

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PARSHAS VAESCHANAN - 5757

I now have capability to send this formatted document via e-mail. So please send your e-mail addresses to crshulman@aol.com.
For instructions and listing of Torah e-mail lists and web sites see <http://members.aol.com/crshulman/torah.html>

Weekly@jer1.co.il Torah Weekly - Va'eschanan Ohr Somayach
Insights Forever "Ascend to the top of the cliff, and raise your eyes westward, northward,..... and see with your eyes, for you shall not cross this Jordan." 3:27 Picture the feelings of longing that Moshe must have had as he stood on top of the cliff, gazing out over the land that he given so much to enter. There it was stretched out in front of him like a map. The Land of Israel. So close and yet so far. Hashem knew how much Moshe wanted to go into Eretz Yisrael, so why did He 'tantalize' Moshe by telling him to go up and gaze at this land that he knew he was never going to enter? Furthermore, our Sages tell us that by prophetic insight Hashem showed Moshe every single square inch of Eretz Yisrael - which only must have increased his longing! What was Hashem's purpose? Each of the Avos, the Patriarchs, represent a specific quality: Avraham embodies Chesed (Kindness); Yitchak personifies Gevurah (Strength/Self- control); Yaakov Emes (truth). The quality that Moshe represents is Netzach - Eternity. Everything that Moshe did was forever. Hashem gave the Torah though Moshe because the Torah is eternal. If Moshe had gone into the land of Israel with the Jewish People, then their entry would have been an 'eternal entry' - everything that Moshe did had that touch of eternity. After such an entry, the Jewish People could never again leave the Land. Hashem knew that the Jewish People would have to go into exile for they would not be able to maintain the high spiritual standards that the Land requires. If they could not leave, and they could not stay, they would be caught, as it were, in a spiritual vise -- the very real danger of annihilation (r"l). Thus, Moshe could not enter the Land of Israel. However, Hashem made Moshe's non-entry into the Land serve a positive purpose: Hashem wanted to sear the memory of the Land of Israel into the collective psyche of the Jewish People. By showing Moshe every blade of grass, by taking him and showing him every corner of the land he was never to enter, Hashem planted in Moshe's heart a longing for the Land of Israel which would be eternal. Look at our daily prayers. Look at the blessings after eating a meal. Our petitions to Hashem are saturated with the name of the Land to which we long to return to -- as a Holy People. Throughout the long, long night of exile, the Jewish People have never lost that same longing for Eretz Yisrael that Moshe felt when he stood on the top of the cliff and gazed into the Land he would never enter.

The 516th Prayer "Va'eschanan" 3:23 "Va'eschanan" means "I implored". The gematria - the numerical equivalent - of Va'eschanan is 515. There are 516 hours between the start of Rosh Hashana and the end of Hoshana Raba - which is the last chance to change a decree which was made on Yom Kippur. In the last year of his life, between Rosh Hashana and Shmini Atzeres, Moshe prayed every hour - 515 times - that Hashem should forgive him and let him cross over the Jordan. Finally Hashem told him not to continue praying. From this we can learn the enormous power of prayer: Hashem told Moshe to stop praying to Him - implying that if Moshe had continued to pray, if he would have prayed the 516th prayer, Hashem would have acceded to his petition.

A Gentle Nudge "And you will love Hashem, Your G-d, with all your heart..." 6:5 The philosophers ask: How can you command love? Love is something instinctive which a person either feels or doesn't feel! Can a person be made to love on command?! The answer is to be found in the

B'S'D' question itself. From the fact that Hashem commanded us to love Him, it follows that it must be part of the nature of every Jew to be able to love The Creator. All that is required is to awaken this natural strength and give it a gentle nudge!

PrayerLine 1 "And I beseeched Hashem at that time, saying" (3:23) The phrase "At that time" hints to a prayer for generations unborn: Whenever the Jewish People will find themselves in times of anguish, unable to pray properly because of the oppression of exile, Moshe's prayer will arise in their place. Even in the most numbing unhappiness, when the cord of prayer that connects the lips to the heart is disconnected, and all we are able to do is merely utter the words, Moshe's prayer will arise for us. "At that time", when all we will be able to do is "say" and there will be no feeling in our words, this prayer of Moshe's will arise in front of Hashem.

PrayerLine 2 "With all your heart" (6:5) A similar idea is hinted to in the phrase "With all your heart" in the Shema. Rashi explains the following phrase "With all your soul" to mean "even if He will take your soul." So, similarly -- even if He will take your heart. Even when doubts gnaw away at your heart, even when it is confused and you don't see the Hand of Hashem, even then, serve Him -- "With all your heart."

Haftorah: Isaiah 40:1-26 The Shabbos immediately following Tisha B'Av is called Shabbos Nachamu -- The Shabbos of Consolation. It takes its name from the first word of this week's Haftorah -- "Comfort, comfort my people says your G-d." The Prophet reminds the people that the time of the Exile of Jerusalem has come to an end. The Midrash tells us that Hashem asks Avraham to comfort Jerusalem, but he does not succeed. He is followed by Yitzchak and Yaakov and Moshe who are also unsuccessful. Finally Hashem Himself comes to comfort the Holy City.

Sources: o Forever - Malbim, Rabbi Yerucham Uziel Milevsky z"l o The 516th Prayer - Rabbi Mordechai Perlman o A Gentle Nudge - Sfas Emes o PrayerLine 1 - Amshenover Rebbe z"l o PrayerLine 2 - Chidushei HaRim

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor:
Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

ohr@virtual.co.il (Ohr Somayach) parasha-qa@virtual.co.il Parshas Va'eschanan Parsha Questions 1. "And I prayed to Hashem at that time..." Why 'at that time'? 2. What is Ha'Levanon? 3. Part of Moshe's request was granted. Which part? 4. What did Hashem tell Yehoshua after the battle of Ai? 5. When do the nations view the Jews as a wise people? 6. How did the decree that Moshe not enter the Land affect him even in death? 7. What is hinted by the word V'noshantem? 8. "You'll serve man-made gods..." Is this literal? 9. Why is East called Mizrach? 10. How often is Mitzraim mentioned in the 10 commandments? 11. "Keep the Shabbos day as I have commanded you." When did Hashem command us to keep Shabbos. 12. What is meant by 'Hashem, our G-d, Hashem is One'? 13. What are two meanings of loving Hashem 'with all your might'? 14. How well-versed must one be in Torah? 15. 'And teach them to your children...' Your children refers to whom? 16. Where does the word Totafos come from? 17. Who is fit to swear in Hashem's name? 18. What does it mean that the Jews are the "smallest nation." 19. When someone serves Hashem with love, how many generations receive reward? 20. Why are evil-doers rewarded in this world?

