



I, I am He Who consoles you...
(Haftorah of Parshas Shoftim, Yeshaya 51:12)

“The great and powerful king was obsessed with an overwhelming love for his wife. Perhaps for this very reason when she displayed disloyalty towards him, he was so angered that he threw her out of his house and sent her off to a faraway land. From being queen of the entire kingdom, in an instant she had been turned into a pauper begging from door to door for her basic needs, and suffering at the whim of whomever wished to harm her. She suffered unimaginably, however, she was well aware of how much she was truly loved by the king. She knew that however much she suffered on the street, the king suffered so much more just from her absence. Such was his infinite love towards her. She was so sure of this that when the king finally sent her the message: All of your suffering is over! You can return to the paradise of the royal palace to rule the kingdom once again by my side, despite her unbearable suffering she responded: Let him first double my kesuba! Only then will I return to him! “

The *Medrash* on our opening *Pasuk* states: “Rav Aba said in the name of Rav Shimon Ben Levi that his is analogous to a king who was angered by his wife and threw her out of his palace. After some time, he sought to return her to him, whereupon she said: Let him double my *kesuba* then I will return to him! Similarly, Hashem said to Yisroel: My son, at Sinai I said one time “*Anochi – I am Hashem your G-d*”, and regarding Yerushalayim when the time comes I will say twice, “*Anochi Anochi – I, I am He Who consoles you...!*”

Imagine the picture! After two thousand years of suffering! Burned by the stake, pogroms, and holocaust such as no other nation in the history of the world has seen! When finally, Hashem reveals Himself to return us to His side, we are compared to the wife in our story, who’s so sure that her husband’s pain in her absence is greater than hers, despite all her suffering, that she has the temerity to say: *Let him double my kesuba then I will return to him!* For however desperate we are to reclaim our status as the princes of the world, we know deep down that He, so to speak, is even more desperate! As He says: *With them I am in their suffering!* (*Tehilim* 91:15) And as He cries out three times each night, “*What does a father have when he has exiled his children!*” (*Brachos* 3a)

