

AUG. 2ND 2025 • ח' אב תשפ"ה

פרשת דברים **PARSHAT DEVARIM**

EREV TISHA B'AV | SHABBAT CHAZON

United We Stand



Tisha B'Av and **Chet Hameraglim** Rabbi Shalom Rosner Page 30



Restoring Leadership, **Rebuilding a Nation** Page 52 Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman



חדש ימינו כקדם איכה ה:כ״א

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT DEVARIM ZMANIM

CANDLES 7:00 PM • EARLY 6:10 PM • SHABBAT END 8:15 PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:52 PM







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IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Middush Levana Av

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Netanel Epstein

Torah 4 Teens by Teens

Dafna Erlbaum // Leora Weinberg

7 Days After Molad: 10 Av/ Sun. night Aug. 3 Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 14 Av /Thurs. night Aug. 7

(a) This Shabbat, in anticipation of the Fast of Tisha Be'AV, we stop eating at 7:39pm (Jerusalem time). The Fast concludes on Sunday evening at 8:03pm (Jerusalem time). Please see more on the Halachic details for Tisha Be'Av in Rabbi Nadel's auidelines on page 64.



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COVER IMAGE

Bishul Akum- Salmon and Sushi

Rabbi Ezra Friedman

Simchat Shmuel

42 Rabbi Sam Shor

The photo on the cover was taken by OU Israel's Nina Broder at the Kotel on Tisha Be'Av last year. Each year, NSCY Kollel leads thousands at the Kotel in heartfelt song to powerfully bring the day of Tisha Be'Av to a close.

CANDLE LIGHTING







4:57-5:05

	DEVARIM			VA'ETCHANAN		
	Candles	Early	SHABBAT ENDS*	Candles	Early	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	7:00	6:10	8:15	6:53	6:05	8:08
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	7:17	6:12	8:17	7:11	6:07	8:10
Beit Shemesh/RBS	7:18	6:11	8:16	7:12	6:06	8:09
Alon Shvut	7:15	6:10	8:15	7:09	6:05	8:08
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	7:17	6:12	8:17	7:11	6:07	8:10
Modiin/Chashmonaim	7:16	6:11	8:16	7:10	6:06	8:09
Netanya	7:18	6:12	8:18	7:11	6:07	8:11
Be'er Sheva	7:16	6:11	8:15	7:10	6:06	8:09
Rehovot	7:17	6:12	8:17	7:11	6:07	8:10
Petach Tikva	7:00	6:12	8:17	6:53	6:07	8:10
Ginot Shomron	7:16	6:11	8:16	7:10	6:06	8:09
Haifa / Zichron	7:08	6:13	8:18	7:02	6:08	8:11
Gush Shiloh	7:15	6:10	8:15	7:09	6:05	8:08
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	7:17	6:12	8:17	7:11	6:07	8:10
Givat Zeev	7:20	6:10	8:15	7:14	6:05	8:08
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:15	6:10	8:15	7:09	6:05	8:08
Ashkelon	7:18	6:13	8:17	7:12	6:08	8:10
Yad Binyamin	7:17	6:12	8:16	7:11	6:07	8:10
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	7:10	6:11	8:17	7:04	6:05	8:09
Golan	7:15	6:10	8:15	7:09	6:05	8:08
Nahariya/Maalot	7:17	6:12	8:18	7:11	6:07	8:11
Afula	7:16	6:11	8:17	7:10	6:06	8:10

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Devarim 8:52 PM • Va'etchanan 8:45 PM

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities; 40 mins in Yerushalvim and Petach Tikva: 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

Daf Yomi: Avodah Zarah 45

*Havdala is said Motzaei Tisha B'av



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5:53-6:00 Sunrise Sof Zman Kriat Shema 9:19-9:22 8:38-8:42 Magen Avraham Sof 7man Tefila 10:28-10:29 (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya) 12:45-12:44 Chatzot (Halachic Noon) 1:19-1:18 Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) 6:11-6:04 Plag Mincha Sunset (Including Elevation) 7:41-7:32



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"Why are so many of these *kinot* written by Rabbi Elazar HaKalir?" he inquired. I began answering him by explaining the poetry and the importance of Rabbi Elazar HaKalir, the different opinions about when he lived, and so on, when he asked me another question. "Abba, if you could go back to any time in Jewish history, which era would you want to be born in?" This was difficult for me to answer, since every major time period in Jewish history is exciting in its own way. Ultimately, I told him that the most fascinating time for me would be the time of Shlomo HaMelech, when we had the *Beit HaMikdash* and the sovereign kingdom of

May the learning from this issue of TT be לע"ג

Rose Edith Cohen ע״ה איטה רייזל בת גנשא ואריה לייב הכהן ע״ה

on her 17th yahrzeit - ייג מנחם אם Missed very much by her daughters

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Then I turned to him. "Now it's your turn. Which era would *you* want to go back to?" He looked at me and immediately said, "Abba, it makes no difference to me, as long as it's before Rabbi Elazar HaKalir."

I have to admit that I started laughing, which was pretty awkward given that it was in *shul* on Tisha B'Av, but then I started to think about it on a deeper level. Clearly, my son felt disconnected from the *kinot*, as he was wishing for a time before they were written. If so, the problem is that he hasn't been given the tools to truly understand what he is reading, why they represent something so important, and what kind of story they tell. At that moment, I decided that I needed to do something new in order to make sure my children could really feel Tisha B'Av each year.

Tisha B'Av happens to be my Bubby's yahrzeit - Chana Ita bat Reb Moshe *a"h*. This Tisha B'Av will be exactly 20 years since she passed away. She was a true role model to me, and I miss her dearly. Because of this timing, Tisha B'Av has become a day where I try, on a personal level, to do as many meaningful things as possible in her memory and to work on helping to figure out what we are missing in order to build what we need as the Jewish people.

So when my son told me in this humorous way that he had a hard time connecting with the *kinot* (which many young people as well as adults struggle with), along with the fact that this is a time I generally think about how I can make more of an impact, the idea was

born to create OU Israel's annual Tisha B'Av video, to make sure that we have explanatory *kinot shiurim* every year, and to help provide learning programming for teenagers on the evening of Tisha B'Av.

One of the most impactful things to do on Tisha B'Av - certainly the most personally inspiring thing I do - is going to the Kotel together with the OU NCSY Summer programs during the last hour and a half of Tisha B'Av. Every year, though we pray that *Moshiach* comes way before the last hour and a half of Tisha B'Av, we stand with hundreds of teenagers from around North America and Israel together in a big OU circle at the Kotel Plaza. We sing songs that symbolize not only our relationship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu, but also the desire and the yearning we have for the Beit HaMikdash to be rebuilt hopefully very soon. I truly believe that there are very few moments in the year that I am able to have such a heightened kavana as during that moment, at the Kotel toward the end of Tisha B'Av, surrounded by thousands of others at such a holy place, yearning for something so much greater. If you've been there before, I'm sure you don't need my convincing to come again. If you haven't been there, then trust me that vou want to be there.

It's not an easy time to come out to the Kotel. Everybody's tired, hungry, and weak, but if you do have the strength and you want to be inspired and connect with thousands of your brothers and sisters at the Kotel, then please join us. The Mayor of Yerushalayim, Moshe Leon, has joined us for many years and knows how important it is to many people in Yerushalayim, and thousands more have discovered that what NCSY Kollel and other NCSY programs have created over the past thirty years is unbelievably uplifting and inspiring.





Thousands upon thousands come every year to sing with tremendous *devekut*, with tremendous love and passion for God, asking Him, begging Him, to please bring us the *Beit HaMikdash*. It's so uplifting that I've wondered, perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek, whether maybe *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* really likes this davening so much that He might even delay the coming of the *Beit HaMikdash* for a few more minutes so that He can hear us sing. To that, I always say to God, "HaKadosh Baruch

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Hu, I promise you, after you bring us the Beit HaMikdash, we will make sure to get together and sing in the most beautiful way possible, thanking You for all of the incredible miracles that You have brought to the Jewish people this year, and that You continue bringing the Jewish people."

The fact is, the difficulty of traversing Yerushalayim and finding parking is a sign in itself of the beginning of the redemption; the streets are filled with people because HaKadosh Baruch Hu has been gathering the exiles. The Ramban tells us that when he came to Yerushalayim, he found two Jewish painters, brothers who were allowed to stay and paint by permission of the ruler. Just two Jews out of so many who used to be there. So I constantly ask myself, how much would the Ramban be willing to pay in order to see the Yerushalayim of today where we have hundreds of thousands of Jews living in Yerushalayim, connecting to Yerushalayim, rebuilding Yerushalayim with more cranes than we could ever have imagined, with more Jews living in Yerushalayim than ever in the history of the world? I think he prayed for a Yerushalayim that began with what we see happening in this amazing and holy city.

But therein lies the problem. With such a rebuilt and revitalized Yerushalayim, it makes it much more challenging to even describe what the *Churban* was. It takes real planning and

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CHANA LERBA a"h

מורא בנותם באובה. לעילוי נשמת

חנה לאה בת שלום מאיר וצביה ע״ה

On her 4th Yahrzeit Tuesday, August 5th 6:00pm Har Hamenuchot (שער יוסף) hard work to figure out how to get this message through to ourselves and the younger generation. Several great organizations, including OU Israel, have put out videos and programs that explain to us what we had during the time of Beit HaMikdash, what we lost, and what we should look forward to seeing be'ezrat Hashem very soon. So I encourage you to watch the videos that we at OU Israel have created over the last three years on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@theouisrael. This year's OU Israel video, which I did with Rav Shlomo Katz, is entitled Building the Beit HaMikdash Now and will premiere on our YouTube this motzei Shabbat. There is so much great online content, including the Shiurim from Torah Efrat, to ensure that we can connect to Tisha B'Av in a very meaningful way while ensuring that our younger generation is also not only connected, but is also part of this incredible experience that we are, baruch Hashem, remembering but also moving forward in.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the Beit HaMikdash very, very soon *bezrat Hashem*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel aberman@ouisrael.org





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Kibbud Av and Chodesh Av

Klal Yisrael's success requires us to build a future based firmly on our past, respecting and committed to the tradition of values that have characterized our people since Avraham and Sarah and since we stood at Sinai.

