



I am sure many of you heard the news this week that a Year 12 student at our College tested positive for Covid-19. First and foremost, I wish the student a speedy Refuah Shleima, together with all those requiring Refuah at this time.

At times of uncertainty, we turn to our leaders for a sense of security and direction. Our Principal and co-Chairmen deserve credit for their regular and clear communications with the school community this week, and indeed throughout these challenging months. When Gerard Max and Ari Schachna assumed their roles as co-Chairmen, who in their wildest dreams would have imagined that a significant part of their role would involve responding to a global pandemic?

There are a number of significant overlaps between my role and the roles of the lay leaders in our organisation. We serve the same clientele, need to respond to similar challenges, and work towards a shared vision. However, there is one clear difference between us. My communal work is my profession. Their communal work is in addition to their professional lives, and their extremely important contributions should never be taken for granted.

In a week that has shown the resilience and strength of our teachers, students and staff, it was great to hear that Year 10 student, Tahni Paluch, came top in the Victorian finals in the Mikolot public speaking competition. She will now represent Leibler Yavneh College in the Grand Final, competing against students from schools across the country. When Tahni was a Captain of our Primary School, she introduced me at numerous public events. This week, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Tahni as our guest "Seudah Shlishit" contributor. In addition to her public speaking talent, I commend her for the inclusion, empathy and respect of her winning speech.

Shabbat Shalom



Rabbi Mirvis

"Hashem our Go-d spoke to us by Chorev, as follows: 'Enough for you dwelling by this mountain'" (Devarim 1:6).

With these words, Moshe begins his last will and testament (which continues until the conclusion of the book of Devarim), five weeks prior to his death. Our commentators explain that Chorev refers either to Mount Sinai or the area near Mount Sinai where the people dwelt at the time of receiving the Torah.

What is meant by the phrase, "Enough for you dwelling by this mountain"? Whereas Rashi understood this as praise for the achievements of the Israelites in the wilderness, the Kli Yakar saw these as words of rebuke, providing two separate explanations.

Firstly, he explains that the Israelites did not want to move on to the Promised Land but preferred to settle permanently by the mountain:

"When you go from Mount Chorev, the place where you learnt Torah, turn your faces to the land - the place of keeping Torah, for learning is not what is most important, but action" (Kli Yakar, Devarim 1).

Dwelling by Har Chorev, the Israelites felt they were leading ideal lives. They were sustained miraculously with water from the ground (Miriam's well) and food from the sky (manna). They benefited from the presence of the Shechina (Divine presence) and without concerns for making a livelihood or building a country, they were able to dedicate to their entire lives to studying Torah at the foot of the mountain where Torah was given. They were therefore rebuked to remind them of their role in the world – "learning is not what is most important, but action".

Secondly, the Kli Yakar brings the opinion of those who claim the complete opposite: "Others explain that he blamed them for running away from Har Chorev like a child running away from school" (Kli Yakar, Devarim 1).

According to this explanation, the Israelites were not rebuked for wishing to stay at Har Sinai, but rebuked for running away too quickly! By hastily escaping like children at the end of a day at school, they displayed a lack of appreciation for the Torah and Mitzvot they received and were therefore deserving of rebuke.

These two contradictory explanations combine to provide us with very strong guidance. On the one hand, the ideal is not to dedicate our lives solely to learning Torah. Rather, we must focus on keeping Torah as well, bringing Torah into our daily lives. At the same time, when engaging in other activities, we must not run away from studying Torah, but maintain a deep appreciation for the value of learning.

By internalising these messages, may our learning add meaning to our actions, and may our actions add meaning to our learning.



Reb Leor Broh

Riddle for Devarim

Where is the name "אליהו" hinted to in the Parsha?

Answer to Last Week's Riddles:

Mattos: We are not persons, animals or plants, but you'll find nine of us in one verse. What are we? And in which verse?

Answer: There are 9 places in Transjordan that the tribes of Reuven and Gad found suitable for their cattle.

They are all listed in 32:3.

עֲטֹרוֹת וְדִיבֵן וְיַעֲזָר וְנִמְלָה וְחִשְׁבֹּן וְאֶלְעָלָה וְשִׁגְם וְנָבו וְבָעֵן:

Maasei: Find six consecutive verses containing verbs, all with the same root.

