



Va'Etchanan 5780

The last time I spent Tisha B'Av without attending Shule was during my army service. I was rostered to perform guard duty at our base in central Israel and with only 5 of us there at that time, there was no chance of forming a Minyan. It was a truly miserable Tisha B'Av as I sat in the dirt to say Kinot alone between shifts.

This year, though (together with the community) I was once more unable to attend Shule, it was a completely different experience. I was able to follow Eicha to the familiar voice of Moshe Landau on Zoom as part of an online community during one of four readings we had on offer. I joined with many others in learning about the themes and meaning of the day from Rav Yehoshua Asulin and Rabbanit Esti Rosenberg. On Tisha B'Av morning, I recited Kinot led by the familiar voices of different members of Shule, who in some ways felt closer and easier to hear online than when separated in Shule. Throughout the rest of the day I was able to avail of the high level sessions and resources of World Mizrachi, connecting through my community to a global community of mourners.

In this week's Shabbat thought, our Rosh Midrasha, Dr Michal Kaufman, shares a beautiful story of connecting with each other and with Israel at this time, and the key role our Beit Midrash and Midrasha play for so many people in our community and beyond.

Having mourned together, we now commence the process of being comforted together with Shabbat Nachamu. For a number of years, Shabbat Nachamu has been at the centre of the annual campaign of the Australian Friends of Shaarei Tzedek. Continuing the theme of familiar voices, our "Seudah Shlishit" guest contribution this week is from Allan Garfield, who normally speaks about Shaarei Tzedek at Seudah Shlishit on Shabbat Nachamu each year.

May we soon return to hearing familiar voices, and seeing familiar faces in person,

Shabbat Shalom.



Sadly this Tisha B'Av was like no other for nearly all of us. The Rav has written of his personal experience during his service in the IDF. I've never missed sharing Tisha B'Av with community in shul. Yet many of our founding members did have that experience during the Shoah, not only being unable to participate in the tefillot, the rendition of Eicha and the kinnot, but personally suffering the shocking experience of a Tisha B'Av over many terrible years. Our concluding kinnot on Wednesday night and Thursday morning bore testimony to that dark period.

Baruch Hashem we live in a generation that has celebrated Israel's 72nd Yom Haatzmaut, a State that is there to protect its inhabitants and seek to protect Jewry worldwide. Nevertheless Israel is very far away for all of us at this time.

Unfortunately we see that Israel is suffering badly under Covid and additionally there is much tension and even violence within Israel. Surely the lessons of the Churban Bayit Sheni, of sin'at chinam bringing about its destruction and a 1900 year galut, must be heard! We can only pray that this should be so.

With the upturn in Covid cases in Victoria, the notion of praying together anytime soon is probably wishful thinking. It's still too early to rule out the Yamim Noraim in shul, but we are planning our minyanim in hope!

In 1996 Late Chief Rabbi Jakobowitz spent shabbat 'Vaetchanan' in Mizrahi. His sermon was focussed on the rise of the Shema and the demise of the Aseret Hadibrot in our tefilla. He focussed on the expression of plurality in the former and singularity of the latter. It's a lesson for us to work together in harmony as we advance our common goals. Finally you will all shortly receive a letter from me with an invoice for membership, which we've held off under the circumstances.

Wishing you all a shabbat shalom,

Dr Danny Lamm AM



Rabbi Mirvis

"You shall not covet your friend's wife and you shall not desire your friend's house, (nor) his field and his maidservant and his ox and his donkey and anything that belongs to your friend" (Devarim 5:18). At first glance, the last of the Ten Commandments is very difficult to understand. Firstly, desiring or longing for someone else's possessions is a natural human response. Can we really be commanded to suppress natural emotions? Secondly, whilst we do not know which commandments are more important than others, this final commandment nevertheless seems somewhat out of place. The other nine commandments clearly stick out as fundamental tenets of our faith. Does "You shall not covet..." belong on this list of fundamentals? Does coveting one's friend's wife belong on the same list as adultery?

