

5779 – Deuteronomy 1-3 - D'varim (Words)

^{1,11}These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the wilderness east of the Jordan—that is, in the **Arabah**—opposite **Suph**, between **Paran** and **Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth** and **Dizahab**. ²(It takes eleven days to go from **Horeb** to **Kadesh Barnea** by the **Mount Seir road**.)

1. *Aravah*—the Jordan Valley.
2. *Suph*—a shortened form of *Yam Suph* = the Red Sea.
3. *Paran*—The wilderness of Paran (“place of caverns”), now called the wilderness of El-Tih, north of the Sinai Peninsula, and west of the Aravah.
4. *Tophel*—(white) some identify this unknown place tieh el-Tafle, a village about 15 miles south-east of the Dead Sea.
5. *Laban* (white) and *Hazeroth* (settlement)—possibly the Libnah and Hazeroth in Num 33:17-20.
6. *Di-Zahab* (enough gold)—the spot has not been identified. The Hebrew implies “a place productive of gold.”
7. The five names mentioned here seem to (define) the place where Moses gave one of the discourses to Israel. Their identification is uncertain and full of difficulties. Some of the ancient and medieval teachers (explain the text by) playing on their meaning, they associated these places with the murmurings and transgressions of the children of Israel.
Onkelos translates this verse as follows: “These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel beyond Jordan. He reproved them because they had sinned in the Wilderness, and had provoked God to anger in the Plain (*Aravah*) of Moab; over against the Red Sea (*Suph*) they murmured against God; in Paran, they had spoken contemptuously (*tophel*) concerning the manna (*laban*); and in Hazeroth, they angered Him on account of flesh and because they made the Golden Calf (*di-zahab*).”¹
8. Horeb—Mt. Sinai.
9. Kadesh Barnea (*the holy place of the desert of wandering*)—also known simply as Kadesh, it was a city in the extreme south of Judah.
10. Mt. Seir Rd—the easternmost track from the Sinai Peninsula to Kadesh.

11. Deuteronomy Rabbah 1:4

4. THESE ARE THE WORDS. R. Aha b. R. Hanina said: it would have been more fitting for the rebukes to have been uttered by Balaam and the blessings by Moses. But **had Balaam uttered the rebukes then Israel would say, ‘It is an enemy that rebukes us’⁽⁴⁾; and had Moses uttered the blessings then the other nations of the world would say, ‘It is their friend who blesses them.’⁽⁵⁾** Therefore, the Holy One, blessed is

He, commanded: ‘Let their friend Moses reprove them, and their foe Balaam bless them, **so that the genuineness of the blessings and the rebukes of Israel may be clear beyond question.**’

(4) **And what he says is biased.**

(5) **And what he says is exaggerated.**

a. Proverbs 3:11-12

¹¹My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline ... ¹²the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.

b. Proverbs 9:8

c. Proverbs 27:5-6 (CJB)

⁵**Better open rebuke than hidden love.** ⁶Wounds from a friend are received as well-meant, but an enemy’s kisses are insincere.

1) 5. *than love that is hidden*. Usually explained as a love which does not show itself by correcting a friend when it is necessary to do so ... ‘Better a frank word of reproof than the love that will not speak’ (Moffatt²).³

2) 27:5 **Better open rebuke than love concealed** (Ralbag⁴). As in the earlier verse (3:12), “For whoever God loves, He rebukes.” This principle can be understood through the following analogy: A father who sees his son behaving improperly immediately rebukes him and, if necessary, spansks him in order to rectify his ways. The child’s relatives, on the other hand, at most rebuke him, but do not bother to spank him. As for mere acquaintances, they do not even bother rebuking the child. From this we learn that the more a person loves another, the more harsh his reproof (GRA⁵).⁶

Or, “Open rebuke is good [if it comes] from hidden love” (*Metzudoth*⁷). Or, “Rebuke given in public is more effective than [rebuke] given in private by a loved one” (Ibn Ezra⁸).