Answer: In Chapter 35, verses 16 to 21, every verse has a words/s with the root מות.
(oops, that sentence had a dead end)

Let's finish instead with the closing verse of the Haftorah for Devarim:-

צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפַּט תִּפְדֶּה וְשָׁבִיָּה בְצִדְקָה

**SHABBAT
THOUGHT**



Dr Michal Kaufman, Rosh Midrasha

Mourning on Tisha B'Av

Rav Joseph Karo, in the Shulchan Aruch 551:1 rules that משנכנס אב מעטין בשמחה, when Av begins we lessen our happiness. Starting today, on Rosh Chodesh Av, we are not only

lessening our happiness we are also intensifying our mourning over the destruction of the two temples.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l, in his article *Avelut Yeshanah and Avelut Hadashah: Historical and Individual Mourning*, notes that the three week period between the 17 of Tammuz and the 9 Av, mirrors the mourning that a child observes when losing a parent. Tisha B'Av is like the seven-day period of shiva when the sense of mourning is most intense. The "Nine Days" beginning with Rosh Chodesh Av are similar to the period of shloshim (30 days of mourning), and from the Seventeenth of Tammuz until Rosh Chodesh Av we observe laws of mourning similar to the twelve month period of aveilut.

The Rav goes on to note that the order of observances is reversed. The child who loses a parent observes shiva first, then shloshim and then the twelve month period of aveilut, while during the Three Weeks we first observe the aveilut of the twelve month period, then shloshim, and only on Tisha B'Av do we keep to the restrictions of shiva.

Why is the order changed when we mourn the loss of the Beit HaMikdash?

The Rav notes: "The Gemara (Yevamot 43b) distinguishes between avelut hadashah and avelut yeshanah, "new" mourning and "old" historical mourning - or, expressing the same thought in a different idiom, between avelut de-yahid and avelut de-rabbim, private and national-communal mourning.

The first, avelut hadashah, is caused by a death or disaster which strikes a family or an individual. It is a primordial, instinctual, spontaneous response of man to evil, to the traumatic confrontation with death, to the impact of catastrophe and disaster. It is an existential response, not one that evolves by the application of artificial stimuli.

The second category, avelut yeshanah, is due to a historic disaster that took place 1,900 years ago. This category is the handiwork of man. There is no spontaneous reaction to some new event which has just transpired, for nothing new has happened which should justify grief. The avelut is a result of recollection of events." (*Avelut Yeshanah and Avelut Hadashah: Historical and Individual Mourning*)

With avelut yeshanah, memory becomes something more than remembering past events, it becomes experiential in nature. We do not just recollect the past – we re-experience the events of the past. On Tisha B'Av, while reciting Kinnot, "We say On this night, בליל זה, my Temple was destroyed." The destruction of the Temple occurred nearly 2000 years ago, yet for us, we feel as if they happened tonight.

The Halachot of the Three weeks, with their gradual intensification helps prepare us to re-experience the loss of the Bet Mikdash and the galut of Am Yisrael.

On the night of Tisha B'Av we sit on the floor, we mourn we read the book of Lamentations and recite Kinnot, our morning is intense. The following day, at chatzot (midday) we get up from the floor, men put on tefillin and recite the brachah of Nachem, asking G-d to console Jerusalem and us.

How are we able to contemplate such a consolation? Rav Soloveitchik explained that “our comfort lies in the fact that Hashem took out his wrath on the Beit HaMikdash and not on the Jewish people (see Tosafot, Kiddushin 31a). Paradoxically, it is precisely at the time of the mincha prayer, when the Beit HaMikdash started to burn (Ta’anit 29a), that we feel comforted because that act of destruction was really a demonstration of love. It showed that Hashem wants the Jewish people to survive; he wants them to flourish and ultimately to reunite with Him. If Hashem punishes us only out of love, like a father disciplines his child, then there is hope for the future. We can look forward to the day of reconciliation when Hashem will return to us and reveal His glory to the entire world.” (Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg - What Mourning Means: Reflections of Rav Soloveitchik zt”l on the 3 Weeks and Tisha B’Av)

(איכה ה:כא) “השיבנו ה'אלֵינוּ ונשוב [וְנִשְׁוֵבָה] חֲדָשׁ יְמֵינוּ כְּקֵדָם.



Rabbi James Kennard

Parashat Devarim opens the new sefer, which is, in many respects, an elucidation of the mitzvot (some new, some previously listed in other Chumashim) and the overarching need for the Jews to live in Israel in accordance with the Torah. Indeed, almost at the very start of the parasha, we read:

(ה) בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה בָּאֵר אֶת הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לְאָמֵר.
דְּבָרִים א:ה

Across the Yarden, in the land of Moav, Moshe began to explain this Torah. (Devarim 1:5)

Why did Moshe commence this explanation at this time?

The **Ibn Ezra** (12th century Spain) explains that Moshe was speaking to the new generation, that arose after the previous one died out during the forty years in the desert. Moshe therefore took it upon himself to tell the children about the deeds (and misdeeds) of their parents' generation.

