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YERUSHALAYIM in/out times for D’VARIM-CHAZON
itura 6:54PM Plag 6:05PM • Raba 8:07PM Rabeinu Tam 8:46PM

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Minhag Yerushalayim people will have said Kiddush L’vana last Sunday night. Most everyone else says KL right after the fast, also Sunday night (this year). If possible, one should wash full Netilat Yadayim before KL (since hands were not washed fully in the morning). So too, if possible, one should say/hear havdala and eat something before KL. Emphasis on the phrase, if possible. If it would mean missing KL with the tzibur, then KL can be said before and before.

MazalPic for Av is a diagram of a low earth orbit (LEO), generally considered to be below 2000km. LEO is the mazal of Av - ARYEI, the lion

Word of the Month
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**Other Z’manim**

- Ranges are 11 days, Wed-Sha 6-16 Menachem Av • Aug 7-17
- Earliest Talit & T’fili 5:04-5:12am
- Sunrise 5:58½-6:05am
- Sof Z’man K’ Sh’ma 9:21-9:23am
  (Magen Avraham: 8:41-8:45am)
- Sof Z’man T’fila 10:29-10:30am
  (Magen Avraham: 9:55-9:58am)
- Chatzot (Halachic noon) 12:45-12:43½pm
- Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) 1:19-1:17pm
- Plag Mincha 6:06½-5:59pm
- Sunset (counting elevation) 7:36-7:26pm
  (based on sea level: 7:31-7:21pm)

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The word EICHA occurs in Megilat Eicha 4 times, 5 times in Sefer D'varim, once in Yeshayahu, twice in Yirmiyahu, and others...
DAYEINU Revisited

First of all, DAYEINU does not mean "It would have been enough." It means that there is enough to thank G-d for, even without going to the next step.

The Hagada refers to MAALOT TOVOT - the many goodnesses that HaShem bestowed upon us.

The first 10 items concern the Exodus, Yam Suf, and the miracles of the Midbar. Let's examine the last third of the DAYEINUs.

Shabbat - in the context of the manna - preceded Matan Torah. In it we glimpse G-d's Creation and His special covenant with us. DAYEINU. Shabbat and all it stands for would give us sufficient cause to thank G-d, even if He had not brought us to Sinai.

But He did, and the experience of being at Har Sinai in itself gave us sufficient cause to thank HaShem.

Certainly, we understand very well the special quality of Matan Torah, the Giving of the Torah and Revelation at Sinai. DAYEINU.

But misunderstanding the meaning of DAYEINU at this point is disastrous. The Meraglim seemed to believe that life in the Midbar with the Torah was enough. They portrayed Eretz Yisrael as a step down from their level of sanctity in the Midbar. Disaster! How many Jews today think, feel, and act in the same way? That's part of why we still mourn the Churban instead of rejoicing in the Geula.

Those same Jews - and even those who realize AND actualize the next step in DAYEINU - living to Eretz Yisrael - have one more step to take seriously.

How many Jews today, Torah observant Jews, do more than pay lip-service to the building of the Third Beit HaMikdash. And I'm not talking about actually building it until instructed to do so by Melech HaMashiach. I'm talking about more than a picture on the wall, or singing L'SHANA HABA'A, or even saying three times a day UVNEI OTAH B'IKAROV B'YAMEINU and V'HASHEIV ET HAAVODA LIDVIR BEITECHA AND V'TECHEZENA EINEINU AND SHEYIBANEH BEIT HAMIKDASH.

I'm talking about really meaning it. Being serious about one's hopes and prayers to actually see the rebuilding and rejoicing in it. I'm talking about seriously studying Avodat Beit HaMikdash and all in entails. I'm talking about mourning the Churban but being active in a massive Tikun that we need in many areas. And more!
Kohen - First Aliya
11 p'sukim - 1:1-11

[Pt 1:1 (47)] The opening p'sukim of D'varim clearly identify time and place. The entire book takes place in Arvot Moav (last place of encampment before entry into Eretz Yisrael) and begins on Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat in the final year of wandering.

Several places that are mentioned in these p'sukim are considered by the commentaries to be allusions to events that occurred during the previous 40 years rather than being actual locations. The events include the golden calf, the rebellion of Korach, the complaint about the manna, and the sin of the spies. These, plus the explicit discussion of the "Sin of the Spies", are part of Moshe’s reproach and warning to the People.

Note that the only 'sin' of the Midbar to be detailed is Cheit HaMeraglim, which occurred on Tish'a b'Av, set the tone for Tish'a b'Av. We always read this sedra right before Tish'a b'Av.

Moshe also tells the People of the victories over Emori and Cheshbon. This, to give them confidence for the difficult period they will face upon entering the Land.

We find the first of many references to the purpose of the existence of the Jewish Nation is made - to live (according to G-d’s laws) in the Land that G-d had promised to our
ancestors. D'varim 1:8 says:

**See that I have presented you the Land; come and take the Land that G-d promised your ancestors He would give to them and their descendants.**

**Rashi's comment:** Had we not sent Meraglim to spy out the Land, we would have been able to march in and take it without a weapon, without a fight, without 7 years of battles.

That living in Eretz Yisrael is an integral part of a Jew's life is first set down at the Burning Bush, G-d's first prophecy to Moshe Rabeinu. G-d says that He will go into Egypt to take the People out and bring them up to a good and expansive land, a land flowing with milk and honey... In the same verse that He tells Moshe of His intention to take the people out of Egypt, He tells Moshe to where He is taking us, where He wants us to be. In one single verse, the purpose of our Nationhood is set.

In last week's sedra, the connection between the people and the Land comes in the form of a command. Here in D'varim, Moshe tells the new generation of the "invitation" that was extended to them by G-d, to go into Eretz Yisrael. There will be various other ways the same idea is expressed, but it is important to keep in mind that living in Eretz Yisrael is a mitzva, the fulfillment of our national destiny, AND it is RTZON HASHEM, G-d's will. This point is made over and over again. All we have to do is do it.

**SDT** (Actually, this is an LDT): Within the opening 5 p'sukim of D'varim, there is a repetition of sorts in telling us that Moshe Rabeinu spoke to the People. The Vilna Gaon and others point out that the Book of D'varim can be divided into 3 parts, as indicated by the wording of the opening p'sukim: "These are the things that Moshe spoke to all Israel..." (pasuk 1). This can refer to the first three sedras of the book wherein we have a general review of the brief, but action-packed and significant history of the People to date. In addition, these sedras contain a restatement of the principles of Judaism in the form of the Aseret HaDibrot and the first two passages of the Shma. Also expressed in this opening section of D'varim is the integral link between the People and the Land of Israel. These sedras contain relatively few mitzvot, but they do contain the "basics of Judaism" and its foundations, which Moshe reviews with "all of Israel".

The following three sedras (R'ei, Shof'tim, and Ki Teitzei) contain 170 mitzvot, the greatest concentration of mitzvot anywhere in the Torah. "...Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael of all that G-d commanded upon them" (pasuk 3). After laying the foundation of Judaism, Moshe presents the essence of day-to-day life as a Jew - mitzvot of all kinds, between the Jew and G-d, interpersonal mitzvot, mitzvot linked to the Land, general mitzvot.

The final section of D'varim, the last 5 sedras, again contains relatively few
mitzvot. But it does contain the basis of understanding what being a Jew means. In these sedras we have the admonition against forsaking the Torah, the concepts of Free Will, Reward and Punishment, Repentance, and the Chain of Tradition. "...Moshe began to explain [HO'IL MOSHE BEI-EIR] this Torah saying:" (pasuk 5)

I, says Moshe, told you (and G-d) that I could no longer handle the leadership by myself. G-d has increased your population greatly; you are today like the stars of the heavens.

On Shabbat, the first Aliya is ended one pasuk early to avoid beginning the second portion with the word "Eicha" - a word that we will meet again in the haftara of Chazon and then on Leil Tish'a b'Av - several times - in the book of Eicha. We will thus be reading the word EICHA from all three sections of Tanach - Torah, Nevi'im, K'tuvim - this year, within approx a 12-hour period.

**Levi - Second Aliya**

10 p'sukim - 1:12-21

Moshe tells the People again that he had reached a point where he was too weary to lead the People alone, and that he (at G-d’s command) designated the leaders of the Tribes as judges of the People.

Judges are to be selected for their Torah knowledge and other appropriate qualities. It is forbidden to appoint a judge for "the wrong reasons" (wealth, charisma, connections - without the important qualities in place) [414, L284 1:17]. Judges must be fair and impartial and must not be afraid to render proper judgments [415, L276 1:17]. Moshe retained the role of final authority on difficult matters.

**MitzvaWatch**

Even though these two mitzvot are primarily directed towards the leaders of the people whose task it is to choose judges and towards the judges themselves, respectively, there is an element of each mitzva that applies to each and every Jew. Every so often, we each can be in the position of choosing someone to fulfill a task. Perhaps a communal function, a teacher, youth leader... whatever. For any of these choices, there are right reasons and motivations and wrong reasons and motivations to guide our choices. This mitzva [414] commands us to always choose based on the proper criteria.

And many people find themselves in the position of making a judgment call. We may not be afraid to make a just decision, even in the face of possible unpleasant ramifications.

What was just said about these two mitzvot can apply to the many other mitzvot related to the justice system. There are formal judges, and then there are the rest of us who are put into the judge's chair as parents, employers, co-workers, students, friends, et al.

Once again, Eretz Yisrael is shown as the main focus and the People are
urged not to fear what lies ahead.

On the phrase from 1:16 - Hear it among your brothers and judge fairly - the Gemara teaches us that judges may not hear one party to a case without the other present.

In the same pasuk, the reference to the convert in the context of judging teaches us that conversion to Judaism must be done by a Beit Din. The Gemara states that if a non-Jew decides on his own that he is Jewish, this does not constitute conversion. A Beit Din and fulfillment of halachic steps are required.

**Shlishi - Third Aliya**

17 p'sukim - 1:22-38

Moshe next recounts for the new generation, the episode of the spies.

**SDT**

Parshat D'varim was "made" to be read on the Shabbat before Tish'a b'Av...

The mishna states that one of the tragedies marked by Tish'a b'Av - the first one, the one that gave Tish'a b'Av its dark character - was the decree against the (adult males of the) "Generation of the Wilderness". The sedra serves as a reproach for our poor attitudes and lack of commitment to the Land. It is as if G-d is saying to us: "Do not continue in the ways of that generation. Reverse the effect of that terrible punishment by heeding the call of Kalev and Yehoshua." When we, the Jewish People of today, succeed in "repairing" the negative attitudes and actions of the generation of the spies, the generation whose sins caused the destruction of the first Temple, the generation whose gratuitous hatred and Lashon HaRa caused the destruction of the second Temple, then we will merit and be privileged to rejoice in the building of the third Beit HaMikdash, the restoration of Jews all over the world to this Land, and the spreading of Torah values and commitment to mitzvot to all of Klal Yisrael. D'varim and its message of the significance of Eretz Yisrael and the reminder of G-d's terrible anger against those who denigrate the Land of Israel is the "perfect" introduction to 9Av. Amazing, is it not, how relevant this message is today. "Behold, I have set the Land before you; go in and possess the Land..." May we be deserving (and even if not deserving) to live in peace in all the Land of Israel, with all the People of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel.

