

D'varim Chazon



44th of the 54 sedras; 1st of 11 in D'varim

Written on 196.5 lines (rank: 26th)

5 parshiyot; 1 open, 4 closed

105 p'sukim - ranks 32, 6th in D'varim
tied with Chayei Sara, but larger

1548 words - ranks 26th, 6th in D'varim

5972 letters - ranks 24, 5th in D'varim
tied with Vayeishev, but smaller

Jump in rankings from p'sukim to words
& letters due to relatively long p'sukim

MITZVOT

2 mitzvot - both prohibitions

One of only three sedras that have only
prohibitions (LO TAASEI). Vayishlach
and B'shalach are the other two, with
one LAV each.

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start
of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is
Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the
parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the
parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the
Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND
Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI; L=LAV
(prohibition). X:Y is the perek & pasuk from
which the mitzva comes.

Kohen - First Aliya 11 p'sukim - 1:1-11

[P> 1:1 (47)] The opening p'sukim of
D'varim clearly identify time and
place. The entire book takes place in
Arvot Moav (last place of encampment
before entry into Eretz Yisrael) and
begins on Rosh Chodesh Sh'vat in the
final year of wandering.

Several places that are mentioned in
these p'sukim are considered by the
commentaries to be allusions to events
that occurred during the previous 40
years rather than being actual
locations. The events include the
golden calf, the rebellion of Korach,
the complaint about the manna, and
the sin of the spies. These, plus the
explicit discussion of the "Sin of the
Spies", are part of Moshe's reproach
and warning to the People.

Note that the only 'sin' of the Midbar to
be detailed in Parshat D'varim is Cheit
HaMeraglim, which occurred on Tish'a
b'Av, and set the tone for Tish'a b'Av.
We always read this sedra right before
Tish'a b'Av.

Moshe also tells the People of the
victories over Emori and Cheshbon.
This, to give them confidence for the
difficult period they will face upon
entering the Land.

We find the first of many references
to the purpose of the existence of the
Jewish Nation is made - to live
(according to G-d's laws) in the Land

that G-d had promised to our ancestors. D'varim 1:8 says:

See that I have presented you the Land; come and take the Land that G-d promised your ancestors He would give to them and their descendants.

Rashi's comment: Had we not sent Meraglim to spy out the Land, we would have been able to march in and take it without a weapon, without a fight, without 7 years of battles.

That living in Eretz Yisrael is an integral part of a Jew's life is first set down at the Burning Bush, G-d's first prophecy to Moshe Rabeinu. G-d says that He will go into Egypt to take the People out and bring them up to a good and expansive land, a land flowing with milk and honey... In the same verse that He tells Moshe of His intention to take the people out of Egypt, He tells Moshe to where He is taking us, where He wants us to be. In one single verse, the purpose of our Nationhood is set.

In last week's sedra, the connection between the people and the Land comes in the form of a command.

Here in D'varim, Moshe tells the new generation of the "invitation" that was extended to them by G-d, to go into Eretz Yisrael. There will be various other

ways the same idea is expressed, but it is important to keep in mind that living in Eretz Yisrael is a mitzva, the fulfillment of our national destiny, AND it is R'TZON HASHEM, G-d's Will. This point is made over and over again. All we have to do is do it.

SDT: (Actually, this is an **LDT**): Within the opening 5 p'sukim of D'varim, there is a repetition of sorts in telling us that Moshe Rabeinu spoke to the People. The Vilna Gaon and others point out that the Book of D'varim can be divided into 3 parts, as indicated by the wording of the opening p'sukim: "These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel..." (pasuk 1). This can refer to the first three sedras of the book wherein we have a general review of the brief, but action-packed and significant history of the People to date. In addition, these sedras contain a restatement of the principles of Judaism in the form of the Aseret HaDibrot and the first two passages of the Sh'ma. The mitzva of Benching after a meal - and all brachot before and after food - are also part of the foundation of Torah Life that Moshe is presenting (reviewing) with the People. So too is davening "commanded" in this first section of D'varim. Also expressed in this opening section of D'varim is the integral link between the People and the

Tish'a b'Av - like first day of Pesach - is LO B'DU, it cannot fall on Mon, Wed, or Fri. Can fall on Sun, Tue, Thu, and Shabbat, with the fast pushed to Sun. This gives us these stats: Tish'a b'Av on Tuesday - 26.18% of the time; Thursday - 28.57% of years, and on Sunday - 45.25% of the time. May the fast of 9Av become 0%, in our time.

