

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET  
ON PARSHAS DEVARIM - CHAZON - 5756

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Torah Weekly - Devarim

"[ohr@jer1.co.il](mailto:ohr@jer1.co.il)"\* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion with "Sing, My Soul!" thoughts on Shabbos Zemiro Parshas Devarim For the week ending 4 Av 5756 19 & 20 July 1996  
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Summary

This Parsha begins the last of the Five Books of The Torah, Sefer Devarim. This Book is also called Mishne Torah, literally "the Repetition of The Torah (and hence the Greek/English title of Deuteronomy). Sefer Devarim relates what Moshe told the Bnei Yisrael during the last five weeks of his life, as they prepared to cross the Jordan into Eretz Yisrael. Moshe reviews the mitzvos, stressing the change of lifestyle they are about to undergo: From the miraculous, supernatural existence of the desert under his guidance, to the apparently natural way of life they will experience under Yehoshua's leadership in Eretz Yisrael. The central theme of this week is the sin of the spies, the meraglim. The Parsha opens with Moshe hinting to the sins of the previous generation who have died in the 40 years of wandering in the desert. He gives the Bnei Yisrael a description of what would have happened if they hadn't sinned by sending spies into Eretz Yisrael. He tells them that Hashem would have given them all of the land from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates including the lands of Ammon, Moav, and Edom without needing to fight. He details the subtle sins that culminate in the sin of the spies, and reviews at length the sin of the spies, and the results of that sin: The entire generation was to die in the desert, that Moshe would not enter Eretz Yisrael, but rather they would be led by Yehoshua Bin Nun. He reminds them that their immediate reaction to Hashem's decree was to want to "go up and fight" to redress the sin. He recounts how they wouldn't listen when he told them not to go because they no longer merited to vanquish their enemies miraculously. They ignored him and suffered a massive defeat. They were not allowed to fight with the kingdoms of Eisav, Moav or Ammon -- these lands were not to be part of the map of Eretz Yisrael in the meantime. When

the conquest of Canaan will begin with Sichon and Og, it will need to be in the natural way of warfare.

Commentaries

Planting Seeds "These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel, on the other side of the Jordan, concerning the Wilderness, concerning the Aravah, opposite the Sea of Reeds, between Paran and Tophel and Lavan, and Chatzeros and Di Zahav." (1:1) When you want to convey to someone something unflattering about themselves, the worst way you can do it is by a direct confrontation. The listener will immediately rise against the perceived attack with all manner of self-justification: "I couldn't help it" "You think you could have done better? Better by far is to allude to the matter at hand, subtly planting an inference into the subconscious mind of the listener. In this way, his front-line early-warning defenses aren't triggered, and the idea lodges in his subconscious to grow like a seed. This is what Moshe does in the opening lines of the Book of Devarim. The place-names that are mentioned here are locations of various sins and rebellions of the Jewish People: "concerning the wilderness" -- i.e., their lusting for the flesh pots of Egypt; "concerning the Aravah" -- their immortality with the daughters of Moav; "opposite the Sea of Reeds" -- their lack of trust in Hashem at the crossing of the sea; "between Paran and Tophel and Lavan" -- their complaints about the miraculous food, the Man; "and Chatzeros" -- Korach's rebellion, "and Di-Zahav" -- the golden calf. Moshe is addressing the Bnei Yisrael in the last five weeks of his life. He wants to leave them a strong and lasting message: To beware of inherent tendencies that have already brought them into trouble. Rather than tackle them directly and risk rejection, Moshe plants the seeds of self-examination into the collective psyche of the Jewish People, so that long after his departure, they will still bear fruit. (Rashi, Chasam Sofer, heard from Rabbi Naftali Falk)

The Art of Listening "...And whatever is too difficult for you, bring it to me and I will hear it. (1:17) 'A problem shared is a problem halved' runs the adage. It is a well-know psychiatric fact that part of the process of helping people with their problems is to encourage them to verbalize them. Being listened to is in itself a relief, even if the problem itself still remains. The Rebbe of Gur notes that this idea has its origin in what Moshe says here "And whatever is too difficult for you, bring it to me and I will hear it." Moshe doesn't say "I'll solve the problem for you" rather "I will hear it." Allowing the other person to express his problem is therapeutic in itself and may also help him to find a permanent solution. (Adapted from Rabbi Abraham J. Twersky)

