

D'VARIM { דְּבָרִים } (Words)

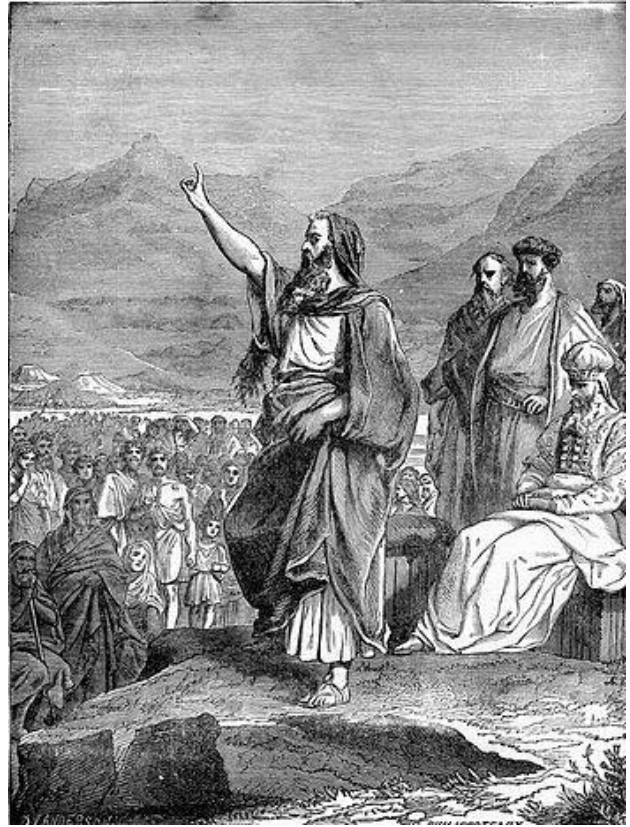
**Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22, Isaiah 1:1-27,
Acts 9:1-21, Mark 14:1-16**

**A Messianic Jewish Commentary by
Hannah Nesher
www.voiceforisrael.net**

“These are the words (d’varim) which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness,” (Deuteronomy 1:1)

The Power of Words:

This portion of scripture begins the fifth of the five books of Moses with the words, **“These are the words (Eleh d’varim)....”** These are the opening words of Deuteronomy, the last book of the five books of Moses. In Hebrew, the name of this book is simply D’varim, which means ‘words’. This same word, however, ‘d’varim’, also means ‘things’ in Hebrew.



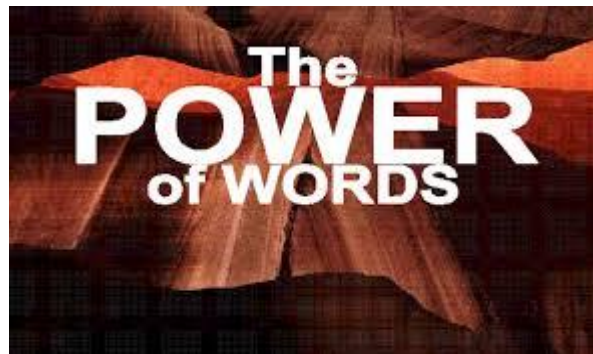
Moses Speaks to Israel (19th-century engraving by [Henri Félix Emmanuel Philippoteaux](#))

This reveals a truth hidden in the Word of God (Devar Elohim); that is, our words have the power to create physical ‘things’. God, the Great Creator of the Universe, used words to form the universe and all that is in it. He spoke and it was created.

God said, **“Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass.”** (Isaiah 46:11)

Our words are so powerful! They can bring life and blessing or death and destruction. **“Death and Life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”** (Proverbs 18:21)

I am beginning to become aware of how often we (including myself) are using our words for wrong purposes, to our own harm and to the detriment of others. When we use our words to criticize, condemn or run down other people, we bring the same negative judgment upon ourselves.



So many sincere Believers are poor in finances, sick in body, weak in faith, and just plain miserable, because they indulge in speaking negative words.

“Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.” (Psalms 34:12&13)

Who doesn't want to see God's goodness in the land of the living? Who doesn't want to experience the abundant life that Yeshua came to give us? Then we must guard our tongue from what is called in Hebrew 'Lashon Harah' which means an evil tongue.