Land of Israel. These sedras contain relatively few mitzvot, but they do contain the "basics of Judaism" and its foundations, which Moshe reviews with "all of Israel".

The following three sedras (R'ei, Shof'tim, and Ki Teitzei) contain 170 mitzvot, the greatest concentration of mitzvot anywhere in the Torah. "...Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael of all that G-d commanded upon them" (pasuk 3). After laying the foundation of Judaism, Moshe presents the essence of day-to-day life as a Jew - mitzvot of all kinds, between the Jew and G-d, interpersonal mitzvot, mitzvot linked to the Land, general mitzvot.

The final section of D'varim, the last 5 sedras, again contains relatively few mitzvot. But it does contain the basis of understanding what being a Jew means. In these sedras we have the admonition against forsaking the Torah, the concepts of Free Will, Reward and Punishment, Repentance, and the Chain of Tradition. "...Moshe began to explain [HO'IL MOSHE BEI-EIR] this Torah saying:" (pasuk 5)

I, says Moshe, told you (and G-d) that I could no longer handle the leadership by myself. G-d has increased your population greatly; you are today like the stars of the heavens.

On Shabbat, the first Aliya is ended one pasuk early to avoid beginning the second portion with the word "Eicha" - a word that we will meet again in the haftara of Chazon

and then on Leil Tish'a b'Av - several times - in the book of Eicha. We will thus be reading the word EICHA from all three sections of Tanach - Torah, Nevi'im, K'tuvim - this year, within approx a 12-hour period.

Levi - Second Aliya 10 p'sukim - 1:12-21

Moshe tells the People again that he had reached a point where he was too weary to lead the People alone, and that he (at G-d's command) designated the leaders of the Tribes as judges of the People.

Judges are to be selected for their Torah knowledge and other appropriate qualities. It is forbidden to appoint a judge for "the wrong reasons" (wealth, charisma, connections - without the important qualities in place) [414, L284 1:17]. Judges must be fair and impartial and must not be afraid to render proper judgments [415, L276 1:17]. Moshe retained the role of final authority on difficult matters.

MITZVAnotes

Even though these two mitzvot are primarily directed towards the leaders of the people whose task it is to choose judges and towards the judges themselves, respectively, there is an element of each mitzva that applies to each and every Jew. Every so often, we each can be in the position of choosing someone to fulfill a task. Perhaps a

communal function, a teacher, youth leader... whatever. For any of these choices, there are right reasons and motivations and wrong reasons and motivations to guide our choices. This mitzva [414] commands us to always choose based on the proper criteria.

And many people find themselves in the position of making a judgment call. We may not be afraid to make a just decision, even in the face of possible unpleasant ramifications.

What was just said about these two mitzvot can apply to the many other mitzvot related to the justice system. There are formal judges, and then there are the rest of us who are put into the judge's chair as parents, employers, co-workers, students, friends, et al.

Once again, Eretz Yisrael is shown as the main focus and the People are urged not to fear what lies ahead.

On the phrase from 1:16 - Hear it among your brothers and judge fairly - the Gemara teaches us that judges may not hear one party to a case without the other present.

In the same pasuk, the reference to the convert in the context of judging teaches us that conversion to Judaism must be done by a Beit Din. The Gemara states that if a non-Jew decides on his own that he is Jewish, this does not constitute conversion. A Beit Din and fulfillment of halachic steps are required.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 17 p'sukim - 1:22-38

Moshe next recounts for the new generation, the episode of the spies.

SDT: Parshat D'varim was "made" to be read on the Shabbat before Tish'a b'Av...

