

## Parashah #44

(Updated for 8.06.11.)

D'varim ~ דְּבָרִים ~ Words

**Torah: D'varim/Deuteronomy 1:1~3:22**

**Haftarah: Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 1:1-27**

**B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 15:1-11; Ivrit/Hebrews 3:7~4:11**

### INTRODUCTION

This week we embark on the last book of Torah. Wow! How time does fly!!! Some believe (D'vah-reem) *D'varim/Deuteronomy* is the “Book of Romans” of the Old Testament. In fact, the authors of the *B'rit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant* mention Moshe more often than any other *Original Covenant/Old Testament* person **AND** Yeshua quoted more from D'varim than any other portion of the Original Covenant. In fact, Yeshua cited several passages from D'varim to turn aside HaSatan's temptations . . .

- . . . in *Mattit'yahu/Matthew* 4:4 Yeshua quoted *D'varim/Deuteronomy* 8:3
- . . . in *Mattit'yahu/Matthew* 4:7 Yeshua quoted *D'varim/Deuteronomy* 6:16
- . . . in *Mattit'yahu/Matthew* 4:10 Yeshua quoted *D'varim/Deuteronomy* 6:13

All in all, this book is essentially a series of sermons by the greatest Old Testament prophet, Moshe.

The Hebrew title of this book, D'varim (דְּבָרִים) is in keeping with the custom of titling a book by its first word(s). The English title Deuteronomy stems from the Septuagint's mistranslation of Deuteronomy 17:18, “this repetition of the Law”. The Septuagint translated those words “deuteronomion” (“deuteron” means “two” or “second”, and nomion is “law”; literally “second Law”), which were rendered Deuteronomium in the Vulgate, Jerome's fourth-century Latin translation of the Bible.

Enough already! Don't get me started on the mistranslations from the original Hebrew!!!

We will see, as we walk through (Say-fer D'vah-reem) *Sefer D'varim/Book of Deuteronomy*, there are three parts.

1. The **first segment is a history lesson** as Moshe reviews past events, shedding light for the benefit of the new generation who did not experience those events.
2. The **second segment is the end of the lawgiving process**. Moshe finishes transmitting the 613 *mitzvot/commandments* he received at Mount Sinai, stressing they specifically

applied to those entering the Promised Land, *Eretz Isra'el/the Land of Israel*, and their descendents, both biological and grafted-in.

3. The **third segment is the final farewell of Moshe before his death**, encouraging the people to fulfill the Torah and warning about the consequences of forsaking The Almighty's Torah.

In D'varim, Moshe's words were addressed to **ALL** Isra'el, an expression used at least 12 times in the book.

Twelve is the number of . . .

- divine government
- divine power
- rule and authority

Twelve seems to be linked with the elective purposes of The Almighty, and, of course, he is addressing the 12 tribes.

I find it interesting D'varim begins by announcing "These are the words Moshe spoke to all Israel . . ." Apparently Moshe has become quite an orator. Remember a little more than 40 years earlier, at the Burning Bush, when The Holy One asked Moshe to lead His people out of *Mitzrayim/Egypt*? At the time, Moshe flatly refused and his reason was "I am not a man of words." Now, 40+ years later, the one who felt so ill equipped to express himself speaks forth enough "words" to constitute approximately 20% of our Torah!

## **CHAPTER 1**

The Sages tell us the entire *Sefer D'varim/Book of Deuteronomy* was spoken by Moshe, who was 120 years old, during the last five weeks of his life,. Apparently, this was his last will and testament to the people he was leading. He began his words by reminding them of the long string of sins and rebellions which marked the forty years since the Exodus. The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash tells us, while he didn't necessarily speak about specific sins Moshe used a silk glove rebuke by alluding to them using place names and other veiled references (**verse 1**). For instance . . .

