

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

The book known as Devarim ("words") was originally known as Mishneh Torah—the repetition or restatement of the Torah. Hence the name Deuteronomy, "a second (statement of the) law". In it Moses restates, with some additions and some omissions, both the history and legislation contained in the previous three books.

But there is also something new. The first verse of the book uses a phrase we have not heard before in the Torah, though it takes a sensitive ear to hear it: "These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel [le-khol Yisrael] in the desert east of the Jordan—that is, in the Arabah—opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazereth and Dizahab." (Deut. 1:1)

It was R. Ephraim Landschutz [= Leczyca, 1550-1619] in his commentary *Kli Yakar* (to Dt. 1:1) who noted that the phrase *kol Yisrael*, which appears eleven times in Deuteronomy, exists nowhere else in the Mosaic books. Until now the Israelites have been described as *bnei Yisrael*, "the children of Israel". Now for the first time they are no longer the children of Israel—they are simply Israel.

What does this signify? It means that the Israelites were about to become something they had not been before. Until now, they had been linked vertically, by biological descent. They had a common ancestor: Jacob, who was given the name Israel. They were his descendants. They were part of the same family tree. They were his children.

With the subtle shift from *bnei Yisrael*, the children of Israel, to *Yisrael*, Moses was preparing the Israelites for a new mode of existence. Now they would be linked horizontally, to one another. They were no longer children. They were about to become moral adults. Their unity was no longer simply a matter of a common past. They were about to create a shared future. They would no longer exist in a state of dependency—relying on Moses and through him, G-d, to provide for their needs, welfare and safety. Henceforth they would have to take responsibility for one another.

Through this subtle linguistic shift, Moses is indicating that once the Israelites crossed the Jordan they would have to become a nation, not just a family. They would have to learn to function collectively. They were about to create a society. They would have to fight

wars, defend themselves, institute systems of justice and welfare, and learn the necessity for, as well as the limits of, politics.

None of that had been necessary in the wilderness. G-d provided their needs, fought their battles, sent them food and water and gave them shelter. G-d would still be with them in the future, but only rarely in the form of miracles. No longer would it be G-d serving the people—giving them all they need. It would be the people serving G-d. That was to be their new identity. The nation would be defined by the covenant their parents had made at Mount Sinai. It would be their constitution, their mission, their task, their destiny. They were about to become, not just individuals, but a people: "Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, said to all Israel, 'Be silent, Israel, and listen! This day, you have become a people of the Lord your G-d. Obey the Lord your G-d and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today.'" (Deut. 27:9-10)

Hence the intense peoplehood dimension of Judaism. Today's secular culture is highly individualistic, and contemporary forms of spirituality reflect that fact. Nowadays we often think that G-d is about me, not us. Nor is this new. Religion has often been thought of as a private engagement of the soul. Dean Inge defined it as "what a person does in his solitude". Walter Savage Landor called solitude the "audience chamber of G-d." Octavio Paz spoke of it as "the profoundest fact of the human condition".

Judaism holds the precise opposite. "It is not good for man to be alone." The *sedra* of Devarim is always read on the Shabbat before Tisha B'av—and there is a verbal connection between the *sedra* and the opening of the Book of Lamentations: the word *eichah*, "how". Moses says: "How [*eichah*] can I bear alone your contentiousness, your burdens and your quarrels." (Dt 1: 12)

Lamentations open with the words: "How [*eichah*] lonely lies the city, once so full of people!"

Immediately we hear that *eichah* is not only the word these two verses have in common. They also share the word *levadi / vadad*, meaning "lonely, alone, solitary". To be alone is not something to celebrate but to mourn. Judaism is a religion not of individuals but of a people. Faith does not belong to the private recesses of the soul. It belongs to the life we live together. Where people meet is where G-d is to be found.

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Sickness and bereavement force us in upon ourselves. Yet in Judaism, we pray for healing for those who are ill "in the midst of all the other sick of Israel". We offer consolation to mourners with the words, "May G-d comfort you in the midst of the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem". We specifically emphasize the not-aloneness of the ill and the bereaved. They are part of a people-and that is part of the healing, the consolation.

Likewise at a wedding, one of the seven blessings (sheva berakhot) says: "Bring great happiness and joy to one who was barren [Zion], as her children return to her in joy. Blessed are You, Lord, who gladdens Zion through her children." It is as if the entire Jewish people, past, present and future, were present at the wedding, taking delight in this new couple.