Today, I Am A Fountain Pen "Listen amongst your brethren and you shall judge fairly." (1:16) A judge may not listen to one litigant in the absence of his opponent. -- Sanhedrin 7b A little baby. Nothing could be purer. Nothing could be more innocent. Nothing could epitomize goodness more than a baby. Or maybe not... >From the moment a baby opens its mouth in its first cries, it is expressing unopposed selfishness. 'I want to eat! 'I want to sleep! 'I don't want to sleep!' 'I want more to eat!' A baby's life is nothing more than an unrelieved litany of selfishness. Twenty-four hours a day. Until the age of 12 or 13. When a child become Bar or Bas Mitzvah -- the best present he gets is not a fountain pen, or a computer. The best present he gets is a yetzer tov (positive inclination). For until Bar Mitzvah, the yetzer hara (selfish drive) rules unopposed. (Rashi, Koheles 4:13) Rabbi Yonasan Eybeshitz was a child prodigy. Even as a young boy, he overcame his natural desire to go out and play, immersing himself instead in learning Torah. When he became Bar Mitzvah, he was asked how it was that he had been able to ward off the yetzer hara while he was still so young. The young Reb Yonasan replied 'The Torah teaches us that it is forbidden for a judge to hear the testimony of one litigant if the other is not present. So whenever the yetzer hara would try to entice me away from my learning, I would say to him that I could not possibly listen to his case until I was thirteen when the other litigant -- my yetzer tov -- would be able to present his side of the case too!"

Sending Out Sparks "Moshe began explaining this Torah..." (1:5) When Moshe began to explain the Torah, he did so in all of the 70 root languages. Why was this necessary? After all, the Children of Israel all knew the Holy Tongue itself, and what possible purpose could there be in Moshe translating the Torah into 70 other languages? Hashem knew that the Jewish People would have to wander through a long night of exile amongst all the nations of

the world. Thus, Moshe explained the Torah in all 70 languages so that in every language and every nation and land there would be a spark of Torah. (Chidushei HaRim)

Haftorah: Yishayahu 1:1-27 Horse Sense

"The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's trough. "Yisrael does not know, My people do not perceive." (1:3)

Rabbi Yochanan ben Tausa once sold an ox to a non-Jew. When Shabbos came, the non-Jew tried to take out the ox to plow his field, but try as he might, the ox refused to budge. He beat the animal vigorously until Rabbi Yochanan came and whispered in the animal's ear "Let it be known to you that you are no longer under my jurisdiction. You are now under the domain of the non-Jew. You must work now as and when he desires.' Immediately, the ox got up and started to work. The non-Jew, seeing what had happened, went and converted. And that's how Rabbi Yochanan got his name -- "ben Tausa" (son of an Ox -- Taurus). Similarly, our Sages relate the story of an ox that Eliyahu HaNavi gave to the false prophets of baal. The ox refused to be slaughtered in the name of the idol baal until Eliyahu told it that by letting itself be offered on the altar of baal, it too would ultimately be sanctifying the Divine Name. Only then, the ox gave in and allowed itself to be slaughtered. Our sages also tell of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair who had a donkey which refused to eat food from which maaser (tithes) had not been taken. All of this is hinted to in this verse: "The ox knows its owner" -- there is an ox that knows its master -- the ox of Eliyahu HaNavi who submitted to being sacrificed to idolatry, or the ox of Rabbi Yochanan ben Tausa who wouldn't work on Shabbos. "And the donkey, the feeding trough of its master" -- the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair who wouldn't eat untithed food. However, you, My people, says Hashem, you have sunk lower than the ox and the donkey, for "Yisrael does not know, My people do not perceive." (Tzoare Shalal in Mayana shel Torah)

Sing, My Soul! Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations. Baruch Keil Elyon - "Blessed is G-d..." "Fortunate is everyone who looks forward to a double reward" v'ashrei kol choche l'shalmey kefel Everything about the Sabbath, note our Sages, is double. The command for observing the Shabbos in the Ten Commandments heard at Sinai was given in double form -- Zachor and Shamor. Two animals are brought as the additional sacrifice on Shabbos, and we honor each Sabbath meal by making our blessing over two loaves. The reward which awaits the Sabbath observer is certainly due to be a double one as well, and that is why we sing of the good fortune of the one who looks forward to receiving that double reward.

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ml@etzion.org.il" PARSHAT HASHAVUA SEFER DVARIM

by Menachem Leibtag

SEFER DVARIM - INTRODUCTION

What is Sefer Dvarim? Most everyone will answer - a REVIEW or REPEAT of Chumash, just as Chazal's name for the sefer "MISHNEH TORAH" implies.

Is this really so? Imagine that you are a teacher who assigns the class to summarize the first four books of Chumash. How would you grade Sefer Dvarim (at 25 points/sefer)? Sefer Breishit - almost no mention. (-25 points)

Sefer Shmot - few details of the Exodus & NO details of the Mishkan (-15 points) Sefer Vayikra - almost no mention (-25 points) Sefer Bamidbar - most of the stories are mentioned but almost none of the mitzvot (-10 points)

Even the most lenient teacher would have to fail the student!

Furthermore, Sefer Dvarim contains many mitzvot which were NEVER mentioned earlier in Chumash. Clearly, Sefer Dvarim is NOT A REVIEW of Chumash! So, what is Sefer Dvarim? What does its name MISHNEH TORAH imply? This week's shiur will not only answer these questions, it

will also help us better understand the importance of "kriyat shma".