- "**Concerning the Wilderness**" (constant complaining) Shortly after leaving Egypt, in the Wilderness of Sin, the people complained they had been led into a desert to starve. (**Sh'mot/Exodus 16:1-3**)
- "**Concerning the Aravah**" (idolatry) This was the name of a particular plain where many Israelites were seduced by the Midianite women. (**B'midbar/Numbers 25:1-9**)

- “**Opposite the Sea of Reeds**” (sarcasm ~ lack of appropriate communication) When they were hemmed in between the Egyptians and the Sea, the Hebrew children complained “Were there no graves in Egypt?” (**Sh’mot/Exodus 14:11**) And when they emerged from the Sea after it had split, they complained the Egyptians had probably escaped on the other side.
- “**Between Paran**” (unbelief) The spies were sent from the Wilderness of Paran (**B’midbar/ Numbers 13-14**)
- “**And Tofel and Lavan**” (more complaining) According to Rashi, quoting Rabbi Yochanan, “We have reviewed all of Scriptures but have not found any place named Tophel or Lavan.” Rather, both words refer to the complaints about the manna (**B’midbar/Numbers 10:12 and 11:6**) Tophel can be rendered “calumny” and Lavan can be rendered “white”, the color of the manna (**Sh’mot/Exodus 16:34**)
- “**And Hazerot**” [meaning “and the courtyards”] (rebellion and slander) Korah’s rebellion took place in or near Hazerot. Alternatively, Miriam was stricken there for slandering Moshe (**B’midbar / Numbers 12:1-16**), but the nation did not let that message stop them from slandering The Almighty.
- “**And Di-Zahav**” [literally, abundance of gold] (wealth and idolatry) Yehovah blessed His children with an abundance of gold when they left Egypt, but they used His gift to make the Golden Calf.

Moshe was concerned. If they and their parents could sin while there were miracles all around them, how would they manage without constant reminders of The Holy One’s Presence?

From Horeb (another name for Mt. Sinai) to Kadesh-Barnea, the first site for entering the Promised Land, is approximately 200 miles. According to **D’varim/Deuteronomy 1:2**, **B’nei Isra’el/Children of Israel** turned an 11-day journey into 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

In **Acts 7:39 & 51**, Stephen pointed out, centuries later, the Israelites had always been slow to believe The Almighty. One commentator said “It took only three days to get Israel out of Egypt; but it took 40 years to get “Egypt” out of Israel!”

Earlier I mentioned Moshe spoke all of D’varim in the last five weeks of his life. According to the Sages, “Moshe began his final teaching in the 40<sup>th</sup> year from the Exodus, on the first of Shevat, which is the eleventh month counting from Nissan (**verse 3**). Since the Sages give 7 Adar as the date of Moshe’s death, he conveyed the teachings of this book during a period of just over five weeks.” (Stone Edition, Artscroll Chumash)

After almost a year at Mt. Sinai, (verses 6-8) HaShem gave the order to go to the Land. Among the regions listed in this passage are the lands of Ammon (Jordan), Moav (Jordan), and Seir, and territory as far north as the Euphrates River, but none of them are within the boundaries delineated in B'midbar/Numbers 34:1-12. These regions were among those promised to Avraham in B'reshheet/Genesis 15:18-19. According to Rashi they would have been part of Eretz Yishra'el **IF** B'nei Isra'el had gone directly to the Land at this point, as The Holy One commanded them. Because they sinned in the affair of the spies, however, these parts of the oath to Avraham were withheld from them. These additional lands will become part of Eretz Yishra'el only with the coming of Messiah.

“Yehovah, your God has multiplied your numbers, so there are as many of you today as there are stars in the sky.” (D'varim/Deuteronomy 1:10) Do these words sound vaguely familiar? Remember in *B'reshheet/Genesis* when The Almighty was encouraging Avram in a vision? Yehovah said He would be a shield to Avram and his reward would be very great! (B'reshheet/Genesis 15:1) Avram told his Heavenly Father (kindly, I'm sure ☺ ) a reward would be of little use to him since he had no heirs. At this point, both Avram and Sarai were getting up in years and were childless, much to their chagrin. “Then He (יהוה) brought him (Avram) outside and said, “Look up at the sky, and count the stars – if you can count them! Your descendants will be that many! He (Avram) believed in Yehovah and He (יהוה) credited it to him (Avram) as righteousness.” (B'reshheet/Genesis 15:5-6)