Notice specifically, that of all the negative things done by the generation of the wilderness, it is only the Sin of the Spies that is spelled out in detail rather than REMEZ. It is more details (with differences) than we find back in Parshat Sh'lach. Everything else is scant hint and held for later review, if at all.

The Book of D'varim says over and over again that the Meraglim were wrong. They believed that the miraculous environment of the Wilderness was perfect for a Torah way of life. Not so. Moshe repeatedly tells us that Eretz Yisrael is the "real" place for the People of Israel.
OBSERVATION... Comparing Moshe's account with the original text in Shlach yields some interesting differences. Perhaps, most strikingly, is the blame Moshe takes upon himself. He even says that G-d banned him from Eretz Yisrael because of the Meraglim incident (when the Torah tells us that it was because of the hit instead of speak the rock incident).

On another note... It is clear that the original purpose of sending the men into the Land was to determine the best way to enter it and which border cities would be best to attack. It is equally clear that the purpose was NOT to decide whether to go or not. This is the major element of the Sin of the Spies and the people's reaction to their words. And it is clear that Moshe's approval of the idea was based upon the "proper" motive for sending the scouts in the first place and not for the way it turned out.

This idea is applicable to our times. A pilot trip to Israel should not be to decide whether or not to live in Israel. It should be for determining how best to make Aliya. Making Aliya should be the given.

Moshe shares the blame with the spies and announces that he had approved of the suggestion to send them. He explains what had happened as a result of the spies’ report. Moshe’s arguments (and those of Kalev and Yehoshua) were unsuccessful in calming the people’s panic. As a result, G-d decreed that none of the adult males (except for Kalev and Yehoshua) would enter the Land. Moshe tells them that he too was banned from entering the Land. It is to be Yehoshua who will lead the People henceforth.

We can see the special qualities of a true leader of the Jewish People. Moshe Rabeinu did not leave the blame for the Sin of the Spies with the people. He shouldered some of it (a lot of it) himself.

R’vi'i - Fourth Aliya
9 p'sukim - 1:39-2:1

As Moshe Rabeinu is telling the new generation what has happened, he is continually warning them against repeating the blunders of their predecessors. It is specifically this new generation that the previous one worried about. They cried that their children would be orphans. Those same children are now the one’s about to enter the Land.

Moshe also tells them of the tragic results in the People’s attempt to go into the Land against G-d’s wishes. It won’t work without G-d’s help; it cannot fail with His help. This is the lesson of more that 3300 years ago; this is the lesson for today.

Rashi records a tradition that the People of Israel spent 19 years - half of the wandering time - in one location, Kadesh. The actual wandering was much less than 40 years. On the other hand, there were places in which the
people only spent a day or so.

As many times as Moshe repeated the story and lessons to be learned from the Sin of the Spies, to the people of that generation, these same stories and lessons have been repeated thousands of times for the benefit of each and every Jew throughout the generations. Why does the Torah tell us to Remember the Shabbat day and make it holy? To remind us that it is important to make Kiddush as Shabbat begins and say Havdala as it ends, and to honor and sanctify the Shabbat in many other ways. Why tell us about Cheit HaMeraglim? Because it is an important reminder for us about the significance of Eretz Yisrael in G-d's Plan for the people of Israel.

**Chamishi 5th Aliya**

29 p'sukim - 2:2-30

[S> 2:2 (6 + 12/17 - there is a parsha-break in the middle of 2:8)] The People next turned northward and were warned not to fight with the people of Eisav, for their land is theirs as an inheritance. Only purchasing food and water for their journey past Eisav's territory would be permitted.

[S> 2:8 (5/17 + 8 p'sukim; this parsha begins in the middle of a pasuk)] They turned (from Edom) and headed towards Mo'av. Mo'av's territory was also placed off-limits because it was an inheritance for the descendants of Lot. Various peoples are named for the different lands in the area.

The wandering took 38 years until G-d told the People to cross into the territory of Amon and Moav, but without fighting there. Both Edom and Amon/Moav had fought for their land as Israel will be doing soon.

[S> 2:17 (14)] Next, the people passed Amonite territory. Here too they were not allowed by G-d to fight against the Amonites. Sichon the Amorite was not so fortunate. He was offered peace - same terms as with Eisav's people - but he rejected it, clearing the way for Israel to successfully conquer his land.

[This is reminiscent of the future (yes, we know that it usually is the other way around), Israel's victory in the Six Day War. Israel said to Jordan, that if it stayed out of the conflict, Israel would leave it alone. Jordan decided to attack (whatever their reason) and as a result, all of Jerusalem, and Yehuda and Shomron ended up back in our hands. If that is part of Eretz Yisrael - which it is, and we got that land in a war we were fighting for survival - not an aggressive war of conquest, then why should we give up even one square centimeter of our land? Population problems? Let's solve them in a way that is NOT self-destructive. Not so easy when the population around us and in our midst is taught to hate us.]
Shishi - Sixth Aliya
21 p'sukim - 2:31-3:14

[2:31 (29)] Moshe continues his narrative with the details of the victories over Sichon and his land. Og, king of Bashan, also fell to Israel. Moshe describes the conquered lands that have been promised to the tribes of Reuven, Gad, and half of Menashe. The victories on the East Bank of the Jordan helped build Israel's confidence for the difficult times to come upon crossing the Jordan into Eretz Yisrael. This new generation, the children of slaves, needed the multi-faceted preparation that the years of wandering provided, in order to be able to succeed in their conquest and settling of the Land.

Haftara 27 p'sukim
Yeshayahu 1:1-27

This is the third of the haftarot of Tragedy. The prophet speaks of the accumulation of terrible sins and acts of unfaithfulness to G-d which lead to the destruction of Zion and Jerusalem. This haftara is 'perfectly' suited to precede Tish'at b'Av. Most of this haftara is read in the tune of Eicha, rather than the regular haftara tune. The final p'sukim switch to the regular haftara melody because they contain the promise of an end to exile and the rebuilding of Zion and Jerusalem in a mode of justice and righteousness. This bright note is appropriate for Shabbat, in contrast to the main part of the prophecy which Shabbat has no choice but to tolerate, so to speak, since it is right before Tish'a b'Av.

Yeshayahu contrasts the people of Israel, who had become unfaithful to G-d, with animals, who instinctively acknowledge their owners. "An ox knows its owner and a donkey recognizes its owner's pen." In an allusion to this pasuk, the Yerushalmi tells the story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Torata who sold his ox to a non-Jew. The ox refused to work on Shabbat, until Rabbi Yochanan whispered in its ear that it was now owned by a non-Jew and must work on Shabbat.
Which it then did. There is also the story of the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas b. Yair. These stories give us insight into the harsh criticism of the People of Israel who repeatedly "do not know" their Creator. Loyalty to a master is one of the many lessons we must learn from (some) animals.

**PROBING the PROPHETS**

As we have pointed out in the past, this week's haftara, "Chazon", is taken from the first perek of Sefer Yishayahu but, according to most meforshim, is not the first vision of the navi, which is found in the sixth perek of his sefer. Perhaps the placement of this later nevu'a at the opening of the book is because it expresses the most basic themes that are emphasized throughout Sefer Yishayahu.

The navi prophesied during the time when the northern tribes were exiled from Eretz Yisrael for the rampant worship of false gods that filled the land. While his contemporary, Hoshea, prophesied to the soon-to-be exiled north, Yishayahu directed his words to Yehuda, the southern kingdom. Often, he would use the punishment of Efrayim, (or Shomron - synonyms for the northern kingdom) as a warning of what would happen to the southern kingdom if they continue to turn to idolatry.

But decrying idolatry was not the only theme of the book. In fact, Yishayahu focuses on the holiness of the people that requires them to internalize the significance of the ritual practices and of the sacrificial rites but, most importantly, to pursue justice and righteousness with one another. And this is precisely the focus of this haftara.

In the outset of the reading, Yishayahu decries the sinfulness of the people, marked by their abandonment of G-d, despite the severe punishments with which they were threatened. The navi describes the desolation of the land which would ultimately take place following their exile from Eretz Yisrael. He then turns to the nation's meaningless worship of Hashem - whether through sacrifices or through prayer - even to the point of exclaiming that G-d "detests" their observances of the chagim. Yishayahu calls for them to cease their evil deeds and purify themselves from all their trespasses saying that, if they do, Hashem will erase their sins.

The final section of the haftara condemns the corruption found in the Judean society - corruption that is typified by the actions of the leaders and nobility. Those judges who pursue wealth and, as a result, accept bribes, princes and leaders who ignore the plight of the orphan and who are deaf to the grievances of the widow, have been allowed to trample upon the unfortunate and to pervert justice within the nation. As the Radak explains, rather than use their positions to protect the people from
thieves and brutality, they have col-
luded with the thieves and the brutal.

These crimes, heinous as they were, seem to be the limited to the actions of the powerful, the nobility and the wealthy. Nonetheless, it is clear that the blame is to be shared by all. An essential truth that the prophet teaches is that the silent majority who allows these crimes to take place, those who may not act wickedly but do not react to the wickedness, share in the punishment because they share in the blame. They too will suffer because they were silent.

As we approach the Tzom of Tish'a b'Av, it would be proper to consider the warnings of Yishayahu. Not simply the sins of commission but those of omission as well. What could we have done to prevent a chilul Hashem? What could we have done to help one in need avoid being embarrassed or ignored? How can we help those who need comfort or company receive what they need?

We can once again become that nation known for justice and righteousness, a nation that cares for everyone and provides for their needs.

All we need do is remember the words that Yishayahu told his generation - and realize that they apply to our generation as well.

*Probing the Prophets, weekly insights into the Haftara, is written by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler, author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*
In our Parsha that opens Sefer D'varim, Moshe recounts the events that the people experienced during their travels in the desert. Uncharacteristically of our current leaders, Moshe describes the difficulties of judging Bnei Yisrael; he laments the burden that was placed upon his head. Moshe then continues to portray how he appointed “the heads of your tribes... as heads over you, leaders of thousands... hundreds... fifties... and tens - and officers for your tribes" (D'varim 1:15).

For every thousand people, there were now 131 lieutenants! Why so many? The Vilna Gaon indicates that each category of leader had a specific task. In order: military commanders over thousands; judges over hundreds; teachers over fifties; and over the tens, policemen, while the officers were to enforce the decisions of the courts.

The goal was to reduce the burden on Moshe's shoulders. But another no less critical objective was achieved. Many people were now sharing the responsibility for the moral fiber of the community. They were beginning to actualize the (rabbinic) maxim that all Jews are responsible for one another (Shevu'ot 39a).

