

*With our prayers to HKB"H for your health, the health of all of Klal Yisrael,
and for all the good people on Earth, wherever they may be...*

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JERUSALEM in/out for **D'varim-Chazon** See Z'manim for others

7:06PM Earliest (Plag) 6:15PM • 8:21PM Rabbeinu Tam 8:58PM

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Word of the month

The molad of Av was Monday afternoon (July 20th - yes, two days before R"Ch - it happens). The full days after the molad is Thursday afternoon, so Minhag Yerushalayim is to say KL from Thursday night (July 23rd). MY is not to wait until after Tish'a b'Av, but most other KL-sayers will wait for Motza'ei 9Av, preferably after breaking the fast (if that is feasible). It usually means bringing a fast-breaking snack. If that doesn't work out, KL can be said while one is still fasting. **The GR"A applied Z'RIZIM even in Tishrei, Sivan, and Av, when most people prefer to wait for a better mood for KL, rather than say it at the earlier time. 7 day KL-sayers can say it Monday night (July 27) but will probably wait for after 9Av.**

Weekly Inspiration

Moshe, our teacher, had lofty ideals within his own life and a perfection that was distinct from the Jewish People. He was, therefore, capable of establishing an entire nation like Israel. Due to his great love of the Jewish People, he agreed that all his perfection would be channeled toward improving the nation, and he did not seek any glory for himself except that of the glory of the Nation of Israel.

HaRav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt"l, Ein Ayah, Berachot, Ch.5, Note 60

Candles	Earliest	Havdala	D'VARIM - Shabbat CHAZON	Va'etchanan
7:06	6:15	8:21	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:01 6:11 8:16
7:22	6:17	8:23	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, et al)	7:18 6:13 8:17
7:21	6:16	8:22	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:17 6:12 8:16
7:21	6:15	8:21	Gush Etzion	7:16 6:11 8:15
7:23	6:17	8:24	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / Kfar Saba	7:18 6:13 8:18
7:22	6:16	8:22	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:17 6:12 8:17
7:23	6:17	8:24	Netanya	7:18 6:13 8:18
7:19	6:16	8:22	Be'er Sheva	7:14 6:12 8:16
7:22	6:16	8:23	Rehovot	7:18 6:13 8:17
7:06	6:17	8:23	Petach Tikva	7:01 6:13 8:18
7:22	6:16	8:23	Ginot Shomron	7:17 6:12 8:17
7:14	6:18	8:24	Haifa / Zichron	7:09 6:14 8:19
7:21	6:15	8:22	Gush Shiloh	7:16 6:11 8:16
7:21	6:17	8:24	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Sh'muel	7:16 6:13 8:18
7:21	6:15	8:22	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:16 6:11 8:16
7:21	6:15	8:21	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:16 6:11 8:15
7:23	6:17	8:23	Ashkelon	7:18 6:14 8:18
7:22	6:17	8:23	Yad Binyamin	7:17 6:13 8:17
7:12	6:16	8:23	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:07 6:12 8:17
7:21	6:15	8:22	Golan	7:16 6:10 8:16

R' Tam (J'lem) - D'varim - Chazon 8:58pm • Va'etchanan - Nachamu 8:53pm

Other Z'manim

Ranges are 11 days, Wed-Shabbat
1-11 Av 5780 (July 22 - Aug 1, '20)

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:52-5:00am
Sunrise	5:48½-5:55am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:35-8:39am)	9:17-9:20am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:51-9:54am)	10:26-10:28am
Chatzot (Halachic noon)	12:45¼-12:45½pm
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:21-1:20pm
Plag Mincha	6:15½-6:10pm
Sunset (counting elevation) (based on sea level: 7:42¼-7:35½pm)	7:47½-7:40½pm



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

- 3 -

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 <> Anticipating needing more room on the T-4 page, I'm appending the TTriddle report here <> The FPT was - The pasuk that gave R'Yisrael Meir HaKohen his pen name. The answer is MI HA'ISH HECHAFEITZ CHAYIM OHEIV YAMIM LIR'OT TOV = $50+316+183+68+8+100+637+17 = 1379$. The Unexplained from the ParshaPix - 79, 47 (we mistakenly typed 74), 29, 26, 50, 82 - these are the atomic numbers of Au (gold), Ag (silver), Cu (copper), Fe (iron), Sn (tin), and Pb (lead) - the six metals mentioned in Bamidbar 31:22. Kudos to R' Meir S. and the Fe-meli for their solution and correction.

D'varim

Shabbat Chazon

44th of the 54 sedras;
first of 11 in D'varim

Written on 196.5 lines (rank: 26th)

5 parshiyot; 1 open, 4 closed

105 p'sukim - ranks 32, 6th in D'varim
tied with Chayei Sara, but larger

1548 words - ranks 26th, 6th in D'varim

5972 letters - ranks 24, 5th in D'varim
tied with Vayeishev, but smaller

Jump in rankings from p'sukim to words
& letters due to relatively long p'sukim

MITZVOT

2 mitzvot - both prohibitions

One of only three sedras that have only prohibitions (LO TAASEI). Vayishlach and B'shalach are the other two, with one LAV each.



[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the Parsha's beginning; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [brackets] are the Mitzva- count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

Kohen - First Aliya

11 p'sukim - 1:1-11

[P> 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 R'TZON 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 than 3300 years ago; this is the lesson for today.

SDT 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. Moav'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**

[S> 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.

Sh'VII Seventh Aliya **8 p'sukim - 3:15-22**

The description of the "East Bank" land continues. Moshe repeats the instructions to the 2 tribes for settling their territory. Only after the successful conquest and settlement of the Land of Israel, will these men be permitted to return to their families and cities. Moshe has commanded Yehoshua to note well the victories to date and not to fear what is to come.

The last 3 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir. The custom is to call the Rav of the community or a prominent member of the congregation to Maftir

Chazon (not a rule, but a common practice).

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'a 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

Rabbi Neil (Nachman) Winkler

The choice of the first chapter of Sefer Yeshayahu as the haftarah for this Shabbat is somewhat curious. The first two selections of the three haftarot of condemnation that precede Tish'a B'av are understandable as they are the opening visions of the navi Yirmiyahu, the prophet of the churban, the destruction of the Beit Mikdash and the subsequent exile of Israel from her land. But Sefer Yishayahu, written by the navi known as the Prophet of Nechama, of comfort, would seem to be a strange source for the reading that precedes the day of mourning, marking the destruction of both Batei Mikdash.

Remarkably, as Rav Moshe Lichtenstein points out, the gemara (Megilla 31a-b) actually divides this perek and suggests that the first part is to be read when Rosh Chodesh Av coincides with Shabbat while the second part of that first chapter (starting at pasuk 21) should be read

on Tish'a B'Av itself. However, the actual custom, as we know, is to read both sections of perek alef on the Shabbat before Tish'a B'av and, over the years, has even been used to identify the Shabbat as Shabbat Chazon. What, then, did Chazal see in the words of this navi of consolation that carries such an important message for this Shabbat?

Although Yeshayahu condemns many types of sinful behavior of which ancient Israel was guilty, practices that would teach us what angered Hashem and, therefore, what we must avoid, I am especially moved by the words of G-d Himself that the navi quotes: "...gam ki tarbu tefilla eineni shome'a," "...even if you would increase your prayer - I will not listen." Even when we daven fervently, Hashem won't listen to our tefillot?? How can that be? How can we pray for forgiveness if the forgiving G-d refuses to even hear those prayers?? All is lost!?? Is there no chance of repentance, of return?? What is there for us if we cannot offer our sincere supplications and entreaties to Hashem? If hearing those words won't make us cry - what words would? It seems that G-d is telling us that we have lost our only connection to our Father in heaven.

Or is that really His message?

Yeshayahu, speaking to the people of

his generation, knew their thoughts and their beliefs very well. Many in that generation accepted the view of the pagan world that the more powerful "god" would defeat the less powerful one. Wars between nations were seen as wars between their respective "gods". Unfortunately, such an approach was adopted by many in Israel as well. The Judeans felt confident that Hashem's "house" could never be destroyed since theirs was the most powerful G-d Who could not be defeated. For that same reason, they believed that G-d Himself would never allow others to destroy His Beit Mikdash because it would prove to the enemies that He was not the most powerful of all (ch"v).

It followed, therefore, that as long as the Temple stood and the sacrificial rite remained, they could never be overrun by the enemy, as the prophets had predicted. It was this confidence that had them close their ears to the warnings and criticisms of the nevi'im over the years. But they kept on sacrificing and praying.

And so, G-d teaches them that prayers and sacrifices are not guarantees because they have brought no change in your behavior. The purpose of any worship is to draw one closer to Hashem. When prayers and sacrifices are given merely as "insurance policies" and

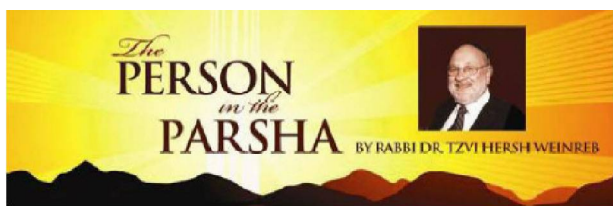
not through a sincere desire to understand what G-d wants of us, a search to know what we can do in order to endear ourselves to the Divine, then they are useless. If you pray regularly and continue to sin regularly – G-d does not accept your prayers. Worse, He doesn't even listen to them because they are meaningless.

We are challenged to leave the Beit Knesset after our tefillot feeling changed, uplifted, closer to Hashem. As we hope for a return to Tefilla B'tzibur IN a Beit Knesset, we should also be hoping to find greater meaning to our prayers.

That is what Hashem wants.

That is what we should ALL want.

Probing the Prophets, weekly insights into the Haftara, is written by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler, author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)



Words, Mere Words

I have kept my time-worn copy of Roget's Thesaurus in my personal library since I was in the seventh grade. It was given to me by my teacher, Mr. Zeller, who introduced me to the beauty of language and

who first stimulated my fascination with words. He taught me to use this thesaurus in order to use language effectively and with precision.

There are those who scoff at words, deeming them to be much weaker than concrete objects. These are the people who distinguish between the "real world" and the world of "mere" verbal expression. Life has taught me, however, that these individuals are very wrong. Words are important not just in the social world, but have influence and impact upon the physical world as well.

With this week's Torah portion, D'varim (D'varim 1:1-3:22), we begin an entirely new book: D'varim, the fifth book of the Torah. This book differs from the previous four in many ways. In the first four books of the Torah, events take place, activities are performed, and stories happen. Not so in D'varim. It is fundamentally one long speech; an exquisitely eloquent address, delivered over a period of forty days.

Events are described in D'varim, but no event actually takes place in the entire book. That is, until the concluding eight verses which describe the death of Moshe.

There is no storyline in this book . It consists of words of review, words of

rebuke, words of instruction, and words of inspiration. Words, mere words. It is no wonder, then, that in Hebrew, the book is called D'varim, "Words."