This point is underscored every year, on the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av, when we read about the sin of the spies, the original Tisha b'Av story that undermined our permanent connection to Eretz Yisrael. As told in the *Parshat Devarim* version, the spies were sent at the initiative of the Jewish people and from the outset the die is cast and our critical failing highlighted (Devarim 1:22): "Then **all of you** approached me and said, "Let us send agents ahead to explore the land for us...."

Rashi notes the contrast between the approach of the Jewish People at this low point and what we will read next week describing the Jewish people in a far better place, at the foot of Har Sinai. Here it describes "all of you" approaching, in a disorganized crowd, in contrast to what it describes there (Devarim 5:20), "you approached me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders." As Rashi explains, based on the Sifrei: "That approach to me was a fitting one — young people showing respect to their elders and letting these precede them, and the elders showing respect to the heads of the tribes that these should precede them. Here, however, you approached me in a crowd, the young pushing aside their elders, the elders pushing aside the heads."

At the core of our failure was a rejection of the continuity of values within Klal Yisrael as reflected in the absence of genuine respect for our parents and leaders. Honoring parents is not only an expression of gratitude and decency; it serves as the foundation of our Mesorah, the tradition that informs both our knowledge and values. It is when we abandon that genuine respect that we lose our connection to that which anchors us, including our connection to Eretz Yisrael, our homeland.

Ramban makes this clear in his commentary to the original version of the story of the spies (Bamidbar 14:17): "Moshe did not pray [for mercy] here based on the merit of the patriarchs, and [therefore] he did not mention Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov at all in this prayer. The reason [for not mentioning them] was because the Land was given to the patriarchs, and it is from them that they were to inherit it, but they rebelled against their ancestors, and did not want the gift which the patriarchs desired very much, so how could he say now, "Remember Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yisrael, Thy servants, to whom You did swear by Your own self, ... and all this Land that I have spoken of will I give to your seed, (Shemos 32:13), since they were saying: "We do not want this gift!"

It is likewise noteworthy that what immunized Yehoshua and Calev from the plot of the spies was their active connection to their

mentors and ancestors, as Yehoshua came with the protective prayer of his teacher Moshe (Rashi Bamidbar 13:15), and Calev with his own prayers at the graves of the Avot in Chevron (Rashi Bamidbar 13:22).

Kibbud Av – honoring our ancestors is therefore the task before us during this month of Av. We must reset our own values such that they affirm, reflect, and respect that which our parents and teachers cherished and valued, moving us to reestablish in both heart and mind our firm bond with the two items identified by the Torah as our national Morasha (heritage), the twin legacies of Torah and Eretz Yisrael.









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ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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PARSHAT DEVARIM

The book of Devarim is Moshe's soliloquy in the last weeks of his life. A rather long soliloquy, the better part of 28 chapters. He will not enter the Land of Israel. The Jewish people will. Moshe has a lot to say before he sends them off without him.

Although the English name for the book is Deuteronomy and the Midrash calls it Mishneh Torah, both meaning two, as if to say this book is the second version of the Torah, or the repetition of the Torah, those names are somewhat misleading. Moshe does not review the entire Torah. He relates only some stories, reviewing with the people some of what has occurred earlier in the Torah. But he leaves out much more than he reviews. He does not mention any of the book of Breishit. Nor any of the story in Egypt; nothing of the slavery. Or the plagues. Or the splitting of the Sea. Or

of the instructions for the Mishkan, Or most of the book of Vayikra relating to Tuma and Tahara and Offerings. So, the review is not of the Torah: the review is of some, selected stories and laws of the Torah.

Imagine Moshe's thinking. I am not going to be with the people in this grand adventure of conquering the Land of Israel. And more importantly, of then setting up our unique Jewish society in the Land. And living in a way to gain G-d's favor so we can be successful.

What message do I want to convey? I want to encourage them but should I do that through scaring them, through fear, or should I love them, build them up, tell them how great they are? And where do I start? Should I remind them of their failings? And their high points? Like G-d taking them out of Egypt, giving them the Torah, Should I start there?

Moshe does review many stories but the order is not at all as they occurred; he changes the order.

And noteworthy also, is that the book is mostly told in the first person, by Moshe. It is his language. And his language in the book of Devarim is different. It is emotional. He expresses concern, worry, fear. Concern of failure, challenges that will be unmet, or met with failure. There is love: love of G-d for us and love of us for Him. Lots of zeal and passion; many emphatic forms.

The book of Devarim is Moshe's great speech before taking leave of his people.



1ST ALIYA (DEVARIM 1:1-10)

Moshe related the events of the journey, the 11-day journey from



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055-500-3342 HulkowerMD@gmail.com Chorev to Kadesh Barnea. On 1 Shevat, year 40, Moshe related to the people all that G-d had instructed him about them. This was after the defeats of Sichon and Og, on the banks of the Jordan. He related: G-d instructed us to travel from Sinai and to take the Land of Israel, the Land promised to the forefathers. And I said: these people are now so numerous that I cannot bear them alone.

Moshe begins his parting words with a description of the journey to the Land of Israel. Not with the story of the Exodus. Not even with the story of the giving of the Torah. Certainly not with any stories from Breishit.

His emphasis is the journey to the Land. Because that is what is on the minds of the people. They are preoccupied with that. Moshe wants to begin his speech by relating to where they are, addressing their immediate concerns. He'll get to speaking about Sinai and about religious belief and about religious challenges. But right now, let's address the issue at hand: entering the Land.



2ND ALIYA (1:11-21)

I said then: Let's choose wise people to lead you. You agreed that this

was a good idea. Wise leaders were appointed over thousands, hundreds, tens and officers of enforcement as well. I charged the judges saying: listen and rule fairly without bias. I commanded you in all the things you are to do. We traveled the desert to the Mount of the Emori, Kadesh Barnea. There I said: let's go without fear and take the Land.

It is curious that the first story Moshe feels a need to review is the appointing of the various upper court and lower court judges. After all, it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the march to the Land. In fact, there are other stories that do occur as part of the march, like the complaints for water that are simply skipped.

Why mention the appointment of judges?

Perhaps Moshe is addressing the unspoken concern of the people; how in the world are we going to manage without the leadership of Moshe? We will not prevail in the battles without him. Moshe, subtlety tempers his indispensability. I can't do it all. I couldn't do it all then; I needed help from the beginning. And now too. I am dispensable. You will be fine without me.



3RD ALIYA (1:22-38)

You approached me to send spies

to scout out the Land. I thought that was a good idea, choosing the leaders of the tribes for the task. They toured and returned with fruits of the Land exclaiming: The Land G-d is giving us is good. But you refused to go and rebelled against G-d saying: these have damaged our resolve telling us of the large people and the fortified cities. I insisted that G-d will fight the battle as He has done until now. But you did not trust in G-d Who has been guiding you by cloud and fire. You were told that all who do not believe they can enter the Land, will not enter the Land. And I too was told I would not enter; Yeshoshua will lead the

We wondered how Moshe would begin this long address; with encouragement, with high points, great moments in our history? No. The spies. The failure.

people into the Land.

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But he abbreviates it. He relates: the spies brought back a good report. And you people decided you couldn't take the Land.

Wait, that's not what I remember. The spies came back with a long and eventually pessimistic report. In Bamidbar it sounds like their bad report started a cascade of fear. Here, Moshe places the guilt at the feet of the people.

Perhaps Moshe is deliberately emphasizing responsibility. Just like I, Moshe says, admitted I needed help adjudicating all of you, you too need to know that it was not the fault of the spies but of you that we spent 40 years in the desert.

Blame for national failures cannot be laid only at the feet of the leaders. The people need to also bear full responsibility for their decisions.

So how does Moshe begin his great speech? Responsibility. I admitted my weakness and agreed to a system of judges. You too need to accept your responsibility for this great adventure in the Land to succeed.

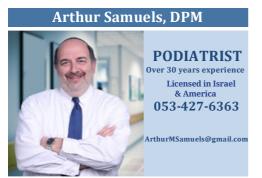


4TH ALIYA (1:39-2:1)

Upon hearing that you would not enter the Land, you regretted your

sin. You said: let us go to the Land. But you were warned that G-d would not be with you in this and the Emori chased you away like bees to the region of Seir. We dwelt in Kadesh and Har Seir for a long time.

Here is lesson two. When we follow the



Divine plan, we will succeed. When we venture off on our own, devoid of Divine support, then we will be chased away like bees. The image of the people scampering away as if chased by bees is satirical; with Divine assistance you have no defense. You ran defenseless, arms flailing.

It was time to travel northward.

5TH ALIYA (2:2-30)

Do not confront the descendants of your brother Esav who dwell in Seir. Circle their land; pay for the food and water that you need from them. In addition, do not confront Moav for it is the rightful possession of the descendants of Lot. Past the land of Moav is Amon; do not confront Amon for it too is the rightful possession of the descendants of Lot. The region north of the Arnon is the land of Sichon and Og; those lands I have given to you. I offered to Sichon to pass through his land, but he refused; G-d made him stubborn so that we could take his land.

This description of our family ties with Esav and Lot is surprising; don't engage in war with Esav's descendants nor Lot's descendants. They are relatives. And we are to give regard to those relatives. Yaakov's brother Esav settled in Seir. He deserves brotherly deference and hence leave him alone. Moav and Amon are nations from Lot, Avraham's nephew. Leave them alone as well; they are your relatives. Brothers, even when pursuing entirely different legacies, remain brothers nonetheless.

6TH ALIYA (2:31-3:14)

G-d told us to take the lands of Sichon in war. The lands were con-

quered up to the Gilad. Og confronted us in the region toward the Bashan and he too was conquered. Their lands were given to Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Menashe.

These confrontations with Sichon and Og are the last stories in the book of Bamidbar, not too

long ago. Moshe relates these stories right at the beginning of his long speech, even though if he were reviewing our history chronologically, they would have to wait 25 chapters. He does so to begin his long speech with success and with encouragement. Even though we spent 40 years in the desert as a result of the spies, but we then marched to the Land. With success.

Moshe will eventually want to warn the people, chastise them, tell them of their future failures: but that can all wait. Start with encouragement.



7TH ALIYA (3:15-22)

The lands on the east of the Jordan including the Gilad and the lands

from the Kineret to the Dead Sea were settled by Reuven and Gad and half of Menashe. I instructed these tribes to join the battle for the Land of Israel and then to return to their lands.