Bonus QUESTION: Moshe thought perhaps the vow against his entering the Land had been annulled (see question #1 and answer). If so, why did he need to pray to enter the Land?

I Did Not Know That! "And you will be careful to do (the mitzvos) ... a land flowing with milk and honey." (6:3) If we carefully observe the mitzvos, then it is a land flowing with milk and honey. If not, it is transformed into a barren wasteland. Moznaim LaTorah

Recommended Reading List Ramban 4:2 Adding or Subtracting 4:9 Mt. Sinai 4:27 Dispersion 6:5 Love and Fear 6:18 Spirit of the Law 6:20 Significance of the Mitzvos 7:6 Hashem's People Sforno 4:3 Baal-Peor 4:9

Philosophy 4:39 Aleinu 6:4 Shema Yisrael Sefer Hachinuch 416
Coveting Property 418 Loving Hashem 419 Learning Torah 420 Reading
the Shema 421 Tefillin of the Hand 422 Tefillin of the Head 423 Mezuzah
427 Inter-marriage

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and
Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated. 1. 3:23 - Defeating Sichon and
Og, whose lands were part of Eretz Canaan, Moshe thought perhaps Hashem
had annulled the vow against his entering the Land. 2. 3:25 - Ha'Levanon
means the Beis Hamikdash, which 'whitens' (lavan), i.e., atones for, the
Jewish People. 3. 3:27 - Moshe was allowed to see the Land. 4. 3:28 -
Joshua must lead the army into battle. 5. 4:6 - When we study Torah and do
mitzvos. 6. 4:22 - Even his bones weren't buried in the Land. 7. 4:25 - The
gematria of V'noshantem, 852, hints at the number of years until the first
exile. 8. 4:28 - No. It means you'll serve others who serve idols. 9. 4:41 -
It's the direction from which the sun shines. (Mizrach means shining.) 10.
5:6, 5:15 - Twice. 11. 5:13 - Before Matan Torah, at Marah. (Shmos 15:25)
12. 6:4 - Hashem, who is now our G-d, but not [accepted as] G-d of the other
nations, will eventually be [accepted as] the one and only G-d. 13. 6:5 - 1)
With everything you own. 2) Whether Hashem treats you with kindness or
harshness. 14. 6:7 - If asked a Torah question, one should be able to reply
quickly and clearly. 15. 6:7 - Your students. 16. 6:8 - Tot means two in Caspi.
Fos means two in Afriki. Together they allude to the four sections of
tefillin. 17. 6:13 - One who serves Hashem and reveres His name. 18. 7:7 -
The B'nei Yisrael are the humblest nation. 19. 7:9 - 2,000. 20. 7:10 - So that
they get no reward in the next world.

[Bonus Answer] There were two separate aspects: (1) Hashem's
Decree that he not enter, and (2) Hashem's Vow that he not enter. Only after
Moshe thought the Vow had been annulled was he able to pray for the
rescinding of the Decree. In the name of Rabbi Yitzchak Ze'ev Solevetchik

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Reuven Subar General Editor: Rabbi
Moshe Newman Production Design: Lev Seltzer (C) 1997 Ohr Somayach
International - All rights reserved.

torah@lubavitch.chabad.org Torah Studies - Vaeschanan B"H The Chassidic
Dimension Adaptation of Likutei Sichos by Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg
Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem
M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion

Vaes'chanan -- The Proper Manner of Prayer The Torah
portion Vaes'chanan derives its name from its first word, Vaes'chanan, which
according to the Midrash is a derivative of both chinun or "supplication," and
chinam or "free" -- something done freely and not from any sense of
obligation. According to the Midrash, the opening verses of the Torah
portion thus consist of Moshe's plea that he be permitted to enter Eretz
Yisrael, a petition that he based not upon his own merit, but which he sought
as a matnas chinam, a gratuitous gift from G-d. The Midrash goes on to state
that, since even Moshe found it necessary to supplicate G-d for an unearned
gift, and did not ask that his request be granted in view of his many
achievements, we can conclude that no created being has the ability to make
demands of his Creator. Why should we pray as if we have no merits upon
which to base our requests? There are two factors involved in asking that G-d
fulfill a request or provide something that is needed: The manner in which
the request is made -- supplication or demand; and the reason that G-d
should fulfill the request -- that the person is deserving, or as a free gift.
Since G-d is the Creator of all beings, it is reasonable to assume that He also
has a moral obligation to provide them with their needs, especially so since
He is "merciful unto all His creatures." The Jew especially, filled as he is
with good deeds and accomplishments, is deserving that G-d provide him
with all manner of good. Accordingly, yet another question may be posed:
Why is it even necessary to pray for the fulfillment of one's needs, when man
is also one of G-d's creations, and thus inherently entitled to have his needs
met? And this question seems pertinent if one possesses merits and
accomplishments that stand him in good stead. The reason is as follows:
Even when G-d provides for a person's needs because that person is

deserving or because He is merciful, He is in no way obligated to do so. The
verse expresses this explicitly when it states: "Unto You, G-d, is kindness,
for You repay each individual according to his actions." This informs us that,
even if an individual's good deeds make him worthy of G-d's blessings,
Divine beneficence must still be considered a kindness, for nothing can
compel G-d to act in a certain manner; His answering of a need or granting of
a request is ultimately an act of kindness. This also explains why it is
necessary to petition G-d; one can demand nothing from Him, but must
instead plead that He grant any request as an undeserved gift. This is also in
accord with the saying of our Sages that one should not make the fulfillment
of his prayer dependent upon his merits, for even when G-d fulfills a request
as a result of a person's meritorious deeds, "no created being can rightfully
make demands of his Creator," since man's actions are wholly insignificant in
relation to G-d. Thus, one must always petition G-d for a matnas chinam, a
gratuitous gift. In a more profound sense, Moshe wanted to enter Eretz
Yisrael so as to draw down upon the Jewish people a level of G-dliness far
loftier than that which is generally drawn down through man's service -- a
boundless, free gift from Above far beyond man's supplications. Moshe was
unsuccessful in his quest, for G-d's intent is that holiness be drawn down as a
result of man's service. Although the denial of Moshe's petition resulted in
the possibility of further exiles, G-d still desires man's service, for it is this
service that draws down an unsurpassed degree of G-dliness -- a level even
greater than that of a matnas chinam. Based on Likutei Sichos, Vol.
XXIV, pp. 28-35

