

**LOOKING AT MIDRASH
THROUGH THE LENS OF THE
MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE THEORY**

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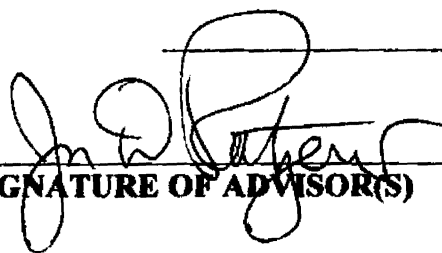
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ABSTRACT

The collection of value-laden texts commenting on the Bible is known as the Midrash, yet the word Midrash is also employed in the sense of education and learning. Using this variety of stories, parables, law codes, and analogies, the Rabbis were trying to reach the widest audience.

There is a modern theory of education, created by Dr. Howard Gardner, which suggests that each person has the capacity to learn in different ways, the "Multiple Intelligence" theory, specifying seven Intelligences: Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical-Rhythmic, Spatial, Intrapersonal and Interpersonal.

This thesis will examine Midrashim through the lens of Multiple Intelligences, showing that the Rabbis composed their works knowing that they had to appeal to different learners who learned and accepted information in different ways, following the advice in Proverbs 22:6, "חֲנֹךְ לְנֶעֶר עַל-פִּי דַרְכּוֹ" – "Train a lad according to his way".

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Introduction

There was a man traveling through the desert, tired and thirsty. All of a sudden he came upon an oasis with a beautiful shade tree laden with fruit, nestled next to a refreshing stream. He rested under the tree, ate the fruit and drank the water. When it was time for him to continue his journey, he turned to the tree: "O tree, how can I bless you? Shall I say: "May your fruit be sweet?" It is already sweet. Shall I say: "May your shade be restful?" It already is restful. Shall I say: "May there be a stream running along your side?" There already is a stream. O tree, how can I bless you? All I can say is: "May all your saplings be like you."¹

The story of the Jewish people is written in our sacred texts. These texts were passed on from generation to generation, adding and removing layers of interpretation and understanding. What remained constant was the seeking and searching for meaning from the Bible and passing the values therein from teacher to student². The collection of value-laden texts commenting on the Bible is known as the Midrash, a particular genre of rabbinic literature consisting of public exegesis and sermons, as well as stories and laws, written from the second Temple period through 1200 CE³. Yet the word Midrash is more than just a reference to a body of literature, it is also employed in the sense of education and learning. Using this wide variety of stories, parables, law codes, and analogies the Rabbis were able to reach various types of learners, so that each successive generation could accept and learn the ideals and morals of the Jewish people. Indeed the teachers themselves each possessed different strengths, different intelligences, that present themselves in the different Midrashim.

¹ Rabbi Laura J. Geller, "Blessing for the Inauguration of Rabbi David Ellenson" Fall 2002, from Taanith 5A-6B.

² Definition and understanding of Midrash taken from Encyclopaedia Judaica. (The Macmillan Company, Jerusalem, 1971) Vol.11, "Midrash" p.1507-1508.

³ Barry W. Holz, Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts. (Summit Books, New York, 1984) p.178.

There is a modern theory of education, created by Dr. Howard Gardner, which suggests that each person has the capacity to learn in different ways, and may be stronger or weaker in specific aptitudes. Gardner calls it the "Multiple Intelligence" theory of education⁴. I believe it is probable that the Rabbis, without knowing the modern-day educational theory, prepared different types of Midrashim to access the widest variety of learners from among the Jewish people. Similar to the Midrash written above, where the tired and thirsty man takes advantage of the oasis he finds in the desert, I too have found that the Midrashists have left us an oasis of learning models. This thesis will examine Midrashim through the prism of Multiple Intelligences, showing that the Rabbis composed their works knowing that they had to appeal to different learners in order to get their ideas across to the widest spectrum and have the people retain the knowledge.

How intentional or self-conscious were the Rabbis about recognizing the diversity of learners? Can we take the theory of Multiple Intelligence and attach it to the Rabbis who were writing thousands of years before the theory was even created? When Copernicus challenged the notion of the movement of the planets, he did not change the location of the sun; his theories explained the facts that already existed. It is a fact that there is a wide spectrum of Midrashic sources that delve into music, Linguistics, math, and personal relations. New educational theories do not challenge the breadth of Midrash. However with the wealth of research into brain function, Intelligence assessment and learning styles⁵, we can reexamine the Midrash to show that the Rabbis instinctively provided diverse learning opportunities. Following the advice in Proverbs

⁴ Howard Gardner, Frames of Mind, (Basic Books, New York, 1983)

⁵ Mel Levine, A Mind at a Time, (Simon and Schuster, New York, 2002) p.15.

22:6, "לְנַחֵם לְפָנָיו וְרַבָּן" - "Train a lad according to his way", the Rabbis wanted their message to appeal to the greatest audience, comprised of people who learned and accepted information in different ways.

Here are three Jewish examples of texts attempting to access different learners. In the Passover Haggadah, the Midrash of the four sons describes how to teach four different children, because each learns in different ways. The חכם is very intelligent and can be challenged on a deeper level. He asks, "What are the rulings, the laws, and the traditions which God has commanded us?" Accordingly we answer with biblical sources of how God took us out of Egypt, and we can continue with the Halachot of Passover⁶. The רשע constantly questions and disputes the teacher, asking, "What is this service to you?" We must approach this learner more directly with a clear set of objectives; perhaps he is pushing the teacher away because of a lack of understanding and does not know how to draw closer. The תם student has trouble conceptually; he asks simply, "What is this?" He needs to be taught starting at a very basic level and then adding on layer by layer. The one who cannot even ask a question, this student needs to be cared for on a one-on-one basis, from the very beginning walking slowly step by step through the learning process. Each student learns in different ways and needs to be taught in different ways and the Rabbis, whether consciously or unconsciously, sought to create a variety of texts to reach out to each individual.

⁶ Sue Levi Elwell, The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah. (CCAR Press, New York, 2002) p.40.

In the Bible, the creation story in the beginning of Genesis presents another unique model of multiple learning styles by providing several versions of the same story. Creation is first presented in Genesis 1:1-2:4a, then retold in a different way from 2:4b-24. The creation of humans is then recapped a third time in Genesis 5:1-5. Why the need to run through the story so many times? One plausible explanation was to make sure each reader is able to connect to it, because each person connects to the text in a different way. Some learners resonate with the numbered sequence of days and the logical ordered creation, with plenty of details and visuals. First God created the light, forming day and night. Then came the sky and dry land, followed by vegetation and animals and finally the creation of human beings. Other learners prefer the second creation story because it is non-hierarchical, and follows the creation from the point of view of a human being who is put on earth and then names the animals and vegetation and is finally provided with a mate. The third creation story is the most concise and to the point, less visual with fewer details but more memorable through the repetition and terseness. Each resonates with different learners and learning styles.

The final example is the Siddur, where certain prayers repeat in the morning and evening prayer times, yet have slight variations. When the prayers of our people were first written by our Rabbis in the second half of the second century B.C.E.⁷, they had the flexibility to improvise based on a loose set of designated themes that ought to be covered in every service. Over time these prayers got standardized and fixed into the set

⁷Lawrence A. Hoffman, The Way into Jewish Prayer. (Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock VT., 2000) p.3.

order of the service⁸. However the diversity of prayers that often overlap were kept in the prayerbook because each might appeal to different styles of prayer as well as to the multiple listeners in the synagogue. For example, *יוצר* and *אהבה רבה* are morning prayers equivalent thematically to *עריב מעריב* and *עולם אהבת* said in the evening, but have small Linguistic and word order differences. Adapting the words and rhythm to diverse situations appealed to a wide range of worshippers, not only so that people's *kavannah* – intentionality - would remain focused but also so that each individual would be able to connect to the divine in his or her own personal way, which is the ultimate goal of prayer⁹.

While we might instinctively know that people learn in different ways and have different capacities, some educational theorists have operated on the assumption that all students have a single Intelligence Quotient. In 1905, French psychologist Alfred Binet developed a test to predict academic success when the French government asked him to help them determine which children in the public schools would have difficulty with formal education¹⁰. Binet used a test, originally designed for military soldiers, to assess Intelligence including visual perception, tactile stimulus, and mechanical analysis, as well as verbal, memory and mathematical assessments¹¹. But in their findings, they found that

⁸ Hoffman, p.4.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.17.

¹⁰ www.iqtest.com/history.html

¹¹ New Methods for the Diagnosis of the Intellectual Level of Subnormal, Alfred Binet (1905) First published in *L'Année Psychologique*, 12, 191-244. This translation by Elizabeth S. Kite first appeared in 1916 in *The development of intelligence in children*. Vineland, NJ: Publications of the Training School at Vineland.

tests of practical knowledge, memory, reasoning, vocabulary, and problem solving were the best predictors of school Intelligence¹². This led the way to standardized testing to judge how smart people were based solely on their capacity for logic and Linguistic skills. In America, Louis Terman developed the term IQ and changed the way the results of the test were stated from a simple mental age to a quotient¹³. This number was used to detect persons of lower Intelligence, and to detect children of lower Intelligence in order to place them in special education programs. Students have become characterized by their scores on standardized tests such as the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and GRE (Graduate Record Exam) necessary to admittance to college undergraduate and graduate programs. But it is possible that the standard Intelligence tests measure only a portion of the human abilities that could be considered aspects of Intelligence.

Howard Gardner shattered the mold in 1983 with his groundbreaking work, Frames of Mind. He declared that humans had more than one or two types of Intelligence; we have seven Intelligences and he left open the possibility that there might be even more. The original seven Intelligences are Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Spatial, Intrapersonal and Interpersonal. We are equipped with each one and we can strengthen them with use and practice¹⁴. Gardner's construct recognizes that we are equipped to learn in various ways and can realize our potential in each through our own inclinations, as well as with society providing us with room for

¹² www.iqtest.com/history.html

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Howard Gardner, Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century. (Basic Books, New York, 1999).

growth. Using his theories, Dr. Mel Levine, through his work as a pediatrician helping children find success in school and life, concluded that:

The brain of each human is unique. Some minds are wired to create symphonies and sonnets, while others are fitted out to build bridges, highways and computers; design airplanes and road systems; drive tucks and taxicabs; or seek cures for breast cancer and hypertension. The growth of our society and the progress of the world are dependent on our commitment to fostering in our children, and among ourselves, the coexistence and mutual respect of these many different kinds of minds¹⁵.

Understanding that all people have unique minds inspired me to reexamine Midrash using each of Gardner's original seven "Intelligences" as a lens to discover if and how the Rabbis tapped into each one. We possess a range of learning capacities and I believe that the Rabbis intuitively sought to enable divergent learners to engage in Torah. Max Kedushin¹⁶ addresses this idea that various types of teachers with unique and complementary gifts of various Intelligences employed Midrash, in his book, The Rabbinic Mind¹⁷. Kedushin suggests religious values are present in the vast literature of Rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic value-concepts, which are undefined and indefinable, can respond to and express the multiplicity of human personalities. "At the same time the value-term does convey an abstract, generalized idea of the concept it represents, and this generalized idea is common to all members of the group"¹⁸. The value-concepts played a crucial role in the lives of Rabbis and their followers. They are meaningful enough and colorful enough to make of the individuals who employ them into a unified group, with a

¹⁵ Mel Levine, A Mind at a Time. (Simon and Schuster, New York, 2002), p.13

¹⁶ Max Kadushin (1895-1980) was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1920 and earned a Doctorate there in 1932. Kadushin's chief scholarly work was produced in his attempt to demonstrate that rabbinic thinking presents a systematically structured world outlook. His publications include *The Theology of Seder Eliahu* (1932), *Organic Thinking* (1938), *The Rabbinic Mind* (1952), *Worship and Ethics* (1964), and *A Contemporary Approach to the Mekilta* (1969).

¹⁷ Max Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind. (Blaisdell Publishing Company, New York, 1965).

¹⁸ Ibid, p.2.

clearly recognizable character¹⁹. How were they transmitted to the people? The supplement to the speech of ordinary social interaction was the Aggadah. Arising primarily as sermons to the masses, it approximated the actual manner in which the value-concepts were imbedded in daily situations and ordinary conversation²⁰. To produce this literature, they had to narrow the gap between the teacher and the learner. The Rabbis were bound up in the life of the community; they came from a variety of professions, including artisans, tradesmen, and physicians²¹. Hillel was a carpenter, Joshua ben Hananiah was a smith, and Rabbi Yochanan was a shoemaker. Not only were they of the people, "they were mindful of their audience, suiting the style and content of their message in accordance with the background of the hearers"²².

This thesis has practical applications and implications for praxis. For contemporary teachers of Torah, we can tailor the use of Midrashim to diverse learners. Rabbis, Cantors, Educators and lay leaders are constantly looking for multiple entryways for children and adults to connect to their Jewish heritage and make it meaningful in their lives. Pointing out that Rabbis throughout the ages were trying to reach out to different learners can inspire our students to seek where they fit into the Jewish tradition. Moreover, looking at Midrash, and any other text, through the lens of the "Multiple Intelligences", may encourage teachers of Torah to make the text accessible to different learners and learning styles. We can tailor texts to contexts, and lessons to learners, and it can make us better teachers. Thinking about Multiple Intelligences when using

¹⁹ Kedushin, p.3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.84.

²¹ Louis Ginzberg, *Students, Scholars and Saints*, (Philadelphia, JPS, 1928) p.48-50.

²² Kedushin, p.87, and S. Lieberman *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 1942) p.161-2.

Midrashim enables us to recognize our own tendencies when teaching or preaching and forces us to balance them with the needs of congregants and students. If we tend to focus on Linguistic and Interpersonal Intelligences too much, we might want to reach out to those inclined more to music or Spatial Intelligences. Without rigidly adhering to the construct, we can use it as a tool to diversify our educational assets.

PART I:

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences

In order to apply the theory of "Multiple Intelligences" to Midrash, an explanation of the theory is necessary. A summary of the theory follows, along with specific descriptions of each of the seven Intelligences, anchored with a real-world example of each.

Howard Gardner first proposed the theory of Multiple Intelligences in his landmark book, Frames of Mind, written in 1983, which was updated in 1999 with his book, Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century. His theory is based on the idea that "Human beings possess a range of capacities and potentials – multiple Intelligences – that, both individually and in consort, can be put to many productive uses".²³ Furthermore, "Individuals can not only come to understand their multiple Intelligences but also deploy them in maximally flexible and productive ways".²⁴ Unlike the common misconception that a person's Intelligence is based only on his or her language and logical skills, Gardner suggests, "human beings are organisms who possess a basic set of seven, eight or a dozen Intelligences. Thanks to evolution, each of us is equipped with these intellectual potentials, which we can mobilize and connect according to our own inclinations and our culture's preferences".²⁵

²³ Gardner, Intelligence Reframed, p.4

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p.44

The Multiple Intelligences are classified below in short form and each one will be further elucidated on in the proceeding pages.

The Multiple Intelligences:

1. **Linguistic Intelligence:** involves the sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. (Lawyers, speakers, writers, poets, etc.)
2. **Logical-mathematical Intelligence:** involves the capacity to analyze problems logically, carry out mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. (Mathematicians, logicians, scientists, etc.)
3. **Musical Intelligence:** entails skill in the performance, composition and appreciation of Musical patterns. (Singers, musicians, etc.)
4. **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence:** entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems or fashion products. (Dancers, athletes, craftspersons, mechanics, surgeons, etc.)
5. **Spatial Intelligence:** features the potential to recognize and manipulate the patterns of wide space as well as the patterns of more confined areas. (Navigators, pilots, sculptors, chess players, surgeons, graphic artists, architects, etc.)
6. **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** involves the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself – including one's own desires, fears and capacities – and to use such information effectively in regulating one's life. (philosophers, counselors, therapists, parents, etc.)

7. **Interpersonal Intelligence:** denotes a person's capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people, and consequently, to work effectively with others. (Salespeople, teachers, clinicians, religious leaders, political leaders, actors etc.)

Linguistic Intelligence

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

In "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost²⁶, his wonderful imagery of the divergent paths in front of him, along with the meter and flow of the entire poem, demonstrates some of the central aspects of the Linguistic Intelligence. A poet must be

²⁶ Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken", from Mountain Interval, 1920.

supremely sensitive to shades of meanings of each word, and be aware and promote the variety of sought-after meanings and connotations. The author also hopes the specific use of words will capture the emotions or images that animated the initial desire to compose the material. The logic of a writer, to arrange imagery and meaning, requires as much brainwork as the arrangement of an argument²⁷. Whereas a scientist's logic relies on the implications of a proposition for another, the poet's logic centers on sensitivity to shades of meaning and what they imply for neighboring words.