This is a very large patch of land: on the east side of the Jordan from the Dead Sea all the way up to the Hermon has been conquered and will be settled by the Jewish people. These early victories and Moshe's repetition of their stories allows Moshe to begin his long directives to the

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people on a high note, an optimistic one. The description until here is how we got to where we are. Now he will focus on the much more crucial directives: how to live *in* the Land.

A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

This Motzei Shabbat we will be sitting on the floor, wearing our non-leather footwear and chanting Megillat Eicha. In the second Pasuk of Megillat Eicha, it is written "Bacho Tivke BaLayla, V'Dimata al Lechaya." –"She weeps sore in the night, and her tears on her cheek."

Why does the text stress that the tears are on her cheek? Is it not obvious? Where else would tears be found? What is Jeremiah telling us?

Perhaps the meaning is that the tears are still found on her cheek, even now, never wiped away and never dried. As Rashi points out "Because she is always crying".

Other nations celebrate their victories but do not commemorate their sad days. We as a people never let our tears dry. Even at a wedding we recite the words "If I Forget thee O Yerushalayim, let my right hand forget its skills." (Tehillim 137)

Now we can understand the words "AL Naharot Bavel, Sham Yashavnu Gam Bachinu" "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept." Even though we dwelt in Babylon as citizens enjoying peace and tranquility, there we still wept for Zion.

Gemara Taanit 30b "Everyone who mourns for Yerushalayim, merits to share in her Joy."

Perhaps this is the message of Jeremiah in Megillat Eicha, to never dry our tears and let them stay on our cheeks over the loss of Zion and our past tragedies so we may merit seeing the rebuilding of Yerushalayim in our days.

- Shabbat Shalom



THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, EMERITUS

Words, Mere Words

I have kept my time-worn copy of Roget's Thesaurus in my personal library since I was in the seventh grade. It was given to me by my teacher, a Mr. Zeller, who introduced me to the beauty of language and who first stimulated my fascination with words. He taught me to use this thesaurus in order to use language effectively and with precision.

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

With this week's Torah portion, *Devarim* (*Deuteronomy* 1:1-3:22), we begin an entirely



new book: *Deuteronomy*, the fifth book of the *Pentateuch*. This book differs from the previous four in many ways. In the first four books of the Bible, events take place, activities are performed, and stories happen. Not so in *Deuteronomy*. It is fundamentally one long speech; an exquisitely eloquent address, delivered over a period of forty days.

Events are described in *Deuteronomy*, but no event actually takes place in the entire book. That is, until the concluding eight verses which describe the death of Moses.

There is no storyline in this book. It consists of words of review, words of rebuke, words of instruction, and words of inspiration. Words, mere words. It is no wonder, then, that in Hebrew, the book is called *Devarim*, "Words."

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

What is most astounding about this booklength address is that it is given by Moses, who, by his own admission, was not a man of words. You certainly will recall that it was in the Torah portion of *Shemos* which we read many months ago that Moses at first declined God's mission. He refused to be the one to deliver the Jewish people from Egypt. He said, "Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words...I am slow

of speech and slow of tongue." (Exodus 4:10)

Our Torah portion begins, "These are the words that Moses addressed to all Israel..." Our Sages in the Midrash find this phenomenon remarkable. Say the rabbis in the Midrash, "Yesterday he said 'I am not a man of words,' and today he says 'These are the words?!' ...Rabbi Elazar put it this way: 'Yesterday he was a *pasilus* [*pasilus is* a Greek word meaning a person with a severe speech defect], and now he proclaims 'These are the words!' "

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

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

Rabbi Shaviv offers a most suggestive approach to solving this dilemma. He begins by pointing out that Moses led his people for forty years but spoke to them more in the last forty days of his life than he did for the entire duration of his leadership.

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



They were now ready to hear the hymn of *mitzvot*, statutes, and laws.

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

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

Remember the tragedy of Moses' life, and remember the sin for which he was punished. The Almighty instructed him, when the people

complained of thirst, to speak to the rock from which water would then flow. God instructed him to use "mere words."

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

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

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

"Mere words," you say? I hope I have convinced you of their supreme importance by sharing with you my own conviction of the importance of words, a conviction which began for me in the seventh grade.

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

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Profits and Prophets

There are few more blazing passages in the whole of religious literature than the first chapter of the book of Isaiah, the great "vision" (or "chazon") that gives its name to the Shabbat before Tisha 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

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said to be: "Did you act honestly [be-emunah] 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 Isaiah:

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. (Is. 1:21-23)

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 – Isaiah does not claim to be telling people something they didn't already know; he does not expect to surprise

1. Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 1

his listeners. The fact that people had come to expect no better from their leaders was itself a mark of moral decline.

This, says Isaiah, 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 Isaiah 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 Isaiah, 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." (Is. 1:11-15)

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*





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Eta Morris Realty, Ltd. etamorrisrealestate@gmail.com Eta: 054-723-3863 etamorrisrealty.co.il 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.

Isaiah 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.² But it was

2. This is made clear in the tone and concerns of Adam Smith's book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

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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 Isaiah and the Sages, is emunah, meaning faithfulness and trust. Isaiah, in our Haftara, twice uses the phrase kirva ne'emanah, "faithful city." This is why the sages say that in heaven we will be asked, "Did you conduct your business b'emunah?" – 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.

Isaiah'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.

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PROBING THE PROPHETS

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

The Opening...or the Closing?

This Shabbat is commonly known as Shabbat Chazon, a name drawn from the opening word of the haftarah 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, which always falls on 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 haftarah 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

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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 haftarah 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" ("Artzechem 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 teshuvah, 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, Yeshayahu's condemnation of the nation's sacrificial service—"Why do I need your many offerings?" ("Lamah 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—"Yedeichem damim malei'u" ("Your hands are full of blood" [v. 15])—more accurately reflects the reign of King Menasheh, about whom the text states, "He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood" (Melachim B 21:16). However, Menasheh's reign began only after the conclusion of Yeshayahu's prophetic career!!!

In light of these discrepancies, Rav Yigal Ariel proposes that our haftarah was not the **beginning** of Yeshayahu'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 teshuvah, 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 Yehudah, 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 teshuvah 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 haftarah may have been one of Yeshayahu's **closing** prophecies—but it made for a perfect **beginning**.

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Tisha B'av and Chet Hameraglim

Parshat Devarim always coincides with Tisha B'av. There is a reference to the word "eicha" in the parsha, which reflects the "eicha" that we recite on the night of Tisha B'av. There is another reference in the parsha to Tisha b'av as well. Moshe rebukes Bnei Yisrael for the sin of the meraglim, which occurred on the 9th of Av. Since we cried in vain that night, we are destined to cry on that day for generations. That is the day that both Batei Hamikdash were destroyed, and other atrocities have transpired throughout history.

Rabbi Frand (Power of a Vort), offers an interesting insight about the connection between the sin of the *meraglim* and Tisha B'av. The sin of the *meraglim* was a form of lashon hara, as they spoke negatively about the promised land. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 104b) finds an allusion to *chet hameraglim* in *Megillat Eicha*. The pesukim in the first four chapters of *eicha* are written in the order of the *Aleph Bet*. There is one notable exception. In the second, third and fourth chapters, the letter "p" appears prior to the letter "y", although that is not the order of the *aleph bet*. This is symbolic that the *meraglim* said with their mouths (peh) what they had not seen

with their eyes (ayin).

Based on the above, perhaps Chazal are seeking to teach us that one of the problems that makes *lashon hara* so prevalent is the tendency to report things that we have not witnessed with our own eyes.

This explains a perplexing ruling with respect to *negaim*. When one is inflicted with *tzaraat*, commonly known as leprosy, it is understood as a spiritual affliction for having engaged in lashon hara. Whether a *nega* renders one impure (*tamei*) may only be determined by a Kohen. If the Kohen is not an expert, he can seek the advice of an expert, but the Kohen must **see** the *nega* himself. A blind Kohen cannot make such a determination. (Meiri Sanhedrin 34b).

Perhaps this is to highlight that there is a tendency to spread rumors that we have not witnessed with our own eyes and so the Kohen has to see the *nega*. A Kohen who cannot see cannot rule on any sort of nega, because if he would, he would pass judgment on something he has not seen with his own eyes- a key cause of the very transgression the nega is sent to eliminate. Obviously, even if we witness something we are not to spread lashon hara, but it is even more prevalent that rumors spread among people as hearsay, without ever witnessing the claim.

As we experience the mourning of Tisha B'av and reflect on the sin of the *meraglim*, we ought to undertake to at least take more care at avoiding spreading rumors about people when we have not witnessed the claims and seek to spread *ahavat Yisrael* so that we can merit a *geula shelema!*





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Honorable Honor

Parashat Devarim opens with Moshe Rabbeinu's address to Am Yisrael in the last month of his life. Rashi offers a curious commentary on the first verse which lists a number of locations. Malbim maintains that these were places, "asher diber Moshe el kol Yisrael," where Moshe Rabbeinu spoke to the people. (Devarim 1:1) Yet Rashi, drawing on the words of Chazal, asserts that these were places where Am Yisrael had sinned throughout their many years in the desert. Moshe Rabbeinu shared words of rebuke albeit by way of hinting to their sins to protect the people's honor. This approach is not commonly used; why did Moshe Rabbeinu choose to admonish the people in this way specifically at this point in time?

The Tosher Rebbe *zt"l* in *Avodat Avodah* offers several explanations. He notes that this was an opportunity for Moshe Rabbeinu to

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effect a full teshuvah for his angry response to the people at *Mei Merivah*, referring to them as "rebels" before striking the rock to give them water. Now Moshe Rabbeinu speaks with the people calmly, treating them with tremendous respect by hinting at their sins, instead of expressing his displeasure outright. This is indeed a lesson for all who find themselves in a position to rebuke others. Constructive criticism that emanates from love and shared in a gentle manner is much more effective and will be received in a more positive way.

The second approach offered by Tosher Rebbe focuses on the structure of Moshe Rabbeinu's remonstration. He begins using hints to refer to the people's sin and only later throughout the text do we find a more detailed description. These two stages of rebuke parallel two different aspects of our avodat Hashem. Some of the mitzvot we do can be classified in the realm of thought, such as loving and fearing Hashem, other mitzvot belong in the domain of action. The former, "hanistarot la'Hashem," are known only to Hashem, and the latter, "haniglot lanu u'levaneinu," are revealed to us and to our children. By first hinting to the people, Moshe Rabbeinu directs them to examine those matters that are within one's mind and heart. Then, speaking in a more expanded fashion, he calls for them to scrutinize their deeds and engage in teshuvah for both.

