



7 years of Points to Ponder on

Parshas Devarim

**Sefer Devarim** – Sefer Devarim contains Moshe’s admonishments to Bnei Yisrael. Often, these include many words of Tochacha. The one who keeps Taryag Mitzvos will be zocheh to turn the Klalos into Beracha. **Rav Michoel Dov Weissmandl ztl**. noted that if one begins with the first letter Beis in Devarim and counts 613 letters, one gets to a Reish, 613 letters later is a chaf anf 613 more is a heh. If one works on the 613, it will bring beracha.

**אֵ֣לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֗ים These are the words (1:1) - Mrs. Sivan Rahav Meir T’Ch** notes that the same man we are introduced to, with the claim that “I am not a man of words” wrote a whole book dedicated to a 3 month speech at the end of his life? She explains that Moshe was a man who by nature a quiet individual. However, once endowed with a life of meaning and purpose, Moshe had a mission to complete and changed his very nature for the will of Hashem. What an incredible inspiration for someone who begins life thinking or being told that s/he cannot. With the proper mission from Hashem, “Yes we can!”

**אֵ֣לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֗ים** **These are the words that Moshe spoke (1:1) – Rashi and Ramban** disagree if the words were those of rebuke (Mussar—see Rashi) or the Mitzvos of Sefer Devarim (Ramban). But why now and here? **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** suggests that there is a time and a place wherein it has become apparent to the teacher that he has implanted both the foundation of ethics in his students and the Torah he wants them to learn. At the same time, the ethics also have to be Torah based. Moshe offered them the words now – because he felt he could do both and not have to worry that they would go astray on him.

**אֵ֣לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֗ים These are the words (1:1)** – Moshe opens the book of Devarim with some harsh Mussar for the Jewish people who had committed many different sins during their 40 years. He veils the episodes so as not to embarrass them. Why wait 40 years for the rebuke? Why not offer it sooner? **Rashi** notes that Yaakov Aveinu also waited until the end of his life to offer the rebuke. Why? **Rav Noach Weinberg ztl.** explained that when it comes to giving rebuke, leaders must pick their battles. Rebuking the nation EVERY time they commit a transgression will lead his words becoming a broken record not worthy of being heard. A good leader knows when to say something and know that the word will have impact. The same is true for parents who are leading their children. The parent who is always critical will eventually simply be ignored. Criticism needs to be a tool that is used together with other tools in a coordinated manner that will effectively encourage our children, not drive them away.

**אֵ֣לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֗ים These are the words that Moshe spoke (1:1) – Rashi** explains that Moshe accounted for the rebuke he wanted to give to the people by identifying the places that they angered Hashem in hints out of respect he had for the people. The Midrash explains that the people would’ve passed out in embarrassment had he spoken to them directly. **Rav Shalom Schwadron** **ztl**. noted that the hints didn’t take the people away from the central message that was being presented. Our times too, contain many opportunities for rebuke but the ideal rebuke is one that recognizes that there is a purpose and a hope in the eyes of the rebuked for the future.

 **אֵ֣לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֗ים** **These are the words that Moshe spoke to the entire people of Israel (1:1) – Rashi** comments that Moshe spoke to everyone at once so no one would later claim that had they been there they would have said otherwise. **Rav Yitzchak Dov Koppelman ztl.** of Lucerne asked what bringing them together helped. After all, by bringing them together he ran a risk of being answered directly? He explained that when the report would have come out, the people would have provided an answer. However, now that they heard it live, directly from Moshe, they were emotionally moved. When they heard it directly they knew they would have no answer for him.

