



Dartmouth College HANOVER • NEW HAMPSHIRE • 03755

Program in Linguistics & Cognitive Science

• TEL. (603) 646-0332 • FAX (603) 646-1557

י"ח אלול ה'תשנ"ב

'So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.' (Joshua 6,27)

It is an ancient Jewish tradition to mark a celebration by delivering a 'Dvar Torah', a teaching based on the wisdom of the Rabbis. For most of us, to reach 80 with all our faculties is a lifetime's goal, a token, as Psalm 90 states, of "gvures", some extra-special vigor. For a Moses, however, or for a Joshua, 80 is just the start of a new adventure and undreamed-of achievements. Moyshe Rabeynu ('Moses our mentor') was indeed just 80 years old when he was commissioned to lead his people out of Egypt and across the Wilderness to Israel. Yehoshua ('Joshua') was just 82 when he inherited the mantle of leader and proceeded to conquer the Land.

I have learned more than I can ever say from Joshua Fishman, in all intellectual spheres – from his khokhme ('intellectual creativity'), his bine ("analytical capacity") and his daas ("power of integration") — and, no less, in the sphere of character: from his simkhe ("good cheer"), his khesed ("generosity"), and his anove ("humility"). But above all, I have learned how to be at one and the same time a dispassionate observer of language and a passionate advocate, at every level, for the languages of my people.

Rabbi Shneur Zalmen of Liady taught: "The same alef expressed in the Holy Tongue is also the alef expressed in other languages of the 70 languages, such as Yiddish. [...] The five types of consonant are the source of the division of the letters in all languages equally. Therefore the 70 languages have a spiritual source above, in the spiritual source of speech, which is the Divine Attribute of Kingship."

May my mentor and friend Joshua Fishman be granted many, many more years to tie crowns to the holy letters.

Ad mea ve'esrim!

Lewis Glinert
Dartmouth College

אד מעא ווע'עסרימ!
לוי גלינערט