

PHILOTORAH לה"ו

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים, רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לפצועי המלחמות, ולנפגעי מעשי טרור ואנטישמיות בישראל ובכל מקום שהם - עם שאר חולי ישראל. אמן.

May HaShem protect our soldiers and the hostages; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured; may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel, may He end the war with total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever they are.

כֹּה-אָמַר
ה' צְבָאוֹת
צוֹם הָרְבִיעִי
וְצוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי
וְצוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
וְצוֹם הָעֲשִׂירִי
יִהְיֶה לְבֵית-יְהוּדָה
לְשִׂשׁוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחָה
וּלְמַעֲדִים טוֹבִים
וְהָאֱמֶת וְהַשְּׁלוֹם
אֶהְבּוּ:



So said HaShem Tz'vakot: The fast of the fourth [month], the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth shall be for the House of Yehuda joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace. (Zechariya 8:19)

YERUSHALAYIM in/out times D'VARIM - CHAZON

ח' אב ה'תשפ"ה • August 1-2, '25

 **7:01PM** PLAG **6:10PM** •  **8:15PM** R' Tam **8:47PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales and other halachic times

Seuda Sh'lishit - no eating or drinking after 7:35pm (J'lem)

See link for TISH'A B'AV REVIEW for more...

There is an interesting term used to tell us that we may eat anything we want at the Shabbat meals, even on Shabbat Erev Tish'a b'Av. The term is "even like the Seuda of Shlomo in his (finest) hour", referring to the lavish, festive meal celebrating the building of the Beit HaMikdash. If all we had was our present and past, then that phrase would be insensitive, to say the least, in light of our mourning the Churban. But with our future guaranteed through G-d's prophecy, the phrase itself is part of the prophecy and promise. That could be why the halacha didn't just say you can eat as much as you want. It focuses us on the anticipation of the Geula.

Here's the bottom line of the Tish'a b'Av story, the Nine Days, the Three Weeks, the other fast days - AVEILUT HACHURBAN.

Yishayahu says...

שִׂמְחוּ וְגִילוּ אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם וְגִילוּ בָּהּ
כָּל-אֲהַבָּיהָ שֵׂשׂוּ אֶתֶּהּ מִשׂוֹשׂ
כָּל-הַמְּתַאֲבְלִים עָלֶיהָ: יִשְׁעִיחוּ סוּי

Rejoice with Jerusalem and exult in her all those who love her: rejoice with her a rejoicing, all who mourn over her.

Here's what the Gemara says about the above pasuk -

Kiddush L'vana

Minhag Yerushalayim based on the opinions of the Vilna Gaon, which is two things:

(1) First opportunity for Kiddush L'vana is after 72 hours following the molad of the month, and

(2) one should say the b'racha after those 72 hours without delay. One should not wait for Motza'ei Shabbat. One should not wait until after Yom Kippur in Tishrei, nor until after Shavuot in Sivan, and not until after Tish'a b'Av - as is the common practice.

With the molad of Av occurring on Friday morning (July 25th), the first op according to Minhag Yerushalayim is Monday evening, July 28th.

For those whose first opportunities is after seven days following the molad - and everyone else, is after the fast, on Sunday evening, August 3rd.

Ideally, one should say KL after havdala and breaking one's fast.

Some will wait until Monday evening, since that is after the whole mournful period of the Nine Days, which includes the tenth of Av until CHATZOT.

מכאן אמרו: כל המתאבל על ירושלים
זוכה ורואה בשמחתה, ושאינו מתאבל על
ירושלים – אינו רואה בשמחתה.

From here (this pasuk) they said: All
who mourn over Jerusalem, will merit
to see her joy; and he who doesn't
mourn over Jerusalem, will not see
her joy. Taanit 30b

Can't see the forest for the trees.

This expression describes someone
who is so focused on the small details
(the trees) that they miss the big
picture (the forest).

That is the "correct expression".

But the reverse works well too -

Can't see the trees for the forest.

This describes a person who focuses
on the big picture and ignores or
trivializes the details.

Halachic details and minhagim are
important - always.

Think of them as the trees.

Now step back and see the forest.

That's what the above "bottom line"
is meant to convey.

AVEILUT HACHURBAN includes
many details. But the goal of each
detail is to realize the seriousness of
the concept of Mourning for Yerusha-
layim. It is accomplished by fasting,
davening, kinot, not taking a haircut
or shaving, not listening to joyous

music... but it also needs other things
that might not be required, but are
helpful to the whole thing...

Such as appropriate reading, videos,
shiurim, discussions, and a lot of
pondering...

And not just about Churban Beit
HaMikdash. But also...

The factors that caused it. Other
destructions we have experienced
over the millennia.

And pondering the Geula Sh'leima
that we are promised and for which
we long... and work towards - by
Torah study, practice of Mitzvot -
with the proper details and the
enthusiasm and love of Torah that
should accompany the observance,
acts of Chesed, KIRUV RECHOKIM,
encouraging Aliya...

D'VARIM CHAZON



44th of the 54 sedras;

1st 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.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

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

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV (prohibition). X:Y is the perek & 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 in Parshat D'varim is Cheit HaMeraglim, which occurred on Tish'a b'Av, and set the tone for the future 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 words that Moshe spoke to all Israel..." (pasuk 1). This can refer to the first three sedras of the Book - D'varim, Va'etchanan, Eikev - 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 Sh'ma. The mitzva of Benching after a meal - and all brachot before and after food - are also part of the foundation of Torah Life that Moshe is presenting (reviewing) with the People. So too is davening "commanded" in this first section of D'varim. 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", its foundations, and the history of the birth (and infancy) of the Nation - 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 will present 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 - Ki Tavo, Nitzavim, Vayeilech, Ha'azinu, V'zot HaB'racha - 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, on the same day (if we look to Shabbat and Motza'ei Shabbat as the same day - which it isn't, but it is).

The last pasuk of Rishon - a.k.a. the first pasuk of Sheini, is a blessing that

Moshe gives to the People, that they should multiply a thousand-fold.

See the second GM (Gimatriya Match) for a further comment on this pasuk.

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.

MITZVAnotes

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 must 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, teachers, 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 Mikdash, the generation whose gratuitous hatred and Lashon HaRa caused the destruction of the second Mikdash, 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 this first sedra of D'varim - in detail rather than in REMEZ (hint) form. It has 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 Sh'lach 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 first. 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. That is determined for us by G-d's command to live a Torah Life in Eretz Yisrael. 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 wander-

ing 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 countless times for the benefit of each and every Jew throughout the generations - by our reading and studying the Torah on an annual basis.

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 melody of Eicha, rather than the regular haftara melody. 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.

Yishayahu 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.

From A Candle by Day by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein z"l

The process of moral growth is a progression from ACTING to BEING good.

It is not enough to be shown the right path; we must be taught how to walk on it.

Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara
by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler**

Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)

**CHAZON - 27 p'sukim
- Yishayahu 1:1-27**

The Opening... or the Closing?

This Shabbat is commonly known as Shabbat Chazon, a name drawn from the opening word of the haftara and, seemingly, from the first words of the prophet Yishayahu himself. Indeed, the stark prophetic message found in the opening chapter of Sefer Yishayahu is particularly fitting for this Shabbat, the one preceding Tish'a b'Av.

However, it is important to note that, according to Chazal (see Mechilta, B'Shalach, and elsewhere), this first chapter was not necessarily the prophet's initial prophecy. Rather, Yishayahu's official call to prophecy appears in sixth perek of the sefer, suggesting that his inaugural vision came later in the text.

This raises a significant question: Were the words of the first perek actually Yishayahu's first prophetic message, or not?

The challenge in understanding the

message of this haftara lies in determining when this prophecy was delivered to the nation. Some commentators do regard this first chapter as the prophet's initial address and consider the sixth perek not as the beginning of his prophetic career per se, but as a broader introduction to the sefer as a whole (see Malbim). According to this view, the timing of the prophecy is less critical; as a message about events yet to unfold, the first perek could indeed serve as Yishayahu's opening warning to the people.

However, this approach raises a fundamental question: What relevance would such prophecies have for people living in a different generation? How could those experiencing entirely different circumstances relate to harsh words seemingly directed at a past - or future - generation?

Rav Yigal Ariel, in his sefer Hamevaser, explores the prophecies included in this haftara and challenges us to consider the following:

Would Yishayahu have condemned the generation of King Uzziah by declaring that "your land is desolate, your cities burned with fire" (ARTZ'CHEM SH'MAMA; OREICHEM S'RUFOT AISH [v. 7]), when it was a time of righteous leadership, national strength, and territorial expansion?

Would such a prophecy have inspired T'shuva, or would it have led the people to dismiss the message entirely - perhaps even undermining their faith in both the prophecy and the prophet?

Rav Ariel suggests it is more plausible that such a stark portrayal would have been delivered during a later period - specifically, during the reign of King Achaz, when Jerusalem was under siege by King Pekach of Israel and King Retzin of Aram. Moreover, Yishayahu's condemnation of the nation's sacrificial service - "Why do I need your many offerings?" (LAMA LI ROV ZIVCHEICHEM [v. 11]) - is also more consistent with the era of Achaz, who notoriously introduced idolatry into the Beit HaMikdash itself.

Additionally, the prophet's denunciation of widespread bloodshed in Judea - Y'DEICHEM DAMIM MALEI'U ("Your hands are full of blood" [v. 15]) - more accurately reflects the reign of King Menashe, about whom the text states, "He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood" (Melachim Bet 21:16). However, Menashe's reign began only after the conclusion of Yishayahu's prophetic career!

In light of these discrepancies, Rav Yigal Ariel proposes that our haftara was not the beginning of Yishayahu's prophecies, but rather among his final messages, delivered during the

reign of the righteous King Chizkiyahu. It was Chizkiyahu who launched a sweeping movement of national T'shuva, reversing the idolatrous practices of his father, Achaz. He dismantled the bamot (private altars), reestablished centralized worship in the Beit HaMikdash, and restored the sacrificial service.