**בַּמִּדְבָּ֡ר  In the Midbar, in the Arava… (1:1)** – While **Rashi** and many of the other commentaries note that the places mentioned are really just hints to different episodes that the people encountered through the ages, **Rashbam** insists that these are directions to understand Moshe’s location. **Rav Hirsch ztl.** explains that when one refers to a Torah lesson, the precision of location helps the listener remember the message too. **Rav Amital ztl.** added that the Torah also needs to be applied to the precise circumstances in which one finds oneself. The Torah needs to be translated into the language of the particular culture where one is. It is for this reason that the Torah cites the exact time and place. Where exactly did Moshe deliver his message? "In the desert, in the Arava, opposite Suf, between Paran and Tofel, Lavan and Chatzeirot and Di-zahav." When did he give this message? "In the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month." The application needs to be precise, to fit the audience one addresses as well as possible.

**הוֹאִ֣יל משֶׁ֔ה Moshe began to explain this Torah (1:5) - Rashi** explains that the word Hoeil means he began just as it meant with Avraham’s pleading on behalf of Sodom. However, in that case, Avraham had already begun his negotiations. How does Hoeil mean began there? **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl** explained that to begin means to begin anew. The same is true here. Moshe had tried again, beginning anew to translate the Torah into 70 languages so that Torah can be observed anywhere in the world.

**בֵּאֵ֛ר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את**  **Moshe explained the Torah as follows (1:5) – Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that this is a reference to Moshe’s handing over of the Torah here refers to the Torah She’Baal Peh. However, in the end, the original conquering of the land was with the power of Torah Sh’B Ksav which has the ability to be destroyed like the klaf of the Sefer Torah itself. Ultimately in the times of Esther and Achashveirosh the Jews will unite under Torah She’Baal Peh, a gift that will be with them forever more.

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**בֵּאֵ֛ר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָ֥ה הַזֹּ֖את  He explained this Torah (1:5) – Rashi** explains that he translated the Torah into 70 languages. Why would Moshe translate the Torah into 70 languages if the people didn’t speak those languages? **Rav Amital ztl.** explained that the 70 languages refers to 70 different cultures. The Torah has something to say about all 70 cultures. Similarly, the Torah specifies the timing of these words. This is because, the Torah wishes to teach us that Moshe's words were not disconnected from either the place or the time when they were spoken. The Torah has a message for each generation, and that the Torah must be applied to each generation. Here what is being emphasized is that Moshe adapted his words to the specific time and place where they were spoken.

**נְהַר־פְּרָֽת Turn and travel for yourselves…until the great river, the River Paras (1:7) – Rashi** explains that the reason the river is called great is that it is connected to the land of Israel. Despite being the smallest of the rivers mentioned in Berashis, it is called Gadol here because it is mentioned in connection to Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl.** noted that those who have the merit to live in the land of Israel certainly can understand its importance. The importance is not limited to Yirushalayim and Bnei Brak but rather to the entire land. It is for that reason that the nations of the world fire rockets and burning kites over Israel – they want to take down the land with Kedusha and that is what they fight over and for.

**רְאֵ֛ה נָתַ֥תִּי לִפְנֵיכֶ֖ם אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ בֹּ֚אוּ** **See (singular) I gave you the land go together and inherit (plural) the land (1:8)** – Why does the Possuk begin with a singular “see” and end with the plural (go & inherit**)? Rav Gifter ztl**  explained that when it comes to inheriting the land it requires a group but when it begins – it begins as an idea on the mind of each and every individual because Hisbonenus is a Mitzva on every individual by himself.

**רְאֵ֛ה נָתַ֥תִּי לִפְנֵיכֶ֖ם אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ בֹּ֚אוּ** **Behold I have given you the land, go and inherit the land (1:8) – Rav Menashe Klein, Ungvarer Rav ztl.** notes that the possuk contains an inherent contradiction – if the land was given, how does it need to be acquired via inheritance? That’s why he notes that originally people thought the same significance given to Eretz Yisrael would be accorded to eiver HaYarden. Not so, declares Hashem – one is the land promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and the other is a gift of lower status.