In these days of the Three Weeks (and Nine Days), may we be so inspired to take on the mantle of leadership with that convivial care and concern due to our fellow brothers and sisters, thus to hasten the Redemption, speedily and in our days.
The Teacher as Hero

Imagine the following scenario. You are 119 years and 11 months old. The end of your life is in sight. Your hopes have received devastating blows. You have been told by God that you will not enter the land to which you have been leading your people for forty years. You have been repeatedly criticised by the people you have led. Your sister and brother, with whom you shared the burdens of leadership, have predeceased you. And you know that neither of your children, Gershom and Eliezer, will succeed you. Your life seems to be coming to a tragic end, your destination unreached, your aspirations unfulfilled. What do you do?

We can imagine a range of responses. You could sink into sadness, reflecting on the might-have-beens had the past taken a different direction. You could continue to plead with God to change His mind and let you cross the Jordan. You could retreat into memories of the good times: when the people sang a song at the Red Sea, when they gave their assent to the covenant at Sinai, when they built the Mishkan. These would be the normal human reactions.

Moshe did none of these things - and what he did instead helped change the course of Jewish history.

For a month Moshe convened the people on the far side of the Jordan and addressed them. Those addresses form the substance of the book of D'varim. They are extraordinarily wide-ranging, covering a history of the past, a set of prophecies and warnings about the future, laws, narratives, a song, and a set of blessings. Together they constitute the most comprehensive, profound vision of what it is to be a holy people, dedicated to God, constructing a society that would stand as a role model for humanity in how to combine freedom and order, justice and compassion, individual dignity and collective responsibility.

Over and above what Moshe said in the last month of his life, though, is what Moshe did. He changed careers. He shifted his relationship with the people. No longer Moshe the liberator, the lawgiver, the worker of miracles, the intermediary between the Israelites and God, he became the figure known to Jewish memory: Moshe Rabbeinu, "Moshe, our teacher". That is how D'varim begins - "Moshe began to expound this Law" (1:5) - using a verb, be'er, that we have not encountered in this sense in the Torah and which appears only one more time towards the end of the book: "And you shall write very clearly [ba'er hetev] all the words of
this law on these stones" (27:8). He wanted to explain, expound, make clear. He wanted the people to understand that Judaism is not a religion of mysteries intelligible only to the few. It is - as he would say in his very last speech - an "inheritance of the [entire] congregation of Yaakov" (33:4).

Moshe became, in the last month of his life, the master educator. In these addresses, he does more than tell the people what the law is. He explains to them why the law is. There is nothing arbitrary about it. The law is as it is because of the people's experience of slavery and persecution in Egypt, which was their tutorial in why we need freedom and law-governed liberty. Time and again he says: You shall do this because you were once slaves in Egypt. They must remember and never forget - two verbs that appear repeatedly in the book - where they came from and what it felt like to be exiled, persecuted, and powerless. In Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical Hamilton, George Washington tells the young, hot-headed Alexander Hamilton: "Dying is easy, young man; living is harder." In D'varim, Moshe keeps telling the Israelites, in effect: Slavery is easy; freedom is harder.

Throughout D'varim, Moshe reaches a new level of authority and wisdom. For the first time we hear him speak extensively in his own voice, rather than merely as the transmitter of God's words to him. His grasp of vision and detail is faultless. He wants the people to understand that the laws God has commanded them are for their good, not just God's.

All ancient peoples had gods. All ancient peoples had laws. But their laws were not from a god; they were from the king, pharaoh, or ruler - as in the famous law code of Hammurabi. The gods of the ancient world were seen as a source of power, not justice. Laws were man-made rules for the maintenance of social order. The Israelites were different. Their laws were not made by their kings - monarchy in ancient Israel was unique in endowing the king with no legislative powers. Their laws came directly from God Himself, Creator of the universe and Liberator of His people. Hence Moshe's ringing declaration: "Observe [these laws] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (4:6).

At this defining moment of his life, Moshe understood that, though he would not be physically with the people when they entered the Promised Land, he could still be with them intellectually and emotionally if he gave them the teachings to take with them into the future. Moshe became the pioneer of perhaps the single greatest contribution of Judaism to the concept of leadership: the idea of the teacher as hero.
Heroes are people who demonstrate courage in the field of battle. What Moshe knew was that the most important battles are not military. They are spiritual, moral, cultural. A military victory shifts the pieces on the chessboard of history. A spiritual victory changes lives. A military victory is almost always short-lived. Either the enemy attacks again or a new and more dangerous opponent appears. But spiritual victories can - if their lesson is not forgotten - last forever. Even quite ordinary people, Yiftach, for example (Shoftim 11 & 12), or Shimshon (13-16), can be military heroes. But those who teach people to see, feel, and act differently, who enlarge the moral horizons of humankind, are rare indeed. Of these, Moses was the greatest.

Not only does he become the teacher in D'varim. In words engraved on Jewish hearts ever since, he tells the entire people that they must become a nation of educators:

Make known to your children and your children's children, how you once stood before the Lord your God at Chorev (4:9-10).

In the future, when your child asks you, "What is the meaning of the testimonies, decrees, and laws that the Lord our God has commanded you?" tell them, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand...." (6:20-21)

Teach [these words] to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise (11:19).

Indeed, the last two commands Moshe ever gave the Israelites were explicitly educational in nature: to gather the entire people together in the seventh year to hear the Torah being read, to remind them of their covenant with God (31:12-13), and, "Write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the people of Israel" (31:19), understood as the command that each person must write for himself a scroll of the law. In D'varim, a new word enters the biblical vocabulary: the verb LAMED-MEM-DALET, meaning to learn or teach. The verb does not appear even once in B'reishit, Sh'mot, Vayikra, or Bamidbar. In D'varim it appears seventeen times.

There was nothing like this concern for universal education elsewhere in the ancient world. Jews became the people whose heroes were teachers, whose citadels were schools, and whose passion was study and the life of the mind.

Moshe's end-of-life transformation is one of the most inspiring in all of religious history. In that one act, he liberated his career from tragedy. He became a leader not for his time only but for all time. His body did not accompany his people as they entered the land, but his teachings did. His sons did not
succeed him, but his disciples did. He may have felt that he had not changed his people in his lifetime, but in the full perspective of history, he changed them more than any leader has ever changed any people, turning them into the People of the Book and the nation who built not ziggurats or pyramids but schools and houses of study.

The poet Shelley famously said, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." In truth, though, it is not poets but teachers who shape society, handing on the legacy of the past to those who build the future. That insight sustained Judaism for longer than any other civilisation, and it began with Moshe in the last month of his life.

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These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks are part of the 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more essays from the series on [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org)
These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan, concerning the Wilderness, the Arava, opposite the Red Sea, between Paran and between Tofel, and Lavan, and Chatzerot, and Di-Zahav (1:1 - translated according to Rashi).

The bulk of Sefer D’varim contains Moshe’s final address to B’nei Yisrael before his death. The first third was to remind them of their past sins and rebellions from Yetzi’at Mitzrayim onwards.

In order not to open by offending or embarrassing them, he alluded-to rather than emphasized the offences, by stating where they were located (following Rashi to 1:1). Thus for example, Di-Zahav was a euphemism for the place where the Israelites built the Golden Calf, which was made possible because they had dai zahav, enough gold.

Once the Israelites were tuned into his hints of castigation, he continued to detail the offences, which form a large part of this and the oncoming parashiot. However the content of his warnings shows clearly that he gave his listeners self-respect. When Moshe reproved the people he did not refer to the misdeeds of any individual families, such as Korach's.

The Ohr HaChayim suggests that the words in the opening pasuk are remazim, hints, to what is the correct frame of mind to absorb Torah teaching, including what Moshe himself was delivering.

Specifically, the word EIVER in Eiver HaYardein contains the same core letters as IVRI, which refers to Avraham Ha-Ivri (B’reishit 14:13). As Yeshayahu would put it, B’nei Yisrael must turn to its distinguished origins: "Look to the rock from which you were hewn… look to Avraham your forefather… when he was one alone, I summoned him, I blessed him, and I made him many" (Yeshayahu 51:1-2).

Further hints emanate from the next words. Yardein’s core letters are similar to lirdot, meaning to castigate, including self-castigate. A person should be self-critical and strive to constantly improve. Bamidbar, literally in the wilderness, alludes to the quality of humility, concerning which "a person should always see himself as a wilderness" (Eruvin 54a), but at the same time not being too humble to speak up take responsibility for others when necessary, the word Arava having similar letters to areivut, all Israelites having a responsibility to one another.

Other remazim include Mul Suf, opposite the Red Sea, but can be literally rendered as "facing the end", regarding which Akavia b. Mahallel...
would emphasize: "Consider these three things and you will never sin: where you started life, where you will finish life, and to Whom you will be giving account of your deeds" (Avot 3:1). They also include dizahav, enough gold, hinting that a person should not strive for wealth beyond his needs, but bear in mind: "Who is wealthy? He that is satisfied with the wealth he has" (Avot 4.1).

In sum, the Ohr HaChayim expounds the opening words of Sefer D'varim as creating the attitude among Am Yisrael that is most receptive to learning Torah, even when containing words of rebuke. That mindset includes remembering the examples set within one's distinguished ancestral roots, and the balancing of self-improvement, initiative and responsibility to others with humility, appreciating what one has, and an eye to one's final destiny that is common to all people. Not having such a mindset is like throwing seeds on an unploughed desert surface; even the best ones will not take root. Conversely, cultivating that attitude makes it possible for those "seeds" to "germinate and flourish"; a lesson to teachers and purveyors of Torah. ☞
It's On Me

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Yoma 5a) makes a stark statement.

‘Every generation in which the Beit HaMikdash is not rebuilt, it is as if he is responsible for its destruction.’

Rav Asher Weiss (Minchas Asher), highlights that the text of the Yerushalmi quoted above is often misinterpreted. The common understanding of the above statement is that if the Beit HaMikdash is not rebuilt in our lifetime it is because our “generation” was not worthy of its being rebuilt. In a way it is a bit of a relief for us to place responsibility for not meriting the rebuilding of the Mikdash on others. There is so much Chilul Shabbat, sinat chinam and other transgressions being committed by the masses, and that is why we do not merit the redemption. Yet, if we look at the specific language used by the Yerushalmi, it states – K’ILU HU HECHERIVO - it is as if “he” destroyed it. The gemara does not state that it is as if the generation was not worthy, rather it uses the term HU- relating the responsibility to the individual! Each and every individual has to internalize that we are personally responsible for the fact that we did not merit the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash (yet) in our lifetime.

When there is a storm at sea, Yona HaNavi steps up to the plate and takes responsibility by stating: ‘This storm is on account of my behavior.’

The Gemara in Gittin (58a) informs us of a story whereby Rav Yehoshua ben Chananya, who was on his way to Rome was told that there was a young child who was taken captive. Rav Yehoshua goes to visit the child and asks him a question, which is actually a pasuk from the Navi Yeshayahu (42:24):

Who subjected Yaacov to plunder and Israel to spoilers? Meaning - why did this happen, that you were placed in captivity?