Perhaps it is because of my lifelong obsession with words that this particular book is so personally significant to me. For many years, beginning with the week after I was bar mitzvah, I was the Torah reader for my shul, the ba'al koreh. I remember how thrilled I was as I chanted the words of Chumash D'varim. I recall savoring the very sounds of the words and absorbing the simple meaning of what I was chanting.

What is most astounding about this book-length address is that it is given by Moshe, who, by his own admission, was not a man of words. You certainly will recall that it was in the Torah portion of Sh'mot which we read many months ago that Moshe at first declined God's mission. He refused to be the one to deliver the Jewish People from Egypt. He said, "Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words...I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." (Sh'mot 4:10)

Our Torah portion begins, "These are the words that Moshe addressed to all Israel..." Our Sages in the Midrash find this phenomenon remarkable.

Say the rabbis in the Midrash, "Yesterday he said 'I am not a man of words,' and today he says 'These are the words?!' ...Rabbi Elazar put it this way: 'Yesterday he was a pasilus [pasilus is a Greek word meaning a person with a severe speech defect], and now he proclaims 'These are the words!' "

A contemporary rabbi, Yehuda Shaviv, whose work MiSinai Ba I so admire, makes the same point using different words: "This talent of Moshe is a wondrous one. He, who began his leadership career so convinced that he was inarticulate that he depended upon his brother Aaron to be the spokesman able to convey his ideas to his audience, has now become, as his days are waning, a facile and persuasive speaker."

How are we to understand this transformation? I maintain that one cannot fully comprehend the unique nature of the book of D'varim and its message unless he can answer the question which must trouble the alert reader and which so troubled the aforementioned rabbis: Why did Moshe change?

Rabbi Shaviv offers a most suggestive approach to solving this dilemma. He begins by pointing out that Moshe led his people for forty years but spoke to them more in the

last forty days of his life than he did for the entire duration of his leadership.

He argues that we must postulate that Moshe only now began to sense that the ears of the Israelites were at last receptive and attentive. They were finally ready to hear his words and to assimilate his message. Their hearts were now ready to open up and to understand both his words of faith and his words of rebuke. They were now ready to hear the hymn of mitzvot, statutes, and laws.

There is a very important lesson here. Language requires a relationship in order to be effective. Much depends upon the speaker, but the speaker must have a listener. Monologues do not communicate. Dialogs do. A speaker's eloquence depends upon his conviction that someone is listening.

Rabbi Shaviv proceeds to impart yet another creative teaching in his masterful little essay on this week's Torah portion. Moshe becomes able to deliver his impressive address not only because he finally senses that he had a receptive audience. Rather, he can do so also because he has finally overcome his mistrust of "mere words."

Remember the tragedy of Moshe's

life, and remember the sin for which he was punished. The Almighty instructed him, when the people complained of thirst, to speak to the rock from which water would then flow. God instructed him to use "mere words."

But instead, Moshe struck the rock with his staff. He only trusted a concrete object, a "real thing." He mistrusted "mere words." In a sense he was guilty of the same error of those to whom I referred at the beginning of this essay, to those who scoff at words.

So serious was his choice of things over words that God considered it an unforgivable flaw. God deemed it a sin deserving tragic punishment. He, therefore, deprived Moshe of achieving his most precious dream: entering the Promised Land.

The entire book of D'varim is evidence that Moshe learned his lesson well. He may have failed to use words to draw water from the rock, but he succeeded gloriously in using words to inspire his people, words which continue to reverberate eternally for all of us.

"Mere words," you say? I hope I have convinced you of their supreme importance by sharing with you my own conviction of the importance of

words, a conviction which began for me in the seventh grade.

Thank you, Mr. Zeller, wherever you are. And thank you, Rabbi Shaviv, for your insights into this week's parsha. I hope that I have conveyed them as satisfactorily to my audience as you did to yours.



לעילוי נשמות
פנחס בן יעקב אשר וגולה בת ישראל חור אידי ע"ה
עזריאל בן אריה לייב ומעניה בת יצחק שרתר ע"ה

Followership

In the last month of his life, Moses gathered the people. He instructed them about the laws they were to keep and reminded them of their history since the Exodus. That is the substance of the book of Devarim. Early in this process, he recalled the episode of the spies – the reason the people's parents were denied the opportunity to enter the land. He wanted the next generation to learn the lesson of that episode and carry it with them always. They needed faith and courage. Perhaps that has always been part of what it means to be a Jew.

But the story of the spies as he tells it here is very different indeed from the version in Shelach Lecha (Num.

13-14), which describes the events as they happened at the time, almost 39 years earlier. The discrepancies between the two accounts are glaring and numerous. Here I want to focus only on two.

First: who proposed sending the spies? In Shelach, it was God who told Moses to do so. "The Lord said to Moses, 'Send men ...'" In our parsha, it was the people who requested it: "Then all of you came to me and said, 'Let us send men ...'" Who was it: God or the people? This makes a massive difference to how we understand the episode.

Second: what was their mission? In our parsha, the people said, "Let us send men to spy out [veyachperu] the land for us" (Deut. 1:22). The twelve men "made for the hill country, came to the wadi Eshcol, and spied it out [vayeraglu]" (Deut. 1:24). In other words, our parsha uses the two Hebrew verbs, lachpor and leragel, that mean to spy.

But as I pointed out in Covenant and Conversation Shelach, the account there conspicuously does not mention spying. Instead, thirteen times, it uses the verb latur, which means to tour, explore, travel, inspect. Even in our parsha, when Moses is talking, not about the spies but about God, he says He "goes

before you on your journeys—to seek out (latur) the place where you are to encamp” (Deut. 1:33).

According to Malbim, latur means to seek out what is good about a place. Lachpor and leragel mean to seek out what is weak, vulnerable, exposed, defenceless. Touring and spying are completely different activities, so why does the account in our parsha present what happened as a spying mission, which the account in Shelach emphatically does not?

These two questions combine with a third, prompted by an extraordinary statement of Moses in our parsha. Having said that the spies and the people were punished by not living to enter the promised land, he then says:

Because of you, the Lord was incensed with me also, and He said: you shall not enter it either. Joshua son of Nun, who attends you, he shall enter it. Strengthen him, because he will lead Israel to inherit it. (Deut. 1:37-38)

This is very strange indeed. It is not like Moses to blame others for what seems to be his own failing. Besides which, it contradicts the testimony of the Torah itself, which tells us that Moses and Aaron were punished by not being permitted to enter the land

because of what happened at Kadesh when the people complained about the lack of water. What they did wrong is debated by the commentators. Was it that Moses hit the rock? Or that he lost his temper? Or some other reason? Whichever it was, that was when God said: “Because you did not trust in Me enough to honour Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them” (Num. 20:12). This was some 39 years after the episode of the spies.

As to the discrepancy between the two accounts of the spies, R. David Zvi Hoffman argued that the account in Shelach tells us what happened. The account in our parsha, a generation later, was meant not to inform but to warn. Shelach is a historical narrative; our parsha is a sermon. These are different literary genres with different purposes.

As to Moses’ remark, “Because of you, the Lord was incensed with me,” Ramban suggests that he was simply saying that like the spies and the people, he too was condemned to die in the wilderness. Alternatively, he was hinting that no one should be able to say that Moses avoided the fate of the generation he led.

However, Abarbanel offers a

fascinating alternative. Perhaps the reason Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter the land was not because of the episode of water and the rock at Kadesh. That is intended to distract attention from their real sins. Aaron's real sin was the Golden Calf. Moses' real sin was the episode of the spies. The hint that this was so is in Moses' words here, "Because of you, the Lord was incensed with me also."

How though could the episode of the spies have been Moses fault? It wasn't he who proposed sending them. It was either God or the people. He did not go on the mission. He did not bring back a report. He did not demoralise the people. Where then was Moses at fault? Why was God angry with him?

The answer lies in the first two questions: who proposed sending the spies? And why is there a difference in the verbs between here and Shelach?

Following Rashi, the two accounts, here and in Shelach, are not two different versions of the same event. They are the same version of the same event, but split in two, half told there, half here. It was the people who requested spies (as stated here). Moses took their request to God. God acceded to the request, but as a

concession, not a command: "You may send," not "You must send" (as stated in Shelach).

However, in granting permission, God made a specific provision. The people had asked for spies: "Let us send men ahead to spy out [veyachperu] the land for us." God did not give Moses permission to send spies. He specifically used the verb *latur*, meaning, He gave permission for the men to tour the land, come back and testify that it is a good and fertile land, flowing with milk and honey.

The people did not need spies. As Moses said, throughout the wilderness years God has been going "ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go" (Deut. 1:33). They did however need eyewitness testimony of the beauty and fruitfulness of the land to which they had been travelling and for which they would have to fight.

Moses, however, did not make this distinction clear. He told the twelve men: "See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified?" This sounds dangerously

like instructions for a spying mission.

When ten of the men came back with a demoralising report and the people panicked, at least part of the blame lay with Moses. The people had asked for spies. He should have made it clear that the men he was sending were not to act as spies.

How did Moses come to make such a mistake? Rashi suggests an answer. Our parsha says: “Then all of you came to me and said, ‘Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us.’” The English does not convey the sense of menace in the original. They came, says Rashi, “in a crowd,” without respect, protocol or order. They were a mob, and they were potentially dangerous. This mirrors the people’s behaviour at the beginning of the story of the Golden Calf: “When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered against Aaron and said to him...”

Faced with an angry mob, a leader is not always in control of the situation. True leadership is impossible in the face of the madness of crowds. Moses’ mistake, if the analysis here is correct, was a very subtle one, the difference between a spying mission and a morale-boosting eyewitness account of the land. Even so, it must have been almost inevitable given the

mood of the people.

That is what Moses meant when he said, “because of you the Lord was incensed with me too.” He meant that God was angry with me for not showing stronger leadership, but it was you – or rather, your parents – who made that leadership impossible.

This suggests a fundamental, counterintuitive truth. There is a fine TED talk about leadership. It takes less than 3 minutes to watch, and it asks, “What makes a leader?” It answers: “The first follower.”

There is a famous saying of the Sages: “Make for yourself a teacher and acquire for yourself a friend.” The order of the verbs seems wrong. You don’t make a teacher, you acquire one. You don’t acquire a friend, you make one. In fact, though, the statement is precisely right. You make a teacher by being willing to learn. You make a leader by being willing to follow. When people are unwilling to follow, even the greatest leader cannot lead. That is what happened to Aaron at the time of the Calf, and in a far more subtle way to Moses at the time of the spies.

That, I would argue, is one reason why Joshua was chosen to be Moses’ successor. There were other distinguished candidates, including

Pinchas and Caleb. But Joshua, serving Moses throughout the wilderness years, was a role-model of what it is to be a follower. That, the Israelites needed to learn.

I believe that followership is the great neglected art. Followers and leaders form a partnership of mutual challenge and respect. To be a follower in Judaism is not to be submissive, uncritical, blindly accepting. Questioning and arguing part of the relationship. Too often, though, we decry a lack of leadership when we are really suffering from a lack of followership.

