

Parashah Devarim

The one where Moses recounts the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness as they prepare to enter the Promised Land.

In Parashah Devarim, Moses delivers his farewell speech in which he addresses the Israelite people, reminding them of their experiences and encounters during their journey in the wilderness. He speaks of the challenges they faced as a community and their moments of doubt and rebellion against divine guidance. He recounts:

Leaving Egypt: Moses mentions the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt, the 10 plagues, and the people's miraculous escape through the parted Red Sea.

Mount Sinai: He refers to the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, where they received the commandments and instructions from the Divine.

Wandering in the wilderness: Moses recalls the many years of wandering in the desert, during which the Israelites faced numerous challenges, including scarcity of food and water, complaints, and rebellions.

Appointment of leaders: Moses reminds the people of his appointment of judges and officials to help govern the community and administer justice, ensuring that disputes are resolved fairly.

The spies' mission: He mentions the incident of the 12 scouts sent to explore the Promised Land and the lack of faith displayed by the Israelites, leading to their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness.

Conquest of Sihon and Og: Moses recounts the victorious battles against the Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, which resulted in the Israelites' possession of their lands.

Allocation of land: He discusses the allocation of land on the eastern side of the Jordan River to the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

Moses also stresses the **importance of unity and obedience** among the people. He emphasizes the **need for the Israelites to appoint wise and just leaders** to help govern the community effectively. He insists on the significance of **establishing a system of justice and the fair administration of laws**, which would contribute to the well-being and harmony of the society they were about to create in the Promised Land.

Throughout the parashah, Moses urges the people to **remember their shared history** and the **lessons learned from their past mistakes**. He encourages them to **remain faithful to the covenant** and to **uphold the commandments** given to them by the Divine, emphasizing that their unity and adherence to these principles are vital for their successful settlement in the Promised Land.

Teen Takeaways from Parashah Devarim

1. **The word Deuteronomy means "second law."** This book repeats so much of what we learned in the first books of the Torah. It is a review, and it contains another recounting of the giving of the Torah and Ten Commandments. But there are some differences worth exploring. Learning Torah is all about discussion and offering our thoughts.
2. **Learning from mistakes:** Parashah Devarim reminds us that mistakes are an important part of life because of the opportunities to learn from them. The key is to reflect on what went wrong and use that experience to make better choices in the future.
3. **Choosing good leaders:** Choosing wise and fair leaders in any situation is crucial. Good leaders can make a big difference in solving problems and keeping things running smoothly. Not everyone can be a Moses, but most of us get an opportunity to be a leader sometime in our lives. Elections are our country's way of choosing government leaders.
4. **Strength in unity:** When everyone works together and supports one other, we can achieve great things. Unity is like your secret weapon in facing challenges. Teamwork brings lots of resources together, which often helps to solve problems. But it also can create other problems when too much disagreement slows things down. Can you think of examples of each?
5. **Following rules and values:** Following guidelines and making ethical choices is important in life. Doing so helps us make fair decisions and treat others with respect. How does the Torah and its lessons and stories help ground us in an ethical framework?
6. **Remembering your roots:** Remembering your family's history and cultural heritage can provide valuable lessons and a sense of identity. The Torah is like our grandparents passing down our family's stories, beginning with Abraham and Sarah. Much of our family album contains pictures of Moses and our ancestors travelling through the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land. Ask your grandparents how their grandparents came to America.
7. **Having trust and confidence:** It's essential to have trust and confidence in yourself and the positive forces around you. This trust can help you stay focused on your goals and stay true to your values.

Summary

Parashah Devarim offers timeless wisdom that can **help teenagers navigate the ups and downs of life, make smart choices, and grow into responsible and thoughtful individuals.**