The young lad responded by citing the remainder of the verse in Yeshayahu:

Was it not HaShem? This, that we sinned against Him, and they did not want to go in His way and did not hearken to His Torah.

Rabbi Yehoshua hears his words and declares this child will grow to become a gadol hador and demands that he be redeemed by the community and freed from captivity immediately. That child was Rav Yishmael ben Elisha. Asks the Minchas Asher, how did Rav Yehoshua recognize from this brief exchange that this child would be a great scholar? By analyzing the child’s response, we see his level of maturity. The pasuk he quoted answers Rav
Yehoshua’s question - why was this child taken into captivity? The child responds initially with a “we” sinned against Hashem. He includes himself. He takes responsibility. Then he uses more general terms, to include others - “they” did not want to go in His way. True the people were not all Torah abiding Jews, and they have to improve their ways, but first the child introspects and admits that he has to improve as well. That is the mark of a true scholar; one who does not point fingers at others, but who internalizes events in order to improve oneself and blossom.

The story is told of the Rabbi who gave a knockout drasha Shabbat morning. He pointed out to his congregation all the areas in which they needed improvement, in an inspiring and moving way. On his way down from the pulpit, one of his baalei batim ran over and exclaimed, “Rabbi, you really told them all they needed to hear! Yashar Ko’ach”. The Rabbi then continued walking to his seat bit now with mixed feelings. He did his best but he realized that someone will always look elsewhere to place the blame.

During this time of year when we mourn the loss of our Batei Mikdash, and yearn for the redemption, we should internalize the loss and take personal responsibility for not yet meriting the geula sh’leima in our time. To understand the words of the Yerushalmi, K’ILU HU HECHERIVO to refer to the personal contribution that each of us has toward the destruction of the Mikdash. Rather than look elsewhere and blame others for our fate, we should look in the mirror and direct our attention to that individual and “reflect” on how to improve our avodatHashem. How to improve our davening, our Torah learning, our patience with our children and spouse and the acts of chesed we could perform. If each and every one of us would take upon ourselves that responsibility, perhaps we would merit the building of the third Beit HaMikdash in our time!
The Cause of the Churban

Flaunting what we have and what we have accomplished comes naturally to many people today. Social media particularly is bent on making sure everyone knows everything about anything that one deems important to know. One of the fallouts of this phenomenon is found in a fundamental Kli Yakar on Parshat D’varim.

After the sin of the Spies, the Torah tells us that the Jews spent a long time going around Har Se’ir, instead of crossing it to enter the land of Israel. The D’varim 2:3 states: “Enough of your circling this mountain, turn yourselves northward [tzafona].” The Kli Yakar comments that this pasuk is alluding to the reality of Jewish History. It is a description of the quintessential wandering Jew, continuously traveling from place to place until the time of the final redemption. The end of the pasuk, however, is perhaps most informative; when a Jew finds success and riches in places of galut, then “tzafona” (from the root tafun-hide) one should conceal what he has and not display it.

Further, it is not accidental that this verse is referring to the travels around the mountain of Se’ir, the territory of Eisav. Eisav has never forgiven Yaakov for stealing his brachot and believes that all earthly riches belong to him exclusively. Such feelings of being cheated are still present in his descendants who are jealous of any wealth and grandeur that any Jew possesses. The Kli Yakar warns the people of his generation and generations for all time to be careful about public exhibition of their wealth so as not to arouse the envy of the nations.

Parshat D’varim is always read right before Tish’a b’Av. Perhaps the lesson of the Kli Yakar can be extended to include interpersonal relationships between Jews as well. We are all still struggling with the great offense of sinat chinam, baseless hatred -- the ultimate cause of the churban. It is appropriate to ask ourselves at this time if we are in any way responsible for igniting this baseless hatred. What are we gaining by posting every detail of our riches, successes and vacations for all to see and “ooh” and “aah”?

The path to rebuilding the Beit HaMikdash is through improving our inner selves in the way Hashem desires. The navi Micha teaches us the three fundamental building blocks of serving Hashem: doing acts of justice, loving kindness, and walking modestly with Hashem. Modesty is not only in dress; it is in knowing how to appreciate what we have without creating resentment and antagonism from the nations or among our own brethren. When we can “hide” our wealth we begin to “reveal” our greatness.
Tish’a b’Av: We Are All from Yerushalayim

When beloved Israeli author, Shmuel Yosef “Shai” Agnon was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966, his acceptance speech revolved around his Jewish identity, relationship to Torah, love for Yidishkeit and Kesher to Yerushalayim.

When asked by Gustav VI, the King of Sweden, where he had been born, Agnon replied, “Your Majesty, like all Jews, I come from Jerusalem.”

In his legendary acceptance speech, Agnon addressed the honored assembly, and again spoke of his connection to our eternal capital: “As a result of the great catastrophe in which Titus of Rome destroyed the Holy City and Israel was exiled from its land, I was born in one of the cities of the Exile, Buczacz. But always I regarded myself as one who was born in Jerusalem. In a dream, in a vision of the night, I saw myself standing with my brother Leviyim in the Beit HaMikdash, singing with them the songs of David, King of Israel...”

In the Torah’s account of Yaakov Avinu fleeing his brother Eisav’s wrath (Vayeitzei, B’reishit 28), Yaakov is alone, surrounded by darkness, and sleeping on the cold ground. Suddenly, he experiences a “vision of the night”: he sees a ladder to Heaven with angels “ascending and descending”, and realizes he is in the future Makom haMikdash, the place of the Holy Temple.

Yaakov Avinu represents and expresses the Mida of Tiferet, ‘Splendor’, which is the quality of harmonious uniting of opposites. In his night vision, he sees a place and a time in which he and his brother will be in harmony and peace, in which the Jewish family will be reunited. When he awakens, he is inspired to ‘pray’, V’shavti b’Shalom el Beit Avi - “and I shall return to my father’s house in peace (28:21)...”

We too, through Shalom and brotherhood, are charged to restore the splendor and beauty of Am Yisrael; ‘Yaakov’ will then rise up from the ground, the dawn will break, and we will return to Beit Avi.

Hishlich miShamayim Eretz Tiferet Yisrael; “He has cast down from heaven to earth the glory of Israel (Eicha 2:1)” Reb Shlomo Halberstam, The Bobover Rebbe zy’a, explains this pasuk in connection to Yaakov Avinu: the glory (Tiferet) of Israel (Yaakov) is our Achdut, our togetherness, the oneness of our greater family. This is what was cast to the ground. Indeed as is well known and oft-quoted but tragically not yet internalized, the
Mikdash was destroyed due to Sinat Chinam, baseless hatred (Gemara Yoma 9b). The Bobover Rebbe concludes: the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash will come through reclaiming our People’s Tiferet, our Achdut - our Shalom.

The Halachot of Tish’a b’Av restrict us from She’eilat Shalom, greeting one another. How, really, can we wish each other Shalom Aleichem on a day where we deeply feel the lack of Shalom and Shleimut in the world? However, this year the Ninth of Av falls out on Shabbat, and the fasting and explicit grief are pushed off until Sunday. Therefore, we have the unique opportunity to connect with one another, express brotherhood by greeting each other with a Shabbat Shalom, even on the Ninth day of Av.

Consider: is there someone we are estranged from, a former business associate, an old classmate, friend or family member from whom we have grown distant? Perhaps now is the right time, the opportune time, to extend a She’eilat Shalom.

It has been two thousand years since our “brother Leviyim” have sung those songs in the Beit haMikdash. May we extend Shalom and Achdut to our neighbors, sisters and brothers, and make efforts toward repairing relationships, and may this bring us closer to our birthplace, our father’s home. JMi
Teachings of the Maharal

Birth Order Relates to Modesty

D’varim 2:9 - Hashem said to me, "Do not besiege Moav and do not provoke war with them..."

Rashi - He forbade only war with Moav, but they could frighten them and appear armed. Therefore, Moav was afraid of the nation [Bamidbar 22:3], for they would loot and plunder them. But with Amon it says, “do not provoke them” [2:19] - any provocation. This was a reward for the modesty of their mother, who did not publicize her father's sin as her sister did by calling her son Moav.

Gur Arye - With respect to Moav, Moshe is told, "Do not provoke war", and by Amon, “do not provoke them.” The fact of their mother’s modesty made them closer to Israel, whose attribute is modesty in a world where the other nations are immodest. Not only was their mother modest but the nation of Amon as a whole was. If you understand this, you will understand the words of the sages, that as a reward for Rachel’s modesty she merited Shaul among her descendants [Megila 13b]. Note that the younger one is modest and inwardly directed, coming from a more modest and internal origin.

How do we know of Rachel’s modesty? She was the younger, born later, more hidden. Likewise, Lot’s younger daughter was prepared for a more modest role, and her seed came from a more modest, internal place, and like begets like, resulting in a nation of modesty. Therefore, Amon was worthy of Hashem’s protection.

Hashem commanded Moshe to circumvent their land, which He had earlier given them as an inheritance. In fact, you will find that Moav, Amon and Edom were all nations before Israel, who became a nation only upon emerging from Egypt, after the others were residing on their land.

Physicality comes first and spirituality last. This applies to man just as it applies to Israel. Spirituality perfects and completes. Therefore, man was created last of all creation. Similarly, all the other nations were created before Israel. There were seventy nations in the generation of dispersion, and four subsequent Abrahamic nations - Amon, Moav, Yishmael and Edom. Then the spiritual nation, Israel, emerged from Egypt and brought hashlama [completion, perfection] to the world.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr
Walk through the Parsha
with Rabbi David Walk

FEEDING TROUGH

Before the advent of Stephen Spielberg, my favorite movie genre was westerns. I loved High Noon, The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, and so many, many others. The most striking scenes were usually shot in Monument Valley, Arizona. Those majestic buttes and mesas populated my dreams until Close Encounters of the Third Kind, when all I could dream about was Devil's Tower, Wyoming. But the most characteristic scenes in these movies took place on main street in some generic Western town, complete with saloon, church and hitching posts. Next to those hitching posts was a watering trough for horses, into which, inevitably, a cowboy would get dunked or bullets would pierce. I never thought those props would invade a D'VAR TORAH. But lo and behold, a fascinating debate got me thinking about those troughs.

This week's famous Haftara gives our Shabbat its name, Shabbat Chazon, Yeshayahu's vision. This stirring address to the leaders of our nation, begins, 'An ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's feeding trough, but Israel doesn't know, My people don't understand' (Yeshayahu 1:2). The normative approach to this rebuke is that the Jews have less loyalty to God than farm animals to the farmer. Even these domesticated beasts realize on which side their bread is buttered. Our Sages view ingratitude as a horrible character flaw. It's bad policy on both practical and ethical grounds.

The Radak (R' David Kimchi, 1160-1235), rubs salt into the wound by explaining that the central idea isn't gratitude, but intelligence. These animals are displaying superior awareness of their status in the nature of things than their human counterparts, in our relationship with God.