INTRODUCTION

In our study of Chumash thus far, we have found the primary theme of each sefer:

**BREISHIT** - God's creation of the universe and His choice of a special nation.

**SHMOT** - The Exodus of that Nation from Egypt until their arrival at Har Sinai; Matan Torah and building the Mishkan.

**VAYIRKA** - Torat Kohanim, the laws which make Am Yisrael an "am kadosh" (a holy nation).

**BAMIDBAR** - Bnei Yisrael's journey from Har Sinai, with the Mishkan at its center, towards the Promised Land.

Each of these books are written in **THIRD** person, i.e. Moshe Rabeinu writes as though he is the narrator, even when he is talking about himself (see Baba Batra 14b). Sefer Dvarim appears to be different, since most of the sefer is written in **FIRST** person.

The opening psukim of Sefer Dvarim explain why. The first five psukim, written in third person, introduce Moshe's speeches:

"These are the DVARIM (words/ speeches) which Moshe spoke to all of Israel... In the fortieth year on the first day of the eleventh month... in Arvot Moav, Moshe began to explain this Torah saying..." (1:1-5)

The next four chapters, from 1:6->4:40, written in first person, simply quote Moshe's speech.

In a similar manner, the first pasuk of chapter five introduces Moshe's main speech which continues until chapter 26. Here again, the opening pasuk introduces the speech in third person, and the speech itself is written in first person:

"And Moshe called together all of Israel and said to them (third person): Listen to the laws and rules which I tell you today... (first person)" (see 5:1)

Hence, most of Sefer Dvarim is written in first person simply because it records several **SPEECHES** which Moshe gave to Bnei Yisrael. It's basic style, however, is no different than the rest of Chumash. To identify each of Moshe Rabeinu's speeches in this sefer, one need only pay attention to the change of person in Sefer Dvarim, i.e. from third to first person.

[I suggest that you try this on your own; if you are short for time, read carefully at least 1:1-7, 4:40-5:2, 26:16-27:2, 28:69-29:2, & 30:19-32:1]

**A BOOK OF SPEECHES**

The following table illustrates the division of Sefer Dvarim into four speeches:

<b>SPEECH #1</b>	Chaps. 1->4	Introductory speech
<b>SPEECH #2</b>	Chaps. 5->26	Main speech
<b>SPEECH #3</b>	Chaps. 27->28	Tochacha & Covenant
<b>SPEECH #4</b>	Chaps. 29->30	Teshuva

[From chapter 31 until the end of the sefer (chapter 34), Sefer Dvarim 'returns' to the regular narrative style of Chumash (third person).] **THE MAIN SPEECH**

As the above table indicates, Speech #2 is by far the longest speech, and thus the **MAIN** speech of Sefer Dvarim. Therefore, to understand what the sefer is all about, we must first determine the purpose of this speech (chapters 5->26). In later shiurim, we will show that Speech #1 actually introduces this main speech, while the final two speeches form its conclusion.

[It is suggested that you read 5:1 -> 6:9 before continuing, or at least from 5:20->6:1.]

The main speech begins with what appears to be simply a 'repeat' of the Ten Commandments (5:6-18). Why are they being repeated?

To appreciate the purpose of the main speech we must understand its setting.

We are now in the fortieth year as Bnei Yisrael prepare to cross the Jordan and conquer Eretz Canaan. Moshe is about to die, and before he retires, he gathers Bnei Yisrael together in order to teach and remind them of the laws which they must keep upon entering the land.

**MAAMAD HAR SINAI - WHAT SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED!**

These laws which Moshe now plans to teach them were first given during Matan Torah. This generation, however, was not present (at least not of adult

age) at Maamad Har Sinai. Nonetheless, they must now fulfill the destiny which was originally intended for the generation which went out of Egypt. Therefore, Moshe begins his speech by reminding them that the covenant which Bnei Yisrael accepted at Har Sinai applies to them as well: "SHMA YISRAEL [listen] to the CHUKIM (laws) and MISHPATIM (rules) which I TEACH YOU TODAY, study them and keep them. God made a COVENANT with us at CHOREV (Har Sinai). It was not [only] with our FATHERS that God made this covenant, but [also] with US who are here alive today..." (5:1-3)

Before Moshe explains the details of these CHUKIM & MISHPATIM, he must first explain what transpired at Har Sinai, for those events explain the framework in which these laws were originally given. Moshe begins by reviewing the Ten Commandments which constitute the essence of Gods' covenant (5:4-20), then he tells the story of Bnei Yisrael's immediate reaction:

"When you heard God's voice and the mountain ablaze with fire, you came to me and said... 'Let us not die, for this fearsome fire will consume us if we continue to hear God's voice... You [Moshe] should go closer and hear what God wants to command us, then YOU WILL TELL US everything which GOD WILL TELL YOU..." (5:20-24)

After hearing the "dibrot", Bnei Yisrael became fearful and opted to hear the remaining mitzvot from Moshe, instead of directly from God. Their request is accepted: "God heard the plea which you made... Go say to them: 'Return

to you tents', but you [Moshe] stay with Me and I will give YOU the MITZVAH, CHUKIM & MISHPATIM that you should teach them - for them to keep IN THE LAND that I am giving them to conquer." (5:25-28)

These psukim are the key for understanding Sefer Dvarim, for they explain what the main speech is all about! Moshe's speech contains the mitzvot which Bnei Yisrael must keep UPON ENTERING THE LAND. These mitzvot were originally given to Moshe immediately after Bnei Yisrael heard the Ten Commandments.