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Immersion for Utensils Used Unconventionally

The Gemara (Avoda Zara 75b) debates whether all utensils require immersion in a mikveh, or just utensils used for food. One opinion suggests that scissors used to shear sheep may require immersion. The Gemara rejects this view, stating that only klei seuda (utensils that are connected to eating) require immersion.

An interesting question arises regarding a utensil that is not associated with food consumption,

which is being used for eating purposes. An example would be the use of a Swiss Army knife to cut fruit.

Later authorities discuss which factors determine whether a utensil is used for eating purposes. Is the status dependent on the intent of the manufacturer or the buyer? Does the frequency of the utensil's use for eating purposes play a role?

Issur V'heter (Siman 85), writes that if someone purchases a knife to cut parchment for a Sefer Torah and then decides to use it for cutting meat even once, immersion is required beforehand. From this ruling, it is obvious that no matter what the purpose or how many times it was used for food, it requires tevilah (immersion).

The Pri Chadash (YD 120:19) disagrees, pointing out that in many areas of Torah law we go by majority use. The same is true with tevilat keilim; in order to consider a utensil a kli seuda, we consider its majority use. Thus, according to the Pri Chadash, if someone occasionally uses a Swiss Army knife to cut vegetables, yet it is mostly used for camping purposes, no immersion is required. (Other authorities agree, see Pitchei Teshuva 120:6.)

The Aruch Hashulchan (YD 120:40)

disagrees with the Pri Chadash. He asserts that it's the mindset of the purchaser that is the deciding factor in requiring immersion. If someone purchases a utensil exclusively for a non-meal related use, even if he uses it once for food, the utensil is exempt from tevilah. However, if the buyer's initial plan is to use it occasionally for food, even only rarely, the utensil must be immersed before any food use. An example of the Aruch Hashulchan's opinion is small shot glasses. It was common to buy small glasses for both lighting candles and for occasionally drinking liquor at special occasions. According to the Aruch Hashulchan if the owner purchased the small glasses specifically to hold oil for candles, no immersion is required even if they are used, rarely, for drinking. However if the glasses were purchased with the intent of using them for both lighting and an occasional shot of whisky, tevilah is required.

The Pri To'ar (YD 120:11) brings a different approach, distinguishing between two types of utensils. If a utensil is manufactured and used by most people for food purposes, and someone decided to use it for a different purpose, then even if it will be used once for food, tevilah is required beforehand. For example, if someone purchases a kitchen knife

and decides to use it to sharpen things, if he then wants to use it even once for a meal, it requires tevilah, since in essence it is a kli seuda. It would seem the Pri To'ar agrees that a utensil that was not made for meal purposes goes by its majority use.

To summarize:

A utensil that is not made for meal purposes and is never used for food is exempt from tevilah.

According to the Pri Chadash, in a case where it is used occasionally for food it does not require tevilah.

The Aruch Hashulchan holds that it depends on the intent of the buyer. If it was purchased for both purposes, tevilah is required. However, if the buyer intended it only for non-food purposes, it does not need immersion even if it is later used occasionally for food.

The Pri Toar rules that majority use is only relevant when the utensil is not meant and used by the general public for food. However if its main purpose is food and the owner uses it mainly for other purposes, that does not exempt it from immersion, if he chooses to use it even once for food.

Later authorities (see Sefer Hakashrut p.111) rule stringently on many of these matters and

recommend immersing most of these utensils, but without a bracha because of doubt.

Here are some practical examples of what we learned above:

A steak knife used to sharpen pencils requires immersion if it is used in a meal even once.

A camping knife that is used occasionally for food should be immersed. However, if someone wants to use it once or twice without tevilah that is permitted. (Based on the Aruch Hashulchan Ibid).

Shears used for cutting cardboard and used on numerous occasions to cut chicken require immersion.

All these utensils should be immersed without a bracha.

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VEBBE REBBE - Ask the Rabbi

Rabbi Daniel Mann

Moving into a Home during the Nine Days

Question: We sold our home and have been renting because construc-

tion on our new apartment is not complete. Now, it is basically ready, but lacks a Tofes 4 (municipal permission to inhabit). If we get the Tofes 4 during the Nine Days, is it permitted to move in then?

Answer: Classical sources do not discuss entering an apartment during the Nine Days, but building then. The gemara (Yevamot 43b) requires one to “lessen building activities” during the Nine Days, without specifying. In a parallel context, the gemara (Ta’anit 14b) says not to build a “house of simcha” on a fast day and gives as an example building a house for a chatan, implying that most building is permitted. In contrast, the Yerushalmi (Ta’anit 4:6) writes that it is permitted to build when there is concern that a wall will collapse, implying that most building is forbidden. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 551:2) brings both extreme rulings; the Mishna Berura (ad loc. 12) follows the Magen Avraham and Ran, who say that any unnecessary building, for nonessential expansion/enhancement, is forbidden.

Our understanding (see Bemareh Habazak III:60) is that when something is too simcha-related to be permitted to build in the Nine Days, one should not move into it

either (Levushai Mordechai 1:101 disputes this thesis). It should also be at least as problematic as wearing a new article of clothing (Levushai Mordechai disputes this too), which is forbidden on grounds of simcha (Rama, OC 551:6).

Let us, therefore, investigate whether building would have been permitted. The Mishna Berura (ibid.) permits to build when it is needed to enable normal living conditions. In your case, this is not grounds for leniency if your present rental setup is satisfactory.

However, the Mishna Berura (551:13) permits building needed to prevent a financial loss, similar, although less dramatic, to the Yerushalmi's case of a possibly collapsing wall. Finishing up the building to receive the building's Tofes 4 is certainly justified, as even a minor missing detail can hold up a building - full of families for weeks, causing large losses of money and hardship. Is paying several days of rent enough of a justification? In a parallel case of buying a car during the Nine Days, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, OC III:80) allows it when needed for work (it is unclear what his assumptions were regarding the person's alternatives: no job, renting, using taxis?) In your case, it depends

greatly on the individual family and its financial situation. In borderline cases, there is logic to allowing moving in during the beginning of Av but not during the week in which Tisha B'av falls (Bemareh Habazak ibid.).

There is another issue - the bracha upon entering the house. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 551:17) says that one should refrain from reciting Shehecheyanu during the Three Weeks because the time is one we are not happy about. Many assume that one should recite Shehecheyanu upon entering a new house (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 223:3). The Levushai Mordechai (ibid.), whom we cited as being very lenient on building, forbids entering the home due to inability to recite Shehecheyanu. Rav Moshe Feinstein (ibid.) ruled that in case of need, one can get the car during the Nine Days and recite Shehecheyanu after Tish'a B'av; that logic applies here too. In Bemareh Habazak (ibid.), we accepted the Bi'ur Halacha (to 223:3) that when the homeowner has a wife and children benefiting from the house, the bracha to make is Hatov V'hameitiv (see more in Living the Halachic Process V, D:18), rather than Shehecheyanu. Since it does not mention "this time," it is permitted in Av.

Another factor in play here is the concern that major projects undertaken during this period will be lacking in good mazal (see Ta'anit 29b). We are not experts on the rules of mazal. We suggest to consider the psychological element as well – a believing Jew is sometimes uneasy and/or regretful, short and perhaps long-term, about projects he did in the Nine Days, and it is wise to consider that feeling as well.

Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

Bringing Your Own Brick

There is a widespread custom to read in a mournful voice the verse which begins with the word Eicha from parshat Devarim. The haftorah which is read on that same Shabbat, taken from the book of Yeshayahu, also contains the evocative word Eicha, and is also read in a mournful melody. And of course when the book of Eicha is read on the evening of Tisha B'Av in synagogues throughout the world, those chapters are read in a mournful tone beginning with the word Eicha.

Why should all three readings follow this unique custom?

Perhaps we can trace this practice back to a midrashic teaching that weaves a common conceptual theme

between all three. The following is the first midrashic comment on the book of Eicha (Midrash Rabbah 1:1):

“Three prophets used the expression eicha (How - an utterance of amazement or disbelief). Moshe, Yeshayahu, and Yirmiyahu... Rabbi Levi said: This may be explained by means of parable. A noblewoman who fell from grace had three attendants: One saw her when she was in her state of tranquility, one saw her when she was in her state of rebelliousness, and one saw her when she was in her state of shame. So too, Moshe saw Israel when they were in their state of glory... Yeshayahu saw them in their state of disobedience... Yirmiyahu saw them in their state of shame...”

Moshe witnesses the burgeoning of a nation but is exposed to argumentative people. Yeshayahu saw them as they were stumbling and Yirmiyahu lamented the tragedy of their behaviors leading them to their banishment and the painful exile of galut.

The Sfat Emet, Rebbe Yehuda Aryeh Leib of Ger, explains that the common expression Eicha used by all three prophets is not coincidental. The Midrash rather points us to a fundamental connection between these three prophecies. The message

conveyed in this rabbinic teaching is that the latter sins of the Jewish people had their roots in the actions of the earlier generations. Had the earlier generations perfected their ways, the eventual sins that led to the destruction would not have come to pass.

The pasuk tells us Yirmiyahu's lament: "Our fathers have sinned [chatu] and are no more, and we have suffered for their iniquities [avonoteihem] (Eicha 5:7). The word, CHEIT, refers to an unintentional sin, whereas AVON refers to a sin that is premeditated. Yirmiyahu laments: The sin of our forefathers was unintentional, but it was left unchecked and emerged in us, their descendants, as premeditated avonot. Just as an individual who starts to sin in even a minor way finds it difficult to arrest his slide and eventually commits greater transgression, so it is with the nation. The 'sin' of the fathers festered, and became the iniquity of their children.

Moshe said, "How can I alone carry your contentiousness...! (D'varim 1:12) You are too great for me to judge alone. It is necessary to appoint judges to assist me. The nation had descended slightly so that they were no longer fit to be under the direct guidance of Moshe. This descent

went uncorrected; the people fell further and further until Yeshayahu was forced to declare: "How has [the faithful city] become a harlot." And the downward spiral continued until the sins of the people brought about the destruction of both the Temple and Jerusalem, and Yirmiyahu's lament: Eicha, how she sits in solitude!" (Sfat Emet, D'varim Tish'a B'Av, 5640, 5637).

This is the point of the parable of the noblewoman who fell from grace. Each point of her decline led her further along until she finally found herself in a state of abject humiliation. Each of her three attendants saw her at different points along this descent, and expressed amazement and sadness appropriate to the state in which he found her.

The Sfat Emet is highlighting how mistakes and transgressions not attended to at an early stage, over time, easily expand and exasperate. This is true for an individual but it is also the case on a national scale. This is comparable to two lines that are not exactly parallel - their divergence is initially small, and barely noticeable - but the further they extend, the more they diverge. As time passes they share no proximity to one another.

The Rebbe posited that this is the meaning of the Talmudic statement : “A generation in which the Temple is not rebuilt, is guilty of its destruction” (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:5). In other words, a generation which has not taken up the task to rectify sins that caused destruction in the past are now also culpable. Otherwise, if they rectified matters, the Beit Hamikdash would be rebuilt.

This lesson is not meant to overwhelm us. On the contrary. It is meant to be empowering. The esteemed Rebbe of Ger inspired and uplifted his chassidim exhorting them that their actions have a direct impact on the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash.