**הִרְבָּ֣ה אֶתְכֶ֑ם וְהִנְּכֶ֣ם הַיּ֔וֹם כְּכֽוֹכְבֵ֥י הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם לָרֹֽב:** **Hashem your God made you as prosperous and made you as large as the stars in the heavens (1:10) –** We find two different descriptions of the multiplicity of Bnei Yisrael . They are compared to the stars and to the sand. On the one hand while stars are respected in the heavens, the sand is tread upon in the streets. But, adds **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita,** while the stars are in heaven, they are far apart. The sand stays very close together. In fact, that is where it gets its strength. The dual Beracha is to reach the great heights but to do so by being close together at the same time.

**יֹסֵ֧ף עֲלֵיכֶ֛ם כָּכֶ֖ם אֶ֣לֶף פְּעָמִ֑ים He should add onto you a thousand-fold and should give you the Beracha as he promised (1:11) – Rashi** comments that the people challenged Moshe complaining that Hashem already gave them a beracha to the infinite degree and he was now lowering it. Moshe answered that he was giving his own Beracha but that Hashem’s should also be fulfilled. Why did Moshe need to make his own Beracha? What was he adding? **Rav Zaidel Epstein ztl.** explains that Hashem’s beracha can only work if there was Shalom. Moshe was already overwhelmed and knew that there was a lot of squabbling in the camp and with him. Hence he knew there was no Shalom – and thus, no Beracha. BY offering his own Beracha, Moshe hoped to calm the tensions and thus allow the Beracha of Hashem to be successful.

**אֵיכָ֥ה אֶשָּׂ֖א לְבַדִּ֑י** **How can I myself alone bear your care and your burden and your strife (1:12) – Rashi** explains that Moshe cried out from the tri-part difficulties of leadership – the fact that his every move was constantly under scrutiny, that his litigants could not let go and that everyone seemed to accuse him of scheming with the other side**. Rav Yaakov Neuberger Shlita** once asked why Moshe would invite others to join him in this misery? Why would that solve his problem? He answered using an old teaching of **Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook ztl**. who noted that when you are righteous and come up against wickedness, add more righteousness in order to counteract it. Rav Neuberger added that perhaps this was Moshe’s intent – not to challenge evil by criticizing it but rather by increasing the amount of righteousness that would hopefully turn it around.

**אֵיכָ֥ה אֶשָּׂ֖א לְבַדִּ֑י** **How will I be able to carry on my own (1:12)-** Although the word משאis normally translated as “burden,” in this case **the Ramban** writes that it is a language of prayer that Moshe was expressing his inability to be solely responsible to pray for the entire nation and all of its needs. Why is Tefillah described as a burden, especially when there are many other mitzvos that are more difficult and physically taxing than prayer? **Rav Simcha Zisel Broide ztl**. explains that when we pray for another Jew who is suffering and in pain, it isn’t sufficient to merely petition Hashem on his behalf. We are expected to actually feel his hurt, and to call out to Hashem to alleviate not only his agony, but ours as well. Accordingly, Moshe complained that when he prayed on behalf of the nation, he felt their collective pain, and he described it as a משא – heavy burden to be carried.

**אֵיכָ֥ה אֶשָּׂ֖א לְבַדִּ֑י** **Eicha – how can I alone carry the load of your arguments, appoint judges (1:12-13)** – Why is the section of appointing judges in the opening of the book of Devarim? What is to be gained **? Sforno** explains that despite being promised a major land with riches whose abundance far overshadowed the wealth of the desert, the people still fought with one another to the point that there needed to be a judge for every 10 people**. Rav Sabato Shlita** notes the irony in the use of Eicha here as the word Badad which Yirmiyahu associates with Eicha is exactly the ideal that Moshe sought. Had the people not argued, then Moshe would have been able to judge them by himself. That they needed more Dayanim indicated a more systemic problem --- which would lead to Yirushalayim becoming Badad.