To prove this, we need only read the next several psukim (5:28-6:3). Recall that God told Moshe that he should remain on Har Sinai to receive the MITZVAH, CHUKIM & MISHPATIM, which must then teach Bnei Yisrael. In the next pasuk, Moshe begins his explanation of precisely what these mitzvot are: "And THIS ('v'zot') is the MITZVAH, CHUKIM & MISHPATIM that God has commanded me to TEACH YOU to be observed on the LAND WHICH ARE ABOUT TO ENTER..." (6:1-3)

#### THE 'ELEVENTH' COMMANDMENT

Thus, the opening chapter (5:1->6:3) of the main speech simply explains when and why its mitzvot were originally given. The next pasuk (6:4) begins the detail of these mitzvot. Lo and behold, the first mitzvah is none other than the first parsha of Kriyat Shma!: "Shma Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu Hashem echad, v'AHAVTA..." This lengthy speech of mitzvot continues until Parshat Ki-tavo (chapter 26). [Note the final psukim 26:16-19 and their relationship to Maamad Har Sinai/ Shmot 19:3-5!]

In other words, the main speech of Sefer Dvarim contains the mitzvot pertaining to entering Eretz Canaan which Bnei Yisrael first received at Har Sinai at the conclusion of the Ten Commandments! Within this speech, Moshe Rabeinu may add some comments relating to events which have transpired in the interim, however the mitzvot themselves are '40 years old'! WHY NOW?

If you have followed up until this point, you are probably asking yourself the obvious question: If these mitzvot were given forty years earlier, why do we only hear about them in the fortieth year?

The reason is quite simple. These mitzvot deal with laws which must be kept when Bnei Yisrael enter the land. Therefore, they are only recorded at this time, as Bnei Yisrael prepare to cross the Jordan and conquer Eretz Canaan. As we shall show in the following shiurim, these mitzvot comprise a complete unit, sort of a "shulchan- aruch" (halachik guide) for entering the land (note again 5:28 & 6:1).

#### MISHNEH TORAH

We have shown that the main speech in Sefer Dvarim is not a 'repeat' of Chumash, rather a set of mitzvot which had been given earlier but only

recorded in the fortieth year. How are we to understand Chazal's name for Sefer Dvarim - "Mishneh Torah"?

Once again, the answer is quite simple. The word "mishneh" is derived from the "shoresh" (root) - "l'sha-neyn" [sh.n.n.] - to repeat. Sefer Dvarim is not a 'repeat' of Chumash, rather it contains the mitzvot which NEED TO BE REPEATED every day!

This is precisely what Sefer Dvarim tells us in the first mitzvah of the main speech (a pasuk which you all know by heart): "v'hayu ha'DVARIM ha'eyleh asher anochi m'tzavcha hayom al l'vavechu. v'SHINANTAM l'banecha v'dibartah bam..." ["And these DVARIM (mitzvot of the main speech) which I am teaching you today must be kept in your heart AND YOU MUST REPEAT THEM (over and over) TO YOUR CHILDREN and speak about them constantly, when at home and when you travel..." ] (see 6:5-8)

The laws of Sefer Dvarim must be constantly repeated and taught ("v'shinantam"), just as its name - "Mishneh Torah" - implies. Each time we read the parshiot of "kriyat shma" we fulfill this mitzva! [This will be discussed in further detail in next week's shiur.]

Further proof of this interpretation is found in the sole pasuk in Sefer Dvarim which mentions "mishneh torah" (in parshat HaMelech 17:14-20): "And when the King is seated on his royal throne, he must write this MISHNEH HA'TORAH in a book... and it must be with him and HE MUST READ FROM IT EVERY DAY OF HIS LIFE in order that he learn to fear God..." (17:18-19)

Once again, we see that "Mishneh Torah" does not imply a repeat of earlier laws, rather a set of laws which NEED TO BE REPEATED! [Similarly, the word "mishnah" (Torah sh'baal peh) has the same meaning. The "mishnayot" require "shninun", for they need to be repeated over and over again.] PARSHAT DVARIM

With this background, we can better understand the opening psukim of Sefer Dvarim and the first speech.

Even though these mitzvot are not recorded in Chumash until the fortieth year, they had already been taught to Bnei Yisrael (see Shmot 34:29-32). As its name "Mishneh Torah" implies, most likely Moshe had already taught these mitzvot to Bnei Yisrael on various occasions and at several locations. This explains the enigmatic list of places in the first three psukim of Sefer Dvarim (1:1-3): "Ayleh ha'dvarim asher diber Moshe el kol Yisrael ...." These DVARIM (which will be explained in the main speech- see Ramban!) are those which Moshe HAD ALREADY SPOKEN to Bnei Yisrael - in Transjordan, in the wilderness (midbar), in the Arava, near 'Suf', between 'Peraan' and 'Tofel', at Lavan, and at Chatzeirot, at Di Zahav, AND during their eleven day journey from Har Chorev until Kadesh Barnea." (1:1-2)

[Recall that had it not been for "chet ha'mraglim", Bnei Yisrael should have entered Eretz Yisrael from Kadesh Barnea. During that ELEVEN DAY JOURNEY from Har Sinai to Kadesh Barnea, in anticipation of entering Eretz Canaan, Moshe taught and repeated these laws each day of that journey!]