But not everyone agrees with that assessment. Shadal (R' Shmuel David Luzzato, 1800-1865) translates the word AVUS differently. We translated it 'feeding trough', but he avers that this is the threshing floor. In this scenario, the ox's level of understanding far outstrips ours. These massive beasts of burden go straight to work for their owner. They understand that they must do their master's bidding to receive life's requirements. The Talmud further chastens us by demanding that when one is lashed...
according to Jewish law, the strap must contain donkey hide, because 'a sinner who doesn't recognize God's control will be punished by means of a donkey who knows the master's AVUS' (Makot 23a).

This is a powerful censure of the Jewish people. It reflects the sorry state of affairs in ancient Israel, leading up to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash. Sadly, this observation remains relevant for many of our modern brethren. Most of world Jewry follows neither the letter nor spirit of God's Torah. En mass, Jews ignore the nuts and bolts of Jewish law, but, perhaps, more importantly don't live up to the high ethical standards demanded by our tradition, our Torah and our God.

However, it's the S'fat Emet who takes Yeshayahu's reprimand and applies it specifically to Tish'a b'Av. The Gerrer Rebbe is addressing a very specific audience, his Chasidim, and declares, CHAS V'SHALOM that the Jews (at least his Chasidim) don't have the same recognition of God comparable to barnyard animals' relationship to their master. After all, they bless and pray to God. So, what can this mean? Rather the Divine will for B'nei Yisrael is that we should clearly recognize and demonstrate (LEVARIR) God's kingship over the world. This was the situation during the glorious time when the Beit HaMikdash stood in Yerushalayim, and our ancestors brought the daily offerings. This daily process of serving God helped to bind (LEHITDABEK) the life force of every living thing to heaven. Even the gentiles recognized this phenomenon. As a result, many gentiles also brought offerings to God's Holy Abode. That's when Yerushalayim was the Faithful City (KIRYA NE'EMANA).

But towards the end of that magical period, Yeshayahu declares that the Jews no longer 'know their Master'. By this, he meant that the Jews had lost their way. They forgot that they had to bring this knowledge of God to all life on earth.

Rav Kook, in the previous century, added to these ideas. He taught that along with controlling our behavior, we're also required to have at least some control over what we think. Rav Kook describes 'ethical enlightenment'. This requires us to not only freely choose to behave morally but also do it because that's what God wants from us.

This is harder for us than it was for the people who were able to see God's glory daily, because now God is
only found in 'the heavenly sanctuary' (Tehilim 11:4).

Now, I think that we can understand what the S’fat Emet was saying about Yeshayahu's complaint. In those days, the choice was pretty straightforward. Either recognize God or idols, but today, idolatry is off the menu. So, one might believe that it's easier to follow God and the Torah. However, that's not true. Because, without the Beit HaMikdash, we must be the vehicle for God's glory in this world. When the Beit HaMikdash sat sublime in Yerushalayim, the moral choices were only about us. Be good or be bad. But in our present status, we must not only be good, but do it in such a way that the glory of God is evident to the whole world.

Yes, the Gerrer Chasidim of the S'fat Emet recognized God in their BRACHOT and TEFILOT, but did they make the Creator manifest in this world? With a Mikdash, following God is comparable to farm animals, either 'yes' or 'no'. Without it, the 'yes' must be accompanied by clearly demonstrating God's HASHGACHA.

On Tish'a b'Av, we, of course, mourn the destructions of the Batei Mikdash. But even more so, we mourn the seeming absence of God in the world. The purpose of the mourning is to motivate us to do something about that dual absence in our world. We not only have to build a building, but also a bridge for God's entry into this realm.
D’varim-Chazon

The Path to Eloquence

It is an experience common to all freshmen. One comes to a new campus, knows no one, and tries to orient himself by identifying the senior students who seem to have prestige. Then, he tries to connect with these campus big shots.

This was my experience precisely when, many years ago, I explored a new yeshiva at a transition point in my life. I was barely 19 years old, and I was trying to decide whether I would pursue an exclusively Talmudic education or combine my Talmud studies with college courses. I decided to spend the spring semester in an elite institution devoted only to Talmud, and to determine whether this approach suited me.

I quickly came to learn that the senior students were organized in a kind of hierarchy which reflected their respective degrees of erudition and their relationship to the world-famous dean of the school. I was somewhat impressed by all of them, but one in particular stood out for me. I do not recall his name now, but I can close my eyes and easily conjure up an image of him.

He was about twenty-five years old, of medium height, thin and wiry. He had a precision to him which resulted from his carefully measured movements. When he walked, he seemed to be taking each step intentionally. When he moved his hands, there was a precision to his movements. The words that came out of his mouth were few and deliberate; and his comments, short and to the point.

I remember being impressed by how he sat down before the texts he studied, first brushing the dust off of his desk and chair, then opening his book cautiously, and then taking from his pocket a plastic six-inch ruler. He placed the ruler under the line of text which was his focus, almost as if he intended to literally measure the words on the page.

I was fascinated by him and began to inquire about his background. I soon learned that he was the wunderkind of the school. His scholarly achievements impressed everyone. In early adolescence, he had found his studies extremely frustrating. Had this occurred but a decade or two later, he would probably have been diagnosed as learning disabled. He was not as bright as his peers, had great difficulties in following the give and take of Talmudic passages, and couldn't handle the bilingual curriculum.
At the suggestion of his high school's guidance counselor, he made a trip to Israel to study there, something more uncommon in those days. While there, still frustrated, he sought the blessing and counsel of the famous sage, Rabbi Abraham Isaiah Karelitz, more commonly known as the Chazon Ish.

This great man, then in his waning years, encouraged the young lad to persist in his studies, but to limit the scope of his daily efforts to small, "bite-sized chunks" of text. He concluded the interview with a blessing, quoting the passage in Psalms which asserts that Torah study can make even a dullard wise.

I befriended the young man, easily five or six years my senior, and attempted to enlist him as my study partner. But I soon discovered that his keen intelligence and the broad scope of his knowledge were far too advanced for me. The advice and blessing of the Chazon Ish coupled with the young man's years of toil and commitment had the desired effect. He may indeed have once been a dullard, but he was one no longer. He was now an intellectual giant.

Although I did not learn much Talmud from this fellow, I did learn a most important life lesson from him. I learned that one can overcome his limitations if he persists in trying to overcome them. I learned that one could undo his natural challenges with a combination of heeding wise counsel, becoming inspired spiritually, and devoting himself with diligence and dedication to the task.

It was much later in life when I realized that I could have learned the same important life lesson from this week's Torah portion, D'varim, and from no less a personage than our teacher Moshe, himself. This week, we begin the entire book of D'varim. Almost all of this book consists of the major address which Moshe gave to the Jewish people before he took his final leave from them. "These are the words that Moshe addressed to all of Israel..." (D'varim 1:1).

Although it is now the long, hot summer, all readers of this verse remember that cold, wintry Shabbat just six months ago when we first encountered Moshe, back in the Torah portion of Sh'mot. We then read of how Moshe addressed the Almighty and expressed his inability to accept the divine mission. He said: "Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue..." (Sh'mot 4:10). Moshe stammered and stuttered and suffered from a genuine speech defect.

How surprising it is, then, that in this week's Torah portion, albeit forty years later, he is capable of delivering the
lengthy and eloquent address which we are about to read every week for the next few months! How did he overcome his limitations? What are the secrets of his path to eloquence?

These questions are asked in the collection of homilies known as the Midrash Tanchuma. There, the rabbis speak of the astounding power of sincere and sustained Torah study. They speak too of the effects of years of practice. And they emphasize the healing which comes about from a connection with the One Above. The rabbis of the Midrash Tanchuma could have cited the Lord's own response to Moshe's initial complaint: "Who gives a man speech? Who makes him dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"

But those rabbis chose another proof text entirely to illustrate that man, with God's help, can overcome his handicaps and challenges. They quote instead that beautiful passage in the book of Yesha-yahu which reads:

> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb shall shout aloud;
For waters shall burst forth in the desert,
Streams in the wilderness. (35:5-6)

We seldom contemplate the development, nay transformation, of the man who was Moshe. But it is important that we do so, because, although we each have our unique challenges and personal handicaps, we are capable of coping with them, and often of overcoming them. We all can develop, and we all can potentially transform ourselves.

This week, and in all of the ensuing weeks which lie ahead, as we read Moshe's masterful valedictory and are impressed with the beauty of his language, we must strive to remember that he was not always a skilled orator. Quite the contrary, he was once an aral s'fatayim, a man of impeded speech, who grew to achieve the divine blessing of shedding his impediments and addressing his people with the inspiring and eminent long speech that is the book of D'varim.

He can be a role model for us all.
**Why the UN Needs the Beit HaMikdash**

by Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

One of the 13 Principles of Faith listed by the Rambam is the belief that Mashiach will come and build the Final Beit HaMikdash. Why is the belief in the rebuilding of the Mikdash an Essential of Judaism?

The Beit HaMikdash was much more than just a magnificent physical building in which G-d’s Holy Divine Presence dwelt. The Beit HaMikdash was the place where every human being, not just a Jewish person, could connect with G-d, and form a unique, special bond of love and closeness with Him.

The concentration of Holiness that was contained in the abode of G-d’s Glory enabled EVERY person to develop a special closeness and love that nourishes one’s G-dly soul and spiritual existence. The Beit HaMikdash was the spiritual center of the ENTIRE world, which served as a conduit through which every human being’s prayers ascended to G-d in Heaven. And through which an abundance of Divine Grace and bounty descended to the physical world. The Beit HaMikdash was truly the Stairway to Heaven for ALL mankind.

This is why G-d tells Yeshayahu in ch. 56 “…for My House will be called a House of Prayer for ALL the (United) Nations.” G-d is not just the G-d of Israel but He is the G-d of ALL mankind, and He calls all peoples to acknowledge and worship Him.

The Talmud in Menachot 53 states that the Beit HaMikdash has to be built by a person who is called a YEDID, which means a lover of G-d. That is why Shlomo HaMelech, who built the First Beit HaMikdash, was called Yedidiyah by G-d, which means G-d’s Lover.

And that is why the first two and the Final Beit HaMikdash are all located in the territory of the Tribe of Binyamin, because Binyamin is the only son of Yaakov who is called Yedid Hashem, the Lover of G-d (D’varim 33). Why is Binyamin so special? After all, he is the youngest of Yaakov’s 12 sons. The Ramban answers that he is the only son of Yaakov who was born in the Holy Land. Therefore all the Batei HaMikdash are located only in his territory.

The message to us is to appreciate and cherish the merit of dwelling in G-d’s Holy Palace! 🌟
When ma'aser sheni is worth less than a peruta

by Rabbi Moshe Bloom, Torah VeHa'aretz Institute
Visit our website www.toraland.org.il/en

Sometimes we pick one fruit from the garden, bring it into the house, and need to take terumot and ma'aserot. In this case, the ma'aser sheni (9%) of the amount of fruit will be worth less than a peruta (today approx. 5.2 agorot).