So deep does this idea go that the word for human "life" in Judaism- chayyim-is in the plural, as if life alone were not a life. The word simchah in Hebrew is impossible to translate precisely. It does not mean "happiness, joy, rejoicing"-because each of these emotional states can be experienced by someone alone, whereas simchah in Judaism always refers to a collective celebration. Simchah means "the happiness we share with others".

Jewish law tells us to make the blessing (shehecheyanu), "Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this time" on seeing a friend whom we have not seen for at least thirty days. Why specifically this blessing? Because, as Honi ha-me-agel says in the Talmud (Taanit 23a): "Either companionship or death". A renewal of friendship is therefore nothing less than a renewal of life itself. Life alone is not a life. Hence the remarkable ruling of Maimonides (Hilkhos Teshuvah 3: 11): "One who separates himself from the community, even if he does not commit a transgression but merely holds himself aloof from the congregation of Israel, does not fulfil the commandments together with his people, shows himself indifferent to their distress and does not observe their fast days but goes on his own way like one of the nations who does not belong to the Jewish people-such a person has no share in the world to come."

This is so strange a law that we have to go back and make sure we have understood it correctly. The person concerned has committed no sin-except that of holding himself apart from his people. Yet that is

sufficient to rob him of the world to come. Judaism is a collective faith-the faith of a community, a people, a nation.

This is all the more striking because Judaism is a faith that ascribes radical value to the individual: "One who saves a single life is as if he had saved an entire universe". Judaism values the individual without being individualistic. That is a very subtle distinction, and few cultures have ever managed it. I once asked Paul Johnson, a Catholic and the author of the superb *A History of the Jews*, what he found most impressive about Judaism. He replied: "It has managed, better than any other culture known to me, the delicate balance between individual responsibility and social responsibility".

That is the deep significance of the shift in the book of Deuteronomy / Devarim from "the children of Israel" to "Israel"-from a group of individuals with a common ancestry to a nation bound by collective responsibility. G-d did not choose, nor did He make a covenant with, individuals as individuals-the righteous, the holy, the pure, the innocent, the upright. He made a covenant with an entire people, righteous and not-yet-righteous alike.

Why? Because that, we believe, is where G-d lives: in interactions, in the life we share. That is what we seek to sanctify: the relationships between husband and wife, parent and child, teacher and disciple, employer and employee, leader and follower, friend and stranger. That-as against the hyper-individualism of our late capitalist society-is a lesson worth re-learning. We find G-d in the "we" not the "I". © 2010 Chief Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and torah.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

The bleakest fast of the Hebrew calendar is on the ninth of Av, Tisha B'Av, commemorating the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem (in 586 BCE, and 70 CE). We begin preparing ourselves to feel the enormity of the loss three weeks before, from the 17th of Tammuz, with a sunrise-to-sunset fast on the date that the Roman armies breached the wall around Jerusalem. Then, from the 17th of Tammuz until Tisha B'Av, Jewish law ordains a moratorium on all group festivities, with no haircuts, no shaving (although some may continue to shave until the beginning of Av) and no listening to music.

The expressions of mourning grow in intensity with the start of Av, when we do not wear freshly laundered clothing (except for those garments which absorb perspiration), and do not eat meat or drink wine other than on the Sabbath. And then, on Tisha B'Av itself, we fast for 25 hours (from before sunset until the coming out of the stars the next night), sit on the ground or on a low stool as we read the Scroll of Lamentations in the evening and recite dirges until midday; we do not

even refresh ourselves with the balm of Torah except for those passages which deal with the destruction or the laws of mourning. The prohibitions of meat and wine, and even laundering garments, extend into mid-day of the 10th of Av, when the majority of the Second Temple was actually destroyed by Roman flames.

But what precisely is it that we are mourning when we beat our breasts and weep over the destruction of the Temple? It cannot be the loss of the mere buildings, no matter how grand. After all, the Jews had already rejected the massive Egyptian pyramids in favor of two modest tablets of engraved stone. It cannot even be the loss of our national sovereignty (which the loss of the Temples symbolized), because if so, then our fast would be on the anniversary of the removal of the Judean kings and the installation of a Roman governor in Jerusalem, which took place decades before.

And it certainly could not have been the loss of the sacrifices, which disappeared together with the Temple. Prayers and repentance seem to be a fine substitute for sacrifices, and there are statements in the Midrash and in Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed which suggest that they are even improvements over the sacrifices. Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hakohen Kook maintains that in the Third Temple the only sacrifice will be the "meatless" meal offering.

