

Parshas Devorim in a Nutshell

(Deuteronomy 1:1–3:22)

On the first of Shevat (thirty-seven days before his passing), Moses begins his repetition of the Torah to the assembled children of Israel, reviewing the events that occurred and the laws that were given in the course of their forty-year journey from Egypt to Sinai to the Promised Land, rebuking the people for their failings and iniquities, and enjoining them to keep the Torah and observe its commandments in the land that G-d is giving them as an eternal heritage, into which they shall cross after his death.

Moses recalls his appointment of judges and magistrates to ease his burden of meting out justice to the people and teaching them the word of G-d; the journey from Sinai through the great and fearsome desert; the sending of the spies and the people's subsequent spurning of the Promised Land, so that G-d decreed that the entire generation of the Exodus would die out in the desert. "Also against me," says Moses, "was G-d angry for your sake, saying: You, too, shall not go in there."

(continued next column)



What is the key to discovering [Torah] insights? Identifying one's "I" with G-d and not with one's own self. When a person is preoccupied with self-concern - what I want, and what I think is right - that is what he will think and speak about. When, by contrast, he is able to step beyond his individual concerns, he is able to appreciate - and share with others - G-d's wisdom.

-- The Rebbe

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – July 21 / Av 3

Candle Lighting 8:05 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – July 22 / Av 4

Shacharis 10:00 am*

Torah Reading 11:00 am

Kiddush 12:10 pm

Mincha 8:10 pm

Pirkei Avos/Rabbi's Drasha ... 8:30 pm

Shabbos Ends 9:10 pm

*Latest morning Shema is now **9:20 AM**. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

Community Announcement

The parking behind Shomerei Torah is to be used exclusively for the women using the Mikvah. After dusk, DO NOT PARK THERE!!. Respect the privacy of the women!



Moses also recounts some more recent events: the refusal of the nations of Moab and Ammon to allow the Israelites to pass through their countries; the wars against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og, and the settlement of their lands by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and part of the tribe of Manasseh; and Moses' message to his successor, Joshua, who will take the people into the Land and lead them in the battles for its conquest: "Fear them not, for the L-rd your G-d, He shall fight for you." ❖

We are in the Nine Days.

Fast of Tisha B'Av

Wednesday Fast Begins:
8:19 pm

Thursday Fast Ends:
8:50 pm

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Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, July 22, 2023

Eastern Daylight Savings

Earliest Tallis 4:35 AM

Latest Morning Shema 9:20 AM

Earliest Mincha (Gedola) . 1:40 PM

Plag Hamincha 6:55 PM

Earliest Evening Shema 8:54 PM

Chassidic Masters

Words

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

Devorim means “words,” and is the name of this week’s Torah reading — the first weekly reading in the book of Devorim, the fifth book of the Torah. Of course, the entire Torah — at least as it was communicated to us earthly beings — consists of words; but in the book of Devorim, the nature of these words is of particular significance.

The book of Devorim is a 37-day-long speech by Moses, beginning on the first of Shevat and ending on the seventh of Adar—the day of Moses’ passing—in the year 2488 from creation (1273 BCE). In his speech, Moses recaps the major events and laws that are recorded in the Torah’s other four books. Thus the book of Devorim is also called Mishneh Torah, “Repetition of the Torah” (and hence its Anglicized-Greek name, Deuteronomy, or “Second Law”).

Moses wrote all five books. But, as our sages explain, in the first four books Moses transcribed everything as he received it from G-d, while in Devorim he says it “in his own words.” The distinction is clearly seen by the fact that the first four books are written in the third person (“G-d spoke to Moses, saying”), while in Devorim we hear Moses’ voice in first person (“At that time G-d said to me,” etc.).

Nevertheless, Devorim belongs to what we call the “Written Torah,”

meaning that not only the content but also the words and letters are considered to be of divine origin. Our sages explain that Moses had so totally abnegated his ego to the divine will that “the divine presence spoke from his throat”—Moses’ own words are also G-d’s own words.

