

Finally, we are out of the three weeks, the nine days, the day of Tisha Be Av itself... No more doom and gloom, now is the time for happiness! Or is it? On the day after Tisha Be Av, many of the laws of Avelut still apply. Hashem is telling us that whilst the fixed period of mourning the loss of the temples is over, we should still feel the absence of Kedusha the whole year round. By taking some of this mood with us, only then can we show Hashem that we really want the Bet Ha Mikdash, not only for three weeks a year.

Right, now, on with the Mishna!

This week we will learn Mishna Bet, Perek Daled of Messechet Shabbat which continues on the subject of insulation.

On a Friday, one may insulate hot food with animal hides. The hides are not Muktzeh on Shabbat as they are also used as rugs.

If however, one insulated with shearings of wool (which are permitted), they themselves are Muktzeh. Therefore, to open the pot you have to hold the lid handle and shake off the wool to avoid touching something Muktzeh.

When using wool, once the pot is open, there is discussion about how one may serve. R'Elazar ben Azaryah says that one must remove the food without

picking up the inner pot. This is because if one picks up the pot, the wool might fall into the cavity thereby leaving no place to return the pot when one has finished with it.

The Chachamim disagree and permit the full removal of the pot.

If one forgot to insulate a pot before Shabbat he may not do so on Shabbat. If one covered it before Shabbat but it then became uncovered, then he may recover it, even on Shabbat!

One may wrap up a bottle of cold water to keep it cool, even on Shabbat.

Hadran Alach Perek Revii, Perek Shlishi, Perek Sheini, Perek Rishon - Messechet Shabbat.

This is our last week of the living torah so I would like to add thanks to everyone who has helped us distribute in Shul, or contributed, or read it! Also, thanks to Eli Gaventa for your hard work. Take a break now! We hope you have all enjoyed it and I wish next year's team Hatzlacha Rabbah.

Shabbat Shalom

'Parasha Digest – Va'etchanan

ראשון: Moshe recounts how he pleaded with Hashem to allow him entry to Eretz Yisrael. Hashem refused but he told Moshe that he could see the land from a mountain. Moshe then uses the Baal Peor incident to show to Bnei Yisrael that those who remained faithful to Hashem survived and thrived.

שני: Moshe implores Bnei Yisrael to treasure the torah and to never forget the day on which they were given the torah and to tell that day's events to their descendants. Then Moshe focuses on Hashem not appearing to Bnei Yisrael in any form and that if they worship idols Hashem will exile them, but even so Hashem will still be with them.

שלישי: Moshe designates three cities of refuge on the eastern side of the River Jordan; these cities provided refuge for people who accidentally killed someone else.

רביעי: Moshe repeats the Aseret Hadibrot (10 commandments) and reminds Bnei Yisrael that the Brit (covenant) made at Har Sinai was not limited only to those who were physically present, but also to their descendants.

חמישי: Moshe describes the fright that Bnei Yisrael felt following Matan Torah, the Nesiim (Princes of the tribes) asked Moshe to talk to Hashem on their behalf.

ששי: The first paragraph of the Shema is detailed and Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael that if they question why we do the Mitzvot it is because Hashem took us out of Eretz Mitzrayim in order to serve him and we gain rewards for doing so.

שביעי: Bnei Yisrael are told to destroy the inhabitants of Eretz Canaan with their idols and the aveiroh of intermarriage is discussed.



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Endless Years...

As we enter Shabbat Nachamu, we look forward to the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash and daven with renewed fervour for the coming of the Moshiach. However, one may wonder why Hashem is more likely to listen to our prayers, than those of the previous generations. When the generations of the Rishonim and Acharonim like Rashi, the Rambam, Rabbi Yosef Karo or the Chafetz Chayim all davened for the Moshiach and didn't have their tephilot answered, what chance is there for us, who are not even close to being on their level?

This question can be answered with the following Moshel.

There was once a rebellious prince whose wicked actions caused considerable anguish to his father, the king. On one particular occasion the prince was brought in front of the king, having carried out a particularly heinous crime.

The king, who was renowned for his kind and caring ways, was distraught and determined to teach his son a lesson. He pointed to a large boulder on the top of a nearby hill and announced that at dawn his son would be stoned by this boulder. The courtiers were stunned; they knew that once the king had passed a decree it could not be changed. This punishment would mean certain death for the prince.