The mishna states that one of the tragedies marked by Tish'a b'Av - the first one, the one that gave Tish'a b'Av its dark character - was the decree against the (adult males of the) "Generation of the Wilderness". The sedra serves as a reproach for our poor attitudes and lack of commitment to the Land. It is as if G-d is saying to us: "Do not continue in the ways of that generation. Reverse the effect of that terrible punishment by heeding the call of Kalev and Yehoshua." When we, the Jewish People of today, succeed in "repairing" the negative attitudes and actions of the generation of the spies, the generation whose sins caused the destruction of the first Mikdash, the generation whose gratuitous hatred and Lashon HaRa caused the destruction of the second Mikdash, then we will merit and be privileged to rejoice in the building of the third Beit HaMikdash, the restoration of Jews all over the world to this Land, and the spreading of Torah values and commitment to mitzvot to all of Klal Yisrael. D'varim and its message of the significance of Eretz Yisrael and the reminder of G-d's

terrible anger against those who denigrate the Land of Israel is the "perfect" introduction to 9Av. Amazing, is it not, how relevant this message is today. "Behold, I have set the Land before you; go in and possess the Land..." May we be deserving (and even if not deserving) to live in peace in all the Land of Israel, with all the People of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel.

Notice specifically, that of all the negative things done by the generation of the wilderness, it is only the Sin of the Spies that is spelled out in detail rather than in REMEZ (hint) form. It has more details (with differences) than we find back in Parshat Sh'lach. Everything else is scant hint and held for later review, if at all.

The Book of D'varim says over and over again that the Meraglim were wrong. They believed that the miraculous environment of the Wilderness was perfect for a Torah way of life. Not so. Moshe repeatedly tells us that Eretz Yisrael is the "real" place for the People of Israel.

OBSERVATION... Comparing Moshe's account with the original text in Sh'lach yields some interesting differences. Perhaps, most strikingly, is the blame Moshe takes upon himself. He even says that G-d banned him from Eretz Yisrael because of the Meraglim incident (when the Torah tells us that it was because of the hit instead of speak the rock incident).

On another note... It is clear that the original purpose of sending the men into the Land was to determine the best way to enter it and which border cities would be best to attack first. It is equally clear that the purpose was NOT to decide whether to go or not. This is the major element of the Sin of the Spies and the people's reaction to their words. And it is clear that Moshe's approval of the idea was based upon the "proper" motive for sending the scouts in the first place and not for the way it turned out.

This idea is applicable to our times. A pilot trip to Israel should not be to decide whether or not to live in Israel. It should be for determining how best to make Aliya. Making Aliya should be the given.

Moshe shares the blame with the spies and announces that he had approved of the suggestion to send them. He explains what had happened as a result of the spies' report. Moshe's arguments (and those of Kalev and Yehoshua) were unsuccessful in calming the people's panic. As a result, G-d decreed that none of the adult males (except for Kalev and Yehoshua) would enter the Land. Moshe tells them that he too was banned from entering the Land. It is to be Yehoshua who will lead the People henceforth.

We can see the special qualities of a true leader of the Jewish People. Moshe Rabeinu did not leave the blame for the Sin of the Spies with the people. He

shouldered some of it (a lot of it) himself.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 9 p'sukim - 1:39-2:1

As Moshe Rabeinu is telling the new generation what has happened, he is continually warning them against repeating the blunders of their predecessors. It is specifically this new generation that the previous one worried about. They cried that their children would be orphans. Those same children are now the one's about to enter the Land.

Moshe also tells them of the tragic results in the People's attempt to go into the Land against G-d's wishes. It won't work without G-d's help; it cannot fail with His help. This is the lesson of more than 3300 years ago; this is the lesson for today.

SDT: Rashi records a tradition that the People of Israel spent 19 years - half of the wandering time - in one location, Kadesh. The actual wandering was much less than 40 years. On the other hand, there were places in which the people only spent a day or so.

As many times as Moshe repeated the story and lessons to be learned from the Sin of the Spies, to the people of that generation, these same stories and lessons have been repeated countless times for the benefit of each and every Jew throughout the generations. Why

does the Torah tell us to Remember the Shabbat day and make it holy? To remind us that it is important to make Kiddush as Shabbat begins and say Havdala as it ends, and to honor and sanctify the Shabbat in many other ways. Why tell us about Cheit HaMeraglim? Because it is an important reminder for us about the significance of Eretz Yisrael in G-d's Plan for the people of Israel.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 29 p'sukim - 2:2-30

[S> 2:2 (6 + 12/17 - there is a parsha-break in the middle of 2:8)] The People next turned northward and were warned not to fight with the people of Eisav, for their land is theirs as an inheritance. Only purchasing food and water for their journey past Eisav's territory would be permitted.