Now, in the fortieth year on the first day of the eleventh month, Moshe gathered the people in Arvot Moav to repeat these mitzvot ONE LAST TIME.

"And in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moshe spoke (and taught) these mitzvot..." (1:3-4)

Not only does this interpretation explain the opening psukim of the Sefer, it also explains the purpose of Speech #1 (chapters 1->4). Before Moshe teaches the laws of the main speech, he must first explain to Bnei Yisrael why forty years have passed since these mitzvot were first given. He must remind and rebuke Bnei Yisrael concerning what went wrong the first time, and he must infuse Bnei Yisrael with the necessary confidence to conquer the Land, assuring the people that this time the conquest will succeed (see Rashi 1:1!).

This may explain the meaning of the word "ho'ee" in the final pasuk of the introduction: "In Transjordan in the land of Moav - "ho'ee Moshe" - Moshe BEGAN to explain this TORAH saying..." (1:5 - See Rashi!)

Moshe's first speech INTRODUCES the main speech by explaining why forty years have passed. Note that before the main speech, the word Torah is used once again to introduce the mitzvot: "v'ZOT ha'TORAH asher sam Moshe" - and this (the forthcoming main speech)- which Moshe taught before Bnei Yisrael..." (Dvarim 4:44 / see Rashi)

Recognizing this purpose of the first speech, we briefly review its order and content:

A) INTRO 1:1-5 Opening narrative explaining background of speech (what, when, where, etc.).

B) FROM HAR SINAI TO ARVOT MOAV

Explaining the reason for the 40 year delay. 1:6-11 The original trip from Har Sinai to Eretz Yisrael, (what should have happened then instead of now) 1:12-18 Moshe's leadership shared with the elders etc. (they will help lead, judge, and teach the laws) [See Further Iyun.] 1:19-40 "Chet Ha'Mraglim" - the REASON why that generation did not enter the Land, and why forty years have passed.

Accented in this account is not to fear nations of Canaan like that generation had feared them. 2:1-16 The journey from Kadesh, around Har Seir until Nachal Zared. The death of "Dor HaMidbar" (2:14-16) 2:17-30 The journey through Moav and Amon, passing Nachal Arnon (challenging Sichon to war, God's involvement /2:30) 2:31-3:22 The war against Sichon, and Og King of Bashan, Conquest of most of Transjordan, Inheritance of Reuven and Gad, and their 'condition' [Note God's assurance to assist the people, based on

these events in 3:20-22.] 3:23-29 Moshe's final request to see the Land. C) INTRODUCTION TO THE MITZVOT 4:1-24 General principles regarding mitzvot in forthcoming speech, i.e. not to add or take away, their purpose- to be an example for other nations, not to worship God through any type of intermediary after Moshe dies. 4:25-40 'Mini- tochacha', your punishment should you not follow these forthcoming mitzvot, and the eternal option to do 'teshuva'.

[4:41-49 is a short narrative explaining that at this gathering Moshe designated the three cities of refuge in Transjordan, followed by several introductory psukim for the forthcoming main speech.]

BETWEEN DVARIM AND BAMIDBAR /SHMOT

This interpretation helps explain the many discrepancies between the details of various events as recorded in Shmot and Bamidbar, when compared to their parallel accounts in Sefer Dvarim (a classic example is "chet ha'mraglim"). Neither sefer records all the details of any event, however each sefer records the events from the perspective of its theme and purpose.

Iy"n, I will try to write a quick shiur on Parshat Dvarim itself before shabbat. Until then, this should suffice.

shabbat shalom menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

1. See Ramban's introduction to Sefer Dvarim, and relate it to the above shiur. See also the explanations of Ramban, Chizkuni, Ibn Ezra, and Rashi on the first psukim of the parsha.
2. Based on the shiur, attempt to explain the differences between "chet ha'mraglim" here and in Parshat Shlach.
3. Based on the shiur, can you offer an explanation why the laws of the Mishkan are not included in Sefer Dvarim, while certain mitzvot relating to the Mikdash (hamakom asher yivchar Hashem) are recorded?
4. Compare the account of the battle against Sichon and Og here and in Parshat Chukat, explain as above.
5. Explain why these mitzvot were never recorded, as a unit, in Sefer Shmot. Which of the mitzvot of Sefer Dvarim are recorded in Shmot? Where? Why? [Relate to Parshat Mishpatim.]
6. Compare Dvarim 1:9 and 1:12 to Bamidbar 11:14 and its context from 10:33 ->11:14 . How does this help explaining why this is included in this introductory speech?

time-frame. The Torah tells us that only "after smiting Sichon, king of the Amorites, and (the giant) Og, king of Bashan, did Moshe begin explaining this Torah (rebuke) to them." (Deuteronomy 1:4)

The fact that the Torah makes a point of stating that the reproofs occurred only after Moshe smote two powerful enemies has obvious connotations. Rashi explains: "if the Jews were to say, 'what has Moshe done for us? Has he brought us into the Land? How does he have the right to rebuke us?' Moshe thus waited until the defeat of the last two major enemies before rebuking the nation."