One cannot be a poet without understanding the interaction among Linguistic connotations. Even those of us who are not poets possess a feeling to the functions of language: its potential to excite, convince, stimulate, and convey information and to please. Language can be used to convince others of a course of action, especially politicians, lawyers and even three-year-olds trying to get extra dessert. It has a mnemonic potential to help one remember information, like rules of a game, directions or one's possessions. Language plays a vital role in explanation - much of teaching and learning occurs through language by oral and written instructions. Even with logical mathematical reasoning and symbols, language remains the optimal means to convey basic concepts.

In some ways, if one focuses on phonological, syntactic and certain semantic properties, language is a relatively autonomous Intelligence that every person acquires early in childhood. As language takes off to encompass broader aspects, society appreciates those individuals who excel at certain uses. For example, the ability of actors or singers to remember huge bodies of verse and perform nightly for appreciative audiences. It takes a high level of Intelligence to put oral verses into component parts for

²⁷ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.73-74.

memorization and have it readily accessible at one's cerebral fingertips. The ability to remember lists became less vital with access to writing and printing and especially now with the Internet. But earlier epochs created elaborate systems for aiding memory including number lists, intricate images, spatial codes, zodiac systems and astrological schemes. A traditional source of prestige among elder males was their knowledge of the meanings of proverbs and traditional phrases, which may still be opaque to the less venerable members of society. The recollection of large amounts of information singled people out as treasured commodities and their powers were then cultivated and developed. The Linguistic Intelligence emphasizes the remarkable flexibility of language, and the variety of ways in which humans have exploited their Linguistic heritage for communicative as well as expressive purposes.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Train A departs Chicago at 10:00 PM traveling nonstop westward at 57 miles per hour. Train B leaves Chicago 2 hours later traveling nonstop westward as well. Train B passes train A at exactly 12 AM. At what speed was Train B traveling?

This could be a sample question from a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or a math problem in a Grade 10 textbook. Some of us might immediately see the problem in our minds and be able to solve it. Some might write out calculations and find the answer. Some might break out into a cold sweat and have no method to break the answer code. Solving this problem draws on the logical-mathematical Intelligence, the ability to understand and work in the realm of math and science.

In studying this Intelligence, Gardner writes that it does not have its origins in the auditory-oral sphere; instead this form of thought can be traced to a confrontation with the world of objects²⁸. In confronting objects, ordering, and reordering them, and assessing their quantity, children at a young age gain the most fundamental knowledge about the logical-mathematical realm. The individual soon becomes able to appreciate the actions one can perform upon objects, the relations among the objects, statements about the potential actions and the relationship of these statements. The development is from objects to statements, from actions to relations, from sensory-motor to pure abstraction, and finally to the heights of logic and science.

The characteristics of the logical-mathematical Intelligence include love of solving problems²⁹. No fact is accepted unless proved rigorously by universally accepted principles. There is great speculative freedom, but the theory must comport to physical reality. Mathematicians are sustained and motivated by the potential to create a result that is entirely new and change forever the way others think about the mathematical order. The mathematically inclined person is a maker of patterns, which become permanent because they are made with ideas. It includes the ability to handle skillfully long lines of reasoning. It also requires the ability to discover a promising idea and draw out its implication, or recognize significant problems and solve them.

With very complex problems, the logical mathematician is able to find a simpler component of the problem, solve that and then build upon it. Another method of problem solving is to propose a possible solution and work backwards, or even describe

²⁸ Gardner, Frames of Intelligence, p. 128-130.

²⁹ Ibid., p.138-139.

characteristics the solution should have and try to attain each of them. Perhaps another way is indirect proof. All these methods of problem solving are useful to explain other problems in life such as connecting the activities of one person to others.

The logic-math-science Intelligence is fueled by the need to understand our physical environment. Math is a tool for building models and theories which can explain the operation of the world including: material objects like physics and chemistry, living things like biology, human beings (social or behavioral sciences) or the human mind (cognitive science). In common with logic-math-science Intelligence is an individual who is absorbed with the objects in the world and how they operate and the search for a set of rules or principles, which can help explain the behavior of objects. Progress is made when disparate elements are linked and a few simple rules can explain observed interactions.

The scientist often poses challenging questions whose answers can change the way we see the universe. They are guided by underlying beliefs about how the universe must work and basic conviction about how these principles are best revealed. In some respects, science is a kind of religion, a set of beliefs that scientists embrace with almost a zealot's conviction.

Conventional thinking in modern education and standardized testing seem to overly rely on this Intelligence when assessing the overall Intelligence of a given candidate. However, while the logical-mathematical Intelligence is of importance in history in terms of scientific breakthroughs, technology, biological discoveries and physics, it is not superior or overwhelming to the other Intelligences. There are idio

savants who perform great feats of calculation even though they remain tragically deficient in most other areas. It is perhaps ironic that the actual mechanism by which one arrives at a solution to a logical-mathematical solution is not as yet properly understood³⁰.

Musical Intelligence

Do, a dear, a female dear
Re, a drop of golden sun
Mi, a name, I call myself
Fa, a long long way to run
Sol, a needle pulling thread
La, a note to follow sew
Ti, a drink with jam and bread
And that will bring us back to do, do, do, do³¹

This song written by Rogers and Hammerstein for the Broadway hit, The Sound of Music is one of the most memorable tunes from that successful show. The character who sings it in the show, Maria, is trying to teach the Van Trapp children how to sing, and so she takes a basic singing learning tool of Italian syllables and composes fun lyrics to help remember the song notes. For the musically inclined, the song is built on the major scale, called the solfeggio system, which uses syllables to represent notes. Similar to how the alphabet song helps people remember the letters and order of the alphabet, this mnemonic of do-re-mi helps singers remember the order of musical notes. This song demonstrates some of the elements of the Musical Intelligence.

Of all the Intelligences with which a person is endowed, none emerges earlier than musical talent³². One can exhibit musical precocity as a result of involvement with an instructional regime, a life in a household filled with music, or even a core talent that

³⁰ Gardner, Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice. (Basic Books, New York, 1993) p.20.

³¹ "Do-Re-Mi" from The Sound of Music, by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II, 1959.

³² Gardner, Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice, p.17.

was inherited. A composer uses the Musical Intelligence working with tones, rhythms and above all a sense of form and movement to create a piece of music. The composer must decide how much sheer repetition, and which harmonic, melodic, rhythmic or contrapuntal variations, are necessary to realize his or her conception. Some composing takes great time and effort. Other times, it seems as if it occurs not by acts of thought or will, but rather accomplished naturally. For those who do not compose, composer Aaron Copland suggests, "even the intelligent listener must be prepared to increase his or her awareness of the musical material and what happens to it. He must hear the melodies, the rhythms, the harmonies, and the tone colors in a more conscious fashion. He must follow the line of the composer's thought, know something of the principles of musical form."³³

There are certain components of Musical Intelligence, most central are pitch (melody) and rhythm: sounds emitted at a certain auditory frequency and grouped according to a prescribed system. "Part of the organization of music is horizontal - the relations among the pitches as they unfold over time; and part is vertical, the effects produced when two or more sounds are emitted at the same time, giving rise to a harmonic or dissonant sound"³⁴. Next in importance is timbre, the characteristic qualities of a tone. With these central elements of music, the next part is the role of audition in the definition of music. The auditory sense is crucial, but rhythmic organization can exist apart from auditory realization.

Rhythm allows deaf individuals entry into music. For example in the motion picture, Mr. Holland's Opus, there is a scene where the music was translated into a

³³ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.103.

³⁴ Ibid. p.104.

rhythmic series of colored lights for a group of deaf listeners. They watch the lights and smile, as they are able to gain a sense of the rhythm and flow of the music.³⁵

There is certainly another central aspect to music, its affect. It has emotional implications, and can capture feelings. As music expert Roger Session suggests, "Music cannot express fear but its movement in tones, accents and rhythm can be restless, violent and suspenseful".³⁶ Listeners have emotional responses to music, leading psychologists to try and understand how music is perceived. The research shows that most people can appreciate something of the structure of music. People have frames for hearing music, expectations about what a piece should be, or how to complete a segment that makes musical sense³⁷.

Like language, music is a separate intellectual competence, not dependant upon physical objects in the world. Musical facility can be elaborated to a certain degree through exploration and exploitation of the oral-aural channel. It is equally important to note the important and integral links between music and other spheres of intellect. Music is related in a variety of ways to the range of human symbol systems and intellectual competencies. Many composers stress the close tie between music and Bodily or gestural language. Music can be seen as an extended gesture, a kind of movement or direction carried out with the body. Children certainly relate music and body movement naturally, doing them together. Most accounts of music tie it to dance or integrate it with hand and body motion. Music can also serve to capture feelings, or knowledge about feelings, and communicate them from the performer or creator to attentive listener.

³⁵ Mr. Holland's Opus, Directed by Stephen Herek, Written by Patrick Sheane Duncan, Buena Vista Pictures, 1995.

³⁶ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.106.

³⁷ Ibid, p.106-108.

Another Intelligence linked to music is the mathematical sphere. In order to appreciate the operation of rhythms in musical work, an individual ought to have basic numerical competence, especially since performances require sensitivity to regularity and ratios that can sometimes be quite complex. But this remains mathematical thinking only at a relatively basic level. When it comes to the appreciation of musical structures and how they are repeated and/or transformed, one encounters mathematical thought at a higher level. Sensitivity to math patterns and regularities has characterized many of the great composers including Bach and Mozart. Music lends itself well to exploration with other modes of Intelligence.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence



When Michael Jordan soars through the air in a gravity-defying slam dunk, we marvel at his ability to launch his lithe six-foot, six-inch body four feet into the air and deliver a basketball with great force through the netted rim. When the famous mime Marcel Marceau creates the appearance of an object, person or action on stage, it requires caricature, and an exaggeration of movements and reactions. He can create characters, personalities, actions, animals, natural phenomena and even abstract concepts such as

freedom or evil, often simultaneously. The mime and the basketball player draw upon a highly evolved Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence.

Characteristic of this Intelligence is the ability to use one's body in highly differentiated and skilled ways, for expressive as well as goal-directed purposes³⁸. Characteristic as well is the capacity to work well with objects, both those that involve fine motor movements or fingers and hands as well as gross motor movements of the entire body. These two capacities, control of one's Bodily motions and capacity to handle objects skillfully, are the core of Bodily Intelligence. They can exist separately, but typically they go hand-in-hand.

Dancers and swimmers have keen mastery over the motions of their bodies. Artisans, baseball players and instrumentalists manipulate objects with finesse. Inventors and actors also use the body for success. Skilled use of the body has been important in the history of the species. Naturally one thinks of the Greeks where perhaps this form of Intelligence reached its peak as they revered the beauty of the human form by means of their artistic and athletic activities. Today the body as a form of Intelligence is jarring. Reasoning and physical activities tend to be separate - mental vs. physical. What we do with our bodies is often regarded as less privileged or special than solving problems by logic or language.

Psychologists who see the link between the use of the body and the deployment of other cognitive powers have recently minimized the distinction between the "reflective" and "active"³⁹. The highly skilled performer has evolved a family of procedures for

³⁸ Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, p.206-208.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.220-222.

translating intention into action. Knowledge of what is coming next allows that overall smoothness of performance. Programming of actions at a relatively abstract level allows the choice of those particular units of performance, which will result in the smooth sequence of activity. Mature forms of Bodily expression can be found in performing roles such as dance.

Dancing is "culturally patterned sequences of nonverbal body movements that are purposeful, intentionally rhythmic, and have aesthetic value in the eyes of those for whom the dancer is performing"⁴⁰. It can serve as a vehicle for secular or religious expression, a recreation activity, a psychological release, a statement of values even an economic activity. It uses the body in all kinds of unusual and satisfying ways, and provides an opportunity for one to observe Bodily Intelligence in its purest form. The performers in Cirque de Soleil⁴¹ configure their bodies, defying gravity and conventional wisdom of how a body may stretch and bend, unifying music and movement into a acting breathtaking theatrical performance.

In the field of stage performance, an actor uses the skill of observing carefully and then recreating scenes in detail. Combined with absolute concentration and creating feelings and emotions through the body. The great physical/slapstick comedians and clowns bring us laughter and humor, something exclusive to human beings. Athletes have the ability to excel in grace, power, speed, accuracy and teamwork. It provides pleasure to the athlete and countless fans as well. It combines control, craft and poise, along with natural Bodily endowment to complement the skill. The hockey player Wayne Gretzky doesn't always go to the puck, he goes where the puck is going to be, based on highly

⁴⁰ Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, p.222.

⁴¹ Mark Schreiber, *Dreams of the Solo Trapeze: Offstage with the Cirque de Soleil*. (Canal House Books, New York, 2005)

attuned skill of knowing the probable movements of other players and the rhythm of the game. Inventors, engineers and technicians have developed the capacity to manufacture, and transform objects with one's body or with tools. One can use other Intelligences to understand a mechanism, but being able to execute appropriate motions requires the Bodily Intelligence.

The body is its own Intelligence. Dancers, athletes, workers and inventors use their bodies to manipulate, arrange and transform objects in the world. Even those of us who do not use our bodies as a profession still have this Intelligence within us in varying degrees, simply to get out of bed, walk across a room or jump in the air. The Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence is the exercise of one's own body facing outward to the world.

Spatial Intelligence:

Navigation around the Caroline Islands in the South Seas is accomplished without instruments. The position of the stars, as viewed from various islands, the weather patterns, and water color are the only signposts. Each journey is broken into a series of segments; and the navigator learns the position of the stars within each of the segments. During the actual trip, the navigator must envision mentally a reference island as it passes under a particular star and from that he computes the number of segments completed, the proportion of the trip remaining and any corrections in heading that is required. The navigator cannot see the islands as he sails along; instead he maps their location in his mental "picture" of the journey⁴².

Central to Visual-Spatial thinking is the capacity to perceive the visual world accurately, to perform transformations and modifications upon one's initial perceptions and to be able to re-create aspects of one's visual experience, even in the absence of

⁴² Gardner, Multiple Intelligences: Theory in Practice, p.21.

relevant physical stimuli.⁴³ One can even be asked to produce forms or simply manipulate those provided. This Intelligence is an amalgam of abilities because an individual may be acute in visual perception but unable to draw. However, individuals with skills in drawing, manipulating pre-existing works and recreating a visual experience would most likely have success in the Spatial domain.

The most elementary operation of this Intelligence is the ability to perceive a form or an object. As one manipulates it or views it from different angles, one enters into the Spatial realm because a manipulation through space has been required. The ability to solve these Spatial problems uses elements of Linguistic and Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, though it remains a separate Intelligence, entailing a number of loosely related capacities: transforming an element into another, conjuring a mental image and transforming it, producing a graph of spatial information, etc. The skills are apparent in orienting oneself in various locales, from street grids to rooms to oceans. The Spatial Intelligence is invoked to recognize objects and scenes even if the original presentation has been altered. It is utilized for two and three-dimensional scenes, including maps, diagrams and geometrical forms.

The Spatial Intelligence is also used in abstract ways. One way is the feeling of tension, balance and composition that characterize a painting, a sculpture, or a waterfall. This is vital for artists and viewers of the arts. Another is the ability to discern similarities across diverse domains. An example is an author depicting the sky as a membrane or mankind as a heap of earth. The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's notion that a human's "unconscious is submerged like an iceberg" is a scientific conception

⁴³ Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, p.173.

using a mental image as a form of problem solving⁴⁴. Visual and spatial imagery can be a primary source of thought, because unless we can conjure up an image of a process or concept, then we will have trouble thinking clearly about it.

Visual-Spatial Intelligence certainly contributes to scientific and artistic thought. A keenly honed Spatial Intelligence is an invaluable asset in our society, making progress easier in domains such as science, art, and geography. Imagery has played a vital role in the solution to scientific problems. Sketches helped create the structure of the DNA molecule and were used as a metaphor for the development of the human race. Chess demonstrates the ability to anticipate moves and their consequences. Planning a painting or sculpture requires an exquisite sensitivity to the visual and spatial world along with the ability to fashion it. We all use our Spatial Intelligence to drive a car or appreciate art or surf the internet. Visual-Spatial Intelligence remains tied to the concrete world, of objects and their location in the world as well as the ability to picture those objects in your mind.