However, despite Chizkiyahu's spiritual reforms, the kingdom remained militarily vulnerable. The weakened Judean forces were no match for imperial aggression. It was during this precarious period that Sancheirev, king of Assyria, launched his invasion of Yehuda, destroying many Judean cities and eventually laying siege to Yerushalayim itself.

It is highly likely that such a contrite generation would have possessed a strong belief in Hashem and in His prophet, and a clear awareness of the devastation that could befall them. The sins of previous generations were well known to them. They understood what had provoked God's anger, and the destructive power of Assyria was still vivid in their collective memory.

It was precisely this kind of generation - spiritually awakened and historically conscious - that would be most open to T'shuva and return. And therefore, this generation would be most receptive to the prophet's message.

And so, although this opening chapter may have been delivered later in Yishayahu's career, it served as a fitting introduction to his prophetic mission - a call to a nation in need of remorse, repentance, and atonement.

As Rav Ariel suggests, this haftara may have been one of Yishayahu's closing prophecies - but it made for a perfect beginning. ✨



The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests

Matot-Mas'ei - R"Ch

✨ and two Unexplaineds

HA HA HA HA HA are for the 5 sedra-names that have their initial HEI chopped off. HAMISHPATIM, HA-SH'MINI, HAM'TZORA, HAMATOT, HAD'VARIM.

$$2+50+10 + 200+1+6+2+50 = 321$$

The left side of the equation is the gimatriya of B'NEI REUVEN. The Torah tells us that they built CHESHBON, hence the building of the equation.

D'VARIM-CHAZON

Speech-bubble contains the main elements of what Moshe said to the People: the travels from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael... victories of the People

in several battles (the V for victory hand signal), and about Torah and Mitzvot that are the essence of Jewish Life • the letter D marked 24K stands for DI ZAHAV • Judge's gavel flanked (above & below) by two negation circles, relates to the prohibition of appointing judges for the wrong reasons - not because of wealth, nor out of fear or threats. Furthermore, a judge may not be afraid of threats (e.g. the gun) • Arrows indicating DO NOT ENTER to the right and the left, permitting only straight ahead, for the two instances we approached nations for permission to pass through their land • Spies carrying the cluster of grapes stands for one of the major elements in the sedra - Moshe's recounting of CHEIT



HAMERAGLIM • Casper the Ghost with the SF Giants logo is a play on the pasuk (2:11), The REFA'IM (ghosts in modern Hebrew; warriors or mighty people in the Biblical context) can be considered giants (or vice versa) • Silhouettes of bull and donkey are from the pasuk at the beginning of the haftara in which the prophet contrasts us unfavorably with the animals. The bull knows his master and the donkey, his feeding trough • computer keys emanating from a button = D'varim 2:23 - KAFTORIM HAYOTZ'IM MIKAFTOR • Stars at the top = Moshe's description of the size of the nation: G-d has caused you to multiply and here you are as numerous as the stars of the heavens • character with question mark covering his face is for LO TAKIRU PANIM BAMISHPAT (D'varim 1:17) • bent arrow pointing north as in D'varim 2:3 - ...P'NU LACHEM TZAFONA, turn to the north • Mount Hermon is for Mount Hermon, mentioned in the sedra • so is the snowman for D'varim 3:9, which tells us that the Tzidonites called the Hermon Siryon and the Emori called it SNIR. Rashi says SNIR means snow in Ashkenaz (early form of German) and in the Canaanite language • Moshe is telling the "new" generation (D'varim 2:7), of G-d's blessing... that going through the Midbar for 40 years... LO CHASARTA DAVAR, nothing was lacking. Literally, nothing was sub-

tracted. Hence, 40-0 • Anchor minus N = Anchor is OGEN. Take off the N (spelled EN) and you are left with OG • Kazoo is for ZAMZUMIM (sounds like a kazoo sound) • Hoe and eel, for HO'IL MOSHE BEI'EIR ET HATORA HAZOT... • Gumby 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, the place of encampment for the longest period in the Midbar - 19 years • MCLX are Roman numerals for 1000, 100, 50, and 10, for the officers of units with those numbers • Lower-left is an L-shape made by two drums - it is a TOF-L. The there is Betty White (LAVAN). The X marks the spot BEIN TOFEL V'LAVAN • The ampersand, meaning and, is made up of an E and a T, spelling ET (French and Latin for AND). ET OR (AYIN-REISH), a place the sedra tells us was given to the descendants of Lot • The building above the anchor minus EN is the TATE museum. TEIT, spelled TAV-TAV, a word that occurs twice in the sedra. It has the highest gimatriya of any two-letter word • The 4 x 9 grid of boxes represents the dimensions given in Parshat D'varim of the bed of OG • element 20 is Calcium - symbol is Ca. 32 is LAMED-BET - together we get CALEV - mentioned significantly in the sedra • and two Unexplaineds

לע"נ

הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

Profits and Prophets

D'VARIM-CHAZON

There are few more blazing passages in the whole of religious literature than the first chapter of the book of Yishayahu, the great "vision" (or CHAZON) that gives its name to the Shabbat before Tish'a b'Av, the saddest day of the Jewish year. This is more than great literature. It expresses one of the great prophetic truths, that a society cannot flourish without honesty and justice. It could not be more relevant to our time.

The Talmud (Shabbat 31a) states that when we leave this life and arrive at gates of the World to Come, the first question we will be asked will not be a conventionally religious one ("Did you set aside times for learning Torah?"). This question will come later, but the very first question is said to be: "Did you act honestly [BE-EMUNA] in business?" I used to wonder how the rabbis felt certain about this. Death is, after all, "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns." The answer, it seems to me, is this passage from Yishayahu (1:21-23) -

See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice;

righteousness used to dwell in her - but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them.

Jerusalem's fate was sealed not by conventional religious failure but by the failure of people to act honestly. They engaged in cunning business practices that were highly profitable and hard to detect, such as mixing silver with baser metals and diluting wine. People were concerned with maximising profits, indifferent to the fact that others would suffer. The political system too had become corrupt. Politicians were using their office and influence to personal advantage. People knew about this, or at least suspected it - Yishayahu does not claim to be telling people something they didn't already know; he does not expect to surprise his listeners. The fact that people had come to expect no better from their leaders was itself a mark of moral decline.

This, says Yishayahu, is the real danger: that widespread dishonesty and corruption saps the morale of a society, makes people cynical, opens up divisions between the rich and powerful and the poor and powerless, erodes the fabric of society, and

makes people wonder why they should make sacrifices for the common good if everyone else seems to be bent on personal advantage.

A nation in this condition is sick and in a state of incipient decline. What Yishayahu saw and said with primal force and devastating clarity is that sometimes (organised) religion is not the solution but itself part of the problem. It has always been tempting, even for a nation of monotheists, to slip into magical thinking: that we can atone for our sins or those of society by frequent attendances at the Temple, the offering of sacrifices, and conspicuous shows of piety. Few things, implies Yishayahu (1:11-15), make God angrier than this:

"The multitude of your sacrifices - what are they to Me?" says the Lord... "When you come to appear before Me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of My courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to Me ... I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts My soul hates. They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen."

The corrupt not only believe they can fool their fellow humans; they believe they can fool God as well. When moral

standards begin to break down in business, finance, trade, and politics, a kind of collective madness takes hold of people - the Sages said ADAM BAHUL AL MAMONO, meaning, roughly, "money makes us do wild things" - and people come to believe that they are leading a charmed life, that luck is with them, that they will neither fail nor be found out. They even believe they can bribe God to look the other way. In the end it all comes crashing down and those who suffer most tend to be those who deserve it least.

Yishayahu is making a prophetic point but one that has implications for economics and politics today and can be stated even in secular terms. The market economy is and must be a moral enterprise. Absent that, and eventually it will fail.

There used to be a belief among superficial readers of Adam Smith, prophet of free trade, that the market economy did not depend on morality at all:

"It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."

It was the brilliance of the system that it turned self-interest into the common good by what Smith called, almost mystically, an "invisible hand". Morality was not part of the system.

It was unnecessary.

This was a misreading of Smith, who took morality very seriously indeed. But it was also a misreading of economics. This was clarified, two centuries later, by a paradox in Game Theory known as The Prisoner's Dilemma. Without going into too much detail, the Prisoner's Dilemma proposed a scenario in which two people are arrested and questioned separately. They have the choice to stay silent, to confess, or to accuse the other. The outcome of their decision would depend on what the other person did, but this could not be known in advance. It can be shown that if both people act rationally in their own interest, they will produce an outcome that is bad for both of them. This seems to refute the basic premise of market economics, that the pursuit of self-interest serves the common good.

The negative outcome of the Prisoner's Dilemma can only be avoided if the two people repeatedly find themselves in the same situation. Eventually they realise they are harming one another and themselves. They learn to co-operate, which they can only do if they trust one another, and they will only do this if the other has earned that trust by acting honestly and with integrity.

In other words, the market economy depends on moral virtues that are not

themselves produced by the market, and may be undermined by the market itself. For if the market is about the pursuit of profit, and if we can gain at other people's expense, then the pursuit of profit will lead, first to shady practices ("your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water"), then to the breakdown of trust, then to the collapse of the market itself.

A classic instance of this happened after the financial crash in 2008. For a decade, banks had engaged in doubtful practices, notably subprime mortgages and the securitisation of risk through financial instruments so complex that even bankers themselves later admitted they did not fully understand them. They continued to authorise them despite Warren Buffet's warning in 2002 that subprime mortgages were "instruments of mass financial destruction". The result was the crash. But that was not the source of the depression/recession that followed. That happened because the banks no longer trusted one another. Credit was no longer freely available and in one country after another the economy stalled.