Perhaps Moshe wanted to tell us a bit more.

Reb Mendel Kaplan (1913-1985) was a Rebbe at the Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia from 1965 until he passed away. In the later years, he would conduct an early morning class with a select group of students. He would study with them Daas Chachma U'Mussar, the magnum opus of his Rebbe, Rabbi Yeruchum Levovitz, the Mashgiach of the Mirrer Yeshiva of Europe and later Shanghai. Each day the group would meet before Shacharis (morning prayers) and listen to their elderly Rebbe discuss deep philosophical issues concerning the nature of man and the profound eternal struggle he faces.

One night a heavy snow covered the streets of Philadelphia. As the boys trudged into the classroom they were dazzled by the view of the dawn breaking over the white blanket that softly covered the frozen ground. But an even more amazing sight beheld then inside the classroom. Rav Mendel was at sitting at his desk wearing his boots, gloves, and an overcoat that was as warm as his expression.

"Today we will learn the real Mussar (ethics)," he smiled. "Don't take off your boots and coats." He closed the large tome on his desk and pointed to six shovels neatly stacked in the corner of the classroom. With that, he took a shovel, walked outside, and began to lead the boys in shoveling a path from the dormitories to the Bais Medrash where the entire school would soon conduct their morning prayers.

Moshe knew that for forty years he had admonished his nation on issues of faith, trust in Hashem, and belief in the prophets. He had put his honor on the line, as he constantly defended their misdeeds. He prayed for them as they battled with Amalek and prayed for them when G-d's wrath was upon them. But he had yet to do physical battle.

The call came. Moshe had to fight the most notorious and powerful rulers of the region, Sichon and Og. They were stronger and bigger and surely more aggressive than he. His faith was on the line. He had to teach real Mussar. Only after conquering those two foes, showing his people that he too can get down in the trenches, did he begin to admonish the nation for forty years of various improprieties.

Sometimes, if you'd like your friend to become as pure as snow, you can't just talk about it. You have to shovel it.

Good Shabbos (c) 1996 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

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Speaking Louder -- Drasha Parshas Devorim "rmk@yoss.org"

"drasha@torah.org" by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Moshe is saying his last good-byes to his beloved nation. He stands at Israel's border and reviews forty years of trials and tribulations, the good times and the bad, and how his nation Israel matured to become the inheritor of the promised land. The first verse in this week's portion alludes to the ensuing topics of discussion. The Golden Calf, the incident with the spies, and the time when Israel faltered at the idol Ba'al Pe'or are amongst the many issues that are re-examined.

But the Torah defines Moshe's rebuke by confining it to a specific

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Haftorah Devorim

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HAFTORAH PARSHAS DEVORIM - SHABBOS CHAZON Yeshaya 1:1 This week's haftorah concludes the three week series regarding the Jewish people's exile and the destruction of their Bais Hamikdash. This final reading of rebuke goes down in history as the strongest message of reprimand ever delivered to the Jewish people. The prophet Yeshaya depicts the moral conduct of the Jews to be the most corrupt and wicked since the days of Sedom and Gemorah. He declares the Jews worse than the animals, and says in the name of Hashem, "The ox knows his master and the donkey his owner's

feeding tray but My nation doesn't know and doesn't even consider Me. Woe guilty people, heavy with sin, evil and corrupt children who forsook Hashem and disgraced Israel's Holy One." (1:3,4) Yeshaya continues with harsh words of chastisement, and says, "Why should you continue to be beaten if you just increase your straying? From head to toe there is no clear spot, only stabs, bruises and open wounds. But you have not treated them, not bandaged them or even softened them." (1:5,6) The prophet indicates that after all the beatings they have received the Jewish people haven't even made an attempt to rectify their faults.

Yeshaya then concentrated on the Jewish service in the Bais Hamikdash and attacked them even on that count. He expressed that Hashem was displeased with their sacrifices and lacked interest in their service. Hashem says, "When you come to see Me who asked you to trample on My courtyard? Don't continue bringing useless offerings; your incense is disgusting to Me. I cannot tolerate your gatherings on Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh, and I despise your festivals and celebrations; they're too much bother for Me." (1:12,13) The Jewish people were going through the motions of Judaism but lacked any level of sincerity. They assembled in the Bais Hamikdash during the holiday seasons but did not dedicate their efforts to Hashem, rather to themselves. Hashem therefore referred to those gatherings as theirs rather than His. Even their prayers, their direct line to Hashem, were being rejected. Yeshaya said in the name of Hashem, "When you stretch out your hands in supplication I will ignore you; even when you increase your prayers I won't listen because your hands are full of blood." (1:15) These last words refer to the increasing number of murders and crimes that were taking place amongst the Jewish people, even in the Bais Hamikdash proper. Yeshaya said that Hashem had literally closed the door on His people and was not interested in seeing or hearing from them anymore.