So what is it about the loss of the Temple which engenders such national mourning? I would submit that the Holy Temple was inextricably intertwined with our national mission: to be G-d's witnesses, and thereby serve as a light unto the nations, bringing humanity to the G-d of justice, morality and peace. Our prophets saw the Temple as the living example from which all nations could learn how to perfect society. With the loss of the Temple, we ceased to be "players" on the world stage; we lost the means by which our message was to be promulgated. And a world without compassionate righteousness and just morality - especially with the possibility of global nuclear destruction - is a world which cannot endure.

At the very dawn of Jewish history, when Abraham was elected by G-d, he was given a divine charge: "through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth" (Genesis 12:3). The Lord then seals a covenant with him, (Gen. 15) guaranteeing that he will be the father of a great nation, even the father of a multitude of nations (which will all accept ethical monotheism). And then the sacred text explains why Abraham was elected: "Through [Abraham] shall be blessed all the nations of the earth; the reason that I have known, loved and designated [Abraham] is in order that he command ... his household after him to guard the way of the Lord, to do compassionate righteousness and just morality..." (Gen. 18:18,19).

This charge is repeated to Abraham after the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22:17,18). In effect, the Bible is

saying our mission can only be accomplished if we are willing to sacrifice the lives of our children for it, and it will disseminate to the world from "the mountain from whence the Lord will be revealed" (ibid 14). When Jacob leaves his ancestral home (fleeing Esau's wrath) and dreams his dream at Beit El, he envisions a ladder rooted in the earth and reaching up to the heavens - a veritable Holy Temple, a Beit Hamikdash - "he is blessed that his seed shall spread out westward, eastward, northward and southward, and through him shall be blessed all the families of the earth." Jacob identifies the ladder as "the house of G-d, at the gates of the heavens," and Rashi, citing the Talmudic sages, insists that the ladder extended to the Temple Mount (Gen. 28:12, 14, 17 and Rashi ad loc).

In the Book of Exodus, at the Song of the Sea, when the text describes the awe of the nations at G-d's wondrous miracles in freeing the enslaved from tyranny, the Israelites sing of being brought to and planted within the Temple Mount, when the Temple of the Lord will be prepared by divine hands, and the Lord will reign throughout the world (Exodus 15:17, 18). And when King Solomon dedicates the Temple in Jerusalem, he beseeches G-d to answer the prayers of the gentiles who shall come from far away "for Your name's sake," so that "all the nations of the earth may recognize Your name, as does Your nation Israel" (I Kings 8:41-43).

And, in order to close the circle, when we read the prophetic portion of Isaiah this Shabbat, who weepingly excoriates the Israelites for forgetting their ethical calling, for their treatment of rituals as substitutes for loving-kindness and justice and thereby their having to suffer the destruction of the Temple, he promises that in the future, "Zion shall be redeemed by moral justice, and those who return to Zion shall practice compassionate righteousness" (Isaiah 1:27).

The second chapter of Isaiah, a continuation of the vision we have just cited (Isaiah 2:1) pictures the Temple exalted above the mountains, inspiring the nations to "beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks." Indeed, we yearn for our Temple, which will inspire the world to accept a G-d of love, morality, compassion and peace. © 2010 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The final book of the Chumash, Dvarim, is also known as Mishneh Torah- the restatement and review of the Torah. Though the book of Dvarim does contain within it descriptions of mitzvot/commandments there were not previously mentioned in the Torah, it nevertheless remains mainly a review of the previous books of the Chumash.

It rarely breaks new ground except for the prophetic portions of the book which mark its concluding chapters. The question may arise as to what

the purpose and importance of the book might be. Repetitive works hardly hold the attention of the reader or student. Yet Jewish tradition and traditional Jewish educational methods emphasize clearly the requirement of constant review of Torah topics.

As an example, *shochtim*, Jewish ritual slaughterers of animals and poultry, are required to review the halachic rules that are pertinent to their craft at least once every thirty days. The Talmud emphasizes the importance of reviewing Torah study, even sharply differentiating between the students who review one's Torah lesson one hundred times to the ones who review it one hundred and one times!

Perhaps in times when individual powers of memory were so essential to success in Torah study, this idea of review was certainly pertinent and necessary educational methodology. But what of our current age, when all the knowledge of previous generations is available almost effortlessly with the press of a button on our computer keyboard? Is review of already stated laws and events truly necessary any longer? The answer of course is a resounding "yes" but why is this true. The matter has occupied my thoughts for some time.

