

PARSHA FROM THE SOURCE פרשה ממקורה

4 Av 5786

פרשת דברים תשפ"ו

As we enter Sefer Devarim, the Meforshim's varied introductions highlight differing views on the Sefer's purpose within the Torah.

Abarbanel's Introduction to Sefer Devarim

15th c. Spain

Rather, his sole intention was to explain the Torah and the commandments — those that required explanation — as it is written, "*Moshe undertook to explain this Torah.*" For this alone was his purpose, and nothing else... But the matters that had been stated only by hint or in brief — he, peace be upon him, while alive would explain them; yet at the time of his death they would require interpretation and clarification. Therefore he needed to bring them in this book in order to explain them, and not for any other purpose.

אברבנאל הקדמה לספר דברים

דון יצחק אברבנאל

שהיתה כונתו בלבד לבאר את התורה והמצוות אותם שהיו צריכות ביאור וכמו שאמר הואיל משה באר את התורה הזאת. כי זה בלבד היה תכליתו לא דבר אחר... אמנם האותות שנזכרו ברמז או בקיצור. ראה ע"ה שבהיותו חי הוא היה מבאר אותם. אבל בשעת מותו יצטרכו לפירוש וביאור. ולכן הוצרך להביאם בספר הזה כדי לבארם לא לתכלית אחר.

According to the Abarbanel, the purpose of the whole Sefer is to clarify those Mitzvot which hadn't been clearly explained until now.

Seforno's Introduction to Sefer Devarim

Italy, 15th c.

And with this his Torah was completed, together with the testimony at its end that indeed no person other than Moshe ever reached the level of his prophecy, through which the Torah of truth was given — a Torah to which nothing may be added and from which nothing may be subtracted. And through this God made known the supernal kindness that He brought into being in Moshe a prophetic capacity beyond what is naturally possible for a human being, in order that the Torah of truth be given through him — a Torah that admits no change, no addition and no diminution through the prophecy of any other prophet, as our Sages said: that no prophet is permitted to introduce anything new from now on.

ספרנו הקדמה לספר דברים

ר' עובדיה ספורנו

ובזה נשלמה תורתו, עם עדות בסופה כי אמנם לא הגיע אדם זולת משה למדרגת נבואתו אשר בה נתנה תורת אמת, עליה אין להוסיף וממנה אין לגרוע. ובזה הודיע חסד עליון שהמציא במשה הכנה נבואית יותר מן האפשר בטבע אנושי, למען תת תורת אמת על ידו, אשר אין חליפות לה, ולא תוספת וגרעון על ידי נבואת שום נביא, כאמרם ז"ל: שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה.

According to The Seforno, the purpose of Sefer Devarim was to pay tribute to Moshe and to show that he, and he alone, reached a level of Nevu'ah that allowed him to 'contribute' to the writing of the Torah.

The Ramban's Introduction to Sefer Devarim

Spain, 12th c.

The subject of this book is known: it is Mishneh Torah, in which Moshe our teacher explains to the generation entering the Land most of the commandments of the Torah that are necessary for Israel... And before beginning to explain the Torah, he began by rebuking them and reminding them of their sins — how often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness, and how the Holy One, blessed be He, dealt with them with the attribute of mercy... so that no one should say: We cannot inherit the Land, for there is no person who does not sin, and immediately the attribute of judgment will be stretched out against us and we will perish. Therefore, Moshe, our teacher, informed them that the Holy One, blessed be He, is compassionate and full of mercy, for forgiveness and pardon from Him, blessed be He, are a support and aid to human beings in their service of Him, as the verse says: *"For with You is forgiveness, so that You may be feared."*

רמב"ן הקדמה לספר דברים

ר' משה בן נחמן

הספר הזה ענינו ידוע שהוא משנה תורה יבאר בו משה רבינו לדור הנכנס בארץ רוב מצות התורה הצריכות לישראל... וטרם שיתחיל בביאור התורה, התחיל להוכיחם ולהזכיר להם עונותיהם כמה ימרוהו במדבר, וכמה התנהג עמהם הקב"ה במדת הרחמים, וזה להודיע חסדיו עמהם... שלא יאמר אדם: לא נוכל לרשת את הארץ, כי אין אדם אשר לא יחטא, ומיד תהיה מדת הדין מתוחה כנגדנו ונאבד. ולכן הודיעם משה רבינו כי הקב"ה רחמן מלא רחמים, כי הסליחה והמחילה ממנו יתברך סייע ועזר לבני אדם בעבודתו, ובענין שאמר הכתוב: כי עמך הסליחה למען תורה.

According to the Ramban, the point of Sefer Devarim was to ensure that the Jews entering Israel would be prepared to continue their observance of *mitzvot* and not lose hope because of sins that they may commit in the future.

Questions for Reflection:

1. In light of the Ramban, what lesson should we be aware of when it comes to addressing past failures in our journey of Avodat Hashem?
2. According to the Abarbanel, what was the purpose of not giving certain Mitzvot clearly to begin with and only clarifying them before Moshe's death?

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