Men of Wisdom & Seekers of Wisdom In speaking of the
"Cities of Refuge" -- six cities to which those guilty of manslaughter could
flee to find safety from a victim's avengers -- the Torah in the section of
Vaes'chanan says: "he shall flee to one of these cities and he shall live." The
Gemara derives from this that "a student who is exiled has his teacher exiled
with him, for the verse states, 'he shall live.' That is, you shall do something
for him that provides him with life." The Rambam in Yad HaChazakah states
this law as follows: "A student who is exiled to the Cities of Refuge has his
teacher exiled with him, for the verse states 'he shall live' -- you shall do
something for him so that he may live." The Rambam concludes: "For men of
wisdom, or for those who [at least] seek wisdom, life without the study of
Torah is considered as death." The concept implicit in the statement that "a
student who is exiled has his teacher exiled with him," also applies to the
spiritual service of every individual. Every Jew enjoys a relationship with
G-d that is similar to that of a pupil and his master, as the verse states: "All
your children [all Jews] are G-d's disciples." When a Jew sins against G-d, he
is considered "an unworthy disciple" until he repents. The reason he sinned
in the first place is because he lacked wisdom, as our Sages state: "A person
will not sin unless he is overcome with a spirit of folly" -- the antithesis of
wisdom. The Alter Rebbe explains that the verse: "Wisdom gives life to
those who possess it" means that a Jew's life derives from G-dliness clothed
in the human faculty of wisdom. Therefore, when a person is "a man of
wisdom," he is constantly aware of his relationship with G-d, and it is high
impossible for him to sin. The ability to sin comes from not being a "man of
wisdom;" such an individual does not feel a connection with his Master. This
is a result of the spirit of folly, which occludes a person's wisdom. When an
individual sins against G-d, he must reckon with the "avenger," the evil
inclination that seeks to bring a Jew to a state of spiritual death, as our Sages
say: "He is Satan, he is the evil inclination, he is the angel of death."
Concerning this sad state of affairs, we learn that "a student who is exiled has
his teacher exiled with him." In spiritual terms, this means that although a
sinner is currently "lacking in wisdom," this in no way means -- G-d forbid --
that his connection with G-d has been severed. For every Jew at least seeks
wisdom, in line with the saying: "A Jew neither desires nor is he able to be
sundered from G-dliness." If a Jew sins, it means that his connection to G-d
is dormant and concealed. However, even in such a situation, the Divine link
remains powerful enough to save him from the "avenger" and the spiritual
death it brings. When a Jew demonstrates a desire to be a "worthy disciple"
and clearly seeks wisdom, then "wisdom will give him life," i.e., it will infuse
his entire being with a feeling of sanctity. Thus, the sway of the evil

inclination will cease in and of itself. If this is so with regard to an individual Jew, it is certainly true regarding the Jewish people as a whole: When Jews find themselves in exile, as we are today, it is possible to -- Heaven forbid -- lose hope, not knowing how to extricate ourselves. The Torah therefore rules that "a student who is exiled has his teacher exiled with him." And since "that which G-d does, He commands us to do as well," it follows that our Divine Teacher finds Himself in exile, as it were, with us. As our Sages state: "Wherever the Jewish people were exiled, they were accompanied by the Divine Presence." Thus, a loss of hope is totally out of place, for even in exile, "G-d is your protective shade [for He is found] at your right hand." G-d therefore sees to it that we all become "worthy students." This brings about our liberation from exile and leads us to the complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXIX, pp. 33-39

WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5757 COPYRIGHT 1996-7
SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS VAESCHANAN
By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

"But you should greatly beware for your souls" (4:15)
PEELED EGG, ONION OR GARLIC LEFT OVERNIGHT Several Biblical injunctions are derived from the warning to "beware for your souls", including the Biblical prohibition of placing oneself in any type of life-threatening situation(1), e.g., walking dangerously near the edge of a roof, exposing oneself to a disease, etc. In addition to such obviously dangerous acts, our Sages warned against other dangers which are not understood today, such as the well-known injunction against eating meat and fish together. Although we cannot define the resultant danger in term of medical science, we accept and adhere faithfully to our sages' warning that eating fish and meat together is a danger(2). Another practice involving food which our Sages considered dangerous is eating a peeled egg, onion or garlic(3) that was left overnight. Although this practice is less widespread than the universally accepted restriction against eating meat and fish together, the Talmud(4) maintains that a ruach ra'ah, a "spirit of impurity," rests upon these three foods when peeled and left overnight, similar to the "spirit of impurity" that rests on one's hands during nighttime sleep. One who eats these foods after they were left overnight, states the Talmud, endangers his life. Moreover, he will be judged by the Heavenly Court as a person who took his own life(5). In view of the severity of both the offense and the punishment, it is difficult to understand why certain communities do not comply with this restriction. How can they ignore such frightening consequences? There is a basic difference, however, between the two prohibitions mentioned above. The prohibition against eating meat and fish together is quoted by the Shulchan Aruch as practical Halachah(6). All Jews - without exception - are obligated to follow the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch, whether scientifically understood or not. The prohibition against eating certain peeled foods, however, is omitted by many of the Rishonim(7) and the Shulchan Aruch, probably because they held that this particular "spirit of impurity" was no longer prevalent in their times(8). Thus, in many communities this practice is not followed, and, indeed, many people have never heard of it. But in many other communities this prohibition is in force to one degree or another. While omitted by the Shulchan Aruch, this warning is cited by some Rishonim(9), and recorded as practical Halachah by several of the later authorities, among them the Pri Chodosh, Shulchan Aruch Harav(10), Aruch ha-Shulchan(11) and Ben Ish Chai. The following discussion, therefore, applies only to those whose custom is to observe this practice, or to those who would like to adopt it.

QUESTION: MUST EVERYONE OBSERVE THIS PROHIBITION?
Whoever comes from a family that adheres strictly to this custom, should definitely continue to do so, since it has a Talmudic source and is surely not less valid than any other well-founded custom. The poskim differ as to whether or not one who never followed this practice is required to adopt it. Some rule that the practice is mandatory(12), others recommend adopting