This viewpoint is reminiscent of a beautiful story told of the great Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717-1787). One night the holy Rebbe had a dream. In that dream he saw the angels that were running quickly. Each one was carrying a brick and bringing it for the building of the holy Temple in Jerusalem. There were thousands of angels all bringing bricks for the building of our long-awaited Temple in Jerusalem. Reb Elimelech went over to one of the angels and asked him, “Why are there so many angels bringing bricks? The angel turned to Reb Elimelech

and said to him, “Don’t you know? Each person needs to bring their own brick for the rebuilding of the Temple.” (“The Night That Unites” p. 214)

Following a meal when reciting the Birkat Hamazon we express our aspirations and longing for the Beit Hamikdash with the words “Rebuild Jerusalem, the Holy City, speedily in our days.” The Chassidic Rebbes interpreted this line based in the story above. Most translate the phrase ‘bimeheira v’yameinu’, speedily in our days’ to mean that we are praying that Jerusalem and the Temple be rebuilt quickly so that we will be able to see it in our own lifetime. However, the phrase can be understood to mean not “in our days” but “with our days.” In other words, let us rebuild Jerusalem by the way we fashion and live each day; healing the flaws of yesteryear. In this way each of us needs to take on noble tasks and accept the responsibility of bringing our own brick so that the Temple will finally be rebuilt.

This inspiring theme is voiced by HaRav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt”l (1865-1935) in a memorable comment he makes on the Pesach Haggadah. The well known passage “In every generation, we are obligated to see ourselves as if we

have come out of Egypt" is generally understood to mean that in the Seder night we should envision ourselves leaving Egypt. That is why we reenact the event by eating matzah and maror and celebrating the deliverance by drinking the wine. Rav Kook understood the phrase differently. He taught: Each and every person must feel that he or she has a contribution to make to the overall perfection of the nation of Israel and the world. Each individual has a unique role to play in perfecting his or her own generation. Egypt was only the beginning of the process; God's "outstretched arm" continues to guide us. We are responsible to realize our mission and propel things forward, bringing the Redemption closer each day (Haggadah Olat Re'iyah p. 47)

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter (1810-1883), the famed founder of the Mussar movement, offered a practical application based on his reading of the opening Midrash of Eicha. When contemplating one's actions, one must keep in mind not only how they will be impacted in their own life, but also the effect it will have on their children and beyond. A slight deviation on one's part can, if not corrected, have an ill effect on future generations. A slight movement toward increasing positive actions

and making better choices can cause untold benefits that will be realized generations later (Torat Rav Yisrael MiSalant p. 209).

Parshat Devarim, which is always read the Shabbat prior to Tisha B'Av, opens with words of rebuke. However a closer look reveals a hidden love for Israel and Hashem's eternal belief in His people. The Netziv of Volozhin (1816-1893), in his classic Haamek Davar penned a short introduction to each book of the Torah. Here he writes that Moshe saturated this book with words of mussar, ethical and moral wisdom meant for every Jew; everyone, he says, can discover teachings sweet as 'milk and honey.' Even Yehoshua, Moshe's closest disciple, writes the Netziv, would consistently study and review this single book of Devarim as a source of inspiration and guidance. He adopted this book, so to speak, to be used as his own 'mussar sefer'.

In the coming weeks as we hear the reading of Sefer Devarim each Shabbat we open our hearts to its messages of encouragement and motivation. We are meant to imbibe these teachings, each of us in our own way; assimilating and inculcating these ideals so that we steadily move closer and closer to the geulah shleima and to the rebuilding of

Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh,
'bimeheira v'yameinu" - 'quickly, with
our days.'

THE NEW OLD PATH

Rabbi Benji Levy

CEO of Mosaic United

Yitro, the Anonymous Messenger

In the final five weeks of his life, Moshe attempts to remind his beloved people of the Torah's teachings, and counsel and inspire them towards a successful future. While essentially reviewing the Torah (Many infer this perspective of the book of Devarim from its other title, Mishneh Torah - mentioned in Devarim 17:18 - which literally translates as the repetition of Torah). Moshe chooses to omit certain incidents and highlight others in his recounting of the events. Reading between the lines of his review can therefore sometimes be as enlightening and valuable as the lines themselves.

Moshe begins by reminiscing over his inability to carry the burden of leadership alone and lays out the innovative idea of delegating responsibility to other worthy individuals (Devarim 1:9-13). This

strategic approach was actually first floated by Moshe's father-in-law, Yitro, who saw the burden under which Moshe was operating (Sh'mot 18:17-18), however, in his review of events, Moshe fails to mention his father-in-law.

On a basic personal level, Yitro is Moshe's family and therefore one would assume that the right thing to do would be to mention the fact that this plan was originally his initiative. On a broader level, since one of the Torah portions is named after Yitro and grants significance to his presence in the chronicle of the Jewish People, one would assume that Moshe would have at least mentioned his name here and given him credit for the idea. Furthermore, the Talmud states: 'whoever says something in someone else's name brings redemption to the world' (BT, Tractate Chullin 104b). It is clear that the Talmud lends great importance to giving credit to the originator of ideas. In that case, why was Moshe not sensitive to this value?

One may suggest that Moshe simply forgot to mention his name, but a deep appreciation of who Moshe was precludes entertaining such a notion.

Through his omission, Moshe is implicitly showing that the idea of delegation is not actually a

revolutionary idea at all. By not making a big deal of the original suggestion from Yitro, and by not emphasising the radical nature of such a strategy, Moshe is showing that the idea of delegation is more evolutionary than revolutionary. Moshe should not have needed Yitro to suggest it. It is the kind of idea that he was capable of coming up with himself.

We all are familiar with ideas, strategies and plans that we simply should not need someone else to notice on our behalf, and yet for one reason or another we are unable to tap into our inner resources and think of them for ourselves. Of course, having a sounding board is useful; often it helps to have someone hold up a metaphorical mirror for us to look into, and sometimes it is simply easier to hear other people's suggestions than to think of our own. However, this does not mean that the ideas that others suggest are so revolutionary that we could not have thought of them ourselves. This is most notable when our friends, family or colleagues turn to us for advice. More often than not, the advice we offer is strikingly similar to advice they may have given us in the past. If we genuinely dig deep within ourselves, we are likely to find that the solutions are all there, just

waiting to be revealed.

Yitro represents one who notices the words that are not said. He hears beyond the sound and sees beyond the sight. We too must learn to listen to our intuitions, to tune into our enormous potential and to follow our instincts. Moshe does not mention Yitro's name when talking of his system of delegation, for the idea was one he should have thought of alone. If we are able to tune out the general noise of life and tune into our own individual strengths, insights and wisdom, then we will be better able to acutely analyse our decisions, effectively assess our actions and problem-solve successfully and independently.

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The “Things” That Matter

This week's Parsha marks the beginning of the fifth Sefer of the Chumash, which carries the same title Devarim. Usually, the name of the Parsha – and even more so a complete book of the Bible – will have

particularly meaning for us; it will represent a major theme of the narrative for us to take away after our encounter with the text.

So what is the meaning of “Devarim”? Can there be a term more vague than this word? For, in essence, at least in Modern Hebrew, Devarim means “things”, an expression so amorphous that we are left wondering what it means. After all, the Torah could simply have recorded that “Moshe spoke to the people as follows...” How then shall we interpret this opening sentence? Better, perhaps, “These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Israel on the other side of the Jordan in the Midbar (the wilderness).”

If that is the case, then comes the next question: Why mention the Midbar, when we already know that that the desert was where the people were at that time? So, of course, we need to look ahead in the text so that the intention of the narrative and Moshe’s soliloquy becomes clearer. The Torah (or to be more precise, the Torah’s rendering of Moshe’s description of events) continues to outline the specific locations where these words of Moshe were delivered. What is the meaning of all this?

An approach comes to mind: The term “Devarim” is purposely

ambiguous. Our rabbis teach us that Moshe outlined the places that were of import to the people just as, perhaps, a tour guide reviews all the sites visited by his group just before he leaves them. But each person will recall at each spot what was most subjectively significant. Hence “Devarim”: Take from my words what you will.

But Jastro’s Dictionary of the Talmud will teach us that another meaning of the Hebrew term “Davar” is ‘to lead’, as in the phrase “to lead the flock”. Thus, in our Parsha, Moshe, the eternal shepherd and leader, is exploiting his intrinsic leadership qualities – his “Devarim” – to lead his flock, even as he is about to relinquish both life and leadership. Moreover, as the teacher, par excellence, Moshe delivers his final message in a subtle manner, allowing his rebuke to the people to emerge naturally as the people reflect on what happened at these places and on their misbehavior.

Moshe spoke to the people in a language that they could understand; he let the people work things out for themselves: Always the better way. Moshe Rabbeinu! Moshe our [master] teacher! Long before our contemporary pedagogues arrived on the scene and long before Solomon coined the

phrase, Moshe actualized the axiom “Chanoch Lana’ar Al Pi Darko” – ‘Educate the youth according to his way’, that is, according to one’s capacity to absorb and internalize the lessons to be learned.

Rabbi Shalom Rosner

Accusing or Excusing?

These are the words which Moshe spoke to all Israel on that side of the Jordan in the desert (aravah), in the plain opposite the Red Sea, between Paran and Tofel and Lavan and Hazerot and Di Zahav. (D'varim 1:1)

Even though when we read the first pasuk of the parsha it sounds like Moshe Rabbeinu is mentioning different locations along the journey through the desert, Chazal explain that each location refers to an earlier transgression. Moshe was rebuking the nation for previous transgressions.

Rashi tells us which transgression was committed at each location. Aravah – the egel ha-zahav; Paran – the meraglim; Tofel – the complaints about the manna; Hazeros – Korach. What about Di Zahav? Rashi explains: “He rebuked them with respect to the golden calf that they built due to the abundance of gold they had...”

The Gemara (Berachot 32a) interprets the allusion of Di Zahav a bit differently: “Moshe said to Hashem: The riches you gave to Bnei Yisrael until they said ‘enough’ (‘dai’) is what caused them to erect the golden (‘zahav’) calf.” Moshe blames Hashem for the sin of the golden calf. After hundreds of years of slavery, He took them out of Egypt with great miracles and gave them vast riches. What can be expected of someone who becomes a millionaire overnight? It is hard to deal with so much good fortune so quickly. It is Your fault, Hashem, for having spoiled them!

Asks Rav Asher Weiss (Minchas Asher), what is transpiring? Is Moshe Rabbeinu rebuking Am Yisrael or Hashem? Actually, it is both. On the one hand, Moshe is giving us mussar, but at the same time, he is defending us. Whenever we are trying to improve someone else, as a parent, as a teacher, as a friend, at the same time that we are pushing down, we have to be raising up. At the same time that we're accusing, we have to be excusing. As the Gemara (Sanhedrin 107b) states, “With the left-hand push away, and with the right-hand embrace.”

Moshe Rabbeinu is the messenger of Hashem and our messenger as well. He's the go-between, in both

directions. From Hashem's point of view, he's giving us mussar. But from our point of view, he is defending us before Hashem. May we take this lesson with us and carefully balance rebuking and defending our students and children. Especially during this time period when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed for sinat chinam, may we embrace rather than criticize each other.