The key word, used by both Yishayahu and the Sages, is EMUNA, meaning faithfulness and trust. Yishayahu, in our Haftara, twice uses the phrase KIRYA NE'EMANA, "faith-

ful city". This is why the sages say that in heaven we will be asked, "Did you conduct your business BE'EMUNA?" - meaning, in such a way as to inspire trust. The market economy depends on trust. Absent that, and depend instead on contracts, lawyers, regulations and supervisory authorities, and there will be yet more scandals, collapses and crashes since the ingenuity of those who seek to sidestep the rules always exceeds those whose job it is to apply them. The only safe regulatory authority is conscience, the voice of God within the human heart forbidding us to do what we know is wrong but think we can get away with.

Yishayahu's warning is as timely now as it was twenty-seven centuries ago. When morality is missing and economics and politics are driven by self-interest alone, trust fails and the society fabric unravels. That is how all great superpowers began their decline, and there is no exception. In the long term, the evidence shows that it is sounder to follow prophets than profits.

Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) **Can you think of a time when you experienced someone's dishonesty affecting a group or team? What happened?**
- (2) **When no one is watching, what**

helps you decide what's right or wrong?

- (3) **Can you think of a leader who you trust? What makes them trustworthy?**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Message from the Haftara

*Rabbi Katriel (Kenneth) Brander
President and Rosh HalYeshiva of
Ohr Torah Stone*

Tish'a b'Av From Grief to Empowerment

HAFTARA - CHAZON

Every year we read the haftara for Parshat D'varim on the final Shabbat before Tish'a b'Av, called Shabbat Chazon. This haftara is read from the first chapter of Yishayahu, but there are varying traditions concerning exactly which verses to read. The prevalent custom is to start from the first verse through verse 27, the opening of the prophecy. Yemenites, however, only begin from verse 21: "How [EICHA] like a prostitute is she now, the faithful metropolis."

The word EICHA rings in our ears. It echoes not only the first word of the Megilat EICHA, the Book of Lamentations, which we read on Tish'a b'Av,

but also, serendipitously, is a word found in the parsha itself. In D'varim 1:12, Moshe despairs of being able to manage the quarrels and complaints of the Israelites by himself: “How [EICHA] can I bear alone all your problems, your burdens, your disputes?”

The way we hear Eicha in the haftara, parsha and the approaching reading of Megilat Eicha on Leil Tish'a b'Av, conveys a sense of despair, helplessness and overwhelm. It is something that Am Israel has felt at many points throughout its history including during its difficult journey to the Promised Land, after the destruction of the Temples, as well as persecutions, expulsions, crusades, and blatant acts of antisemitism in the halls of academia. It is what we are feeling today amid the ongoing war and other challenges both in Israel and the Diaspora. It is natural to feel overwhelmed, that we cannot bear this any longer, and to feel helpless.

Often asking this question EICHA? How can this have happened? – is the first step to finding the answers we need – we express our emotional exhaustion and recognize that we are in a challenging place, hopefully as the first step to growth and finding a solution, or finding the strength to accept the present reality. In fact, this word, when examined more carefully, can help guide us on this

journey from despair, fear and questioning to a place of more productive thinking and deeper faith.

Rav Soloveitchik taught us that when we wish to truly understand any word in the Torah, we should begin by noting the first form that word takes. When we search for the word EICHA, we find, to our surprise, that in its first appearance in the Torah, in B'reishit 3:9, the word is vocalized differently altogether – AYEKA – and it carries a different meaning: “Where are you?” This was the gentle question God asked of the ashamed Adam and Chava after they ate the fruit from the forbidden tree and tried to hide. This alternative vocalization of the same Hebrew letters can also teach us a new way of looking at the EICHA – “how can this have happened?” – that we repeat throughout the liturgy surrounding Tish'a b'Av.

When confronted with tragedy, after expressing EICHA, “How could we have gotten here?” – it is important that we also then face the calamity and ask AYEKA – “Where are we?” This will help us move from being immersed in the sadness of the moment, in misery and find the courage to be part of the process of picking ourselves back up and transforming the current reality in our personal, communal or national life.

In every generation, in every life, individual and collective tragedies occur. It is our opportunity to prevent ourselves and each other from being sucked into the whirlpool of despair, and instead to ask ourselves **AYEKA**: What can we do to make a difference? What role will we play in the great drama taking place in us and around us, to help transform Tish'a b'Av from a day of sadness to a day of joy and redemption, as expressed in the words of the prophet Zechariya (8:19): "The fast of the fifth month... will be for the House of Yehuda joy and happiness, and a time set aside for good. Therefore, love truth and peace!" 🌍

One of them turns to the other and says, "I'll bet you \$20 the guy gets away this time."

The other looks surprised. "You're on."

They watch again - same chase, same crash into the same tree.

The first one sighs and hands over the money. "I guess you were right."

His friend shakes his head and says, "Honestly, I would've bet on him too - until he made that same wrong turn again!"

Every year we listen, read, and study Parshat Sh'lach with the episode of the Meraglim. Every year we read about the Sin of the Spies a second time, as Moshe Rabeinu recounts it to the generation poised on the threshold of Eretz Yisrael.

Every year, it is the same result. It doesn't change. The car crashes into the tree every time.

Doesn't matter how much you bet, the Torah's story remains the same - year after year.

But the story can change. The Torah tells us about the Meraglim, not just to tell us about something that happened 3337 years ago. It is also - and maybe more importantly - challenging us to change the ending.

Would have been great if the people had rallied to the call of Kalev - ALO



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

It's not the Old Joke!

There is an old joke which goes something like this:

Two simple-minded friends are sitting on the couch, watching the 5:00 o'clock news.

There's a dramatic story about a high-speed car chase on the highway. After a few tense minutes, the car crashes into a tree.

Later that evening, at 11 o'clock, the same news broadcast is replayed.

NAALEH, rather than panic with the report of the Ten Spies.

They didn't. But we can... and must.

CHEIT HAMERAGLIM (and other major sins of Dor HaMidbar) laid a flawed foundation for the Beit HaMikdash. The result, Churban. Every Jew who is complacent living elsewhere, who says "We have everything we need for a full Jewish life in (fill in your favorite Diaspora Jewish Community), is perpetuating the Sin of the Spies... and is delaying the Geula. Every Jew who says: Israel - nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there" is keeping the Sin of the Spies alive today.

Part of ANI MAAMIN... Mashiach is working towards it. **PTDT**

Walk through the Parsha

with **Rabbi David Walk**



TISH'A B'AV

Balm & Tears

We're used to preparing for Jewish holidays way in advance. There are SLICHOT a month before Yamim Nora'im (Days of Awe) and then there's the massive shopping before Pesach. (Doesn't it seem that the Matza gets into the supermarkets earlier every year?). But I don't think there is a more strategic approach to

a Jewish holiday than to Tish'a b'Av. We have the Three Weeks, then the Nine Days, followed by SHAVUA SHE'CHAL BO, and, finally, Erev Tish'a b'Av, with ever-increasing sadness and restrictions. One might think that we'd be 'griefed out' before ever getting to Tish'a b'Av, but they'd be wrong. And it's the Kinot which annually deliver the monumental mourning of the day.

This year I'd like to briefly look at two Kinot, which are very different in topic and content, but share the same source (Yirmiyahu ch. 8, the Haftara for the day). They together demonstrate the scope of Tish'a b'Av. We usually think of the day as commemorating the destruction of both of our holy Temples. However, Rav Soloveitchik pointed out that in reality the Divine decree in the Desert about this day made it our annual day for national mourning. So, we should include in our grief the full panoply of Jewish tragedy.

The first KINA (number 25 in the Ashkenazic rite) to discuss is MI YITEN ROSHI MAYIM (Oh, that my head were water, my eyes a fount of tears), written by Rav Kalonymus ben Yehuda and it concerns the destruction of three German Jewish communities (Worms, Mayence and Speyer) by the First Crusaders on their way to Yerushalayim.

The opening line is the last verse (23)

in Yirmiyahu 8: Oh, that my head were water, My eyes a fount of tears! Then would I weep day and night for the slain of my poor people.

This elegy discusses the brutal destruction of these once proud Jewish communities, and emphasizes the eyewitness's attempts to mourn and express personal sorrow for the brutal destruction of these three ghettos. Our ancestors' neighbors were incited to a violent frenzy against these innocent and loyal citizens by religious zealotry (some things never change). The Diaspora reality: neighbors become perpetrators and executioners, seemingly overnight.

The other Kina (TZIYON KICHI, O, Zion take, is number 37 for Ashkenazim), which is based on the penultimate verse in Yirmiyahu 8, and is one of the Kinot for Tziyon. These poems, toward the end of the Kina recitation, turn our attention back to Eretz Yisrael in general rather than to Yerushalayim or the Beit HaMikdash specifically. This poem was perhaps written by Rav Avraham Ibn Ezra, and is addressed to the Land itself. The poet recalls the former glory of the Land; first discussing the plentiful water sources, then praising the dirt and the rocks, the vegetation and the animals.

Only after lauding the physical beauty of the Land, does the poet turn to

spiritual issues. He discusses the Pilgrimage to Yerushalayim and then the former glory of the Temple. Then does he again address the Land: Where is your Sanctuary; Where is your Anointed One (in this context: the Kohen Gadol); Where are your Prophets; Where are your Scholars?

Finally, our inspired mourner wails: My soul craves so very much to see the brilliance of Your TZO HAR (splendor); Peace upon you, and an abundance of Peace upon your supporters.

Clearly, this appeal could be addressed to God, but here the author is beseeching the Land itself. The Land is our partner in this spiritual quest. We love the Land, and palpably sense that this love is requited.

The poem's first line has a profound alliteration, which goes beyond the similarity of sound. From the verse in Yirmiyahu we have the word TZARI, 'balm' or medicine. Then the poet says that there isn't enough TZARI to heal TZIRAYICH, your wounds or pains. The medicine sounds like and is in sync with the suffering.