As such, the book of Devorim acts as a bridge between the Written Torah and the “Oral Torah.” The Oral Torah includes the Talmud and the Midrashim, the commentaries and the codes, the Zohar and the Kabbalah, and “everything that a worthy student will expound before his master”—everything that has been produced by thirty-three centuries of Torah scholars studying and interpreting the Torah in accordance with the Sinaitic tradition. In the Oral Torah, which is generated by minds and mouths less ego-free than Moses’, the content is divine but the words and letters are human—man’s own.

In other words, we have two dimensions to Torah: a dimension in which both the content and the “packaging” are bestowed from Above, and a dimension in which the divine wisdom and will is packaged in “our own words.” And then we have the book of Devorim, in which the two converge: a human being, Moses, attains a level of identification with the divine wisdom and will on which “his own words” are completely in harmony with their divine content—so much in harmony that they are no less G-d’s words than those which G-d dictated in the first four books.

Indeed, it is from the book of Devorim that the entire “Oral Torah” flows.

Moses’ utter identification with the divine wisdom empowers our own lesser souls, each of which possesses “a spark of the soul of Moses,” to do the same (albeit on a lesser level): to create of “our own words” receptacles for the divine wisdom.

Talking Man

This happens, on one level, every time we open our mouths.

The ancient philosophers refer to the human being as “the speaker,” and no one has yet come up with a better appellation for our talkative race. We do love to talk. Witness the endless self-explaining we engage in, the perpetual conversation we feel obliged to “make,” the quadrillions of words unleashed each day in every imaginable medium. Why this insatiable need to put everything into words, as if nothing truly exists until it is trimmed and stretched to fit a set of humanly emitted sounds?

Because, say the chassidic masters, there is nothing that the human being wants more than to play G-d.

G-d did it: He spoke reality into being. He said, “Let there be light!” and there was light. He said, “Let the waters gather and the land be revealed!” and oceans and continents were formed. But man looks at G-d’s creation and sees it as something still unformed, still lacking definition. So we speak and speak and speak, categorizing, quantifying and qualifying G-d’s world in an effort to give it meaning and purpose.

(continued next page)

Of course, there are differences. G-d is infinite and omnipotent; we are finite and fallible. G-d spoke light into being; we have been granted the power to speak that light into a brighter, more focused luminescence — but we are just as likely to speak it into darkness. We can verbalize the continents as countries and provinces of a productive world community — or we can speak into them boundaries of animosity and strife.

But that's the "partner in creation" whom G-d desired: a partner who is just as likely to run the shop into the ground as to build it up. A free, independent partner, whose choices are fully his own—and therefore fully his responsibility and fully his achievement. Because G-d wanted true partners to His endeavor, not a bunch of employees and messenger boys (He had plenty of those already when He created man — they're called "angels").

But G-d did even more. Not only did He subject his creation to human speechifying, He also put His Torah — His own thoughts and desires — into

humanly cognizant words, and then invited us into the process of verbalizing His Torah.

Because if we're His partners, we have to be in on it all. A true partner doesn't only do his part in the running and the development of the business; he also participates in drawing up the mission statement, the *modus operandi*, the rules and regulations.

So G-d granted the human mind and mouth a mandate not only to shape His world, but also to participate in the formulation of the Torah—the laws, the blueprint, the "source code" of creation.

Thus was born Devorim, the book of Words.

The first to receive this mandate was Moses, who fulfilled it so perfectly that his "contribution" became one of the five books that form the crux of Torah. Moses' achievement contains the empowering seeds for all subsequent human partners to the articulation of the divine wisdom. ❖

For Tisha B'Av – A Letter from the Rebbe

By the Grace of G-d

***15th of Menachem Av, 5725 [August 13, 1965]
Brooklyn, N.Y.***

Greeting and Blessing:

I have chosen the 15th of Av as the date of this letter because of its special significance, and also because of its proximity to the day of these dedication exercises.

Our Sages tell us that the 15th day of Av was a very joyous festival in olden days, especially for the younger generation, with particular emphasis on the religious ideals and values of our Jewish way of life.

Coming so soon after Tishah b'Av, the radical transition from a mood of sadness to that of joy is doubly significant. Firstly, it signifies that any sad interlude in Jewish life is only transitory, and is based on the principle of "descent for the purpose of ascent." In other words, any and all sad events in our history which are commemorated on the few sad days on our calendar are backward steps which are necessary for a greater forward leap.