This idea is particularly relevant during the period of the Three Weeks, notes the Tosher Rebbe, when we recall the primary sin, *sin'at chinam*, baseless hatred, that led to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. We are told that the generation that lived prior to the *Churban Habayit* was involved in Torah learning and did acts of chessed, however, the inner workings of their hearts were sorely lacking. At this time, we must undertake to ensure that we rid ourselves and our communities of jealousy, anger and hatred.

Rav Chasman in *Ohr Yahel* remarks that Rashi's explanation gives us a positive message. "Mi'pnei kevodan shel Yisrael," Moshe Rabbeinu spoke in veiled terms to "protect the honor of the people." That is to say, the people were on such an elevated spiritual level that a mere reference to their sins was enough for them to engage in introspection and do teshuvah. When one has a healthy sense of self and kavod atzmi he has the self-awareness to welcome even subtle hints that can stimulate growth and change in a positive direction.







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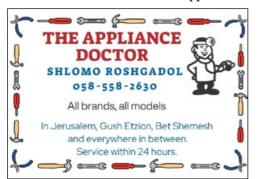




Chazon: A Tremendous Light

The grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, Rebbe Baruch of Medzhibozh, zy'a, was known as a passionate and fiery eved Hashem as well as for his intense personality and uncompromising strong will. While visiting some of his chassidim in the city of Zhitomir, Reb Baruch met a Yid who was panhandling for tzedakah outside of the shtiebel. This Yid was unkempt and dressed in tattered clothing, but Reb Baruch was drawn to him and showed him great affection and honor. Reb Baruch's oldest daughter had reached marriageable age, and the Rebbe was moved to propose a shidduch with the beggar's son. The beggar happily agreed, and the two drank a l'chaim to celebrate the engagement.

Zhitomir was in an uproar. How could it be that the Rebbe Reb Baruch, the grandson of the holy Baal Shem Tov, would propose to marry off his daughter to the son of a beggar? Did Reb Baruch not realize who he was making the *shidduch* with? One of the townsfolk approached



the Rebbe and shared the community's open secret: this fellow was reduced to begging for scraps, and his family was ostracized, as a result of what had occurred years earlier. The beggar had been an infamous thief, was caught, tied to a wagon and dragged across town, while crowds jeered and pelted him with garbage. Reb Baruch smiled and calmly replied, "My eye sight is obviously better than yours; there is a tremendous light emanating from this Yid; I know exactly what I am seeing."

Before heading home to Medzhibozh, Reb Baruch paid a visit to the elderly widow of the 'Ohr HaMeir', the tzadik Rav Zev Wolf of Zhitomir. When he entered, the *almanah* greeted him. "I heard about the wonderful *shidduch* you made; Mazal tov!" She went on to explain that years earlier, her late husband Reb Zev Wolf heard a ruckus coming from the street and went to the window to see what was happening. When he saw the Yid being dragged and publicly shamed, he said "Oy, he's an innocent man! He's covering for another Yid, the actual thief, who would not have survived the humiliation!"

"I asked my husband what to do. This is what he told me: 'There will come a time when a tzadik will pass through Zhitomir and make a *shidduch* with the son of this Jew; then the truth will come to light..."

Shabbos Chazon, 'the Shabbos of Vision', receives its name from the opening words

of this week's haftarah, *Chazon Yeshayahu....* The dreadful vision portrayed in these verses is of the first destruction of Yerushalayim as a result of the moral degeneration of Klal Yisrael at that time:

"An ox knows his owner and a donkey his master's trough; only Yisrael does not know Me (*Yeshayahu*, 1:3).... Your land is desolate; your cities burnt with fire (1:7).... Alas, the faithful city [Yerushalayim] has become a harlot. Once full of justice, in which righteousness would lodge, now she is filled with murderers..." (1:21)

This prophecy is bleak. Am Yisrael is mired in exile, the Holy City fallen from grace.

But this is the challenge and opportunity of Shabbos Chazon: to cultivate the deeper vision to see beneath surface appearances. Rebbe Akiva had 'vision' when he laughed to see foxes scampering across the destroyed Holy of Holies. When questioned, he said, as it were, 'My eyes must be better than yours... I know exactly what I'm seeing! The same Divine Spirit that predicted this destruction has also predicted the rebuilding!'

We often only see part of the story; indeed, our Sages tell us that on the Ninth of Av, while the Beis haMikdash is burning, the reality of Mashiach is being born.

The Chozeh of Lublin, zy'a, once said that he was able to see a future day when Jews will be sitting together around a festive Yom Tov table on the Leil Tishah B'Av, singing songs of praise to Hashem, and a festive prayer: "Va-titen lanu es yom chag haTishah b'Av ha-zeh...!" Until that great day when the tzadik of tzadikim will pass through our towns heralding the redemption, let us not wait to look beneath the degradation, woes and suffering of our times. Let us recognize the great light that lies within every one of us. There is a tremendous light right here, right now, that is just waiting to be revealed!





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BY RABBI EZRA FRIEDMAN

Director, The Gustave & Carol Jacobs
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Bishul Akum-Salmon and Sushi

Our Sages instituted a prohibition against eating kosher food that was cooked by non-Jews, a decree known as *Bishul Akum*. One of the determining factors in this prohibition is whether the food in question is commonly eaten raw. This qualification is subject to change based on evolving culinary practices and societal norms. As such, it is not unusual for certain foods that were once included in the prohibition to later be excluded, as their consumption raw becomes widespread.

A particularly interesting question that has arisen in recent years concerns sushi and sashimi. For generations, large fish such as salmon required *Bishul Yisrael* (cooking performed by a Jew) for them to be permitted. However, with the increasing global consumption of raw fish, especially in the form of sushi

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and other East Asian dishes, the question is raised: Has this shift in culinary trends affected the halachic status of cooked salmon prepared by a non-Jew?

THE HALACHIC SOURCE

It is clear from the *Gemara* (*Avodah Zara* 38:a) and early authorities that large fish fall under the decree of *Bishul Akum*. Historically, these fish were associated with formal meals and were not eaten raw. This ruling is codified in the *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 113:12) and upheld by later halachic authorities (*Pesakim U'teshuvot* 113:8).

Sushi is a traditional Japanese dish that includes raw fish, rice, vegetables and vinegar, often wrapped in nori (seaweed) sheets. Sashimi, on the other hand, consists solely of raw fish, such as salmon or other seafood. Today, sushi and sashimi have become global culinary staples, with thousands of restaurants serving them across all continents.

Despite their popularity, contemporary halachic authorities, including prominent OU *Poskim*, Rabbi Hershel Schachter and Rabbi Yisroel Belsky, have ruled unequivocally that the widespread consumption of sushi and sashimi does not alter the halachic status of fish in the context of *Bishul Akum*.

REASONING OF THE POSKIM

These *Poskim* provide several reasons for their stringent position. First, raw fish in sushi is rarely eaten in isolation; it is typically combined with other ingredients such as rice, vegetables, and seaweed. While there is halachic precedent (see *Magen Avraham* OC 203:4)

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suggesting that a food can be considered "eaten raw" even when consumed in combination—as with ginger mixed with sugar—the situation with sushi differs significantly. In the case of ginger, the sugar merely enhances the ginger. In contrast, sushi is appreciated as a composite dish in which the rice, vegetables, and other ingredients are as central as the fish itself.

In addition, in many sushi preparations, fish constitutes a minority of the dish—often less than 40%. As such, sushi does not provide sufficient halachic evidence that fish is commonly eaten raw. Consequently, this does not permit the consumption of cooked fish that was not prepared by a Jew.

Another reason for stringency is that most fish used in sushi are still more commonly consumed cooked, baked, fried, or grilled—rather than raw. The halachic qualification of "Ne'echal Chai" (eaten raw) is based on how the majority of the world consumes the food (see *Pri Chadash* Y.D. 113:3). Even in countries where sushi is widely available, raw fish remains a minority preparation compared to cooked methods. Therefore, these types of fish still fall under the decree of *Bishul Akum*.

WHAT ABOUT SASHIMI?

Sashimi, raw salmon or other seafood served without rice or vegetables might seem to present a stronger case for reclassifying fish as "commonly eaten raw." However, the halachic argument for stringency remains even stronger here. According to both OU *Poskim* and other major authorities (Responsa *Shevet HaLevi* 9:163), the limited popularity of sashimi

does not meet the threshold needed to consider salmon or other fish as "commonly eaten raw" in the context of *Bishul Akum*.

An important proof supporting this view is the halachic treatment of eggs. While some individuals do consume raw eggs, all early authorities and the *Shulchan Aruch* (113:14) rule that eggs are subject to *Bishul Akum*, since raw egg consumption is limited to a small minority. The same logic applies to fish such as salmon.

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10 Hillel St., Jerusalem | 36 Dam hamkabim st., Modiin 02-6255592, 050-3202909 Madar@netvision.net.il This Shabbat is known as Shabbat Chazon- the Shabbat of Vision. Most associate that this Shabbat is called Shabbat Chazon because of the Haftara we recite from the first chapter of Sefer Yeshayahu, of Yeshayahu's Vision of the Churban of Yerushalayim. However, these days leading up to Tisha B'Av are not simply a time for us to reflect on the past, and the pain and loss of the Batei HaMikdash, and the subsequent lengthy exile of the Jewish people, but also an opportunity for us to begin to perceive and envision a better tomorrow.

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

The Kedushat Levi, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev zy'a, suggested another slightly different interpretation of the significance of this Shabbat Chazon, this Shabbat of vision. On this Shabbat, explained Reb Levi Yitzchak, each and every one of us is shown a vision of the third Beit HaMikdash.

The *Lubavitcher Rebbe zy'a*, further explains that the revelation of *Shabbat Chazon* is of such intensity that although the *Beit HaMikdash* is shown "from a distance," to the extent that there are some who do not see it at all, nevertheless, this revelation is so powerful, that it becomes internalized within every single Jew. *Hashem* allows our souls a glimpse of a world of complete peace, a world which is empowered through the knowledge and awareness of the Divine presence, a world that has begun to see and actualize our innate potential for greatness and *kedusha*.