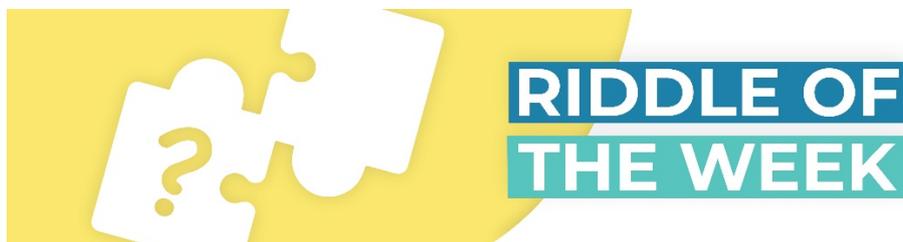
Ibn Ezra addresses our first question and explains with a parable:

"Many people have been astounded by this commandment. How can there be a person who does not covet in his heart something that he finds attractive? And now I will give you a parable: Know that a villager who sees the King's daughter and finds her attractive will not yearn for her in his heart to sleep with her, for he knows that this is impossible. Nor will this villager think like one of the madmen and yearn for wings so that he can fly to the heavens, for this is also impossible. Just like no man longs to sleep with his mother, even though she is attractive, for he has grown up from his youth knowing that she is forbidden to him" (Ibn Ezra, Shemot 20:14).

Ibn Ezra explains that although coveting may be natural, nobody covets anything that is entrenched in their mind as being beyond their reach, impossible, or forbidden. Therefore, we are not being commanded to suppress our yearnings for that which we covet, but to never reach those yearnings in the first place.

It is essential for us to internalize the fact that everything we have and everything we own comes from Hashem. Once we understand deep down that that which belongs to us is ours because that is what Hashem gave us, and we learn to appreciate and be happy with our portion, we will not come to coveting possessions which Hashem has decided to give to others.

"You shall not covet" is therefore much deeper than a commandment to suppress emotions. It is about conditioning our minds with the notion that everything we have comes from Hashem. It is about being happy with what we have got so we will not ever come to looking longingly elsewhere. It is about internalizing Hashem's commandments to the extent that we would never yearn or long to break them. It certainly deserves its place in the Ten Commandments.



Reb Leor Broh

Riddle for Vaetchanan:

Five senses have we indeed
Not all appear in the parsha we read.
But in one verse you'll find four
The missing one you'll know for sure

Answer to Riddle for Last week (Devarim):

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

In the following verse: **בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ מִזְבֵּחַ הַזֶּה מִשָּׁה בְּאֶרֶץ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לְאִמֶּר (א:ה)**
the word **הַזֶּה** has the same letters as **אליהו**

The sefer **מאמרות עשרה** explains the connection, that Eliyahu will explain (באר) all the difficult hidden things in the Torah, as the Chazal say whenever there is an unsolved question:- **תיקו** which stands for:- **תשבי יתרץ קושיות ואבעיות** Tishbi (Eliyahu) will answer the questions and queries

SHABBAT THOUGHT



Dr Michal Kaufman, Rosh Midrasha

וְשָׁבוּ בְנֵי לְגִבּוֹלָם

My last chevruta with Yasmin Schwartz was a few weeks ago. It was the last night of learning in the Midrasha. We were closing again, the second wave of the Covid 19 virus meant no more public gatherings were permitted.

Yasmin and I have been learning together for a few years. She has been part of the Midrasha since her return from seminary and throughout her involvement in Bnei Akiva. Our pre chevruta chitchat was filled with excitement. Yasmin was about to make aliyah, she had received her permission to travel and her flight was booked. With the pandemic worsening I didn't really think she would be allowed to fly. I was wrong, our next chevruta was cancelled as Yasmin was on her way to Israel!