Standard cucumbers weigh 100g and cost 5 NIS/kg; that is, 50 agorot per cucumber. The amount of ma'aser sheni (9%) is about 4.5 agorot, which is less than a peruta. This scenario is especially common with herbs where a few leaves are picked each time.

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 53b) says: "The Sages taught: 'And if a man will redeem of his tithe and he will add one-fifth' (Vayikra 27:31) [infers]: Of his tithe, but not all his tithe. This excludes the second tithe that does not have the value of one peruta."

There is a machloket as to the Sages' intent: in Yerushalmi (Ma'aser Sheni 4:2) and Rambam (Ma'aser Sheni 5:4-5) it seems no chomesh should be added, but it is possible to redeem it. Rashi and Tosafot, though, understand that it is not possible to redeem such ma'aser sheni. A peruta is the coin of the least value that halacha considers for this purpose.

However, Chezkiya provides a solution: "when ma'aser sheni is not worth a peruta, it and one-fifth its value are redeemed on the original coins." That is, if I transferred ma'aser sheni sanctity from produce worth more than a peruta, I can continue to use it for ma'aser sheni worth less than a peruta.

Tosafot Rosh explains that new coins cannot "absorb" ma'aser sheni sanctity from produce worth less than a peruta; if a coin was already used for this purpose, however, the sanctity in the coin can join the less-than-peruta sanctity, which together redeem the produce.

More next week.
Tikun for the Sin of the Spies

The Book of D’varim contain the speeches Moshe delivered in the last month of his life to the generation who would cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land.

Moshe’s first discourse to the people consisted of a retrospective survey of Israelite history. Most notably, he harkened back the traumatic episode of the sin of the spies. This transgression is arguably one of the Jewish people’s most severe failures. The tribal leaders return from their mission with their evil report and their entry to the land was postponed by divine order for 38 years.

When we contrast the original story in Bamidbar and Moshe’s account here in D’varim we note several marked differences. The first obvious difference is regarding the factor prompting the sending of the spies. In Bamidbar it was prompted by a command of the Almighty; in our parsha it is described as coming from the people.

A second difference in Moshe’s retrospective recounting of the incident is that the slander is no longer attached to the spies. Moshe speaks of the people’s error and accuses the Israelites as a whole and them alone: “Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God; and ye murmured…” (D’varim 1:26-27). No derogatory remark of the spies is related, but Moshe inordinately dwells on the murmurings of the people.

The legendary Torah teacher of Jerusalem (1905-1997), Nechama Leibowitz, argued that Moshe was not merely rehashing the facts surrounding this tragic episode. Moshe had a particular message in mind. He offered ‘mussar’, a moral lesson that he felt was critically important to be grasped. Moshe emphasized the guilt of the entire nation and the direct responsibility of their ancestors for their actions. It was their choice to send the spies. They need to own up to their own failure. Even after hearing the negative report form the majority of spies the listeners, Am Yisrael, had the choice to turn a deaf ear to the evil words or allow themselves to be misled by them. It was their duty to resist. In a word, the message he imparted is the view that charges man with responsibility for all his actions. Each individual is ultimately to be his own leader, responsible for his every action and not just a cog in a vast machine called society (Studies in D’varim p.16).

A third, and perhaps most startling example of the unique nature of Moshe’s retelling of the sin of the spies is the fact that Moshe did not recall that the spies spoke disparagingly
about the land. He merely referred to their statement that 'the land was good’. Why did Moshe not share the second half of their statement. Apparently, he meant to convey: “Didn’t you realize that even these wicked men who spread an evil report admitted that the land was good? You should have trusted in God who promised to give it to you!”

The incident of the spies is popularly known in rabbinic literature as ‘Cheit HaMeraglim’, The Sin of Spies. Moshe, it would seem, would have opted for a different title; one which would have combined the guilt of all the Israelites.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt”l believed that we must closely heed Mohes’s words and take them to heart. In order to affect a tikkun, the festering flaw must be fixed. He suggested that this transgression of Israel was so severe that only the most genuine type of teshuva can be effective. Therefore, a repentance known as Teshuvat HaMishkal,’ a ‘Repentance of Counter-balance’ is needed. It is simply not enough to admit the fault and commit to change. In this case one must tilt themselves to the other side in order to rectify the sin (Chanan Porat, Me’at Min Ha’or p. 121)

Rav Kook taught that for generations we are feeling the repercussions of the sin of the spies. He wrote: “The fabric of the exile and the lowliness that exists in the world is a result of not giving due recognition to the Land of Israel, its value and its intelligence - and not fixing the sin of the spies who spoke disparagingly about the land…” (Igrot HaRe’iya, vol. 1 pp. 112)

We were guilty of defaming the land therefore we must do the opposite and show our unwavering love for the Land: “[We must] declare to the entire world [The Land’s] magnificence and beauty, its holiness and grandeur. If only we could even express a ten-thousandth of the desirability of the beloved Land, the splendid light of its Torah, and the superior light of its wisdom and prophecy! The quality of wonderful holiness that Torah scholars seeking holiness may find in the Land of Israel does not exist at all outside the Land. I myself can attest to this unique quality, to a degree commensurate with my meager worth.” (Igrot HaRe’iyah, vol. 1 pp. 112-113)

In this context, it is worthy to relate a simple yet profound anecdote regarding one contemporary rabbi’s sensitivity to the sanctity of land. Rav Aharon Lichtenstien zt’l, Rosh Yeshiva of Gush Etzion, would often travel to the U.S. On each return flight to Israel, as the plane was approximately fifteen minutes away from entering Israel he would begin reciting chapters from the book of Psalms in order to prepare himself for entering the holy air space of Eretz Yisrael. (Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon reports this directly from Rav Lichtenstein’s son Meir)
When the twelve tribal leaders returned from their mission in Canaan, only Yehoshuua and Kalev spoke in defense of the Land. They both cried out. “...the land is very very good.” It is peculiar to find the Torah employing double language like “very very”. Rav Kook suggested that same language employed by the Sages, in a seemingly unrelated context; “Be very very humble in spirit” (Pirkei Avot 4:4). Rav Kook taught that in truth they share a commonality. People of humble spirit are willing to comply to the divine command and respond to the call of the Torah.

During a 1924 fundraising mission to America, Rav Kook had the opportunity to meet with a wealthy Jew regarding the possibility of moving to Eretz Yisrael. The man gave various reasons why it would be too difficult to emigrate. He concluded his meeting with Rav Kook saying, “God willing, one day I will make aliyah.” Rav Kook smiled warmly and said, “God certainly wills it... the Almighty designated this Land to be the home for every Jew. But, my dear friend, you must also be willing.” (based on RavKookTorah.org/Shlach)

Rav Kook, an eternal optimist, believed that teshuva, repentance for the tragic sin in the wilderness long ago, was indeed materializing in our own time. The spirited return of the Jews to the land, even among those who considered themselves secular, was in fact a longing to heal the maladies of an exiled nation and an endeavor to permanently be reunited with the Promised Land. Rav Kook commenting on this wonderful reawakening wrote: “An illumination of teshuva [is shining] in [the nation of] Israel. The awakening of the desire of the nation [of Israel] as a whole to return to its Land, to its nature, to its spirit and to its makeup truly contains within itself the light of t’shuva.” (Orot HaTeshuva 17:2)

Each year we read Parshat D’varim just prior to Tish’a b’Av. When the reader chants the verse which begins with the word Eicha, he chants it with a mournful melody (D’varim 1:12). This serves to remind the community of the upcoming reading of the book of Lamentations which also begins with the word Eicha. Perhaps the sorrowful tune is also meant to direct our attention to the pain of a missed opportunity. Moshe’s call for teshuva which is highlighted in the parsha serves as a reminder of our undying conviction that the Jewish people will return to her land. It is up to each of us to ensure its realization.
Fasting on the Tenth of Av

Rabbi Gideon Weitzman

Since this Shabbat is 9Av and we will fast this Sunday, we will take a break from our regular series to discuss a relevant halachic question.

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 559:9) writes that when 9Av is pushed off until Sunday a Brit can be performed during the day and the father can break his fast. The source is the Gemara (Eruvin 41a) that Rabbi Eliezer bar Tzadok describes how he had a Brit on such a Sunday and he broke the fast since it is considered to be a festival for him. However, on a regular year they would not be able to eat on the fast. From this source we can deduce that when 9Av is pushed off the severity of the fast is reduced. It should be mentioned that the Aruch Hashulchan stresses that he never saw the family have a meal for a Brit on 9Av since the circumcision can be performed towards the end of the day and the meal can be eaten after the fast.

Many poskim use this leniency in relation to the question of whether pregnant and nursing women need to fast. On regular years pregnant and nursing women must fast on 9Av (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 554:5) but do not fast on the other rabbinic fast days. The question is whether 9Av that is pushed off to Sunday is considered as a regular fast day or still retains the severity of Tish'a b'Av.

There is another issue; the whole point of fasting on 9Av is a communal mourning for the destruction of the Temple. Therefore everyone has to participate in this commemoration of the destruction; we do not greet each other, we do not work and we act as mourners. One cannot separate themselves from the mourning and sorrow.

Some hold that Tish'a b'Av this year has the status of any other fast day and therefore pregnant and nursing women do not fast, while others (see Bi'ur Halacha OC 559) is of the opinion that they do fast unless they feel ill.

Generally we would suggest that such women start the fast, if we have eaten well on Shabbat most people will be able to fast until the next morning. If during the fast they feel ill then they can break their fast. Even if someone does get permission to eat and drink on Tisha b'Av they should not eat lavish food and drink and should still have a sense of connection to the fast day and the mourning.

May we all merit to eat and drink on Tisha B'Av in the celebration of the complete redemption.
**Kri’at Sh’ma in a Whisper**

**Question:** As a speech therapist, I was wondering whether Kri’at Sh’ma can be done in a whisper. In a whisper, the "z" sound is produced as an "s" and the "v" sound is produced as a "f" (and all voiced sounds become devoiced). Scientifically, this is because the vocal chords do not vibrate when whispering. Doesn’t one need vocalize to truly produce a "zayin", "vav", or any voiced sound, when saying Sh’ma?

**Answer:** We will have to understand the laws of enunciation of Kri’at Sh’ma to deal with your scientific revelation (to people like me, who were not aware). There is a machloket among Tana’im about whether Kri’at Sh’ma must include sound that is audible to one’s own ear (B’rachot 15a). We rule like Rabbanan’s middle approach in between the stringent Rabbi Yossi and lenient Rabbi Meir: L’chatchila one should recite Kri’at Sh’ma audibly, but b’di’eved he fulfills the mitzva even if he did not, as long as he just moved his mouth, lips, and tongue (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 62:3; the same is likely true for davening - see Mishna Berura 101:5).

It turns out scientifically that not all letters can be differentiated in a whisper, and certainly when no sound comes out. Your good question about whispering, which is not a major discussion in halachic sources, applies equally to totally non-audible speech, which is discussed. Since the clear halacha is that one does fulfill the mitzva, the question is only: why? (If there were a halachic difference between whispering and quiet talking, some poskim would have mentioned it.)