Yehi Ratzon, as we read the prophetic words of Yeshayahu on this Shabbat Chazon, may we indeed be moved to recall all the tragic events that led to our exile, and as we also reflect upon the many painful and frightening experiences of these past many months, may we simultaneously be inspired to envision the Beit HaMikdash, and everything it represents, and may we merit to do everything in our capability to move the world closer to that brighter tomorrow that we continue to long for. In essence, may we be blessed with the capacity to both envision and experience a world of peace, unity, and concern for one another.



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An Ancient Hatred and a Modern Mask: Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism

There are two sections of tochacha in the Torah—one in Parshat Bechukotai and one in Parshat Ki Tavo. Each details the punishments we face when we abandon Hashem's commandments and violate the covenant of Torah. Most of the bleak imagery depicts divine retribution. These punishments come from above—sometimes through natural forces like famine and plague, other times through human agents, such as invading armies.

One of the punishments described in the tochacha in Parshat Ki Tavo is antisemitism: יְּהְיִיתָ לְשַׁמָּה לְמָשָׁל וְלִשְׁנִינָה בְּכֹל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר ינהגּרָ ה׳ שׁמה"

"You shall become an object of astonishment, a parable, and a byword among all the nations where Hashem will lead you." (Devarim 28:37)

The oldest hatred in human history—the odious and irrational hatred of the Jew—is, in part, a divine response to our national disobedience. Had we never turned from Hashem's will, this ancient hatred may never have been born.

Yet, Chazal offer a slightly different perspective on antisemitism. The *Gemara* in *Shabbat* (88a) questions why the mountain was named Har Sinai. Of all the names associated with that mountain—such as *Chorev* or *Har*

HaElokim—why has *Sinai* become the one enshrined in Jewish memory and culture?

Playing on the phonetics of the word Sinai, Chazal teach that hatred of the Jewish people—sin'ah—was born at the moment of Matan Torah. This approach doesn't trace antisemitism to our sins, moral failings, or religious decline. Instead, it sees this hatred as embedded in the fabric of Jewish history—a hatred that would have existed even had we remained faithful to Hashem's will and preserved our sovereignty in our own Land.

Which is it? Is antisemitism a deep-rooted hatred woven into human history, or a divine punishment for our betrayals? Did it start at Sinai, or with the tragedies of Tisha B'Av? The truth is—both.

CHOSEN AND CHALLENGED

After two centuries of spiritual turmoil and moral chaos among the nations, Hashem chose our forefather. Through him—and through us—He tasked the building of a model nation to restore clear values lost to history. Our nation was meant to embody the twin principles of monotheism and morality. We are assigned to call a disoriented world to higher religious ground. Avraham was designated *Av Hamon Goyim*—not because he was the biological

father of humanity, but because he was meant to be its spiritual guide. We, in turn, were chosen to be a *mamlechet kohanim*—a kingdom of priests—charged with embodying the nobility of a life of covenant and commitment. We were meant to live the dignity of 613, so that the world might better appreciate the nobility of 7.

Our mission carries within it an inevitable truth: we would face rejection—if not outright disdain. No one welcomes a voice that challenges their lifestyle. No one embraces a nation that calls for moral introspection. We are the whistleblowers of history, and the easiest way to silence a message is to discredit the messenger. As bearers of a divine mandate to elevate humanity, we were fated to be resisted—if not reviled.

Hashem programmed this struggle into His historical pact with Avraham Avinu. When Avraham was told,

ָפִי־גֵר יִהְיֶה זַרְעֲרְּ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לְהֶם, וַעֲבָדָם וְעִנּוּ אֹתָם" ארבע מאוֹת שׁנה"

Hashem wasn't only referring to geographic exile in Egypt, but to the broader, ongoing condition of the Jewish people—called to live a godly life and tasked with educating humanity. We would always be the *ger*—the outsider, the different one. And as a people who stood for something different, we would always face *inu*'i—pain, affliction, and alienation.

Our *Avot* were aware of this built-in pattern of Jewish history. They embraced the nobility of the mission, while fully recognizing its fear-some cost. Even had we remained securely in our homeland, we still would have faced hostility and rejection. It is not merely the price of exile; it is the price of being chosen. This struggle was built into *Sefer Bereishit*, built into the Brit—and it began at Har Sinai.

THE NEW REALITY OF ANTISEMITISM

However, on Tisha B'Av, the complexion and



intensity of antisemitism radically changed. Our mission—to live a distinct life and to advance humanity—did not end with Tisha B'Av. We were cast out of Israel, condemned to roam the earth—from land to land, continent to continent. Yet our mission continued. The terms of engagement, however, shifted. We would now pursue our calling as guests in foreign lands. From that point on, the hostility toward us grew fiercer. This was a divine punishment, born from a toxic blend of factors.

Typically, when a foreign nation settles among an indigenous people, one of two paths unfolds. At times, the newcomers fully integrate—adopting the language and culture of the host land, marrying into the local population, and eventually blending entirely into the surrounding society.

Other times, ethnic groups choose to preserve their distinct identity by resisting integration. To protect their heritage and traditions, they live separately from the dominant culture, often withdrawing from modern society to maintain their way of life. The Amish in North America, the Aborigines in Australia, and the tribes of the Amazon jungle are all examples of communities that have chosen extreme cultural isolation over assimilation. They preserve their culture by living apart, maintaining a complete separation from the broader society to safeguard their unique way of life.

LIVING APART, LEADING FORWARD

The Jewish people don't fit neatly into either of these models. We are tenaciously different. Halacha sets us apart—in marriage and in food, in our weekly rhythm and yearly calendar. We mark time differently. Even when halacha doesn't mandate separation, an inner sense of cultural distinctiveness drives us to protect and preserve our unique Jewish identity. Bilam's prophecy—

"הן עם לבדד ישכון"

—"Behold, a nation that dwells apart"—has echoed throughout the centuries. An essential part of Jewish identity is the awareness that our distinct heritage must be preserved—and that we must not dissolve into the culture around us.

Yet, despite our extreme cultural insularity, we have always been active participants in the societies around us. For much of our exile, we were denied equal status—barred from owning land, attending universities, or rising to classic positions of socio-political prominence. Yet even when pushed to the margins, we profoundly influenced the cultures surrounding us.

Our way of life made us indispensable. We built strong families and cultivated powerful networks of trust among Jewish communities across the world. Through the discipline of Talmud Torah, we maintained high levels of literacy in a world where literacy rarely surpassed ten percent. Even while being discriminated against, we were uniquely positioned to energize local economies and drive intellectual advancement.

Over the past 250 years, since we were invited back into broader society, our influence on the human condition has grown exponentially. The Jewish mind has played a pioneering role in advancing science, politics, culture, and philosophy. If you are part of us, join us; if you choose to remain apart, do not

expect to influence the course of human events. The Jewish experience defies simple classification—we insist on being distinct, yet refuse to isolate ourselves from the flow of history and the shared human journey. This tension, both our burden and our strength, continues to shape our destiny.

When we betrayed Hashem, were evicted from our Land and sent into exile, our national mission continued—but under conditions that naturally invited hostility. This, too, was part of the divine punishment for our failure.

DO NOT ACOUIT

Antisemitism is woven into Jewish history and the sentence of galut. But this does not excuse the crime or lessen the guilt of those who commit it. Every individual chooses whether to hate, attack, or surrender to darkness. The fact that antisemitism is woven into the fabric of history does not absolve anyone of responsibility or moral culpability.

Additionally, it doesn't absolve us from the responsibility to confront antisemitism and work to contain it. Even if this powerful force is embedded in Jewish history and has flared throughout exile, we are still obligated to push back, to defend ourselves, and to limit its reach whenever and however we can.

There are two distinct models of antisemitism tied to the Jewish mission. The first exists independently of exile—rooted in the fact that we are disliked precisely because of our role challenging humanity's values. The second emerges during exile, where the unique pressures of living among other nations intensify the inherent tensions woven into Jewish history.

RETURN AND RESISTANCE

There is also a third model of antisemitism connected to the Jewish mission. When the people of Hashem return to the Land of Hashem, history shifts and quickens its pace.

The trajectory of this story moves toward a world illuminated by the presence of Malchut Shamayim. Those who oppose Hashem—whether consciously or unconsciously—oppose our return to Israel. In coming home to the Land of Hashem, we have stirred a new form of antisemitism—one cloaked as anti-Zionism but rooted in the same ancient rejection of Jewish destiny. This perspective on modern antisemitism centered on the State of Israel brings us to a crucial question: is anti-Zionism merely political dissent, or does it fundamentally embody antisemitism itself?

THREE REASONS THAT ANTI-ZIONISM=ANTISEMITISM

Many claim that anti-Zionism and antisemitism are distinct. Theoretically antisemitism is hatred of Jews, whereas anti-Zionism is opposition to a Jewish state. There are three responses to this crucial question.

Firstly, history has taught us a painful truth—humanity cannot be trusted not to persecute Jews. Time and again, it has regressed into hatred and violence. Without a Jewish state as a haven and refuge, Jewish survival is always at risk. So while anti-Zionism may not be antisemitism in theory, in practice, it often is. Denying the right of the Jewish state to exist is effectively denying the sustainability of the Jewish people.

Secondly, when anti-Zionism becomes

obsessive—when opposition to a Jewish state is wildly disproportionate—it begins to cross the line. When the same classic antisemitic tropes are recycled and weaponized against Israel, anti-Zionism becomes indistinguishable from antisemitism.

Thirdly, as stated above —at a metaphysical level—anti-Zionism resists the Jewish return to the Land that Hashem promised us. Our return fulfills our historical mission and advances a better destiny for all humanity. Those who oppose our return to Zion are, consciously or not, opposing our historical mission of bringing Hashem to our world.

At its core, opposition to our presence in Israel stems from the same root as antisemitism: a refusal to accept the presence of Hashem in this world, as reflected through our people and our way of life.

Antisemitism did not begin on Tisha B'Av; it intensified as we entered exile. Now, as we return from exile and herald the unfolding of history's final chapter, it has not vanished—it has merely reemerged under a new mask.