Last week we resumed our learning, only this time, it was online from Israel! Yasmin was self-isolating in a hotel in Tel Aviv. She was in good spirits despite the challenges of being quarantined. Midway through our chevruta, the doorbell rang, someone was at her hotel door. She excused herself and returned holding a pizza box! I wondered, how do you get pizza delivered when you are in quarantine? Yasmin showed me the message on the box. It was a welcome to Israel gift from Racheli, Nadav, Elchai, Yoseph and Yitzhak! Our former Bat Midrasha and Hesder bachurim! It was a real surprise! "What a remarkable coincidence, just as we are learning this welcomed gift arrived! The Midrasha has been an important part of my life since returning from seminary", she remarked.

Deeply moved by what just happened, I wanted to share this story with the community. Our Bet Midrash- Midrasha is more than a place of learning, it also connects young adults to their Israeli counterparts. For those making aliyah, they have a peer support network in Israel.

I want to thank you, the Mizrahi community for your ongoing commitment to the Bet Midrash, without your ongoing support none of this would be possible!

וַיִּשְׂ-תְקַוָּה לְאַחֲרִיתָהּ נְאֻם-ה' וְשָׁבוּ בְנֵי לְגִבּוֹלָם: (ס) (ירמיהו לא: טז)

And there is hope for your future — declares the LORD: Your children shall return to their country.

SHABBAT AFTERNOON

SHIUR



Rabbi James Kennard

As a critical part of preparing the people for entering the land of Israel. Moshe warns them that there will come a time of failure, or rebellion against Hashem, and exile. In a passage (Devarim 4:25-30) from the parasha of Ve'etchanan, which is also read on Tisha B'Av, this tragic fate is foretold.

But Jews never despair. There is always hope. No matter how terrible the exile, or how far the people have fallen, there remains in the Jewish heart the spark that seeks to re-connect to Hashem.

(כז) וְהִפִּיץ ה' אֶתְכֶם בְּעַמִּים וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם מִתִּי מִסְפָּר בְּגוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יִנְהַג ה' אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה.
 (כח) וְעַבַדְתֶּם שָׁם אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם עֵץ וָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִרְאוּן וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן וְלֹא יֵאָכְלוּ וְלֹא יִרְיִחוּ.
 (כט) וּבִקְשֶׁתֶם מִשָּׁם אֶת ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיךָ וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָשׁוּן בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ.
 (ל) בְּצַר לְךָ וּמִצְאוּךָ כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים וְשָׁבַת עַד ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלוֹ.

(27) Hashem will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where Hashem shall lead you away.

(28) There you shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

(29) From there **you will seek Hashem your G-d**, and you will find Him, when you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

(30) When you are in distress, and all these things have happened to you, **you will finally return to Hashem your G-d**, and listen to his voice: (Devarim 4:28-29)

The meaning of **ובקשתם משם** is debated by the commentators. In what way does one "seek (Hashem) from there"? Why is exile the trigger for such a seeking? And how does **ובקשתם משם** in verse 29 relate to **אלהיך עד ה'** - you will return to Hashem your G-d - in verse 30?

The **Midrash** (מדרש תנחומא פרשת בשלח), commenting on the crying out of the Israelites when confronted by the seemingly impassable Red Sea, states:

כאן ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה' תפשו אומנות אבותיהן, וכשהן צועקין הקב"ה מצוי להם שנאמר "ובקשתם משם את ה' אלהיך ומצאת".

Here the Israelites cried out to Hashem. They took hold of the art of their fathers. And when they cry out, Hashem is found for them, as is said "you shall seek Hashem your God from there and you will find him" (Devarim 4:29).

By comparing the situation at the Red Sea with the future exile of the Jews, and by matching the crying out in the former with the "seeking" in the latter, the Midrash is teaching that prayer - in the form of crying out - is the natural Jewish response to distress. The Red Sea, the pain of exile and indeed any danger should automatically evoke the primeval response of seeking Hashem - as a saviour and a refuge in troubled times.