Suddenly, we discover a complete change in nature and the prophet extends the Jewish people an open invitation. Hashem says, "Please go and reconcile, if your sins are likened to scarlet they will be whitened like snow and if they are like deep red crimson they will be like white wool. If you consent and listen then you will eat the goodness of the land." (1:18,19) This seems to indicate a total reversal of direction. Moments earlier, the prophet proclaimed that Hashem had absolutely no interest in His people and despised their trampling on His property. Hashem was so angry and disgusted with them that He severed all lines of communication. And now, one passage later Hashem was prepared to brighten and whiten the Jewish people to the extent of glistening snowflakes?!

The answer to this perplexing message is found in the insightful words of Chazal in explanation of a puzzling passage in Shir Hashirim. Shlomo Hamelech presents the overall status of the Jewish people shortly before their bitter exile from their homeland. They project themselves to Hashem in the following manner, "I am asleep but my heart is awake." (Shir Hashirim 5:2) Rashi (ad loc.) quotes the comment of Chazal in the Pesikta explaining the Jewish people's response. They said that they fell into a deep slumber and basically abandoned their service of Hashem but their heart, Hashem himself would always remain awake. He doesn't permit them to disappear from the scene and continuously sends them opportunities to return to Him. He consistently sends His prophets to awaken His people even from their deep comatized state.

This is the hidden secret of the Jewish people's eternal existence. From the vantage point of their actions, the Jews at that time fell into a deep coma and developed the most corrupt and immoral standards conceivable. They did not demonstrate any inner interest of being with Hashem or any sincerity regarding their service to Him. But Hashem, the heart and pulse of the Jewish nation retained His interest in His people. His love for them is so great that He never gives up on them. And so, when their actions were so corrupt that they didn't even deserve "the time of day" from Hashem, He didn't forget His people. He beckoned them to reconcile their ways and informed them that He was prepared to cleanse them from all of their sins. This experience reinforces the fact that Hashem is forever waiting for His people to return. He patiently awaits that glorious moment when all of His people will finally proclaim, "You are our father and we are Your sons!" May this day come speedily in our times.

by Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Rosh Kollel (Dean) Kollel Toras Chesed 3732 West

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Devorim Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

". . . Moshe spoke to the Children of Yisroel according to everything which HaShem commanded him with regard to them . . . Across the Yarden, in the land of Mo'av, Moshe began to expound the Torah, saying . . ." (1, 3 & 5) The Gri"z of Brisk observes that the repetition requires an explanation. He elaborates that Moshe was given two (distinct) directives when he taught the Torah to Yisroel. Firstly, every navi (prophet) is commanded to relate his prophesy. Secondly, as Rash"i writes in Parshas Mishpatim (Shmos 21,1) "These are the laws which you shall set before them" - HaKodush Boruch Hu said to Moshe "Do not imagine that you can say 'I will teach them the chapter and the law two or three times until it is fluently (known by them) like (the topic which) they are studying, but I will not exert myself to make them understand the reasons for (the laws) and their explanations.' Thus it says '. . . which you shall set before them' like a table which is set before a person, ready for him to eat from."

The gemorra says "The general principles and the details (of all the Mitzvos) were spoken at Sinai, and repeated in the Ohel Mo'ed (Tabernacle), and (taught) a third time on the Plains of Mo'av." (Sotah 37b)

This is why both of these aspects are written here (recording the discourse on the Plains of Mo'av): That "Moshe spoke to the Children of Yisroel according to everything which HaShem commanded him" referring to his actual prophesy which he was obliged to tell them. "Moshe began to expound the Torah" which alludes to (his responsibility to) teach them and make them understand it (properly), which he was also commanded to do.

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"You have dwelled enough (time) at this mountain. Turn and journey and come to the Mountain of the Emori and to all of its neighbourhoods . . ." (1, 6 & 7) The Chasam Sofer explains this with a mussar approach. The Midrash (quoted by Ramba"n on this possuk and by Tosfos - Shabbos 116a) expounds the possuk "And they travelled from the Mountain of HaShem a journey of three days" (Bamidbar 10,33) 'like a child running away from his school.' This very (fact) that the Torah was not important to them, and the events of the (material) world were more appealing to them, caused them to send the meraglim (spies), and (led to) the decree that they should not come into the Land. That night (Tisha Be'Av, when the meraglim returned, and enticed them to believe that they could not conquer Eretz Yisroel DR) was established as (a night of) weeping for (all future) generations, and the Beis (HaMikdash) (Temple) was destroyed (on that day) and they went into exile. This explains the reference to 'the Mountain of the Emori' - (the Emori refers to) Eisav, whose actions were (like those) of an Emori. (The Beis HaMikdash was destroyed by the Romans, who were descended from Eisav - Rash"i on Bereishis 36,43 states that Magdiel, one of the realms of Eisav, is Rome DR). This is what is hinted at here: the fact that "You have dwelled enough (time) at this mountain," that the sojourn at the Mountain of HaShem was a burden to them, caused them to "Turn and journey and come to the Mountain of the Emori" - into exile.