Simchat Shmuel

Rabbi Sam Shor

This Shabbat is known as Shabbat Chazon - the Shabbat of Vision. Most associate that this Shabbat is called Shabbat Chazon because of the Haftara we recite from the first chapter of Sefer Yeshayahu: Yeshayahu's vision of the churban of Yerushalayim. However, the days leading up to Tish'a B'Av are not simply a time for us to reflect on the past, and the pain and loss of the Batei HaMikdash, the subsequent lengthy exile of the Jewish People, but are also an opportunity for us to begin to perceive and envision a better tomorrow.

The Aish Kodesh, the Rebbe Piascetzna zy'a, suggests that although we associate the message of this Haftara to be Yeshayahu's

vision of the churban, giving us perspective and context to enable us to reflect on the tragic events that led to our exile, the Haftara concludes with the verse: Tzion B'Mishpat Tipadeh, V'Shaveha BiTzdaka - Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and those that return to her with righteousness. The Rebbe, as he does in so many of his powerful teachings, is reminding us that even when the Jewish People are besieged with pain and suffering, we must hold steadfast to the belief that Yishu'at Hashem K'Heref Ayin - that Hakadosh Baruch Hu can bring salvation with the blink of an eye! Even when our circumstances seem bleak, and it is beyond our capability to perceive from our limited human perspective how it might be possible, a Jew must always believe that indeed Yishuat Hashem K'Heref Ayin.

Our Chazal teach us in Masechet Shabbat, that one of the fundamental questions which each of us will be asked after 120 years, when they leave this world, is tzipita liyshua - Did you anticipate and long for redemption?

The Netivot Shalom, the Admor of Slonim zy'a, explains that there is a fundamental difference with the simple belief in the concept of redemption and anticipating that

redemption. Anticipating redemption is one of the fundamental tenets of Jewish life, not simply to believe intellectually or conceptually in the idea of redemption, but to believe that, that redemption, that better tomorrow for the entire world is indeed within our reach. The true question, explains the Rebbe, is how much do we really want that redemption? Have we demonstrated strongly enough that we believe it is within our sight and reach? Are we empowered to do everything we are personally capable of to contribute to making the world a better, safer, morally sound place?

Yehi Ratson, as we read the prophetic words of Yeshayahu on this Shabbat Chazon, may we indeed be moved to recall all the tragic events that led to our exile, but simultaneously be inspired to envision that better tomorrow that is within our reach, and to do everything in our capability to move the world closer to that better tomorrow.

Towards Meaningful Tefilla

by **Zemira Ozarowski**

Birchot HaTorah

During this time period of mourning, we often discuss various reasons why the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed.

One answer given in Gemara Nedarim is that the people at that time neglected to say Birchot HaTorah, the blessings we recite every morning in our davening, about our Torah learning. This seems very perplexing - why would Hashem give such a terrible punishment for a seemingly minor wrongdoing? The Mishna Berura explains that the fact that the people neglected to start off their learning with Birchot HaTorah was symptomatic of a much larger problem. The people in that generation learned a lot of Torah, but they forgot why they were doing it. They viewed it as any other subject, as a purely intellectual pursuit. The Bach also says that they used their Torah study to show off to others how learned and frum they were. But what they forgot was that the goal of Limmud Torah is for one to grow in Ruchniyut (spirituality) and to develop a connection with Hashem.

The Mishna Berura therefore explains that it is extremely important for us to remember to say Birchot Hatorah every day and to use it as a means to give us the right perspective every day about our Torah learning, and to remind ourselves that our learning is meant to help us build our relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Structure

There is a debate in Gemara Berachot as to what the text of Birchot HaTorah should be. Three different Amoraim each offer their own bracha and our siddur reflects a combination of all three Brachot.

BARUCH ATA HASHEM ELOKEINU
MELECH HA'OLAM ASHER KID'SHANU
B'MITZVOTAV V'TZIVANU LAASOK
B'DIVREI TORAH.

We start off with a Mitzva-Bracha, a bracha recited prior to doing a mitzva, in which we recognize prior to starting our Torah learning for the day, that we are about to embark on a mitzva that Hashem has commanded us. We note specifically that the mitzva is not merely to learn Torah but LAASOK B'DIVREI TORAH, to delve into the words of the Torah, to really immerse ourselves in Torah study, making the Torah a part of ourselves. This bracha really focuses on the efforts that we need to put into our Torah study.

V'HAAREV NA... We then continue with the beautiful bracha in which we ask Hashem to please make the words of Torah sweet to us, and not only to us, but to our children as well. We need to put in our effort but we also need Hashem's help to make us feel connected to our Torah study and to be able to pass that

enthusiasm and passion over to our children. This is not a simple thing in today's times. We need to really have Kavana as we say this Bracha because it is only with tremendous siyata dishmaya that we will be successful in inspiring our children.

BARUCH ATA... ASHER BACHAR
BANU... NOTEIN HATORAH.

In the final bracha, we praise Hashem for choosing us to be the nation to receive the Torah. Here we recognize not only the importance of Torah in our own lives but how the Torah shapes us as a nation.

After finishing the Birchot HaTorah, we need to immediately learn some Torah and we do so by reciting sections from three different types of Torah –

1. A selection from the Torah – Birkat Kohanim;
2. A selection from the Mishna - a list of mitzvot that "have no limit";
3. A selection from the Beraita – a list of mitzvot whose reward is received mainly in Olam Haba.

Message

Rav Soloveichik asks a very interesting question. Usually we recite a bracha before each individual mitzva we perform, so if one does Netilat Yadayim three times in one

day, he will make the bracha three times. One would expect that one should make Birchat HaTorah each time one sits down to learn something or goes to another shiur. And yet we find that we make the bracha once a day early in the morning and it covers all the learning we will do over the course of the day. Why is this? Rav Soloveichik answers that while it is true we do not study Torah constantly the whole day long and we do take breaks in between, the Torah remains constantly on our mind. Just like a mother doesn't forget her children when she goes off to work and continues to worry about them and think about them, so too, the Torah should become such a part of us, that even when we are dealing with other mundane tasks, it is always there, shaping who we are, how we act, and what we do. We are OSEIL BATORAH throughout the day even when we are not actually learning it, because it shapes every single thing that we do.

Machon Puah

Rabbi Gideon Weitzman

Real and Present Danger

Last week we saw the difference of opinion between the Ridbaz and the Rema regarding the permissibility of endangering oneself to save someone else. While the Ridbaz prohibited placing oneself in such danger, the

Rema permitted it. Rabbi Waldenberg (Tzitz Eliezer, Vol. IX 17:5,3) explained that the Rema was of the opinion that the mitzvah surpassed the obligation to distance oneself from danger. Based on this we can say that doctors and medical professionals are permitted, and obligated, to save lives even though they expose themselves to danger.

If that is the case, why did the Ridbaz disagree and outlaw helping others? The Tzitz Eliezer suggests that the Rema and the Ridbaz may be discussing two different cases. In the Ridbaz's case there is a chance of a clear and present danger. In the case he discussed, gentiles threaten to kill someone unless another person agrees to have one of their limbs cut off. While the person may not die from this removal of a limb, it is very possible that he is in mortal danger.

This is different from the case discussed by the Rema in which a person refuses to rent his house to someone whose wife is ill. There the danger is much less acute, especially if the illness is not contagious, or the air is not contaminated. But, in other circumstances, where the landlord would be in danger, even the Rema would agree that he can refuse to rent the property.

Rabbi Waldenberg claims that the Rema and the Ridbaz do not argue. On the contrary, they agree that one cannot endanger oneself in the case of real danger, and only in the case of a small chance of danger can one

place oneself in some peril.

The obvious practical application of this distinction is that a doctor is obligated to treat a sick patient even if there is a chance of danger, on the condition that there is not an imminent threat to the doctor's life. However, if the doctor is in danger, he cannot endanger himself even to save another person. Of course, if the doctor takes the correct precautions to ensure that he is safe, then he is permitted and obligated to treat the patient.

But are doctors really exempt from the mitzvah of healing the sick and relieving their ailments out of a fear of getting sick themselves? Surely the doctor's entire job is to heal the sick under whatever circumstances.

More on this next week.

Rebbetzin Shira Smiles

Powerful Perspective

Parshat Devarim always coincides with Shabbat Chazon, the Shabbat before Tisha B'av. Let us therefore find some direction within the parsha to help us navigate the intensity of this period.

In retelling the tragic story of the meraglim, Moshe Rabbeinu describes how the people "complained within their tents and said, it is with the hatred of Hashem that He took us out of Mitzrayim" (Devarim 1:27). The

Midrash Yalkut Shimoni notes that this response caused the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. It is our obligation, says the Sefat Emet, to believe that all Hashem does for us is good. When Am Yisrael failed to believe in this reality, when they spoke of Hashem's hatred towards them, it indeed turned into hatred and destruction. Rav Gedalyah Schorr in Ohr Gedalyahu points out the name of this month – Menachem Av – conveys this important lesson. The month of destruction and devastation should be understood with this deeper perspective; Hashem loves us, cares for us and wishes to comfort us. Our challenges and difficulties in life are akin to the chastisement of a caring parent. Although painful for the child, it is perceived as coming from love, not from a punitive place.

Rav Tzvi Meyer Zilverberg imagines for us the 'conversation' that perhaps ensued between Hashem and the Jewish People at the final moments prior to their exile. The gemara (Yoma 54b) recounts that when the enemy stormed the Beit Hamikdash to destroy it, they found the keruvim, which usually faced away from each other when the Jewish People disobeyed the word of Hashem, surprisingly embracing each other. At that poignant moment Hashem was

expressing to His people how much He loved them and cared for them. This holy embrace has accompanied Am Yisrael throughout our tumultuous history, pogroms and holocausts. Hashem wants us to know that behind all these events is a loving Father who watches over every one of us and that all we endure is ultimately for our benefit.

Rav Avraham Schorr in HaLekach Vhalebuv, further quotes the Sefat Emet who notes it is particularly when we view these events as signs of love that they indeed transform the experience into one of love. Our perception creates the reality. “Ohev et hatochachot” (Avot 6;6) means the following – when one loves the challenges they encounter, when one understands it all comes from the One who loves enduringly, the very pain is transformed into sweetness.

Shabbat Chazon, the height of our national pain, is one of the holiest Shabbatot of the year. This is the Shabbat during which we can envision the future Beit Hamikdash and geulah. This time of sadness, redirected by our attitude, has the potential to be reestablished as a time of joy and hope; it is we who can create a new reality.

Rabbi Judah Mischel

Shabbat Chazon

Rav Shneur Kotler zt'l (d. 1982), Rosh Yeshiva of Beit Midrash Gavo'ah of Lakewood was a humble ga'on, the successor and son of the yeshiva's founder, Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l. In 1940, newly engaged, Rav Shneur escaped to Eretz Yisrael, spending the war years living with his illustrious grandparents, Rav Isser Zalman & Rebbetzin Baila Hinda Meltzer, and learning in Yerushalayim. Meanwhile, his kallah-to-be, Rebbetzin Rishel, had escaped Europe and spent years in Japan and Shanghai.