it(13), while others do not require following it at all(14). The prohibition applies even when the peeled food items were wrapped, sealed and stored in a closed pot or container, or were placed in a refrigerator(15); The prohibition applies only when... The entire egg, onion or garlic was peeled. If even a minuscule part of it was left unpeeled, or even if the root hairs on top of the onion or garlic remain, the food is not considered to be "peeled" and the prohibition does not apply(16); The peeled egg, onion or garlic was kept separate from any other food. If, however, it was mixed together with other ingredients, e.g., with vegetables, tuna fish or mayonnaise, it is permitted(17). The egg, onion or garlic was peeled with the intent of using it immediately and it was then left over night, or if it was peeled in order to be used the next day. If, however, it was peeled with the express intent of being frozen and used at a later date (as many large companies or bakeries do), it is permitted(18). Dried egg powder does not fall into the category of "peeled eggs" and is permitted(19). The egg, onion or garlic is peeled and left in its raw state. When cooked, roasted or fried, several poskim hold that it may be left overnight(20). The egg, onion or garlic is peeled and left the entire night. If it is peeled and left for only part of the night, it is permitted(21). B'dieved, if these items were peeled and left overnight, what can be done? Some poskim hold that b'dieved, one does not have to be stringent and the peeled foods should not be thrown away(22). Most other poskim, however, hold that even b'dieved these items should not be eaten(23). Some poskim hold that cooking or soaking the peeled items in vinegar removes the "spirit of impurity" from them and they may then be eaten(24). Other poskim do not mention this leniency. Washing the peeled foods does not alter their status - they still may not be eaten(25).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Berachos 32b; Rambam Hilchos Rotzeiach 11:4; C.M. 427:5. 2 Pesachim 76b. 3 Some people are strict with radishes also, but it is without an apparent source. 4 Niddah 17a. 5 Rashi ibid., as explained by Aruch l'Ner. 6 O.C. 173 and Y.D. 116:2. 7 Such as the Rif, Rambam and Tur. 8 Explanation offered by Teshuvos Pri ha-Sadeh 3:61-2 and others based on Yam Shel Shelomo (Chulin, Kol Habasar 31) and Tosfos Yoma 77b who state that ruach ra'ah is no longer prevalent in our midst. 9 See Tosfos Shabbos 141a, Tosfos Beitzta 14a, Rosh Beitzta 1:21, Sma"k 171, Leket Yosher Y.D. pg. 6, who all record this prohibition as being applicable. See also Mordechai (Shabbos, Hamotzi Yayin) who quotes the M'haram of Rottenburg as doubting if this prohibition is presently applicable. 10 Hilchos Shemiras Haguf 7. 11 Y.D. 116:23. 12 Teshuvos Beis Shlomo Y.D. 189, quoted in Darkei Teshuvah 116:74; Teshuvos M'harsham 4:148 (see also Da'as Torah O.C. 513:6), Divrei Yatziv 2:16 (Kloizenburger Rebbe) in addition to all the authorities mentioned above who quote this advisory as practical Halachah. See also episode with Harav Y. L. Diskin, quoted in Misgeres Zahav 99:1. 13 Chafetz Chayim (Likutei Halachos, Niddah 17a, Ein Mishpat 7); Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:20; Harav Y.Y. Kanievsky (quoted by Harav C. Kanievsky in Shemiras Haguf v'ha-Nefesh 3:1); Yabia Omer Y.D. 2:7. 14 Teshuvos Yad Meir 19, quoted in Darkei Teshuvah 116:74, based on the previously mentioned argument that nowadays, this ruach ra'ah is no longer prevalent. In addition, all the other poskim who do not mention this advisory, including later authorities such as the Chochmas Adam, Pischei Teshuvah and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, must be included in this category. 15 Niddah 17a; Shulchan Aruch Harav, ibid. 16 Niddah 17a (see Yaavetz and Aruch l'Ner); Shulchan Aruch Harav, ibid. 17 Sma"k 171; Zivchei Tzedek 61, quoted in Kaf ha-Chayim O.C. 504:1 and Y.D. 116:92; Ben Ish Chai (Pinchas 2:14); Chazon Ish (quoted by Harav C. Kanievsky in Shemiras Haguf v'ha-Nefesh 3:5 and in Archos Rabbeinu 1:209); Yabia Omer Y.D. 2:7. [Some mention that even if the item was salted, it is also sufficient (Ta'amei ha-Minragim (Likutim 16). One may rely on this when a large amount of salt [or sugar] is involved - Minchas Yitzchak 6:75.) 18 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:20. 19 Darkei Teshuvah 116:74 quoting Degel Efrayim 28; Yabia Omer Y.D. 2:7; Shevet ha-Levi 61:111. According to the previously mentioned Igros Moshe, this would also be permitted. See, however, Har Tzvi Y.D. 74 who does not cite this leniency. Harav S.Y. Elyashiv is quoted (Yashiv Moshe, pg. 159) as permitting onion powder when mixed with other ingredients. 20 Darkei Teshuvah 116:74 quoting Beis Shelomo Y.D. 189; Aderet (Kunters Over Orach 4); Shevet ha-Levi 3:169. There are others (see Darkei Teshuvah and Minchas Yitzchak 4:108), however, who hold exactly the opposite - the prohibition applies to cooked items only while raw items may be peeled and left overnight. 21 Divrei Yatziv 2:16-9 is unsure of this halachah but he states that it is not customary to be stringent when these items were peeled and left for only part of the night. 22 Chazon Ish (quoted in Archos Rabbeinu 1:210). Yaskil Avdi 8:14-4 allows these items to be used for a Shabbos meal. See also Sdei Chemed (Lamed 41:31) and Minchas Yitzchak 2:68 and 9:28. 23 Birkei Yosef Y.D. 116:10, Shem Aryeh Y.D. 56, Chelkas Yaakov 4:12, Divrei Yatziv 2:16 (who opines that various severe stomach illnesses are a result of being negligent in this prohibition) and all the poskim mentioned above who quote this practice and do not differentiate between l'chatchilah and b'dieved. 24 Kaf ha-Chayim 116:93. 25 Artzos ha-Chayim O.C. 4:32; Divrei Yatziv 2:33
Weekly-Halachah, Copyright (c) 1997 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Project Genesis

yhe-parsha@jer1.co.il] VBM - Parashat Hashavua by Yeshivat Har Etzion
Faculty PARSHA - 44: Parashat Vaetchanan ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY
VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)
Wishes of Happy Birthday and (with the help of Hashem) a continued Refua

Sheleima to Yehudah Lev ben Shifra - His Children and Grandchildren
In honor of the birth of our son, Joseph Ira - Larry and Malkie Frank

""Zakhor' And 'Shamor' Were Uttered As One Word"
by Rav Yoel Bin-Nun

A. The Reasons for Shabbat in the Ten Commandments in Sefer Shemot and in Sefer Devarim In comparing the language of the Ten Commandments as they appear in Sefer Shemot and as they appear in Sefer Devarim, we find only a few slight differences, except for the mitzvah of Shabbat where the differences are very clear. The principal difference is not the introductory word - 'shamor' or 'zakhor' - (despite the fact that we interpret 'zakhor' as referring to the positive mitzvot of Shabbat, and 'shamor' as indicating that we should be careful not to transgress the negative mitzvot), since the clause 'to keep it holy' is the same in both cases, as is the prohibition to perform 'any melakha'. The main difference lies rather in the reasons presented for the mitzvah of Shabbat. In each case the reason is stated absolutely, as though it represents the sole basis for the holiness of Shabbat and its prohibitions. In Sefer Shemot the source and reason for Shabbat are in the context of the Creation, while in Sefer Devarim the mitzvah commemorates the exodus from Egypt. The presence of two exclusive reasons would seem to contradict common sense; moreover, it is patently impossible for them to be recited simultaneously, as Chazal explained, except of course by the Holy One, Blessed be He, in a Divine utterance.