Rabbenu B'chaya (14th century Spain) also observes that Moshe was speaking to a new generation, but he had a prophetic rather than a didactic purpose. Nearly forty years before, the previous generation had stood at Sinai and heard the Aseret Ha-dibrot from Hashem Himself. Their children, who had not then been born, had only heard of these mitzvot from

their parents, and now Moshe gave this tradition prophetic authority as he repeated the Aseret Ha-dibrot (Devarim 5:6-17) and the other mitzvot.

The **Sforno** (16th century Italy) says that this moment was significant not in relation to the past, but to the future. Moshe, knowing that he was about to die and that the Jewish people would complete their journey into the land of Israel without him, took this opportunity to strengthen their commitment to Torah and their rejection of idolatry, since he would not be present to guide them as they create their new society.

We have translated באר as “explain” - an interpretation supported by **Targum Onkelos** (1st century Israel) who uses the Aramaic “פרש” and **Ibn Ezra**, who rephrases the verse as “משה להחל לפרש”.

(The alternative translations of הוֹאִיל are beyond the scope of this shiur).

However **Rashi** (11th century France) understands Moshe’s “explanation” implied by the word באר in a very particular way:

באר את התורה - בשבעים לשון פירשה להם:

(Moshe began to) explain the Torah: in seventy languages he explained it to them.

From where does Rashi acquire this interpretation? The **Mizrachi** (16th century Turkey) explains that Moshe is comparing the word באר in our verse, with the same word as it appears later in Devarim. Regarding the command to the Israelites to set up great stones in Har Eval, after they have crossed the Yarden, the Torah says

וְכָתַבְתָּ עַל הָאֲבָנִים אֶת כָּל דְּבַרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בְּאֵר הַיֵּטֵב.

You shall write on the stones all the words of the this Torah, well-explained (“באר בהיטב”) (Devarim 27:8)

On the phrase באר היטב in that verse Rashi also says “בשבעים לשון” - “in seventy languages”.

Mizrachi states that the Gematria of היטב, when considering each letter accumulatively (i.e. the total of היט, הי, הי, הי, הי) is seventy. This explains Rashi’s comment in 27:8 and hence, by considering the use of the same word, באר, it also explains Rashi’s interpretation of Moshe’s actions in our verse (1:5).

The **Maharal of Prague** (16th century) finds a more straightforward source for Rashi’s comment. The word באר must mean that Moshe explained the Torah in a way that everyone could understand, and this can only be achieved by explaining the Torah in every one of the world’s languages (which then totalled seventy).

The **Maskil L’Dovid** (18th century Italy), by contrast, believes that Rashi is interpreting הוֹאִיל באר as telling us that Moshe was explaining the mitzvot in a way that he had not done before. This cannot mean a full elucidation, since that was required at the time that the

mitzvot were originally given (as Rashi stated in Shemot 21:1). Therefore it must imply that this explanation was of a type that had never been provided before - i.e. in all languages.

Another commentator on Rashi, the **Be'er B'Sadeh**, (19th century Bosnia) explains that at this time in Moshe's life there was a need for the Torah to be translated. Since the Jewish people had just conquered the lands of Sichon and Og, they were coming into contact with other nations, some of whom wished to learn about the Torah and convert to Judaism. Their introduction to the sacred text had to be in their own vernacular.

The Be'er B'Sadeh's position may be challenged by considering the Gemara (Sotah 35b) which claims that Moshe explained the Torah by writing it, in seventy languages, on stones, just as the Jewish people did subsequently in Har Eval. Rashi's deviation from this view, by saying that Moshe translated the Torah verbally rather than in writing (as per the Midrash, Berieshit Rabbah 49:2), suggests that his audience was the people who were listening to him, rather than outsiders who would come to read the stones.

But for those who may wonder if the notion of Moshe translating the entire Torah into seventy languages can be understood literally, the **Ktav VeKabalah** (19th century Germany) expresses the same doubt. He states that there would have been no need to translate the Torah, since it was intended for the Jews, who understood its original language. But for the Ktav VeKabalah, the word לשון in the Midrash quoted by Rashi does not mean "language" but rather "intention" or "precise meaning" of a word. Thus באר teaches us that Moshe explained the Torah with all its deeper meanings, echoing the Rabbinic idea that there are "שבעים פנים לתורה" - "seventy interpretations of Torah" (with the number seventy not to be taken literally, but indicating a multitude).

The **Emek Dvar** (19th century Lithuania) also concludes that "seventy languages" is not the p'shat (simple meaning of the text) because the Jewish people themselves would have no need for translation. Rather, "seventy languages" is a metaphorical expression for the "many words" that Moshe used.

The **Maharal** (Tiferet Yisrael, chapter 43) comments on a statement in the Gemara (Megilla 31b) that "Hashem said the curses in Vayikra (chapter 26) but Moshe said the curses in Devarim (chapter 28)". As the Maharal says, this observation cannot be understood at face value, as it is impossible to say that Moshe added even a single word to the Torah without it coming from Hashem. But nevertheless there is a difference between Devarim and the first four Chumashim.