During those chaotic and painful years of distance from his parents and fiancée, Rav Shneur developed an especially close relationship with his grandparents. After six long years, when the day arrived for Rav Shneur to head to his new home in the United States to be reunited with his parents and future wife, his parting from his grandparents was with a heavy heart.

Rav Isser Zalman, the beloved Gadol and Rosh Yeshiva of Etz Chaim was filled with emotion as he accompanied his beloved grandson down from their third-floor Yerushalayim apartment. Suddenly,

when they reached the second-floor landing, Rav Isser Zalman abruptly stopped, and tearfully blessed Rav Shneur, hugging and kissing him effusively, and then turned and began to climb the steps back up to their apartment.

A family member present was confused as to why Rav Isser Zalman had stopped midway, and asked the loving Zaidy why he didn't accompany his cherished grandson all the way down to the taxi waiting below?

Rav Isser Zalman became still, and said, "I thought to myself: the horrific war has just ended. My Shneur is heading to his chupah, but there are thousands of other 'Shneurs' who were murdered, who will never have that zechus. Many of our neighbors here in Yerushalayim are survivors who lost young relatives just like him. They might have seen me embracing my grandson and felt additional anguish...

When Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkovitch zt'l, a close talmid of Rav Isser Zalman heard this poignant maaseh re-told, he choked back tears, and whispered, "Oy... I too knew so many of those Shneurs..."

~ This Shabbos marks the start of Sefer Devarim, Moshe Rabbeinu's 'swan song', the Torah's version of a

'Last Dance' of the greatest leader of all time.

Chazal explain that Moshe had been chosen by Hashem to lead Am Yisrael as a result of his open heart, sensitivity and willingness to share the burden of his brothers and sisters. Having grown up in the aristocracy of the Egyptian palace, Moshe set out to connect with his brethren, and repeatedly intervened on their behalf.

"In those days, vayigdal – Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers, vayar b'sivlosam – and looked at their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers." (Shemot 2:11) Rashi says that when seeing the Egyptian taskmaster beating the Ivri, Moshe nasan einav v'libo l'hiyos meitzar aleihem; Moshe "directed his eyes and his heart," and looked at their burdens. He directed his eyes and his heart on them in such a way that he would be distressed over them.

More fundamental to the identity of Moshe Rabbeinu, "Our Teacher" and the greatest prophet who ever lived, is that he was a man of great moral sensitivity, kindness and love. He was dedicated to Klal Yisrael with every fiber of his being, "giving his eyes and heart to be meitzar aleihem, distressed over them".

A parallel to Rashi's description of Moshe's sensitivity toward people is found in the opening siman of the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law (Ohr haChayim 1:3), regarding the Temple: "It is fitting for every person who has fear of Heaven to be meitzar, anguished and concerned regarding the destruction of the Temple."

There have been so many times throughout our history when we suffered unfathomable heartbreak and loss, and Tisha B'Av is the day when we allow ourselves to sit in the pain and sadness of it all. Shabbos Chazon, which immediately precedes our National day of mourning, is a time for us to open our eyes and hearts to the suffering of our Nation to remember all of the "Shneurs" of our history, and to remember that despite all the personal suffering and hardship, we have shown fortitude and resilient faith. We have never turned away from being "anguished and concerned" regarding our Temple, our precious communal and spiritual center. And we have always, and will always, direct our eyes and hearts to the welfare of our brothers and sisters.

May this Tisha b'Av be converted to a day of feasting and rejoicing, with the end of all anguish and coming of Mashiach, B'mheira.

Walk through the Parsha
with **Rabbi David Walk** 

HELP! NOT JUST ANYBODY!

One of the salient ideas about governance is that it requires cooperation. No country, state or large assemblage of people can be managed by one person. Even the smallest human groupings require responsibility sharing to function well. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that this is Moshe Rabbeinu's first topic in his valedictory address to the nation. Without responsible lieutenants and officials, no association can long endure. However, in this presentation there is one very surprising fact: Moshe leaves out Yitro.

It's remarkable that the earth's most humble person gives no credit to Yitro when discussing the delegation of authority to captains (SARIM) and constables (SHOTRIM). Back in Parshat Yitro, we're told that Moshe heeded his father-in-law. Here, it says that Moshe brought his own idea, actually a complaint, to God, and God approved it.

Although there are many answers to this question (Surprise! I wasn't the

first to notice.), I'd like to develop an approach based on the context. Here's what Yitro observed and commented in Shmot: What is this thing that you are doing to the people? Why do you sit by yourself, while all the people stand before you from morning till evening? (Shmot 18:14).

Yitro is specifically discussing judging the cases which are brought by the people. Moshe, on the other hand, says: 'I cannot carry you alone. The Lord, your God, has multiplied you, and behold, you are today as the stars of the heavens in abundance. May the Lord, God of your forefathers add to you a thousand-fold as many as you are, and may He bless you, as He spoke concerning you! How can (EICHAH) I bear your trouble, your burden, and your strife all by myself? (Devarim 1:9-12)

Moshe is clearly discussing broader governmental issues. A fascinating aspect of Moshe's description is the double-edged sword of growth and expansion. He is clear that the nation received the following bounty from God: 1. increase (HIRBA) 'to be like the stars', 2. additional (YOSEF) numbers, 3. blessing (VaYIVARECH). This corresponds to his difficulties in handling the Jews' 1. trouble

(TIRCHA), 2. burden (MASSA), 3. conflict (RIV). The Jews are more trouble because 'they're like the stars', more of a burden because 'they increased a thousand-fold', and there's more conflict because they are 'blessed as promised'.

The big difference between the issues in Shmot and here are in the requirements for the different jobs. Yitro says, 'seek men of valor (CHAYIL), God fearing, men of truth, who spurn bribery (Shmot 18:21). Here Moshe cites the following job description, 'men who are wise (CHACHAM), understanding (NAVON), and knowing (YEDU'IM, Rashi: well-known). Also, in Shmot Moshe picks the judges; here, the people choose.

It's clear, I believe, that the two stories are describing different incidents and, therefore, different details. There is no disrespect for Yitro. We're talking about another scenario. Yitro was looking for judges who would be men of morality and piety. Moshe was searching for leaders who would be men of wisdom and accomplishment. I'd like to think that we can find people who have both sets of qualities. However, that wasn't the case even then. In Shmot, when we actually find the individuals, the trait of 'spurning bribery' is not

mentioned. Here, the attribute of understanding (NAVON) doesn't get mentioned for the appointees.

It's important to acknowledge that a third list of requirements is presented in Sefer Bamidbar, when Moshe was distressed by the complaints of the people. In response, God said, 'Assemble 70 of Israel's elders, the ones you know to be elders (ZAKEN) and leaders (SHOTRIM, Bamidbar 11:16).' Rav Amnon Bazak commented that along with the judges in Shmot, we have:

Sefer Bamidbar describes the system of the seventy elders, who – together with Moshe – represent the spiritual leadership of the nation, by virtue of the prophecy awarded to those elders. Sefer Devarim, on the other hand, describes the system of captains – the heads of the nation, chosen by the nation to help with routine material leadership.

One of the critical lessons of Tanach is how good our shepherds can be, while, simultaneously, reminding us of the threshold of behavior our chiefs must achieve. Our guidance from God is honest and clear.

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein z"l said on our Parsha: It is no coincidence that Moshe starts his speech by noting the difficulty of maintaining a legal

system and the challenges that it brings...We must remind ourselves of the minimal requirements (good character), and ask ourselves what efforts we are making to ensure that the candidates...meet them.

We've had inspired managers, like Moshe and David, but real stinkers like Yerovam and Achav. Our nation has been given the metrics to evaluate our judges, spiritual guides, and political leaders. Let's be true to them. Please!

PIRKEI AVOT SUMMER SERIES

There is a long standing custom that during the summer Shabbatot one learns the weekly chapter of Pirkei Avot. Each week Torah Tidbits will feature a prominent personality who will share insights and inspiration from the weekly Perek. Enjoy!

Phil Chernofsky
Editor Emeritus, Torah Tidbits

Perspectives on the Study of Nature

We in Israel read/learn the 3rd perek of Avot this Shabbat. In Chutz LaAretz, they have the 3rd perek next week. Let's look at the 9th mishna (some texts number the mishnayot differently). This mishna is sometimes attributed to a R' Yaakov.

R' Shimon says: He who walks on the road and is reviewing (his Torah

learning in his mind), and stops his learning and says - How beautiful is this tree, how beautiful is this field - the verse considers him to have put his life in jeopardy.

The obvious question is what is so terrible about admiring a tree or a field while walking on the road? The admiration of nature is the admiration of G-d's World. We even have brachot for different elements of nature.

The standard explanation is that when one is engrossed in Torah study, nothing should cause him to interrupt himself - even the beauties of nature. Studying Torah is above all.

There is another way to understand this mishna. The key words to this understanding is UMAFSIK MIMISHNATO, and he stops his learning to admire nature. Admiration of nature must be part of the Torah in which we are engrossed as we walk on the 'road of life'.

The study of nature, of the life sciences, needs a very special perspective. On the one hand, to view nature as something different from G-d is problematic. It short changes G-d. This attitude manifests itself with making a sharp distinction between Limudei Kodesh and Limudei Chol - studying holy matters and

mundane matters. The Torah way of life does not recognize the pursuit of any area of knowledge as being outside the Jew's lifetime challenge of Knowing G-d, better and better. This, says the Rambam, leads to a deeper and richer Love of G-d.

When one studies biology or chemistry or physics or astronomy... (any topic, really), he should close the part of his mind and heart that is reserved for Torah Learning, and open up a different part for other disciplines. A beloved biology professor I was privileged to have for several courses at Yeshiva University - Dr. William Etkin z"l - said to us once, a Torah person's mind must always be open (he would have said 24/7, but that phrase wasn't popular yet) and everything that he learns, sees, experiences, should be seen within a Torah perspective.

The above touches on one side of this issue. MAFSIK MIMISHNATO is problematic.

There is another side of the study and admiration of nature, that is just as problematic.

When admiration of nature, of the Sun and the Moon, of lofty mountains and magnificent animals and trees, leads to veneration and worship. This is the dire concern Moshe Rabeinu

expresses in the beginning of next week's sedra (Va'etchanan) about seeing various impressive elements of G-d's Creation, and either making the grave mistake of worshipping them, even in the misguided thinking that it is a way to serve and worship G-d.

If a person is rightly impressed with the Sun (for example), its light, warmth, energy, life-force, and this leads to Sun-worship (as it did in generations of long ago), then that is a very serious situation, to say the least.

But being equally impressed with the Sun as a ball of fiery plasma with internal convective motion that creates a magnetic field... that it is 109 times the diameter of the Earth and 330,000 times as massive... The Sun currently fuses about 600 million tons of hydrogen into helium every second, converting 4 million tons of matter into energy every second as a result... Wow, look at what G-d created - that's fine. What does G-d have to do with the Sun which formed about 4,600,000,000 years ago from the collapse of part of a giant molecular cloud that consisted mostly of hydrogen and helium and that probably gave birth to many other stars. - that's the problem!