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Torah Studies - Devarim B"H Torah Studies Adaptation of Likutei Sichos by Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion  
DEVARIM

The Sidra of Devarim is always read on the Shabbat before the 9th of Av, the date on which both Temples fell. These tragedies are reflected in the choice of Haftorah for the surrounding weeks, those before the 9th of Av expressing prophecies of rebuke for the sins that were the spiritual cause of the destruction; those afterwards conveying messages of comfort and solace.

This week's Haftorah, the famous "Vision" of Isaiah, gives its name to the day - Shabbat Chazon, the "Shabbat of the Vision."

Traditionally, this is read as a powerful indictment of a rebellious people. But, true to the Chassidic tradition of seeing the Divine blessing even in the apparent curse, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, one of the early Chassidic teachers, saw in it a distant "vision" of the Third Temple of Messianic times.

The Sicha traces the connection between this thought and the content of the Sidra of Devarim, the opening of the "repetition of the law" by Moses to the Israelites as they stand on the threshold of their Promised Land.

#### THE SHABBAT OF THE VISION

There is a saying of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev that this Shabbat, Shabbat Chazon (when we read as the Haftorah, the famous Vision (Chazon) of Isaiah), is a day when we are presented with a vision of the future Third Temple, even though we see it from a great distance.

And this leads us to understand the connection between the "vision" of the Haftorah, and the Sidra of Devarim, which are always read together on the Shabbat before the 9th of Av.

For, with Devarim begins the "Second Torah" - Moses' recapitulation of the Torah. And the whole book of Devarim differs from the other four books of the Chumash in being addressed to the generation who were about to enter the Holy Land.

They needed counsel and caveat in a way that the previous generations did not. For the people who had traveled in the wilderness possessed an immediate knowledge of the Divine - they had seen G-d on Sinai. But the succeeding generation, already touched by their responsibilities in the physical world, lost that immediacy, they heard G-d but did not see Him. They were addressed in the words "And now, Israel, listen...."

And the difference between seeing and hearing is this: someone who witnesses an event is unshakable in his testimony about it - he has seen it with his own eyes. But one who hears about an event may eventually entertain doubts. Hearing does not confer certainty. That is why the generation who were to enter Israel, who heard but did not see G-d, had to be commanded about self-sacrifice and the like, a warning which would have been superfluous to the people of the wilderness.

In one way, then, the later generation lacked the spiritual immediacy of their forebears. But they were, nonetheless, to reach something unattained by their fathers, who were told: "You have not, as yet, come to the rest and the inheritance which the L-rd your G-d has given to you."

Shiloh and Jerusalem were reached only by that later generation. For only by the descent into material concerns, the translation of G-d's will into practical action, could the fulfillment be reached of "the rest and the inheritance."

Devarim, in short, tells us of the paradox that through descent comes true uplifting: The highest achievements of the spirit are won in earthly and not heavenly realms.

And this is also the message of the "vision" - even though this Haftorah is read in the "Nine Days" of mourning for the loss of the Temples, nonetheless through the resultant exile will come the true redemption, the vision of which we glimpse (in the words of the Berditchever) in the very moment of our loss.

#### SADNESS AND REJOICING

The sense of mourning, of being "in the straits" which dominates our consciousness in the Nine Days when we recall the destruction of the Temples, is broken by Shabbat, the day on which joy must prevail.

Indeed, on the Shabbat before the 9th of Av we are bidden to rejoice even more than usual, to remove any possibility that the melancholy of the surrounding days should intrude into the Shabbat spirit.

But the injunction has a deeper meaning.

Shabbat is a reflection of the World to Come; and that future redemption will be so complete as to efface all traces of the exiled past. So on this day there is no place for the evocations of exile. But we go further on this Shabbat than to eliminate sadness - we increase our joy.

For the future redemption will be more spiritually intense than any previous one. If it merely restored the status quo, exile would have been unnecessary. Each exile of the Jews has culminated in new levels of spirituality, for by being scattered, they have been able to redeem and bring into G-d's service environments that would otherwise have been untouched by the hand of Torah. And the end-point of this journey - the Time to Come - will be a

redemption without further exile, a completeness of spirituality that needs no new excursions.

So the Shabbat most connected with exile, the day of the "vision," sees in its foretaste of the future, the consummation of all exile and its transformation into undisturbed rejoicing.

The Shulchan Aruch tells us that on this day it is permitted to prepare a feast like that which Solomon made when he was made king: That the anticipation of the future kingdom might give us the strength to turn the sorrows of exile into the joys of redemption.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. II, pp. 357-359.)

See Tisha B=Av collection