I think that the review is always necessary for even though the words of the Torah are the same and are unchangeable, the person studying those words is constantly undergoing change. Human life never stands still. The words of Moshe to the Jewish people at the end of the period of the desert have taken on a different dimension and meaning than when he first taught those laws decades earlier.

Life shapes our appreciation of knowledge gained. It makes us wiser and more foolish all at one and the same time. Things that we thought we knew and understood are now mysteries to us and what we did not understand and appreciate at an earlier stage of life now become relevant and essential.

The Book of Dvarim comes to teach us, according to the Talmud, that we really cannot appreciate knowledge learned and studied from our Torah teachers until "forty years" has passed. It is the review of the past learned knowledge that makes that knowledge truly meaningful to us. My teachers in the yeshiva always emphasized the importance of constant review of topics already studied and seemingly mastered.

"Forty years" has passed for me since those holy days of intensive Torah study in the yeshiva and only now do I begin to appreciate and understand those lessons learned and the knowledge then gained. The lesson of Dvarim therefore lies in its other title-Mishneh Torah-an ongoing review and restatement of Torah throughout our years of life. © 2010 Rabbi Berel Wein-Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For

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RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

There is a Talmudic story that reveals a lot about how we should react when facing adversity. It is one that is obviously an appropriate one to focus upon just days before Tisha B'Av, the 9th of Av, when both Temples were destroyed in Jerusalem.

The story goes as follows: Rabbi Yossi said: "Once I was traveling on the road and entered one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray." Elijah appeared and said, "My son, why did you go into the ruin." Rabbi Yossi responded, "To pray." Elijah then said to Rabbi Yossi, "You should have prayed on the road." Rabbi Yossi answered, "I feared that a passerby would interrupt me." To which Elijah said, "You could have then said a short prayer."

Rabbi Yossi concluded that he learnt several principles from the words of Elijah. First, it is important not to enter a ruin. Second, it is permissible to pray on the road, as long as the prayer is short. (Berakhot 3a)

What is the message that underlies these principles? Rabbi Shlomo Riskin argues that it's important to recognize that Rabbi Yossi was a sage who was suffering, living as he did in the aftermath of the destruction of the Temple. The prophet tells us that Elijah will announce the coming of the Messiah. Elijah is therefore known as the teacher, par excellence, of how to achieve redemption. Thus, Rabbi Yossi states, "I have learned from Elijah important ideas concerning how to turn destruction into rebuilding, galut into ge'ulah, exile into redemption."

It is first of all important not to enter into rooms that represent tragedy and not to get side tracked by wallowing in disaster. Elijah was teaching Rabbi Yossi to stay on the road, to stay the course of human action and effort to repair the Jewish people, an act through which the whole world will be repaired.

But Elijah also taught a second message. He was teaching that on that road to redemption, it is important to pray. But the prayer itself should be short in order to make time for investing incredible amounts of energy into human activity and initiative.

Life requires a combination of action and prayer. History is a partnership between human endeavor and divine intervention.

A story is told of Rabbi Isaac Blazer, Reb Itzele Petersburger. One day, a rumor spread that he was a Zionist. The community decided that he would be fired. After all, in the prayers we speak of G-d as the builder of Jerusalem. Yet, Reb Itzele was declaring that he would do his share in building Jerusalem himself. Reb Itzele turned to one of the leaders of the community and responded, "But when your daughter was sick, did you not seek out a doctor, even though G-d is spoken of in the prayers as the healer of Israel?" And turning to

another, Reb Itzele said, "don't you do all you can to make a living, even though in our prayers we speak of G-d as the provider of sustenance?" If health and sustenance is a combined effort of human beings and G-d, so too in Zionism, prayer must work hand in hand with action.

When one acts, one must act as if everything depends on us and when one prays, our must pray as if everything depends on G-d. We must live a life where we honor both sides of these two seemingly contradictory directives - action and prayer.

As we prepare our prayers for Tisha B'Av we must make them ones of meaning and concentration, yet realize that full service of G-d is incomplete without action on the part of each and every one of us. © 2010 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG

TorahWeb

“**W**e circled Mount Seir for many days. Hashem said to me enough of your circling this mountain; turn yourselves northward” (Devarim 2:1-3).

The Hebrew word tzafon, north, stems from the root tzafun, hidden. The sun, as we see it, moves from east to west in an arc that inclines to the south. Therefore, the north is somewhat hidden from the sun (Ramban Shemos 26:18).