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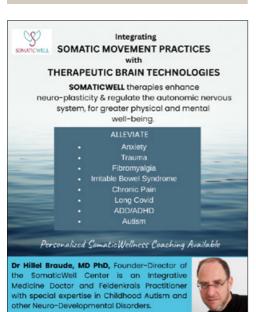
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HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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Restoring Leadership, Rebuilding a Nation

Each day, multiple times a day, in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei, we ask Hashem:

השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה ויועצינו כבתחלה, Restore our judges as at first and our advisers as at the beginning.

This request, which we often say automatically, is in fact a quotation from a pivotal verse in this week's haftorah — Chazon Yeshayahu, the third and final haftarah of calamity (Shalosh D'Paranuta) leading into Tisha B'Av. In perek 1, the Navi proclaims: האשיבה שופטיך כבראשונה ויועציך כבתחלה, אחרי כן יקרא לך עיר הצדק, קריה ויועציך כבתחלה, אחרי כן יקרא לך עיר הצדק, קריה *I will restore your judges as at first and your counselors as at the beginning; afterward you will be called the city of righteousness, a faithful city.* (Yeshayahu 1:26).

It's a vision of redemption — not through military strength or political success — but through just, wise, and righteous leadership.

In his commentary Rav Schwab on Prayer,

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Rav Shimon Schwab explains that this bracha is a tefillah for communal teshuvah. It follows our prayer to gather in the exiles, על בשופר and leads us toward national moral repair, על — through the return of leadership grounded in Torah values.

Rav Schwab distinguishes between *shoftim*, judges who ensure justice in society, governing relationships *bein adam l'chaveiro*, and *yoatzim*, spiritual advisors who guide us *bein adam laMakom*, in areas of faith, growth, and return. He emphasizes that *yoatzim* like Eliyahu and Elisha are needed to stir the soul, while *shoftim* right wrongs and build order. Both are vital. Together, they reflect the infrastructure of a Torah-driven society.

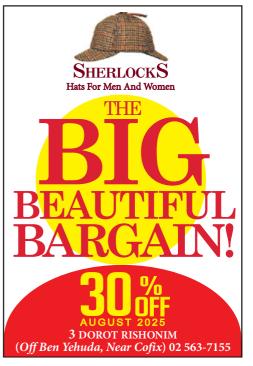
Rav Schwab draws our attention to the continuation of the very same bracha: הסר ממנו יגון — Remove from us sorrow and sighing. He notes that this phrase is not an unrelated plea but the natural outgrowth of the earlier request: השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה ויועצינו כבתחלה. The sorrow and sighing we experience — nationally and personally — are rooted in the absence of righteous leadership. Without the presence of trustworthy judges and inspired counselors, we are left confused, fragmented, and spiritually adrift. Rav Schwab teaches that it is precisely this vacuum that breeds despair. Thus, the tefillah for restored leadership flows directly into a

plea for emotional and communal healing — a recognition that without guidance, we grieve; with guidance, we can begin to heal.

As we enter the Nine Days, the words of the haftarah and of our daily tefillah meet in a shared vision: a rebuilt people requires rebuilt leadership. If we restore integrity and seek wise guidance, then we will fulfill the prophetic promise that concludes the verse השיבה שופטיך כבראשונה ויועציך כבתחלה אַרְיֵרִי הָשָּׁבָּיָה הַשִּׁבָּה שופטיך כבראשונה ויועציך - Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, a faithful city. The return of justice and counsel is not only the path to healing — it is the key to reclaiming who we are meant to be.

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RABBI AARON GOLDSCHEIDER

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The Avodah of Tisha B'Av

UNCEASING ANTICIPATION

A well-known Talmudic teaching states that we will be asked six questions by the heavenly court regarding our time on earth. A question asked of every Jew is: *Tzipita leye'shuah?* "Did

you await the redemption?" A Jew is to yearn for the Messianic days which is highlighted by the return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land. (Shabbat 31a)

Many have been puzzled in trying to locate the precise Torah source for the obligation of "awaiting the redemption." One would assume that the fundamental concept of anticipating

the redemption should be based on a particular verse in the Torah.

In the classic compilation of the 613 mitzvot by the *S"mak* (*Sefer Mitzvot Katan*) written in the 1300s by Isaac of Corbeil, he claims that the obligation of "awaiting the redemption" is contained in the first commandment of the Ten Commandments. "Just as we are to believe that God redeemed us from Egypt, we must also believe that God will redeem us at the end of days. The story of the Jews leaving Egypt is not meant to only recall what happened in the past but it also symbolizes what will happen in the future."

The eminent chief rabbi of the Old City of Jerusalem, Rav Avigdor Nevenzhal, suggested

that there is another source in the Torah that hints to the obligation to anticipate the redemption. When the Torah relays the law of offering the daily sacrifice, the pasuk says that this law requires *shmira*, a close watch

(Bamidbar 28:2). This is generally understood to mean that one must be scrupulous in observing these laws. Rav Nevenzhal, however, suggested that the word shmira has another meaning. The Hebrew word Shomer can also mean to await, anticipate, or pine for something. Thus, one can interpret this verse to mean that although the sacrifices cannot be brought at this

Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl

time without the Beit Hamikdash, we anxiously await its rebuilding.

One must await the redemption. (*Yerushalayim be'Moadeah*, *Bein Hameitzarim*, Nevenzhal pp. 86-87)

IMPULSIVE?...YES

Rav Yitzchak Mirsky, author of the popular series of sefarim *Hegyonei Halacha*, takes note of the fact that there are two distinct times in the Talmud when the Jewish people are criticized for being an *ama paziza*, an impulsive nation.

First, the story is told about the Talmudic sage Rava who was so immersed in his Torah study that he failed to notice that his fingers pressed beneath his legs began to bleed from the pressure. A certain heretic who witnessed this scene called him out and said,"You are a nation that is impulsive. You act without thinking. This undesirable trait of yours goes back to your response at Mt. Sinai when you accepted the Torah without even knowing what exactly you were accepting." (Shabbat 88a)

Little did this heretic realize that this episode was actually one of our nation's proudest moments. The people of Israel's overhasty acceptance of the Torah was a deep expression of love and profound devotion to Hashem.

The second time that the Talmud employs the expression *ama paziza* (impetuous nation)

is also when a heretic hurled this same insult toward an eminent talmudic sage. "When Rabbi Zeira ascended to Eretz Yisrael he could not find a ferry to cross the Jordan river. He took hold of a rope [that was strung across as a makeshift bridge] and crossed the Jordan." He was ridiculed by a certain heretic who said that you are an *ama paziza*, impetuous people. Rabbi

Zeira answered: Moshe and Aharon did not merit seeing the Land; now that I have the opportunity I will not miss the chance. (*Ketubot* 112b).

The love that a Jew has for Torah and for Eretz Yisrael is driven by a deep attachment to holiness and an attempt to experience true closeness to the Shechina.

In a well-known quip from Rav Kook, he once said that one of the fiercest kings which the Jewish people had to vanquish when entering the Land of Israel was *Melech Cheshbon*. In a brilliant play on words, Rav Kook said that one who wants to make aliyah has to be willing to conquer *Cheshbon* ("precise calculations"). Moving to Israel often entails leaving behind the financial stability that one had in the diaspora,

one's friends and family, and the familiar communities in which one was raised.

Eretz Yisrael will always be built by those dreamers who heroically act upon their idealism and with great zeal achieve what appears to be at times virtually impossible to attain.

MOSHE BARRED FROM BURIAL IN THE LAND

Rebbe Meir Yechiel Halstock (1889-1928), the Ostrovtzer Rebbe, cites a striking midrash in which Moshe Rabbeinu requested of God to allow his bones to be carried to the Land of Israel and be buried in its holy soil. Moshe argues that Yosef's bones were brought from Egypt and reinterred in the Land of Israel. Why

then should I not be honored in the same way?

The Almighty's answer to Moshe is quite powerful. Yosef, who associated himself with the Land is merited to be buried in the Land, but you, Moshe, did not identify yourself as a citizen of the Land of Israel. The midrash clarifies this statement: Yosef publicly declares that he had been stolen from the

Land of the *ivrim* (Jews). A reference to the Land of Israel.

Moshe Shmuel ben David Betzalel Hy"d

In contrast, says the Midrash, when Moshe ran away from Egypt and found himself at the well of Yitro, the daughters of Yitro identified him as an *ish mitzri*, a man from Egypt. Moshe heard this and did not correct them. Thus, God said, you failed to associate yourself with the Land of Israel and therefore you are not worthy to even be buried in the Land.

The Rebbe of Ostrovtzer, asked the following ostensibly obvious question regarding the teaching in this Midrash. How does the Midrash make the comparison between Yosef and Moshe? Yosef does in fact live in Israel and therefore he considered the Land of Israel to



be his home. Moshe never lived in Israel, How can the midrash hold him accountable for not associating with Israel as his home?

The Rebbe offered a penetrating answer: The Land of Israel was given to every descendant of Avraham. Every Jew should view residing outside of the Land as something impermanent. A Jew's authentic place of residence is only in the Holy Land. (Hegyonei Halacha, vol. 2, Mirsky, pp. 229-230).

"DON'T GO INTO GAN EDEN"

A Jew's yearning for redemption is a mitzvah which is ongoing. Yet, there are times when our collective desire to witness the final salvation is intensified. At this time, when the Nation of Israel is in the midst of a war, we continue to experience the excruciating pain of the loss of soldiers on a constant basis. Our hearts are torn and we raise our voice to Heaven with an intense prayer for geulah.



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A few weeks ago a young soldier by the name of Moshe Shmuel Noll Hy"d from Ramat Beit Shemesh was killed in Gaza. He was one of the five soldiers from the Netzach Yehudah Battalion in the Kfir Brigade who was killed in the incident. Moshe was 21 years old.

The family's rabbi offered a heartwrenching eulogy at the burial. The rav, Rebbe Kalman Shapira is the grandson of Reb Yeshaya Shapira zt"l who was known as the Admor HaChalutz and he was one of the most illustrious students of Ray Kook.

The Rebbe first shared that Moshe's mother relayed to him that she wanted her beloved son to be buried on Har Herzl. The Rebbe said that he said to her, "I know exactly why you want him to be buried on Har Herzl. It is because it is from that spot that all the holy souls will first rise during Techiyat Hameitim, the Resurrection of the Dead."