3) Galatians 2:11-13

¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, **I opposed him to his face**, because **he was clearly in the wrong**. ¹²Before certain men came

2 James Moffatt (1870–1944) was a Scottish theologian.

3 Rev. Dr. A. Cohen, Ed., *Proverbs*, (The Soncino Press), p. 179.

4 Rabbi Levi ben Gershon (1288–1344), known as Gersonides, or as **RalBaG**. He was a Jewish philosopher, Talmudist, mathematician, physician and astronomer.

5 Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman known as the Vilna Gaon or as HaGra (“**HaGaon Rabbenu Eliyahu**”) (1720 – 1797), was a Talmudist, halakhist, kabbalist, and the foremost leader of misnagdic (non-hasidic) Jewry of the past few centuries.

6 *The Living Nach, Sacred Writings*, (Moznaim Publishing Corporation), pp. 350-351.

7 David Altshuler was an 18th century Biblical commentator. His notes and writings on the *Tanach* were assembled by his son, Yehiel Hillel, and published under the name *Metzudot*.

8 Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra (1089–c.1167) was one of the most distinguished Jewish biblical commentators and philosophers of the Middle Ages.

1 Dr. J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, (Soncino Press), p. 736

from James, **he used to eat with the Gentiles**. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and **separate himself from the Gentiles** ... ¹³*The other Jews* joined him in his hypocrisy ... even Barnabas was led astray.

a) ¹¹*I opposed him to his face* ...

1] Since Peter's behavior was public and the resulting schism between Jewish and Gentile believers was public, Paul confronted Peter publicly.

2] Matthew 18:15-16

¹⁵"If your brother sins **against you**, go and show him his fault, **just between the two of you** ...

¹³In the **fortieth year**, on the first day of the **eleventh** month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. ⁴This was after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and at Edrei had defeated Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. ⁵East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to **expound this law**, saying:

1. ³*fortieth year* ...

a. **Moses reserved his exhortation for the closing days of his life**, in the same way as Jacob (Gen 49), Joshua (Josh 24), Samuel (1Sam 12), David (1Ki 2) and Yeshua (Jn 13-17) did.

2. ³*the eleventh month* ...

a. Heb: בְּעֶשְׂרֵי עָשָׂר (b'ash-tei asar)—*eleven*. In the preceding verse, the form for eleven is אֶחָד עָשָׂר (achad asar). **Unlike the Samaritan and Septuagint Texts, the Hebrew Text has from the first been handed down to us with absolute accuracy—no attempt was made to “harmonize” different forms of the same word or phrase.**

b. The “Documentary Hypothesis” (JEPD)⁹

The Torah (or Pentateuch) is collectively the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. According to tradition they were dictated by God to Moses, but when modern critical scholarship began to be applied to the Bible **it was discovered that the Pentateuch was not the unified text ONE WOULD EXPECT from a single author**. As a result, the Mosaic authorship of the Torah had been largely rejected by leading scholars by the 17th century, and the modern consensus is that it is the product of a long evolutionary process.

In the mid-18th century, some scholars started a critical study of doublets (parallel accounts of the same incidents), inconsistencies,

and changes in style and vocabulary in the Torah. In 1780 Johann Eichhorn, building on the work of the French doctor and exegete Jean Astruc's "Conjectures" and others, formulated the "older documentary hypothesis": the idea that Genesis was composed by combining two identifiable sources, the **Jehovist** ("J"; also called the Yahwist) and the **Elohist** ("E"). These sources were subsequently found to run through the first four books of the Torah, and the number was later expanded to three when Wilhelm de Wette identified the **Deuteronomist** as an additional source found only in Deuteronomy ("D"). Later still the Elohist was split into Elohist and **Priestly** ("P") sources, increasing the number to four.

1) Matthew 8:2-4

⁴Then Yeshua said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and **offer the gift Moses commanded**, as a testimony to them" (LEV 14:2).

2) Mark 7:10

¹⁰For **Moses said**, 'Honor your father and mother' (EXO 21:17), and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death' (LEV 20:9).

3) Mark 10:2-9

⁶"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female' (GEN 1:27; 5:2). ⁷For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁸and the two will become one flesh' (GEN 2:24) ..."