What follows is the Kli Yakar's understanding of this passage. "Turn yourselves northward" is an exhortation to hide one's wealth. We must hide our wealth from Esav, for no nation is as jealous of Yisrael as is Esav. Esav views all of our possessions as stolen from them, since Yaakov received Esav's beracha by deceiving Yitzchak.

Yaakov questioned his sons, "Why do you make yourselves conspicuous?" (Bereishis 42:1). Rashi explains, "Why do you appear to the sons of Yishmael and Esav as if you are satiated?" They think that Yitzchak stole the prosperity of Yishmael and that Yaakov stole the prosperity of Esav.

Therefore, Hashem commanded Am Yisrael, particularly regarding Esav (who dwelt on Mount Seir, Bereishis 36:8), "turn yourselves northward", so that Esav should not be jealous of them.

This is the opposite of what Yisrael does in these times on the land of their enemies. One who has one hundred presents himself, with fancy clothes and expensive houses, as if he has many thousands. This incites the nations against us, and violates "turn yourselves northward."

This custom pervades a large portion of our people. It is what causes all the hardship that has befallen us. The wise will understand to learn the lesson.

The lesson (mussar) of the Kli Yakar has particular relevance as we mourn the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash at the hands of the Romans. Esav is Edom (Bereishis 36:19), the Romans who destroyed the second Beis HaMikdash (Rashi, Eicha 4:21). Our present primary nemesis, Yishmael, is included in the kingdom of Edom (see Metzudas David to Zecharia 6:3).

The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 560:1) requires that we leave a portion of our homes unfinished as a remembrance of the churban. Ostentation is incompatible with a proper perspective of our exiled status, even as it invites further jealousy on the part of Esav and, particularly, Yishmael, who continue to despise us and/or attempt, sometimes successfully, to harm us.

Conspicuous consumption causes disaster within Am Yisrael as well. It creates jealousy within our people, which often begets hatred, the very cause of our lengthy exile (Yoma 9b). It places pressure on others to keep pace, even if they lack the means, which can lead to poverty or, worse, theft. And it invites an ayin hara, evil eye, as others gaze upon the wealth flaunted by the rich (Bava Basra 2b).

Aside from the interpersonal evils generated by ostentation, arising from the aforementioned responses of non-Jews and Jews, it reflects an inner character flaw. Modesty is an intrinsically desirable trait, and its opposite, flaunting one's wealth, is undesirable even if there is no negative interpersonal consequence.

Imagine if the Kli Yakar were alive today! How excessive could the clothes and houses of 17th century have been? The homes, cars, clothes, bar mitzvahs, and weddings of 2010 are, too often, status symbols of newfound prosperity. Eye-catching excess and exhibitionist opulence have, alas, replaced, in many cases, the tasteful and functional lifestyles of the previous generations.

In today's difficult economy, such excess is particularly grievous. With so many people suffering, a wedding invitation which requires three stamps borders on the grotesque. Leveling perfectly functional homes to create ever-increasingly palatial edifices, inexcusable in the best of times, is cruel and inconsiderate in the current downturn which has affected so many.

Again, it must be emphasized that flaunting one's wealth reflects an internal personality flaw, even if there is no interpersonal damage. Indeed, self-glorification is undesirable in all areas of human achievement.

The haftara of Tisha B'av concludes: let the wise man not glorify himself with his wisdom, the strong man with his strength, the rich man with his wealth. Only understanding and knowing Hashem is worthy of glorification.

In an age of increasing anti-Semitism which endangers our people, at a time when we are mindful of the lengthy and painful exile stemming from the

destructions of Tisha B'av, we are duty bound to "turn northward", to exhibit appropriate modesty and restraint.

If, as the KliYakar writes, ostentation is the cause of all the hardships that have befallen us, then its avoidance can rid us of these hardships. With appropriate modesty and restraint, the jealousy of Esav and Yishmael will cease, the interpersonal sins within Am Yisrael will end and the Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt. © 2010 Rabbi M. Willig and The TorahWeb Foundation

RABBI DANIEL TRAVIS

Integrity

“**Y**itzchak sent Yaakov on his way. [Yaakov] headed towards Padan Aram, to Lavan the son of Bethuel the Aramite, the brother of Rivka, Yaakov and Esav's mother.” (Bereshith 28:5)

Rashi comments, "I don't know what these words [Yaakov's and Esav's mother] come to teach us." There are those who say that Rashi's "explanation" is superfluous. After all, since Rashi could not fathom the reason these words appear in the Torah, if he had simply omitted any commentary on them, would it not have been self-evident that he did not understand the words' intent?