The TZARI is usually translated as 'balm', and refers to medicine from a plant found in the area called Gilad (north west modern Jordan). What is the plant? Perhaps 'balsam'. The word first appears in the story of the sale of Yosef. It was in the list of the

expensive products carried by the merchants who bring Yosef down to Egypt. It's also the first spice listed in the KETORET, incense in the Beit HaMikdash, right back to our longing for the Temple.

So, here we have two poems, both powerfully sad and evocative. One addressed to God; one addressed to Eretz Yisrael, TZIYON. One about the grand sweep of our eternal connection to the Land; one about a very specific historical event which took place over a few short days to a relatively small number of people (maybe 1000 in total). One a description of beauty and glory; one about slaughter and the 'people of the Eternal who have fallen by the sword'.

They are both central to the true Tish'a b'Av experience. As Rav Soloveitchik expressed it: There are two elements to the observance of Tish'a b'Av and the recitation of the Kinot. One is to remember Tziyon in its state of destruction. The second is to remember Tziyon in its magnificence prior to the destruction.

On Tish'a b'Av we are obligated to mourn our losses to the depth of our being, but that is only possible if we truly appreciate what we have lost. Hence the role of both of these different types of Kinot. But I believe strongly that there is another duality which we must explore for a successful Tish'a b'Av experience.

We have to feel part of the big picture, mourning for the millions of Jews killed over the millennia, and, simultaneously feeling the intense, poignant reality of each individual Jew who suffered at the hands of our tormentors.

Why is The Diary of Anne Frank so important? Because a million deaths is a statistic; a single death is a tragedy. On Tish'a b'Av, we must investigate both realities; the big picture of Eretz Yisrael in ruins for eons of time and the outrage of a few days of cruel chaos in 1096.

We must be part of a massive historic movement, while crying for individuals. The beginning of our present war in Gaza was massive and too big to get our heads around. Then we started going to the individual funerals, for us first my wife's cousin then our upstairs neighbors' niece. The massive became bite-sized, and much more poignant.

I remember telling my kids (both biological kids and students) on 9/11: This is now a national crisis; tomorrow it will be a personal tragedy. And it's true, within a day or two we started recognizing individual names and stories. We do the same thing on Tish'a b'Av.

We must try to contemplate the enormity; then feel the individual pain. 🤝

Rav Kook Torah

by Rabbi

Chanan Morrison • www.ravkooktorah.com



The Book that Moshe Wrote

MIPI ATZMO

Already from its opening sentence, we see that the final book of the CHUMASH is different from the first four. Instead of the usual introductory statement, “God spoke to Moshe, saying,” we read:

“These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Israel on the far side of the Jordan River ...” (D'varim 1:1)

Unlike the other four books, D'varim is largely a record of speeches that Moshe delivered to the people before his death. The Talmud (Megila 31b) confirms that the prophetic nature of this Book is qualitatively different than the others. While the other Books of the Torah are a direct transmission of God's word, Moshe said D'varim MIPI ATZMO – “on his own”.

However, we cannot take this statement – that D'varim consists of Moshe's own words – at face value. Moshe could not have literally composed this Book on his own, for the Sages taught that a prophet is not allowed to say in God's name what he did not hear from God

(Shabbat 104a). So what does it mean that Moshe wrote D'varim MIPI ATZMO? In what way does this book differ from the previous four books of the Chumash?

Tadir vs M'kudash

The distinction between different levels of prophecy may be clarified by examining a Talmudic discussion in Zevachim 90b. The Talmud asks the following question: if we have before us two activities, one of which is holier (M'KUDASH), but the second is more prevalent (TADIR), which one should we perform first? The Sages concluded that the more prevalent activity takes precedence over the holier one, and should be discharged first.

One might infer from this ruling that the quality of prevalence is more important, and for this reason the more common activity is performed first. In fact, the exact opposite is true. If something is rare, this indicates that it belongs to a very high level of holiness – so high, in fact, that our limited world does not merit benefiting from this exceptional holiness on a permanent basis. Why then does the more common event take precedence? This is in recognition that we live in an imperfect world. We are naturally more receptive to and influenced by a lesser, more sustainable sanctity. In the future, however, the higher,

transitory holiness will come first.

The First and Second Luchot

This distinction between M'KUDASH and TADIR illustrates the difference between the first and second set of luchot (tablets) that Moshe brought down from Mount Sinai. The first tablets were holier, a reflection of the singular unity of the Jewish people at that point in history. As the Midrash comments on Sh'mot 19:2, “The people encamped – as one person, with one heart – opposite the mountain” (Mechilta; Rashi ad loc).

After the sin of the Golden Calf, however, the Jewish people no longer deserved the special holiness of the first Tablets. Tragically, the first Luchot had to be broken; otherwise, the Jewish people would have warranted destruction. With the holy Tablets shattered, the special unity of Israel also departed. This unity was later partially restored with the second covenant that they accepted upon themselves while encamped across the Jordan River on the Plains of Moav. (The Hebrew name for this location, Arvot Moav, comes from the word ARVUT, meaning mutual responsibility.)

The exceptional holiness of the first Tablets, and the special unity of the people at Mount Sinai, were simply too holy to maintain over time. They were replaced by less holy but more

attainable substitutes – the second set of Tablets, and the covenant at Arvot Moav.

Moshe and Other Prophets

After the sin of the Golden Calf, God offered to rebuild the Jewish people solely from Moshe. Moshe was unsullied by the sin of the Golden Calf; he still belonged to the transient realm of elevated holiness. Nonetheless, Moshe rejected God’s offer. He decided to include himself within the constant holiness of Israel. This is the meaning of the Talmudic statement that Moshe wrote D'varim “on his own”. On his own accord, Moshe decided to join the spiritual level of the Jewish people, and help prepare the people for the more sustainable holiness through the renewed covenant of Arvot Moav.

Moshe consciously limited the prophetic level of D'varim so that it would correspond to that of other prophets. He withdrew from his unique prophetic status, a state where “No other prophet arose in Israel like Moshe” (D'varim 34:10). With the Book of D'varim, he initiated the lower but more constant form of prophecy that would suit future generations. He led the way for the other prophets, and foretold that “God will establish for you a prophet from your midst like me” (18:15).

In the future, however, the first set of

Tablets, which now appear to be broken, will be restored. The Jewish people will be ready for a higher, loftier holiness, and the M'KUDASH will take precedent over the TADIR. For this reason, the Holy Ark held both sets of Tablets; each set was kept for its appropriate time.

*Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 287-290.
Adapted from Sh'muot HaRe'iyah,
D'varim 1929*

SCHNITZEL?

How do you say SCHNITZEL in Hebrew? Wait, what do you mean? SCHNITZEL is Hebrew.

No it isn't. It is German, borrowed and incorporated into Hebrew.

Okay, how do you say SCHNITZEL in Hebrew?

K'TITA - כְּתִיתָהּ

Should you ask for K'TITA with rice & beans and a salad when you next go to a restaurant (after Tish'a b'Av)?

If you want to get SCHNITZEL rather than a strange look from the waiter, you should probably order Schnitzel

But it's nice to know the real Hebrew word - isn't it?

(Don't answer that - it was a rhetorical question)

Parsha Story

Stories and Parables from the famed Maggid of Dubno by Rabbi Chanan Morrison

Drop the Bundle

The Eternal, your God, Who goes before you – He will fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your very eyes. (D'varim 1:30)

D'varim is Moshe's farewell address, his final effort to shape the soul of a nation. Standing at the threshold of the Promised Land, he didn't discuss military strategies or political alliances. He spoke of bitachon – trust. Not in swords or schemes, but in something far less tangible and far more dependable: the unseen Hand that split the sea and delivered bread from heaven.

Moshe reminded them: “God will fight for you, just as He did in Egypt.”

But let's not be too hard on them. Even the generation raised on manna and Divine cloud-cover had their shaky moments. Faith is never easy, especially when the enemy giants look taller than your courage.

Which brings us to the Maggid of Dubno, who, as always, had just the right story.

The Poor Man and the Carriage

A poor man was trudging down a dusty country road, all his worldly

belongings tied in a sad little bundle slung over his weary shoulders. His feet shuffled along the road, his back bowed under the weight of his troubles.

Then, in the distance, something glinted in the waning light. A carriage, polished and shining, drawn by two magnificent horses, clattered toward him like a beacon of hope.

The carriage belonged to the local squire, a man both wealthy and generous. Spotting the bedraggled traveler, the squire reined in his horses.

“Friend”, he called, “hop in. The road is long, and you’ve walked enough.”

The poor man, blinking with gratitude, climbed aboard and sank into the velvet seat. But as the carriage rolled on, the squire noticed something odd. The man was still clutching his bundle to his chest like it held family jewels.

The squire smiled kindly at him. “Good fellow, why don’t you set your baggage down? There’s plenty of room in the carriage.”

The man flushed with embarrassment. “Oh no, sir! You’ve already done so much by taking me in your carriage. I couldn’t possibly ask your horses to bear the weight of my belongings as well.”

The squire chuckled, a deep, honest

laugh. “Silly fellow”, he said, shaking his head. “Don’t you see? Whether you hold your bundle or lay it down, it’s still my horses pulling the load.”

Let Go Already

And that, said the Maggid, is us.

Like the beggar clutching his bundle, we trudge through life, shoulders hunched under the weight of our worries, convinced that we alone must bear the burden. We cling to our anxieties as if they were precious gems.

We all know that, ultimately, our well-being, our health – in fact, most aspects of life – are not in our hands. So why do we spend so much time fretting over them? Why do we try to carry the burdens of life on our own shoulders when, in the end, it’s really not up to us?

King David said it best, and he said it three thousand years before your therapist: “Cast your burden upon God, and He will sustain you” (T'hilim 55:23).

So go ahead. Sit back, drop the bundle, and let God do His job.

*The Wit and Wisdom of the Dubno Maggid.
Adapted from Mishlei Ya'akov p. 114*



Reprinted from *Living the Halachic Process* by Rabbi Daniel Mann - Eretz Hemdah, with their permission [www.erezhemdah.org]

The Transition from Shabbat into Tish'a b'Av

Question: Could you please explain how to handle the transition from Shabbat into Tish'a b'Av (when it falls on Motza'ei Shabbat) regarding se'uda shlishit, Havdala, and changing clothes?