4) John 3:13-15

¹⁴Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness (NUM 21:9), so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

5) Luke 24:44

⁴⁴Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me **in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms**."

a) "Law of Moses" = *Torah*

"Prophets" = *Nevi'im*

"Psalms" = *K'tuvim* (Writings)

Torah, Nevi'im, K'tuvim = **TeNaCH**

—**Yeshua cites the “order” of these “sections” of the Bible according to their order in the Jewish** (and not the Christian) **canon of Scripture**.

6) The “Law of Moses”—Jn 7:23; Acts 13:39; 15:5, 21; 28:23; 1Cor 9:9; Heb 10:28.

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis

3. ⁵*expound this law ...*

- a. The Hebrew word *Torah* does not mean (and never did mean) “Law.” **It means (and always has meant) “Teaching.”**
- b. The word *torah* may refer to moral guidance, or to a single specific teaching, as in Prov 1:8 “Forsake not the teaching (*torah*) of your mother.”
- c. It is also applied to a body of religious precepts or teachings—such a form the central portion of this Book (Chaps. 12-26).
- d. Often, it denotes **the entire sum** of Israel’s religious doctrine and life—the *Torah* of Moses.
- e. Gk: νόμος (*nomos*)—a formalized rule (or set of rules) prescribing what people must do - ‘law, ordinance, rule.’

^{1:6}**The LORD our God** said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain ... ⁸See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of **the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers**—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them.”

1. ⁶**The LORD our God ...**

- a. 6 יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (*Adonai Eloheinu*)—HASHEM, our God. **This is the first time this expression is used in the Torah.** It will recur more than twenty times. This designation of Hashem bespeaks an intimacy based on reciprocal love between Hashem and Israel. No term has done as much to encourage devotion and piety.¹⁰

1) See 2., b. The “Documentary Hypothesis” (JEPD) above.

2. ⁶*“You have stayed long enough at this mountain.*

- a. 6 **You have dwelt too long at this mountain:** God here is alluding to the lesson that **we should never remain too long on the same level in our relationship with Him, without advancing and ascending.** This idea is also articulated in the Prophets, where the human potential to progress in Divine consciousness is contrasted with the angels’ lack of potential: “If you go in My ways ... I will make you into those who walk [i.e., constantly move forward] among these [angels, who merely stand here]” (Zech 3:7). Angels, being personified emotional states of involvement with God, are static, whereas human being can progress from one level of emotional involvement with God to another. In fact, **we should strive to reach the next level of spirituality as soon as we become aware of its existence.**⁽⁶¹⁾

Furthermore, this verse teaches us not to cloister ourselves in the study hall, devoting ourselves exclusively to our own self-refinement. Rather, **God challenges us to leave this pristine and holy environment, traveling to a place far from “His mountain,” to illuminate even these distant places with the Divine light of the Torah.**⁽⁶²⁾¹¹

(61) Likutei Sichot (“Collected Talks”), vol. 24, p. 18.

(62) Likutei Sichot, vol. 2, p. 695.

1) **Zechariah 3:6-7**

⁶The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: ⁷“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.’

b. **Hebrew 5:11-14**

^{5:11}**We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.**

1) Learn about what?—Yeshua’s example:

a) **Hebrews 5:7-10**

⁸Although he was a son, **he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him** ¹⁰and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

^{5:12}In fact, though by this time **you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again.** You need milk, not solid food! ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, **is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** ¹⁴But **solid food is for the mature**, who **by constant use** have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

2) ¹²*you ought to be teachers ... you need someone to teach you the elementary truths ... all over again.*

a) Elementary—*basic, essential, fundamental* truths. What is the opposite?—advanced, complex, difficult truths.

b) **1Corinthians 13**

¹If I speak in the tongues (*or* languages) of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal ... ⁸Love never fails ... ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹**When I was a child, I talked like a child, I**

thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- c) **Growing to maturity is a process—one that requires moving beyond the elementary truths of the faith.** Compare the life of Moses, David, Joshua—even Yeshua.

1) It came into the heart of **Moses** to deliver his people when he was 40 years old (Acts 7:23-25), but **he spent another 40 years training for the ministry in Midian** before he was ready to lead God's people!—there he tended the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro.

2) **Joshua** was raised up by God to lead the people into the promised land when Moses died—but **he was trained for ministry** by assisting Moses in the ministry (Deu 1:8).