Shemot: "You shall perform no melakha, you, your son and your daughter, your man- and maid-servant, and your beast, and the stranger in your gates; For six days God made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in it, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, God blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it."

Devarim: "You shall perform no melakha, you, your son and your daughter, your man- and maid-servant, and YOUR OX AND YOUR DONKEY AND ALL YOU BEASTS, and the stranger in your gates; IN ORDER THAT YOUR MAN- AND MAID-SERVANT REST LIKE YOU. And you shall remember that you were a servant in Egypt, and Hashem your God took you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, Hashem your God has commanded you to keep the Shabbat day."

The reason for Shabbat provided in Sefer Shemot presents God as Creator of the Universe, and those who remember and sanctify Shabbat as servants standing before God - as a created person stands before the Creator of all, himself included. Shabbat testifies to the works of Creation, and is an expression of the negation of a person's will, needs and aspirations in the face of the absolute will of the Creator which is revealed in His creation and in the weekly framework of time. Creation ex nihilo had no cause; it was not the result of any phenomenon or event, power or law. It was itself the event and the law. Shabbat itself is also an arbitrary timeframe; it is not the result of any natural phenomenon, any other time-related calculation, power or event. The absolute will of the Creator is that one should rest on the seventh day, just as it was His will to create and to perform during the six preceding days. A person who observes Shabbat testifies thereby to the fact that he knows his limitations as a creature, before the Creator of the world. This is a religious perception which is especially revealed among Am Yisrael, although it is not limited to Israel alone. In essence it can also express itself in a natural-universal religion which believes in a God who created the world and man (a possibility raised by Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Levi in his Kuzari, part 1, 11-13), and as it is indeed expressed in religions which drew their inspiration from Judaism (with well-known changes and adjustments).

The reason presented in Sefer Devarim presents God as the Redeemer and Savior of Israel, He Who brought the nation out of Egypt to eternal freedom. Those who observe and sanctify Shabbat stand before God as a free Israelite stands before the Master and Ruler of the world Who breaks the yoke of servitude imposed by human dictators - those kings of flesh and blood who presume in their pagan pride to assume themselves masters of the world. Shabbat bears testimony to the exodus from Egypt, and to freedom in general. It is the flame of freedom borne by the redeemed

Israel (and, in fact, anyone redeemed) who can thereafter stand before God, Lord of Israel, as a free nation and accept upon itself Torah and mitzvot.

The prohibitions of melakha on Shabbat here are testimony to human freedom and equality, which came about at the time of the redemption from Egyptian slavery. A person is forbidden to enslave himself, his household members, his workers and servants or the stranger within his gates; even his ox, his donkey and his other beasts are deserving of rest. An Israelite who observes Shabbat testifies thereby to his limitations as a free man - he is forbidden to enslave himself or others. This is a special socio-moral perception. Am Yisrael has a special obligation to observe Shabbat in light of our record of more enslavement and greater redemption than any other nation throughout history. The mitzvah of Shabbat is a central pillar of the Torah which was given to Israel and whose values and principles are dispersed throughout the world by the power of Israel.

Is it really possible for these two concepts to be sounded simultaneously - even when each of them is an absolute justification: "Therefore God blessed.../Therefore God commanded..."? (See Moreh Nevukhim, II, 31)

We have no choice but to return to the formula of Chazal mentioned in the title, which uniquely succeeds in rising above the obvious contradiction and sees the two reasons as two sides of one coin. Each side appears and sounds to many people as representing the entire story, leaving no room for the other. Various groups build their philosophy on one of these two perceptions. The supreme sanctity of the Divine Torah rests precisely on this: that these two perceptions (each complete and absolute as it may be) are simply two sides of the same coin. Only man is unable to comprehend both sides simultaneously! But the Divine utterance included both 'zakhor' and 'shamor' - both the Creation and the exodus; both "metaphysical religiosity" and "social morality" - at once.

B. Reasons for Shabbat in Sefer Shemot Actually, both these perceptions of Shabbat have appeared in Sefer Shemot itself, where the reasons for Shabbat are repeated six times, in four distinct groups: In Eilim in the wilderness of Sin, at the time when the manna fell (16); in the ten commandments (20); at the end of Parashat Mishpatim (23:12) and in the parallel renewal of the covenant following the sin of the golden calf (34:21); at the conclusion of the commands regarding the building of the mishkan (31:12-17); and again as the construction of the mishkan gets underway (35:1-3). A detailed comparison of the Shabbat commands in Sefer Shemot (looking first at Eilim [16] and the Ten Commandments [20], and then at Mishpatim/Ki Tisa [23:12, 34:21] and the two accounts concerning the building of the mishkan [31:12-17, 35:1-3]) reveals the following picture: The crux of Shabbat: Eilim- Shabbat for ISRAEL; idea of Shabbat already known. Ten Commandments- Shabbat already known. purpose: Eilim- Rest: "Rest every man in his place". Ten Commandments- Shabbat unto God. and Commands: Eilim- Preparation from Friday; two helpings of manna. Ten Commandments- Prohibition of all melakha - profane work. of Prohibitions: Eilim- Prohibition of household work - baking, cooking - from Friday; prohibition of gathering and going out. Ten Commandments- Prohibition is on every Israelite and on all those subject to his authority. and Reason: Eilim- Exodus from Egypt and manna in the desert (Divine Providence) Ten Commandments- Creation (absolute reason) Eilim- No punishment mentioned but God tests the nation regarding both the manna and Shabbat. Ten Commandments- No punishment mentioned.

