

## Dear Friends,

Here is a short drasha and an advertisement for something very personal...

Tomorrow the Hebrew tribe will finish another cycle of Torah readings.

Symbolically and magically, members of the tribe - all of us - will read the final verses of the book of D'varim. We will part yet again from Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest of prophets. We will roll the Torah all the way back to the beginning, to "Heaven and earth", to Adam and Eve and the serpent.

The Torah is not a history book! Did the Garden of Eden "really" exist? Did Adam, Eve, and the snake actually live some 5779 years ago? I have no idea. But in a different sense - one which I will explain here - they definitely were and did. Not only that, they still are!

The Torah, as I said, is not a historical account. Rather, it is the inner story of our ancient tribe.

It is a story that speaks in code! It whispers only to those willing to listen - really listen - to the secrets of existence. The secrets appear as words ("In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...", etc). The black words written on the light parchment are in fact codes that invite and perhaps even demand decoding.

Thousands of drashot are published each week about the Torah portion. Some are repetitious; some are interesting; some are truly exciting. They all open narrow cracks into the depths of the great mystery, called "our lives". Indeed, every drasha is an attempt to crack the code of existence.

As we know - or don't know - nothing is ever as it seems... When we gaze deep into existence we discover that it is all enveloped in mystery. "World" in Hebrew is "olam". "Olam" means "absent", as in "absent from our vision." This mystery - the essence of existence, or meaning of life - is something we will seek, consciously or unconsciously, our entire life, just as our ancestors did, ever since the frontal cortex of the human brain developed, or, as the Torah relates, since the first homo-sapiens ate from the seductive Tree of Knowledge and began putting words together into stories.

This evening and tomorrow we will celebrate Simchat Torah, the holiday of our inner being. We celebrate the freedom we have to interpret the Torah's magnificent words, to crack the code encrypted on the parchment yet again. And again. And again.

I write a drasha every week and send it to a growing number of readers in Hebrew and in English. Some of you read it every week, some of you read it occasionally, and some of you do not read it at all. It's all fine! Of course, like any writer, I prefer that my words be read, but I definitely do not write them with that end in mind. I write because it is my way of cracking the code of existence. By exploring the Parsha every week, and writing the drashot, I

discover hidden worlds. A drasha is a conversation - at times a wrestling match - between myself, the ancient words, contemporary life, and the mysteries of the existence.

Several months ago we collected 54 of these drashot into a book called "Ayeka", which has recently come out in English on Kindle as well, and will soon be available in paperback through Amazon.

All income from this book - every penny - is earmarked for Veahavta's activities.

As we begin a new cycle of Torah readings, I invite any and everyone who is interested to purchase a copy - for yourself or for your friends - and by doing so, support the Kehillah, but more importantly, join in this deep conversation between us humans, and the God of mystery.

The Hebrew version is hardback and costs 75 NIS. It may be purchased at the Kehillah office, or by telephone at 04-6291180 , or by return email. I will happily add a dedication should you want one.

The English version on Kindle, can be purchased through Amazon:

[https://www.amazon.com/Ayeka-Evolving-Question-Portions-Veahavta-ebook/dp/B07DP6ZNTX/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1538312876&sr=8-3&keywords=ayeka](https://www.amazon.com/Ayeka-Evolving-Question-Portions-Veahavta-ebook/dp/B07DP6ZNTX/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1538312876&sr=8-3&keywords=ayeka).

**And, of course, we would love to see you at the hakafot dancing tonight, beginning at 6 p.m., and tomorrow at approximately 10:15 a.m. If you would like an Aliya LaTorah, (because it is customary that everyone gets an Aliya on Simchat Torah), please arrive by 9:30.**

I wish all of us the opportunity to delve deeply into the mysteries of existence. May the words of the Torah bring sweetness to our tribe. May the tough questions of life become clearer, and may we be replenished with new ones. New questions are a sign that we haven't given up, and that we are truly alive!

**Chag Sameach,**

**Elisha**