G-d's conveying to the prophet: "Console, O console My people . . . Announce to Jerusalem that her period of exile has been fulfilled and that her sins have been forgiven."

Yeshayahu's prophecy describes some of the remarkable events that will unfold with the onset of the messianic era. These include: the return of the exiles to Yerushalayim, the revelation of Hashem's glory, and the rewards and retribution that will then be meted out to the nations of the world.

The navi then goes on to comfort the people, describing G-d's power and might, and reassuring them of His care for His people. ■

STATS

45th of 54 sedras; 2nd of 11 in D'varim. Written on 249 lines in a Torah, rank: 7. 21 parshiyot; 5 open, 16 closed, 7th (tied with Ki Tavo).

122 pEsukim - rank: 17 (2nd in Devarim) same as Vayak'hel & Ki Tavo - but larger. 1878 words; rank: 10th (2nd in Devarim). 7343 letters; rank: 10th (2nd in Devarim). Va'etchanan's pesukim are longer than average, hence the jump in rank from 17th for pesukim to 10th for words.

MITZVOT

12 of 613 mitzvot: 8 positive, 4 prohibitions and many more that are counted elsewhere - this is so for several sedras, but it really shows for Va'etchanan (e.g. Aseret HaDibrot in Yitro has 14 mitzvot, repeated here but not counted here).

A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOKH YERES
RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

ונשמרתם מאד לנפשותיכם כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה... כן תשחתון ועשיתם לכם פסל (ד:טו,טז)
"Watch out, **immensely**, for yourselves for you saw no manner of form...Lest you deal corruptly and make for yourselves a graven image." (4:15,16)

Why does the pasuk teach us by stressing watching ourselves immensely (meod)?

The Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933) points out that every person must take care of one's health and well-being. A person should be wary of how he treats his body without extreme care. As a taxi driver minds the upkeep of his cab so it does not break down on the road, so too we must maintain our physical health and physique to continue our tasks in this world. The Chofetz Chaim rebuked a Rosh Yeshiva who restrained from eating meat to better provide for his students. He told him that amongst other priorities, it is vital that his students see a healthy Rosh Yeshiva.

The Meshech Chochma (R' Meir Simcha Divinsk 1843-1926) placed emphasis on the context of the verse. One needs to make a great effort to avoid idolatry. One reason given for Moshe being refused entry to Israel was due to his high spiritual level and capabilities. He brought forth great miracles and went without eating or drinking. The Torah was concerned that the new generation entering the Land of Israel, might not remember Moshe's humble beginning, and misconstrue him as Divine. "And the people spoke against G-d and Moshe (Bamidbar 21:5) upon which the Midrash Rabbah (19:12) adds that "They equated the servant with the Master." Due to the fear that the new generation would deify Moshe, his entrance into the Land was denied. - Shabbat Shalom