⁴⁴ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.190-195.

Intrapersonal Intelligence

In an essay called, "A Sketch of the past," Virginia Woolf discusses three specific and poignant memories of her childhood; a fight with her brother, seeing a particular flower in the garden and hearing of the suicide of a past visitor.

These are three instances of exceptional moments. Two of these moments ended in a state of despair. The other ended, on the contrary, in a state of satisfaction. The anger over the fight and the sense of horror (in hearing of the suicide) held me powerless. But in the case of the flower, I found a reason; and was thus able to deal with the sensation. I was not powerless.

Though I still have the peculiarity that I receive these sudden shocks, they are now always welcome; after the first surprise I always feel instantly that they are particularly valuable. And so I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what made me a writer. I hazard the explanation that a shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it. I feel that I have had a blow but it is not as I thought as a child, simply a blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life; it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearance; and I make it real by putting it into words⁴⁵.

This quotation illustrates the Intrapersonal Intelligence, the knowledge of the internal aspects of a person. This includes access to one's own feelings, and range of emotions, as well as the capacity to effect discrimination among these emotions, and then draw on them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behavior. A person with good intrapersonal skills has a "viable and effective model of himself or herself"⁴⁶. Since is it so private, it often requires other expressive Intelligences, such as language or music or art, to fully convey to an observer. In the above quotation from Woolf, she draws upon the Linguistic Intelligence to convey intrapersonal knowledge. Sigmund Freud was especially interested in the self as located in the individual, one's knowledge of oneself.

⁴⁵ Gardner, Multiple Intelligences, p.24

⁴⁶ Ibid.

He felt a person's interest in others was justified chiefly as a better means of gaining further understanding of one's own problems, wishes, anxieties and ultimately, of achieving one's goals⁴⁷.

The Intrapersonal Intelligence at a basic level amounts to the capacity to distinguish a feeling of pleasure from pain, and on that basis become more involved or withdraw from a situation. At the most advanced level, this knowledge allows one to detect and to symbolize complex and differentiated sets of feelings. This form of Intelligence is highly developed in, for example, a novelist who can write introspectively about feelings, a therapist and patient who together attain a deep knowledge of personal feelings, or a wise elder who draws upon his own wealth of inner experiences in order to advise members of his community.

It is an unusual individual who would not try to deploy his or her understanding of the personal realm to improve his or her own well being. Parents constantly examine parenting skills to better family relations. Large corporations spend time and money to develop leadership skills among their managers. Counselors and therapists not only guide others but also must continually examine themselves to be better professionals. Personal Intelligence might not readily translate into "know-how". But certainly these are forms of knowledge that are of tremendous importance even if students of cognition have ignored them. There is an identifiable core, a characteristic pattern of development, and specific end-states. An emerging sense of self proves to be a key element of

⁴⁷ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.238. This is just one aspect of Sigmund Freud's controversial theories on psychoanalysis that he developed in the early 1900's, especially his set of lectures on "Origins and Development of Psychoanalysis" at Clark University in 1909. Gardner consistently draws on thinkers like Freud to justify his theories. While Freud never used the phrase 'Intrapersonal intelligence' Gardner believes that Freud would have been sympathetic to the notion of it, being so preoccupied with the individual's knowledge of oneself.

overriding importance in the realm of Intrapersonal Intelligence. A developed sense of self has become one of the highest achievements of humans, which supersedes other more mundane forms of Intelligence.

Interpersonal Intelligence

With little formal training in special education, and nearly blind herself, Anne Sullivan began the task of instructing blind and deaf seven-year old Helen Keller. Sullivan's efforts at communication were complicated by Helen's emotional struggle with the outside world. Anne noticed that Helen's mother Annie regularly stopped Helen from putting her hand hand onto other peoples plates. At mealtime Annie would firmly put aside Helen's hand if she tried, and Helen would constantly try. The battle of wills happened constantly, usually ending with Helen kicking and screaming, pushing and pulling at Annie's chair.

Anne took Helen to a small cottage near the family's house and proceeded to discipline and control Helen without breaking her spirit. After seven days alone, Helen's personality suddenly underwent a profound change; the therapy had worked. The key to the miracle of language was Anne's insight into the person of Helen Keller⁴⁸.

Another dimension of the personal Intelligences is Interpersonal Intelligence.

William James, dean of American psychologists and philosophers, classified it as the relationship between a person and the community⁴⁹. One's knowledge of self comes from an ever-increasing appreciation of how others think about the individual. The purpose is less to advance one's personal agenda but rather to ensure the smooth functioning of the wider community. According to Gardner, the core capacity of this Intelligence is the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals, and in particular, among their moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions. At its most elementary form, the Intelligence allows even the young child to discriminate among the

⁴⁸ Gardner, Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice. p. 23.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.237.

people around him or her to detect their various moods. At an advanced level, it permits a skilled adult to read the intentions and desires, even hidden, of others and potentially to act upon this knowledge, for example, to influence a group of disparate individuals to behave along desired lines. Political and religious leaders are very skilled at this, along with expert parents and teachers, and helping professionals such as therapists or counselors.

When considering knowledge that revolves around other people, we enter a realm where culture and historical forces prove more important than other Intelligences. It is through the learning and use of a cultural system that the Interpersonal Intelligence assumes its characteristic form. This Intelligence reflects a set of powerful and competing constraints: the existence of one's own person; the existence of other persons; the cultures' presentations and interpretations of selves. There will be universal features of any sense of person or self, but also considerable cultural nuances, reflecting a host of historical and individuating factors.

Are There Other Intelligences?

The theory of Multiple Intelligences is elastic. Since its inception, there have been many suggestions of additional Intelligences. In Gardner's 1999 book, Intelligence Reframed, he encourages the creation of new Intelligences and fresh applications of the theory. He recognizes that his theory is a work in progress and never set a number of the number of Intelligences for which a human has the capacity. One suggestion is for a

philosophical Intelligence; "a proclivity for pondering the ultimate cosmic or existential concerns constitutes a distinctive human intellectual capacity"⁵⁰. Another common proposal is for a moral Intelligence, the ability to understand and live by ethical standards. Both of these suggestions, according to Gardner, do not extend beyond the spheres of the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligences, which are already part of the theory. Moreover, there is no single delineation of "the moral" that satisfies all; there is not one set of mandated moral behaviors or attitudes. Gardner did recently add an eighth Intelligence to his official list that he felt was outside the original seven, the Naturalist Intelligence⁵¹. This describes a person who demonstrates expertise in the recognition and classification of the numerous species – the flora and fauna – of his or her environment.

For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to restrict myself to the original seven Intelligences. I would like to demonstrate that the Rabbis addressed more than one Intelligence; once this is proven, it is entirely likely that the Rabbis addressed more than seven Intelligences, including naturalist, moral, philosophical, and spiritual Intelligences and more that have not been discovered yet. The point of this thesis is not to find all the Intelligences but rather to demonstrate the flexibility of Rabbis as teachers. I am trying to uncover, in a suggestive rather than exhaustive manner, the proposition that the Rabbis indeed recognized the multiple Intelligences of their audience members and taught accordingly.

⁵⁰ Howard Gardner, Intelligence Reframed, p.68.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.48-52.

PART II:

Applying the Theory of Multiple Intelligences to the Midrash

With the principles of the theory of Multiple Intelligences at hand, the task is to build a case that the Rabbis, whether consciously or not, enabled their Midrashim to respond to each of the multiple Intelligences. The second part of this thesis will address each Intelligence, finding examples from the large body of Midrashic materials that fit into each one.

Chapter 1: Linguistic Intelligence

“בראשית ברא אלוהים”

Since the Linguistic Intelligence focuses on the power of words, an obvious place to start looking at the Rabbis' fascination with language would be the very first words of the Torah. There is extensive commentary in the Midrash on the creation of the world in Bereshit 1:1, “בראשית ברא אלוהים”. The phrasing is so simple yet so poetic and these words have inspired so much mystification, profundity and creativity. Readers and teachers are consciously sensitive to meanings of each word and aware of the variety of connotations. In this vein, the Zohar comments that the order of the first three words display their meaning. In Zohar 1:15a, reading in hyperliteral translation, “Bereshit” is translated as “with beginning” and because of the order, God is the object⁵². Thus it is translated as, “with beginning, the ineffable source (חכמה) created Elohim (בינה). This is appropriate for a mystical reading because the true subject of emanation is unnamable.

But the Rabbis of the Talmud were concerned that if Elohim was the subject, then this could promote Gnostic dualism. In an opposing view, tractate Megillah 9A voices the concern. When the Torah was translated into Greek for Ptolemy, seventy elders independently translated this text as “אֱלֹהִים בְּרָא בְּרֵאשִׁית” – “In the Beginning God created...” so it would not be misconstrued that “בְּרֵאשִׁית” was a deity that created

⁵² All Zohar references are from Daniel Matt, *Commentary on the Zohar*, (Stanford U Press, Stanford, 2004).

Elohim, as the Torah might indicate. It is fascinating how the manipulation of words through the Linguistic Intelligence is at play here.

In the second verse of the Bible, continuing the description of creation, the world is depicted as "וְהָיָה נֹרָא וְגִבּוֹר". What exactly does this mean? Again the Linguistic Intelligence allows the Midrashists to paint colorful pictures of what our universe was like before God ordered and created it. According to the Zohar 1:16B the first act of creation was by language, by words - וַיֹּאמֶר. "And then God created light". Until this point, all was suspended in the mystery of the Ein Sof – נֹרָא וְגִבּוֹר. Once the force spread through the supernal palace, "when חֲכָמָה, impregnated the divine womb of בִּינָה, known as Elohim, the subsequent process of emanation can be described in terms of speech".⁵³ Until that stage, the metaphor was only thought. With תְּבִינָה, speech is manifest. בִּינָה represents the subtle beginnings of speech, the inner voice emerging silently through thought, חֲכָמָה. The Midrashist, in writing the Zohar, plays with the word "אָמַר" to mean more than just "say", but "create through words".

Other Midrashim pick up on the theme of creation through language. According to Mishnah Avot 5:1⁵⁴, the world was created by 10 "sayings," מֵאֲמֵרוֹת, based on the formula set here, "וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים" which appears 10 times in the creation account: Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,29,2:18 - "By the word of God the heavens were made". Not only were the heavens and earth created by Divine Utterance, but the ten

⁵³ Zohar 1:16B.

⁵⁴ Mishnayot, Translated and annotated by Philip Blackman (Judaica Press Ltd., Gateshead, 2000).

commandments from the book of Exodus are often referred to as the ten utterances, עשרת הדיברות. Both examples give credence to the high value of words and language by the Rabbis, as well as the power of a God who can create simply by speaking.

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, in his book Words that Hurt, Words that Heal, writes about the power of words, in negative as well as positive ways. "Chances are the worst pains you have suffered in life have come from words used cruelly - from ego-destroying criticism, excessive anger, sarcasm, public and private humiliation, hurtful nicknames, betrayal of secrets, rumor and malicious gossip"⁵⁵. Jewish tradition regards words as tangible things, indicated by its translation as "devarim" – דברים. There is a famous Midrash of a Rabbi who is slandered and asks the man who did it to make amends by going into the center of town and ripping open a pillow and letting all the feathers out. He would be forgiven when he brought back all the feathers. As the Rabbi says in the moral of the story, "although you truly wish to correct the evil you have done, it is as impossible to repair the damage done by your words as it is to recover the feathers"⁵⁶. Words have power to hurt and to heal, and so the Rabbis used this Intelligence to take great care in how they worded their sermons and stories, and also taught constantly the dangers of using hateful words that can have such harmful effects on people.

Another connection between the Linguistic Intelligence and our ancient texts is the entire book of Deuteronomy. This book is ascribed to Moses and is a compendium of

⁵⁵ Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, Words that Hurt, Words that Heal. (Quill William Morrow, NY, 1996), p.xivvv.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.3.

discourses and poems that Moses delivered to Israel in the last weeks of his life. It includes the history of the Jewish people from the creation of the world until that point, the naming of Joshua as successor to Moses, and miraculously, the details of Moses' own death. Unlike previous books of Torah, Moses is specifically named as the author. It is his valedictory address, summing up the laws and lessons from God and urging *Am Yisrael* to keep them in mind always. Ironically, Moses who earlier in the Torah doubts his ability to engage in dialogue with Pharaoh in Egypt is at this point able to give a series of speeches encompassing the entire history of the Jewish people!

The Midrash seeks to answer the momentous progress in the Linguistic Intelligence of Moshe Rabeinu. In Deuteronomy Rabbah 1:1, God says, "ראה לשונה של תורה מה חביבה שמרפה את הלשון" - Torah can heal the tongue. This is based on a verse from Proverbs 25:4, "a soothing/healing tongue is a tree of life", where "tree of life" is equal to Torah, "עץ חיים הוא" (Prov.3:18). Furthermore in Ezekiel 47:12 it is written that the fruit shall be for food and the leaf for healing, "והיה פריו למאכל ועלהו לתרופה". 'לתרופה' according to Rabbi Joshua b. Levi means that whoever is tongue-tied yet eats hungrily of the tree, of Torah, will have his tongue cured and will speak clearly at once. Moses was privileged to receive Torah, but he complained, (Exodus.4:10), "לא איש דברים אנכי" - "I am not a man of words". But when he proved himself worthy of Torah, "his tongue became cured and he began to speak words"⁵⁷ And how do we know Moses was able to speak words? From the opening phrase of Deuteronomy, "אלו הדברים..."

⁵⁷ Midrash Rabbah, Devarim Rabah 1:1, p.2.

Rabbi Gunther Plaut, in his Torah commentary, adds a more psychological element⁵⁸. When Moses was younger he thought of himself as a man of few words, but became more confident over time. After he received Torah he changed and spoke about it often and at length. This is a subtle difference from the Midrash, which ascribes to Torah the power to cure the slow-of-tongue as opposed to Plaut's analysis that one can gain confidence over a lifetime developing one's Linguistic ability.

Through the lens of the Linguistic Intelligence, the Rabbis also point to the power of the sacred language of Hebrew. Just using Hebrew grants people a place in the next world, as it says in Sifrei Deuteronomy 1:3, "It is taught in the name of Rabbi Meir: Everyone who dwells permanently in the Land of Israel, recites the Shema morning and evening, and speaks the sacred tongue is assured that he will dwell in the world-to-come". Another example also from Sifrei Deuteronomy 4:6 - "When a child begins to speak, his father should speak to him in the sacred tongue and teach him Torah; if he does not speak to him in the sacred tongue and does not teach him Torah, it is as though he were burying him".

This is quite a harsh punishment, but the Hebrew language has its own power and essence. It is the symbol of the Jewish people and the Rabbis knew the ability of language to keep a people unified in times of dispersion, to maintain their link to their roots and their history. Hebrew was that tool both for the Rabbinic period as well as the modern period, when Hebrew was revived as a modern language to be used in the state of Israel. Zionism was not just a call for political independence in the holy land; it was a

⁵⁸ Gunther Plaut, The Torah: A Modern Commentary, (UAHC Press, New York, NY, 1981), p.1315.

cultural and ethnic revival of the Jewish people⁵⁹. Once free in their own land, the distinct language of Hebrew represented nationalism and pride in Jewish culture. Hebrew unified Jews around the world who all spoke different languages but could maintain their religious and ethnic connection.

Another element of the Linguistic Intelligence is the ability to forge relationships between previously unrelated phrases. By creating coherence among them, new patterns of thinking are introduced into the brain, and with them a flexibility and willingness to regard texts in new ways. A "Petichta" Midrash attempts to connect unrelated biblical verses to create new patterns of thinking about the *Tanach*. An example comes from Bereshit Rabbah 55:22. This homiletic Midrash begins with a passage from Psalms 60:6, "נִתְּנָה לִירֵאָה גֹּם לַחֲתָנוּסִים" an open-ended statement meaning "God tests the righteous". The Midrash follows with examples of testing things. When a potter examines his wares, he tests not the cracked ones, which he knows are faulty, but the solid ones to see if they will break. A farmer puts a yoke on the stronger cow, not the weaker one, to test its strength. Similarly, God only tests the righteous, those whom God thinks will stand up to scrutiny. Finally the Midrash comes to identify who exactly is being tested in the week's Torah portion; it is Abraham, who is tested when he is asked to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 21. God knows that Abraham is righteous and will be able to stand up to this difficult test and indeed Abraham does live up to God's expectation. There is no connection between the verse in Psalms and Genesis until the Midrashist

⁵⁹ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, "Zionism: cultural and synthetic Zionism" p.1048-49

connects the two through the weaving of an analogy and a moral lesson, using the skills of the Linguistic Intelligence.