Rashi's purpose was much deeper than merely offering a disclaimer. He was well aware that these words have been explained in a number of ways, but Rashi's approach is always to seek the pshat (i.e., the most straightforward explanation) of the Torah's words. Since he could not find a pshat that satisfied him, he commented that he did not know what we are to learn from this. (Sifthei Chachamim on Bereshith 28:5)

A job interview is an especially challenging situation in which people often are tempted to create an inflated impression of themselves, in the hope of improving their chances of being hired. On a practical level, it is unwise to give a potential employer a false impression, since one may win the job based on that impression, in which case one will be forced to "live a lie," for the duration of one's employment. (Heard from Rav Moshe Meiselman) It is certainly forbidden to produce false credentials, and whoever does so and is hired on these grounds is guilty of having stolen from his employer. (Responsa Igroth Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 2:30)

Furthermore, honesty and reliability are sometimes the very traits that make the best impression, and are often just what an employer is looking for. During his very first job interview, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was asked an unusually complex and difficult question which he did not know how to answer. Rather than trying to cover up his ignorance in the matter, and without offering any excuses, Rav Shlomo Zalman simply confessed that he did not know the answer, for he was altogether a man of truth.

When he returned home, Rav Shlomo Zalman told his wife that he was convinced he had not won the job, since he had responded, "I don't know." He was surprised therefore when his prospective employers called him back and told him that they had decided to hire him. It was the fact that he had put his own honor aside in admitting that he did not know the answer that had so impressed them! (Pe'er HaDor) © 2010 Rabbi D. Travis and Project Genesis, Inc.

RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

Weekly Dvar

The best part about books is that you can always look back at parts that are either unclear, or parts that you've missed or liked, and the Torah is no exception. With that in mind, though, why do we need a whole Sefer (Devarim, the book of Deuteronomy) dedicated to review the first 4 books, when all we'd have to do is look back and exam them? Also, why would you start a book of review with words of rebuke, as our Parsha does?

As Rabbi Twerski points out, the answer lies in a quote by Shlomo Hamelech (King Solomon), who said: "A conceited fool has no desire for understanding, but only wants to express his own views (18:2)." What's the point of a past if we don't learn from it? And what's the point of learning from our mistakes if we don't keep what we've learned and integrate it into our future? As we get closer to Tisha B'av, when both Batei Hamikdash (Temples) were destroyed ON THE SAME DAY, the question applies even more.. Didn't the Jews learn from the destruction of the first Temple merely a few hundred years prior? Do we learn from the destruction of BOTH Temples so many years later? There's a whole book in front of us pointing its finger at itself and the four volumes before it, begging us to read it, and read it AGAIN, until we find the meaning intended for us, and use it to enforce what we WILL do. It's the thirst of knowledge of our past that will lead to the accomplishments of our future! © 2010 Rabbi S. Ressler and LeLamed, Inc.

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

“**A**nd you dwelled in Kadeish for many years” (Devarim 1:46). Rashi, based on Seder Olam Rabbah (8), tells us that of the 40 years spent in the wilderness, 19 of them were spent living in Kadeish. This works out to be the same amount of years as their "wandering," i.e. traveling just to fill out the full 40 years decreed upon them (Bamidbar 14:33-34). The decree was made after their "crying" on Tisha B'Av, the fifth month of the second year, and much of the 40th year was spent traveling around Edom, past Moav, conquering Sichon/Og, and reviewing the Torah with Moshe at Arvos Moav, leaving 38 years of "wandering" just for the sake of "wandering." Dwelling in

Kadeish for 19 years means there were "only" 19 years of true "wandering."

Which years were spent "wandering" and which years were spent "dwelling in Kadeish" depends on a number of factors, including which "Kadeish" these 19 years were spent at. This issue was raised several years ago by Rabbi Menachem Leibtag (www.Tanach.org), and despite also working on a deadline, I would like to expand upon some of his thoughts.

The context of the verse indicating that the Children of Israel stayed at Kadeish "the same amount of days that you dwelled" during the rest of the wanderings (see Rashi on Devarim 1:46) indicates that this occurred before the wandering started, as it comes immediately after Moshe reminds them of the sin of the spies (1:22-45) and before they "turned and traveled to the desert by way of the Sea of Reeds (2:1) and, after being told they've wandered enough (2:3), going north past Eisav (2:-3-8) and Moav (2:8-18), and conquering Sichon (2:24-36). However, there are other indications that they left right after the decree, and didn't hang around for years after the decree was made.

