

LAMPLIGHTER

8 Menachem-Av
Parshas
Devarim
1357
20 July
5778/2018

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Torah portion of Devarim (the first portion in the book of the Torah known as Devraim, Deuteronomy) is always read on the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av, known as Shabbat Chazon (literally "The Sabbath of Vision"). As nothing in Judaism is coincidental, the Torah portion of Devarim and Shabbat Chazon must be interconnected.

The Book of Deuteronomy is unique in that, unlike the first four Books of the Torah, it was transmitted by Moses to the generation of Jews that was about to enter the Land of Israel.

The generation of Jews that wandered through the desert is known as "the generation of knowledge." Because they occupied such a high spiritual level, commensurate with Moses', they merited to lead a completely spiritual existence. The generation that entered Israel, by contrast, began a new chapter in Jewish history. Because they had to involve themselves in more mundane affairs, their spiritual level is considered to be lower than that of the preceding generation.

Nonetheless, it was precisely the generation that entered Israel that was able to successfully fulfill G-d's plan. G-d wants us to serve Him within the context of the material world, establishing a "dwelling place" for Him in the "lower realms."

Accordingly, although the Jews who entered Israel were spiritually inferior in comparison with their parents, they possessed a certain advantage over their elders: The Jews who entered Israel merited to attain a level of "peace and security" that was denied the previous generation.

Shabbat Devarim is thus a resolution of two opposites. On the one hand, the Jews' entry into the Land of Israel was a very great descent, for it signified the need for daily contact with worldly matters. On the other hand, it was precisely by means of this descent that they were able to attain the highest ascent of all: the fulfillment of G-d's plan.

Likewise, Shabbat Chazon is a study in contradiction. Shabbat Chazon occurs in the middle of the Nine Days, a period in which we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple. Yet, at the same time, as the famous Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev explained, on Shabbat Chazon every Jew is shown a vision of the Third Holy Temple, an edifice that will be infinitely superior to the two Holy Temples that preceded it.

Thus Shabbat Chazon expresses the same theme of descent for the purpose of ascent as Devarim: It is precisely through the descent which caused the Temple's destruction in the first place that we will achieve the highest ascent of all: the establishment of the Third Holy Temple by Moshiach, may it happen at once.

The True Translation

By Tali Loewenthal

In our multinational society, translations are an important part of life. Ideally, they enable different peoples, who have totally different ways of thinking, to connect together. But are translations always accurate?

The Parshah of Devarim (Deuteronomy 1:1–3:22), beginning the fifth and final book of the Torah, presents Moses giving talks to the Jewish people, explaining what the Torah is going to mean in their lives when they enter the Land of Israel. The sages tell us he did not only speak to them in Hebrew; he also translated the Torah into the seventy languages of the original seventy nations of the world..

This was opening the possibility for future translations of the Torah, as in our time, communicating aspects of Torah thought to very disparate kinds of people: men and women with different lifestyles, with different questions. The Torah has answers for them all, but these have to be translated in a way which they can understand.

Now, this is a sensitive and possibly dangerous process. A false phrase in the translation might lead a person in the wrong direction, with serious consequences. In fact, the sages were very anxious about an actual event in Second Temple times, when the Torah was translated into Greek. The Hellenistic king of Egypt was fascinated by the idea of the Torah, and ordered the sages to produce a translation. He was worried they might falsify something, so he made 72 sages sit in separate cubicles, so that each one would write an independent version. Miraculously, their translations tallied with each other, even when it came to delicate passages which could easily be misconstrued.

Nonetheless, the later Jewish sages commented that the day the Torah was translated into Greek "was as difficult for the Jewish people as the day when the Golden Calf was made, because the Torah cannot really be translated." What is meant by the comparison with the day the Golden Calf was made?

(Incidentally, the worship of the Golden Calf caused Moses to break the Tablets of the Law on the 17th of Tammuz, commemorated recently with a fast. This began the Three Weeks which culminate with the fast of the Ninth of Av, when both Temples were destroyed.)

The sages were worried about a false translation of the Torah. In a sense, that is exactly what the Golden Calf was: a false translation of spirituality. The people wanted something spiritual which would be here, in our lower world. A true translation of holiness would be the Sanctuary, or the Temple. According to Nachmanides, the Golden Calf was actually intended to substitute for Moses. Moses' role was to connect the Jewish people with G-d. A false translation of this role was the Golden Calf: an idol, which would only separate people from G-d.