Secondly, that the very transition from sadness to gladness intensifies the joy, and adds real quality to it, which could not be appreciated otherwise.

The message of these days is best applied in the efforts in behalf of our Jewish youth. All too often we hear about the "lost generation," or our "lost youth." It is therefore most gratifying to see your efforts to provide true guidance, direction and inspiration to the younger generation in your community and environs. Your efforts have, with G-d's help, been fruitful in the past; I hope and pray they will continue in a growing measure, and consequently will enjoy a growing measure of success in the future. ❖

The Nine Days

The first nine days of the month of Av, and also the morning of the tenth, are days of acute mourning for the destruction of the first and second Holy Temples.

During this time, we don't:

- Eat meat (including poultry) or drink wine, for during this period the sacrifices and wine libations in the Holy Temple ceased. The exceptions to this rule are meat and wine consumed on Shabbat or as part of a meal that celebrates a mitzvah, such as a circumcision, bar mitzvah, or the completion of a tractate of the Talmud.
- Launder clothing (except for a baby's)—even if they will not be worn during the Nine Days—or wear freshly laundered outer clothing. Those who wish to change their clothing daily should prepare a number of garments and briefly don each of them before the onset of the Nine Days. Then it is permitted to wear these “non-freshly laundered” garments during the Nine Days. We don't consume meat or wine, for during this period the sacrifices and wine libations ceased
- Swim or bathe for pleasure.
- Remodel or expand a home.
- Plant trees to be used for shade or fragrance (as opposed to fruit trees).
- Buy, sew, weave or knit new clothing—even if they will be worn only after the Nine Days.
- Exceptions to this rule: (a) If you will miss a major sale, or if the garment will be unavailable later. (b) For the purpose of a mitzvah, such as purchasing new clothing for a bride and groom.
- Cut nails during the actual week of the fast of Tisha B'Av —i.e., starting from the Saturday night before the fast until the conclusion of the Nine Days.

The Sephardic custom is to observe the stringencies regarding bathing only in the week of Tisha B'Av.

Some more observances:

The Sanctification of the Moon is postponed until after Tisha B'Av.

There is no law forbidding traveling during the Nine Days; however, it is customary to refrain from traveling (or engaging in any potentially perilous activity) during these days, unless it is absolutely necessary.

One may become engaged to be married during this period, but no celebration should be held until after Tisha B'Av.

Note: All these restrictions are in addition to the restrictions that apply during all of the Three Weeks.

Shabbat Chazon

The Shabbat preceding the Ninth of Av is called Shabbat Chazon—“Shabbat of the Vision.” This Shabbat's reading from the Prophets begins with the words Chazon Yeshayahu, the “vision of Isaiah” regarding the destruction of the Holy Temple. The legendary chassidic master Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev said that on this special Shabbat, every Jewish soul is shown a vision of the third Holy Temple. The purpose of this vision is to arouse within every Jew a yearning to actually see this edifice which will be built by G-d, and to do as many mitzvot as possible in order to realize this dream. While this vision may not be sensed with the physical eyes, the soul certainly experiences this vision, and it affects the person on the subconscious level.

There is no mourning on Shabbat. If possible, this week's *havdalah* wine or grape juice should be given to a child—younger than bar/bat mitzvah age—to drink. ❖

Tisha B'Av

As part of our mourning for the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Israel, we abstain from many pleasurable activities on the night and day of Av 9—starting with sundown on the eve of the day before, and concluding with the following nightfall.