In verses 12-18 Moshe reminds B'nei Isra'el of how burdensome they were and how he appointed judges over them so no favoritism would be shown to anyone. With regard to **verse 15**, commentators have wondered why so many judges were needed, a total of 131 per thousand people. The Vilna Gaon explains each category of leaders had a unique function. For example:

- The leaders of thousands were commanders of a thousand soldiers
- The leaders of hundreds were judges
- Those over fifty taught the Torah
- Those over ten carried out police duties

Those officers were assigned to enforce decisions of the courts and would also patrol the streets and market places bringing wrongdoers to the courts.

**Verses 19-40** retell the episode of arriving at Kadesh-Barnea and the people wanting to send spies into the land despite the fact Yehovah had said to take possession, don't be afraid, don't be dismayed, just take possession. Then in **verse 41** Moshe reminds them of their change of heart and how The Almighty was not with them and would not defend them.

Remember the saying “Two wrongs don't make a right”? Well, two wrongs don't make repentance either!!!! After committing the sin of rejecting the land, the Israelites figured out they had “ticked off” their Heavenly Father so they reversed themselves and prepared,

immediately, to enter the land. As they prepared for their invasion, The Holy One spoke through Moshe and told them, “Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated before your enemies” (verse 42). We know the rest of the story! They didn’t listen, they didn’t obey and they got soundly beaten! When The Heavenly Father told them to enter the land, they wouldn’t and when HE told them NOT to enter the land, they insisted on doing it their way.

Hmmm! Sounds like a lot of believers today. They refuse Yehovah’s directives in favor of following the traditions of men! By picking and choosing those things we follow and think are important from the Word of Yehovah, we are perfect examples of the original meaning of idolatry.

Usually, repentance is a simple matter. When we realize we have sinned, we should simply confess our wrongdoing, turn around and do the opposite. BUT it’s not always so simple. Sometimes sin causes consequences which make it impossible for us to reverse the course.

How does your translation read in verse 46? The Chumash reads “You dwelt in Kadesh for many days, as many days as you dwelt.” and The Complete Jewish Bible reads “This is why you had to stay in Kadesh as long as you did.” According to the commentary in the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, “the nation settled in Kadesh for a total of nineteen years, as many days as they dwelt in all the other resting places combined” during their forty years in the Wilderness.

## CHAPTER 2

**D’varim/Deuteronomy 2** relates the events from the sin of the spies until the *Children of Israel/B’nei Isra’el* were ready to enter Eretz Israel. This included having to go around the Edomites because they refused passage through their country. It also describes encountering what are considered giants, the (Ehm-meem) Emmim and (Reh-fah-yeem) Rephaim.

There are some who believe if the sin of the spies, had not taken place, The Almighty would have caused the King of Seir to either let them cross his country or The Almighty would have permitted them to conquer Seir and annex it to Eretz Yisrael. However, since the nation allowed its faith to waver, it was condemned to wait in the Wilderness for a generation. Now (verses 1-7) they are right back where they started. The King of Seir/Edom (current day Jordan) refused to allow them right of passage (**B’midbar/Numbers 20:14-21**) and Israel had to “skirt his country”.

## CHAPTER 3

As Moshe’s review of past events continues, there are a couple of verses I found interesting.

- In **verse 11**, we are told (Ohg, **NOT** Ahg) Og, King of Bashan was SO large the dimensions of his IRON bed were nine cubits by four cubits. I don't know about you but my mind doesn't compute "cubits" so I was glad the Complete Jewish Bible calculated cubits into feet. WOW! His bed was 13 ½ feet long and 6 feet wide. What a huge bed to hold a mighty big person!!! No wonder they were fearful. When we look at circumstances with our physical eyes and forget the promises of our Heavenly Father, we, too, become fearful.
- In **verse 17**, Moshe is reiterating some of the boundaries of the land given to Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh.
  - "... from Kinneret . . ." is one of the places mentioned. The Kinneret is a body of water which is often called a lake. This same body of water is also called the Lake of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee.

