

Points to Ponder
Devarim 5775

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 Michael 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 and 613 more is a heh. If one works on the 613, it will bring beracha.

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.

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.

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.

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 Yashvei 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.

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.

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 Avraham 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.

Haftorah: Tzion shall be redeemed with Mishpat and her returnees with charity – Why the change?

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.