**הָב֣וּ לָ֠כֶ֠ם אֲנָשִׁ֨ים Appoint for yourself Anashim (1:13) - Rashi** notes that there was not even a doubt that the judges appointed were not supposed to be female. Thus, the term Anashim must refer to Tzaddikim**. Rav Schachter Shlita** once questioned why it was obvious to the Chachamim of the Sifre cited by Rashi that women could not be the intended judges here? After all, **Tosafos** (Bava Kama 15a) entertains the possibility of giving Semicha to women. Why would they not be able to serve as judges and rabbis? **Rav Schachter Shlita** answered that  although we must sometimes compromise on our *midas hatznius* and do certain *mitzvos befarhesia* (in public), this is not required of women. Women are not being discriminated against. They alone, unlike men, are given the opportunity to maintain their *midas hahistatrus* at all times. Rav Schachter added that our generation is so much into publicity that this *midas hahistatrus* is totally unappreciated. We live in a generation in which there is no sense of shame. People will do the most intimate and the most private acts in a most explicit and most demonstrative fashion. Their arrogant attitude has led them to believe that if they were G-d they would always be bragging, boasting, and showing off, always "making a statement". They don't have the slightest notion that G-d exists, is a "*Kel Mistater*", and has created all of us with a *tzelem Elokim*, which also includes this *midas hatznius*.

**הָב֣וּ לָ֠כֶ֠ם אֲנָשִׁ֨ים Choose for yourselves Anashim (1:13) – Tosafos (Bava Kama 15a**) notes a difference of opinion as to whether a woman can be a judge or not. Tosafos wonders how a woman can possibly judge if we hold that one who cannot testify cannot judge and women cannot testify? Tosafos answers that the issue of those who cannot testify cannot judge is a rule that applies to men. **Rav Schachter Shlita** mentioned that **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** would explain this idea by noting that it is the Pesul that makes a difference. One who is Pasul from testifying is also pasul from judging. Women aren’t Pasul from testifying – they are not included in the realm of testimony or judgement (This is apparent here in the Possuk where Moshe selected judges who were Anashim – see Rashi that it was OBVIOUS that women were not to judge and therefore an additional lesson can be learned from the word ”Anashim” in the possuk. Many have argued that the **Sefer HaChinuch** allows women to judge because we find that the Mitzva of not judging while inebriated applies equally to men and women. Rav Schachter cited Pischei Teshuvah (CM 7:5) who notes an apparent contradiction in his words and resolves them by explaining that as far as Issu V’Heter questions are concerned a woman who knows the answers should provide them but in regard to judgement, she cannot join a Beis Din and therefore rules of Beis Din (like taking bribes) are not relevant to her.

**וָֽאֶקַּ֞ח אֶת־רָאשֵׁ֣י שִׁבְטֵיכֶ֗ם**  **And I took the leaders of your tribes (1:15) - Rashi** notes that Moshe encouraged them with praise about how great it was to be a leader of the Jewish people. But how could he who complained so bitterly about the job praise it to others? **Rav Yakov Neuberger Shlita quoted Rav Kook ztl.** who explained that the way to handle irreverence is to challenge it with increased righteousness. Moshe hoped that by increasing the ranks he would be able to encourage the people to join him and the Tzidkus would outweigh the Rishus.

 **שָמֹ֤עַ בֵּֽין־אֲחֵיכֶם֙ וּשְׁפַטְתֶּ֣ם צֶ֔דֶק** **And judge righteously between man and his brother (1:16) – Rav Pam ztl.** reminded his students about how difficult it is for a person to remain impartial when money is on the table. He told a story of the author of the **Sma** who once was involved in a Din Torah when the verdict went against his way. Upset at having lost he asked for an explanation of the argument of the court. They cited as proof – the Sma’s own commentary to Choshen Mishpat!

**כַּקָּטֹ֤ן כַּגָּדֹל֙ תִּשְׁמָע֔וּן Like small like large you shall judge (1:17)** – The Gemara (Sanhedrin 8a) explains that small cases (of small disputed amounts) are treated the same way as larger ones. The Gemara explains that this teaches us that a judge should not push up the larger case. Why is this not obvious? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that there are rules and regulations for Mitzva fulfillment. The gemara spells these out in a number of places. Lest a Dayan think that a bigger case is a bigger Mitzva, the Gemara explains that this is not so. For this process of “Din” we have a rule within called Ein Maavirin Al HaMitzvos. Rav Schachter added that Rav Kook ztl. would often reshuffle his waiting room based on the Talmidei Chachamim waiting in it to speak to him but this is not allowed when it comes to Din Torah.

