

# **Sefer Devarim - the most misunderstood book in the Bible**

For Torah in Motion - by Menachem Leibtag

## **Class # 2 - The first speech, and the story of the spies**

### **I. Review of class #1**

Chapters 5 thru 26 form main speech in Sefer Devarim

In it, Moshe Rabeinu reviews a set of laws that:

- God gave him on Har Sinai together with the first Luchot
- That need constant repetition (hence "mishne torah")
- And hence, he has taught this numerous times
- That apply to establishing a 'holy nation' in the Land
- He is teaching one last time, a month before his death
- As Bnei Yisrael prepare to conquer the land (w/o Moshe)

In light of this, in class two, we identify speech #1 (chaps 1->4)

To see how it relates to that main speech

### **II. Identifying the speech (i.e. following 'first person')**

Let's start with chapter one:

Showing how speech spans from 1:6 thru 4:40

Note interlude between speeches in 4:41-49

### **III. Main topics in speech #1**

Is it really a 'history speech'?

A. Appointing additional leadership

B. Sin of the spies

C. Travel in year 40 thru lands of Edom, Moav, & Sichon

Including who didn't fight, and who we did (and how)

D. Moshe's prayer to 'see the Land'

## E. Chapter 4 -numerous warnings re: keeping the laws

Q.- What ties all these topics together?

Let's take a closer look at the speech:

SPEECH BEGINS HERE

ו "יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ דָּבַר אֵלֵינוּ בְּחָרֵב לֵאמֹר רַב לָכֶם שָׁבַת בְּהָר הַזֶּה:  
ז פָּנוּ וּסְעוּ לָכֶם וּבֵאוּ הֵרָאֵמְרִי וְאֵל כָּל שְׁכֵנֵי בְּעֶרְבָה בְּהָר וּבְשִׁפְלָה  
וּבַנְּגֹב וּבַחוּף הַיָּם אֶרֶץ הַכְּנָעֲנִי וְהַלְבָּנוֹן עַד הַנְּהָר הַגָּדֹל נְהַר פָּרַת:  
ח רְאֵה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיכֶם אֶת הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ וַיִּרְשׁוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע  
יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לָתֵת לָהֶם וּלְזָרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם:

ט וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם בְּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר לֹא אוֹכַל לְבַדִּי שְׂאֵת אֲתֶכֶם:  
י יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הִרְבָּה אֲתֶכֶם וְהִנֵּכֶם הַיּוֹם כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב:  
יא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵכֶם יִסֹּף עֲלֵיכֶם כָּכֶם אֶלֶף פְּעֻמִּים וַיְבַרֵךְ אֲתֶכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר לָכֶם:  
יב אֵיכָה אֲשֶׁא לְבַדִּי טְרַחֲקֶם וּמִשְׁאָכֶם וַיִּרְבְּכֶם:  
יג הִבּוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וּנְבִיִּים וַיְדַעִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְאֲשִׁימָם בְּרֵאשִׁיכֶם:  
יד וַתַּעֲנֵנוּ אֲתִי וַתֹּאמְרוּ טוֹב הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת:  
טו וְאֶקַּח אֶת רֵאשֵׁי שִׁבְטֵיכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וַיְדַעִים וְאֶתְּנוּ אוֹתָם רֵאשִׁים עֲלֵיכֶם שְׂרֵי אֱלֹפִים וְשְׂרֵי מֵאוֹת וְשְׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשְׂרֵי עֶשְׂרִים וְשִׁטְרִים לְשִׁבְטֵיכֶם:  
טז וְאַצְוֶה אֶת שְׁפִטֵיכֶם בְּעַת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר שְׁמַע בֵּין אַחֵיכֶם וּשְׁפִטְתֶם צְדָק בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין אַחֵיו וּבֵין גֵּר:  
יז לֹא תִמְרִיּוּ פָנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט כַּקָּטָן כַּגָּדֹל תִּשְׁמַעוּן לֹא תִגְדּוּ מִפְּנֵי אִישׁ כִּי הַמִּשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהִים הוּא וְהַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם תִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי וּשְׁמַעְתִּיו:

**יח וְאַצְוֶה אֲתֶכֶם בְּעַת הַהוּא אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן:**

יט וְנִסַּע מִחָרֵב וּנְלַךְ אֶת כָּל הַמְדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא הַהוּא אֲשֶׁר רְאִיתֶם  
דְּרָךְ הֵרָאֵמְרִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ וְנָבֵא עַד קִדְשׁ בְּרִנְעַ  
:כ וְאָמַר אֲלֵכֶם בְּאֵתֶם עַד הֵרָאֵמְרִי אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ.  
כא רְאֵה נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת הָאָרֶץ עֲלֶה רֵשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר יְהוָה  
:אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְךָ אֵל תִּירָא וְאֵל תַּחַת  
כב וַתִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי כְּלָכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ נִשְׁלַחְהָ אֲנָשִׁים לְפָנֵינוּ ...

#### IV. Why Moshe begins with the story of the spies

A. That story is the main reason why it's been 40 years

That was last time these laws were relevant.

& now they are relevant again, [DEJA-VU]

B. Moshe wants to make sure they don't repeat same mistake  
[the fear of Fear]

C. Keeping the laws - is integral part of the conquest!

This we must prove, as it will help us understand the sin  
& their punishment as a 'consequence' of their attitude.

#### V. What were the spies supposed to report?

What was their sin?

God wanted them to tell the truth

a. the land is good - i.e. worth fighting for

b. enemy is formidable -

& hence impossible to defeat w/o God's help

c. God's help is contingent on keeping the mitzvot

& hence you better keep them, or you'll die

Let's prove this from Devarim chapter 9

א שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲתָה עֹבֵר הַיּוֹם  
אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן, לָבֹא לְרֶשֶׁת גּוֹיִם,  
גְּדֹלִים וְעֲצֻמִּים מִמֶּנִּי--עָרִים  
גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצֻרֹת, בְּשָׂמַיִם.

1 Hear, O Israel: thou art to pass over the  
Jordan this day, to go in to dispossess  
nations greater and mightier than thyself,  
cities great and fortified up to heaven,

**ב** עַם-גָּדוֹל וָרָם, בְּנֵי  
 עֲנָקִים : אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ,  
 וְאַתָּה שָׁמַעְתָּ--מִי יִתְיַצֵּב, לְפָנָי  
 בְּנֵי עֲנָק.

**2** a people great and tall, the sons of the  
 Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of  
 whom thou hast heard say: 'Who can  
 stand before the sons of Anak?'

**ג** וַיִּדְעַתָּ הַיּוֹם, כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
 הוּא-הָעֹלֵבֵר לְפָנֶיךָ אִשׁ אֹכֶלֶת--הוּא  
 יִשְׁמִידֵם וְהוּא יִכְנִיעֵם, לְפָנֶיךָ ;  
 וְהוֹרֵשְׁתָּם וְהֶאֱבַדְתָּם מֵהָר, כַּאֲשֶׁר  
 דִּבֶּר יְהוָה לְךָ.

**3** Know therefore this day, that  
 the LORD thy God is He who  
 goeth over before thee as a  
 devouring fire; He will destroy  
 them, and He will bring them  
 down before thee; so shalt thou  
 drive them out, and make them to  
 perish quickly, as the LORD  
 hath spoken unto thee.

**But God's help - ONLY if you keep the mitzvot:**

**See Devarim 11:11:22-25 - as well as opening verses of Yehoshua**

**Devarim 4:1 & 6:17-19 & 7:12-16 & 8:1 & 11:8-9**

**All in light of 3:21-22 of the first speech!**

**Hence, God was hoping leadership would encourage the nation to take the challenge.**

**Instead, they continued their attitude issue,**

**that they are on a death march**

**See Shmot 14:10-13; 16:1-3; 17:1-3 ;**

**Bamidbar 20:1-6**

**Moshe emphasizes this in Devarim:**

**כ** וַיִּקְחוּ בְיָדָם מִפְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ,  
 וַיּוֹרְדוּ אֵלֵינוּ ; וַיִּשְׁבוּ אֶתְנוּ דָּבָר,  
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ, טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ נָתַן לָנוּ.