However, ultimately the translation of the Torah into Greek had a positive effect: it communicated the Oneness of G-d to all nations. Further, Moses' translation of the Torah into the seventy languages was the key to the communication of Torah in our own time, to Jews all over the world.

The effect of this spread of Torah will eventually be the transformation of the sad day of the Ninth of Av into a joyous festival, with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. This, at last, will be the true translation, translating sorrow into joy.

Slice of LIFE

Life in the Old City

By Shoshanah Selavan

Here in Jerusalem's Old City we live this surreal existence. You aren't just living your own life. It's a sense that whatever you do you are representing the entire Jewish people. You can't be scared, you can't give in.

We are here in the center of the world, the magnetic field that attracts the entire Jewish world. And the truth is, we aren't scared. We send our children to school, we go to the supermarket, go to work run our errands...but with one ear listening for sirens, helicopters, gun shots. I'd say we are all looking over our shoulders a bit more than before.

My newlywed daughter just called me. She needs to see a doctor and is scared to go alone. I wonder if my Arab neighbors in the Muslim Quarter are also showing signs of anxiety. As I hear the kindergarten children playing under my window I also hear the whir of helicopters in the distant background and wonder what the day will bring. Just in case, I've cancelled my husband's tunnel tours for the rest of the month. The phone is not exactly ringing off the hook. But hey — the sun is shining and it's a glorious day, and Rosh Chodesh to boot! So I'm putting on my dancing shoes and away I go ... and in case you're wondering, I will be walking out through the Arab shuk (market) because this is my home and that's how I go. As I continue writing this it is late

afternoon. When I left the Old City this morning I was bombarded by the sound of sirens, first going in one direction and then heading to another. I asked a police officer what was going on and heard about the two attacks in Armon HaNatziv and Geula. I felt short of breath, felt the world crashing in on my lungs, but I continued to town to meet my daughter. It's relatively empty there now and those who are on public transportation or walking the streets are ill at ease. Everyone is talking about the attacks, and everyone is fed up. Everyone wants reprisals. But how do you reprise against a non-entity? Maybe we should let them declare a state and then we declare war on our enemies — makes sense doesn't it? Tomorrow I may be meeting with President Reuven Rivlin. Other community council leaders are drafting a letter demanding an end to the violence to be translated into Arabic and they want us to present it to the president to sign. But if it was as simple as a letter, don't you think someone would have thought of this earlier????? Just got a call to attend an emergency security meeting in the municipality — see you later! And yes, I am walking through the shuk to get there! Fascinating meeting, hearing Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat and his advisors describe the situation in the Arab schools in our city.

The mayor has been going into the schools where the terrorists are coming from and hearing from the principals and teachers how the children and teens are being fed a totally inaccurate pictures of reality from the Arab social media. How they truly believe that the terrorists are innocents being

murdered by Israeli police officers! How they all have pictures of one of the young murderers and idolize him like a movie star, and look forward to joining him in the next world (and we all know how they plan on joining him, don't we?) The principals are unable to combat the lies and our municipality is going in there trying to spread truth. Indeed fascinating how we continue to believe that they care to hear the truth.

But on a positive note, Old City youth organized a march from Jaffa Gate to Zion Square this afternoon, complete with Israeli flags and lots of heartfelt singing. Yesterday, at the end of the Lavie shiva, they closed up the tent which they set up at the site of the murder and held a special tefilla (prayer) at the Western Wall. Today they have focused their energies on keeping the spirits high for all Jerusalem residents.

Another day in the life of an Old City resident. Neighbor Rav Motty Berger once said that all Jews are driving in the car of Jewish history, but those living in Israel are in the driver's seat. In that case we in the Old City are sitting on the windshield!

Prayers for peace throughout the land of Israel, and a speedy recovery to all of our victims of terror.

Ed. Note: Shoshanah Selavan is a chairperson of Jerusalem's Old City Jewish Quarter Community Council, and manager of the Overseas Office at Yeshivat HaKotel. She is also married to tour guide Barnea Levi Selavan, and has raised five amazing children in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield
in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 1357

WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

To Spend Millions on Fancy Synagogues, or on Jewish Education?