It seems implausible that the letters in question are close enough in sound that it does not make a difference if one says s instead of z or v instead of f, since they can create different words with different meanings. The answer is based on the following observation. (Almost) every Jewish subgroup pronounces certain things wrong. For example, Ashkenazim pronounce AYIN like ALEF and CHET like CHAF. Sephardim do not distinguish between KAMATZ GADOL and PATACH. Some of these regrettable (see Megilla 24b) inaccuracies can change the meaning. Yet, one with a speech impediment fulfills mitzvot of speech with a theoretically confusing lack of differentiation, and when it is standard for one’s society, it is not considered a problem (see Mishna Berura 53:37).

Why? Hashem knows what we mean. While thought is not enough (see above), one only has to enunciate to the extent that he can be expected to based on circumstances (ability, minhag (?)). Hashem can handle homonyms. The same is apparently
true of whispering. While one technically cannot tell if someone whispered "zonim" or "sonim," but Hashem knows what one meant, and since whispering is a legitimate form of speech, the best he can do is enough.

One can ask on this approach: why does Halacha makes instruct us to stress the zayin of TIZK'RU so as not to sound like TISK'RU (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 61:17) if anyway it is indistinguishable when done inaudibly or with whispering? One can answer by saying that stressing the zayin is only l'chatchila (Mishna Berura 62:1), and vocalizing so the speaker can hear himself, is anyway required l'chatchila. So indeed, if you follow the l'chatchila of vocalizing, stressing the zayin becomes relevant. But this works out only if the l'chatchila of making audible to the ear can be done only through regular speech and not whispering, an opinion I have not found.

Perhaps the answer, then, is that a whisperer does not need to actively make the ZAYIN sound, but rather if and when one is vocalizing, so that a proper ZAYIN is possible, pronouncing it wrong is a real problem. For example, if an Ashkenazi says an AYIN wrong it is not a problem, but a Sephardi who usually uses a proper guttural AYIN but in one place says it like an ALEF, that is a halachic problem, at least if it changes the meaning. Perhaps also, because one is sometimes audible for Kri'at Sh'ma and sometimes not, he should consciously do these words audibly and correctly, to avoid accidentally doing it audibly and incorrectly.

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This Shabbat is known as Shabbat Chazon - the Shabbat of Vision. Most associate that this Shabbat is called Chazon because of the Haftara we recite from the first chapter of Sefer Yeshayahu, of Yeshayahu’s vision of the Churban of Yerushalayim.

Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev zy’a taught that there is an additional, more profound reason why this Shabbat is called Chazon: On this Shabbat every single Jew is shown a vision of the third Beit HaMikdash from a distance.

How exactly are we to understand this unique interpretation?

The Lubavitchiver Rebbe zt’l explained that Reb Levi Yitzchak is teaching us the difference between “seeing” something rather than just "hearing about it". When one lives through experiencing something miraculous, that event leaves a lasting impression. Subsequent generations may hear of that great event, but since they did not see it with their own eyes, it does not have the same lasting imprint as it did for those who merited to experience it and “see” that miraculous event with their own eyes.

On Shabbat Chazon, each one of us has the ability to experience a glimpse of the Beit HaMikdash - not simply to hear about the Beit MaMikdash of the past, but rather to imagine and "see" the Beit HaMikdash of the future.

On this Shabbat Chazon, may we take to heart this powerful teaching, and not solely experience this as a Shabbat of reflection of past tragic events and of the Churban, but also as an opportunity to imagine and "see"; to gain a glimpse of the future, of a brighter and better tomorrow.
Speech-bubble at the top contains the main elements of what Moshe said to the People • the travels from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael... victories of the People in several battles (the V for victory hand signal), and about Torah and Mitzvot that are the essence of Jewish Life • the letter D marked 24K stands for DI ZAHAV • Judge's gavel flanked (above & below) by two negation circles, relates to the prohibition of appointing judges for the wrong reasons - not because of wealth, nor out of fear or threats. Furthermore, a judge may not be afraid of threats (e.g. the gun) • Arrows indicating DO NOT ENTER to the right and the left, permitting only straight ahead, for the two instances we approached nations for permission to pass through their land • Spies carrying the cluster of grapes stands for one of the major elements in the sedra • Ghost with the SF Giants logo is a play on the pasuk (2:11), The REFA’IM (ghosts in modern Hebrew; warriors or mighty people in the Biblical context) can be considered giants (or vice versa) • Silhouettes of bull and donkey are from the pasuk at the beginning of the haftara in which the prophet contrasts us unfavorably with the animals. The bull knows his master and the donkey, his feeding trough • Buttons (computer keys) emanating from a button = D’varim 2:23 - KAFTORIM HAYOTZ’IM MIKAFTOR • Stars at the top = Moshe's description of the size of the nation: G-d has caused you to multiply and here you are as numerous as the stars of the heavens • Blank face with a question mark is for LO TAKIRU PANIM BAMISHPAT (D’varim 1:17) • Compass pointing north, as in D’varim 2:3 - …P’NU LACHEM TZAFONA, turn to the north • Snowflake is for D’varim 3:9, which tells us that the Tzidonites called the Hermon Siryon and the Emori called it SNIR. Rashi says SNIR means snow in Ashkenaz (early form of German) and in the Canaanite language • Moshe is telling the "new" generation (D’varim 2:7), of G-d's blessing... that going through the Midbar for 40 years... LO CHASARTA DAVAR, nothing was lacking. Literally, nothing was subtracted. Hence, 40-0 • Anchor minus N = Anchor is OGEN. Take off the N (spelled EN) and you are left with OG • Kazoo is for ZAMZUMIM (sounds like a kazoo sound). • Hoe and eel, for HO’IL MOSHE BEI’EIR ET HATORA HAZOT... • Gumby with his faithful steed Pokey. Gumby sounds like GAM BI, me too, from D’varim 1:37 • The first name of the fellow in the lower-right is BARNEA, as in KADEISH BARNEA • Photo of the TATE Britain, one of four art museums in the Tate Gallery network. The word TEIT, spelled TAV-TAV, occurs 14 times in the Tanach, of which, 3 are in the Chumash, of which two are in Parshat D’varim. It has the highest gimatriya of all two-letter words, 800 • The letter L made up of two drums = TOF-EL • Below the X which is below the TOF-L are the pictures of the six characters from the game CLUE, with the focus on Mrs. White. White represents LAVAN and the X marks the spot BEIN TOFEL V’LAVAN • The basketball backboard with the number 2 touching the rim. Both the number and the rim are red, which is an old reminder of Russia. So we take the Russian word for "two", which is D’VA and combine it with the English word RIM and we get D’VARIM • 1160 is the sum of 1000, 100, 50, and 10, for the officers of units with those numbers
Every year we read Parshat D’varim on, or very near, the 9th of Av. This juxtaposition is a timely one, seeing as at the outset of the parsha, Moshe Rabeinu reminds the people of the sin of the Meraglim. The ten spies besmirched the Holy Land causing the people to cry bitterly, and the Talmud (Ta’anit 29a) relates the following Divine reaction to this sorry episode: “You cried without cause”, Hashem declared, “therefore, I will set this day (the 9th of Av!) for crying throughout the generations.”

The Psalmist describes the immediate punishment which was received by that entire generation. “They despised the pleasant land (Vayim’asu B’eretz Chemda), they believed not His word, they murmured in their tents and did not hearten to the voice of Hashem”, (Tehilim 106:24). And as a result: “Therefore He lifted up His hand against them swearing to overthrow them in the wilderness…” (Tehillim 106:26). As we know, all the males between twenty and sixty years of age would be destined to die in the desert.

The Psalmist’s choice of words, referring to those who “despised the pleasant Land”, leads us to an interesting machloket between the Mefarshim regarding the Meraglim’s report back.

Moshe tells us that the Meraglim “Took the fruit of the Land… and brought it down to us… And said it is a good land which Hashem has given…” (D’varim 1:25). Who exactly stood behind these words? Which spies were responsible for this positive report? The Malbim understands that the words: “It is a good land” were uttered by Kalev and Yehoshua while all the rest of the Meraglim rebelled against the words of Hashem. The Ramban however points out that all twelve Meraglim agreed that it was a good land - after all, they had carried with them the produce to prove it! Yet, nonetheless, ten of the Meraglim claimed that despite the bounty of its produce “it is a Land that devours its inhabitants”, and therefore, not worth the fight. Only Kalev and Yehoshua said it is our Promised Land and worth fighting for “Aloh Naaleh V’yarashnu Otah!

The Torah’s next verse describes the peoples’ response: “Yet you would not go up but rebelled against the commandment of Hashem and murmured in your tents” (D’varim 1:26). The Malbim explains that the people sinned in three regards: They did not want to go up; they did not believe that Hashem would exile the enemies; and they rebelled in their unwillingness to sacrifice themselves to follow Hashem’s commands.

As Tish’a b’Av comes around, and we read these words once again, we should make sure to take them to heart and learn the appropriate lessons.

Today, too, there are many Jews who voice their appreciation for the bounty of the land. They are proud to partake of Israeli produce, and when eating the fruit and vegetables of the Land will remark how delicious they are! Nonetheless, they are not prepared to go up to the “Good Land”. They know about the mitzva of Aliya - What is holding them back? Could it be, as the Malbim suggests, that as important as this mitzva is in their hearts and minds, they are not prepared to make the sacrifices needed? They are lacking the Mesirut Nefesh, the sense of personal sacrifice. L’maan Ha’am V’Ha’aretz, that is required to make the move.

Last week we studied the words of the Ramban who stated that the mitzva of Yishuv Ha’aretz is found in the pasuk “V’horashtem Et Ha’aretz Vishavtem Bah”, as opposed to Rashi who interpreted these very same words as a divine promise rather than as a Mitzva. While the difference may seem somewhat prosaic, the ramifications are immense. Those holding like Rashi can rightfully claim that if it is a promise then:
“I can patiently wait for the Almighty to bring his promise to fruition. The onus is on Him!” On the other hand, if it is a Mitzva, the onus is on us.

This dichotomy plays itself out in other spheres as well: Thus, in general when it comes to T’shuva and Geula, do we say regarding - Hashiveinu Hashem Eilecha V’nashuva or is the correct approach to realize that we must take the first step, saying Shuvu Eilai V’ashuva Aleichem. Or, in the words of Kabbala, what comes first - It’aruta Di’letata or It’aruta Di’leilah - the awakening from below or the awakening from above. Where does the initiative lie?

The 20th century Zionist enterprise is predicated on Jews taking the initiative into their own hands and coming home.

We can only conclude by noting that on Tish’a b’Av it is not only the Jews the world over who will be crying for the destruction of the Temples. The Gemara (Chagiga 5b) tells us that the Almighty sheds three tears: One is for the First Beit Mikdash, one for the Second Beit Mikdash and the 3rd for the Jewish People who had been exiled from their homeland.

Like the Almighty we also cry for the destruction of the Batei Mikdash, but are we crying for all of those who had been exiled from their homeland? (and remain afar by choice?)