The **Ran** (14th century Spain) in Drosht HaRan Chapter 9, puts verse 29 in the context of verse 28. It refers to a time when the Jews, in exile, have left Judaism and have adopted the idolatrous practices of those around them. The message therefore of **ובקשתם משם** is that even people on such a low spiritual level can perform Teshuva and find their way back to Hashem.

The location (i.e. outside of Israel) of this outpouring of Teshuva is significant. As the Ran says,

וצריך לתת לב במלת משם, ופירושו כך שאע"פ שהשכינה שורה בארץ ואינה שורה בח"ל כפי דעתנו . . . אעפ"כ עם היות שעל דרך לשון בני אדם הש"י אינו נמצא בח"ל כאמור, גם שם תמצאוהו כי תבקשוהו.

The phrase "from there" calls for explanation. It is to be understood as follows: Though, in our view, the Shechinah resides only in the land of Israel and not outside it . . . even so, and even though people say Hashem is not found outside the land of Israel, you will find Him even there if you seek Him.

The **Abarbanel** (15th century Portugal) rejects the notion that verse 29 is describing the process of Teshuva. That must be implied in verse 30, with the words **עד ה' אלהיך** - you will return to Hashem your G-d. **משם** **ובקשתם** must therefore refer to something different.

The Abarbanel, himself an exile from Portugal at the time of the Inquisition, explains that this section talks of a time when Jews will be prevented from practicing Judaism and compelled to adopt other religions. Such people will not be able to perform complete Teshuva and return to the observance of mitzvot because of the oppressive regimes under which they live. But nevertheless they will be able to seek Hashem “with all their heart and with all their soul”. Thus **משם** **ובקשתם** is the emotional and spiritual yearning to connect to Hashem, and the essential first, incomplete, stage in the Teshuva process, which is completed by “finally returning to Hashem” (verse 30).

The **Emek Dvar** (19th century Lithuania) also sees **משם** **ובקשתם** as a lesser form of Teshuva than **ושבת עד ה' אלהיך**. Verse 29 describes Teshuva motivated by displacement alone, a proto-Zionist realisation that “the nature of lands outside of Israel are not good for them”. Verse 30, by contrast, refers to Teshuva inspired by a love of Hashem. Hence it is only that that mode of Teshuva that enables the penitent to return **עד ה' אלהיך** - all the way to Hashem your G-d.

The **Ohr HaChaim** (18th century Israel) sees the relationship between **משם** **ובקשתם** and **ושבת עד ה' אלהיך** very differently. He explains that there are two types of Teshuva; the first comes from within, from the recognition of one’s obligations to the Creator and the need to channel one’s inclinations towards mitzvot. The alternative is a response to external pressure, turning to Hashem as a redeemer from affliction.

Thus verse 29 and **משם** **ובקשתם**, which does not refer to any suffering associated with exile, tells of the first, self-motivated, type of Teshuva, whereas verse 30, opening with the words **בצר לך** - “when you are in distress” - describes the alternative version of Teshuva, which is the result of affliction.

One common theme underpins each of these interpretations. Exile is unnatural for the Jews. Our home is in Israel. The greatest benefit of exile is that it should bring us to prayer, to an emotional connection to Hashem or to complete teshuva. Conversely, the greatest tragedy would be for us to live outside of Israel, and yet not feel this lack, and not be moved to seek Hashem. A worthy message for Tisha B’Av and for always.



Dr Allan Garfield

Shaare Zedek and the Pandemic

I have never taken for granted my role as a doctor, but as a great privilege being a member of an honourable profession. In 1981 as newlyweds, we were living in New York, whilst finishing my training as a specialist respiratory (pulmonary) physician. It was on a hot July night around 1 a.m., that we had the great *zechut* of having our own personal face-to-face *yechidus* with the late Lubavitcher Rebbe z”l,

the 3 of us alone in his office. The *yechidus* lasted 7 minutes! (for others it would not even be a minute). The Rebbe mainly focused on my role as a doctor, my obligations in fulfilling the sacred mission as G-d's *shaliach* in the healing of both body and mind. There was more said in detail but the emphasis was on the unique opportunity that I as a physician, would have in fulfilling the greatest of *mitzvah* of "ורפא וירפא". His holy words have never left me; every day I have the *zechut* of admiring G-d's handiwork to the smallest molecular level, and the greatest *mitzvah* of all in healing the sick.