The Linguistic Intelligence, like all the Intelligences, is something inherent in people, but too often we take it for granted. We use language on a daily basis sometimes ignoring its power and influence. One who uses language more and more, gains confidence and skill and becomes more prolific and becomes even more sensitive to the functions of it. Whether using our common language of Hebrew or the local vernacular, we must utilize this tool to its utmost extent. Our greatest teacher Moses used his new-found Linguistic Intelligence skills to inspire the children of Israel and guide them to understand and follow the laws of Adonai. If slow-tongued Moses could communicate the lessons of Torah through speech, how much more so should we use the Linguistic Intelligence to encourage and motivate our students.

Chapter 2: Logical-mathematical Intelligence

There is nothing that delights the mind more than seeking and discovering patterns and designs⁶⁰. The Rabbis were very conscious of the use of numbers and patterns when writing and presenting Midrashim. This might have been used because they liked fitting ideas into the patterns, such as coming up with the three answers to a question, or the ten things that are important in life. They might have also been using this technique to show off their skills of displaying life lessons in groupings. It is also possible that the Rabbis wanted their Midrashim to be remembered easily by their listening audience so they used common mathematical denominations to help in retention.

Chapter five of Pirkei Avot is replete with these mathematical codes. Mishnayot א through י all center on the number ten. Mishnah א: “בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם”, with ten utterances the world was created. Mishnah ב: Ten generation between Adam and Noah, then Noah to Abraham. The length of both time periods show how long-suffering God is, despite all provocations. Mishnah ג: “עשרה נסיונות נתנסה אברהם”, Abraham was tried with ten tests, and he stood steadfast in them all, including the famous finale of Akedah Yitzhak. Mishnah ד: ten miracles for the Jewish people in Egypt – ten at the sea and the ten plagues. Rashi comments on this verse with an old Midrash as to the ten miracles at the sea.

⁶⁰ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.24.

"Moses asked the people to arise and cross over. They would not do so until the sea formed into channels. Moses lifted his staff and the sea became channels: the first miracle occurred. Again he asked that the people cross, but they demurred. Only if the sea were formed into heaps would they cross. Moses lifted his staff, and the sea so formed: the second miracle. The third miracle was fissures, then plastered over, then a desert, then changed into crumbs, then into boulders then dry land and then walls and finally skin bottles – finally 10 miracles⁶¹.

God, elaborating on the idea that the children of Israel were a stiff-necked people,

"עַם קָשָׁה עָרָף", considered this a test. Mishnah נה, ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Temple; and finally Mishnah י, ten items were created on the eve of the first Shabbat. This beautiful Midrash relates how things that later had significance in Jewish History can be traced back to the original seven days of creation, lending them credibility in the eyes of the people that it was all preordained by God. These items include the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the ass, the rainbow, the manna, the staff of Moses, the שִׁמְרֵי (the miraculous worm that could cut or engrave stone, ideal for building the Holy Temple⁶²), the writing, the writing instrument, and the tablets. Other commentators suggest that other items were also included at creation including, the grave of Moses and the ram that Abraham sacrificed on Mount Moriah⁶³ in place of his son Isaac. These are miraculous items, beyond the normal scope of the worldly creations from the first six days. Each served a specific purpose, in time and space. Whether to punish wrongdoing, such as the earth swallowing Korah and his followers, or to save the Israelites such as the Manna in the desert, these ten wonders were vital to miraculous events that will be remembered forever.

⁶¹ Leonard Kravitz and Kerry M. Olitzky, *Pirke Avot: A Modern Commentary on Jewish Ethics*. (UAHC Press, New York, 1993). p.77-78.

⁶² Kravitz and Olitzky, p.79.

⁶³ Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial*. (JPS, Philadelphia, 1967). p.38-39.

Using the number ten is a strategic device in Midrashic thought, highlighting the logical-mathematical Intelligence. It sets a standard and helps define patterns that show deeper meaning in events. Is it mere coincidence that there are ten generations between Adam and Noah, and then ten more to Abraham? It shows the power of God at work subtly below the surface. It also guides people in understanding and remembrance. Maimonides sees a pattern in the repetitive use of ten, that these are "opportunities for the progressive improvement of one's moral and intellectual qualities."⁶⁴ In other words, the recurrence of numbers not only leads to remembrance, but to the improvement of how one behaves and learns in all facts of life. The Rabbinic mind might not have known this scientifically, but the constant fascination with the same set of numbers suggests that the Rabbis probably intuited that it was helping people in some way and so they continued patterns like this through the Rabbinic era.

Makot 24A has a connection to the Logical-Mathematical Intelligence. Rabbi Simlai first taught that 613 commandments were told to Moses, 365 negative ones corresponding to the days of the solar year, and 248 positive ones corresponding to the parts of the human body. This mathematical formulation was an easy way to remember how many commandments there were and feeds directly into the logical-mathematical brain functions of the Rabbis. But the Rabbis continue discussing this point through Makot 24B and 25A and B, fleshing out the numerology of the letters of Torah. The

⁶⁴ Kravitz and Olitzky, p.77.

numerical value of the word Torah is 611, the number of commandments which were told to Moses. To get 613, we must add the first two of the 10 commandments, "אנוכי", and "לא יהיה לך" which we heard directly from God. Later, kings and prophets sought to establish a certain number of ethical requirements as the basis for the fulfilling the 613 mitzvot. King David established 11 ethical requirements, based on Psalm 15. Using a mnemonic, ק"ד ממשמ"ק the Psalm is broken down into 11 characteristics of righteous behavior, to which the Gemara then gives examples of people who exemplified each one. It is interesting to note here, as in most Midrashim, the constant use of proof texts, a feature of deductive thinking the Rabbis always employed. This is the process starting with a general rule and then trying to fit particular examples and situations into the general rule. Midrashim consistently use a text from the Bible to back up a point. In this Midrash the Rabbis use several, starting with Psalms and then moving to the prophets. From Isaiah we learn that all mitzvot are based on six ethical commandments (Isaiah 33:15):

- A. One who walks with righteousness
- B. Speaks with fairness
- C. Despises stealthful gain
- D. Shakes his hands from taking bribes
- E. Closes his ears from listening to bloodshed, or things that may lead to bloodshed
- F. Shuts his eyes from seeing evil

Micah then reduced the fulfillment of the commandments (Micah 6:8) to three ethical requirements,

- 1. To do justice
- 2. To love kindness

3. And go discreetly/modestly with your God

Isaiah came back and reduced the number to two, "שִׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפָּט וַעֲשׂוּ צְדָקָה", "guard justice and do righteousness" (Isaiah 56:1). Finally Habakkuk reduced the entire Torah to one ethical requirement, "וְיָחִיד בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה", "a righteous person will live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).

There have been many commentaries on this particular verse from Habakkuk. Some look at it within its context. According to The Living Nach, this verse is an allusion contextually to the Israelites who were exiled to Babylon along with King Zedekiah, who refused to be coerced into worshipping idols⁶⁵. Some commentators even suggest that this is a rebuke to Habakkuk himself for doubting the wisdom of God's judgment in chapter 1. Most commentators however see its relevance as the basis for all mitzvot. Rashi explains that in the beginning there were many righteous people capable of bearing the burden of many mitzvot but later generations were less righteous and could not be expected to fully keep all the commandments. Habakkuk sets forth the single requirement; since the principal cause of corruption is lack of the faith, the man who is faithful to God is deemed righteous. The Meiri suggests that the word faith in this context means that in the performance of all commandments, one should be directed solely for the sake of God service. Maharsha adds that one must have faith that God is the Creator, and the fulfillment of all the commandments flows from that central principle. For Malbim, this is a reference to individuals who do not attempt to calculate

⁶⁵ The Living Nach: Later Prophets. (Moznaim Publishing Corp., Jerusalem 5765) p.704.

when redemption will begin, but rather place their faith in God and wait patiently for the prophecies to be fulfilled.

Along the same lines, Hillel was asked by a potential convert to teach him the entire Torah on one foot⁶⁶, and he searched for a verse that represented all mitzvot, and said, “וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה” (Leviticus 19:18). In these two cases one verse encompasses the basic philosophy behind the laws of Torah, love and faith. The numbering sequence from 613 to 1 appeals to the Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, though it delves into emotions and personal Intelligences to see the meaning in the explanations.

There are other mathematical formulas that people have tried to discover in the Bible. Mystics recognize spiritual meanings hidden within Jewish words. They use the system of Gematria to find the hidden meanings, the process of assigning a number to each letter of the Hebrew alphabet and then adding letters of words together to uncover new meanings. For example, the name of God, יהוה is equal to the number 26 (5+6+5+10). Thus the Kabbalists constantly sought new names for God, and found words that also equal 26. כבוד (4+2+20) means respect but it is also a mystical name for God. Another more complex example is the explanation behind the extra ׀ in Deuteronomy 32:6 of the song of Moses. Mystics consider this ׀ as the end of Moses' signature, ascribing the poem to himself. If one takes the first letters of the first 6 verses

⁶⁶ Rabbi Shmuel Yerushalmi, The book of Trei-Asar: Me'am Lo'ez, translated by Dr. Zvi Faier, (Moznaim Publishing Company Jerusalem 1997), p.171-172

of the song of Moses, (היכחשה - $5+300+5+20+10+5$) they add up to 345. This is the same value as the letters in the name of Moses - משה ($5+300+40$). In this way Moses affixed his name to the book, ending his signature with the detached ה⁶⁷.

Some researchers think that there is a definite code in the Bible that has even foretold events that happened exactly as predicted⁶⁸. According to David Drosnin, there is a complex network of words and phrases crisscrossing the entire known text of the Bible, hidden underneath the original Hebrew. Since the Bible was first handwritten on parchment in columns, we can use computers today to read it as intended. By eliminating the spaces between the words, Eli Rips, who works in Israeli Intelligence, turned the entire Bible into one continuous letter strand, 304,805 letters long⁶⁹. He then can use a computer to search for names, words and phrases hidden by simple codes, such as every fourth letter, or every fiftieth letter. The computer then looks for related information, and then for correlations.

Using this program, the computer found that Yitzhak Rabin, Yigal Amir, Tel Aviv and the year of his assassination were all encoded in the same place in the Bible⁷⁰. Rips then searched for the names of thirty-two great sages from the Bible to modern times along with the dates of their birth and death. In the Bible, the names and the dates

⁶⁷ Plaut, p.1565.

⁶⁸ Michael Drosnin, *The Bible Code*. (Simon and Schuster, New York 1997) p.11.

⁶⁹ Doron Witztum, Eliyahu Rips and Yoav Rosenberg, "Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Book of Genesis." *Statistical Science*. 1994, Vo.9, No.3, p.429-438.

⁷⁰ Drosnin, p.15-17 and 26.

were encoded together. The same program was tried with a variety of other English or Hebrew books and manuscripts to no avail. Some scientists scoffed at the claims.

Avraham Hasofer wrote, "Certain types of patterns must inevitably occur in large data sets"⁷¹, though he never actually checked the math or did a statistical check of the codes.

The biblical code theory suggests that the Rabbis encoded information into the text that later readers would be able to find using the mathematical Intelligence, and thus draw even more deeper into the text to discover the secrets hidden within.

According to mathematician Ari Belenkiy there is a constant interplay between Torah and mathematics. In an article called "Mathematical Drash"⁷², Belenkiy proposes that new mathematical disciplines can provide a natural language for the discussion of various philosophical questions posed by Midrashim. For example, in Ezekiel 46:9 it says that if one enters the Temple through the northern gates, he should leave through the southern gates, and vice versa; one should never leave the Temple through the gate he entered. Mathematically, the concept of beginning and returning to a fixed point is considered one point. However, starting at one point and not returning leaves many more mathematical options for discovery. The gates of the Temple dramatically change routine earthly matters – they offer a chance to make nontrivial paths on earth. When talking about holiness, the prophets encouraged people to make non-trivial paths, as opposed to always beginning and ending on the same point. By walking in one gate and exiting another, the people were creating new paths in their regular routine, highlighting

⁷¹ Drosnin, p.30.

⁷² Ari Belenkiy, "Mathematical Drash", B'or Hatorah: Science, Art and Modern Life in the Light of the Torah, Number 13, 2002, Lamda Publications, Brooklyn NY. p.149-160.

the holiness of the Temple and the sacred mission of doing sacrifices there. It was more than simply a walk in and out of the Temple; it was a powerful spiritual journey that should have life-altering effects each time one entered.

The patterns, codes and formulas of math and logical methods can and are applied by our teachers to the studies of Bible. Using the Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, the Rabbis created extra layers of meaning and symbolism. As teachers and learners, accessing the texts through this Intelligence can help us gain insight into these secrets and provide more enjoyment and significance from our texts.

Chapter 3: Musical-Rhythmic Intelligence

הללֵיָהּ | שִׁירוֹ לְיְהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ

Psalm 149 declares the inexplicable link between Judaism and music – “Sing unto God a new song - Hallelujah”. The role of music in marking important moments in life is highlighted in the Torah specifically with the Song of the Sea - שִׁירַת הַיָּם - in Exodus Chapter 15, a poem that has inspired dozens of Midrashim, some of which will be highlighted in this section on the Musical-Rhythmic Intelligence.

According to Exodus Rabbah⁷³, from the day that God created the world until that moment, no one had sung praises to God – not Adam after creation, not Isaac when spared from the knife, nor Jacob escaping Esau. But when Israel fled Egypt and God parted the sea for their escape, “Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to God” (Exodus 15:1). And God said, “For this I have been waiting”. The Midrashist realizes the power of song as the ultimate expression of joy and relief. The spontaneous launch of song properly expressed the power of the moment. As David of Kotzk writes, though the Angels also wanted to sing songs of praise, God told them, “Wait and let Israel sing first. Humans are able to praise only when they are inspired. If we do not give them the opportunity, the desire will pass”⁷⁴.

⁷³ Exodus Rabbah, Beshallah 23:3-4 and Mechilta D'Rabbi Ishmael, Beshalach p.252-255.

⁷⁴ Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary. (The Rabbinical Assembly, Jewish Publication Society, New York, 2001), p.407.

As is often the case in Midrash, a body of literature that spans generations and geographic locations, there are often competing Midrashim about the same moment.

While the above Midrash suggests that no one praised God until the Song of the Sea,

Midrash Rabbah offers the following story:

At the beginning of the world's creation, the praise of the Holy One ascended only from the water, as it is said, "from the voices of many waters" (Psalm 93:4). And what did they proclaim? "The Lord on high is mighty" (ibid.). The Holy One said, "if these, which have neither mouth nor the capacity of utterance or speech praise me, how much more and more when Adam will be created."

The proof text is that Adam, when he first opened his mouth, sang out songs of praise to God, based on Psalms 92:2, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O most high". This Midrash does not take away from the power of the moment of God's great miracle at the sea inspiring praise, but it does speak to those with high Musical Intelligence as well as those without. As the Midrash Rabbah indicates, the waters did not have the capacity for speaking, yet praised God. So too, people can use the music within themselves to praise God. Everyone can sing, and while not everyone will be a Broadway star or a cantor, the realization that everyone has some capacity for music, and thus praise, is an inclusive concept taught here by Rabbis of the Talmud which is as applicable today as it was then.

Similarly, the Mishnah (Sotah 5:4) reflects on Exodus 15:1 where it is written:

אָז שָׁיר־מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה
"then Moses and Israel sang this song to God".

It says that Moses and Israel sang together, and so while they were singing, they were on par. They all enjoyed the fit of the Holy Spirit, which made prophet and ordinary person

equal. But the same verse then continues "אֶשְׁכֶּחַ לַיהוָה" – "I will sing to God" - in the first person. The Rabbis need to explain how Moses and Israel could sing together, but yet Moses sings alone. The explanation from the Mechilta D'Rabbi Ishmael 15a, is that Moses recited the song and the people followed, verse-by-verse. As Rabbi Akiva expounded,

When Israel came up from the Red Sea, the Holy Spirit rested on them, and they sought to utter song. How did they utter their song? Rabbi Eliezer son of Rabbi Yose the Galilean said, they uttered their song in the manner of a child who chants the Hallel in his school. Moses said, "I will sing unto the Lord", and they repeated, "I will sing unto the Lord". Moses said, "The Lord is my strength and song", and they repeated, "The Lord is my strength and song".