Study of nature can and has led some

people and societies to forget about the one G-d and worship many other things. Study of nature has led other people and societies to leave G-d to the spiritual matters in the world (if that) and consider nature as we know it and are still learning about, to have nothing to do with G-d at all.

Wikipedia's entry on the Sun is huge. I did a search for God in the entry - gods and goddesses were mentioned numerous times in the article. Not G-d as Creator of All.

If the study and admiration of nature is so fraught with pitfalls for the G-d-fearing person, may it be better not to study nature.

No, says the Navi Yeshayahu in next week's haftara of Nachamu. He says, S'U MAROM EINEICHEM UR-U MI VARA EILEH..., lift your eyes heavenward and see (and understand and appreciate) Who created it all.

OzTORAH

Rabbi Raymond Apple

Moshe's Last Lap

The final book of the Chumash sees Moshe Rabbenu summing up his career and giving the people a farewell message.

Baruch HaShem he has been blessed

with many years and he approaches the end of his book of life with a clear mind, a perceptive eye and an energetic stride.

This echoes the verse from T'hilim 71:9, AL TASHLICHENI L'EIT ZIKNA, "Do not cast me off in time of old age", which can be interpreted as, don't let me feel too tired to give old age a value and quality.

How do we define old age? In T'hilim 90 life expectancy is three score and ten or (if you're strong) four score. These days 60, 70 or 80 are nothing special. Modern life expectancy has almost reached Moshe's 120 - hopefully "120 without falling apart".

The Levites retired at 50 (Bamidbar 8:25-26) when they were no longer so strong and energetic. They were not lost to the community: the Torah says, "They shall serve with their brothers" (verse 26).

Maybe that means they supported their fellow Levites. Or perhaps they had less onerous duties than before. They could still lock the Temple gates, sing in the choir, teach the children, and supervise loading the wagons.

These days people are generally still strong and well long past the conventional 60 or 65 so there is no need for a set age for retirement.

Older people can continue to work, even at a slower pace.

Society should find ways of retaining the expertise and experience of its older members.

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

CRUMBS

And your little ones, who you said will be prey, and your children, who on that day did not know good and evil, they will go there and I will give it to them, and they will possess it. (Devarim 1:39)

The Lubavitcher Rebbe was childless. Nevertheless, he explains this verse by using imagery that resonates chiefly with parents trying to feed their young children. About to enter the Land of Israel, Moshe addresses the children of the generation of the wilderness, who will merit entering the land: "And your little ones... they will go there and I will give it to them, and they will possess it."

Young children play with their food and if they are given a slice of bread, more crumbs remain on their plate than go into their mouth. Still, the child does eat something. The Lubavitcher Rebbe compares this to the nation's entry into the Land of

Israel. The people are compared to a child, and the Torah to bread. In the wilderness, the Torah was whole, perfect, and clean, which made for a comfortable existence. Once they enter the Land of Israel, the Jewish People will have to begin applying it in real life and it will turn into crumbs. They won't have absorbed everything they were taught, and they will not be fully keeping all the commandments in a calm, relaxed manner. After all, their food will no longer fall as manna from the heavens like it did in the wilderness. Now they will have to work hard for their food and worry about their material existence.

Only a small amount of Torah (bread) will actually go into our mouths, and many crumbs will remain on the plate. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains the parable and says that, nevertheless, this is the right thing to do and the natural course of history. God prefers the child's attempts to eat, our attempts to keep the Torah in the Land of Israel, to the toil of the generation in the wilderness.

NCSY ISRAEL

Asher Manning

Gush Etzion Chapter Director

People of Chazon

"Look beyond what you see"- [Rafiki, The Lion King, chapter 3 verse 6].

As a teenager I often found myself protesting: "What do you mean 'are you listening?' I heard everything you said!" But the answer was always forthcoming – "You might well have heard everything, but you weren't listening!"

Sometimes we go through life as if it were an abstract dream; we just float on through, totally oblivious to what is going on around us. So caught up are we in our own lives and troubles that we become blind to anything outside of our personal little bubble.

The Haftara of this week's parsha is famous for its opening line: "Chazon Yeshayahu ben Amotz" – "The vision of Yeshayahu".

In the Hebrew language there are many words that describe the act of 'seeing' – R'i-ya, Tzefi'ah, Habata, Hashkafa, Histaklut... But none contain the gravitas and foresight embedded in the word "Chazon" – 'Vision'. A prophet doesn't just see the future and let you in on the secret; his words and descriptions actually form the future, in the manner that he sees it. In the books of Nevua in the Tanach, our prophets lay down a blueprint for how the future could, and should look. They

share with us their vision of a better world, a place of justice and righteousness, a time of peace and prosperity.

Every year, we return to read the same Haftara, to remind ourselves time and time again of the poignancy and relevance embedded in this one word - "Chazon".

All year round we frantically rush through the bustle of our lives, hearing but not listening, looking but not seeing – but stop! Harken to the bell ringing "Chazon"! Listen closely to the loaded words, echoing through the ages – "Chazon Yeshaya" – Now is the time for Vision!

In every Tefilat Shmoneh Esrei we repeat the final words of the 'Bakashot' (requests) section, often without noticing the vision that they carry: "VeteChezena Eineinu". May our eyes be filled with vision, may we be people of Chazon.

"Look beyond what you see" said Rafiki – May we be people of "Chazon".

By Teens, for Teens

Elish Eisenberg - Neve Daniel

The Admor & the Tractor

Before the State of Israel was established, an Admor came to Palestine to visit his talmidim on kibbutz. When he arrived, he was appalled to see his students on tractors instead of learning in the Beit Midrash. When the Admor returned to Europe, he discouraged his students from making aliyah, because he was worried that in Palestine they wouldn't learn Torah. I feel that the Admor might have misunderstood the intentions of his students and their understanding about how the Torah is supposed to be applied in Eretz Yisrael.

Parshat Devarim describes how the Dor Hamidbar likewise might have misunderstood this very issue. The Jews in the desert had everything provided for them directly from Hashem - when they were hungry - they had manna, when they were thirsty - they drank from Be'er Miriam, and from above - the Annanei HaKavod provided protection. The generation of Bnei Yisrael that entered Israel with Yehoshua had a very different reality from the Dor Hamidbar. The younger generation couldn't just rely directly on miracles

like “handouts” from Hashem, but had to also fight to conquer and work the land. They did their own Hishtadlut, while relying on Hashem to provide good results from their work. The generation of Bnei Yisrael who were ready to enter the land of Israel couldn't just be talmidim in a Beit Midrash. They also had to be committed to the land, using their Torah for both practical work and for halacha.

The common mistake made is thinking that the only way to get close to Hashem is through learning Torah. While learning in Yeshiva is important, in the land of Israel, to get close to Hashem you can't just learn all day, you also have to work the land and get on that tractor. That is why the generation that came out of Egypt, who experienced the miraculous events of the 10 Makot and Matan Torah, weren't the right people to go into Israel. They didn't have the right mentality to work the land and preferred to just wait for Hashem to send manna.

Nowadays, we are fortunate that as Jews in Israel, we can do all these: learn in Yeshiva, serve in Tzahal, and fulfill the mitzvah to work the land. None of these are contradictions to Torah values. In fact, this is the true fulfillment of the Torah.

Torah VeHa'aretz Institute
Rabbi Moshe Bloom

Separating Terumot and Ma'aserot in Iraq Today [2]

Last week we wrote that despite the words of the Mishna, Rambam, and Shulchan Aruch - that we are obligated to separate terumot and ma'aserot in countries near the Land of Israel - this is not the practice today.

There are several reasons that led to this leniency today, which began in the times of the Rishonim or even the Geonim:

[1] Chazal set up this institution only when the obligation was Biblical. Since today the Temple isn't standing and the obligation is rabbinic, the decree no longer applies.

[2] This institution applied only when it was possible to eat terumah in a state of ritual purity. Today, however, kohanim cannot eat the terumot in a state of purity (Rabbi Tzemach Gaon).

[3] The institution did not apply to lands under non-Jewish sovereignty, only when the king had some sort of ownership of the land.

[4] The prophets instituted separating terumot and ma'aserot following the destruction of the First

Temple and upon the exile to Babylon. During Second Temple times, however, only select individuals continued this custom, which was no longer practiced at a later time (Harav Avraham Kook).

[5] The custom of not separating terumot and ma'aserot in lands surrounding the Land of Israel predates Rabbi Yosef Karo, so we are not bound to follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch in this case.

In conclusion: According to most Acharonim, there is no obligation to separate terumot and ma'aserot in lands surrounding the Land of Israel (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq). In any case, the obligation of separating terumot and ma'aserot applies only to land owned by Jews. The current situation today is that there are nearly no Jewish land owners who raise produce in our surrounding countries.

Note that we are only talking about territory that is not included in modern-day Israel.

From the school of the Ramchal - Jacob Solomon

These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel on the other side of the Jordan, concerning what had happened in the Wilderness, the

Arava, opposite the Red Sea, between Paran and between Tofel, and Lavan, and Hatzerot, and Di-Zahav (1:1 – translated according to Rashi).

Most of Sefer Devarim contains Moshe's final address to B'nei Yisrael before his death. The first third reminded them of their past sins and rebellions from Yetziat Mitzrayim onwards.

In order not to open by offending or embarrassing them, he alluded to rather than emphasized the offences, by saying where they happened (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 di zahav, enough gold.

Once the Israelites were tuned into his hints of rebuke, 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 Ramchal (Otzrot Ramchal 113) shares with Rashi the view that the words with which Moshe opened his

final exhortation to Am Yisrael were Divrei Tochacha, words of rebuke. In that way he was exemplifying and putting into action: “You should reproach your comrade” (Vaykira 19:17) before his death.

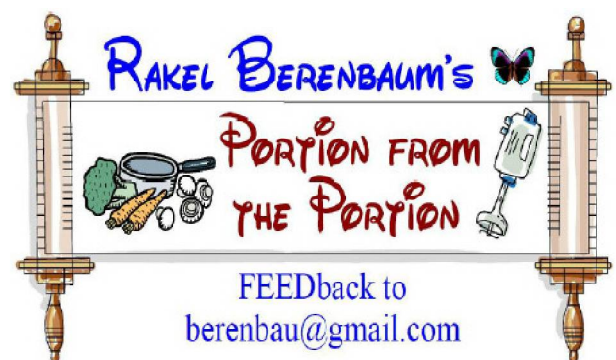
For the Ramchal, on a mystical level, explains that Tochacha is a vital ingredient to help people to do Teshuva, regret and repentance for previous sins. “A prisoner cannot free himself from his own imprisonment” (Berachot 5b). A person who is accustomed to sin is “imprisoned in sin”. Let the person who is free from sin come and show where the other has gone wrong, and offer the encouragement and support to improve.