Answer:

Seuda shlishit: A b'raitā, quoted in Ta'anit 29b, says that one may eat as extravagant a meal as he wants on Shabbat, even if the ninth day of Av falls on that day or the next. The Tur¹ cites customs that one is allowed and would do best to curtail the Shabbat meal in this case. This is especially so at se'uda shlishit, which in effect is the se'uda hamafseket.² However, these considerations are countered by the requirement to avoid display-

ing mourning on Shabbat. Therefore, there are no real restrictions, even at se'uda shlishit.³ However, the mood should somewhat reflect the coming of Tish'a b'Av, as long as it does not bring on clearly noticeable changes.⁴ One important halachic requirement is that one must finish eating before sunset.⁵

Havdala: One says the standard preliminary Havdala in the Amida of Maariv on Leil Tish'a b'Av. The main Havdala over a cup of wine is made on Sunday night, after Tish'a b'Av.⁶ Nevertheless, if one forgot to mention Havdala in the Amida, he does not repeat the Amida. Rather, saying HaMavdil, which enables one to do actions that are forbidden on Shabbat, suffices.⁷ Unlike Havdala during the Nine Days, when we try to have a child, rather than an adult, drink the wine,⁸ after Tish'a b'Av an adult can drink it freely.⁹ (*Ed. note: Even though, aside from havdala, wine & meat are not permitted until after Chatzot of the 10th of Av.*)

The b'racha on b'samim¹⁰ is not recited this week because it is said only on Motza'ei Shabbat, and on

¹ Orach Chayim 552.

² The last meal before *Tisha B'Av*, which usually incorporates special elements of mourning.

³ Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 552:10.

⁴ Mishna Berura 552:23.

⁵ Rama, Orach Chayim 552:10.

⁶ Shulchan Aruch ibid. 556:1.

⁷ Mishna Berura 556:2.

⁸ Rama, op. cit. 551:10.

⁹ Mishna Berura 556:3.

¹⁰ Fragrant herbs.

Tish'a b'Av it is not appropriate because it is supposed to serve as a pleasure that revives the soul.

The b'racha on the fire is also specific to Motza'ei Shabbat, but it is not connected to a pleasure and does not require a cup of wine. Therefore, the minhag is to recite it in shul toward the end of davening, before the reading of Eicha.¹¹ There are those who say that a woman should, in general, avoid making Havdala. This is because of the doubt whether a woman is obligated in the b'racha on the fire, which is not directly related to Shabbat, and thus is a regular time-related mitzva, from which women are exempt.¹² Therefore, if one's wife will not be in shul at the time of the b'racha, it is better for the husband not to fulfill the mitzva at that time, but to make the b'racha on the fire at a time that his wife can hear it.¹³

Taking off shoes: As we mentioned, one may not do a noticeable act of mourning before Shabbat is over. Whereas finishing eating before sunset or refraining from washing need not be noticeable, taking off shoes is. There are two minhagim concerning when to take them off:

1) One waits until after Shabbat is over, says HaMavdil, and then changes clothes and goes to shul. One may do so a little earlier than the regular time listed for the end of Shabbat, which is usually delayed a little bit beyond nightfall to allow for an extension of Shabbat at its conclusion. The exact amount of time is not clear and depends on the latitude of one's location. It is advisable to delay Ma'ariv to allow those who take this approach ample time to make it to shul.¹⁴ (If the rabbi has ruled that everyone should keep the following minhag, all should conform, and there is no need for such a delay.)

2) One takes off his shoes after Barchu of Ma'ariv. One who takes the second approach should bring non-leather footwear and Eicha/Kinot books to shul before Shabbat to avoid the problem of HACHANA.¹⁵ However, if one makes even minimal use of these s'farim in shul before Shabbat is over, he may bring them with him on Shabbat.¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid. 1

¹² *Bi'ur Halacha* 296:8.

¹³ *Shemirat Shabbat K'Hilchata* 62:(98).

¹⁴ Ibid. 40; *Torat HaMo'adim* 9:1.

¹⁵ Preparations on Shabbat for after Shabbat.

¹⁶ *Shemirat Shabbat K'Hilchata* op. cit. 41.

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

From the legacy of the Ari HaKadosh on his yahrzeit

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

1. The Ari HaKadosh, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, was among the greatest of the Kabbalists. He immersed himself in the secrets of the hidden Torah in the city of Tz'fat and passed away 453 years ago at the age of 38. He made the Zohar a central text in Jewish learning, and in the course of time, it would have a seminal influence on the Chassidic movement.

2. He explained that the secrets he revealed and the heights of understanding that he reached were due to the joy he experienced when performing mitzvot. In other words, he did not perform mitzvot solely out of obligation, but rather due to the happiness and excitement that come when basking in the Infinite Light through fulfillment of God's will.

3. His students related that he could have accessed heavenly guidance when studying the Zohar, but he preferred to study and toil without assistance, reaching the highest levels of understanding on his own.

4. He left very few writings behind

and Rabbi Chayim Vital, his venerable student, published most of his master's teachings. However, we do have three Kabbalistic hymns written by the Ari HaKadosh himself: AZAMER BISHVACHIN (I will sing His praises) for the Friday night meal, ASADER L'SEUDATA (I will prepare the feast) for the Shabbat morning meal, and BNEI HEICHALA (Princes of the Palace) for the third meal toward the close of Shabbat. In these three piyutim (liturgical poems), there are profound hints as to the essence of Shabbat.

5. He inserted many lofty kavanot (devotional prayers) and esoteric meditations into his prayer book, but there is one line that he added, also written on his gravestone, that all of us can understand. Before beginning the morning prayers, he asked that we say the following: "I hereby take upon myself to fulfill the mitzva of V'AHAVTA L'REI-ACHA KAMOCHA - 'And you shall love your fellow as yourself."

You are invited to light a candle in his memory and to bring one of his practices, teachings, or hymns into your life.

To receive Sivan Rahav-Meir's daily WhatsApp: tiny.cc/DailyPortion

From the Writings of Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher z"l

Why the FAST will become a FEAST

Zechariya 8:19 states, "Thus speaks Hashem Tz'vakot, the fast of the fourth month [Shiv'a Asar b'Tamuz] and the fast of the fifth month [Tish'a b'Av] and the fast of the seventh month [Tzom Gedaliya] and the fast of the tenth month [Asara b'Tevet] will one day turn into days of joy and celebration for the House of Yehuda, provided that the people will learn to love truth and peace."

The theme that sorrow will one day not only give way to joy but actually turn into joy is a basic principle of Judaism.

An example of this idea appears in Yirmiyahu 31:12. "Then [in the Messianic Era] the young women will dance joyously; young men and elders together. I [G-d] will turn their mourning to joy. I [G-d] will comfort them and cheer them in their grief and sorrow."

This verse echoes clearly the statement that we saw expressed by Zechariya. Yirmiyahu is not predicting some new, joyous celebration with no roots in the past. Rather, G-d will turn the mourning of centuries of exile into joy and celebration.

These joyous prophesies of Zechariya and Yirmiyahu will be fulfilled in the Messianic Era.

Why is it that in the time of Mashiach these former mournful fast days, commemorating the CHURBAN, will become joyous festivals and not just ordinary days? Why will these FAST DAYS become FEAST DAYS when Mashiach comes?

The answer is that these sorrowful tragic days will assume their original intent.

The 17th of Tamuz was the date of the giving of the Luchot HaBrit, the tablets upon were written The Ten Commandments, that was supposed to be a day of great joy and celebration, when G-d gave us His Luchot written by the Finger of G-d". However, that is also the very day that we worshiped the Golden Calf and Moshe smashed G-d's Holy Tablets.

Moshe has to re-ascend Mt. Sinai and plead for G-d's forgiveness for the Jewish People. The Second Tablets were not given until Yom Kippur. When we do T'shuvah and Merit the arrival of Mashiach, we will have fully rectified and repaired the Sin of the Golden Calf. Thus, in the Messianic Era, the 17th of Tamuz will assume its original character, a day of joyous feasting celebrating the giving of the First Holy Tablets.

Tish'a b'Av also was supposed to be the day that we resolved to enter the Land of Israel and conquer it. The Sin of the Spies, in slandering the Holy Land, took place on Tish'a b'Av. The spies negative report prevented the Jewish people from entering the Land of Israel on Tish'a b'Av.

When Mashiach comes, we will have rectified this Sin of the Spies also.

Thus Tish'a b'Av will also assume its original intention of joyous national celebration of appreciating and cherishing the Holy Land of Israel!
-ESP

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

D'VARIM - CHAZON

Finding the Good

"These are the words which Moshe spoke to all Israel" - that is how the sidra opens.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev asks, "What words did Moshe speak to the people? Words of rebuke and reproof." He knew them well, and he told them home truths.

"However", adds Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, "when he spoke to God, he did not, God forbid, speak of the iniquities of Israel, but only of their good points, and he pleaded in favour of his people."

R' Levi Yitzchak was of course the great defender of Israel. When someone complained that he had seen a wagon-driver greasing his axles while wearing tallit and tefillin, Levi Yitzchak said, "Master of the world! What a wonderful people are Your people of Israel! Even whilst greasing their axles they think of You!"

What a pity it is that there are so few Levi Yitzchaks today, able to see the good points in others and to insist that the Almighty acknowledge the virtues of His creatures.

In Jewish life in particular we desperately need some Levi Yitzchaks. Somehow we seem to have been blessed with so many self-appointed experts on the subject of other Jews, who make certain that God knows all the smallest details of fellow Jews' failings, follies and frailties.

Yes, of course I realise that God knows it all already and if we do happen to act wrongly He is far from unaware of it. So the critics are not telling Him anything He doesn't know. If someone deserves punishment

from above it will presumably happen even without our help. But when we speak well of others it helps us as well as them.

more...