The Torah tells us explicitly (2:14) that it took 38 years from the time they traveled from Kadeish Barneya (the "Kadeish" that the spies were sent from) until they crossed the Zered Stream (east of Moav, almost parallel to the bottom of the Dead Sea). If the 38 years started from when they "traveled from Kaseh Barneya," they obviously must have left right away, not 19 years later. Nevertheless, the Chizkuni addresses this issue by telling us that "it doesn't mean only [years of] travel, but [the years it took] between [both] standing (i.e. staying put) and traveling." Once the decree was made and they knew that they wouldn't be able to enter the Promised Land for more than 38 years (and wouldn't enter from where they were, but would have to travel to a different point of entry), the fact that they hadn't physically left yet didn't change the fact that they hadn't yet reached their final destination, and it was considered as if they were "traveling" for the whole 38 years.

After telling them that they weren't going to enter the Promised Land now, G-d told them they would have to travel away from there (the original point of entry, Kadeish Barneya) "tomorrow" (Bamidbar 14:25). It would seem difficult to say that they stayed in Kadeish Barneya for 19 years if G-d told them to leave "tomorrow." However, several commentators (i.e. Chizkuni) point out that "tomorrow" doesn't have to mean literally "the next day;" it sometimes means "some time in the future." The Netziv and the Panim Yafos (in Devarim) suggest that originally they were going to have to "wander" for the full 38 years (starting "tomorrow"), but their prayers not to have to "wander" helped cut that part of the decree in half, so they only had to "wander" for 19 years, and the "tomorrow" part was nullified. (It could be suggested that this addresses the previous issue as well, as since their prayers

nullified 19 years of the "wandering," it was still considered as if they "traveled" for all 38 years.)

Although Rashi does tell us (Bamidbar 32:8) that there were two cities with the name "Kadeish," the implication (see Gur Aryeh) is that the place the spies were sent from is referred to as "Kadeish Barneya," while the city "by the edge of the border of Edom" (Bamidbar 20:16), where Miryam died and Moshe hit the rock, is referred to as just plain "Kadeish." If so, it was not at Kadeish Barneya that they stayed for 19 years, but at Kadeish. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of commentators understand it to be Kadeish Barneya where they stayed for 19 years, before the "wandering" started, perhaps because the spies did return "to Moshe and to Aharon and to the entire congregation of the Children of Israel to the Paran Desert, at Kadeish" (13:26).

Despite saying explicitly in Devarim that the Kadeish they stayed at for a long time was Kadeish Barneya, in Bamidbar (20:1) Ibn Ezra says that it was at the Kadeish where Miryam died that they stayed for a long time. However, Ibn Ezra doesn't follow Chazal's approach that the "long time" was 19 (or 18, see Midrash HaGadol) years, as he says explicitly that they arrived at Kadeish, where they stayed for a long time, in the 40th year. Rabbeinu Bachye also says (in Bamidbar) that it was the Kadeish where Miryam died that they stayed for a long time, but in Devarim he follows Chazal and says that the "long time" was in fact 19 years. This would explain why the Torah doesn't tell us that they arrived at Kadeish in the 40th year, as they really arrived in the 21st year. [Even though the Torah doesn't tell us that Miryam died in the 40th year either, Rabbeinu Bachye does say it was in the 40th year, with all three of the generation's leaders (Miryam, Aharon and Moshe, at the ages of 127, 123 and 120 respectively) passing away in that final year before the nation entered the Promised land. That Miryam died in the 40th year seems to be accepted by all; see Seder Olam Rabbah 9.] According to Rabbeinu Bachye they did leave right away ("tomorrow") from Kadeish Barneya, and it took 38 years (even if they stayed for 19 of them in Kadeish) until they crossed The Zered Stream. The only real difficulty in the verses is the one we started with, as the context indicates that the long stay in "Kadeish" occurred right after the decree, before they left the place where the decree was issued. Based on the Netziv and Panim Yafos, it could be suggested that since the initial decree was that they couldn't enter the Promised Land for 39 more years and that they would "wander" for 38 of them, and it was their prayers that allowed them to stay in one place for 19 of those years, Moshe mentioned the 19 year stay here because having to wait those 19 years was still part of the decree, as "G-d did not answer your cries" to reverse the decree (Devarim 1:45), although he did cut the years of "wandering" in half, "enabling you to stay in Kadeish," 19 years later, for 19 years.