"Don't be afraid of them, because Yehovah your God will fight on your behalf." (**D'varim / Deuteronomy 3:22**). This commandment, "do not fear" is a command we find repeated throughout Torah and all the Scriptures. In fact, there are over 130 times in Scripture where it says "Do not be afraid," or "Fear not!" The words "Do not be afraid," occur five times in this parashah alone.

Fear cost the first generation their opportunity to enter the Promised Land. By reviewing how Yehovah had delivered the people in the past, Moshe is trying to give the new generation confidence. In addition, Moshe hopes to bolster their faith so they won't be crippled by fear, as were their ancestors. We are to live by faithful confidence in the strong hand of Yehovah. We haven't been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind, as *Sha'ul/Paul* tells us in **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7**. Furthermore, Yeshua says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows" (**Mattit'yahu / Matthew 10:29-31**). Remember fear is defined as lack of faith. Fear is the opposite of genuine faith. Fear comes from a place of faith-lessness. When we have real confidence in our Heavenly Father fear is driven out. For the person of faith, fear is actually irrational.

Lastly, in **verses 28 and 29**, Moshe reminds B'nei Isra'el of Yehovah's decision concerning Moshe's entrance in the Promised Land.

## CONCLUSION

The Almighty's primary message through His servant Moshe was/is LOVE. Not a list of do's and don'ts; not legalism but relationship! Yehovah has not changed since then. As a matter of fact, man has not changed since then either!!

Before we leave this week's portion, here are some interesting parallels between "The Prophet Moshe" and Yeshua Ben Yosef, our Messiah, which are fascinating:

- both were spared in infancy
  - Sh'mot/Exodus 2
  - Mattit'yahu/Matthew 2:13-23
- both renounced a royal court
  - Ivrim/Hebrews 11:24-27
  - Philippians 2:5-8
- both had compassion for the people
  - B'midbar/Numbers 27:17
  - Mattit'yahu/Matthew 9:36
- both made intercession for their people
  - D'varim/Deuteronomy 9:18
  - Ivrim/Hebrews 7:25
- both spoke with Yehovah face to face
  - Sh'mot/Exodus 34: 29-30
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:7
- both were the mediator of a covenant
  - D'varim/Deuteronomy 29:1
  - Ivrim/Hebrews 8:6-7
- both yielded the greatest revelation of their respective testaments
  - Mattit'yahu/Matthew 21:11
  - Luke 7:16
  - Yochanan/John 5:46
  - Acts 3:22
  - Acts 7:37
  - Ivrim/Hebrews 3:2-6

**D'varim ~ דברים ~ Words**

**Haftarah: Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 1:1-27**

In these verses, we read about Yehovah's outcry against Israel's and Yehudah's sins. Again and again He pleads for their repentance interspersed with the mention of the hope for the future restoration of His children to Himself.

Both our Torah portion and this Haftarah are traditionally read on the Shabbat preceding Tisha B'Av, the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av (late July to early August), which falls on Tuesday,

August 9<sup>th</sup> this year. Traditionally, the book of Lamentations is read. According to rabbinical tradition, this is the date when . . .

- The spies returned from the land of Israel and gave their evil report about the land and its inhabitants.
- It is also the date on which both the First and the Second Temples were destroyed. The First Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in 586 BCE. The Second Temple was destroyed by General Titus and the Romans in 70 CE.
- There are some who believe the first set of tablets which Moshe destroyed happened on Tisha B'Av as well. Other atrocities which occurred during the month of Av are:
- 1492, 7<sup>th</sup> of Av: In Spain, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expelled all Jews from Spain who refused conversion. (SO, guess who sailed the ocean blue with Columbus!!!)
- 1929, 17<sup>th</sup> of Av: 67 Jewish adults and children were massacred by Muslim Arabs in Hebron.
- 1994, 10<sup>th</sup> of Av, 1994: Arabs bombed the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 86 and wounding more than 300 – the deadliest attack in the Diaspora since the Holocaust. As of July, 2010, there is an Interpol arrest warrant for the newly appointed Defense Secretary of Iran because he was the perpetrator of this event.
- 2005, 10<sup>th</sup> of Av: thousands of Jews were forcibly expelled from 25 towns and settlements in the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria, as part of the "Disengagement Plan."