[S> 2:8 (5/17 + 8 p'sukim; this parsha begins in the middle of a pasuk)] They turned (from Edom) and headed towards Mo'av. Moav's territory was also placed off-limits because it was an inheritance for the descendants of Lot.

Various peoples are named for the different lands in the area.

The wandering took 38 years until G-d told the People to cross into the territory of Amon and Moav, but without fighting there. Both Edom and Amon/Moav had fought for their land as Israel will be doing soon.

[S> 2:17 (14)] Next, the people passed Amonite territory. Here too they were not allowed by G-d to fight against the Amonites. Sichon the Amorite was not so fortunate. He was offered peace - same terms as with Eisav's people - but he rejected it, clearing the way for Israel to successfully conquer his land.

[This is reminiscent of the future (yes, we know that it usually is the other way around), Israel's victory in the Six Day War. Israel said to Jordan, that if it stayed out of the conflict, Israel would leave it alone. Jordan decided to attack (whatever their reason) and as a result, all of Jerusalem, and Yehuda and Shomron ended up back in our hands. If that is part of Eretz Yisrael - which it is, and we got that land in a war we were fighting for survival - not an aggressive war of conquest, then why should we give up even one square centimeter of our land? Population problems? Let's solve them in a way that is NOT self-destructive. Not so easy when the population around us and in our midst is taught to hate us.]

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 21 p'sukim - 2:31-3:14

[S> 2:31 (29)] Moshe continues his narrative with the details of the victories over Sichon and his land. Og, king of Bashan, also fell to Israel. Moshe describes the conquered lands that have been promised to the tribes of Reuven, Gad, and half of Menashe.

The victories on the East Bank of the Jordan helped build Israel's confidence for the difficult times to come upon crossing the Jordan into Eretz Yisrael. This new generation, the children of slaves, needed the multi-faceted preparation that the years of wandering provided, in order to be able to succeed in their conquest and settling of the Land.

Sh'VII Seventh Aliya 8 p'sukim - 3:15-22

The description of the "East Bank" land continues. Moshe repeats the instructions to the 2 tribes for settling their territory. Only after the successful conquest and settlement of the Land of Israel, will these men be permitted to return to their families and cities. Moshe has commanded Yehoshua to note well the victories to date and not to fear what is to come.

The last 3 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir. The custom is to call the Rav of the community or a prominent member of the congregation to Maftir Chazon (not a rule, but a common practice).

Haftara 27 p'sukim Yeshayahu 1:1-27

This is the third of the haftarot of Tragedy. The prophet speaks of the accumulation of terrible sins and acts of unfaithfulness to G-d which lead to

the destruction of Zion and Jerusalem. This haftara is 'perfectly' suited to precede Tish'a b'Av. Most of this haftara is read in the tune of Eicha, rather than the regular haftara tune. The final p'sukim switch to the regular haftara melody because they contain the promise of an end to exile and the rebuilding of Zion and Jerusalem in a mode of justice and righteousness. This bright note is appropriate for Shabbat, in contrast to the main part of the prophecy which Shabbat has no choice but to tolerate, so to speak, since it is right before Tish'a b'Av.

Yeshayahu contrasts the people of Israel, who had become unfaithful to G-d, with animals, who instinctively acknowledge their owners. "An ox knows its owner and a donkey recognizes its owner's pen." In an allusion to this pasuk, the Yerushalmi tells the story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Torata who sold his ox to a non-Jew. The ox refused to work on Shabbat, until Rabbi Yochanan whispered in its ear that it was now owned by a non-Jew and must work on Shabbat. Which it then did. There is also the story of the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas b. Yair. These stories give us insight into the harsh criticism of the People of Israel who repeatedly "do not know" their Creator. Loyalty to a master is one of the many lessons we must learn from (some) animals.