The crux of Shabbat: M/Ki Tisa- Positive commandment: you shall rest. Mishkan- Holy to Israel and holy to God, 'shabbat shabbaton'. Prohibitions and Commands: M/Ki Tisa- Rest from all work of the field ("You shall rest from ploughing and harvesting", "Your work" - "that which you sow in the field") Mishkan- Absolute prohibition of all melakha, including for the sake of heaven (mishkan). Special prohibition of fire as example of prohibited melakha which is easy to do. Punishment: M/Ki Tisa- No punishment mentioned. Mishkan- "karet" and death penalty. Source and Reason: M/Ki Tisa- Exodus from Egypt, from slavery to freedom (n.b. 23:9,15) Mishkan- Creation Purpose: M/Ki Tisa- "In order that your ox and donkey will rest and that the son of your maidservant and the stranger will be refreshed." Mishkan- Significance: eternal covenant, a sign forever between

God and Israel, absolute sanctity (overrides even the building of the mishkan). It is clear that the perception of Shabbat in Sefer Devarim already exists in Sefer Shemot, at the end of parashat Mishpatim, as proved by the expression "in order that your ox and donkey will rest". It is equally clear that the reason and command regarding Shabbat are based on a two-fold source - the Creation and the exodus, which appear alternately: at Eilim, in the parasha of the manna, Shabbat is connected with the exodus, while in the Ten Commandments it is connected to the Creation. At the end of Mishpatim we return to the concept of the exodus, and the conclusion of the command regarding the mishkan once again makes mention of the Creation; at the end of Ki Tisa we find the exodus again, and at the beginning of parashat Vayak'hel we return to the Creation.

In the parasha of the manna Shabbat is bound up with the concept of miracle and Divine test: "And God said to Moshe, behold I shall rain down bread for you from the sky, and the nation shall go out and gather daily each day's portion, in order that I may test them to see whether they will walk in the ways of My Torah or not. And it shall be on the sixth day and they shall prepare that which they bring, and it shall be double that which they gather each day" (Shemot 16:4-5). The test here refers to the actual descent of the manna and to the prohibition of leaving any over until morning (as a test of faith) (16:19-20), as well as to the gathering of a double portion on Friday, and the command not to go out to gather on Shabbat. All of these are bound up with mutual tests: God tests the nation with the waters of Mara ("There He made them a law and a judgment and there He tested them" - Shemot 15:25), and Israel tests God at Refidim ("And he called the place Massa u-meriva for the argument [riv] of the children of Israel and for their testing of God saying, Is God among us or not?" - 17:7).

God's commands here have, aside from the idea of a test, the promise of reward, as we read at the conclusion of the "law and judgment and test" at Mara: "And He said, If you will indeed listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is upright in His eyes and hearken to His commandments and observe all His statutes, all the illness which I placed on Egypt I shall not place upon you, for I am the Lord your Healer" (16:26). In Sefer Devarim, too, the manna is explained in a general sense as a test: "In order to humble you and to test you, to know what was in your hearts, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and made you hungry, and He fed you the manna which you had not known and which your fathers had not known, in order to tell you that man does not live on bread alone; man lives rather on everything that comes forth from God's mouth" (Devarim 8:2-3, 16). The mitzvot of Shabbat appear here as part of the difficult task of addressing questions of faith in Divine Providence and of religious consciousness. The absolute command of Shabbat, devoid of any connection to being tested, to Providence or to reward and punishment actually appears only in the Ten Commandments, and then again while the mishkan is being built.

In the first understanding of Shabbat in the parasha of the manna, HOUSEHOLD melakha is prohibited (Shemot 16), and in the second understanding in parashat Mishpatim we find the prohibition of melakha in the FIELDS, which is usually the domain of various types of laborers. In both cases we have principally a positive mitzvah, out of which the various prohibitions arise. The second understanding, at the end of parashat Mishpatim, stands at the root of the Ten Commandments in Sefer Devarim. The mitzvot of Shabbat in the parasha of the manna are connected to the home, not to work in the fields, because the manna represents the very opposite of the produce of the field ("bread from the sky" - Tehillim 105:40). The only aspect of the manna which involves the outside of the home at all is the gathering and bringing it in - in other words, transferring from one domain to the other. The rest of the melakhot mentioned in connection with manna concern preparation, baking and cooking.

In contrast, the mitzvot of Shabbat at the end of parashat Mishpatim are concerned principally with the field, where the laborers and animals - "your ox and your donkey, the son of your maidservant and the stranger" - are usually to be found. The same idea arises from two comparisons in the same chapter: "And six years shall you sow your land..." (23:10) in contrast to "Six days shall you perform your work..." (23:12), as well as "Six days shall

you perform your work..." (ibid.) in contrast to "...and the festival of the ingathering at the end of the year, when you collect your work from the field." (23:16)

We find the same idea in comparing this parasha to the corresponding parasha in Ki Tisa: "Six days shall you do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, in order that your ox and your donkey will rest and that the son of your maidservant and the stranger may be refreshed" (23:12), "Six days shall you work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, in the ploughing and the harvesting shall you rest." (34:21).

It arises from the above that there are two commands concerning the mitzvah of Shabbat as a positive commandment: Resting at home - prior to the receiving of the Torah, and resting in the field - thereafter. In the Ten Commandments given at Har Sinai the Torah includes "all melakha", with no distinction, and an absolute prohibition, "lo ta'aseh", applies to all types of melakha.

The perception of Shabbat against the backdrop of the Creation also has two aspects in Sefer Shemot: In the Ten Commandments we find an absolute prohibition of all "melekhet chol" (profane work), while in the command concerning the mishkan there is an absolute prohibition of all melakha whatsoever, including melakha performed for the sake of Heaven (such as the construction of the mishkan). It is only the second aspect which determines the absolute sanctity of Shabbat, a shabbat-shabbaton which overrides any type of melakha, and "anyone who desecrates it shall surely die." Therefore the punishment for desecrating Shabbat appears only in the parashat of the mishkan. C. The Innovation of Sefer Devarim Concerning the Reasons for Shabbat In light of the connection which we have found between Shabbat at the end of Mishpatim and in the Ten Commandments in Devarim, we are faced with the question of what, if anything, is new and different about the latter rendition.

It seems that the innovation is to be found in three principal areas: firstly, at the end of Mishpatim (Shemot 23:14) there is no "lo ta'aseh" (negative command). In Sefer Shemot, the exodus from Egypt gives rise to the obligation of a Shabbat of rest for laborers in the field as a positive commandment, but without any corresponding negative command, since an absolute prohibition arises only from the idea of the Creation. In Devarim the source of the command as arising from the exodus is connected to the absolute prohibition of "You shall do no melakha...". Secondly, the word "like you" defines the rest which comes with freedom from subjugation to labor on Shabbat on the basis of the equality of worth of all humanity, which goes beyond individual status or the value of any labor. For this reason, in Sefer Devarim the ox and the donkey are separated from the stranger and the maidservant and are inserted in their proper place, immediately prior to "and all your beasts". In Shemot (23 and 34): "Six days shall you perform your work (in chapter 34, "shall you work") (in the field) and on the seventh day you shall rest, in order that your ox and donkey may rest (physical rest) and that the son of your maidservant and the stranger shall be refreshed (veyinafesh - physical rest)."

