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Today's *parsha* deals in large measure with the *mitzvah* of *kibud avot v'emot* - honouring one's parents. We are here today to do a somewhat different *mitzvah* - honouring a man who was once my pupil, and from whom I learned much. G-d willing, we will continue to learn from each other. And we are here to honour this man's parents who have lived ~~their~~ lives ~~according to a certain message that~~ of Torah and of fearing G-d and have done much to instill these values in their children.

It is about one of these values that I would like to address my remarks.

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Shabbat Shalom

It is customary, when trying in a דבר, to connect the דבר, the weekly portion, with the Bar-Mitzvah boy - in the case of a דבר like this - to try & learn from what the Torah is telling us a message to pass on to the Bar Mitzvah bocher - to help him live a life of דבר.

In this case, we want to try & learn from what the Torah is not telling us, from what it leaves out.

We begin by being reminded that דבר is tomorrow + Monday, דבר. Rav Ki-Tov, in his "Sefer HaToda'ah" tells us:

that "it was customary in many Jewish communities to focus public concern, during Chaukah, on matters affecting the education of the children. Community officials used to gather to prescribe ways & means for enhancing the study of Torah among the youth, as well as the masses of the people. For Chaukah means both "dedication" and "education" (from the word דבר)."

Shlomo Hamelech in Mishlei advises: דבר:
Educate a child according to his level. About this verse, the famous Maggid, Rav Paysach Krohn says the following:

- A parent at ~~every~~ home or a teacher in class must recognize that every child is different. Each child possesses distinct qualities, talents & capabilities. Shlomo Hamelech ~~is~~ is instructing us that every ~~child~~ child should be viewed as an individual and not merely as an insignificant cog in the wheel of humanity.

Interestingly, the word דבר (lit., educate) is written in

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this verse with the letter vav missing. Normally this word is spelled $\gamma\prime\prime\prime$, with the vav in place

$(\text{18'3 } \text{vav}) \sim \gamma\prime\prime\prime \text{ } \text{vav} \text{ } \text{vav} \text{ } \text{vav} \text{ } \text{vav}$

"That is why I ~~thought~~ think", concludes the Maggid, "that the letter vav is missing."

If we will notice, there is a word in this week's portion that also has a vav missing - and that is the word vav - in fact this word, when spelled full - with 2 vav's - appears only once in the entire $\gamma\prime\prime\prime$ - in Sefer Ruth.

There are many ways to understand this - something was missing in one ~~area~~ of ~~Yaacov's~~ Yitzchak's children - perhaps something wasn't quite right. And indeed, we notice that vav was not exactly a Torah scholar and a God-fearing Jew. But I would like to propose another reason.

vav tell us that one of the lessons we are to learn from the giving of a half-shekel to the vav is that no Jew, no matter who he is or where he is, is a complete unit by himself - he needs the other Jew (whoever + wherever he is) to complement him, to complete him. So too in the matter of Esau + vav - vav without the vav is not telling us that one was good + one was less good, rather that a complete Jewish lifestyle requires the full input of the potentials that both a vav AND an Esau can give. vav the more spiritual, Esau the more material. Both are wanted, both are needed. vav understood that this was not going to be the case - so he sought to take on himself the full responsibility of ~~all~~ both potentials.

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Not an easy task - and _____ years down the road, we are still trying to put our act together.

The lesson of the missing part is that each of us, every single Jew is missing something and we each of us needs every other Jew to help put the whole picture together.

Mordechai, 5754+ years ago, 'I' decided on your part, your rôle in the scheme of things, & nearly 14 years ago decided the time had come for your entrance on the scene. 13 years ago - *Voilà*. You came! Am Yisroel was missing you until then - in fact, until now.

This week you joined your people. Unfortunately, this week our people lost valuable members - including two of your close relatives. Also missing are your grandparents who, either for reasons of health or, to our sorrow, are sitting *itshel* are unable to be here to share in your *simcha*. May you & your family be spared further sorrow.

Your joining the Jewish people is a major cause for joy.