

Parshas Devarim

This week's parsha is Devarim as well as Shabbos Chazon, that is the Shabbos before 9 av (which is followed next week by Shabbos Nachamu). Chazon- is the first word of the book of Yeshayahu, it means vision, and it is the opening prophecy of Yishayahu that talks about the sins of the Jews and the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash-but ends with a message of hope that Mashiach will come.

The Parsha itself and the 5th book, which is called Mishneh Torah (repetition), is Moshe's culminating speeches and guidance to the Jews that were going into the land of Israel. The repetition of the Torah was how Moshe was infusing direction and purpose into the words of the Torah such that the Jews should be confident about embarking on the mission to conquer the land and live the days outside of the cocoon of the wanderings in the desert. The Rebbe in a sichos finds a way to spin negative narratives into positive ideas such as in Parshas Miraglim (and in other places). The Rebbe doesn't understand how the Miraglim could say Lashon Hara about the land which they were promised. One 'rationale' the Rebbe elucidates is that the Jews wanted to continue to live in the presence of Hashem that was the travels through the desert. Their clothes grew on them, the manna was outside of their door, i.e., food was made for them, they were engaged in Torah day

and night, the clouds of glory protected and guided them, wars were won, it was a perfect life. Said the Miraglim, why should we enter the land for which we will have to deviate from learning¹, toil over work, lose our way². The claim, albeit valid, was wrong place wrong time, that is the Jews must end up in Israel, living the Halachos of the "Toras Chaim" (living Torah), as the Torah is "lo bashamayim hi" (not for the heavens) it is to practice. Therefore, Moshe's repetition (1:19) are words of Chizzuk and clarity on how to live and enter the land as it was meant to be. (At our Shiur on Thursday evenings, Rabbi Yossi Holzberg pointed out that opening words "Eileh Havarim" - "These are the words" reflect 36 days before Moshe was to pass away. In the third posuk- we are told that these words began on the first of the 11th month- which is Rosh Chodesh Shvat (Adar being the 12th month- which is in the order of the counting of the months- i.e., we begin with Nisan). 36 days later is the 7th of Adar- which we know is the Hilula of Moshe Rabbeinu.)

Rashi on the beginning of the Parsha explains that the first words of Moshe in the parsha were veiled rebuke-by referencing locations of places where bad things/misinterpretations occurred. But Moshe's words are ones of hope and support. As we see on Posuk 5- Rashi says that Moshe said the Torah over in many languages, the Sfas Emes builds on this to tell us that Moshe is giving the Torah over again for the future generations no matter where they will find themselves, they will

¹ The Mamer Isah B'Medrish Tehillim- the opening question of the "Bar Mitzvah Mamer" is the Jews asking Hashem what to do that they want to learn Torah day and night and they don't have time, Hashem said, put on Tefillin and I will consider it like you learned Torah day and night.

² In a similar way to Adam and Eve getting exiled from the Garden of Eden for eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Their punishment was to live as humans- but we know this is the purpose of creation. The Jews traveling in the desert were living like it was Gan Eden, but that is not our purpose.

understand the Torah, in their language.
The connection of the Parsha to the Haftora therefore (beyond it being fit for the 9 days) is much like Yeshayahu begins with words of rebuke- but offers words of hope. As we saw last week, the word for conquering the land is "v'horashtem", here in posuk 8 Moshe says; "bou ureshu es ha'aretz..."- "come and possess the land which was sworn to your forefathers..." Ureshu "(possess) also is rooted in the words inherit, and conquer, as we know and explained by Rashi- this culminates for us that should the nations of the world argue about our right to the land we can show them Bereishis until the end, and show that world was created, and Hashem promised us our inheritance.

Just as the historical events occurred, as presented in the Torah and beyond in the prophecies of Nach, so to, logically, the prophecies of Mashiach will occur. At this point in the history of the world- our generation is closest and with maximum potential to receive Mashiach- as envisioned by our forefathers, and strengthened in the words of Moshe, and prophesied about in Nach. We are ready! Good Shabbos.