In Devarim (5): "Six days shall you work and perform all your melakha, and the seventh day is a Shabbat unto the Lord your God; you shall not perform any melakha - you, your son and your daughter, your man- and maidservant, and your ox and your donkey and all your beasts, and the stranger who is within your gates - in order that your manservant and maidservant will rest like you."

Freedom and rest are arranged from the bottom upwards according to the various hierarchical positions enumerated at the end of Mishpatim: animals first and then man; servant and then stranger - like the hierarchy which exists in a large portion of the mishpatim (social laws) themselves. (See principally chapter 21 from verse 12 in decreasing status: man-servant-embryo-animal.) In Sefer Devarim there is a change: the ox and the donkey are not to perform any melakha, as part of the all-encompassing prohibition, but the manservant and maidservant and the stranger are to rest "like you".

The third - and most important - innovation of Sefer Devarim is that the presentation of the exodus as the source for the commandment of Shabbat becomes generalized and absolute: "Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the day of Shabbat." SUMMARY It is specifically Sefer Devarim which places Shabbat absolutely against the backdrop of the exodus as the

source of freedom and the equality of Bnei Yisrael before their God Who brought them from slavery to eternal freedom. The ideals of freedom and equality which have become so popular in our generation are based, without any doubt, on the exodus, and they are written in the Divine Torah given to Israel by Moshe's hand - especially in Sefer Devarim. (It is only idolatry and its attendant phenomena which are given no freedom or leeway in Sefer Devarim - since true freedom comes only from God!) [This article originally appeared in Hebrew, in Megadim Vol. 9, pp. 15-26. Translated by Kaeren Fish.] Copyright (c) 1997 Yeshivat Har Etzion.

peninim@shemayisrael.com Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - peninim ...
And make known to your children and your children's children - the day that you stood before Hashem at Choreiv. (4:9,10) In the Talmud Kiddushin 30A Chazal infer from this pasuk's command to teach Torah to one's grandchildren that one who does so is considered as if he received the Torah from Har Sinai. This is derived from the juxtaposition of the revelation at Har Sinai to the mitzvah of talmud Torah. In a lecture in Hilchos chinuch, Horav Reuven Grosovsky, zl, explains that one who teaches Torah becomes a shaliach, agent, of Hashem to transmit Torah to future generations. He parallels Moshe Rabbeinu, the quintessential teacher and lawgiver, who transmitted the Torah to Bnei Yisrael. This unique relationship gives rise to Chazal's statement in the Talmud Nedarim 37A, that those who teach Torah should do so for no charge. Since Torah educators are agents of Hashem who taught the Torah to Moshe "free of charge," they should follow suit. Being Hashem's agents for transmitting His Torah creates enormous responsibility for the teacher. He must be conscious of his character, degree of spiritual intensity, indeed, his total demeanor. Chazal assert that only if one views his rebbe, Torah teacher, as an angel of G-d should he study Torah from him. After all, since he is Hashem's agent, he should be G-d-like. Horav Grosovsky continues, to pose the dilemma of the director of a Torah oriented school who is faced with the moral dilemma of choosing between two teachers. One is an experienced pedagogist whose level of yiraas Shomayim is limited. The second teacher, although lacking in experience and pedagogical skills, is a devout yarei Shomayim and talmid chacham. It is obvious whom he should choose. While it may be obvious to Rav Reuven, is it obvious to us? What is the obvious answer? Based upon the premise that a rebbe who teaches Torah is a shaliach of Hashem, his pedagogical skills, although yet unrefined, necessarily take a secondary position to his fear of Hashem. When a person is ill, he chooses a doctor, regardless of his level of competence, not a lawyer. The Chofetz Chaim once said that if a person must choose between two trains which are traveling to a specific place, he should not take the faster train if it is not headed in the right direction. He will obviously select the train that is traveling his way, regardless of its lack of speed or shabby interior. Likewise, while some of us might be inclined to have a greater sense of confidence in the teacher with impressive pedagogical skills, he, however, may not be going in the direction we hopefully seek for our children. Pedagogic competence in Torah is impossible without Yiras Shomayim. ...

yhe-intparsha@jer1.co.il INTPARSHA - 43: Parashat Va-etchanan ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)
Wishes of Happy Birthday and (with the help of Hashem) a continued Refua Sheleima to Yehudah Lev ben Shifra - His Children and Grandchildren
In honor of the birth of our son, Joseph Ira - Larry and Malkie Frank
"And I beseeched God at THAT TIME, saying: Oh God, Hashem, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness, and Your mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven or earth who can do anything like

Your works and Your might. Let me, I beg You, cross over and see the good land over the Jordan, the goodly mountain and the Lebanon" (Deut. 3,23-24).

On the borders of his forty-year goal, Moshe, knowing that he has been denied entry into the promised land, begs God to overturn the decree, but is turned down (verse 25). Although allowed to VIEW the land, he will die and be buried outside its borders. Two questions arise: Why did Moshe make this request "at that time;" and, if we remember that the parasha is not the narrative of what happened in the desert but Moshe's speech to the Jews before his death, why is he retelling this episode now?

Our first task is to determine which time is "that time." Rashi makes the obvious assumption and places "that time" immediately after the occurrences of the previous verses - the military victories over Sichon and Og, the two kings who blocked the Jew's advance to the Jordan river from the east (2,31-3,22). Rashi explains:

"At that time: After I captured the land of Sichon and Og, I imagined that perhaps the decree had been annulled."

God's decree against Moshe was that he would not lead the Jews into the promised land. Moshe sees that he has succeeded in leading the Jews into the land of Sichon and Og, which is, in effect, annexed (given to the 2 1/2 tribes, as detailed at the end of last week's parasha) to the Land of Israel. This gives rise to the hope that perhaps, without telling him, God has changed His mind.

There are primarily two difficulties with this explanation. Firstly, there is really no reason to consider the land of Sichon and Og to be the "promised land" which God has declared to be off-bounds to Moshe. The land of Israel, as promised by God, was specifically bounded by the Jordan river (in Parashat Masei, Num. 34, AFTER they have already defeated Sichon and Og). Even as they camp on the plains of Moav, after the battle with Sichon and Og, both God and Moshe speak to the Jews as ABOUT to enter the promised land. While the EVENTUAL halakhic status of the Transjordan, after the Land had been conquered, is an interesting topic (it is considered to be part of the Land of Israel, with certain legal exceptions), there seems to be no question in the Torah that it was not the land "promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov," but was at best annexed to that land after the completion of the conquest. The war that Moshe fought was in principle no different than other battles fought in the desert, against Amalek (Ex. 18), and the Canaanites of Arad (Num. 21).