Moses retained his prophetic preeminence maintaining the separation between himself and the people. In this interpretation, the Rabbis may be saying that even if one doesn't have any musical ability, one can always follow when another leads. The power of the voice comes from people singing together, good singers and bad. Everyone has their place, because it is not as much how you sing but the feelings behind it. There is no hierarchy based on skill, Moses and the people simply joined together in song. As Rabbi Simon said, "not everyone who wishes to hymn a song may hymn it. But he for whom a miracle has been performed and who does hymn a song – it is well know that all his iniquities are forgiven him and he becomes a new creature"⁷⁵.

For teachers of Torah, it is important to recognize that while all students may not have the musical ability to chant their Torah portions, they can each chant the words in their own way, if it is true from the heart and with the intention to sanctify the moment.

⁷⁵ Quote from Rashi on Judges 6:1.

"Embrace your suckiness" says Ben Stiller, the Rabbi in the motion picture Keeping the Faith⁷⁶ to his Bar Mitzvah student, imploring him to sing on despite his voice cracking. It is also a lesson in congregational singing. Many congregations in the Reform movement employ congregational singing, as opposed to a worship service dominated by the voice of a cantor or a professional choir. Musical settings for prayers are written and chosen by worship leaders that make it easier for congregants to sing along together.

The goal of music in services was at one point in classical Reform theology to be very beautiful and angelic⁷⁷. It was part of the idea of the separation between congregants and the clergy, since clergy were deemed to be closer to God and the music and word came through the clergy to the people. However, as congregants are finding more and more personal connections to God, and are reaching for spirituality, clergy are responding and moving off the high pulpits and coming down to the level of the people to pray beside them.

Congregational singing reflects this philosophy, and while it may not always be as pretty or aesthetically pleasing to the ear as a professional choir or trained Cantor, the overall effect of a group of people singing prayers together can reach the highest heavens and praise God. It helps people connect to the divine and find spirituality and ultimately gain visions into the past, connecting to the Israelites when they sang, and also connecting and glimpsing into the redemptive future age⁷⁸. Our congregations today continue to use musical moments to highlight our worship, because music has such power to uplift the soul. We sing the famous phrase from the Song of the Sea, מי כמך, at

⁷⁶ Keeping the Faith. Directed by Edward Norton, Written by Stuart Blumberg, Buena Vista Pictures, 2000.

⁷⁷ Larry Hoffman, "Introduction to Liturgy" lecture at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Fall 2002.

⁷⁸ Judah Goldin, The Song at the Sea. (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1971) p.65-68.

every service just before the most important prayer, the Amidah. It is also chanted in synagogue on the seventh day of Passover, the day on which tradition says the crossing of the sea actually happened. Its placement in our worship service suggests to the worshipper how important songs of praise are to sanctify moments of life. The creators of the prayerbook were distinctly aware of how Musical Intelligence exists in people and helps people in developing a prayer relationship with God.

According to the Midrash, music has the power to connect us to the world to come. The Song of the Sea, "שירת הים" begins with the phrase, "או ישיר", which is usually translated as, "then they began to sing". But what transpired immediately before? From the Mechilta D'Rabbi Ishmael⁷⁹ we are taught that when Israel saw the wondrous powers that God wielded against the Egyptians, freeing them from slavery, culminating in the splitting of the sea, they had perfect faith in God and Moses, and this spontaneously led to singing of praises. The verb "לשיר" - to sing - comes from the root "שרה", which is a similar root to designate the presence and resting place of the God - "שכינה". The singing by the sea is the product of God's presence, the song of ultimate redemption. The root of "שירה" also relates to the verb "לשור" - meaning to glimpse into the future. Ecstatic song allows us to see into the future, glimpse into messianic times. In this interpretation, the word "then" refers not only to what has just passed, but also to an eschatological vision of the future, a time of peace and harmony, of song and joy.

⁷⁹ Parshat Beshalach Exodus 15:1

By the same token, while singing is often associated with happy events and expresses joy, it needs to be at the right occasion. In Megillah 10b there is a Midrash that describes how the angels wanted to sing when they saw the Egyptian pursuers drowning in the sea, but God silenced them saying "How dare you sing for joy when my creatures are perishing". This highlights the idea that happiness and joy spring forth from song, but it must come at the appropriate moments. Song has such powerful connotations; God did not want song to overshadow the fact that people were dying, even if they were the enemy Egyptians. In a similar vein, there is a Midrash from Tosefta Sanhedrin 12:10 that declares that, "He who sings selections from the Song of Songs with a tremulous voice in a tavern, turning it into a kind of drinking song, has no portion in the world-to-come." From the point of view of the Rabbis, because music and song can have powerful effects, care must be taken as to time and place. Certain passages cannot be taken lightly, and there are times when song is inappropriate. But when the occasion calls for it, there is nothing like music to fully express the joy and excitement of a moment.

Finally, Rabbi Akiva in Beit Hamidrash 3:12-13 sums up the reason we have music;

The Holy One said, I will open the tongue of all flesh and blood, that they may hymn praise before Me every day and proclaim me their King in the four corners of the world, because I would not have created my world but for the song and music that they intone daily.

It is an inspiring passage for those musically inclined, suggesting that the world was created for song. It is part of life, as much as air, water and food are necessities, so are creative expressions of music. The Midrash acknowledges the power of song and the role Musical Intelligence can play in making moments of life extra special and meaningful, beyond words and actions.

Chapter 4: Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

With a focus on texts and sermons, where does physical movement fit into Jewish tradition? Interestingly, there are many Midrashim that focus on dance and what the movement symbolizes. In Leviticus Rabbah⁸⁰ there is a Midrash about the power of dance.

In the time to come, God, the Holy one blessed be He, will lead the chorus of the righteous – as it is written, **פָּסְגִי אֶרְמוֹנֶיךָ לְחַיִּלָּה** (Psalm 48:14). It is written **חַיִּלָּה** (a the round dance) “and they will dance around Him like young maidens and point to Him – This is our God, our God, for ever and ever” He will lead the people to a world in which there is not death. He will lead the people in this world and He will lead them in the world to come.⁸¹

The dancing is of pure joy, an outward release of excitement over the beginning of the Messianic Age. For those inclined towards the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, many descriptions of the world to come are with words, the intellectual world to come. That description is one way to understand *olam habah*, but to be able to express the world to come in movements of the body through this Midrash, is appealing to certain learners. The interconnectedness of circles as opposed to partners or lines displays the unity and cohesiveness of Olam Habah.

The Hasidim especially love to dance in circles (as do most Jews at *simchas*- celebrations when they dance the *Hora*) usually without choreography or planning. In his look inside

⁸⁰ Leviticus Rabbah, (Midrash Rabbah, edited by Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, Soncino Press, London, 1938) Parshat Shemini 9, p.151.

⁸¹ Ibid.

the life of ultra-orthodox Jewry⁸², Samuel Heilman describes a Bar Mitzvah in Belz where the Rabbi stood up with his son towards the end of the service and spontaneously began to dance in circles to the singing of the crowd. There was shouting and pushing, but it was simply part of the proceedings. During most life cycle events, there is a time for dancing people from place to place. In a wedding, the groom is danced into the room where the *ברדקן* takes place, the ceremony where he veils his wife. The groom is then danced out of the room to the *חופה*, the wedding canopy. At this Bar Mitzvah the dancing extended out into the main hall accompanied by singing. As the Rebbe and his son were danced towards the exit, his empty armchair was lifted up as well and passed over the heads of the crowd.

Hands popped up from everywhere hoping to share in holding or even touching the chair. And in a flash, the large chair seemed to fly through the room. For those at the edges of the throng, it must surely have looked as if it had a magic life of its own. Perhaps someday the Hasidim would tell a story of how the Rebbe's chair floated out of the room as soon as he left it.⁸³

The natural outpouring of emotion into circular dancing or organized chaos is symbolic of the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence. Despite the lack of coordination, the dance in the Hasidic world, similar to the Midrash, allows for people to express their feelings. The collective singing and dancing swept up the participants, fostering a feeling of closeness. It aroused a comfortable familiarity and reaffirmed the sense that things are as they should be, that there was continuity, that expectations could and will be fulfilled. The

⁸² Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith*. (Schocken Books, New York, 1992) p.288

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.66.

dances and songs symbolized order and stability. They were, as the communal gatherings themselves, an anchor for life⁸⁴.

In The Midrash on Psalms⁸⁵ on Psalm 48 there is a question:

What is meant by the words, 'For this God is our God' (48:15)?
R. Berechiah, said in the name of R. Jose bar Hanina: In the time to come the Holy One, Blessed be He, will prepare a dance for the righteous, and the Holy One Himself, blessed be He, will dance with them, and the righteous shall point Him out with their fingers, for "it shall be said in that day, 'Lo this is our God' (Isaiah. 25:9). Hence it is said, "This God is our God".

For those who are inclined in the Bodily Intelligence to hear that God Himself will be dancing in the time to come can be inspirational and encouraging. The Rabbis must have known that some of their audience would respond to this aspect of *olam habah* and highlight the movement aspect of Messianism.

Looking for texts that might relate to the Bodily kinesthetic Intelligence requires some thinking outside of the conventional applications of this method. For example, according to Gardner, there is a relationship between images formed in the mind and physical being. It is possible to produce changes in the body through words and sensory images⁸⁶. Thus are the Midrashim that allow listeners to change their perception of reality through images and words of the preacher. Gardner also says that breathing can shift a person's awareness, thus putting him or her into more optimal states to face

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.90

⁸⁵ Midrash on Psalms, (Translated by William G. Braude, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959). Book 2, Psalm 48, p.462.

⁸⁶ Gardner, Frames of Mind, p.79

different situations in daily life.⁸⁷ Midrashists used this type of Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence in order to connect to God. In mystical tradition, there are texts that create imagery of ascension through levels of Godliness to attain transcendence, known as Yordei Merkava – the descent of the chariot⁸⁸. Mystics would put their heads between knees, hands on ankles, and meditate constantly, and fast. They attempted to descend into themselves in order to have an out-of-body experience of ascension in the seven upper heavens to gain a vision of God on the Holy Throne with the angels on fiery chariots flying around. That is the ultimate purpose, to gaze upon God's glory. The ascent is one part, then the mystic participates in the heavenly liturgy, uttering praises to God. This is the closest experience to God, being part of the angelic minyan, chanting, "Holy, Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts", קדוש קדוש קדוש (Isaiah 6:3). The mystic actually becomes like an angel, and has a transformative experience.

Gardner proposes another use of the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, the ability to use pleasant images for relaxation,⁸⁹ like vividly imagining your favorite food to trigger a response such as salivation or anticipatory movements in the stomach. Midrash sometimes uses visualization for these types of physical reactions. The Rabbis offered pleasant images of Israel to appease Jews living in Babylon who were desperate to return to their land and needed to hear specifics about what rebuilt Jerusalem might look like.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.93

⁸⁸ Dr. Sharon Koren, "History of Mysticism" course lecture, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Fall 2003.

⁸⁹ Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, p.79.

There is a Midrash from Zevachim 62A about what the return will be like and how the Temple will be rebuilt. Three prophets went up with the Jews from exile in Babylon. One informed them about the dimensions and the site of the altar; another informed them that they could bring offerings, even though there was as yet no Temple; and the third informed them that the Torah should be written in Assyrian characters. These small indications of hope and specifics about the future rebuilt Temple were spoken in order to alleviate the Diaspora hopelessness.

The Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence theory also purports that gestures can be used to amplify a point. For many people the involvement of the body and physical movement is a critical part of their ability to learn. Attaching a physical gesture or motion to something being learned can accelerate and deepen learning and leave a permanent impression or memory. It encodes the learning the whole body/mind system, thus creating a greater integration and application of the knowledge with the way one lives.⁹⁰ The formal reading of the Torah, for example, is carried out with musical intonation linked to Masoretic accents of the text. According to Megillah 32A, the Bible was to be read and studied by melodic recitation, "R. Shefatiah in the name of R. Yochanan said: "it is not good to read without a pleasant tone or recite without song." Hand movements indicating accents and their melody were used as memory aids and prompting signs for the reader, probably administered by the *Somekh* (supporter)⁹¹. Many communities including a synagogue in Rome still use the hand movements⁹². The physical gestures

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p.90.

⁹¹ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol.11, p.1098-1099.

⁹² I. Adler, "Histoire de la Musique Religieuse Juive," in J. Porte (ed.) *Encyclopedie des Musiques Sacrees*, vol.1, 1968, p.472-3.

helped people, both readers and listeners, learn the correct method for chanting the text and also gain more insight into the text through the special music and intonation of certain words or phrases giving them extra significance and verisimilitude.

The connection between movement and Torah has recently been explored more thoroughly by students of Torah who have attempted to make modern Midrash through dance. Norman Cohen writes in the preface to the book Torah in Motion that there is not a more dynamic art form by which to interpret the Bible than dance⁹³. Accordingly, dance Midrash has its roots in the tradition of interpreting biblical texts⁹⁴. It is a form of interpreting the text through movement activities, which illustrate and explicate the nuances of verses under consideration. An example of making Midrash through using the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence would be in relation to the creation of the world in Genesis Chapter 1. God said, "let there be light" and there was light. To begin, people can try improvising movements on images of light, such as bolting across the room to mimic bolts of lighting. The Dance Midrash activity could include having participants imagine they are light being created out of darkness. Was it a quick burst, or slow as a growing spark. Then each member of the group comes together into a larger group, to form a large mass of light distinguishing itself from the surroundings. The classical Midrash has many accounts of how the light might have looked or how God created through words. In this experiential activity, people with high Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence can use their body to tell the story of the creation of light. Another exercise could be to imagine the darkness and light fighting over how many hours of the day each

⁹³Joanne Tucker and Susan Freeman, Torah in Motion: Creating Dance Midrash. (A.R.E. Publishing Inc, Denver, 1990) p.2

⁹⁴ Ibid.

should rule. The involvement of physical movement, moving out of the pews and letting one's entire body be part of the story, can substantially increase a person's ability to learn and retain knowledge and uncover hidden meaning in the text.

Another modern dance Midrashist, Sol Jacobson, uses a similar technique but instead of starting with the Torah text, he developed a model of creating movement from existing Midrashim. In Sanhedrin there is a Midrash that seven pits are open to the good man but he escapes, whereas for the evildoer there is only one, into which he falls. This is based on Proverbs 24:1, "The righteous man falls seven times and rises up again". Jacobson understood that every part of the body can express thoughts and feelings. He created a dance to be performed sitting down using only the performer's arms and fingers. The dance has a choreography that follows a modern Midrash poem based on the idea of the seven pits. To tell the story-dance, one can sit or stand facing the audience. Jacobson's instructions are as follows.

Put out your left arm, fingers extended, in front of you, chest high. Your dancer is the two fingers of your right hand next to the thumb. Hold your right hand so these fingers hang straight down and put your thumb behind to hold the other two fingers. You can now walk or dance on your stage. After introducing the story, created your stage and your two-finger dance and begin by introducing your characters⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ Solomon Jacobson and Robert Rovinsky, "Seven Pits: The Dance", Kerem Vol.6, 5759/1999, p.99-104.



There follows more specific instructions on how to act out each part of the poem. This simple technique is both for those who have a high level of Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, as well as those for whom “dance” is inconceivable, because with a few motions they can carry on the vision and spirit of the text.

Presenting a unique twist on Midrash using dance and movement is the troupe “Storahtelling”. According to their website, Storahtelling is a radical fusion of storytelling, Torah, traditional ritual theater and contemporary performance art⁹⁶. Founded in 1998, this New York City-based nonprofit company is committed to promoting relevant and dynamic Jewish cultural literacy through theatrical performances and educational programs for multi-generational audiences. Storahtelling performances feature traditional Hebrew chanting, non-traditional English translation, original and ethnic music, modern stagecraft, and audience participation. Storahtelling’s primary focus is the revitalization of the traditional Torah Reading Service and the revival of the ancient craft of interpretive translation. They base their ideas on the *M’turgeman*, a live

⁹⁶ www.storahtelling.org

translation in the local vernacular, provided by a translator/commentator helping the community better comprehend the text and find relevance in it.⁹⁷

An example script is provided here based on Parashat Chukat, Leviticus 19:1-13 called "Red Cow Detox"⁹⁸

Characters:

- Rabbi Goldman of the Temple Foundation – Israeli Rabbi with distinct interest in rebuilding the Temple
- Mazie McDonald - Breeder of cows, Owner of Red Heifer

What follows are excerpts from the script:

- Opening Monologue
- Calling up the 1st Aliyah
- 1st Aliyah read in Hebrew with translation
- Segue scene into Calling up the 2nd Aliyah.