Specifically, **we don't:**

- Eat or drink. All adults – even pregnant and nursing women – fast on this day. One who is ill, or a pregnant woman who feels excessive weakness, should consult with a rabbi. An ill person who is not fasting should refrain from eating delicacies and should eat only that which is absolutely necessary for his physical wellbeing.
- Wear leather footwear, or footwear that contains any leather (even if it is only a leather sole).
- Sit on a normal-height chair until midday. ("Halachic" midday is the halfway point between sunrise and sunset;
- Bathe or wash oneself— "even to insert a finger in cold water."
- Exceptions:
 - One who becomes soiled may rinse the affected area with cold water.
 - It is permitted to wash up after using the restroom.
 - When preparing food – for children, or for the post-fast meal – one may wash the food, even if it also, incidentally, washes the hands.
 - When ritually washing the hands in the morning, the water should be poured on the fingers only until the knuckle joints.
- Apply ointment, lotions or creams.
- It is permissible, however, to bathe a baby and apply ointments to his skin.
- Engage in marital relations or any form of intimacy.
- Send gifts, or even greet another with the customary "hello" or "how are you doing?"
- Engage in outings, trips or similar pleasurable activities.
- Wear fine festive clothing.
- Study Torah, because "the commandments of G-d are upright, causing the heart to rejoice" (Psalms 19:9). It is, however, permitted – and encouraged – to study sections of the Torah which discuss the laws of mourning, the destruction of the Temples, and the tragedies which befell the Jewish people throughout our history. This prohibition actually begins at midday of the day before Tisha b'Av.

"One who mourns Jerusalem will merit to see her happiness, as the verse (Isaiah 66:10) promises: 'Rejoice with her greatly, all who mourn for her'" —Talmud Taanit 30b.

Havdalah is recited on Sunday night. In the evening prayers, the usual Shabbat night insertion, "Atah Chonantanu," is included. The prayer "Vihi Noam" is omitted. Those who have not recited the evening prayers should say, before doing any activity that is forbidden on Shabbat, "Baruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol" ("Blessed is He who separates between the holy [day of Shabbat] and the mundane [weekday]").

Sometime on Saturday night (ideally right before the reading of Eicha), kindle the havdalah candle and recite the appropriate blessing. (We do not recite the blessing of the spices.)

Immediately after the "Barchu" passage is recited in the Saturday night prayer service, remove your leather shoes and don non-leather footwear.

Recite the havdalah on Sunday night before eating -- omitting the blessings on the spices and candle. When 9 Av is on Sunday, if possible, the havdalah wine or grape juice should be given to a child— younger than bar/bat mitzvah age—to drink. ❖

From Our Sages – Devorim

Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this Torah (1:5)

He translated it for them into seventy languages.

(Rashi)

G-d spoke to us in Horeb, saying: “You have long enough stayed at this mountain. Turn away, and take your journey . . .” (Deuteronomy 1:6–7)

The mountain we’re talking about is Mount Sinai, scene of the most monumental event in human history: G-d’s revelation of His wisdom and will to man. Still, G-d says: “You’ve been hanging around this mountain long enough. Move on!”

In our lives we also have moments, days or years of revelation, times when we learn and grow and are enriched. But the purpose must always be to move on, move away, and carry the enlightenment and enrichment to someplace else—some corner of creation that awaits redemption.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

G-d said to me: “Fear him not . . .” (Deuteronomy 3:2)

In the case of Sichon, it was not necessary for G-d to reassure Moses in this way. Why did Moses have more cause to fear Og than Sichon? Because he was afraid lest there stand by Og the merit that he served Abraham, as it is written (Genesis 14:13), “The refugee came and informed Abraham [of the capture of Lot]”—and this was Og.

(Rashi) ❖



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Haftorah for "Third Shabbos of the Three Weeks" in a nutshell

Isaiah 1:1-27

This week's haftorah is the third of a series of three "haftarot of affliction." These three haftarot are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

Isaiah relays to the Jews a G-dly vision he experienced, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against G-d, criticizing them for repeating their errors and not abandoning their sinful ways — even after having been reprimanded and punished. "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." Harsh words are employed, comparing the Jewish leaders to the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah. G-d states his distaste for their sacrifices and offerings which were flavored with pagan customs. "How has she become a harlot, a faithful city; it was once full of justice, in which righteousness would lodge, but now it is a city of murderers..."

Isaiah then speaks gentler words, encouraging the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of justice and kindness 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 a promise that G-d will eventually reestablish Israel's judges and leaders, when "Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitents through righteousness."

Note: 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." According to chassidic tradition, on this Shabbat the soul of every Jew is treated to a "vision" of the third Holy Temple that will be rebuilt with the coming of Moshiach. ❖



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שבת שלום גוט שבת!



Good Shabbos to all!