

# DEVARIM



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven  
Tradburks**  
Director of  
RCA Israel Region

The book of Devarim is Moshe's soliloquy in the last week of his life. A rather long soliloquy, the better part of 28 chapters. He has a lot to say. He will not enter the Land of Israel. The Jewish people will. He has transferred leadership successfully; Aharon's successor is Elazar, Moshe's successor is Yehoshua.

We have seen parting words before: Yaakov in Parshat Vayechi charged his sons. But not for 28 chapters. Yaakov's was one chapter of 33 verses.

The English name for the book is

The community of  
Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh extends  
its deepest condolences to our beloved  
HaRav Shalom Rosner,  
on the passing of his mother

**Saranne Rosner a"h**

חנה שרה בת הרב מיכל שמעון והרבנית מלכה ע"ה

Beloved wife, sister, mother,  
grandmother, and great grandmother

Condolences to the family

Dr. Fred Rosner, Rav Mitch Rosner,  
Miriam Goldberg and Aviva Taragin

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Deuteronomy; the Midrash calls it Mishneh Torah. Both mean 2 – the second version of the Torah, or the repetition of the Torah. But those names are misleading. Moshe does not review the *entire* Torah. He relates only *some* stories, reviewing with the people *some* of what has occurred earlier in the Torah. But he leaves out much more than he reviews. He does not mention any of the book of Breishit. Nor any of the story in Egypt; nothing of the slavery. Or the plagues. Or the splitting of the Sea. Or of the instructions for the Mishkan. Or most of the book of Vayikra relating to Tuma and Tahara and Offerings. So the review is not of the Torah; the review is of *some*, selected stories and laws of the Torah. We are compelled to ask why Moshe chose these stories as we encounter them; and not others. And the order is not at all as they occurred; he changes the order. What's he getting at? What's driving Moshe? And as a last point of introduction. The language of Devarim is different. It is emotional. There is a lot of concern, of worry, of fear. Concern of failure, challenges that will be unmet, or met with failure. There is love: love of G-d for us and love of us for Him. Lots of zeal and passion; many emphatic forms. Moshe, in this departing speech, is sharing a lot of himself in a most revelatory fashion to the people from whom he is imminently departing.



### 1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Devarim 1:1-10)

Moshe related the events of the journey, the 11-day journey from Chorev to Kadesh Barnea. On 1 Adar, year 40, Moshe related to the people all that G-d had instructed him about them. This was after the defeats of Sichon and Og, on the banks of the Jordan. He related: G-d

instructed us to travel from Sinai and to take the Land of Israel, the Land promised to the forefathers. And I said: these people are now so numerous that I cannot bear them alone.

It took 40 years to go on an 11-day journey. That is not very good mileage. Moshe begins his parting words with a description of the journey to the Land of Israel. Not with the story of the Exodus. Not even with the story of the giving of the Torah. His emphasis is the journey to the Land. The people are about to enter the Land; they are preoccupied with that. Moshe meets them where they are, addressing their immediate concerns. He'll get to speaking about Sinai and about religious belief and about religious challenges. But right now, let's connect with the issue at hand: entering the Land.



**2nd aliya (1:11-21)** I said then: Let's choose wise people to lead you. You agreed that this was a

good idea. Wise leaders were appointed over thousands, hundreds, tens and officers of enforcement as well. I charged the judges saying: listen and rule fairly without bias. I commanded you in all the things you are to do. We traveled the desert to the Mount of the Emori, Kadesh Barnea. There I said: let's go without fear and take the Land.

It is curious that the first story Moshe feels a need to review is the appointing of the

May the learning from this issue of TT be ל"ג ע"ג

**Rose Edith Cohen ע"ה**

איטה רייזל בת גנשא ואריה לייב הכהן ע"ה

נ"ג מנחם אב, on her 14th yearzeit,

*Missed very much by her daughters,*

*Janica Weinreb, Barbara Yagur and*

*Benay Devora Cohen Nesher and families*

various upper court and lower court judges. After all, it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the march to the Land. In fact, there are other stories that do occur as part of the march, like the complaints for water that are simply skipped. Why mention the appointment of judges? Perhaps Moshe is addressing the unspoken concern of the people; how in the world are we going to manage without the leadership of Moshe? We will not prevail in the battles without him. Moshe, subtly tempers his indispensability. I can't do it all. I couldn't do it all then; I needed help from the beginning. And now too. I am dispensable.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (1:22-38)** You approached me to send spies to scout out the Land. I thought

that was a good idea, choosing the leaders of the tribes for the task. They toured and returned with fruits of the Land exclaiming: The Land G-d is giving us is good. But you refused to go and rebelled against G-d saying: these have damaged our resolve telling us of the large people and the fortified cities. I insisted that G-d will fight the battle as He has done until now. But you did not trust in G-d Who has been guiding you by cloud and fire. You were told that all who do not believe they can enter the Land, will not enter the Land. And I too was told I would not enter; Yeshoshua will lead the people into the Land.

Moshe is creating a bond with the people: I asked you for judges and you thought my

**Condolences to Barry Ernstoff**  
**and family on the passing of his wife**  
**Judy a”h**  
 המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

idea a good one. You asked me for spies and I thought your idea a good one. The differences in how Moshe relates this famous story of the spies and how the Torah itself described it is rich material for discussion. One of numerous differences is the role of the spies in this account: it's missing. Little is said of the spies. In Bamidbar it sounds like their bad report started a cascade of fear. Here, Moshe places the guilt on the people: based on the report of the spies, but clearly at the feet of the people. Perhaps Moshe is deliberately shifting emphasis from leaders to the followers. You need good leaders: but you also need to be good followers. Blame for all national failures cannot be laid at the feet of the leaders. The people need to also bear full responsibility for their decisions. And here the decision of the people was to rebel against G-d.