Dr. —
New York, N.Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

After not hearing from you for a considerable length of time, I was pleased to receive your letter with the enclosed article. Thank you very much for your thoughtfulness in sending me this article which, of course, I read with interest. May we soon merit to see the fulfillment of the prophecy, "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of G-d, to serve Him with one consent," when there will be no possibility of the recurrence of the events with which your article deals.

Incidentally, with further reference to your article, it is regrettable to note that public opinion has not sufficiently been aroused in protest against the vogue in some American Jewish circles to squander millions of dollars on centers, or even fancy synagogues, at a time when the money could be much better spent in support of Torah institutions and Yeshiva education. It is also most unfortunate that teachers in Yeshivot and Hebrew Day Schools are generally underpaid, and the holier the subject which they teach, the less remuneration they receive, with the least security. Even in the same institution, it often happens that the salary of teachers seems to be in the opposite proportion to the subject they teach. Apart from the direct and negative results of making these positions the least attractive in the teaching profession, and the frustration of the teachers affected, it shows the attitude towards Torah and Torah education in general, and it also has an adverse effect upon the students, who cannot fail to see this discrimination.

With particular interest, I read in your letter about your lectures in the past, as well as in the current year. May G-d grant that all your affairs should be with Hatzlacha, including the essential matter (and you will forgive me for emphasizing it so frequently), namely a suitable Shidduch for you.

With blessing,

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

May I Shop in a Store and Then Purchase for Cheaper Online?

Question: Here's the scenario. I walk into an electronics store and ask the sales staff for advice on which digital camera is best for my needs. The guy spends half an hour explaining the pros and cons of all the different models. I say thanks and walk out of the store, then go online and order the exact camera he recommended, but at a much cheaper price. Am I being dishonest?

Answer: "Thou shalt not steal" does not only apply to outright thievery. The Torah warns against "stealing people's minds," which means misleading them through words or actions in order to gain some personal benefit.

Say you're getting married, and you send an invitation to an acquaintance who you know won't attend the wedding. If your true motive is just to earn a gift in return, and you don't really want the person to come to the wedding, then that's stealing their mind for selfish gain. But if you are extending the invitation to honor them, or so they don't feel insulted, then that's fine. In such a case you are not taking, you are giving. It all depends on your intent.

The Talmud prohibits asking a shopkeeper the price of an item that you have no intention of buying. You are stealing his mind, by making him think he has a customer. It would seem that the same applies to your camera-shopping expedition. The salesguy invested half an hour in you, thinking he had a buyer. If you never intended to purchase the camera in that store, you stole his mind, as he gave you his time for nothing.

Now, you could argue that your case is different from the Talmudic one. The guy who served you doesn't own the store; he is just in sales. It makes no difference to him if he made the sale or not; his job is to answer customers' questions. Okay, but perhaps he gets a commission on each sale, so he wouldn't have bothered wasting his time on you if he knew there was no chance of sealing the deal. And even if not, are you not stealing from the shop owner, who pays his sales team to serve genuine customers?

You might say that you would be more than happy to purchase the camera from the store, if they would match the online price. So you weren't deceiving, just comparative shopping. That may indeed be the case. Only you and G-d know.

In most questions of right and wrong, actions count more than intentions. But when it comes to stealing minds, the action is always defensible. Your intentions should be, too.

A WORD

from the Director

Although it is unusual for Tisha B'Av to coincide with Shabbat, it does periodically occur in this manner. In 5751 (1991) when Tisha B'Av also fell out on Shabbat, the Rebbe spoke about the significance of this schedule.

Tisha B'Av, normally a day of mourning for the destruction of the Holy Temple, was therefore a day of happiness and rejoicing, as we do not mourn on Shabbat.

There is another reason to rejoice on Tisha B'Av. And this, too, the Rebbe spoke about at great length on that Tisha B'Av and the days immediately following.

Tisha B'Av is known by our Sages as the birthday of Moshiach.

In simple terms this means that at the moment of the destruction of the Holy Temple, the potential for the Final Redemption, through Moshiach, was born.

The Rebbe clarified the exact meaning of this: "Our Sages explain that this cannot refer to Moshiach's actual birth, because Moshiach will not be an infant when he redeems our people. But rather, it refers to a strengthening of his influence. For our Sages refer to a birthday as a day when mazalo govair, "the spiritual source of one's soul shines powerfully."