Any item which is passed from one authority to another, will have elements relevant to the giver, and other elements relevant to the recipient. The Torah, given by Hashem to the Jewish people, follows this pattern. Bereishit to Bemidbar is "from the aspect of Hashem" but Devarim is the section of the Torah "from the aspect of the people". Developing this idea, the Maharal explains that for the first four Chumashim, Moshe's role was to be no more than a "mouthpiece" for Hashem, articulating his very words. But in Devarim, he served more as a prophet, putting the mitzvot into words that the people could more easily understand and act upon.

Moshe Rabbeinu, the teacher par excellence, spent his final days teaching his students. Even though much of his great speech that constitutes most of this Chumash often repeats mitzvot that have appeared before, he could not leave his people without the fullest possible understanding, and the ability to fully grasp the Torah and its meaning for themselves. This is his “explanation” of the Torah.



Tahni Paluch, Year 10, Leibler Yavneh College

We learn that everyone is created in God’s image. We are taught to value each other’s differences. We preach compassion. We pride ourselves on the high percentage of children who attend a Jewish school.

Our schools offer streams of Judaism for all - Ultra Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Traditional and Progressive schools - but do we really cater for everyone?

Educational experts have long espoused that children with disabilities should be educated in mainstream schools. By and large, our Jewish schools cater for children with special needs – providing teacher aides, modified materials and learning programs.

But sometimes children with more complex difficulties and higher support needs benefit more from being in a special school than being integrated into a mainstream school. These schools can offer more specialised equipment for learning, smaller class sizes, resources, support staff and specially trained teachers.

Our broad Jewish community has many children who require an education in these such specialist schools. But where do these children go? Where do they get a Jewish education? Where do they get to grow up with other Jewish children? Why do our Jewish schools cater for all beliefs across the Jewish observance spectrum but not across the disability spectrum? As one Jewish parent who used to send her daughter to a Jewish school told me “the most heartbreaking part of it all was pulling her out”. When this child left her Jewish school, she was leaving her community. Parents who send their children to Jewish schools are actively choosing for their child to experience a Jewish way of life. To actively have to then remove your child from that environment that you value so much, or to know from the onset that you can’t even consider enrolling your child in a Jewish school is gut-wrenching. It’s a definitive symbol that your child with special needs will not get to experience the life you always envisaged for them. Why are we doing this to parents?

Organise such as Access, Camp Sababa and Friendship Circle certainly do lots for children with disabilities and their families. Every Sunday, Friendship Circle provides over 30 children with recreational and social programs. Most of them go to different special schools all

around the state. At these schools, they are 'different' again because they are Jewish. So Friendship Circle offers these children their only chance to interact with other Jewish kids, learn about Jewish festivals and celebrate their heritage.

But are we doing as much as we can? Once a week, these children can spend time with other Jewish children. Once a week, they learn about Judaism. Once a week, they get to experience being a part of the Jewish community. Just once a week, we include them. How incredible is it to look around on Yom Haatzmaut and see everyone – EVERYONE dressed in blue and white. How rare is it to attend school and know that you share a history – and often a last name - with the entire student body. The experience of a Jewish school is all-encompassing and unlike anything in the world – and it is a privilege we as a community are not sharing with everyone.

I propose we create a school within a school. On an existing campus of one of our Jewish schools, a few classrooms to cater to children with special needs in a Jewish environment. Some playgrounds and infrastructure would be modified, and specialised teachers employed. For all non-academic activities – recesses, festivals, important Jewish commemorative days - all students would participate.

Many parents of Jewish kids are already paying private school fees to send their other children to Jewish schools and so would be willing to pay for a Jewish education for their child with a disability also. Moreover, students with disabilities are eligible for various Federal and State Government funding. I acknowledge this is a big idea – but I say, the bigger the better!

It's not just the students with special needs that would benefit from our Jewish school within a school. It would also radically change the experiences of many children currently attending Jewish schools. From a young age, they would learn inclusion, empathy and respect. Parents of children with special needs will also benefit from the opportunity to mix with other Jewish parents in a schoolyard setting. And having a school within a school that caters to children of various religious persuasions will promote unity in an occasionally fractious community.

The impact of this organisation will be felt when parents can send their children with special needs to a Jewish school, just like they do for their siblings. It will be felt when their children come home with drawings of har sinai, and with mishloach manot from their friends. The Etz Hayim states 'The decency of a society is measured by how it cares for its least powerful members'.

Those 30 kids have as much of a right to a Jewish education as you and I.

As Daniel Sher, Director of Services at Friendship Circle said: "it's an awesome idea – and there's no reason not to do it."

What are we waiting for?