It All Takes Time

Many things in the Bible come in forties.

The Flood took 40 days and 40 nights. Moshe was on Mount Sinai for 40 days. The people were in the wilderness for 40 years.

Other narratives also tell of 40 years of one king or experience or another.

This particular Shabbat' when Moshe begins to sum up his life's teaching, we know that he will be reporting on 40 years of leadership, but a question tugs at our minds.

Forty years from Egypt to the Jordan River - when the journey really only needed 11 days?

The traditional explanation is that 11 days would not have been long enough to turn the Israelites into a people, to build a sense of solidarity, to prepare for life in the Promised Land.

We of course have the benefit of centuries of subsequent history and human experience, and we know that

things which happen fast are generally hard to handle.

Imagine what would happen if we were all like the handful of child prodigies who are already finishing university degrees when they are barely into their teens. Adulthood would have come too fast. The struggle to grow up is never easy, but without the struggle we would not appreciate it.

People who win the lottery and become instant millionaires are rarely able to cope with their good fortune; they are simply not ready.

How long each stage in life should take is addressed at the end of the fifth chapter of Pirkei Avot, a brave attempt at telling us what we should be doing at each milestone.

It does not work in the same way for everyone, but the general principle is amply vindicated. Everything worthwhile takes time. **-OZ**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon, F.R.G.S.

D'VARIM

Parashat D'varim forms the opening of Moshe's final address to the Israelites before his death, where he prepares them for their long-awaited entry into the Promised Land. That opening within the Parasha divides into three parts. Firstly, he presents them as a quarrelsome, litigious, and burdensome people who need a complex hierarchical system to survive. Even that, implies the narrative second section, was not sufficient to prevent the mass hysteria following the Spies' report - nearly forty years before Moshe's final address. That fuses into the third and longest section where he recounts the course through the desert from the dying out of the generation of the Exodus, avoiding the lands of Edom, Moav, and Ammon which belonged exclusively those nations, and the wars and conquests of lands of those who attacked the Israelites en route - Sichon, King of the Amorites, and Og, the King of Bashan.

It is this last section which several times seeks to clear up some confusions in local history and geography:

(a) With the lands of the descendants of Moav, the son of Lot, Moshe

pointed out that 'it was previously the territory of the Eimim, a great populous people as tall as the giants.' Moshe continued with: 'they were also considered as Refa'im, like the giants, and the Moavites called them Eimim' (2:10-11). Two names for a people that by then were there no more.

(b) With the lands of the descendants of Ammon, the son of Lot, Moshe pointed out that 'it is too considered the land of the Refa'im. The Refa'im dwelt there previously, and the Ammonites called them Zamzumim. They were a great populous people, as tall as the giants (2:20-21). Again, two names for a people that by then were no more.

(c) Further west, in the area of Gaza: 'as for the Avvim who dwell in open cities until Gaza, the Kaftorim who came from went from Kaftor destroyed them and dwelt in their place' (2:23).

(d) 'Sidonians would refer to Hermon as Sirion, and the Amorites would call it Senir' (3:9).

Rashi and other commentaries explain these verses as relating to the title of the Israelites to the land of Canaan. G-d had promised Avraham's descendants the 'land of the Refa'im' but it did not include the areas mentioned, but rather the Argov and Bashan regions further north - 'that (only) is the land of the Refa'im' (3:13)

which was gifted to Avraham (B'reishit 15:20). Not the lands further south, which the Torah enforced as the rightful property of other nations. On the other hand, the Avvim who were displaced by the Kaftorim were themselves without title to the land. The area they seem to have occupied was 'the Negev of the Keretim' (Shmuel Alef 30:14). They were likely to have originated from Crete - 'the island of Kaftor' (c.f. Yirmiyahu 47:4). Thus the area of Gaza was designated for Israelite conquest, although there is no textual (or archaeological) evidence that it actually came into their possession during the Biblical period. In addition, the connection of Mount Hermon to the lands of non-promised nations of Sidon and Ammon was insufficient to legally challenge the Israelite possession - they merely called it Hermon or Senir, but they did not claim title to it.

Moreover, these four points of history and geography may be interpreted as a veiled part of a warning to the Israelites of the consequences of their leaving the teachings and values of their sacred traditions.

The Refa'im - whose final survivor was Og the King of Bashan (3:11), a giant whose bed was 'nine cubits in length and four cubits in width, the cubit being measured by the cubit of a man' (3:11) were great in their day, but then no more. By the generation

of the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land, this nation of giants had already disappeared into confused legend, into the rear of history. The memory of their greatness was so dimmed that nations were even unclear as to what they were called. The dispossessed Avvim were so completely destroyed (2:23) that their land was known after the Sea People, the Kaftorim, one of the waves of Philistines who invaded and took over that coastal area during that period. And the name of Mount Hermon was also transitory: the name Hermon is derived from the root HEI-REISH-MEM ("sacred"), and like most high mountains (12:2) it was thought to be the residence of idolatry, whose name, Baal-Hermon, also served as the name of the mountain itself (Sho-f'tim 3:3; Divrei HaYamim Alef 5:23).

That was the implied message from Moshe to the Israelites. The Israelites' title to the Promised Land was contingent on their keeping the commandments. If they continued in the idolatrous and corrupt traditions endemic to land of Canaan up until then, they would suffer similarly - become a displaced, destroyed, and ultimately forgotten people. For the Israelites would have been no better than those they had ousted.

It may be added that the reason Moshe makes these veiled references (as in the beginning of the Parasha,

according to Rashi to 1:1) was a sign of respect to the intelligence and exclusivity of the Israelites, which would be well-received and taken seriously. It is as though he said to the Israelites: 'You are clever people, we are members of the same select fraternity, one or two words and we - yes only we - know exactly what we're talking out without having to spell it out.'

As an epilogue - even though the Israelites were to be exiled from the Land after the destruction of the First Temple, they retained their identity as they were to collectively 'return to the Lord... G-d' (30:2), and He would 'bring them back from captivity' (30:3). Indeed, history shows that it is the chain of Torah tradition marching on outside the Holy Land that has prevented the Israelite nation becoming forgotten and assimilated, right up until modern times...

Additional note: In addition, G-d's justice extends to all peoples. It is not exclusive to Am Yisrael. That is one of the key themes in Sefer Yonah. The Torah tells us that after the Migdal Bavel, G-d dispersed the people in all different directions. Thus different city-states took root everywhere in the region, including in the Land of Canaan. Generations later, Avraham Avinu recognized the Almighty and His expectations. G-d promised him that the land of Canaan would

eventually go to his children only far in future, well beyond his lifetime. The reason could be that by the time Avraham Avinu emerged on the scene, all territories in the region that could be settled had already been settled. Thus Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov and their extended families and households found themselves having to make a living out of land that no-one else wanted to settle by moving from place to place as pastoral nomads, shepherds of sheep and goats. G-d was not going to turn any nation out of their city-states just because Avraham Avinu deserved it more than they did. For that to happen, the inhabitants had to be beyond redemption in the eyes of G-d, with no worthy qualities at all. G-d looked into the future (so to speak), and saw that eventually it would be the people of Canaan that would be the people in the region that would forsake elementary morality common to humanity to that extreme degree: "for they would even burn their sons and daughters to death in service to their idols" (12:31). Which emphasized the responsibilities that G-d placed on Am Yisrael, their successors. As newcomers to their Land, their lifestyle had to be compatible with the Kedusha that He gave to the Land; through Torah observance. And prolonged, persistent, and wilful failure incompatible with that Kedusha would see their

exile from the Land, whether due to idolatry with the Churban Bayit Rishon, or to the groundless hatred in the time of the Churban Bayit. 📖



D'VARIM-CHAZON

As is known, Parshat D'varim is always read on the Shabbat before the fast of Tish'a b'Av, the fast that commemorates so many tragedies in the annals of the Jewish people. Yet the parsha also ushers in Sefer D'varim, so much of which is dedicated to the blessings bestowed on Eretz Yisrael...

So, how ironic and tragic, that the parsha is associated with the fast that recalls, perhaps, the source of all the mishaps that befell our people on that day throughout the generations - including, the destruction of the Temples and the proclamation of the Final Solution in the Nazi era.

Yes, the source of those woes, we are told, lies in the evil connotations uttered by 10 of the 12 spies concerning Eretz Yisrael. The people panicked and wept on the 9th Av, inducing HaShem to anticipate reasons for us to mourn on that date in years to come. The outcome of that

outcry was the postponement for some forty years of what should have been a festive procession into Eretz Yisrael.

One day, our prophets recall, Tish'a b'Av will be a day of rejoicing: no longer will the bride cause an embarrassment before her wedding day. Then will the people arise willingly to Har HaBayit. So may it be His Will, speedily and in our days. **MP**

Dvar Torah by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Graciously shared with PhiloTorah

D'VARIM-CHAZON

Parshat D'varim is always read on the Shabbat right before Tish'a b'Av which commemorates the destruction of both Batei Mikdash in Jerusalem along with other tragedies during our exile. On Tish'a b'Av we reflect on how far we have drifted from G-d in Heaven and from the mission we have been created for. We find difficulty in realizing the true nearness of G-d. Our emotions are creating a distance between Hashem and us.

What is the source of our emotional distance from G-d?

The story of the spies, retold in this week's parsha, offers some insight. Moshe recounts the past failings of

the Jewish people, in order to emphasize what our true potential is. Moshe reminds us that it was our ancestors that requested sending ahead the spies to scout out the enemy in Eretz Yisrael. They reported on the one hand, that Eretz Yisrael looks great. On the other hand, it is beyond reach because the opposing nations are too tough.