Late that night the king summoned his advisors. He informed them that though his decree cannot be retracted and his son must be punished by having the boulder thrown on him, it was not his intention that he be killed, rather that he be taught the wrong of his ways so that he may change. He instructed his advisors to return with a solution as to how his decree could stand but ensure that his son lived.

Shortly before dawn and after much consultation, the advisors returned with a solution. They advised the king that if the boulder would be broken into smaller parts, and then these were thrown at the prince, though they would surely inflict pain, they would not kill him.

And so it was that the bolder was broken into pieces, some smaller and some larger, and these were thrown at the prince. These stones caused considerable pain, and frequently the prince called out for mercy, but with the pile of stones still high the king was determined the punishment should continue. However, as the day grew on, and the mound became smaller the persistent cries of the prince found their target, and the king seeing that all that was left was a scattering of stones, showed compassion and allowed his son, the prince, to be freed.

Similarly, at the time of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, rather than c"v seeing the destruction of all of klal Yisrael, the Rebbono Shel Olam allowed our punishment to be broken into smaller pieces. Though the previous generations felt the pain of these stones, the mound was still piled high and their pleas could not counter the outstanding punishments. However, today after 2000 years of exile, and having felt the considerable pain of so many tragic episodes in our distant and recent past, there must surely be only a very few stones left, and the compassion of the Rebbono Shel Olam is well within our grasp. It is therefore an opportune time for us to entreat the Rebbon Shel Olam to forgive us and return us back to Tzion.

The Midrash states that one of the signs of the coming of the Moshiach is that children will teach their parents Torah. (Continued on inside page).

The Ripple Effect

Once upon a time, in a small town, lived a nice man with a nasty problem: he talked too much about other people. He could not help himself. Whenever he heard a story about somebody he knew, and sometimes about somebody he did not know, he just had to tell it to his friends. Since he was in business he heard quite a lot of rumours and stories. He loved the attention he got and was delighted when they laughed because of the way he told his "anecdotes," which he sometimes embellished with little details he invented to make them funnier and juicier. Other than that he was really a pleasant, good hearted man. He kind of knew it was wrong, but... it was too tempting, and in any case, most of what he told had really happened, didn't it? Many of his stories were just innocent and entertaining, weren't they?

One day he found out something really weird (but true) about another businessman in town. Of course he felt compelled to share what he knew with his colleagues, who told it to their friends, who told it to people they knew, who told it to their wives, who spoke with their friends and their neighbors. It went around town, till the unhappy business man who was the main character in the story heard it. He ran to the rabbi of the town, and wailed and complained that he was ruined! Nobody would like to deal with him after this. His good name and his reputation were gone with the wind.

Now this rabbi knew his customers, so to say, and he decided to summon the man who loved to tell stories. If he was not the one who started them he might at least know who did.

When the nice man with the nasty problem heard from the rabbi how devastated his colleague was, he felt truly sorry. He honestly had not considered it such a big deal to tell this story because it was true, the rabbi could check it out if he wanted. The rabbi sighed.

"True, not true, that really makes no difference! You just cannot tell stories about people. This is all

(Continued from front page).

As we come to the end of another year of the Living Torah I would like to thank all those who have ensured the embodiment of this Midrash, with the Hasmonean children preparing divrei Torah for the community. May they and their teachers have con-

lashon hara, slander, and it's like murder, you kill a person's reputation". He said a lot more, and the man who started the rumour now felt really bad and sorry. "What can I do to make it undone?" he sobbed, "I will do anything you say!"

The rabbi looked at him. "Do you have any feather pillows in your house?" "Rabbi, I am not poor, I have a whole bunch of them, but what do you want me to do, sell them?" "No, just bring me one."

The man was mystified, but he returned a bit later to the rabbi's study with a nice fluffy pillow under his arm. The rabbi opened the window and handed him a knife. "Cut it open!"

"But Rabbi, here in your study? It will make such a mess!" "Do as I say!" And the man cut the pillow. A cloud of feathers came out. They landed on the chairs and on the bookcase, on the clock, on the cat which jumped after them, they floated over the table and into the teacups, on the rabbi and on the man with the knife, and a lot of them flew out of the window in a big swirling whirling trail.

The rabbi waited ten minutes. Then he ordered the man: "Now bring me back all the feathers and stuff them back in your pillow. All of them mind you, not one may be missing!"

The man stared at the rabbi in disbelief. "That is impossible, Rabbi, the ones here in the room I might get, most of them, but the ones that flew out of the window are gone. Rabbi, I can't do that, you know it!"