The Ramchal examines how that works in spiritual terms. When a person does something wrong, the behavior places the individual within the realm of the Sitra Achra, literally the side of impurity that attracts the negative spiritual forces which encourage the person to repeat the offence and do worse on a bigger scale. “Sin begets sin” (Avot 4:2). Let the person who is not “imprisoned”, who has not succumbed to those temptations, offer well-intentioned Tochacha to the person who is “imprisoned” under the influence of the Sitra Achra. It is that Tochacha

that not only supports the individual to do better, but makes it easier by weakening the force of the Sitra Achra and thus enable the people to escape its powerful grip.

And the Tochacha was successful: at the end, the people found themselves ready “to pass into a covenant with G-d” (29:11). The Sforno explains that they were not coerced: it was what the people wanted to do. To the degree that Moshe’s final parting words were: “Happy are you, O Israel, Who is like you?” (33:29). Moshe thus left Am Yisrael in the state he wanted them always to be.

This approach also puts heavy responsibility on a person who seeks to correct the other’s behavior in order to promote improvement. That person should be free of the same fault so that his correcting can also weaken the Sitra Achra, to make it easier for the other to improve behavior through the rebuke.



D'VARIM - WORDS

This week we start reading the fifth book of the Torah. Bereshit was about the creation of the world till Yosef's death, about 2300 years of our history. Shmot, starts with Yaakov, his sons, and their generation having died out in Egypt through the redemption from Egypt, till the building of the Mishkan, more than 210 years. Vayikra, deals with lots of Mitzvot that were taught in Ohel Moed and Har Sinai. The book of Bamidbar tells about the 40 years that we were in the desert. So what about the book of D'VARIM which was all said in the 37 days before they entered the land of Israel?

The book of D'VARIM is referred to as the "Mishna Torah", the repetition of the Torah. Moshe repeats mitzvot that he had taught the nation already in one of the other books of the Torah. We would think that if this is a repetition of what was stated in the other four books, then this book would have the most mitzvot, but if someone were actually to check they would find that Vayikra has the most mitzvot.

So we see that the book of D'VARIM doesn't cover the longest time period in our history, it doesn't have the most mitzvot, nor does it have the most "juicy stories". So you may be wondering, what is so special about

this book? The name of the book gives it away. The whole sefer is filled with DIBURIM - talking; speeches and dialogues. In the portions of D'VARIM through Ekev there is TOCHACHA - rebuke and memories, in RE'I thru KI TEITZEI there are speeches about specific mitzvot and how to fulfill them and in Ki Tavo thru Vayelech the speeches are related to the covenant and the book ends with Haazinu and Zot Habracha with a song and speeches.

Rav Yehudah Shaviv in his book on the parsha, points out that for the 40 years in the desert Moshe has led the nation, but he hasn't spoken much. He actually started his career as a leader with a speech impediment, referring to himself as someone who was not able to speak "LO ISH D'VARIM ANOCHI". Moshe even needed Aharon to talk for him, and was punished for hitting the rock, rather than talking to it as he had been instructed to do. It seems in the last 40 days of his life he spoke to the people more than he had ever done during the rest of his time as their leader. He has become someone who shares D'VARIM.

It could be that now, with his death imminent, he feels that the people will be more willing to listen to what he has to say. It is the perfect time

for him to share with them words of faith, rebuke, and more details about the mitzvot. He has learned that "words that go out from the heart, enter the heart - D'VARIM HAYOTZIM MIN HALEV YIKANSU LALEV". These words have the power to educate and shape a whole nation. By sharing his many words with us not only does he teach us specific lessons, but he also teaches us the importance of words themselves - they can influence, teach and shape those around us. Moshe's words are his last will and testament to the nation.

It struck me that it is no coincidence that we read from Sefer D'VARIM just at this time of year, right before 9 Av. There's no better time of year to work on the words, ha'D'VARIM that come out of our mouths. I have started to learn the book "Guard Your Tongue" with one of my sons. It helps make us more sensitive to the power of our words. In the introduction to his book, the Chafetz Chaim, gives a list of the 31 negative and positive commandments which one violates if he speaks LOSHON HARA. For example one commandment he lists is "Love your neighbour as yourself ". By speaking or listening to derogatory words about another Jew, the person shows that he doesn't truly love the other person. In

the time of year when we mourn the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, due to baseless hatred, SINAT CHINAM, we should go out of our way to show AHAVAT CHINUM, true love for our fellow Jew. Working on guarding our own tongue is something we should all be doing now - maybe it will help hasten the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash, speedily in our days.

Since we discussed the importance of speech and guarding one's tongue, here's a simple tongue recipe.

TONGUE CASSEROLE

1 fresh tongue, not pickled

1 box fresh or a can of mushrooms, sliced

1 onion, sliced

3 stalks celery, chopped

1 green pepper, cut in chunks

1 large can tomato sauce

3-4 potatoes, quartered

1/4 c. oil

Garlic powder to taste

Salt & pepper

1 large can peas, drained (optional)

Cook tongue in a pot covered with water. When water boils and darkens,

change water and cook in fresh water over medium flame for 1 hour till tender. Pour off water and while still warm, hold stable with a fork and peel off the skin. When cooled, slice tongue and arrange slices side by side in a casserole dish. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and garlic powder. Set aside.

Saute onion, celery, green pepper and mushrooms. Add tomato sauce; stir well. Pour sauce over tongue. Arrange potatoes on top. Bake in oven, covered until tongue is tender, about 1.5 hours. Add drained peas just before serving. Keep in oven until peas are warm.

LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF^[1]

- Dr. Meir Tamari

The idea behind this teaching is that such love will lead to an improved spiritual life and to an elevated mankind. As such it has been quoted in many different forms by various religions, faiths and social systems. However, the way it is worded here is of itself of great importance; perhaps that is the uniqueness of our view. This way links ve'ahavta, self-love, to communal concern and involvement. The question has been asked in many generations as to why the continuation of the world was not

through Hevel, who left no descendants. "Their names indicate their characteristics and their futures. Cain is evil yet does things on his own initiative and convictions that there is a value to them. So he has a continuation and this makes repentance and continuity possible, whereas Hevel the tzaddick does not have not any such continuation. For one who sees everything as only vanity, there is no purpose in the future and no value in achievement" (Shem Mi Shmuel).

It seems that we need self-love or recognition of self-worth before we can achieve any form of love for others. For instance, given the importance of charity, it would have been possible to achieve an egalitarian society in which there is no necessity for charity. History, both Jewish and general, is replete with the unsuccessful attempts to do this. (As often as not this failure was because basically it required the abolition of the family as an economic unit). The Essenes, of the period of Bayit Sheini, established colonies in the wilderness of Yehuda to do this in the Jewish world. However, this was only a short term measure as Judaism requires private property linked to social responsibility of community, nation and even general humanity. For instance, there are the daily communal sacrifices but also the individual free will offerings.

Likewise, on Sukkot we bring 70 sacrifices for the 70 nations of the world, then on Sh'meni Atzeret there are the sacrifices only for Israel itself.

One can only truly give something which is yours. In today's religious kibbutzim this has been a problem since there is no private property from which to give; the members share the property but do not own a share. So for example, on leaving they are not allowed to actually take their share and sell it or continue to draw a share of the profits. The children grow up unfamiliar with Judaism's concern and practice of charity,

In truth this was something we had aimed at since the ideal was social justice, rather than charity. Charity was regarded by us then as merely one of the subterfuges erected by capitalism to distort the thinking of the oppressed, the poor and the unemployed from the real causes of their poverty. This would ensure their continued oppression and exploitation. This view of charity is a poor substitute for the Jewish view of charity as a noble means of seeing the suffering of others and trying to alleviate it. The Torah shows us the greatness of Moshe, the prince of Egypt, who went out to witness the sufferings and troubles of his brethren. That witnessing is only one of the constant acts and words of Moshe which reveal his love for

Israel. It is his constant love for Israel, irrespective of their acts, which make him Rabbeinu, scholarly leader, teacher and savior of the House of Israel.

Rabbi Akiva saw this love in Judaism as doing to another Jew or Jewess what one desires them to do for or to oneself. Thereby, he removed the love from any concept of sacrifice but rather introduces the idea of giving or doing that which one desires for oneself. Harav S. R. Hirsch stressed the element of doing charity, rather than giving, since one can only give that which belongs to them whereas one may do charity even with what is not strictly speaking theirs.

Halakha frowned on giving up all ones possessions for charity but rather insisted that one retain some wealth for ones needs and those of their family. This would seem feasible and attainable even by normal average people, rather than something reserved for saints and spiritual giants. During the ages, our Sages saw this love in actions or words which help a person in finding a short and easy route to their destination, sharing commercial and financial information or helping them in any way possible. The Sages of the Talmud codified this as, "one has a benefit and the other suffers no loss". The converse is considered to be an attribute of the S'domites.



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Not just the first; the root

Last week, this page was devoted to preparing for the Nine Days - and not what I would have liked to write about for Parshat (Matot-)Mas'ei - the mitzva to live in Eretz Yisrael.

But Parshat D'varim this week, gives me another chance at that topic. Look at D'varim 1:8

רָאָה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֵיכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ בְּאֵי וּרְשִׁי
 אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׁבַע ה' לְאַבְרָהָם לְאִצְחָק
 לְיַעֲקֹב וְלֵעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לָתֵת לָהֶם וְלְזָרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם:

See, I have set the land before you; come and possess the land which G-d swore to your forefathers, to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov, to give them and their descendants after them.

This 'invitation' from HaShem follows a direct command in last week's sedra -

וְהִרְשִׁיתֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְיָשַׁבְתֶּם-בָּהּ כִּי לָכֶם
 נָתַתִּי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אִתָּהּ:

You shall clear out the Land and settle in it, for I have given you the Land to occupy it. - Bamidbar 33:53

The pasuk from Mas'ei is the source of Ramban's famous Mitzva #4 - Mitzvat Yishuv HaAretz. True, the Rambam (and Chinuch) do not number Living in Israel as one of the 613 mitzvot. Different

suggestions to explain this can be found in various sources. Rambam certainly holds that living in Eretz Yisrael is an essential of a Torah Life. He quotes the gemara in his halachic work, Mishneh Torah: A person should rather live in Eretz Yisrael in a city the majority of whose inhabitants are idol worshiper, and not in Chutz LaAretz, even in a city whose majority are Jews. A Jew living in Israel has a G-d, and one living outside is like one who has no G-d. Powerful words from one who didn't count this mitzva among Taryag. It can be argued that Rambam considers Mitzvat Yishuv HaAretz as a supra-mitzva. No room here to explain further.

The mishna in Taanit lists the decree against the generation of the Midbar not to enter the land - this in the wake of Cheit HaMeraglim. This is not just the first of the list of the five items the mishna enumerates, the other four all relating to the Churban. Rather it is the root cause of all the tragedies related to destruction and exile. Of Torah we said NAASEH V'NISHMA, and as a result the Torah is always with us - even when we sometimes don't deserve it. But we keep losing our connection to the Land and it all started with the Meraglim fiasco.

When we all recognize the mitzva living in Israel and that it is R'TZON HASHEM, we will be further on our way to the

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