Please note that though it appears that all of these sections flow into one another, there is actually a break between the Opening Monologue and the Calling up of the 1st Aliyah in which a general Storahelling Introduction is given and the Taking out of the Torah occurs.

MAZIE

(looking a little lost) Hello, I'm supposed to meet Rabbi Goldman. Have you seen him? Moishe Goldman? Pardon me, my name is Mazie McDonald, I'm a farmer – a cattle rancher from West Virginia. I'm supposed to meet ya'll's Rabbi because well see...I have this secret. So one night, a few months ago, I had this wild dream. A white cow sprung up from the earth, and then two more appeared – a black heifer and a red heifer. (No mind you, this is not the first time cows have shown up in my dreams – I am a farmer after all). But here's the strange part – the black cow struck down the red one, and that's it. It gave me a weird feeling so I woke up and thought I'd go check on my heifers. I went to the barn and saw this red heifer exactly like the one in my dream. A newborn, a calf, just standing there, looking at me, and I figured, heck I may not be churchgoer, but it was all just too supernatural for me to ignore. I went to church and told the pastor and he got all bug-eyed and weird lookin, and said he didn't know what to do, but he knew someone who would. A rabbi! Can you believe it? He instructed me take a bunch of photographs of Annie – my daughter named the cow Annie cuz she's a redhead – cute right? And there was all this secretive fuss around me and the cow and they flew me all the way out here to _____ to meet with the Rabbi of your all's church. Hmm... But I guess we don't know where he's at, huh? Well, pleasure meetin' ya'll. I'm gonna go look for him.

.....

⁹⁷ Marc Bregman, "The Darshan: Preacher and Teacher of Talmudic Times", Best of the Melton Journal (The Melton Research Center for Jewish Education, www.jtsa.edu/davidson/melton/bestof/darshan.shtml) p.4.

⁹⁸ Copyright Storahelling, 2004.

RABBI

Hello, hello my friends. So - we're here today to talk some about the coming of the moshiach, and the preparation we are making. specifically – the mystery of the famed red heifer. (*Mazie re-enters and approaches Goldman*)

MAZIE

Um...excuse me...are you Rabbi Goldman?

RABBI

Yes, yes. Mazie, right?

MAZIE

Good to meet you.

RABBI

Oh, yes, you too Mazie... Wonderful that you're here. We're ready to begin. We are ready to begin. Time for the 1st aliyah – the 1st of 3 opportunities to for you to come up to the mountain. For this aliyah I'd like to call up all priests – Cohanim and Levi'im, leaders of the community – on board of and organization, CEOs, presidents....Yamdu, calling up to the Torah anyone who is a leader.

SHIMMER MUSIC – *Indiana Jones*

BLESSING

1st Aliyah, 19:1-6 – SACRIFICE

RABBI

Mazie – you had a mysterious dream, yes?

MAZIE

Sure did. Right before, Annie was birthed. (briefly recap dream)

RABBI

You know that's really about Cain and Abel...the black cow symbolizes Cain and the red cow represents Abel. Torah details the first homicide and the first ritual defilement. The initial purpose of the purification process: to cleanse one after coming into contact with the dead.

MAZIE

Oh Lord! You know I have this thing that I have to take a bath after a funeral. My husband thinks I'm crazy, but I don't know why I just – I just feel better after. I admit I'm a little freaky when it comes to cleanliness, you know. I always carry around a little thing of anti-bacterial? (takes some out of her bag) You know this stuff? oh it's the best – kills all those germs that you know are there, even if you can't see 'em.

RABBI

Mazie, you're not a freak. I bet there are many others like you. ...Call up germaphobes. Do you have hand sanitizer in your purse or your desk at work – Purel or the organic stinky kind from the body shop? Obsessive hand washers, this Aliyah is for you. Yamdu, calling up to the Torah, all germaphobes and Purel-addicts.

Using the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, Storahelling makes Torah come alive in a dramatic fashion, attempting to make the reading of Torah an inspiring and creative part of Jewish life.

All of these Midrashic forms are innovative and positive ways to present text. I have noticed that many feel uncomfortable as soon as a presentation moves away from the traditional reading of the Torah from the pulpit on a reading stand. The idea that congregants can be participants and not just listeners is disconcerting to many. But I find that when I put away my anxiety and initial feelings of self-consciousness and engage in the dances, singing or body motions, I felt more alive, more connected and more spiritual. Many people including Jews are seeking this type of spirituality from our religion and our services. Temple Shaaray Tefila, a congregation in New York City, has a yearly service commemorating Martin Luther King Day and the Rabbi joked that it is easy to separate the African-American worshippers from the Jewish upper east side worshippers because of the way the African-Americans wave their arms, celebrate and "get into" the singing and spirit. They have the *ruach* that it seems Jewish worshippers wish they had. New interpretive Midrash offered by StorahTelling and Avodah Dance Company, utilizing the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence that all of us have, enables us to let that *ruach* reach right into our souls. Just clapping hands and swaying suddenly adds an element of community to a service. Adding dance and story telling only invigorates a קהל to embrace the liturgy and Torah passages in new ways to create fresh meaning and connections and ultimately a more spiritual and memorable worship experience.

Chapter 5: Spatial Intelligence

People often claim that they are visual learners. They cannot just hear someone describe something; they need to see it. These people often learn more effectively from movies, slideshows, graphs or pictures. Often by glancing at a map they can find out exactly where they are and where they have to go.

According to the Torah and many Midrashim, Moses may have been one of the first visual learners. When God first speaks to him in Exodus 3:4, he asks God how the people will believe him that he is their leader and savior (Exodus 3:11). He hears it from God but he needs visual proof. Beyond the burning bush that was not consumed, God proceeded to provide two more incredible visuals – the staff turning into a snake in Ex. 4:3 and a hand turning leprous in Exodus 4:6.

These two visuals provided Moses with proof of the power of God. The key to the passage is that Moses needed to see God. The word “see” and “signs” comes up many times in these passages. This leading word is what Martin Buber calls a *Leitwort*. As Everett Fox elaborates in his new translation of the Bible, “the leading words are repeated within a text to signify major themes and concerns”⁹⁹. The leading word encourages the listener to make connections between diverse parts of story and trace a theme. This then appeals to two Intelligences, Musical-Rhythmic as well as Spatial. The Spatial Intelligence is sparked by the need for Moses to see the sign, so that the people will not complain, “YHWH was not seen by you...!” (Ex.4:1). The Musical-Rhythmic Intelligence is sparked by the repetition of certain words, here see-ראה or sign-אות. Hearing the words repeated when listening, or seeing them repeatedly on the page alerts

⁹⁹ Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*, (Schocken Books, New York, 1995) p. xvi.

this Intelligence to a pattern that proves to be important for theme and connections in the text. Moses becomes not just an example of a visual learner but the entire passage is a cacophony of multiple Intelligence flashes.

In Menahot 29b, there is another example of his visual learning style. This is the famous Midrash of Moses sitting in on a lesson by Rabbi Akiva at the academy but unable to understand a word he is saying. "Crowns over the letters, what is this?" he asks another student. "This is the Torah of Moses our teacher from Sinai!" Then completely confused he asks God, "If Rabbi Akiva is a greater sage, why did you not give Torah through him?" Following this exclamation, the Midrash tells us that those things Moses failed to understand immediately, the Holy One showed him visually. Midrash D'Ari says that Moses saw a sphere. Two points and a great circle passing through them were singled out on that sphere. Showing the sphere, God knew that it is a perfect body, and should be the true model for all aspects of life. The use of visuals helps Moses understand what he was unable to comprehend by words alone.

According to Gardner, the Spatial Intelligence includes the ability to analyze pictures, shapes and designs. The mind loves patterns, colors and designs for their own sake. It can create visual relationships and intuitive connections, which transform apparent chaos and confusion into a place of creativity and imagination¹⁰⁰. There is a Midrash from the Shabbat 104a about the letters of the alphabet and the significance of their shapes. The Gimmel always stretches out towards the Dalet דל, because it is the way of the

¹⁰⁰ Gardner, Intelligence Reframed, p.52.

benevolent to reach out to the poor. The face of the ט is averted from the א because help must be given in secrecy so that the poor will not be humiliated by the presence of the giver. The open מ and closed final ם signify that one utterance of Torah may be open and its secrets easily revealed while another may be closed and undiscovered. The bent נ and upright final ן represent the one who is faithful when bent in suffering in this world, בעולם הזה will be made upright in the world to come, בעולם הבא. The bent פ and the final ף signify that there are times when the mouth פה must be open and times when it should be kept closed. One final drash on the letters is that is the answer to the questions, why is the leg of the ק detached from its upper part? The ק is holy from קדש while the ר is evil from רשע. Thus even a wicked man can repent, by entering between the two parts of the ק.

This visual representation of the letters of the alphabet appeal to the Spatial Intelligence but also alerts any reader of text to the intricacies and potential שדרש on each letter. The Rabbi who wrote this was aware that people knew the letters but some learners are taught best through visuals. What is interesting is that it is children who come up with the meanings for each letter as though it is a game. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi recognizes the validity and wisdom of the visual meaning of each letter and accords the children's teaching with high honor. The visual representation of letters and their meaning is as important and shrewd as any other Midrash.

Rabbi Hannin bar Papa said, in Tahhuma, Parshat Yitro, teaches how the Holy One appeared to the people. It was a way that was easy to comprehend and appreciate. "With an awe-inspiring face, with an equanimous face, a friendly face, a joyous face".

Unlike Moses, who saw God face to face "פני אל פניו," the children of Israel would have a much more difficult time facing the divine presence. Even Moses upon seeing God, was forever changed, for when he returned to the people, "Aaron and all the Israelites saw that the skin of Moses' face was radiant; they shrank from coming near him...and when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face" (Exodus 34:30,33). If Moses could barely survive in the presence of the Almighty, as God said, "You cannot see my face, for many may not see me and live" (Exodus 33:20), then how much more so על אחת כמה וכמה would the people be frightened and possibly hurt. But the people did have a visceral need to see God, which is one of the reasons why they built the Golden Calf while waiting for Moses at Mount Sinai. Thus this Midrash picks up on the visual learners, who need to see God's many faces, but in a way that was inspiring and not harmful.

Marc Bregman proposes that there are subtle verbal stimuli in the biblical text that suggest a particular way of seeing Midrash as a kind of visualization with the mind's eye¹⁰¹. On the biblical statement in the *Akedah* story, that Abraham "saw the place from afar," (Genesis 22:4) we are presented with various possible views of the place, not only through the eyes of Abraham, but the other characters of the story including Isaac, the servants and even the ass. When the Midrash asks, "What did he see?"¹⁰², it can be read as more than just a rhetorical phrase but a verbal cue to visualize for ourselves. The Midrash

¹⁰¹ Marc Bregman, *Midrash as Visualization*.

(www.bu.edu/mzank/STR/trarchive/tr10/aar2001/Bergman.html, 2001) p.3

¹⁰² Genesis Rabbah, Vayera 1.

then offers a variety of possible visualizations. In the article, Bregman even asks the reader to make a mental picture of what happened when Abraham stopped just short of killing his son and then looked behind him and saw a ram stuck in the thicket. What might the ram have done to attract Abraham's attention? Different graphic artists and Midrashic artists employed different methods to elaborate the biblical method, but visualization using the Spatial Intelligence is not only valid, it might have been encouraged by the Midrashists to help connect to the different learners who were either reading or listening to their interpretations.

The southern steps to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem have recently been excavated. When I visited the steps a few years ago I noticed how they were uniquely arranged. There was a short step, then a long step, in width not height. This pattern went on for the entire staircase. This was the staircase that the pilgrims would ascend to bring gifts and sacrifices to the Temple during the Pilgrimage Festivals. Those carrying the first fruits would chant Psalm 122, שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלֹת, as they approached Jerusalem and ascended the steps. This is designated in the Jerusalem Talmud, Bikkurim 3:2, "En route, they would say the following verse, 'our feet have been standing within your gates, o Jerusalem'" (Psalm 122:2). When they arrived on the Temple Mount they would begin saying Psalm 150. Our guide suggested that the meter of Psalm 122 follows the pattern of the steps. In reading it many times, it is possible that the meter fit the short and long steps.

<u>Short Step first</u>	<u>Long Step second</u>
שִׁיר	הַמַּעֲלוֹת
לִדְגֹד	שְׁמֵחָתִי
בְּאִמְרָנִים	לִי
בֵּית יְהוֹנָה	נִלְדָּד
עֲמֻדֹת	הֵינִי
רִגְלֵינוּ	בְּשַׁעֲרֵיךְ
יְרוּשָׁלַם:	

What is also possible is that the steps are uneven in order for the pilgrims to concentrate on their steps to acknowledge the Holy of Holies that they are about to enter. It was impossible to rush or run up and down these steps. Their structure required small and long concentrated steps to avoid falling. In tandem with the reading of specific psalms that had distinct meters, the pilgrim would be unconsciously using the Spatial Intelligence to build up the enormity of the moment of sacrifice at the Holy Temple.

When the Israelites were scattered around the world following the destruction of the Temple, they dreamed about returning. They could and did visualize specific aspects of the Temple to keep the memory fresh in their mind, whether it was an idealistic vision or not. Midrashim about Israel written from Babylonia can give a point of stability in the midst of the ambiguity and chaos of the world. As Gardner writes, using the visual Intelligence, the rich world of images holds us before the mystery, depth and greatness of our existence¹⁰³. They yearned to rebuild the Temple as it was and there are many Midrashim detailing specifics about the size of the building, the materials used to build it and how it looked. For example, in Tanhuma Be-haalotekha it says, "And for the house,

¹⁰³ Gardner, Intelligence Reframed, p.68.

he made windows, broad and narrow" (I Kings 6:4). Rabbi Avin the Levite explained:

You find that when a man makes openings for windows, he makes them broad on the inside and narrow on the outside. Why? So that they draw in the greatest amount of light. But the windows in the Temple were broad on the outside and narrow on the inside. Why? So that the light would flow out of the Temple and illumine the world."

The text suggests the power of the Temple in the subtle language of architecture. For the spatially inclined, the visual of the structure of the window allows the subliminal message to come forth more clearly. One can envision the light pouring out of the Temple through the unusually shaped windows.

Another text comes from Yoma 39b:

והאמר רב אושעיא בשעה שבנה שלמה בית המקדש נטע בו כל מיני מגדים של זהב והיו מוציאין פירותיהן בזמן וכשהרוח מגשבת בהן נושרין שנא' (תהילים עב) ירעש כלבנון פריו

For R. Hosea said: When Solomon built the Sanctuary, he planted therein all sorts of precious golden trees, which brought forth fruit in their season. When the wind blew against them, their fruits would fall down, as it is said: May his fruit rustle like Lebanon.

This text also shows the amount of intimate details the Rabbis of the Talmud held onto and could then describe to their disciples even hundreds of years after the destruction of the Temple. The memory of wind flowing through the temple causing the fruit of the impressive golden trees to layer the ground, is so specific it reveals the love for this building that the people possessed. By making these memories come alive it kept the hope strong that the people would one day return and rebuild the Temple and it also kept their recollections sharp so that they would be able to recreate it exactly as it was, and indeed remake Jewish life as it was when the people Israel lived in their homeland and were strong and powerful and a light unto other nations.

Chapter 6: Intrapersonal Intelligence

The Intrapersonal Intelligence concerns the awareness of self and our personal spiritual development. It involves the development of complex belief systems, including religious symbols, ritual processes, solitary spiritual practices, political ideals, aesthetic values and philosophical presuppositions. These integrate to give meaning to the many diverse experiences of our lives. They give us purposefulness in the struggles, chaos and absurdities of daily living. But more than that, developing this Intelligence allows us to function in the world and be self aware about our actions. The Rabbis of the Midrash are specialists at using their inner experiences, in connection to Torah law or concepts of the divine, in order to help other Jews learn about themselves, about how to live life as a good Jew and how to connect to God.