Some religious Jews post a “No Lashon Harah” sign in their homes or neighborhoods, like a no smoking sign. I like this. It is a good reminder that God wants us to use our words to nourish people, to encourage, and to build up; not to tear down, criticize and find fault, as written,

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers...Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.” (Ephesians 4:29,31)

No lashon hara sign in the [Mea Shearim](#) quarter of [Jerusalem](#)

Words can be so terribly destructive and hurtful when used in a wrong manner. The Word of God tells us to put on our armor, including the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts (arrows) of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:16)

Often, these arrows from the wicked one come in the form of bitter words someone speaks to us: **“Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, who sharpen their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows – bitter words.” (Psalm 64:2-3)**

Some people use their tongue like a sword to pierce and wound our hearts with their bitter words. These may continue to replay over and over again in our mind, each time twisting the point of that poison dart in our heart.

Only speaking the truth of God's word by faith helps to heal the wounds caused by people's bitter words. It is of course not so much the person, but that they have made their tongues available to be used by the principalities and powers of darkness to harm us.

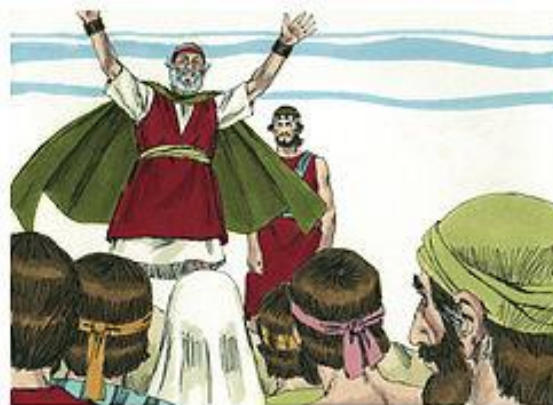
I have found, however, that it doesn't do much lasting good to try by our own willpower to control our tongues; because our words proceed from what is hidden in our hearts. **“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.” (Matthew 15:18)**

When we have bitterness, anger, resentment and malice in our hearts that we have not dealt with, of course this 'leaven' will produce bitter words.

And so we must deal with the root of our sinful tongues – and that is the condition of our hearts. We must ask, as did King David, to create in us a clean heart and renew a right, steadfast spirit within us.¹

Of course, none of us is perfect in the matter of our tongues, but we need to come to the place of understanding that we *will* eat the fruit of our words. **“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love to talk will have to eat their own words.”** (Proverbs 18:21, God’s Word translation)

Sometimes we are afflicted with various ailments and don’t understand why. But if we listen to ourselves, we might hear ourselves say things like, *“I’m so ‘sick and tired’ of this ...or I’m just ‘dying’ to see that ...”*



Moses Addressed the Israelites (1984 illustration by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Sweet Publishing)

I heard one woman at a dollar store who was having trouble finding something she was looking for say, *“Oh, I’m going blind! I can’t find a thing.”* I shuddered to hear her say it, knowing that we can curse ourselves just out of ignorance with a wrong use of the power of the spoken word.

Yeshua warned us that we would be judged by every idle word we speak. **“But I say to you, that for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment.”** (Matthew 12:36) Perhaps it is this foolish, careless, destructive use of words that will bring judgment upon us.

From the very beginning of time, there was THE WORD: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** (John 1:1)
Yeshua is the Living Word which became flesh and dwelt amongst us.

In the beginning (Brisheet), God created the entire universe with the power of His spoken words. He spoke and it was created. **“Let there be light, He said, and there was light!”** (Genesis 1:3)

God said, **“Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass.”** (Isaiah 46:11)

We are created in God’s image and therefore He has also given us creative power in our words, both spoken and written. We are instructed to speak forth those things which are not as if they

¹ Psalms 51:10

already exist (Romans 4:17). If we fail to do so, we fail to make use of a great creative power that God has made available to us to use for good.

Sometimes we keep speaking about a negative condition in our lives that exists instead of what we hope for. By speaking about the problem all the time, we only magnify it and give more power to the darkness. Which is why talking about our problems over and over again rarely solves them. Instead we need to speak forth those things that we hope for, believing that we will receive them by faith.

When we need to correct someone, I find that often I paint a negative picture while doing so. I often say, *“If you continue doing this and that negative thing then this and that bad thing will result.”* This only magnifies the darkness.

Instead, we can paint a more beautiful picture in their mind and heart by implanting hope and a positive vision. *“If you will do this instead, see how lovely and pleasant and better it will be for you and others around you.”*

It’s not always easy to remember these things in the heat of emotion, but I believe that in the days ahead, we absolutely need to learn how to use the creative power of our words to bring about the provision, help, deliverance and solutions that we need.