On the day when Moshiach's spiritual source is powerfully revealed, there is a unique potential for the Redemption to come... Each year, for the past two thousand years, on Tisha B'Av, Moshiach receives new power and new strength, and from year to year, this influence grows more powerfully."

Thus, Tisha B'Av is a unique time, when the potential for the Redemption is at its peak. Through this insight into Tisha B'Av we are introduced to a basic concept in Chasidic philosophy which teaches that the greatest ascent comes after the greatest descent.

Let us use the time properly and bring about the greatest ascent, the revelation of Moshiach and the Final Redemption, NOW.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED



Saving the Torah

Abba Sikra, the head of the Zealots in Jerusalem, was the son of the sister of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai. Rabban Yochanan sent to him saying, "Come to visit me privately." When he came he said to him, "How long are you going to carry on in this way and kill all the people with starvation?" He replied: "What can I do? If I say a word to them, they will kill me."

Rabban Yochanan said, "Devise some plan for me to escape the city. Perhaps I shall be able to save a little."

Abba Sikra said to him: "Pretend to be ill, and let everyone come to inquire about you. Bring something foul-smelling and put it by you, so that they will say you are dead. Let then your disciples carry your bed, but no others, so that they shall not notice that you are still light, since it is known that a living being is lighter than a corpse."

He did so, and Rabbi Eliezer carried the bier from one side and Rabbi Joshua from the other. When they reached the gate, some men (from the Zealot party) wanted to put a lance through the bier. One of the disciples said to them, "Shall the Romans say, 'They have pierced their master?'" They wanted to give it a push. He said to them, "Shall they say that they pushed their master?" They opened a town gate for them, and Rabban Yochanan got out.

When he reached the Roman camp he said to Vespasian: "Peace to you, O king; peace to you, O king." Vespasian said: "Your life is forfeit on two counts: one, because I am not a king and you call me king; and again, if I am a king, why did you not come to me before now?"

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai: "As for your saying that you are not a king, in truth you are a king, since if you were not a king, Jerusalem would not be delivered into your hand, as it is written, 'And Lebanon (a reference to the Holy Temple) shall fall by a mighty one.' . . . As for your question why, if you are a king, I did not come to you till now, the answer is that the biryoni among us did not let me."

Said Vespasian to Rabban Yochanan: "If there is a jar of honey round which a serpent is wound, would one not break the jar to get rid of the serpent?" He could give no answer.

Rabbi Joseph, or as some say Rabbi Akiba, applied to him the verse, "[G-d] turns wise men backward and makes their knowledge foolish." He ought to have replied to him: We take a pair of tongs and grip the snake and kill it, and leave the jar intact.

At this point, a messenger arrived from Rome to Vespasian, saying: "Arise, for the emperor is dead, and the notables of Rome have decided to make you head."

Vespasian had just finished putting on one boot. When he tried to put on the other, he could not. He tried to take off the first, but it would not come off. He said, "What is the meaning of this?" Rabban Yochanan said to him: "Do not worry: the good news has done it, as it is written, 'Good tidings make the bone fat.' What is the remedy? Let someone whom you dislike come and pass before you, as it is written, "A broken spirit dries up the bones." He did so, and the boot went on.

Said Vespasian to Rabban Yochanan: "Seeing that you are so wise, why did you not come to me till now?" He said: "Have I not told you?" He retorted: "I, too, have told you."

Vespasian said: "I am now going, and will send someone to take my place. You can, however, make a request of me and I will grant it."

Rabban Yochanan said: "Give me Yavneh and its sages, and the family chain of Rabban Gamaliel, and physicians to heal Rabbi Tzadok."

Rabbi Joseph, or as some say Rabbi Akiba, applied to him the verse, "[G-d] turns wise men backward and makes their knowledge foolish." He ought to have said to him: "Let the Jews off this time." Rabban Yochanan, however, thought that so much he would not grant, and even this little would not be saved.

Kamtza and Bar Kamtza

Because of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza, Jerusalem was destroyed.

It happened this way: A certain man had a friend named Kamtza and an enemy called Bar Kamtza. He once made a party and said to his servant, "Go and bring Kamtza." The man went and brought Bar Kamtza.

When the man who gave the party found Bar Kamtza there he said, "See, you are my enemy; what are you doing here? Get out!" Said the other: "Since I am already here, let me stay, and I will pay you for whatever I eat and drink."