R. Hanina ben Teradion said in Pirkei Avot 3:3: "If two sit together, and words of Torah are between them, the Shechinah rests between them, and if even one *sits alone* and occupies himself with Torah, God fixes him for a reward." While studying in pairs allows in God's presence, even studying text independently grants us a sense of the divine. God is there whenever we pray or study alone, so we are never really alone. This is the time when we can reflect on our studies internally so that we can prepare ourselves to face the outside world with knowledge and understanding. The value of self-reflection is further exemplified in answering a question from Sifrei Leviticus 1:1: What was served by the empty spaces that occur from time to time in the written text of Torah? The space gave Moshe time to reflect between passages, between one subject and the next. As the

Midrash says, if he who hears words from the mouth of the Holy One and himself speaks with the Holy Spirit requires reflections between one passage and the next, how much more so is reflection required by one who is a mere commoner.

Serious study of the Bible demands an intensely personal response. There is an old Hasidic story recounted by Martin Buber, of the disciples who gathered to learn from their Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov.

After evening prayers, the master would go to his room where candles would be lit and "the mysterious book of creation" lay open on the table. All those seeking advice from the Baal Shem Tov were admitted in as a group to hear their teacher, who would speak late into the night.

One evening as the students left the room, one apologized to the others for monopolizing so much of the Baal Shem's attention. Throughout the entire audience, the master had spoken to him personally. His friend told him not to talk such nonsense. They had all entered the room together and from the very beginning, the master had spoken only to him. A third hearing this laughed, and said they were both mistaken, for their teacher had carried on an intimate conversation with him alone for the entire evening. A fourth and a fifth made the same claim only then did they realized what had happened and they all fell silent.¹⁰⁴

In this parable, the Baal Shem Tov himself represents the Torah, which speaks intimately to each person. We each engage with it. The words evoke different interpretations and so we are each free to comment passionately on them. The text is in us, we are in it. Using one's inner connections can free the mind and offer comfort and serenity. This is the basis of the Intrapersonal Intelligence.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence Kushner, God Was in This Place and I, I Did Not Know it. (Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT, 1991) p.23-24.

Even God had conversations with himself upon the creation of the world. It seems God has a very high level of the Intrapersonal Intelligence. Genesis 1:26 reads, "וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ" - Let 'us' make man in our image. With whom did God take counsel, asks Genesis Rabbah 8:3-4? Rabbi Ammi said, "He took counsel with his own heart". He was like a king who upon seeing the palace, it did not please him. His anger was directed at the architect. God's heart was the architect of humans and so according to Genesis 6:6, "it grieved Him at His heart" when man sinned.

Rabbi Berekhiah said that when God created humans He was able see both the righteous and wicked who were to issue from him. God asked Himself, "If I create him, wicked men will issue from him; if I do not create him, how are righteous men to be born?" God deliberately disregarded the evil and partnered the quality of mercy with Himself and created him. This anthropomorphic description of God arguing with Himself to me is less about an indecisive God, or multiple deities, but rather about a deep-thinking presence who, like a great judge, sees multiple sides of every issue. This ability to have a purposeful struggle before making decisions sets an example for humans to do the same when weighing choices and clearly puts a sense of holiness into our God-given autonomy over our lives.

One of the great intrapersonal debates is the motivation for human behavior. Are we predisposed to act in a certain manner for fear of punishment or does a moral compass guide us? Children are taught that behavior has consequences but over time as adults, we develop an internal set of values – a conscience, to guide our actions. This issue is one of themes addressed in Genesis 39, the attempted seduction of Joseph by Potiphar's wife.

When Joseph resists the temptation of his master's wife, he explains:

"אֲדֹנִי לֹא-יָדַע אֶתִּי מִחֶבְבִּית וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-זָשָׁלָו נָתַן בְּיָדִי" In other words, my master trusts me by placing all that he owns in my hands, how can I break this trust by engaging in sexual activity with Potiphar's wife.

This high level of moral virtue is sufficient for the biblical narrative, but the Midrash expands the reasoning. In Bereshit Rabbah 87:5, three explanations are given for Joseph's righteous behavior. The first explanation is fear of punishment. Joseph remembers Adam, the first human being, violated a minor commandment by eating the forbidden fruit. If he was banished from the Garden of Eden for a minor sin קל וחומר, the punishment for the major sin of adultery would be much more severe. The second explanation is also fear of punishment, reflecting on the sin of Reuben who lay with Bilhah, one of his father's concubines. According to I Chronicles 5:1-2, because of this act, Reuben was stripped of his birthright, which was then transferred to Joseph. Joseph did not want his birthright stripped from him if he fell for Potiphar's wife. The third explanation is his conscience. He fears that if he rejects her, she might decide to kill her husband to have Joseph. Then he will be seen as a murderer. His motivation is fear of the shame of being associated with an "assembly of murderers."

This intriguing Midrash reveals that the point of motivation moves ever closer to the self. The fear of punishment is foremost in his mind, but so is the shame that could be associated with him as well as the breaking of trust of servant with master. Joseph does the right thing; he refuses to be tempted into adultery. But the intrapersonal debate

utilizes this Intelligence, and shows that choices that emerge from a set of internalized values can reflect holiness¹⁰⁵.

The Jewish mystical tradition combines with ethics to express our yearning to comprehend and actualize the unity of all being¹⁰⁶. Mystical awareness leads to the desire to perfect oneself. How we treat one another directly influences how God's unity will be realized in this world of brokenness. In Judaism, voluntary spiritual seclusion from the community is considered an abnormal condition. When it happens it is solely to return to the community with a keener sense of righteousness. The true measure of mystical attainment is measured by our communal behavior, what Martin Buber called the sphere of the interhuman¹⁰⁷. The mystical tradition encourages the spiritual descents and ascents into the self. Dov Baer of Mezritch lists ways into personal prayer.

One who reads from the Torah and beholds the lights of the letters of the text, even though the person may not chant the melody, since the reading is done with devotion and rapture, even though the reading is incorrect, God is not so punctilious. Its like the case of a small child, dearly loved by his father, who wants something from him. Even though he stammers and speaks incorrectly, the father still loves the little one. In the same way when a person reads from the Torah in love, since God loves him so much, God is not concerned over the technical correctness of his speech, as our Rabbis have taught in Midrash Shir Hashirim Rabbah 2:15...God says, 'his babbling (לגלגו) is beloved to me'¹⁰⁸

Accordingly, when you relinquish your self-consciousness, direct all your thoughts to God, feel the light all around you, God will make it clear what you must do. You may fall down, but sometimes you must go down in order to go up to an even higher level. As

¹⁰⁵ Midrash and analysis taken from Torat Hayim, URJ weekly Parsha d'var Torah, written by Rabbi Neal Katz, Congregation Beth El in Tyler, Texas.

¹⁰⁶ Lawrence Kushner, The Way into Jewish Mystical Tradition. (Jewish Light Publishing, Woodstock, VT, 2001) p.107.

¹⁰⁷ I will go into more detail about community in the next chapter, Interpersonal Intelligence.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.112.

in Genesis 13:1, Abraham went down into Egypt and then came up. God is on the highest of levels, so the process of ascension is part of the mystical yearning to become one with the divine. This type of total personal absorption in and devotion to what one is doing leads to a loss of self-awareness. To be so fully present in what you are doing you don't have time to realize it is you who is doing it!¹⁰⁹ The Intrapersonal Intelligence is utilized highly by the mystical Jewish tradition, the effort in negating one's own mind and opinion in order to understand the will of God. Only in such a way can every deed be filled with God's presence.

In her article on the Book of Ruth, Mira Morgenstern writes that the tension in the story derives from the consideration by Ruth of a philosophical question: "How to actualize a sense of self while living a religiously-directed life."¹¹⁰ According to her modern Midrash, by the end of the book, Boaz has come to recognize in Ruth the redemptive aspects of kindness and self that she exemplifies and that he wants to incorporate into his own life¹¹¹. He develops from a leader who is unwilling to disturb the status quo by getting involved in religious legal issues to a person who is willing to take an extra measure of responsibility to achieve what he considers a worthwhile goal, taking care of the widow Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth through marriage. He has the strength to change and admit that Ruth's moral vision is the one to follow, which is hinted in his name, (if you break it into two words, Bo'oz, it is translated as "within him is strength"). As Boaz says to Ruth in "Your last kindness is greater than your first one"

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.114.

¹¹⁰ Mira Morgenstern, "Ruth and the Sense of Self: Midrash and Difference", *Judaism Magazine* (48,2, 1999) p.131-145.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.138.

(Ruth 3:10). Boaz comes to realize that true kindness is not just doing inconsequential favors to make people's lives easier, rather it is the intellectual choice and moral discernment that one must bring to acts of kindness.

Ruth fulfills her personal destiny and that of her new nation through acts of discerning lovingkindness. She consistently retains her sense of self – her sense of ethical and moral hierarchy and her distinctive voice. This allows her to serve as a critic of Judean society in not being welcomed as an outsider, and to serve as a unifying moral force for her new family. Both Ruth and Boaz demonstrate a high sense of self, of Intrapersonal Intelligence, recognizing change in themselves and how this affects for the better their relationship with God and the Jewish community.

The Intrapersonal Intelligence is a developed skill that we must ponder, striving to know who we are in order to interact with the outside world. If we have no idea who we are, how can we understand others? We are conscious that we are conscious. As teachers of Torah we constantly reflect on what it was like to be a student in order to engage our students best. When teaching adolescents, it is vital to reflect on what it was like to be a teenager ourselves, to relate to their level and best serve their educational needs. The same goes for any group we teach. This is one of the most invaluable Intelligences because it affects all others. As Hillel wrote, "If I am not for myself who will be for me, but if I am only for myself what am I?". If we have no sense of self, how can we love or empathize with another. We need to recognize our values, our own strengths, our own moral compass and then use what we know of ourselves to interact with others, to teach others and to love others.

Chapter 7: Interpersonal Intelligence

The Interpersonal Intelligence builds on skills enabling people to think deeply about their community and how they interact with it. One's knowledge of self comes from an ever-increasing appreciation of how others think about the individual. By thinking about others and developing this Intelligence, one may be adept at reading the intentions and desires of others and potentially to act upon this knowledge to influence, for example, a group of disparate individuals to behave along desired lines. Over time people may form bonds of trust with one another, enabling teamwork and cooperation, which ultimately strengthens and bonds the community together. I believe that many Midrashists hoped that through their interpersonal skills, they could guide the Jewish community into certain forms of behavior and strengthen the community as a result.

Yoma 85a-85b concentrates on how we relate to one another through the observance of Yom Kippur. The Mishnah reads, "The transgressions of man towards God are forgiven him by the Day of Atonement; the transgressions against other people are not forgiven him by the Day of Atonement if he has not first appeased the other person." According to Emmanuel Levinas¹¹², in his essay "Toward the Other", just as the Day of Atonement is a fixed day, Jewish wisdom also decided that the freeing of the guilty soul should also take place at a fixed time. "To enable this work to take place every day, there must also be a day reserved especially for repentance"¹¹³. The Mishnah teaches that the celebration of Yom Kippur and the spiritual state it brings about leads to

¹¹² Emmanuel Levinas, Nine Talmudic Readings by Emmanuel Levinas, (Translated and introduced by Annette Aronowicz. Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1990). p.15-16.

¹¹³ Ibid.

us the state of forgiven beings. Our faults towards God are forgiven without depending on God's goodwill. The instrument of forgiveness, even from the Other *Par Excellence*, is in our hands. Yet our neighbor, our friend, the other, is in a certain way, more "other" than God. We must obtain his or her forgiveness and appease him or her before we are forgiven. This lends so much power to the relationship Jews have with God and between fellow Jews. The Rabbis of the Midrash had a high level of Interpersonal Intelligence. They understood how people related to one another and strengthened the bonds of community by building up this day of reckoning as a moment not just to pray but to go to people and ask their forgiveness. This social contract has the potential to mend ruptures among the Jewish people both in the present and future.

Ironically, it was Yom Kippur that proved to be a trying moment for a young German philosopher named Franz Rosenzweig. Going through a spiritual crisis and trying to find where Judaism was in his life, he went to services in Berlin. He wrote, "Anyone who has ever celebrated the Day of Atonement knows that it is something more than a mere personal exaltation or the symbolic recognition of a reality such as the Jewish people; it is a testimony to the reality of God which cannot be controverted"¹¹⁴. He had found a connection to God on that day, when man's soul is alone with the divine, and it is this moment where man is as close to God as is accorded to him. Until that memorable day, Rosenzweig did not believe that the spiritual perception of the reality of God or closeness to God could be experienced by a person within the Judaism of his time. In his major work, The Star of Redemption, he set out to scrutinize and examine what he felt emotionally on that day. He theorized that Creation, Revelation and Redemption are the

¹¹⁴ Franz Rosensweig, The Star of Redemption, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1970) p.xii.

paths that link Man, World and God. God gave the world its reality, the first contact between God and world. In revelation, God reveals His love to man, which makes man aware of his being an "I". Man overcomes his isolation, able to speak and respond to the first divine commandment, "Thou shalt love". Now man translates his love for God into love for "neighbor", which is the first step towards redemption.

The love for God is to express itself in love for one's neighbor. It is for this reason that love of neighbor can and must be commanded. Love of neighbor originated in the mystery of the directed volition; it is distinguished from all ethical acts by the presupposition of being loved by God, a presupposition which becomes visible behind this origin only through the form of the commandment.¹¹⁵

Redeeming love liberates man from the finality of death. This man encounters complete redemption in praying, in the rhythm of the holy days within the liturgical calendar¹¹⁶. In living the sacred year, man anticipates eternity within time. Part of the star of redemption are interpersonal relationships which hold the star together. The love between God and man, and between man and neighbor, all pull together Creation, Revelation and Redemption. In fact without this connection, the focus on the Interpersonal Intelligence, redemption is unattainable.

Sotah 14a is a great example of Interpersonal Intelligence in action, as the Gemara discusses how we can be like God. Rabbi Chama ben Rabbi Chanina asked what is the meaning of the quote, "אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ תֵלְכוּ" - "You shall walk after the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 13:5). How can we be like God? By emulating the attributes of the Divine. Just as God clothes the naked,

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Part Two, Book 3, p.214.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.xvi.

"וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאַדָּם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוּת עוֹר וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם:" (Genesis 3:21)

so too shall you clothe the naked and help the needy. Just as God visits the sick,

"וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בְּאַלְנֵי מִמְּרָא" by visiting Abraham after his circumcision, so too

should we visit the sick in the hospitals and nursing homes, and take care of those who

are ill. Just as God comforts the mourner, "וַיְחַי אֶחָד מֵאֶבְרָהָם וַיְבָרֵךְ" so too shall

we care for the mourners. These are all qualities and ethical commitments that build

upon one another. Each one enables people to think deeply about their community and

how they interact with it. By thinking about others in their greatest time of need, it forces

individuals to also think about themselves and how they would want to be treated in the

very same situation. "וְאָחֲבֶתָ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ" (Leviticus 19:18). Love your neighbor as

yourself, treat your neighbor as you yourself would like to be treated.

Commenting on acts of lovingkindness in Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer¹¹⁷, Chapter XVI

reads,

The Holy One, Blessed be He, descended with the ministering angels
To show loving-kindness to Adam and his help-mate. The Holy One,
Blessed Be He, said: More beloved unto me is the service of loving-
kindness than sacrifices and burnt-offerings which Israel, in the future,
will bring on the altar before Me, as it is said, "For I desired love, and
not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6).

God desires love and compassion among human beings. God does not simply
want sacrifice, the daily interaction is where the love for God is demonstrated. This is
where trust and teamwork develops. By thinking deeply in this interpersonal way, it
strengthens the bonds between the members of the community and the community as a
whole becomes more caring and cohesive.

¹¹⁷ Pirkei De Rabbi Eliezer, translated by Gerald Friedlander (Sepher-Hermon Press, New York, 1916).

Another example of the Interpersonal Intelligence is the way in which biblical characters argued and fought in order to work cooperatively or to cause another to behave along desired lines. In Parshat Vayera, Abraham and God debate the validity of destroying the entire city of Sodom and Gemorah. According to Genesis Rabbah 39:6 Abraham warned God in Genesis 18:23 not to exercise justice too strictly:

”וַיֵּגֶשׁ אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאֵף תִּסְּפֶה צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע

“And Abraham drew near, and said, will you also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

According to Rabbi Levi, Abraham was saying that “If you seek to have a world, strict justice cannot be exercised; and if you seek strict justice, there will be no world...you can only have one of the two. If you do not relent a little, the world will not endure.”