**תִּקְרְב֣וּן אֵלַי֘ כֻּלְּכֶם֒** **And you came close all together (1:22) – Rashi** explains that they came with a mob mentality. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** explains that the disarray is as much an indictment of the people as it is of the way they approached the issue at hand. It wasn’t just the fact that there was no orderliness, it was also the fact that the people acted in a manner that displayed what he calls a lack of Torahdik-ness. In other words, the fact that people act in a pushy, me first, loss of focus for order leads to not just a lack of focus but God-forbid a focus on the self at the expense of the centrally inspired heavenly goal of Hashem. The mob mentality of then – and now – is antithetical to Torah values and a recipe for success as a nation.

**וַתֵּרָֽגְנ֤וּ בְאָֽהֳלֵיכֶם֙** **And you complained in your tents (1:27)** – What do the tents have to do with it**? Rav Dovid Feinstein Shlita** noted that the tents is a reference to the Jewish mothers who pass down the fundamentals of the faith. In the same way that they pass that down, they would unfortunately need to pass down a new tradition – that of Atem Becheesem Bechiya Shel Chinam – you cried an unnecessary cry, so I will give you something to cry about in the future.

 **בְּשִׂנְאַ֤ת** **Because Hashem hates us he took us out of Mitzrayim (1:27)** – Why did think that Hashem hates them? **Rav Nosson Zvi Wachtfogel ztl.** suggests that they thought that they wouldn’t merit having Hashem remove their enemies – the Yoshvei HaAretz – from their midst due to their Aveiros. However, they didn’t believe that Hashem would keep his promise. This is why Kalev told them Al Timrodu – for one who assumes that Hashem doesn’t keep his word and thus does not believe him, is rebelling against Hashem.

**אַחֵ֩ינוּ֩ הֵמַ֨סּוּ אֶת־לְבָבֵ֜נוּ לֵאמֹ֗ר** **Behold we are going up, our brethren weakened our hearts saying the nation is greater than we…and we even saw giants (1:28) – Rav Eliyahu Shlessinger Shlita** notes that this argument is the one that ultimately leads to the Churban. Quoting **Rav Elyashiv ztl.,** Rav Schlessinger explains that the Talmud’s castigation of the fact that the destruction happened because the people didn’t make Birchos HaTorah is out of sync with the eyewitness accounts of Yeshaya and Yirmiyahu who seem to note so much more that was wrong with the people. True, says Rav Elyashiv, but the reliance on foreign treaties and false Gods came about because the Jews did not believe in themselves at the time of the sending of the Miraglim. Our salvation comes because we believe in the Torah and our unique status because we live it and learn it and make it Techilah in our lives.

**עָרִ֛ים גְּדֹלֹ֥ת וּבְצוּרֹ֖ת בַּשָּׁמָ֑יִם Great and huge cities that reached the heavens (1:28) – Rashi** reminds us that these words were understood as exaggerations. How could the Torah use language that was not Emes (truth)? **The Steipler ztl.** (Orchos Yosher) suggests that when the exaggeration is used poetically, leaving no concern that the words are not meant to be taken literally, then exaggeration is not in the category of Sheker. However, if one’s words are left open to interpretation, and can be used to deceive, then they may not be used at all.

**בִּגְלַלְכֶ֖ם** **Hashem also got angry at me because of you (1:37)** – Why does Moshe think that the reason he did not go into Eretz Yisrael was because of the Miraglim – wasn’t it because of Mei Merivah? **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl.** notes that at multiple points in the Midbar when the Jews complained, they always asked why he took them out of Egypt – including at the time of the Miraglim. At that time it led to 40 years of wandering – and continued complaining. It is no surprise that at the end another round of complaining brought on by 40 years of blame led him to snap. The Cheit HaMiraglim caused it.

