

דְּבָרִים

DEVARIM/WORDS Devarim/Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22

This week we begin **Devarim**, the 5th and final book of the **Torah of Moshe**. We understand the **Torah** to be the **Word of יהוה** as it was given to **Moshe** who **repeated it to the Israelites**. In fact we have gotten very used to the line:

“יהוה” spoke to Moshe saying, “Speak to the children of Israel saying....”

In **Devarim**, however, we will **not find this familiar introduction**. Instead, **Devarim begins**:

Devarim 1:1 These are the words which Moshe spoke to all Israel

Most of **Devarim** is written in the 1st person as it includes the **parting words** which **Moshe addresses** to the **nation** just a matter of weeks **before his death**. The 3rd verse tells us exactly **when Moshe began** to speak to the people:

Devarim 1:3 Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moshe spoke to the children of Israel according to all that יהוה had given him as commandments to them,

The question begs to be asked...**what is so important for Moshe to say before his death that 1/5th of the Torah should be dedicated to his speeches?** Let's consider **who Moshe was**. He was a **great leader** who the **Almighty** had **chosen to lead His people out of Egypt**. He was the one who had **stretched out his hand over the Red Sea** when it parted. He had gone up to the **top of Mount Sinai** to meet **“face to face” with יהוה** and to **receive the commandments**. He had seen the people through **rebellions and tragedies**. He had **witnessed the passing of an entire generation**, and had trained and **disciplined this 2nd generation**. As a father figure then, it was truly **Moshe's desire to encourage the nation to retain the lifestyle set by Torah** in order that they might **live in the Promised Land** and be that **“light to the nations”** that Elohim intended for them to be.

Moshe had no earthly monument stone. In fact **no one even knows where he's buried**. Instead, his **“words”**...his **devarim** (דְּבָרִים - means **“words”**) are his **memorial** and his **remembrance**:

Devarim 34:6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day.

Let's consider the **context of Moshe's final words**. The nation is **encamped at the border of the Promised Land**. Some of the people have **waited 40 years** for this opportunity! As **wilderness wanderers**, the nation is headed for **tremendous changes**. Soon they will become a **nation in their own land!** Will they **succeed or will they fail?!!** Much is on the line, and **Moshe recognizes it!**

Devarim contains **four defined speeches of Moshe**:

1. **History's lessons** – 1:6-4:40

2. The **main speech** containing the **mitzvot** (commandments) in the **Land** – 5:1-26:19
3. **Renewal of the covenant** – 27:11-28:69
4. **Repentance** – 29:1-30:20

Last week, as we finished up **Bemidbar**, Moshe took us through a **historical review** of each of the **encampments** where the Israelites stopped during their **40 years** in the **wilderness**. At first glance, **this parasha** also appears to be a **historical review**. However, it is a **much more selective list**. It **doesn't even mention** the **exodus** from Egypt. We also see **nothing** about the **entire Mt. Sinai** experience or the **building of the Tabernacle**. What **message** is **Moshe** trying to **communicate** to his audience by **bringing to mind** certain **incidents**?

First, let's **list the events** as spoken by Moshe:

- **Command to leave Mt. Horeb (Sinai) and proceed to the Promised Land (1:6-8)**
 - *Devarim 1:6 " יהוה our Elohim spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.'⁷ 'Turn and take your journey...'⁸ 'See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which יהוה swore to your fathers...*
- **Leadership issues (1:9-18)**
 - *Devarim 1:13 'Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.'*
- **Arrival at Canaan, the sending and sin of the spies, and resultant punishment (1:19-40)**
 - *Devarim 1:19 ... Then we came to Kadesh Barnea...²¹ 'Look, יהוה your Elohim has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as יהוה your Elohim of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'²² "And everyone of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us...'²⁴ "And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out...²⁶ " Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of יהוה your Elohim... you did not believe יהוה your Elohim...³⁴ " And יהוה heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying,³⁵ 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers...turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.'*
- **Sin of those who tried to enter the Land (1:41-45)**
 - *Devarim 1:41 " Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against יהוה; we will go up and fight, just as יהוה our Elohim commanded us.' ...⁴² "And יהוה said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies."'⁴³ "So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of יהוה ...the Amorites drove you back from Seir to Hormah.⁴⁵ "Then you returned and wept before יהוה, but יהוה would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.*
- **40 years in the wilderness – 1:46-2:1**
 - *Devarim 1:46 "So you remained in Kadesh many days...into the wilderness...for many days.*