We know from history about devastating plagues in centuries past, that wiped out whole communities and towns. In my own career, back in medical school, we studied bacteriology, virology, epidemiology and the more modern plagues such as the great Spanish flu pandemic of over 100 years ago that killed off around 50 million people. To me, I always thought such events were a thing of the past, never to be repeated, with all our modern science, technology, medicines, etc. But to experience a plague /pandemic of such magnitude in our lifetime?

I need not detail what is happening here with the pandemic in Australia, in Melbourne, Israel and around the world, as we are all personally involved and hear information every day. But as a respiratory physician, I am involved in a direct way, as coronavirus infections primarily involve the lung which then cause the immune system to crash, leading to multi-organ failure, necessitating the provision of support to ventilation, oxygenation, circulation, kidney function, with time being the ultimate decisor of who will survive or who will succumb ... מי יחיה ומי ימות

Right now, our hospitals in Melbourne are filling up with sick coronavirus patients. I work at 2 major Melbourne hospitals, and my colleagues are at the forefront. I am amazed at the courage, dedication and selfless care and attention they give. These are the healthcare workers that I know, the doctors, nurses, and allied care givers of all kinds, who work tirelessly around the clock, and many of them coming down with the virus infection themselves. This reduces the staff numbers, and requires the others to increase shift hours, many are exhausted and burned out but still come back to fulfil their roles. We have to give our unconditional thanks to these superheroes.

Many of you are aware of my proud association with Shaare Zedek Hospital all these years. **"The Hospital With a Heart"** of 1000 beds in the heart of Jerusalem, has been serving the people of Jerusalem for almost 120 years. In these Pandemic times, its role has been nothing but exemplary.

While the onset of the Corona pandemic in the early part of 2020 has challenged and changed the world in so many ways, for hospitals such as Shaare Zedek, the crisis has required an unprecedented medical response and introduced new perspectives on community healthcare and management.

As we approach August, Israel now finds itself in a clear second wave of the pandemic as the numbers continue to rise. Shaare Zedek has now treated over 700 people (the numbers change literally by the hour) on an inpatient basis, and over 3,000 total patients for Corona related issues. Many of those have required intensive care and sadly the hospital has been forced to witness dozens of people who have lost their lives to COVID-19.

Over the past several months Shaare Zedek has been required to open six *Keter* Corona wards including a dedicated Intensive Care Unit as well as special absorption and discharge units just for Corona patients. The nature of the disease, and the uncompromising commitment to limit any impact on the general hospital population, requires that the Corona treatment areas are completely isolated from all other areas. This has required significant investment in engineering and construction systems and these efforts to remain 'ahead of the curve' require constant vigil preparing for what may lie ahead.

While the scope and challenges represented by this crisis are indeed something that could have never been projected, for several years Shaare Zedek has been involved in training for a major medical response of this type. Together with partner medical responders in the community, such as the police and the IDF, it held numerous drills in recent years and used that experience to shift into response mode even before the first Corona patient arrived in early March. The hospital's Director General, Professor Ofer Merin has been the official responsible for coordinating the hospital's disaster response for several years (as well as a parallel role for the IDF). He was able to leverage his vision and experience with advance preparedness to provide Shaare Zedek with a unique advantage when the need presented itself.

Shaare Zedek quickly became Jerusalem's busiest Corona hospital and the second biggest in all of Israel. At the peak of the first wave it was treating over 120 patients at any given time. During this second wave the numbers are also moving up quickly, and the hospital is actively working to remain prepared for what may lie ahead- both in the coming weeks and months.