**25** And they took of the fruit of the land  
 in their hands, and brought it down unto  
 us, and brought us back word, and said:  
 'Good is the land which the LORD our  
 God giveth unto us.'

**כו** וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם, לַעֲלֹת; וַתִּמְרוּ,  
אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. **26** Yet ye would not go up, but rebelled  
against the commandment of the LORD  
your God;

**כז** וַתִּרְגְּנוּ בְּאֹהֲלֵיכֶם, וַתֹּאמְרוּ,  
בְּשֵׁנֹאת יְהוָה אֲתָנוּ, הוֹצִיאָנוּ  
מִמֶּצְרַיִם--לְתֵת אֲתָנוּ בְּיַד  
הָאֱמֹרִי, לְהַשְׁמִידָנוּ. **27** and ye murmured in your tents, and  
said: 'Because the LORD hated us, He  
hath brought us forth out of the land of  
Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the  
Amorites, to destroy us.

**כח** אָנָּה אֲנַחְנוּ עֲלִים, אַחֲיֵנוּ  
הִמְסוּ אֶת-לִבֵּינוּ לֵאמֹר עִם גְּדוֹל  
וְרָם מִמֶּנּוּ, עָרִים גְּדֹלֹת וּבְצוּרֹת,  
בְּשָׂמַיִם; וְגַם-בְּנֵי עֲנָקִים, רָאִינוּ  
שָׁם. **28** Whither are we going up? our  
brethren have made our heart to melt,  
saying: The people is greater and taller  
than we; the cities are great and  
fortified up to heaven; and moreover  
we have seen the sons of the Anakim  
there.'

**כט** וָאָמַר, אֲלֵכֶם: לֹא-תִעַרְצוּן  
וְלֹא-תִירָאוּן, מֵהֶם. **29** Then I said unto you: 'Dread not,  
neither be afraid of them.

**ל** יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֵךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם,  
הוּא יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם: כָּל־כִּלְאוֹת עָשָׂה  
אֶתְכֶם, בְּמִצְרַיִם--לְעֵינֵיכֶם. **30** The LORD your God who goeth  
before you, He shall fight for you,  
according to all that He did for you in  
Egypt before your eyes;

**לא** וּבַמִּדְבָּר, אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ, אֲשֶׁר  
נִשְׂאָדָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כְּאִישׁ יִשְׂאֵ-  
אִישׁ אֶת-בְּנוֹ--בְּכָל-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר  
הֵלַכְתֶּם, עַד-בְּאֶזְכֶּם עַד-הַמָּקוֹם  
הַזֶּה. **31** and in the wilderness, where thou  
hast seen how that the LORD thy God  
bore thee, as a man doth bear his son, in  
all the way that ye went, until ye came  
unto this place.

**לב** וּבַדְּבָר, הַזֶּה--אֵינְכֶם,  
מֵאֲמִינִים, בִּיהוָה, אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. **32** Yet in this thing ye do not believe  
the LORD your God,

**לג** הֵהָלֵךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ, לְתוֹר  
לָכֶם מִקּוֹם--לְחַנְתְּכֶם: בְּאֵשׁ  
לַיְלָה, לְרֹאשֵׁיכֶם בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר  
תֵּלְכוּ-בָהּ, וּבַעֲנָן, יוֹמָם. **33** Who went before you in the way, to  
seek you out a place to pitch your tents  
in: in fire by night, to show you by  
what way ye should go, and in the cloud  
by day.'

**לד** וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה, אֶת-קוֹל  
דְּבָרֵיכֶם; וַיִּקְצֹף, וַיִּשָּׁבַע לֵאמֹר. **34** And the LORD heard the voice of  
your words, and was wroth, and swore,  
saying:

**לה** אִם-יִרְאֶה אִישׁ בְּאַנְשֵׁים  
הָאֵלֶּה, הַדּוֹר הַרַע הַזֶּה--אֵת,  
**35** 'Surely there shall not one of these  
men, even this evil generation, see the

הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה, אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי,  
לָתֵת לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם. good land, which I swore to give unto  
your fathers,