Said the host: "Absolutely not."
"Then let me give you half the cost of the party."
The host refused.

"Then let me pay for the whole party."
Still the host refused, and took him by the hand and threw him out.
Said Bar Kamtza, "Since the Rabbis were sitting there and did not stop him, this shows that they agreed with him. I will go and inform against them to the government."
He went and said to the emperor, "The Jews are rebelling against you."

Said the emperor, "How can I know that this is true?"
"Send them an offering," said Bar Kamtza, "and see whether they will offer it on the altar."

So he sent with him a fine calf. While on the way he made a blemish on its upper lip (or as some say, on the white of its eye)—in a place where we count it a blemish but they do not.

The rabbis were inclined to offer it in order not to offend the government. Said Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkulas to them: "People will say that blemished animals are offered on the altar."

They then proposed to kill Bar Kamtza so that he should not go and inform against them, but Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkulas said to them, "Is one who makes a blemish on consecrated animals to be put to death?"

Rabbi Yochanan thereupon remarked: "Because of the scrupulousness of Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkulas our House has been destroyed, our Temple burnt, and we ourselves exiled from our land."

The Laughter of Rabbi Akiva

Again it happened that Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria, Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Akiva went up to Jerusalem. When they reached Mt. Scopus, they tore their garments. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox emerging from the place of the Holy of Holies. The others started weeping; Rabbi Akiva laughed.

Said they to him: "Why are you laughing?"
Said he to them: "Why are you weeping?"

Said they to him: "A place [so holy] that it is said of it, 'the stranger that approaches it shall die,'¹ and now foxes traverse it, and we shouldn't weep?"

Said he to them: "That is why I laugh. For it is written, 'I shall have bear witness for Me faithful witnesses--Uriah the Priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.'² Now what is the connection between Uriah and Zechariah? Uriah was [in the time of] the First Temple, and Zechariah was [in the time of] the Second Temple! But the Torah makes Zachariah's prophecy dependent upon Uriah's prophecy. With Uriah, it is written: 'Therefore, because of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field; [Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the Temple Mount like the high places of a forest.]³ With Zachariah it is written, 'Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem.'⁴

"As long as Uriah's prophecy had not been fulfilled, I feared that Zechariah's prophecy may not be fulfilled either. But now that Uriah's prophecy has been fulfilled, it is certain that Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled."

With these words they replied to him: "Akiva, you have consoled us! Akiva, you have consoled us!"

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

On the first of Shevat (thirty-seven days before his passing), Moses begins his repetition of the Torah to the assembled children of Israel, reviewing the events that occurred and the laws that were given in the course of their forty-year journey from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land, rebuking the people for their failings and iniquities, and enjoining them to keep the Torah and observe its commandments in the land that G-d is giving them as an eternal heritage, into which they shall cross after his death.

Moses recalls his appointment of judges and magistrates to ease his burden of meting out justice to the people and teaching them the word of G-d; the journey from Sinai through the great and fearsome desert; the sending of the spies and the people's subsequent spurning of the Promised Land, so that G-d decreed that the entire generation of the Exodus would die out in the desert. "Also against me," says Moses, "was G-d angry for your sake, saying: You, too, shall not go in there."

Moses also recounts some more recent events: the refusal of the nations of Moab and Ammon to allow the Israelites to pass through their countries; the wars against the Amorite kings Sichon and Og, and the settlement of their lands by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh; and Moses' message to his successor, Joshua, who will take the people into the Land and lead them in the battles for its conquest: "Fear them not, for the L-rd your G-d, He shall fight for you."

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 20 - 21 July	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:05	6:06
Adelaide	5:07	6:06
Brisbane	4:55	5:51
Darwin	6:20	7:11
Gold Coast	4:53	5:48
Perth	5:15	6:12
Sydney	4:49	5:48
Canberra	4:55	5:54
Launceston	4:47	5:51
Auckland	5:08	6:08
Wellington	4:57	6:00
Hobart	4:42	5:47
Byron Bay	4:51	5:46

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PARSHAS DEVARIM • 8 MENACHEM-AV • 20 JULY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	5:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	5:40 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9:55 AM
	SHACHARIS	10:00 AM
	MINCHA	4:45 PM
	FAST BEGINS:	5:24 PM
SUNDAY:	FAST ENDS:	5:54 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	5:15 PM
	MAARIV	6:00 PM