**בִּגְלַלְכֶ֖ם Hashem got angry at me too because of you (1:37)** - Isn’t Moshe fudging the truth a bit here? Wasn’t he personally responsible for not going into the land because of Mei Meriva**? Rav Chaim Kanievsky Shlita** explains that Moshe was being quite exact here. He didn’t say that he was not responsible for his own sin. Rather, although he had sinned, he had also atoned and offered numerous Tefillos on his own behalf. Hashem would have accepted those Tefillos and let him enter the land but for the fact that he did not want Moshe to be in the land in order to inspire the rest of us who also were not to be let into the land. This is the literal meaning of Moshe’s point to the people that Hashem got angry with them saying Moshe will also not go into the land.

**בִּגְלַלְכֶ֖ם Hashem also got angry at me on your behalf saying I too shall not go there (1:37**) – Isn’t that a bit not true? Didn’t Moshe lose his right to enter the land because of the sin at Mei Mirivah? **Rav Shmuel Alter (Likutei Basar Likutei)** opines that perhaps the message is one of hope for the generation that died in the midbar. In the same way that Hashem would not forget Moshe who was not allowed into the land, he would not forget the other members of the generation too – like the Shifcha whose bucket breaks off into the well whose mistress loses her pitcher there too. The Shifcha can take solace that in the same way that her mistress won’t be forgotten, her bucktet too, will be ultimately returned.

**בִּגְלַלְכֶ֖ם  Hashem got angry at me too because of you (1:37)** - Was Moshe correct? Was he punished because of the Miraglim? Isn’t that an incorrect attribution of blame? **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl** says that the word “B’Glal” does not mean “Because” but rather “for”. (Think Avraham and the fact that he would be allowed to live “for” not “Because of” Sarah.) Rav Alpert explains that Rambam notes that Moshe was replaced by Yehoshua as Moshe was demanding more than that which the people could handle. Hashem made the change in leadership for the benefit of the Jewish people.

**וַתָּשֻׁ֥בוּ וַתִּבְכּ֖וּ  And you all sat and cried in front of Hashem and Hashem did not hear your voices (1:45) –** The Midrash (Eichah 3:8) notes that at the time of the Churban our prayers were not accepted by Hashem. **Rav Menachem Genack** **Shlita** explained in the name of Rav Soloveitchik that this is why on Tisha B’Av we do not say Tiskabel or recite Tachanun on Tisha B’Av. On this day, Tefillos and Tahcanunim are not usually likely to be accepted.

**פְּנ֥וּ לָכֶ֖ם צָפֹֽנָה** **Enough going around this mountain, turn northward (2:3) - Rav Efraim Greenblatt ztl**  notes that we all too often look left or right for Yeshua- salvation. The ultimate salvation comes from stopping to walk in circles. Rather, we must turn northward and look into our Torah – and our relationship with Hashem in order to experience real salvation.

**פְּנ֥וּ לָכֶ֖ם צָפֹֽנָה Turn yourselves Northward (2:3)** - What does turning northward have to do with survival? **Rav Dovid Gross shlita** noted that the word for north (Tzafon) is also the word for hidden (Tzafun) and, citing the Midrash here, offered a different perspective. He noted that when times are good, it is not a time for Jews to be ostentatious and demonstrative. Rather, we have a responsibility to take our success and live with modesty and not flaunt it in front of Eisav who is jealous of material success. **Kli Yakar** notes that we have never taken this advice to heart in our history and have suffered greatly throughout the millenia as a result.  Our job is to take our success and plant it in reinvestment in our communities and Torah institutions.

**אַתֶּ֣ם עֹֽבְרִ֗ים בִּגְבוּל֙ אֲחֵיכֶ֣ם בְּנֵֽי־עֵשָׂ֔ו הַיֹּֽשְׁבִ֖ים בְּשֵׂעִ֑יר**  **And tell the nation that you are passing the border of the land of your brother Eisav (2:4) – The Ramban** wonders why brotherhood is mentioned specifically by Eisav and not by Yishmael or the children of Keturah? The **Brisker Rav ztl.** explained that biologically Eisav was a complete Ach – he shared both parents. It was in the choice to act with brotherhood that this familial relation was strained but it certainly existed. Thus, it is stressed.

**וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם מְאֹֽד And you shall be on guard (2:4)** - On guard for what? **Rashi** explains that you need to be on guard when they are afraid of you and certainly when they are successful and not afraid. **Rav Bernard Weinberger ztl.** explained that in these cases we are told to turn Tzafona -- or northward. But perhaps we are told to turn inward (Tafon from Tzafun). In other words, even when we are successful we need not be demonstrative and ostentatious for whether superior in Ruchniyos or Gashmiyus it is not a good idea to be demonstrative of it -- be careful here the Torah warns,

**אַל־תָּ֨צַר֙ אֶת־מוֹאָ֔ב וְאַל־תִּתְגָּ֥ר בָּ֖ם מִלְחָמָ֑ה Do not distress Moav nor start a war with them (2:9)** – The Gemara (Bava Kama 38a) notes that we are not allowed to start up with Moav despite the fact that they directly attacked us because Hashem had 2 beautiful birds (Rus and Naama) destined to come from Ammon and Moav. The Mishneh l’Melech quotes the Chochmei Ashkenaz who asked why the future generations are able to be taken into consideration here if they are deserving of death? **Rav Shteinman ztl.** answered that while we cannot use the logic of Kal V’Chomer in the death of an individual (Ein Onshin min HaDin) we could have used the logic to punish the entire nation. Therefore Hashem had to specifically tell us that this was not ok and that He did not want us to start up with Moav.

**וַיְדַבֵּ֥ר ה' אֵלַ֥י לֵאמֹֽר Hashem spoke to me (2:17) - Rashi** notes that during the middle 38 years that Bnei Yisrael were in the desert, Hashem did not speak to Moshe face to face to teach us that the Shechina speaks to a leader as a merit of the masses. **Rav Moshe Schwab ztl.** explained that sometimes we wonder why we bother getting involved in community issues. Wouldn’t our lives be more spiritual and useful if we WERE NOT involved in the community? However if Moshe Rabbeinu himself derived his spiritual sense from his communal involvement than certainly we too, need to think of our role in the community first.

**רְאֵ֣ה נָתַ֣תִּי בְ֠יָֽדְךָ֠ אֶת־סִיחֹ֨ן מֶֽלֶךְ־חֶשְׁבּ֧וֹן** **Behold I have given you Sichon (2:24)** – Moshe was told to battle Sichon and he sends a letter with overtures of peace?! The author of **the Kerem Chemed** says absolutely. The point is clear – everyone has his own breaking point. For Sichon it was an overture of peace. Moshe knew that if Sichon would be asked to consider peace he would fight and thus, Hashem’s promise would quickly be fulfilled.

**כִּ֣י בְיָֽדְךָ֞ נָתַ֧תִּי אֹת֛וֹ וְאֶת־כָּל־עַמּ֖וֹ וְאֶת־אַרְצ֑וֹ** **Hashem told me do not fear him because I have given him to your hand (3:2)** – Why was there more of a fear about Og in Moshe’s mind than Sichon**? Rashi** explains that it was because of the good things he did in the past in going to Avraham to tell him Lot was taken captive. But, Og’s intention was to have Avrham die and he marry Sarah? Why fear that? **Rav Aharon Leib Steiman Shlita** explained that in Shomayim there is a Cheshbon for things that are done even if not done with the purest intention. If that is true, then it is certainly true that there is additional reward for when Mitzvos ARE done for the best reasons.

**בָּעֵ֣ת הַהִ֑וא At that time (3:12**) - There are a number of instances where the timeline does not fit Moshe’s memory here (See also 3:21;3:14). How are we to explain the strange timing? **Rav Schwab ztl.** Explained that  Moshe knew he was not speaking at that moment but rather was speaking in a way that would be understood for many generations afterward. Thus, he focused differently and set a tone for all future generations.