### D'varim ~ דברים ~ Words

#### **B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 15:1-11; Ivrit/Hebrews 3:7~4:11**

**Yochanan/John 15:1-11** Here, Yeshua refers to himself as the “real vine”. Israel is also Yehovah’s vine or vineyard according to several scriptures in the Tanakh:

- |                 |                  |                 |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| • Isaiah 5:1-7  | • Jeremiah 12:10 | • Joel 1:7      |
| • Isaiah 27:2-6 | • Ezekiel 17:5-6 | • Psalm 80:8-16 |
| • Jeremiah 2:21 | • Hosea 10:1     |                 |

As a comparison, consider Yeshua’s parables in . . .

- |                    |                |                |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| • Matthew 21:33-43 | • Mark 12:1-12 | • Luke 20:9-19 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|

The fact “vine” describes the Hebrew people and their Messiah reinforces the close identification of Yeshua with Israel. The Torah pursuant / Hebrew roots remnant will obey Yeshua’s commands, (which are His Father’s commands because there is only ONE Law Giver according to **Ya’akov/James 4:12**). Stay attached to the **real** vine and the real vine’s power and strength to bring forth good fruit.

I believe the parallel of these verses to our Torah portion has to do with the “pruning”. The children of Israel who were disobedient and didn’t do as the Father instructed them through Moshe, were cut off. They were not allowed to enter into the Promised Land. By the same token, if we do not abide in Yehovah and in Yeshua, then we will become detached from the true vine. If traditions of men continue to be our guiding light, we will not enter into our Father’s perfect will.

**Ivrit/Hebrews 3:7~4:11** Our parallel actually comes in the latter part of these verses, with references to the promise of entering Yehovah’s rest in the Promised Land. In today’s vernacular, to enter HIS rest is to observe HIS Shabbat. This is according to HIS word and the **fourth** of HIS **Ten Commandments**.

Christians often assume the **B’rit Hadashah/Renewed Testament** does not require Yehovah’s people to observe Shabbat and go on to claim Sunday has replaced Saturday as the church’s day of worship. However, this passage and in particular, **verse 9**, shows Shabbat-observance is expected of believers. Shabbat is not only a shadow of things to come but was first exemplified for us by our Heavenly Father. As **verse 10** explains, the Shabbat-keeping expected of Yehovah’s people consists of resting from one’s own works, as our Heavenly Father did from His. It consists in trusting and being faithful to our Abba Father.

*The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 137*

**Next Week’s Lesson: Parashah #45**

**Va’etchanan ~ וְאֶתְחַנֵּן ~ I pleaded**

**Torah:** D’varim/Deuteronomy 3:23 ~ 7:11

**Haftarah:** Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 40:1 - 26

**B’rit Hadashah:** Mattit’yahu/Matthew 4:1-11; 5:21-30; 15:1-11; 19:16-30; 22:33-40; Mark 7:5-15; 10:17-31; 12:28-34; Luke 4:1-13; 10:25-37; 18:18-30; Acts 6:1-7; 13:13-43; Romans 2:17-29; 3:27-31; 7:7-12; 13:8-10; Ephesians 6:1-3; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:4-6; 3:1-14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5-9; Ivrim/Hebrews 12:18-29; Ya’akov/James 2:8-13; 2:14-26; Kefa Aleph/1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9-10

**Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.**

*Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim*

**The giving of Torah happened at one specific time, but the receiving of Torah happens all the time, in every generation.**

*Meir Alter, the Gerer Rebbe*

**Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah, since it can best be acquired in association with others.**

*Talmud: Berkot 63b*

*Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!*