- **Command to once again turn towards the Promised Land – 2:2-2-3**
 - *Devarim 2:2 ...turn northward.*

Confrontations with:

- Edom (**no war**) – 2:3-7
- Moab (**no war**) – 2:8-18
- Ammon (**no war**) – 2:19-25
- Sihon of Heshbon (**war**) – 2:26-37
- Og of Bashan (**war**) – 3:1-20

Our **clue** as to why these **particular events** are mentioned is a **phrase** that is **repeated twice**, in **different contexts**:

*Devarim 1:6 " יהוה our Elohim spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.'⁷ **Turn** and take your journey, and go to the mountains....*

*Devarim 2:2 "And יהוה spoke to me, saying:³ 'You have skirted this mountain long enough; **turn northward**.*

Now let's make a **connection** between these **two events**. In both of these events יהוה is **ordering the Israelites to turn and set out on their journey to the Promised Land**. In **Devarim 1:6-7** the **1st generation Israelites** are to **leave Mt. Sinai**, and **go directly to the Land to conquer it**. These **instructions are interrupted** by the **tragic episode of the spies**.

So...**Moshe** is now making a **parallel** or **hopefully a contrast** between a **generation who failed to set foot in the Promised Land** and a **2nd generation** who are **hoping to soon enter into the Land**. Like the **1st generation**, the **2nd generation** is **once again on the border of the Land**. **Moshe** is in effect **asking them...will they merit entrance into the Land, or will they not?**

In the **1st generation**, **rebellion occurred** when they **processed the information** coming from the **spies**:

Devarim 1:26 "Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of יהוה your Elohim;

Soon **after the Israelites learned** that they would **die in the wilderness**, there was **more rebellion**. **Some decided, against Moshe's advice**, to still attempt to enter the **Land**:

Devarim 1:42 "And יהוה said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies." ' '43 "So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of יהוה, and presumptuously went up into the mountain.

Let's sort out what we have with the **1st generation**:

- In reference to the spies, the nation was **meant to enter the Land, but they refused** – this is **rebellion against יהוה's plan**.
- **After** they received the consequence for this rebellion, **they were told not to enter the Land, yet some decided to go in** – this is also **rebellion against יהוה's plan**.

Here's the important question...how were they to know what to do? **Enter or not enter?**
Answer...they should have listened to the “Words” (devarim - דְּבָרִים) of the Almighty!

Okay, now let's take a look at the **2nd generation**. We saw from our **summary of events** that there were **different ways of handling the nations**. With some nations, the Israelites were to be **careful not to fight** against them:

Devarim 2:5 "Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.

With other nations, they were encouraged to enter into war:

Devarim 2:24 " Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle.

Again, the **question...how did they know** when to remain at **peace**, and when to **battle**? The **answer** is the **same...they must listen** to what the **“Words” (devarim - דְּבָרִים)** of יהוה tell them! To **summarize** what we have so far: we have **two stories** about **two generations on their way to the Promised Land**. The **questions** are the **same...to enter or not to enter...to fight or not to fight?** The **only way** they had any **answers**, was to **look to the “Word” (devarim - דְּבָרִים)** of יהוה.

The **1st generation failed** because they **did not enter** when the **Almighty said, “ENTER!”** And then they **attempted to enter** when **He precisely told them not to**. **Both** were cases of **rebellion**. With the **2nd generation**, they were **much more successful** in **obeying His “Words”**. Under **Yehoshua's leadership**, they **ended up entering the Land**, although later they were **exiled due to disobedience**.

What can we learn from this? Today there are **many “prophets”** and **“messengers”** who are **saying one thing** and **other “prophets”** who are **saying something totally contrary** to what the other said. **How** is a person to **discern truth**? **Moshe** spoke using the **“voice”** of יהוה **Elohim**. It was the **same “voice”** that was **heard from the Mountain**. A **person's “voice”** should **never contradict יהוה's “Voice”**. As far as **when to enter the Promised Land...His directions** were **clearly heard** as **He led them step by step**, as long as they **remained obedient**. **Divine intervention paved the way**. **Once He gave the direction**, there **wasn't time to dawdle**. You **couldn't just trust your own intuition**. You had to **listen** for the **“Voice.”** Are you ready? Do you have **“ears to hear”**? Are you **listening for His “WORDS” (devarim - דְּבָרִים)** speaking directions?