Shaare Zedek's high patient-count has also provided it with the opportunity – and responsibility – to serve a unique role in researching this disease. Immediately upon realizing the function it would have to play in treating thousands of cases, the hospital's Research Division established a "biobank." This is a bank of biological data from Corona patients that can be classified and analyzed for all sorts of functions – it now has the largest Covid-19 Biobank resource in Israel, and is already proving a critical resource both for its teams and partner research institutes. Shaare Zedek is now involved in over 70 individual research studies in a variety of areas including treatment methods, enhanced testing, the efficacy of certain drugs, identifying antibodies, and better understanding of the long-term effects of the disease. Given the access to so much data we are confident and hopeful that Shaare Zedek can be a leading player in the global research effort for this truly devastating healthcare and social crisis.

While the numbers are staggering and intimidating, both in Israel and all across the world, those who work at Shaare Zedek, are daily inspired by the remarkable response that the hospital has been able to provide. All the staff in the Corona units volunteered to be assigned to these areas. For months, these teams have gone above and beyond in providing advanced care in truly difficult practical and emotional conditions. This experience has proven that this takes a true toll on the staff which led to the development of special support and counselling programs that benefit them and their families. The training for COVID-19 care is very much "on the ground" as every day is one of learning how to better care for their patients.

Contributing to the effort are team members from all over the hospital. Physiotherapists help strengthen patients ahead of what is known to be a long rehabilitation process. The social workers at Shaare Zedek have set up a special response centre designed to ensure that patient's families are updated regularly as to their loved ones' situation, and patients – especially the elderly and less technological savvy - are able to effectively communicate with family members despite the limitations imposed by treatment in physical isolation. Wherever possible there is endeavour to let a single family member enter the ward in those cases where death is approaching. Outfitted in full protective gear, it is seen that this meeting can contribute greatly to both the patient and the wider family and is deeply meaningful for all involved.

Perhaps most troubling with this disease is that sense of unknowing. Just as in early March no one could have accurately predicted the constantly changing highs and lows of this crisis, we are forced to admit that we still don't know what lies ahead. In addition to the growing operational issues with the Corona response, we all know it comes with a deep financial burden that is that much more challenging because of the limits the disease has placed on the normal levels of activity and the costs that has imposed in substantially reducing the hospital's projected annual income.

Yet despite this uncertainty and concern, what we do know is that whatever we are forced to confront, we are committed to doing whatever is possible to care for the people of Jerusalem and Israel. This has been Shaare Zedek's mandate for close to 120 years, in times of peace and war, relative calm and deep uncertainty, and the very vision that we know must continue to guide us as we meet this latest challenge in our proud history, with support from us far away in Australia.

Our commitment to helping Shaare Zedek has not diminished. Our dedicated committee here in Australia is actively working towards collecting those funds that the Hospital desperately needs in these very trying times. Last year our Australian Shabbat Nachamu appeal funded, amongst other projects, a biobank to facilitate further research. Although this year we don't have our usual annual Shabbat Nachamu Giving Day, our fundraising campaign continues regardless and we are again looking forward to your generosity and support. This can be done through our website: shaarezedek.org.au. Please support us.

You will already have seen our billboards on our streets which advertise our 4 on-demand Webinars that are being recorded each week from Shaare Zedek, and tell us much more about the pandemic and how it is dealt with at Shaare Zedek and in Jerusalem. Topics of forthcoming webinars include: (please log on to www.shaarezedek.org.au/video/ to view this series)

- Covid-19 – Israel & The world (available)
- Compassion from behind the mask (available)
- Corona through the eyes of sick children
- Obstetrics in the time of a Pandemic.

Shaare Zedek is *Home*. Shaare Zedek is *Heart*. Shaare Zedek is a place with an extra *Soul*. A place with a tremendous number of wonderful people who come to work every day with the only holy mission of *Saving Lives*.