The Rebbe continued his eulogy by describing Moishy's soul ascending to the heavens and how all the gates will open and hosts of angels will accompany him to the entrance of Gan Eden. The angels will lead him to the sublime place that is prepared for him.

And then the Rebbe cried out with terrible shouts: "Moishy, don't go in! Don't you dare agree to enter Gan Eden! If you go on you will forget us. Please, tell them you are not willing to enter until the Holy One, Blessed be He, answers your prayers and and ours, that the Geulah will finally come. Moishy, I know you well, you are a strong man, don't go in!"

The sentiments expressed by the Rebbe of Aish Kodesh in Ramat Beit Shemesh can be understood within the framework of the Chassidic tradition which at times allows speaking forcefully to God and demanding heavenly compassion. A number of powerful examples of this can be found in remarkable stories about

Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov, lovingly known as the "Defender of Am Yisrael." The following exquisite prayer uttered by Rebbe Levi Yitzchak captures this distinct approach:

"Master of the World, what does it take to rebuild the Holy Temple in Jerusalem? Some iron, some stones, and some water. Well we have plenty of that.

Iron? Look at the ironclad resilience of your people. We have been tested time and again, and we have remained steadfast and strong like iron. So many have tried to force us to bend our ways and we have not bent an iota.

Stone? Father in heaven, You know that there have been those of us who have not been able to withstand the suffering, and their hearts have turned to stone. They have tried, but the challenges have been too great; their soft and sensitive hearts have been transformed into stone.

Water? Oy, dear God, how many tears have been shed throughout our long and bitter exile? How many broken hearts have cried rivers and oceans of tears? How many tears have been spilled over the tragedies of our brothers and sisters?

So You see, dear Lord, You have everything you need. Then what are you waiting for?"

(Touched By Tears, A Kinnos Companion, Spero, p. 284)

In our prayers for *Geulah* this Tisha Be'Av let us have in mind the sacred soul of Moshe Shmuel ben David Betzalel Hy"d together with all those who sacrificed their lives for *Klal Yisrael*.

May the *Geulah Shlema* come quickly in our day. Amen. ■



Rabbi Goldscheider's most recent OU Press Publication, "Torah United" on the weekly Parsha, can be ordered directly from Rabbi Goldscheider at aarong@ouisrael.org at a special price for Torah Tidbits readers.

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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

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The Transition from Shabbat into Tisha B'av

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Question: Could you please explain how to handle the transition from Shabbat into Tisha B'Av (when it falls on *Motzaei Shabbat*) regarding *se'uda shlishit*, *Havdala*, and changing clothes?

Answer: Se'uda shlishit: The baraita, quoted in Ta'anit 29a says that one may eat as extravagant a meal as he wants on Shabbat even if Tisha B'Av falls on that day or the next. The Tur (Orach Chayim 552) cites customs that one is allowed and would do best to curtail the Shabbat meal. This is especially so at se'uda shlishit, which is, in effect, the se'uda hamafseket. However, these considerations are countered by the need to avoid displaying mourning on Shabbat. Therefore, there are no real restrictions, even at se'uda shlishit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 552:10). However, the mood should somewhat reflect the coming of Tisha B'Av, as long as it does not bring on clearly noticeable changes (Mishna Berura 552:23). One important halachic requirement is that one must finish eating before sunset (Rama ad loc.).

Havdala: One says Havdala in Shemoneh Esrei. Havdala over a cup of wine is done after Tisha B'Av (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 556:1). Despite these facts, if one forgot to

mention *Havdala* in *Shemoneh Esrei*, he does not repeat *Shemoneh Esrei*. Rather, the declaration of *HaMavdil*, which enables one to do actions that are forbidden on Shabbat, suffices (Mishna Berura 556:2). Unlike *Havdala* during the Nine Days, where we try to give the wine to a child rather than an adult (Rama, Orach Chayim 551:10), after Tisha B'Av, an adult can freely drink the *Havdala* wine (Mishna Berura 556:3). The *beracha* on *besamim* is not recited this week because it is always recited only on *Motzaei Shabbat*, and on Tisha B'Av it is not appropriate because it is supposed to serve as a pleasure that revives the soul.

The beracha on the fire is specific to Motzaei Shabbat, is not a pleasure, and does not require a cup. Therefore, the *minhag* is to recite it in shul toward the end of davening, before the reading of Eicha (Mishna Berura 556:1). 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 beracha on the fire, which is not directly related to Shabbat and thus is a regular time-related mitzva, from which women are exempt (Bi'ur Halacha 296:8). Therefore, if one's wife will not be in *shul* at the time of the *beracha*, it is better for the husband not to fulfill the *mitzva* at that time, but to make the *beracha* on the fire at a time that his wife can hear it (Shemirat Shabbat

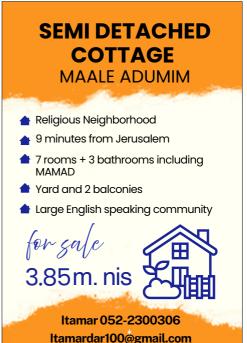
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K'hilchata 62:(98)).

Taking off shoes: As we mentioned, one may not do a noticeable act of mourning before Shabbat is over. While finishing to eat before sunset or refraining from washing need not be noticeable, taking off shoes is. There are two minhagim as to when to take them off: 1) One waits until after Shabbat is out, says HaMavdil, and then changes clothes and goes to shul. One can do so a little earlier than the regular time listed for Shabbat being out, which is usually delayed a little bit beyond nightfall to allow for a significant adding on to Shabbat at its end. The exact time is not clear and depends on the latitude of one's location. It is advisable to start Ma'ariv a little late in order to allow those who take this approach to make it to shul (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 62:40; Torat HaMo'adim 9:1). (If the rabbi has ruled that everyone should take the following approach, 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* (preparations

for after Shabbat). However, if one uses them somewhat in *shul* before Shabbat is out, he can bring *sefarim* with him on Shabbat (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata ibid. 41).



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When Tisha B'Av Begins on Motzei Shabbat: A Practical Guide

As this year the fast of Tisha B'Av begins Motzei Shabbat, there are a number of unique laws and customs observed. Our hope and fervent prayer is that we see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah Chap. 8, and this year we will be feasting instead of fasting. In the meantime, below are some guidelines and practical tips to help you navigate this year's differences.

EREV SHABBAT

As we abstain from meat and wine during the Nine Days, one should be careful not to eat any meat while cooking for Shabbat. In order to ensure that the food is properly seasoned, one may briefly taste a meat dish and then spit it out.

It is permitted to bathe or shower for Shabbat in cooler water than normal and for



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a shorter duration than usual. Sefardim may bathe without restriction.

While there are varying customs, according to most authorities one may wear his clean Shabbat clothing as usual.

As it is prohibited to prepare on Shabbat for Motzei Shabbat, it is advisable to prepare one's Megillat Eichah, Kinot, stools and chairs for sitting, and one's 'Tisha B'Av shoes' before Shabbat begins.

SHABBAT CHAZON

On Shabbat, there are no public displays of mourning. Meat and wine may be enjoyed and it is permissible to sing Zemirot at the Shabbat table.

In the afternoon, some have the custom to limit their study of Torah to areas of Torah permitted to be studied on Tisha B'av itself, like Eicha, passages from the Nevi'im, Talmud and Midrash about the destruction of the Temple, or the laws of mourning. For this reason, some skip Pirke Avot following Minchah this week. However, many authorities are lenient and permit one to study whatever area of Torah he wishes.

This year, the Seudah HaMafseket, traditionally a mournful meal, is replaced by Seudah Shlishit. At Seudah Shlishit, one may eat meat

and drink wine and have a feast fit for a king, "like King Solomon in his day," even if one does not typically serve meat and wine at the third meal on a regular Shabbat. Birkat HaMazon may be recited with a Zimmun. One should be careful to stop eating and drinking before sunset (7:39pm in Jerusalem).

At sunset, the fast and restrictions of Tisha B'Av begin, with the exception of wearing leather shoes and sitting on a regular chair, which are permitted until the departure of Shabbat (8:15pm in Jerusalem).

MOTZEI SHABBAT

At the conclusion of Shabbat, one says "Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodeh L'chol," removes his leather shoes, and changes into his 'Tisha B'Av shoes' and weekday clothes, before returning to the synagogue for Ma'ariv and Eichah. In some communities, the custom is to remove one's leather shoes at the beginning of Ma'ariv, following Barchu.

Havdallah is not recited on Motzei Shabbat. Instead, a candle is lit and the blessing of *Borei Me'orei HaEish* is recited at home or in the synagogue, before the reading of Eichah.

HAVDALLAH

Havdallah is recited Sunday Night at the conclusion of the fast (8:03pm in Jerusalem), without spices or a flame. One should refrain from eating or drinking before making Havdallah. (One who must eat on Tisha B'Av for health reasons recites Havdallah prior to eating).

As we abstain from meat and wine until the 10th of Av at midday, the custom of some is to give some of the wine from Havdallah to a child who does not know how to properly mourn for Jerusalem. If no child is available, one may drink the wine himself. Alternatively, one may use grape juice or a popular beverage, ideally one which contains alcohol like

beer, but beverages like coffee, tea and soft drinks are also acceptable. Other sources permit drinking the wine.

May we merit to properly mourn this year so that soon we no longer have to mourn, as our sages promise (*Ta'anit* 30b), "All who mourn for Jerusalem will merit to see her in her joy." And may we see the Final Ge'ulah, speedily in our days. *Amein*.

Shimshon HaKohen Nadel lives and teaches in Jerusalem, where he serves as mara d'atra of Har Nof's Kehilat Zichron Yosef and rosh kollel of the Sinai Kollel.

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Wake Up and Dream

The Kotzker Rebbe once said, "Cry on Tisha B'Av. And if you can't bring yourself to cry, then cry over the fact that you can't cry."

That line always moved me.

Personally, I don't struggle to cry. I cry watching children receive their first siddur. I cry at army swearing-in ceremonies, at weddings during the bedeken, and when I hear a new song brimming with pride for our land. I cry for our personal loss, and I cry for our national one. I cry on Yom HaZikaron and I cry on Yom HaAtzmaut. I cry when we sing מארי כהן on Yom Kippur, envisioning the Kohanim completing their sacred mission.

Emotion comes easily to me—tears of pain, tears of joy, tears of longing.