The **prophet Hosea** makes a **connection** between the **return (shuv - שׁוּב)** of **Israel** and **“words”**:

*Hosea 14:1 O Israel, return (shuv - שׁוּב) to יְהוָה your Elohim, For you have **stumbled because of your sins**; ² Take words (devarim - דְּבָרִים) with you, And return (shuv - שׁוּב) to יְהוָה....*

As we study the “words” (devarim - דְּבָרִים) of Moshe in “Devarim” (words - דְּבָרִים), isn't it fascinating that **Hosea** tells us that “words” are exactly that **method of “return”** to יְהוָה? Taking another look at **Hosea** reveals to us that we are not only understanding “**return**” in the narrower **dimension of the individual**, but that it is also a **national process of repentance and restoration of all of Israel**. It is a **process of a nation “returning”** to יְהוָה through His “**Word**”. It is a **journey of national revival**. It is the **reunification of the “Word” with a people**. “**Returning**” is made **possible** because **we listen to and accept His “Words”**. Of course we'll connect this with **Yeshua**, who is the “**Word**” of יְהוָה in the flesh in just a little bit.

As **Moshe** used “words” to **point the people towards the Promised Land**, he **contrasts the road to failure (1st generation)** with the **road to success (2nd generation)**. The **Israelites** are a **people** who are **meant to be on the move – out of Egypt**, into the **wilderness** and ending in the **Promised Land**. The course of the **journey mirrors faithfulness**, or **lack of faithfulness**. When you **put yourself** on the road to the **Promised Land**, you become a **participant**, not just an **observer** in the **active plan** of the **Almighty**.

“**Words**” have the **power to link heaven and earth**. **Yeshua**, as the **Living “Word”** perfectly **accomplished this**; and now, as **His disciples**, we **live out the “Word”** by **obeying His commandments**. Our **obedience to His “Word”** also **links heaven and earth**, making us part of a **journey** that will be seen as **even greater** than that **1st Exodus out of Egypt!**

Jeremiah 16:14 " Therefore behold, the days are coming," says יְהוָה, "that it shall no more be said, 'יהוָה lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,'¹⁵ "but, יְהוָה lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.

Yeshua said **repeatedly** that **His “Words”** would **never be changed** or become **obsolete**:

Luke 21:33 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words will by no means pass away.

*Matthew 5:18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, **one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Torah till all is fulfilled.***

*Revelation 22:18 For I testify to everyone who **hears the Words** of the prophecy of this book: **If anyone adds to these things, Yah will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;**¹⁹ **and if anyone takes away from the Words of the book of this prophecy, Yah shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.***

In fact, we are **promised a blessing** for keeping His “**Words**”:

Revelation 22:7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the Words of the prophecy of this book."

As we peruse through the **last few chapters** of **Revelation**, we notice that there is definitely a **focus** on the **“Word”** of the **Almighty**. First, we notice that the **beast has power to rule until the fulfillment of יהוה’s “Word”**:

Revelation 17:17 "For Yah has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the Words of Yah are fulfilled."

It will be a **“voice”** (remember it’s a **“voice”** that is **associated with Mt. Sinai**) that **tells us when it is time to leave and separates us from the sin of the world**:

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."

His **“Words”** invite us to the **wedding supper of the Lamb**:

Revelation 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true Words of Yah."

It is the **living “Word”** that **returns** and it is the **sword of the Spirit** (which is the **“Word”** of **Elohim – Hebrews 4:12**) which **smites the nations**:

*Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And **He who sat on him was called Faithful and True**, and in righteousness **He judges and makes war.**¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His Name is called The Word of Yah.**¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.¹⁵ Now **out of His mouth goes a sharp sword**, that with it He should strike the nations. ...*

As we saw earlier, it is the **“Word”** that **accomplishes the ultimate “return”** of **His people** to the **inheritance of the Promised Land**:

Revelation 21:6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha (Aleph) and the Omega (Tav), the Beginning and the End...⁷ "He who overcomes shall inherit all things..."

Baruch HaShem!

**Shabbat Shalom,
Ardelle**