Today your exile need not be extended. It can be ended. Come home and make Hashem’s tears stop!

Rabbi Yerachmiel Roness, Ramat Shiloh, Beit Shemesh
Tish'a b'Av Review

Consider the following as an educational tool; actual halachic questions should be put to your LOR. This is especially so of cases that are in any way out of the ordinary.

Some of this review is applicable to Shabbat Chazon and Tish'a b'Av in general, and some is specific to this year’s situation of the fast being postponed to Motza'ei Shabbat and Sunday.

Major sources: Aveilut HaChurban by HaRav Yoel Schwartz and The Laws of Tish'a b'Av that falls on Sunday and the laws of the Shabbat before it, by HaRav Sroya Devlitzky.

Erev Shabbat: Cleaning the house and other preparations for Shabbat are as usual. Although we do not eat meat during the Nine Days, it is permitted to taste (without swallowing) food being cooked for Shabbat to determine its flavor-needs.

Many authorities permit bathing and dressing for Shabbat as one would usually do for Shabbat. (This is the standard practice in Israel.) Others impose some restrictions, such as washing with cooler (less pleasant) water, and not bathing the entire body at the same time.

Whether the week from Sunday, 3 Av to Shabbat Parshat D'varim is considered SHAVU'A SHECHAL BO (the week in which Tish'a b'Av falls) because Shabbat is 9 Av, or it is not considered so because the fast of 9 Av is not until Motza"Sh (which is "the following week") is disputed. S'fardim tend to say that in years like this one, there is no "week in which 9Av falls". Ashkenazim generally hold that this week does have that stricter status. None-theless, we may cut our fingernails on Erev Shabbat Chazon - regardless of which custom we follow.

One may wear fresh garments for Shabbat, but not new ones.

Shabbat Chazon Many shuls sing L'cha Dodi to the tune of "Eli Tzion" from Tish'a b'Av morning. Some authorities frown upon this custom as a sign of mourning on Shabbat. Some shuls split the difference. Each shul to its own.

It is permitted to drink wine and eat meat once a person has taken Shabbat upon himself, even before sunset.

If one usually sings z'mirot at his Shabbat table, he does so this Shabbat as well - but not more than usual. Some suggest reducing the amount of singing - unless doing so would be an obvious sign of mourning, which is inappropriate for Shabbat.

The rule of thumb for this Shabbat is sad feelings are in place; conspicuous mourning is not.

Many shuls read the pasuk beginning with the word "Eicha" (D'varim 1:12) to the tune of Eicha. Some object to this custom, too, but it is the common practice.

The Haftara for Shabbat Chazon is mostly read with the Eicha melody. And, once again, some object to this minhag as well. Yet, it is a well-established
TZIDKATCHA is not said at Mincha, which goes along with our not saying Tachanun on Tish'a b'Av day.

No Pirkei Avot on Shabbat, 9Av. One should not take a pleasurable walk on Shabbat afternoon (unless he always does and its lack would be conspicuous).

Shabbat meals are as usual, including meat and wine. The custom of not eating meat or drinking wine during the Nine Days does not apply to Shabbat - another example of "no public display of mourning on Shabbat". One may have meat and wine at all meals on Shabbat, even if this is more than he would usually do. In other words, it is permitted to have meat even at Seuda Sh'lishit, even if you never do so otherwise. On the other hand, there are opinions that Seuda Sh'lishit should not be more than one's usual fare.

Although we abstain from meat and wine during the Nine Days, the actual halacha prohibits meat and wine only for the pre-Tish'a b'Av meal. And this year, because the day before the fast is Shabbat, that halacha does not apply and we may partake of meat and wine even at Seuda Shlishit, this year's pre-Tish'a b'Av meal. We thus get a glimpse of the (hopefully near) future when the prophecy of Zecharia will come to be and Tish'a b'Av and its three satellite fasts will become joyous days.

There is an interesting term used to tell us that we may eat anything we want at the Shabbat meals. The term is "like the Seuda of Shlomo in his (finest) hour", referring to the lavish, festive meal celebrating the building of the Beit HaMikdash. If all we had was our present and past, then that phrase would be insensitive, to say the least, in light of our mourning the Churban. But with our future guaranteed through G-d's prophecy, the phrase itself is part of the prophecy and promise.

Although there is no official Seuda Mafseket with egg and bread etc. because of Shabbat, there are, nonetheless, differences in Seuda Shlishit to be noted:

Although we can eat without restriction at Seuda Shlishit, we should eat the meal with a heavy heart. We should not have company for this meal, unless it would be an obvious sign of mourning. Z'mirot should be held to as minimal as will not be obvious that it is being curtailed because of Tish'a b'Av.

One must stop eating and drinking a bit before sunset. For Yerushalayim, we should stop around 7:45pm. (Stopping a bit before sunset applies on Shabbat as well as during the week.) So too for the prohibitions washing, use of lotions, cosmetics, perfumes, begin at sunset. Some say that one should also not be wearing leather shoes after this time, but should not yet put on "9Av shoes". One should try to avoid sitting on a regular chair after this time. Just don't be obvious about it. The other opinion is that the prohibition of wearing leather shoes and the practice of not sitting on a regular chair do not begin until Shabbat is out.

Right before Maariv, one should say Baruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L'chol (J'lem 8:24pm) and remove his shoes (if
not already done). Maariv is recited in a low, mournful tone.

HAVDALA Wine and the Havdala bracha are held over until Sunday night. B'samim (spices) are not taken at all this week. Fire is used on Motza'ei Shabbat. After Maariv and before Eicha, a havdala candle, other candle or incandescent light bulb is used to say the bracha BOREI M'OREI HA'EISH - if one forgets, no make-up after Motza'Sh. [If one must eat on Tish'a b'Av, he OR she should say havdala before eating. This applies to either Motza'ei Shabbat or the daytime of Sunday. Children may eat without Havdala. People who are fasting can fulfill their obligation of Havdala by listening to the Havdala of one who is not fasting, and they will not need to say Havdala after the fast.]

Then Megilat Eicha is read while people sit on the ground or on low stools. It is customary to reduce the lighting in shul and remove the curtain of the Ark and the covers of the Amud and Shulchan. (When Eicha is read from parchment, a bracha is recited, but not Shehecheyanu.) Following Eicha some kinot (poems of lament) are chanted.

The laws of Tish'a b'Av reflect three factors:

[1] The prohibitions of Yom Kippur-like fasts (viz. no eating or drinking, no washing except for fingertips for ritual washing and the washing of actual dirtied areas of the body, no cosmetics or lotions except unscented deodorant and medications, no wearing of leather shoes - preferable not comfortable non-leather shoes either, no marital relations);

[2] practices related to mourning (no Torah-learning except sad themes such as Eicha and Iyov, parts of other books of Tanach, the laws of Tish'a b'Av, the laws of mourning etc., no greeting one another, sitting on the ground); and [3] a reduction of luxuries and comfort (such as making sleeping conditions less comfortable).

In the morning, one should wash only his fingers (and his eyes, if necessary).

Shacharit: Talit & T'filin are not worn. No Birkat Kohanim. Custom to omit OTEIR YISRAEL B'TIF'ARA (and to say it at Mincha). Some omit the bracha SHE'ASA LI KOL TZORKI in the morning (and say it after the fast), because we cannot wear leather shoes. The Korbanot portion of the davening is reduced (check a Tish'a b'Av kinot-book with davening for the details). Davening is regular but subdued. We don't say Avinu Malkeinu, Tachanun, Laminatzei'ach, or Slichot, any or all of which we might expect on a fast day. Tish'a b'Av is referred to as a "Moed" and will IX"H be a festival when the Beit HaMikdash is rebuilt. As a sign of our complete confidence in this promise of the messianic times, we treat Tish'a b'Av as a festival in these token ways. (There are other reasons for these omissions.)

Special Torah reading and Haftara are followed by many Kinot which should ideally continue until (halachic) noon. Some have the custom of rereading Eicha in the morning.

Thinking about the destruction of the Temples (& other tragedies associated with 9Av) is essential. One should
refrain from such activities that would cause the mind to wander from the day's thoughts.

Although most restrictions continue throughout the entire day, a few items are relaxed at mincha-time. The Parochet is returned to the Ark, lighting in shul is restored to normal, talit and t'filin are worn, Kohanim bless the People, and sitting on regular chairs is permitted. This, in essence, transforms Tish'a b'Av into a "regular" fast day and psychologically allows us to reflect on the consolation of the prophecies of the Geula and the Building of the Third Beit HaMikdash.

Notwithstanding the tone of the previous paragraph, the five prohibitions of the fast continue until stars-out. The restriction on Torah learning applies to the whole day. (For this reason, it seems that it is an erroneous practice to repeat the Sh'ma at Mincha, having fulfilled the mitzva at Shacharit - even without T'filin.)

Torah and Haftara readings for Mincha are like other fast-days. The passages NACHEIM and ANEINU are recited in the mincha Amida. If either (or both) are inadvertently omitted - and one has finished the Amida - one does not repeat. However, if one skipped NACHEIM in its regular position, he can insert it into the R'TZEI bracha, but without the bracha-ending of MENACHEIM TZIYON... Also, NACHEIM and/or ANEINU can be said at the end of ELOKAI N'TZOR, right before the concluding pasuk of the Amida - YIHYU L'RATZON...

Only fasters should say ANEINU; everyone says NACHEIM.

Maariv at the end of the fast is regular. If practical, one should wash his (full) hands ritually before Maariv, since it had not been "properly" done in the morning. According to the minhag of the GR"A, one should put on regular shoes and say the omitted bracha from the morning brachot. Kiddush L'vana after Maariv.

Havdala is said on a cup of wine (or other acceptable beverage). The introductory p'sukim are not said, nor are the brachot for spices or fire. Wine may be used (some say otherwise), notwithstanding what is said in the next paragraph.

Generally the laws and customs of the Nine Days continue until noon of the 10th of Av, because the Beit HaMikdash continued burning throughout the 10th.

This year, we fast on the 10th and all the restrictions of the Nine Days end when the fast does. The one exception is the not eating of meat or drinking of wine (havdala excepted - according to some authorities). Laundry, shaving, music, bathing... are all permitted from Sunday night.

It cannot be overstated, that perhaps THE most important "detail" of Tish'a b'Av is our thoughts and feelings about the many tragedies of Jewish History - their causes and effects, what we can do to repair and rectify the our shortcomings - as individuals and as part of Klal Yisrael - that resulted in the Churban, - and our belief in the coming of the Geula, BIM'HEIRA B'YAMEINU, AMEIN.

The day of the week Tish'a b'Av falls is
the same as the previous first day of Pesach. (This is the ALEF and TAV of the AT-BASH matching the days of the week of Pesach's days with other calendar dates.) Let us hope and pray that Pesach's and Yom Kippur's לֶשְׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּיהוָשָׁוֵיָמָה will become manifest in the joyous festival Tish'a b'Av will become, ז"א. Remember - when in doubt about any rule or procedure - Ask your Rav.