Call me a crybaby. I'm okay with that.

For these things, I weep — על אלה אני בוכיה. I cry for those who aren't crying. Who aren't shedding tears of longing for the life we could have. Who aren't mourning what we once had and lost.

Is anyone else convinced that this upcoming fast of mourning will turn into a feast of

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celebration (as told by the prophet Zachariah)? That this long, painful, and exhausting exile will end? That the distractions, illusions, and false comforts of materialism will fall away, and we will finally begin to live a life of clarity, inner peace, and deep connection to the Divine?

The prophet Yeshayahu promised: "לא יישא גוי חרב, ולא יילמדו עוד מלחמה"—אל גוי חרב, ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה. Peace will reign. And "מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים "שלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים"—the world will be filled with the knowledge of God like water covers the sea. There will be healing. Redemption. Truth revealed. Hospitals transformed into birthing centers. Leaders filled with אלוקים a Godly spirit. Priests returning to sacred service. A world without grief. Without funerals. Without pain. A world of deep connection to the true Source, one of true joy, tranquility and Godliness.

Sometimes I dream of the details. Are we preparing—physically and spiritually—for that day? What if, instead of sirens warning of rockets, we heard shofar blasts announcing salvation? What if the knock on the door wasn't from soldiers delivering devastating news, but messengers inviting us to witness the crowning

It seems lofty—even fantastical. But it will be.

What if instead of rushing to a safe room, we ran to a mikvah, a place of cleansing and rebirth? What if pain gave way to extreme joy? What if all the suffering we've endured—both

of Mashiach?

personal and national—would become so clear it's simply preparing us for this very moment?

Maybe, just maybe, if we allowed ourselves to dream boldly enough, we'd begin to truly mourn what we've lost—and work, full steam ahead, toward the life we're meant to regain.

על אלה אני בוכיה.

When I cry for my son Binyamin Hyd—when I ache to see his bright smile, to feel his strong embrace—I imagine him watching me from the higher realms. He knows the truth. He sees the bigger picture. He wants so badly to comfort me, to tell me it's all going to be glorious, that we'll be together again. But he can't. He's in Olam Haba, and I'm still down here.

That pain, I've come to realize, is perhaps a taste of Tza'ar HaShechinah—the sorrow of the Divine Presence. Hashem, kiv'yachol, longs to redeem us, to hold us, to wipe away our tears. But we are distant. He is hidden. The world we once had—a world of direct connection, of revealed glory in the Beit HaMikdash—is gone.

On Yom HaZikaron, I saw fires rage through our beautiful land, turning lush forests into skeletons of ash. I was broken—not just by the physical damage, but by what it represented. Eretz Yisrael is how Hashem "speaks" to us. When it flourishes, we know He is smiling upon us. But when it burns, something deeper is being communicated.

And then, during the recent 12-Day War, we saw miracles. Buildings were struck—but mostly lives were spared. It was Hashem, perhaps, choosing to destroy structures, not souls.

Both are forms of churban. Sometimes Hashem destroys the physical—trees, homes, hospitals—but never His nation. He destroyed His home, a dwelling place for His Shechinah. But not His beloved children.

Now we're left to rebuild the connection.

To find God in a world without the Beit

HaMikdash. To search through the thick clouds of exile, through the noise of a distracted world. We move through an atmosphere that dulls the soul—filled with conversations that shrink our vision rather than lift it.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

We can choose to be dreamers. We can surround ourselves with the voices of visionaries. We can dare to want more. Because if we dream it, if we yearn for it, we'll begin to act on it. And if we, as a nation, cry for closeness with Hashem—if we truly beg and plead for His return—He will not refuse us.

So ahead of this Tisha B'Av: Stop sleeping. עורו ישנים משינתכם. Wake up from your

אווי ישנים משינונכם. wake up from yo slumber — Wake up, and dream.

Open your eyes and envision. Then we can truly mourn what we've lost—and beg for what can be.

Because that's the greatest longing of all:

Not just to cry over the past—

But to believe in the future.

May we be worthy to witness, with our own eyes:

עין בעין יראו בשוב ה' ציון.

With tearful hope,

Amen

The **Airleys** have built **Beit Binyamin**, a retreat center in Tzfat for those directly affected by the war. Soldiers, Zaka members, security forces, bereaved families and widows can come for respite, relaxation and rejuvenation. For more information and to donate, visit <u>Beitbinyamin.org</u>

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לעילוי נשמת מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

Dear Aleeza.

One theme of yours is that Hashem has a plan for everyone, and every "no" brings one closer to his/her "yes," closer to his/her bashert. That's very comforting and inspiring, but the fact is that not everyone gets married. So aren't people right to worry that they'll end up alone?

Thank you for your thoughtful message and for being a part of our community. You're right to feel concerned, especially when we hear that not everyone we know ends up getting married. Let's take a moment to unpack this together.

Married or unmarried we each have a role in this world. And we all spend portions of time in life without a partner.

As for the journey of love and relationships it can be filled with ups and downs, and these experiences are part of a divine plan.

While everyone has the potential for a soulmate, not everyone gets married. Our free will plays a significant role here. We have the power to make choices that align with our values, dreams, and life circumstances. Also, sometimes, timing, personal growth, or even life events can influence our marriage potential. It's essential to remember that just because someone doesn't marry, it doesn't mean they are destined for loneliness. Many find fulfillment in various forms of relationships, friendships, and community connections that enrich their lives and bring joy.

It's also important to acknowledge that love can manifest in countless ways. Marriage is just

one of them. Many people find happiness, purpose, and companionship in friendships, family bonds, and other meaningful connections.

And yet, someone seeking a life partner will be disappointed if they don't marry. Remember, as long as we are alive our story is still being written.

No one ages out of love.

At any moment a persons story or circumstances can change.

Although not everyone gets married, my advice is never to give up on the potential of meeting the One. And simultaneously, live your best life and become someone who fulfills their potential in this world through their every action. Those two concepts are not mutually exclusive.

May you find comfort in knowing the Jewish concept that the first soulmate is between our body and soul. The second soulmate is between us and another.

Aleeza ■



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Cartoonist's note: The moral of this comic is based on a Midrash, explained by Rav Azriel Ariel, but in truth, it's the story of my life in general, and this weekly comic strip in particular: I'm not a naturally funny person (albhough Tim blessed with a very with Dad, and several with underson.). <u>Every single week!</u> I find myself paralysed with helplessness at the impossible task of writing a new comic for this wonderful publication, my mind a complete and utter blank. Use lost count of times! I've been on the verge of informing the editorial that there's no chance of a cartoon this week, it's just too impossible. And I turn to the Almighty and, in a few simple words, I ask for His Help, and every week! I'm astounded by the results He Grants me! I can't honestly take credit for the humour or devernees, all I can do is humbly and gertly recommend the Method. Try it, it works! - Netanel







DAFNA ERLBAUM CHAI GIRLS SUMMER MADRICHA

DOUBLE VISION, DANGEROUS OUTCOME

Parshat Devarim opens with Moshe's farewell speech, where he reviews the major events that took place during Bnei Yisrael's journey through the desert. One of the most intriguing retellings is the story of the *meraglim* (spies). We first read about it in Parshat Shelach, but Moshe's version in Devarim is noticeably different. And as we know, the Torah never repeats a story without purpose. When we see different versions of the same event, it is a signal to stop and ask: what is the deeper message?

In Shelach, the mission seems like a tour of the land. The spies are told to examine the soil, the cities, the people, and the fruit. It feels like an inspirational journey, meant to excite the nation about the beauty and potential of Eretz Yisrael. The command appears to come directly from Hashem.

In Devarim, the tone shifts. The initiative to send spies seems to come from the people. The goal is not to admire the land, but to strategize its conquest. Moshe describes a more tactical mission, focused on roads, defenses, and military planning.

Rav Elchanan Samet offers a powerful explanation. He suggests that these are actually two different missions. The first, initiated by God, was meant to build love and connection to the land. Later, the people requested a second

mission for practical, military reasons. Wanting to be efficient, Moshe decided to use the same group of leaders for both tasks.

But this decision led to disaster. The spies returned with a mixed message that caused panic and despair. The confusion of having two different goals wrapped into one mission created room for misinterpretation and fear. What began with good intentions ended in tragedy.

There's a powerful lesson here about the importance of clarity in our intentions and roles. Sometimes, trying to "kill two birds with one stone" might seem smart or efficient, but it can actually lead to confusion, blurred focus, and unintended consequences. When our goals are muddled, it becomes easy for our mission to be misinterpreted or manipulated. The Torah reminds us that good intentions require good structure. Our job is to stay focused, define our goals clearly, and make sure that the way we pursue them stays aligned with their original intent.

Shabbat Shalom!



IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

In this *parasha*, Moshe is criticizing *Bnei Yisrael* and recounting their major mistakes—*chet ha-meraglim*, *chet ha-ma'apilim*, their lack of faith, and more. *Devarim* is the *sefer* that contains Moshe's farewell speech to *Bnei Yisrael*.

It takes place during the last few days of his life and serves as a *sikum*—a summary of everything that happened on their journey. But he's not just talking *to Bnei Yisrael*—he's challenging them.

The *pasuk* uses the word "*diber*" instead of "*amar*" because it's not just casual speech—it's *tochacha*, rebuke. Moshe doesn't just say "You did this and that wrong"; he also teaches them how to fix their mistakes and grow from them. He shows them how to become better people and want to be part of *Bnei Yisrael*—something greater than themselves.

In the *Haftarah* from *Yeshayahu*, we see something similar. *Yeshayahu* criticizes *Bnei Yisrael* for their *chata'im* (sins), but he also encourages them to do *teshuva*. If they return to Hashem, Hashem will redeem them.

From this, we can learn how to make ourselves better during the Three Weeks. *Tisha B'Av* and *Shivah Asar B'Tammuz* are not just tragic dates—they are learning opportunities. Yes, they are full of sadness, but we must learn how to respond, grow, and transform our pain into growth.

When something difficult happens, we can choose how to react. Instead of seeing it only as a loss, we can use it to grow and become better. That's a powerful part of life—learning from our mistakes and turning them into stepping stones.

May we all be zocheh to take the hard situations and bad choices in life and turn them into a source of growth.

בעזרת השם שהמשיח יבוא במהרה ונתראה בבית

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