Abraham and God work collaboratively to find a middle ground in justice

Other Midrashim defend the judgment of God and illuminate the evil ways of the Sodomites. From Pirkei De Rabbi Eliezer 25 there is a passage describing a maiden who used to hide food in her water pitcher and give it to a poor man languishing in the town square. It was proclaimed in Sodom that he who sustains a stranger or a poor and needy person with a morsel of bread is to be burned alive. When they found out what the maiden had done, they punished her by burning. She prayed, “God of the Universe, exact justice and judgment on my behalf from the Sodomites”. When a man struck his neighbors wife and caused her to miscarry, the husband would be told, “Give her this man to impregnate her again”. When a man wounded another, the victim would be told, “Pay the man a fee for having bled you” (Leviticus Rabbah 5:2).” These crimes are precisely the sin of lack of Interpersonal Intelligence. Based on this kind of behavior among people, God felt justified in his strict use of justice to destroy the entire city.

Abraham then reverts to another argument, that God cannot destroy an entire city because there is a minority of righteous people living there. Abraham uses his Interpersonal Intelligence skills to try and convince God in other ways that it is not appropriate to destroy the entire city if he can find fifty or forty or even ten righteous people. He counts down and actually changes God's mind, quite a feat considering the immense power and omnipotence of the divine. He smartly phrases his challenge full of praise and modesty, describing himself as but dust and ashes, to get God to listen to him. At the end of the day, the city is destroyed, but it is the dialogue between the two that demonstrates the Interpersonal Intelligence and the Midrash picks up on this with a myriad of stories to fill in the blanks in the argument to justify each side, despite whatever the final answer might be.

Moses and God similarly had arguments where Moses needed to calm God down when the children of Israel sinned. Berachot 32a provides the Midrash of God's anger upon seeing Israel create the Golden Calf. God, quick to fury, cries out, "וְעַתָּה תַּנִּיחָה לִּי וְיָחַר-אַפִּי בָהֶם (אֲבָלֶם)" (Exodus 32:10), "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may destroy them." But Moses quickly needs to find a strategy to appease God. Rabbi Eleazar explained,

Now the nations of the earth will be saying, He has grown feeble like a female, and He has not ability to deliver them out of the wilderness. The Holy One asked Moses, "Son of Amram, have they not already seen the miracles and might acts performed on Israel's behalf at the Red Sea?" Moses replied, "Master of the Universe, they may still say, He could stand up against one king but has no ability to stand up against the thirty-one kings of Canaan. R. Yochanan says, "How do we know that in the end the Holy One, reversing Himself, conceded to Moses that he was right? Because later 'The Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy plea' (Numbers 14:20)

Incredibly, Moses is able to change the mind of God through his forceful argument, especially the ever-useful strategy of asking God what the world will think if God acts in a harsh way, a theme picked up on by many Midrashists and Rishonim in their biblical commentaries. The use of the Interpersonal Intelligence to create an argument to convince another is apparent from this Midrash.

Martin Buber, using the Interpersonal Intelligence, and working from new insights into the concept of self, suggested what it means to be a genuine person, to have true relationships and to create social order that fosters authentic individuality and community¹¹⁸. Authentic human existence is found in meeting, in the reality that arises between people, not in a reality suggested by theories or sensations. "(Buber's) affirmation of the Interpersonal as more significant than the individual repeats the priorities of traditional Judaism. A religiosity that obscures one's responsibility to one's neighbors is uncongenial to the Jewish spirit"¹¹⁹. Buber suggests there are two ways of knowing or relating to the world. The obvious everyday relationship is I-it. It is where we make a conscious effort to put a distance between ourselves and the object or person and it is our objective understanding. The authentic encounter, where two individuals come to understand and appreciate one another, is the I-Thou relationship. The I-Thou moment often comes on its own to grace our lives with its gift of meaning. A lot of Buber's ideas of the power of meaningful interpersonal relationships can be found in his collections of Hasidic stories. There he finds characters and situations in which people relate to other people in momentous ways. In the story, "For the Sake of Heaven", Rabbi

¹¹⁸ Eugene B. Borowitz, Choices in Modern Jewish Thought. (Behrman House Inc., West Orange, NJ, 1983) p. 144-145.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.145.

Jaacob Yitzchak was a seer, whom people would come from miles to visit. Each visit held special significance for him.

With his stricken vision, he looked upon the forehead of each of the numberless people who came wayfaring to him to beseech that a wonder came to pass – whether they were the poor who asked that this burden be taken from them, or the sick who needed healing, or the barren who prayed for increase, or sinners who strove for purification...he gazed with those eyes of his which were within his power into the depth of time and saw the origin and story of the soul of each suppliant, of which the mortal dwelling place, the body, stood before him there. He saw each soul's ultimate descent and root, he saw how often during its pilgrimage it had entered a human frame and how each time in had wrought ill or well at the great task which it was destined to accomplish.¹²⁰

Hasidism might have engendered Buber's philosophy or, more likely, the stories offer convenient illustrations of it. In stressing engagement between people, the Interpersonal skills, Buber affirmed the Jewish heritage in a new, existential way.

Elie Wiesel is a pivotal figure in Holocaust intellectual work, though his works are mainly fiction. They are learned and reflective narrative explorations of range of responses to the Holocaust¹²¹. His is the role of witness, to give truthful testimony despite the agony. Auschwitz, the symbol of the unutterable evil of the Nazis, was a revelatory moment in Jewish history; nothing is the same afterward. In the face of such evil, one many wonder "why bother with life"? But despair is wrong; we must live and try not to despair. We cannot forget, and through his various books and speeches, he approaches different aspects of remembrance. In The Gates of the Forest the protagonist survivor, Gregor, is racked by the ambiguities of life and the guilt over the deaths of his

¹²⁰ Martin Buber, For the Sake of Heaven, (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945) p.3-6.

¹²¹ Borowitz, p.190-192.

family members. In one memorable scene he anguishes over his unrequited love to Clara, someone he met in the trenches of Europe.

"You love Clara," he (best friend Yehuda) stated simply. Gregor did not answer, but his grip tightened on the stock of the rifle which pointed toward the enemy valley below. There, people were being murdered and here Yehuda speaks of love. "You don't dare admit it to yourself," he said in the same calm voice, "but its true. If you see love as a compromise, a defeat, you're mistaken. It's a victory. Above all in time of war, when men are filled with death. This is the time to love. This is the time to choose. An act of love may tip the balance." "Be quiet, Yehuda, I beg of you. You're hurting me." How had Yehuda guessed...¹²²

The key to this character's survival is his ability once again to develop interpersonal relationships to God and to the Jewish people. He feels the love deep down inside, but wants to suppress it, to dwell in his suffering, to wall himself up. He finally admits to himself and Yehuda that he does love Clara and the book ends with them together. Gregor also becomes sufficiently positive in his relationship to God to recite the Kaddish. Having faced the dead and the God who brings death, he is able to then take up marriage and procreation, the primal purpose of life. To Wiesel, speaking through his fictional literature, every Jew, and the Jewish people itself is holy. Promoting Jewish survival is an unshakeable belief after the Holocaust.

Emile Durkheim, the first great modern sociologist, argued that individuals do not create religions¹²³. Rather, their personal needs and desires are given shape and expression by their culture. A people is prior to its religion. A community first shares its way of life and consequently shares it's religion. Mordecai Kaplan followed these

¹²² Elie Wiesel, The Gates of the Forest. (Avon Books, New York, 1966) p.178-180.

¹²³ Borowitz, p.103.

implications religiously. Where traditional Judaism spoke of God giving the Torah, Kaplan argued that the Jewish folk created its culture, Torah, including its religion, climaxed by its idea of God. Both agree that all civilizations have a religion at their core. It integrates a people's way of life. It gives cosmic authority to the values it cherishes. It inspires and motivates individuals to strive to empower institutions and laws¹²⁴. In his first book, De La Division du Travail Social, Durkheim held that religion exercises constraint over individuals and demands personal sacrifice from them. This is a clear analogy to Judaism, whose myriad Halakhic laws require great personal sacrifice. Sacrilege is severely punished. In modernity, Durkheim noticed how religions tend to embrace a smaller and smaller portion of social life coinciding with the advance of history¹²⁵. As collective conscience becomes weaker, individual interpretations are given greater place. When God is held to be far away from man's actions, He no longer is seen as omnipresent nor possesses as much power. Once reflection is aroused, it is difficult to restrain. These views represent a modern look at religion, while the Midrashists lived in a different era when through interpersonal relations and teachings, they cause religion to embrace a huge portion of a Jews' social life. God was omnipresent and very close to man's actions, increasing God's power.

From our ancient sources and modern philosophers we learn the value of personal relations. This Interpersonal Intelligence is predicated on a strong sense of self, developed along with the Intrapersonal Intelligence. But moving beyond the mudane daily interactions to meaningful relationships and connections requires a conscious effort

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.107.

¹²⁵ W.S.F. Pickering, Durkheim on Religion. (Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1994) p.324.

at developing Interpersonal skills. We cannot have I-Thou contacts on a daily basis, they are powerful and rarely experienced. But we may find them when we least expect them.

Devorah Lynn, a fellow Rabbinic student, told us a story of when she asked a man to lower the volume on his personal CD player earphones because he was disturbing a quiet train ride. The man became irate and lashed out verbally at a person who dares tell him how to listen to his music. The argument could have escalated into a shouting match or even violence. The rabbinic student shrunk away from the confrontation, but when tempers had calmed at the end of the ride, she approached the man gently and said, "I didn't realize your music was so important to you; I apologize". He softened immediately and explained that he had lost everything and indeed his music was everything to him. This powerful moment in what otherwise was a mundane train ride demonstrates the potential for meaningful interactions with a highly developed sense of the importance of the Interpersonal Intelligence.

Conclusion

Did the Rabbis take into account the multiple Intelligences of their students, and consequently, learners of Midrash today? The preceeding pages have illuminated Midrashim that fit into each of the seven multiple Intelligences as outlined by Howard Gardner in his groundbreaking theory.

But are there places in the Midrash where the Rabbis explicitly address their thoughts to different learning styles? The Midrashists knew they had to appeal to their listeners, if they wanted their message to get across. Often it was not enough simply to expound the Torah text; they needed to engage and bring the students in and connect to them in order to teach. Rabbah, before beginning his discourse to the sages, always used to say something humorous in order to amuse them. After that, he sat down and with awe began a discourse on Halacha (Pesachim 117a).

The Midrash has many examples of different learners and learning styles. Avot 5:12: There are four types of disciples: quick to learn and quick to forget – his gain is dissipated in his loss; slow to comprehend and slow to forget – his loss is offset by his gain; quick to comprehend and slow to forget – that is a good portion; slow to comprehend and quick to forget – that is a bad portion. In Avot 5:15: There are four types of those who sit before the sages: a sponge, a funnel, a strainer and a sieve. The sponge absorbs everything. The funnel lets in at one end and lets out the other. The strainer lets out the wine and retains the lees. The sieve lets out the powdery stuff and retains the good flour.

Rabbi Meir used to say (Berachot 27b):

To whom may he who learns Torah from only one teacher be compared? To a man who had a field, part of which he sowed with wheat, another part with barley, a third part he planted with olive trees, and fourth part with trees bearing no edible fruit. That man will have an overflow of well-being and plenty. But when a man learns from two or three teachers, he may be compared to a man who has several fields, one sowed with wheat, another sowed with barley, a third planted with olive trees and a fourth planted with trees bearing no edible fruit. This man, spread out in several areas, will have neither well-being nor plenty.

Rabbi Meir is of the opinion that one should learn only from one teacher, who knows a great deal in all areas. In this analogy, the farmer who has too many fields cannot provide proper care for each one. Too many teachers can be overwhelming and the student will be unable to cultivate a good learning relationship with each one. Moreover if each teacher teaches in a different style, with a different point of view, it would be hard for the student to accommodate it all. However, this does not take away from the idea that a teacher should still approach each learner as unique and try to provide different learning models to accommodate multiple learning styles and Intelligences.

Is there an example of a Midrash that appeals to more than one Intelligence?

Some of the examples previously given can apply to more than one category. The Masoretic use of hand signals for chanting Torah appeals to both the Bodily-Kinesthetic as well as a Musical Intelligence. One can use the Spatial Intelligence to visualize the Midrashim on what Abraham might have seen when he looked up on the third day of his journey to sacrifice Isaac, but one could also use the Intrapersonal Intelligence to understand what Abraham learned from that experience and the Interpersonal Intelligence to study the change in the relationship between father and son after the Akedah moment.

Perhaps there is no clearer example than in the Midrash on Psalms¹²⁶, based on

Psalm 48:13:

Walk around Zion, circle it; count towers, take not of its ramparts;
Go through its citadels, that you may recount it to a future age.

The Midrash asks, how many towers are there exactly, and proceeds to number the amount of gardens, towers, mansions and fountains, even delineating the number of aqueducts needed to fill all the fountains. There are also 144 gates, which divides neatly into 12, for each of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel. For the Mathematical-Logical Intelligence, finding precise numbers in the psalm helps them understand and retain the information and helps them connect to the text in a particular way.

Reb Nachman quotes from Ecclesiastes 1:9, "Only that shall happen which has happened; there is nothing new beneath the sun". Even though the children of Israel will depart from Zion, they will return; thus the importance of recounting the details of Jerusalem to the future generations. His proof text accesses the Musical Intelligence, from Numbers 21:17. When the children of Israel were in the desert and needed water, they sang a song and a well sprung up for them. So too they will sing a song in the world to come, and the waters will spring up for them. This teaching envisions the power of music; that song is the connection between the people and God, and the promise that there will be singing in this world and the world to come.

Person's with a high degree of Spatial Intelligence can better understand and visualize this Midrash because of the specific descriptions of Jerusalem with the numbers of towers, palaces, fountains and gates. They can then paint a mental picture of the city, allowing them to gain more insight into the text. Furthermore, the spatially inclined

¹²⁶ Midrash on Psalms. Book 2, psalm 48, p.462.

individual recognizes that for the information to be passed on from generation to generation, there needs to be specificity, and so he or she can appreciate even more why the Rabbis felt the need to be very exact when describing the city.

The learner with a high degree of Linguistic Intelligence will marvel at the way the Midrash flows. It breaks the psalm down into short sentences and then there is a comment on each, followed by a proof text from the Bible. There is also a wonderful use of imagery of God saving the people, "the Holy One, blessed be He, lifted up the children of Israel in clouds of glory and wrapped them around and bore them up". Finally, in the Interpersonal realm, the main message of the psalm is the passing on of the description of Jerusalem from generation to generation. The rabbis writing this understood that even if tragedy were to befall the great city of Jerusalem, memory would carry it on. The connection between the Rabbis and the community was so strong that they impress upon the listeners how essential it is to remember that the city is not as important as maintaining a connection to one another and to God. God will save them at the end of the day and so they must have faith, continued hope, and a belief in the perfection of the world in the time to come.

The source text itself says, "walk around Zion...". The idea of movement, even if only within a mental picture of it, appeals to the Bodily-Kinesthetic learner. Certainly there is an Intrapersonal element to this Midrash, since it is a teaching of how the individual Jewish soul or spirit can stay vital even when in exile. This one Midrash is able to reach all of the seven Intelligences.

Our teachers were always in close touch with the actual life of their listeners whether in Israel or throughout the ancient world where Judaism was taught and promulgated. They thoroughly understood the needs and desires of the people and they handled it in a masterly fashion. The audience did not remain indifferent to the efforts of the Rabbis and contents of the sermon; in fact, they often reacted immediately and gave varied expression to their feelings.¹²⁷ In Bereshit Rabbah 28:3, for example, we read that when Rabbi Abbahu preached in a certain way, the audience laughed in approval. There were also moments when the audience would doze off if they were not connected to the material. Consequently it was very natural and important for the preachers to make every effort to appeal to the taste of the public and speak to them in their language and to their multiple Intelligences.

If the Midrash and our Rabbis could appeal to multiple Intelligences, why can't we? Indeed we should. Through the wide array of Jewish texts available to us in the corpus of Midrash, we have the opportunity, no the obligation, to learn all we can about our students of Torah and meet them where they are. If they love sports, find the Midrash that connects to the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence. If they love talking on the phone, use the Interpersonal connection. If they love to draw or play an instrument, let them express their feelings on the Torah through their natural artistic impulses. We have the keys and the texts at our disposal to keep our traditions relevant and important in the lives of our students. As the Rabbis did before, let us follow their path of wisdom and reach out to all learners.

¹²⁷ Saul Lieberman, Greek in Jewish Palestine. (Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 1942) p.161.

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