"Yes," said the rabbi and nodded gravely, "that is how it is: once a rumour, a gossip story, a 'secret' leaves your mouth, you do not know where it ends up. It can fly outside and be blown away by the wind and you can never get it back!"

(adapted from chabad.org)

Shabbat Shalom

tinued hatzlocho and brocho bchol maaseh yedeihem, and through their efforts may we all be zoche to see beis hamoshiach and the binyan beis hamikdash bimheira byameinu.

Adapted from a Dvar Torah by Rabbi Rivlin, Mashgiach, Yeshivat Kerem B' Yavneh 5746 - **By Rabbi D Meyer.**

Letter from an Editor

This issue marks the end of the current editors' reign here at the Living Torah. As I'm sure you are aware, this publication has been in circulation for many years now, and every year approximately four students in year 12 take on the task of constructing a weekly Parasha sheet. It is down to these boys to write a template, construct Divrei Torah, receive Divrei Torah and finally produce the final product. This arduous process, though often burdening, is necessary and brings us great joy when we finish the leaflet. I would like to extend my thanks to all those people who have helped us in the process of producing the Living Torah.

Firstly a hearty thank you to all the students and Rebbeim within Hasmonean and out who have contributed Divrei Torah. May their studies continue from strength to strength.

Another thank you is needed for the main office secretarial staff; producing the Living Torah on time each week would not have been possible without their gracious support.

The penultimate thank you must go to my fellow editors, it's been a pleasure and an honour working with you throughout the year and your dedication and hard work editing and writing your columns has made the quality of this year's Living Torah something to be proud of.

It also must be said that the Living Torah is nothing without its reader's! That's you lot! We are all grateful that you still feel that this sheet of Torah is worth a glance. Your feedback throughout the year has given us much food for thought and we hope that you have enjoyed reading the Living Torah as much as we have done writing it.

Lastly I would like to recognize that the opportunity to perform Mitzvot is nothing more than a manifestation of God's kindness. For Hashem gains nothing at all from our fulfilment of his commandments; he favours us with Mitzvot only to enable us to draw closer to him and to allow us to earn reward. In the words of R' Chaninah ben Akashia: "*The Holy One, Blessed is He, wished to confer merit upon Yisrael;*

therefore he granted them the Torah and Mitzvot in abundance" (Makkot 23b). We could see God's precepts as a burden that we must bear and then expect reward for hewing to His demands or we can recognize Mitzvot for what they truly are: God's kindness made manifest, a gift freely given. I would like to thank Hashem for the opportunity given to me that allowed me to study the Parasha each week and to learn from Shlomo Ha Melech's words through the mefarshim on Mishlei. We see from the word *Va'etchanan* that Moshe, foremost of the prophets, most deserving of all men, approached God with nothing more than a request for undeserved favour. If it is so with Moshe it is surely so with lesser men. Truly the Living Torah was a gift freely given.

There is a lesson I think that can be learnt from the second Pasuk in this week's Parasha. We explained that Moshe asked Hashem to grant him favour as one who is undeserving. He therefore opened his prayer with the phrase "*You have begun to show your servant*". With these words Moshe declared that none of his attainments and abilities were his own; all derived from what God had shown him. The term *you have begun* is evidence of Moshe's great humility. Consider: the spiritual accomplishments of Moshe were without parallel – it was he who brought the holy Torah down from the Heavens, he who reached an almost angelic level, he who the Gemara testifies was unequalled in righteous deeds (Berachot 32b). Yet he states that Hashem has "begun" to show him His greatness. In Moshe's view of himself, he was no more than a beginner.

So too, just as on Simchat Torah as soon as we complete Sefer Devarim we immediately begin again with Sefer Bereishit, we should know that our work is never really complete – no matter what we accomplish in Torah, we have only just begun.

To our readers, my fellow editors, the staff and students of Hasmonean may we merit to always be moving forward in our lives and in our learning. And may we always carry the message of "*Trust in God with your whole heart and do not lean upon your own understanding*". *In all your ways acknowledge him and He will direct your paths aright*" (Mishlei 3:5-6).

Shabbat Shalom and Thank You: Eli Gaventa

Riddle for the Week
Who will be next year's Living Torah editors?
(Answer next year)

Answer To Last Week's Riddle:

A: The mitzvah of Tefillin contains the word Totephot which contains two foreign words, each meaning **two!**