It is interesting to note that one of the differences between the way Rashi quotes Seder Olam Rabbah and the way our version reads relates directly to whether the 19 years in Kadeish occurred right after the decree or 19 years after the decree; Rashi has the 38 years as "19 of them in Kadeish and 19 years traveling and being harried," while our version has the 19 years traveling and being harried first. Rather than ascribing each version to the two opinions cited above, however, both versions are problematic. Our version of Seder Olam Rabbah is problematic because the 19 years were spent at "Kadeish Barneya," not at "Kadeish;" if the 19 years of staying in one place occurred after the 19 years of "wandering," they had to have been at "Kadeish," not at "Kadeish Barneya." Rashi's version adds one additional thought, "and they returned to Kadeish," strongly implying that they returned to the same place they had stayed for 19 years after their 19 years of wandering. Yet, Rashi had told us (Bamidbar 32:8) that there were two different places called "Kadeish," so how could he say that "Kadeish Barneya" and "Kadeish" were the same place?

Sefer Eileh Masay (pgs. 94-96; published in 2000 by Dun Schwartz) suggests that the two words that add this thought ("v'chuzru l'Kadeish") must be a mistake (even though he cites a manuscript that includes them, and acknowledges that the Raavad had this version of Seder Olam Rabbah). Midrash Esfa (Batei Midrashos I, pg. 213, quoted by Torah Shelaimah, Bamidbar 20:9) says that the nation was thrilled to return to Kadeish, the same place they had dwelled peacefully for 19 years, after having wandered for 19 years. Therefore, no matter how we address the contradiction in Rashi (and it's clear from his commentary on Bamidbar 34:4 that he had in inaccurate map of the area, with "Kadeish" being south of Edom rather than on the eastern side close to the north), we have to address a third opinion, that "Kadeish Barneya" and "Kadeish" are really one and the same (see Mizrachi on Beraishis 14:7, also see Or Hachayim on Bamidbar 13:26).

Although there are numerous "deserts" that the Children of Israel traveled through (or near), such as the Paran Desert (from where the spies were sent), the Tzin Desert (where the southern border of Israel passes through, and where "Kadeish" is) and the Sinai Desert, the Talmud (Shabbos 89a) indicates that they are all one desert. Tosfos (ibid) explains that it is one very large desert that encompasses the Sinai Peninsula (although, like Rashi, Tosfos didn't realize it was a peninsula, which is why they said that the nation didn't "cross" the split sea leaving Egypt, but came out on the same side they came in) and goes all the way up north (on the eastern side of the peninsula) until just below the Dead Sea. A similar thought is put forth by the Maharal (Gur Aryeh on Bereishis 14:7). It is therefore not problematic if "Kadeish Barneya" is described as being in the Paran Desert while "Kadeish" is in the Tzin

Desert, as they are really the same (large) desert. (Atlas Daas Mikre, in its map on pg. 101, has the two deserts overlapping, with the two names criss-crossing each other!) Although from the maps I've seen "Kadesh Barneya" and "Kadeish" are over 100km apart from each other, it should be noted that the nation never (or probably never) camped at either location. Kadeish Barneya is mentioned when the southern border of Israel is described (Bamidbar 34:4), but the border is south of it, meaning that Kadeish Barneya is inside the Land of Israel. Since Moshe never stepped foot into Israel (nor did the rest of the nation, except the spies), they must not have camped at Kadeish Barneya, but near it (see Sefornu on Bamidbar 13:26). Similarly, Kadeish, if it was a "city," was within the borders of Edom (which is how most maps have it); how could Moshe have asked permission to pass through Edom if they were already there? The Israelite camp was quite large, and likely couldn't fit in any already inhabited city; it is much more likely that they camped near Kadeish, not in Kadeish, and that Moshe was telling Edom that we are near one of your northern-most cities, and won't need to pass through much of your land. (See Gittin 6a, where Rekem, the Aramaic translation of Kadeish, is considered the border of Israel but not part of Israel.) It is therefore possible that both times, before sending out the spies and before asking Edom permission to pass through to Moav (if they wanted to go into Israel from there, Edom is in the wrong direction), they camped in the same area, southeast of Kadeish Barneya and southwest of Kadeish. When they were planning to enter Israel from the south, the nearby location of Kadeish Barneya is mentioned; when asking permission from Edom, the nearby city of Kadeish is mentioned. They are two different locations, but the nation returned to the same basic area 19 years after having left it. There would therefore be no problem if Moshe called it "Kadeish," not "Kadeish Barneya" even when discussing events that occurred right after the spies were sent.

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