If the report of the spies wasn't bad enough, the spies added fuel to the fire and began murmuring saying "In G-d's hatred of us He took us out of the land of Mitzrayim, to give us over into the hands of the Emorites to wipe us out" (D'varim 1:27). Very harsh words about the Creator of heaven and earth and our Provider. We become aware that as the problems begin to pile up, we get angry at G-d and shoot our arrows against him. Why do we grow judgmental towards G-d so quickly? Why do we feel that He is out to get us? Rashi opens our eyes. Jews were crying, blaming G-d's hatred of us as the reason for our troubles and threat of being wiped out by the Emorites. Why were the Jews speculating about G-d's emotions?

Rashi detects a subconscious bias. G-d loves the Jewish people but our ancestors didn't seek out the closeness to G-d.

Too many rules and regulations. This caused them to project their own

emotions on G-d, crying that "G-d hates us!" By doing so, they were betraying their own confused feelings. They were projecting their own feelings as a defense mechanism. We see from this that our distance from G-d is rooted in our own ambivalence towards Him. G-d's apparent distance from us and our world are not His doing, but rather our doing. We are not really sure how close we really want to be. We create certain obstacles. G-d only feels distant from us because we allowed ourselves to feel distant from Him.

Tish'a b'Av is the day on which we are challenged to confront these feelings and come to terms with them. This Shabbat, we read the story of the spies and begin to examine these emotions. Will we recognize that the distance we feel from G-d, originates in us? Will we realize that our exile has also self-imposing aspects? Tish'a b'Av is destined to become a great holiday for the Jewish people. In the future, it will celebrate our closeness to G-d. Therefore, today, it is truly an opportunity for us to decide the extent we begin turning towards G-d and to what extent we want to begin building our relationship with Him. 🕊

The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

D'VARIM-CHAZON 5782

Disagreements

Many know that the Torah reader, upon reaching verse 1:12 in our Parsha, abruptly changes the traditional cantillation melody. For a brief moment, the dirge-like tone of Eicha interrupts and dominates. The clear explanation is that the word EICHA suddenly reminds us of the same opening word in Megilat Eicha which we read on Tish'a b'Av night.

The question is this: This word, EICHA, conveys a sense of gloom and despair and it engenders a mood quite in keeping with the mournful atmosphere of Tish'a b'Av. In the context of the Parsha's opening narrative, however, it is hard to understand Moshe's distress and displeasure - as conveyed by the usage of EICHA - at the People's many questions. After all, wasn't this his role, namely, to be the wise mediator and sagacious judge to resolve the controversies, reconcile the differences and bring about peace? Why should he be complaining?

The S'forno addresses this issue. In his view, Moshe's dismay was directed at the sheer volume of the petty gripes - "frivolous lawsuits, if

you will, that required enlisting so many judges and consumed so much time that the ultimate objective of entering Israel was clouded and side-lined. Indeed, there are certainly many disagreements that demand the serious attention of the jurist, but when people get upset about trivialities, when they constantly bicker about matters that ought to be easily resolvable between themselves, it speaks to a sad immaturity and "spoiled" self-centeredness that prevents them from staying focused on what they ought to be devoting their time and energy on.

And so, Moshe had every reason to be disturbed by the litigious behavior of the People. The EICHA in the Parsha is, therefore, and unfortunately, quite appropriate. If the first Tish'a b'Av was a consequence of the People's balking at entering Israel, the S'forno's insight may well explain why they couldn't "see the forest for the trees". Perhaps this explanation also gives new meaning to the sin of SIN'AT CHINAM, the reason given for the destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash. Indeed, when hatred becomes needless and simply pointless, when people cannot get along "for no good reason", everyone pays the price. And when such acrimony becomes endemic and infects the national polity, the result is churban - utter ruin.

The message here is clear. There are real, important things to pray for this Tish'a b'Av. Hopefully, by placing our differences in proper perspective and rising above our overly sensitive natures, our prayers will reflect what really matters and we will merit the transformation of Tish'a b'Av into a joyous festival.

SIN'AT CHINAM

In the Parsha, Moshe recounts the Sin of the Spies. One of the damaging accusations made by the People, not recorded earlier, was the accusation hurled against Gd when they declared, "... (it is) because of Gd's hatred of us that He redeemed us from Egypt ... " (1:27). Incredible! How can one fathom such an indictment? Did the People really believe that HaShem - who punished the Egyptians, performed numerous miracles, protected them in the desert and entered a sacred covenant with them - actually despised them?! In this verse, the Kli Yakar sees the tragic origin of the disastrous trait of SIN'AT CHINAM, needless hatred. The first event in which this pernicious evil made its damaging appearance was when Israel chose to hate Gd for no reason whatsoever.

As we know, the destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash was attributed to this very poison and which - to this day - is responsible for our present perilous vulnerability in the

world. Why do we hate people for no cause? Probably for many reasons. Here's an obvious one - simple and straightforward: Because, well, we just don't like them. And why is that? Because we've never taken the time to understand them, to know them, to talk to them. Our encounter with the stranger threatens us, intimidates us. We imagine all sorts of dangers when none exist. We easily project our own fears and insecurities upon them and hate them because, at bottom, we really nurture a poor self-image (see Rashi on the verse). The result is a fractured, polarized community where suspicion and distrust run rampant. True, the Talmud tells us we are obligated to hate evil and condemn and battle against all wicked behavior. We do not "turn the other cheek". But all too often, the people we scoff at and revile are guiltless of the charge, and we reject them at our own peril. Tish'a b'Av reminds us that such action is plain wrong and must stop.

Justice

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Chazon, picking up on the opening words of the Haftara taken from the first chapter in Yishayahu. Now this prophecy deserves special attention as it accents in bold strokes the hypocrisies of a People who should have known better. For a society which witnessed daily the miraculous wonders in the Beit HaMikdash and

felt the palpable presence of Gd through the prophets, what indeed went wrong? Lots of things; but the Prophet chooses one central crime that obscured and thus prevented HaShem's Torah from impacting the People's behavior as it should have. The crime: injustice, cheating the widow and orphan, rampant corruption in the judiciary. In short, the People's bare self-centeredness created a culture where it mattered little what was right - only what was right for me. Human relations suffered because people became alienated - strangers toward one another. Selfishness did not allow for a show of any kindness or empathy. (See 1:21-24).

And the result? Catastrophe. The Mikdash was destroyed and we were exiled from the Land. But Yishayahu does not leave us without indicating how such behavior can be rectified. The Haftara concludes thusly: "Zion will be redeemed with justice and (the exiled) will return with righteousness." (Yishayahu 1:27) Justice, simply put, means to do the right thing and not to allow any consideration other than the truth to dominate in the affairs of man. Which means that neither wealth nor poverty, power nor weakness, beauty nor unsightliness can ever intrude upon the honest implementation of the Law.

But that's not all. Those very judgments must also be leavened with righteousness. The "right" must also be the "good". If a verdict goes against a poor litigant, once the court is adjourned, society steps in to help the indigent and provide for his needs. True, this impoverished person was guilty of theft. That fact cannot and ought not to be compromised. But once convicted, the tz'daka-instincts of our People must robe the judgment with charity and goodness to ensure that no human relationship will suffer in the carrying out of justice.

Often, it is not easy to be honest, not easy to repair broken relationships. It is difficult to walk that narrow path of justice and righteousness. But when we do succeed - and we can - we are strengthened by the heroism we display. Our life enjoys a deeper layer of meaning, and we have done our share in bringing the redemption that much closer.

9th of Av - During the Second Temple

Rav Soloveitchik asks whether Tish'a b'Av was observed during the days of the Second Beit HaMikdash. Most of the earlier Sages maintain that Tish'a b'Av was not observed. And this view makes eminent sense. After all, if Tish'a b'Av commemorates the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash,

why observe this fast day when the Beit HaMikdash was up and running?

However, there is another view, that of Rambam. (See Rosh HaShana 18b) He felt that Tish'a b'Av was observed during the period of the Second Beit HaMikdash. The question is obvious: if so, what did that observance consist of?

On this point Rambam is silent, but the Rav offered two answers. The first is this: Apparently, there was ample evidence that even during the Second Beit HaMikdash, there was a strong premonition that the Temple would be destroyed. Thus, their Tish'a b'Av was spent praying to G-d that such a calamity would not happen. Tragically, the delinquent behavior of too many Jews did not merit the fulfillment of those prayers. The Second Beit HaMikdash was indeed destroyed and on Tish'a b'Av, no less.

The Rav's second answer proposed that even with a functioning Second Mikdash, the searing question of EICHA remained unanswered: Why was the First Temple destroyed? Whatever sins we committed, why did it warrant such wholesale slaughter? Indeed. We ask the same painful question whenever we think of the Holocaust. And so, even with the Second Temple fully functioning, the Fast of Av was observed. The EICHA question was still asked and tears were shed.

Today, of course, is tragically no different. We still have these questions. Our collective suffering and grief beg for answers and the veil of silence remains in place. Every Tish'a b'Av, we pray that next year this fast day transform into a holiday, and the prophecy of Zechariya (8:19) tells us that's exactly what will happen.

BIMHEIRA V'YAMEINU, AMEIN 🙏

D'VARIM

GM There is an oft-stated Plan - a Package Deal - that G-d had and has for Bnei Yisrael - and that is to bring us out of Egypt, give us the Torah, and bring us to Eretz Yisrael.

Back in Parshat Sh'mot, we find G-d's stated intentions to Moshe Rabeinu at the Burning Bush. In Va'eira, G-d commands Moshe to tell the People of His plans for them, with the famous Multiple Terms of Redemption. Out of Egypt; becoming G-d's Nation, going to Eretz Yisrael.

Here is a pasuk from Parshat D'varim, the gimatriya of which matches a pasuk in Vayikra. Together, they present G-d's Plan.

D'varim 1:21 -

רָאָה נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ עֲלֶיהָ יָשׁ

כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ לְךָ
אֶל־תִּירָא וְאֶל־תַּחַת:

Behold, HASHEM, your God, has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord, God of your fathers has spoken to you; you shall neither fear nor be dismayed.

