

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 4 Av 5786, corresponding to July 18, 2026.

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 736 Hz) (p. 989 S) (p. 653 Hi) (p. 938 AS)

DEVARIM דברים

Deuteronomy 1:1

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis (RED),

1. Bnei Yisrael are situated at the portal of Eretz Yisrael, and Moshe is about to deliver his final address. We don't see the "Hashem spoke to Moshe saying." Moshe speaks as a high level prophet. Very soon life will change drastically for the Chosen Nation. There will no longer be daily supernatural miracles in Eretz Yisrael. Instead of Mannah, the people will have work for a living. They will have to plow, seed, and harvest. There will no longer be a traveling well to supply water. Rain will be a main supplier. And there will constant concern for the water needs of the country. No more miraculous cloud cover. This new reality will be harsh to get used to. This might be what scared the spies a generation ago. This might also be the reason why the sin of the Spy Mission is the first sin mentioned by Moshe now. The people are now in the same position they were in years before, poised to enter the new life in the new Land.

2. Just as Moshe sent spies at that moment years before, Yehoshua will also send spies to Yericho, the first city in the Jewish people's path. The past Spy Mission was very much in the minds of these two spies. They were determined to do proper service to Yehoshua, the people, and to Hashem. In the forty year journey in the desert, the people had to fight several wars. And under Moshe and Hashem's direction, there were never any human losses in battle for the victorious Jews. And this is what happened at Yericho. This was the plan for the future. But Achan's sin in that initial battle, changed everything. Now the people would battle and suffer the normal results of human warfare. This will be a new feature for the Jewish nation, part of the new reality.

3. All the Mitzvahs were given to Moshe at Sinai, but not all of them were given immediately to the people. Many Mitzvahs are repeated in Chumash Devarim. And about 70 Mitzvahs are introduced for the first time here in Devarim even though Moshe knew about them years before. Over 38 years before! Commentators bend over backwards to show how these Mitzvahs were needed now as they were entering the Promised Land. Again I repeat: no daily supernatural

miracles. A new reality. But Hashem is forever present in this new life. How else can we explain and accept such laws of Shemittah and Jubilee. No other land has such laws for its residents. Hashem will forever be a part of Israeli life in Israel then and now.

4. It is interesting to note the subtle differences between the Torah's version of the Spy Mission and Moshe's. In Parshat Shelach where it occurred, the Torah identified the spies as heads of the children of Israel. They were important, true leaders. In Moshe's version, he chose "twelve men, one from each tribe." There is no mention of their prestige, or their leadership. Moshe was writing after the fact, 38 years after the facts. History will now forever look differently upon those evil men. They proved themselves terrible leaders, not worthy of a positive description. These spies did bring back enormous fruit. There is a Mishnah that states that the fruit of the times of the Holy Temple were larger and tastier than any fruit of our day. I heard that from Rav Soloveitchik as well.

5. Life in Eretz Yisrael will not be Messianic. A reminder of that is the law recently introduced and will be repeated later in Devarim....of the Cities of Refuge. There will be accidental killings in normal life in Israel. There will be impoverished unfortunate people who will need our Tzedakah assistance. These and other laws describe what we call normal life in the Promised Land. And the discussion of accidental murder includes premeditated murder as well. So we definitely receive a picture of what the normal life will be in the Promised Land. But it will be Jewish. With a Holy Temple, a king, a Sanhedrin, prophets, Kohanim and Leviyim, and other items that will attempt to describe a Torah society, it will be unique, but not perfect.

6. In between describing Calev and Yehoshua, Moshe does state that Hashem was angry at Moshe as well. Moshe now sees Yehoshua as his successor, which reminds Moshe of the sin that he committed many years after the Spy Mission, and Moshe feels that it, too, was caused by the people. They angered Moshe to the degree that he spoke ill of them and acted not in accordance with Hashem's instructions. The result was that Moshe was punished, and like the people, they were all denied entry into Eretz Yisrael. These two events, the spies and Moshe hitting the rock occurred 38 years apart, but in Moshe's mind, they were all in this same narrative.

7. Esav (Seir), Ammon, and Moav were given land in the same area by Hashem. They are Mishpachah with

us. We never had peace with that branch of the family in our entire history. From the stories in Bereishit, Lot separated himself from Avraham. Yaakov did not want to travel together with Esav. Separation was desired and accomplished. Even though Ruth came from Moav, and that means that Moabite blood flows in the bloodline of the leadership of our nation, and it will even extend itself till the Mashiach, it is just a drop. The international divide continued to separate ourselves forever, and no peaceful warmth developed in the family.

8. MIDRASH. Moshe used the word Eichah in this Parshah. In means HOW. In the Adam and Eve story, it refers to the themes of hidden shame, missed opportunities, and divine pursuit. (Ayeka, same letters). Just as Adam and Eve hid from Hashem, realizing nakedness and mistakes, Moshe is now looking over a generation that has faltered, sinned, and wandered.

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT DEVARIM 5786

I. From the Text

1. How long did it take on the calendar for the whole Chumash of Devarim to be delivered? (1:3)
2. What sin was the first one mentioned by Moshe? (1:19)
3. Whose idea was it to send Spies? (1:22)
4. Why did Moshe mention that he too was punished for the sin of the Spies? (1:37)
5. Why was Moav given their portion of national land near Canaan? (2:9)

II. From Rashi

6. Why did Moshe refer to a place as Di Zahav, abundance of gold? (1:1)
7. What tribe did not send a Spy? (1:23)
8. After the sin of the Spies, how long did Bnei Yisrael stay camped at Kadesh? (1:46)
9. Why was Ammon better protected than Moav? Bnei Yisrael can intimidate Moav but not Ammon? (2:9)
10. Why was Og called the "Refugee"? (3:11)

III. From the Rabbis

11. What did our Sages call Chumash Devarim?
12. When the Spies gave their evil report, "Hashem heard the sound of their words." (1:34). What was the 'sound'? (Ha'amek Davar)
13. What was another word for the Dead Sea? (3:17)

IV. Midrash.

14. The Amorites beat Bnei Yisrael as if they were bees. What does that mean?

V. Haftorah. Isaiah

15. Hashem didn't lament the destruction of the Holy Temple. What did Hashem lament?

VI. Relationships

- 16.
- a) Yitzchak - Adah
- b) Rivkah - Rachel (2 answers)
- c) Reuven - Peretz
- d) Yitzhar - Moshe
- e) Adam - Enosh

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT DEVARIM 5786

1. About 5 weeks. From 1 Shevat till 7 Adar.
2. The sin of the Spy Mission.
3. The people
4. Because Moshe wanted to include his own fate with the people's.
5. Because they are descendants of Lot who earned that land by being related to Avraham.
6. Because that was the place they made the Golden Calf.
7. Levi
8. 19 years.
9. Because Amman's mother did not publicize that Lot, her father, was Ammon's father. Moav's mother did publicize it, by naming her son Moav, "from the father."
10. Because he was the only refugee from the War Between the Four Kings and the Five Kings.
11. Mishnah Torah. Repetition or Review of the Torah.
12. The attitude of your voice.
13. The Arabah Sea
14. According to the Midrash, it was painful, but no one died.
15. The sins that caused it.
- 16.
- a) Father-in-Law Yitzchak
- b) Aunt Rivkah and Mother-in-Law Rivkah
- c) Uncle Reuven
- d) Uncle Yitzhar
- e) Grandfather Adam