**Shabbos Chazon:**

**יָדַ֥ע שׁוֹר֙ קֹנֵ֔הוּ An ox knows it owner and a donkey, the bridle of its owner but the Jewish nation did not** **know me and my nation did not contemplate (Yeshayahu 1:3)** – What kind of Kal VaChomer is this? After all, animals instinctually know their owners – what is the comparison to the human? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** explains that this is precisely the problem. Even if we have lost our way, we should still be able to turn to the instinctually know of He who runs the entire world or the Torah which feeds and sustains it. The inability to see and know Hashem is our problem and makes us lower not merely different than the animals.

**וְנֽוֹתְרָ֥ה בַת־צִיּ֖וֹן כְּסֻכָּ֣ה בְכָ֑רֶם  And the daughter of Tzion was left as a hut in a vineyard…as a besieged city (Yeshayahu 1:8) – Rav Hirsch** notes that in general, the word Mikdash comes from the concept not as a place where Kedusha is regulated but rather, a place where the Shechina flows outward. However, adds **Rav Schwab ztl**. in the time leading to the Churban, the people feared the mikdash and its officers. They did not want it interfering with their lives. As a result, they made the mikdash a besieged city.

**Haftara: מִי־בִקֵּ֥שׁ זֹ֛את מִיֶּדְכֶ֖ם רְמֹ֥ס חֲצֵרָֽי When you come to see me who asked you (Yeshayahu 1:12) - Rashi** comments that Hashem doesn’t need the visit of someone whose heart is not Shalem with Him. **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that the Beis Hamikdash was a special place not only for bringing Korbanos but also for Tefillah. Hashem desires the Tefillah of Tzaddikim and in the Beis Hamikdash, one is able to be sincere with Him there (Nevuash which also emanates from the Mikdash is the other side of the coin insofar as that is how Hashem communicates with us.) Our problem is that we did not and do not take Tefillah seriously and hence, Hashem asks us why bother coming to him with that which is insincere?

ל**ֹ֣א תוֹסִ֗יפוּ הָבִיא֙ מִנְחַת־שָׁ֔וְא  You shall not be able to continue to bring a false Mincha (Yeshayahyu 1:13) – The Meshech Chochma** comments that the stress on a korban mincha comes from the fact that it cannot be brought as a korban in partnership. It is either brought by an individual or on behalf of the whole Tzibbur. Since the single unity of the people didn’t exist, the bringing of the Korban was Shav – it was under false pretenses of a legitimate Tzibbur while it was merely a korban HaShutfin.

**צִיּ֖וֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּ֣ט תִּפָּדֶ֑ה Tzion shall be redeemed with Mishpat and her returnees with charity – Why the change? (Yeshayahu 1:27*)* Rav Moti Greenberg Shlita quoted Rav Chaim of Volozhin** who explained that when a lender exempts a guaranteed loan, it is the borrower who is exempt out of the lender’s kindness while the guarantor is exempt based on the sheer letter of the law. The same is true for the mikdash which is Israel’s guarantor – it will be redeemed with justice while the Shavim will be bestowed with Hashem’s kindness.

**וְשָׁבֶ֖יהָ בִּצְדָקָֽה And its returnees through Tzedaka (Yeshayahu 1:27)** - The Talmud notes that Tzedaka can bring the Geulah. Why is the Mitzva of Tzedaka uniquely that which is attached to the Geulah**? Rav Zilberstein Shlita** cited the **Beis HaLevi** who notes that when it comes to most Mitzvos, it is almost impossible to fulfill them completely. We are missing the Techeiles string of the Tzitzis, we lack the Korbanos to fully observe Shabbos and Yom Tov etc. The One Mitzva we can fulfill fully is that of Tzedaka. There is no Shiur or time frame to the Mitzva and there is no minimum or maximum to its fulfillment. This is Hashem’s Chessed that will allow us to have a means of bringing the Geulah.