Secondly, if Moshe indeed thinks that he has already crossed the line demarcating the promised land from the desert, why does he "beseech?" Either the decree has already been repealed, in which case there is no problem, or it has not, in which case there is no cause for optimism at all. The verb for "beseech" (etchanan), is a very strong one, and is connected by the Sages with a root meaning "unmerited" (chinam), as it represents an appeal to God's mercy without any basis in merit or even logic.

(While I think these questions are pretty solid, I think that if we read Rashi carefully, we will see what he thinks the answer is. Rashi believes that the war with Sichon and Og is not a LOGICAL but a PSYCHOLOGICAL reason for Moshe's prayer. Logically, the argument is rather weak, as we explained. But psychologically, a military victory on the very borders of the Land of Israel cannot but raise Moshe's spirits, re-igniting his hopes to somehow complete the mission of his life. Rashi wrote that Moshe "imagined" that the decree had been lifted. I think the choice of verbs here is deliberate and indicates less than a rational thought process. To convert this irrational hope into reality requires "beseeching," something that Moshe perhaps would not have done had not the taste of the land been so strongly felt on his lips as he began to engage in the very same activity that would be required to conquer all of the land.)

The Ramban and others solve this problem by reinterpreting "at that time." They explain that it refers to a PREVIOUS time, namely, immediately after God's decree (forty years earlier). This neatly explains the timing of the prayer of Moshe, but strengthens the second question we asked above - why is Moshe mentioning this now in his speech? If we examine the occurrence of the phrase "at that time," this explanation becomes

extremely difficult.

This phrase, "at that time," is repeated a number of times in Moshe's speech. The first time was at the very beginning of the speech (1,9). It appears again in 1,18. The past two times were just a few verses before our parasha, both clearly referring to after the war with Sichon and Og (3,18 and 3,21 - read the verses and continue into our parasha without stopping). There are other "timemarks" throughout Parashat Devarim (1,46; 2,13-14; 2,16). We get a clear impression that Moshe is very carefully laying out the sequence of events, emphasizing that each event followed the previous one, and placing different "sayings" of his within the framework of the great political events of the era. If you have a series of events, each prefaced either with an indicator that it took place after a certain period of time, or "at that time," it seems clear that the chronological order is not only being preserved but is being emphasized. The conclusion is that the prayer of Moshe took place after the battles of Sichon and Og, as Rashi stated.

This is further strengthened by the opening of Moshe's prayer - and here we see the importance of noticing the exact choice of words in the Torah. Moshe states, "You have begun to show your servant Your greatness, and Your mighty hand...." The verb for "begun" is "hachilota" (commenced), not a particularly common form in the Torah. Just a few verses previously, before the onset of the battle against Sichon, God had said to Moshe, "See, I have begun (hachiloti) to give Sichon and his country to you..." (3,31). The parallelism between the two is clear - the war with Sichon was a commencement of the manifestation of God's greatness, and this is the object of Moshe's praise at the beginning of this week's parasha.

This brings us back to the questions we posed to Rashi - why should this event have caused Moshe to renew his supplication before God. A strikingly poignant answer is offered by the Abrabanel. (The Abrabanel was the leader of Spanish Jewry at the time of the expulsion from Spain in 1492, and, together with several hundred thousand other Jews, was forced to leave his country, first to Portugal and later to Italy. I am not suggesting that this is related to his interpretation of these verses - but it is something to think about). He forces us to examine closely exactly what Moshe asks of God. "Let me, I beg you, cross over and see the good land over the Jordan, the goodly mountain and the Lebanon." The text of God's decree against Moshe had been, "Because you did not have faith in Me... therefore you shall not bring this congregation unto the land which I have given them" (Num. 20,12). Moshe is not asking for the annulment of the decree preventing him from LEADING the people into the land. He asks, as a personal request, that he be permitted to just SEE the good land, the good mountain (Zion), the object of his dreams for forty years. In the very last verse of the previous parasha, Moshe had reminded Joshua that he would be the leader who would lead the Jews into the land. Moshe has no illusions about that point. All he wants is that he be permitted, as a private individual, to partake, even a little, of the culmination of Jewish destiny. Surely that could be granted him.

The timing then is clear. Moshe has conquered the lands of Sichon and Og. More importantly, he has informed the 2 1/2 tribes that this land in which they are now found will be their inheritance. Jews are beginning, at least tentatively, to settle down. Joshua is groomed and ready to lead the Jews over the Jordan. Moshe can taste on his breath the air of the Land of Israel, and his yearnings to at least see this land of his dreams, of his fathers, of the sanctuary of the Holy Presence, is overwhelming. He begs, beseeches, God to let him cross over.

There are two parts to God's answer. The first is refusal. The second is a command to mount the heights overlooking the Jordan and SEE the land, from afar, from end to end. God understands the personal yearning of Moshe and leads him to a point where he can indeed see the land. (The midrash states that Moshe was miraculously able to see the entire land; see 34,1-4.) But he cannot physically enter.

There are several explanations possible why Moshe was not permitted to enter, even as a private individual. One midrash states that God told him he could - but only if he indeed accepted Joshua's lordship, since there cannot be two figures of authority in Israel. Moshe found he could not

do this. Another midrash states that if Moshe had entered, the Temple would have been built immediately and the messianic era would have been ushered in. The Rav, Rav Yoseph Dov Soloveitchik, has suggested that this expresses a principle that no man can ever have complete success, complete satisfaction. Man by definition must suffer defeat, even if it is one step from his total victory. Moshe climbs the heights of Moav and sees his dream, one short grasp of the hand away, but there he cannot come. If we summarize Moshe's life, it is apparent that he is responsible for teaching the Jewish people Torah - that is why his NAME is Moshe our teacher (Moshe rabbeinu). Joshua is totally responsible for the conquest of the land. This is indeed Moshe's own understanding - his comment of how God will not allow him to enter the land is followed by the conclusion of the first speech of the Book of Devarim - a long and eloquent reminder to the Jews that the Torah is the way of life for them, which must be observed exactly as "I have commanded you." His legacy and final command to the Jews is to remember the Torah and follow it. The sanctity of space, the presence of God on the holy mountain, must be left to someone else. One man cannot do it all, no matter how much his soul yearns to do so.

[HTTP://WWW.VIRTUAL.CO.IL/EDUCATION/YHE](http://WWW.VIRTUAL.CO.IL/EDUCATION/YHE)
