



This week we read the fifth of the Haftarot of Consolation, following on from Tish'a b'Av. The Haftara (Yishayahu 54:1-10) is poignant and stirring. The prophet addresses a people that was exiled and now lives with uncertainty. The prophet is speaking to an audience that was oppressed and to a city, Yerushalayim that was abandoned. Yishayahu could have been talking to us or, more precisely, to our parents and grandparents who survived the horrors of the Second World War but had the merit to see Yerushalayim rebuilt.

One of the most potent lines of the Haftara reads, "For just a tiny moment I abandoned you but with great compassion I will gather you up." How many times, on both a personal and national level, have we felt that sense of abandonment? Do we not, even today, have a fear of the unknown? Do we not wonder what will be tomorrow, in a few years, in the more distant future?

In truth, however, we see the Ge'ula unfolding before our eyes. We see desolate cities resettled, to cite the words of the prophet. We cry out to Hashem in our Elul prayers: "Hide not

Your face!" – But we proclaim, "For in the day of trouble He will hide me in His pavilion... and my head will be lifted above my enemies" (T'hilim 30).

Moreover, in these days when 'The King is in the field', we take solace from Yeshayahu's prediction that "My devotion to you will not waver and My Covenant of Peace will not collapse says He who shows compassion to you – Hashem. **MP**