And Vayikra 26:45 (B'chukotai) -

וּזְכַרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית רְאִשִׁים
אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי־אֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם
לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם לְהִזְוֹת לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים
אֲנִי יְהוָה:

I will remember for them the covenant [made with] the ancestors, whom I took out from the land of Egypt before the eyes of the nations, to be a God to them. I am HaShem.

The D'varim pasuk points to Eretz Yisrael. The Vayikra pasuk speaks about the Exodus and G-d's being our G-d.

This time, it is the shared gimatriya - 5059 - that joins the three parts of The Plan.

GM Moshe Rabeinu gives a B'RACHA to Bnei Yisrael - D'varim 1:11 (Parshat D'varim) -

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יִסַּף עֲלֵיכֶם
כַּכֶּם אֶתְּכֶם וְיִבְרַךְ אֶתְּכֶם
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לָכֶם:

May HaShem the G-d of your forefathers add to you a thousandfold

as many as you are, and may He bless you, as He spoke concerning you!

The gimatriya of the pasuk is 2808.

We are looking for a Gimatriya Match with a pasuk that describes a character trait of our ancestors to add quality to the quantity in the B'racha. Found it! B'reishit 18:6 in Parshat Vayeira -

וַיְמַהֵר אַבְרָהָם הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־שָׂרָה
וַיֹּאמֶר בְּהָרִי שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִים קֶמֶז וְסֹלֶת
לֶחֶם וְעָשִׂי עֲגוֹת:

And Avraham hastened to the tent to Sara, and he said, "Hasten three se'ah of meal [and] fine flour; knead and make cakes."

HACHNASAT ORCHIM and CHESED in general are qualities for the multitude of Bnei Yisrael to emulate.

RED ALERT!

D'VARIM-CHAZON

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

DIVREI TORAH

• And Moshe spoke to “all of Israel” (1:1). This is the first message of Moshe Rabbeinu, when he is speaking to ALL of Israel. (Actually, I cannot even imagine how that occurred. One man speaking to 2,500,000 people without any electronic equipment.)

The key element is that the people were completely united in listening to their leader. And his first message was to stay united. Make this a priority! When they arrived at Sinai 40 years earlier, they came as one person, completely united. This unity made them worthy of receiving the Torah (Vilna Gaon). When Moshe spoke now, he wished to reprove the people and admonish them. He spoke harshly to them. But when Moshe spoke to Hashem, it was always in a softer way (Berditchiver Rebbe). (I would take issue with the Rebbe's remark. When leaving Pharaoh's palace the first time, when Pharaoh got tougher on the Jews and said that they should get their own straw, Moshe was very strong in his language to Hashem. And Hashem reprimanded him for it.)

- Moshe learned to reprimand the people right before he died from Yaakov Avinu (Rashi). But Yaakov addressed his sons on the actual day that he died. Moshe began speaking to the people five weeks before he died. Nonetheless, we get the message. When a person is near death, he is definitely heard in a more serious fashion. There is no hidden agenda. There is no barrier in his approach to speak to his loved ones. And the line of communication is wide open. One Kol Nidre evening, I gave a "fire and brimstone" sermon to a packed crowd. They listened

attentively to every word. I received big Yasher Ko'achs for my performance, but a clearer picture emerged when a congregant said to me "Rabbi, you really gave it to THEM." I quickly realized that I had missed the target. I needed to tone down the message in order to get it across.

- To admonish an audience, you also need standing. Once I asked a teenager to speak at Seuda Shlishit when he came home from attending an out-of-town Yeshiva. He gave Mussar, admonishing the audience, like he would hear from his rebbes at his Yeshiva. He missed the mark in a big way. I talked to him afterward. I told him that an adult audience would never be able to accept reproof from a sixteen year old teenager. When Moshe gave admonition to Bnei Yisrael, it was right after he killed Sichon and Og. Prior to these wars, Moshe was unable to speak to Bnei Yisrael in this authoritative fashion. But after killing the enemy, his relationship with the people changed radically. He was always the leader, the teacher, the Rebbe, but now he was the military warrior and victor. In this new status he gained the newfound admiration that was necessary in this new endeavor.

- A judge is not permitted to show favoritism in court (11:17). Showing favoritism is a fine line of behavior. Once there was a Din Torah between

two members of the Shul. The first congregant came into the court and took a seat. When the second congregant entered, he saw his opponent talking leisurely with one of the judges. This second congregant was disturbed at what he saw and quickly left the room in a rush. When I talked to him later, he said to me that he felt that the judge was a friend of his opponent. I said that I see his point. A judge needs to be aloof from the plaintiff and from the defendant. The Talmud says that when the rivals appear in court, the judges should view each one as an evil person! This is not in opposition to the fact that each is innocent until proven guilty. It is a statement that prohibits a judge to even talk to either person before the proceedings begin.

- And God heard the voice of their words (1:34). Hashem was listening to not only what the spies reported, but also their voice: how they communicated their report. In a written report there would be a deficiency in this matter. The spies had said that the Land was a good land. Immediately afterward they reported that the inhabitants of the Land were giants, and we were like grasshoppers in their eyes. And they had fortified cities. The words “the land was good” was not a convincing statement. The Torah was saying that this was recognizable in their voices (Rabbi Yitzchak Eliyahu Landa). (I was once

in Israel when a lawyer called me from America and asked me if the judge could call me from his American courtroom and ask me some questions pertaining to the court case. Naturally I consented. The court called me the next day. The bailiff said “Rabbi, please raise your right hand.” I said yes, but didn’t raise my hand. I agreed to tell the truth. The judge asked me some questions, and I was dismissed. If my testimony was really important he never would have permitted it.)

- When it comes to the Torah’s description of Og, we can hardly believe what we read: his bed was 9 cubits long. A cubit is the linear measurement that is defined by the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. And the Torah adds that it is “after the cubit of a man...” (3:11). This means that the length of a cubit was not uniform; it was determined by the size of that particular man. So we need to assume that Og’s bed exceeded 18 feet in length. Why does the Torah tell us this trivial information, however startling it is! It is to tell us that the victory that the Ammonites accomplished was only due to Hashem’s will. All the Refa’im were giants. (This is similar to the reasoning that some of the 19th century Rabbis concluded as to why Hashem allowed us to find the huge skeletons of dinosaurs. This is to tell us that there is no reason to

understand how dinosaurs became extinct. It was solely due to the will of Hashem.)

- “Yair ben Menashe took (lands of Bashan)... and I (Hashem) gave the land of Gilad to Machir (the son of Menashe)” (3:14,15). Why does it say that Yair took his land, but that Hashem gave Machir his land? The Rogachover Rebbe explained: The Talmud (Sanhedrin 44a) said that after the victory over Yericho, Bnei Yisrael attacked and lost the battle with the city of Ai. And they lost 36 men in that battle. The Talmud said that Yair was the only casualty, and Yair was worth the majority of the Sanhedrin (hence the number 36). These 2 & 1/2 tribes who settled east of the Jordan were required to lead the battle over Canaan. Yair died young and was unable to fulfill his vow. Hence he took that land before the war over Canaan was won. Machir, on the other hand, fought all the years of battle and earned his lands east of the Jordan. Hence it says Hashem gave Machir his land.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. How many weeks did it take Moshe to deliver the entire Chumash of D’varim? (1:3...)
2. Whose idea was it to send spies on the Spy Mission into Canaan? (1:22)

3. What portion of land did Hashem give to Eisav’s descendants? (2:5)
4. Why did Sichon refuse to allow Bnei Yisrael to pass through his land? (2:30)
5. How large was Og’s bed? (3:12)

From Rashi

6. Why did Moshe agree so quickly to Bnei Yisrael’s request for a Spy Mission? (1:23)
7. Why did Hashem give land to Moav and Ammon, descendants of Lot? (2:5)
8. How many sons did Sichon have? (2:33)
9. After looting the land of Sichon in the battle, what did Bnei Yisrael take from Og? (2:34)
10. Why did Hashem tell Moshe not to be afraid of Og? (He didn’t say the same to Moshe about Sichon.) (3:2)

From the Rabbis

11. The people openly repented for the sin of the spies. Why didn’t Hashem accept their penitence? (Ramban)
12. Why did Moshe take Bnei Yisrael north (toward Og) after beating Sichon, instead of west into the Promised Land? (Ramban)
13. How can we explain Og’s huge size? (Targum Yonatan)

Midrash - D'varim Rabba 1:21

14. If a Jew is traveling on the road on Erev Shabbat and is overtaken by nightfall, what should he do with his money he has on his person?

Haftara - Yishayahu

15. Who was the king of Yehuda when Yishayahu was the prophet?

Relationships

- a) Gershon - Livni
- b) Efrayim - Mupim
- c) Cham - Cheit
- d) Adam - Enosh
- e) Korach - Aharon

ANSWERS

1. Five weeks. (From Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat until the seventh of Adar when Moshe died.)

2. It was the people's idea.

3. The area of Mt. Seir.

4. Hashem hardened Sichon's heart (as Hashem did to Pharaoh).

5. Nine cubits long, four cubits wide.

6. Moshe reasoned that since he agreed so willingly to send spies, the people would change their mind, seeing that Moshe had nothing to hide.

7. When Avraham went to Egypt and identified Sarah as his sister, Lot kept the secret. Hence Lot was rewarded.

8. One large son, as big as his father.

9. Gold and silver.

10. Og had helped Avraham when he told Avraham that Lot was captured.

11. Because Hashem had taken an oath to punish them, and a decree accompanied by an oath cannot be annulled.

12. Og amassed his army and approached Bnei Yisrael. Moshe went north to repulse Og's attack.

13. Og lived prior to No'ach's Flood, when many people were that big.

14. He should give his money to a non-Jew for safe keeping.

15. Chizkiyahu.

Relationships

a) Father & Son

b) First Cousins (Efrayim was the son of Yosef; Mupim was the son of Binyamin)

c) Grandfather & grandson

d) Grandfather & Grandson

e) First Cousins