3) **David** was “a man after (God's) own heart (1Sam 13:14)—but he was first a boy who was zealous for the Lord!

1Samuel 17:26-36

²⁶David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? ...”

³⁴But David said to Saul, “**Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ³⁵I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ³⁶Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.**”

4) Luke 2:42-52

⁴⁹“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?” ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹**Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.** But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²**And Yeshua grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

- 3) ¹³**Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.**

- a) **Better: “... an infant, without experience in applying the Word of righteousness” (CJB).**

⁶¹Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Messiah and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ²instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.** ³And God permitting, we will do so.

- 1) What does it mean to “*leave* the elementary teachings about Messiah?”—Does it mean to ignore them? To abandon them? To trivialize them? Or, to integrate them into a foundation upon which to build something substantial (or meaningful)?

^{1:19}Then, as the LORD our God commanded us, we set out from Horeb and went toward the hill country of the Amorites ... and so we reached Kadesh Barnea. ²⁰Then I said to you, “You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. ²¹See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, told you. **Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.**” ²²Then all of you came to me and said, “Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to.” ²³The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. ²⁴They left and went up into the hill country, and ... explored it ... ²⁵and reported, “It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us.”

²⁶But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against ... the LORD your God. ²⁷You grumbled ... and said, “The LORD hates us; so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. ²⁸Where can we go? Our brothers have made our hearts melt in fear” ... ²⁹Then I said to you, “**Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them.**” ³⁰The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, **as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, ³¹and in the wilderness. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.**” ³²In spite of this, **you did not trust in the LORD your God,** ³³who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.

1. ²¹See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, told you. **Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.**”

- a. “Do not fear them, for the LORD your God is the one fighting for you,” Moses declared. (Deu 3:21-22) The commandment, “do not fear,” is a command we find repeated frequently throughout the Torah and all

the Scriptures. In fact, there are over **130 instances in the Scriptures where it says, "Do not be afraid," or "Fear not!"** The words "Do not be afraid," occur **five times in (this parashat) alone.**

- 1) Yet often times we do find ourselves crippled with fear, doubt and worry—**fear from uncertainty, fear of change, fear of loss, fear of danger—real and imagined.**
 - 2) At times we may find ourselves boxed in and paralyzed by our fears. Similarly, it was fear that cost the first generation their opportunity to enter the Promised Land.
 - 3) Moses' address to the new generation is carefully crafted to give them confidence and certainty. **By reviewing how God has delivered them in the past,** He hopes to bolster their faith enough that they will no longer be crippled by fear. **Fear is the opposite of genuine faith—NOT doubt. Fear comes from a place of faithlessness.**
 - 4) When we have real confidence in God, fear is driven out. When we feel frightened or worried, we must remember who our Father in Heaven is, and that He cares for us and watches over us. **For the person of faith, fear is actually irrational.** Paul tells us, "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom 8:15).
 - 5) It may not sound like one of the commandments of the Torah but it actually is a rule of life for the People of God. We are to live by faithful confidence in the strong hand of God.
 - 6) He who delivered Israel from Egypt and defeated the Amorites will also deliver the Canaanites into the hands of Israel. He who rescued our Master and Savior from the grave will also rescue us from every trouble and fear. Yeshua says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows." (Mat 10:29-31) (FFOZ).
2. ³¹*and in the wilderness. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son ... "*

a. Isaiah 40:11

He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. ³²In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God.

b. Ezekiel 34:12, 23, 31

²³I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd ...

³¹**You are my sheep,** the sheep of my pasture, and **I am your God,** declares the Sovereign LORD."

c. Matthew 2:6

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah ... out of you will come a **ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.**"

1) Micah 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me **one who will be ruler over Israel,** whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

d. John 10:11

3. ³²*In spite of this, **you did not trust in the LORD your God,** ³³**who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day ...***

a. Deuteronomy 4:32-35

³⁵**You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other.**

b. Psalms 40:5

None can compare with you; **were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare.**

1) John 21:25

c. Hebrews 11:1 (CJB)

Trusting is being confident **of what we hope for**, convinced about things we do not see.

1) Faith "looks back"—hope "looks forward."

d. Isaiah 4:2-5

²In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. ³Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy ... ⁴The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. ⁵Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. ⁶It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.