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (1:39-2:1)** Upon hearing that you would not enter the Land, you regretted your sin.

You said: let us go to the Land. But you were warned that G-d would not be with you in this and the Emori chased you away like bees to the region of Seir. We dwelt in Kadesh and Har Seir for a long time.

When we follow the Divine plan, we will succeed. When we venture off on our own,

In honor and in loving memory of  
**Chana (Leah) Lerba a”h**  
 לעילוי נשמת  
**חנה לאה בת שולם מאיר וצביה ע”ה**  
 יא מנחם אב  
 On her first Yahrzeit  
 Monday, August 8th  
 18:00 Har Hamenuchoth.. **שער יוסף**  
 20:00 Mizpe Ramot Shul -3 Even Shmuel  
 (light refreshments)

devoid of Divine support, then we will be chased away like bees. Our success in taking the Land is due to our Divine partner.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (2:2-30)** It was time to travel northward. Do not confront the descendants of your

brother Esav who dwell in Seir. Circle their land; pay for the food and water that you need from them. In addition, do not confront Moav for it is the rightful possession of the descendants of Lot. Past the Land of Moav is Amon; do not confront Amon for it too is the rightful possession of the descendants of Lot. The region north of the Arnon is the land of Sichon and Og; those lands I have given to you. I offered to Sichon to pass through his land, but he refused; G-d made him stubborn so that we could take his land.

This description of our family ties is surprising. We have relatives. And we are to give regard to those relatives. Yaakov's brother Esav settled in Seir. He deserves brotherly deference and hence leave him alone. Moav and Amon are nations from Lot, Avraham's nephew. Leave them alone as well; they are your relatives. Brothers, even when pursuing entirely different legacies, remain brothers nonetheless.



**6<sup>th</sup> aliya (2:31-3:14)** G-d told us to take the lands of Sichon in war.

The lands were conquered up to the Gilad. Og confronted us in the region toward the Bashan and he too was conquered. Their lands were given to Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Menashe.

These confrontations with Sichon and Og are the last stories in the book of Bamidbar, not too long ago. Moshe relates these stories right at the beginning of his long speech, even though if he were reviewing our

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history chronologically they would have to wait 25 chapters. He does so to begin his long speech with success and with encouragement. He will want to warn the people, chastise them, tell them of their future failures: but that can all wait. Start positive.



**7<sup>th</sup> aliya (3:15-22)** The lands on the east of the Jordan including the Gilad and the Lands from

the Kineret to the Dead Sea were settled by Reuven and Gad and half of Menashe. I instructed these tribes to join the battle for the Land of Israel and then to return to



## STATS

44th of the 54 sedras; first of 11 in D'varim  
Written on 196.5 lines (rank: 26th)  
5 parshiyot; 1 open, 4 closed  
105 p'sukim - ranks 32, 6th in D'varim tied with Chayei Sara, but larger  
1548 words - ranks 26th, 6th in D'varim  
5972 letters - ranks 24, 5th in D'varim tied with Vayei-shev, but smaller  
Jump in rankings from p'sukim to words & letters due to relatively long p'sukim



## MITZVOT

2 mitzvot - both prohibitions  
One of only three sedras that have only prohibitions (LO TAASEI). Vayishlach and B'shalach are the other two, with one LAV each.

their lands.

This is a very large patch of land: on the east side of the Jordan from the Dead Sea all the way up to the Hermon has been conquered and will be settled by the Jewish people. These early victories and Moshe's repetition of their stories allows Moshe to begin his long directives to the people on a high note, an optimistic one. And he has described how we journeyed to the border of the Land. Now he will focus on the much more crucial directives: to live *in* the Land.

## HAFTORAH

### YESHAYAHU 1:1-27

This week's *haftorah* is the third of a series of three "*haftorot* of affliction." Yeshayahu conveys to the Jewish people of a G-dly vision he experienced, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against G-d. He criticized them for repeating their errors and not engaging in *teshuva*. "*Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook G-d; they provoked the Holy One of Israel.*" The navi employs harsh words by comparing the Jewish leaders to

## A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

בעבר ה'ירדן בארץ מואב הואיל משה "באר" את התורה הזאת (א:)

"On the other side of the Jordan, in the land of Moav, Moshe began explaining this Torah." (1:5)

Rashi quotes the Midrash Tanchuma that Moshe explained the Torah in seventy languages. Why the need for seventy languages?

Rav Yitzchak Meir Alter (First Gerer Rebbe- 1799-1866) explains that G-d was aware of the future exiles of the people of Israel, thereby Jews would be able to study the Torah in the language that they would understand.

Others give insight to Moshe's timing of these seventy explanations.

Now, after the victory over Sichon and Og, soon to be crossing over the Jordan and conquering the 7 Nations in Canaan, Moshe wanted to publicize the Torah to all nations that G-d has left the legacy of Israel to the Jewish people. In order to prevent any accusations that the Israelites stole the Land from others.

Shabbat Shalom

the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Yeshayahu then speaks gentler words, encouraging the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of justice and chesed towards the needy, orphans and widows, and promising them the best of the land in return for their obedience. *"If your sins prove to be like crimson, they will become white as snow; if they prove to be as red as crimson dye, they shall become as wool."* The *haftorah* concludes with an uplifting promise that G-d will one day reestablish Israel's judges and leaders, when *"Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitents through righteousness."*

The first word of the *haftorah* is "*Chazon*" ("The vision [of Isaiah]"). The Shabbat when this *haftorah* is read, the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av, is thus called "Shabbat Chazon," the "Shabbat of the Vision." ■

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