**Class #32- Parshat Devarim – Dr. Martin Luther King’s last night**

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel *Z”l*

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*Martin Luther King's Last Speech: I've Been to the Mountaintop*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgVrlx68v-0>

1. What term best captures the “Been to the mountaintop” Speech: Sermon, Inspirational speech, harsh rebuke?
2. What are the top three critiques that MLK makes about the USA?
3. Why as white people do we not feel that MLK’s rebuke is too harsh?
4. What three strategies does MLK use to make the rebuke not too harsh?

***Introduction of Devarim***

1:1 These are the words that Moses spoke [to all Israel](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3707) on the [east bank](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3708) of the Jordan, [in](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3709) [the desert](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3710) [and] in the [Aravah](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3711), near [Suf](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3712), in the [vicinity of](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3713) [Paran](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3714), [Tofel](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3715), [Lavan](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3716), [Chatzeroth](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3717) and [Di Zahav](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3718). 1:2 [[This is in the area](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3719)] which is an [eleven day journey](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3720) from [Horeb](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3721) to [Kadesh Barnea](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3722) by way of the Seir highlands. 1:3 On the [first of the eleventh month](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3723) in the fortieth year, Moses [[also](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3724)] spoke to the Israelites regarding all that God had commanded him for them. 1:4 This was after he had defeated [Sichon king of the Amorites who lived in Cheshbon](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3725), and [Og, king of the Bashan](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3726), who lived in Ashtaroth, [[who was defeated in](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3727)] [Edre'i](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3728). 1:5 Moses [began](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3729) to explain this law on the east bank of the Jordan, in the [land of Moab](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=5&CHAPTER=1#C3730), saying:

Rashi:

**These are the words:** Since these are words of rebuke and he [Moses] enumerates here all the places where they angered the Omnipresent, therefore it makes no explicit mention of the incidents [in which they transgressed], but rather merely alludes to them, [by mentioning the names of the places] out of respect for Israel (cf. Sifrei).

**to all Israel:** If he had rebuked only some of them, those who were in the marketplace [i.e., absent] might have said, “You heard from [Moses] the son of Amram, and did not answer a single word regarding this and that; had we been there, we would have answered him!” Therefore, he assembled all of them, and said to them, “See, you are all here; if anyone has an answer, let him answer!” - [from Sifrei]

**Rashi - And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first of the month** [… Moses spoke]: This teaches us that he rebuked them only a short while before his death. From whom did he learn [to do] this? From Jacob, who rebuked his sons only a short while before his death. He said, “Reuben, my son, I will tell you why I have not reproved you [for your shortcomings] during all these years: So that you would not leave me and join my brother, Esau.” And for four reasons, one should not reprimand a person except shortly before one’s death: So that one should not rebuke and again have to rebuke him, so as not to cause his friend to feel ashamed when he sees him; etc. These appear in Sifrei . And similarly, Joshua rebuked Israel only shortly before his death (cf. [Joshua 24:1](http://www.chabad.org/15808#v1)-29), and so, Samuel, as it is said, “Behold, testify against me” ([I Sam. 12:3)](http://www.chabad.org/15841#v3) and so, also, David rebuked his son Solomon only shortly before his death (see [I Kings 2:1](http://www.chabad.org/15886#v1)-10).

1. In what sense, is Moshe similar to MLK?
2. What challenges does Moshe have to overcome to be effective in rebuking and improving the Jewish people [mussar]?
3. How does the fact that they are coming off two huge military successes [destruction of Sichon and Og] helpful?
4. How is the fact that Moshe will soon die helpful for the Jewish people ability to truly hear, accept, and integrate his mussar?
5. Why does Moshe initially mention the areas of disaster obliquely [Rashi]?
6. What inheritance was Moshe trying to leave the Jewish People?
7. The habit of Success – Going from Avoider of Constructive Criticism to a Seeker of Constructive Criticism:

[Proverbs 3:11] מוּסַ֣ר יְ֭הוָה בְּנִ֣י אַל־תִּמְאָ֑ס וְאַל־תָּ֝קֹ֗ץ בְּתוֹכַחְתּֽוֹ Do not reject the discipline of the Hashem, my son; Do not abhor His rebuke.