The Prophet Isaiah, while seeing a vision of the Lord seated on His throne in the Temple, said, **“Woe is me! I am ruined!”** (or possibly something like ‘oye vey!’) Why did Isaiah, great prophet of God, feel completely undone in God’s presence? What brought on this terrible sense of his own sinfulness in contrast to the holiness of God?

By his own admission, it was because he was **“a man of unclean lips and he dwelt amongst a people of unclean lips.”** (Isaiah 6:5) Then a seraph flew to him with a live coal in his hand from the altar. With it he touched Isaiah’s mouth. His guilt was taken away and his sin atoned for.

The Hebrew word **seraph** comes from the word **‘to burn’** (l’sareph). A Seraph is a special angel whose name identifies its mission as a purifying fire which burns away the uncleanness in us.

God is sending out seraphim all over the earth to those who ask. They are applying a hot coal to our lips, cleansing us from the bad habit of lashon harah. We must be re-trained in how to speak for the Kingdom of Light and Love rather than allowing our mouths to be used for evil purposes.



by Matthew Brackney

May our lips be used to nourish many; may the law of kindness be continually on our mouth, and may our tongue be ever so gentle. By guarding our mouth and tongue we can keep ourselves from much trouble. (Proverbs 21:23)

Telling our Stories

It is with words that we tell our life stories. We can either use our words to tell a story of being continually victimized, abused, and treated unjustly; or we can use words to express our lives as a continual growing process by which we are learning from our mistakes, and by the grace of God, pressing forward into the good plan He has for us.

Moses, before his death, begins to tell the history of the Israelites; he recounts their story as a community and as a nation. What should have been an eleven day journey, only 160-170 miles, turned into a forty year exercise in futility. They wandered in the wilderness until they died – all except Joshua and Caleb.



[Satellite](#) image of the land east of the Jordan River – ancient Edom, [Moab](#), Ammon, and [Gilead](#) – present-day [Jordan](#) and vicinity

The Israelites, when faced with challenges said, **“We are going to be victims – our women and children – we will all die in this wilderness!”** And God said, **OK, you said it, so be it!** (Numbers 14:28) (paraphrase). When we have a victim mentality, this ‘victim’ scenario will replay over and over again in our lives. We need to learn how to get out of the wilderness.

Why did Moses dredge up an old and painful history? I believe it was a necessary part of the preparation for leaving the wilderness and crossing over the Jordan into the Promised Land. The children of Israel who had failed to possess the Land, because of their own sinfulness, needed to face the truth, and then release it in order to move on. And we need to do the same.

Moses basically asked them to examine themselves. How did we get here? How is it that an eleven day trip took forty years? Sometimes we need to ask ourselves the same questions in order to finally get out of our wilderness.

We need to face the truth – not about others – but about ourselves. Because, as Yeshua said, **“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”** (John 8:32)

Blaming others for our wilderness experiences will never set us free. The Israelites constantly blamed Moses. Finally, they needed to come to the place of facing the hard truth that it was not Moses’ fault; Moses was not the one to blame. It was their own negative attitudes and words which had kept them in the wilderness.

Yeshua told us an important principle. He said to first examine the plank in our own eye before trying to gouge the speck out of our brother’s. (Matthew 7:5)

It’s so easy to blame someone else for our troubles; then we can wallow in self-pity and play the victim rather than take responsibility.

The truth is that the reason the Israelites wandered for forty years in the wilderness and then died was not because of their enemies and not because of Moses, but because of their own sins: fear, unbelief, idolatry and rebellion which caused them to speak wrong words that angered the Lord.²

Victim or Victor?

I remember vividly the day someone confronted me and challenged me to face the truth about myself. Before I came to know the Lord, I lived like most people in the world. Eventually, I found myself in a crisis pregnancy when the father of my unborn child abandoned me and went back to his home country of Japan. I cried and carried on, playing the victim to the utmost; and most people bought into it too.

But one weekend, I decided to take my kids on a trip to the mountains where we ‘happened’ to stay at a hostel run by Christians. Being very pregnant at the time and obviously travelling solo, the hostel manager asked me about my situation. I was more than happy to relate my pathetic tale of victimhood, how I had been so cruelly abandoned and betrayed.

This woman asked if I had been married to the father of the baby. When I said that I had not, she looked me squarely in the eye and said, *“Then you sinned and are now suffering the consequences.”*

At the time, I felt so hurt and angry but in fact, this was the truth. God has set certain boundaries for the expression of our sexuality in a committed marriage relationship and I had chosen to transgress those boundaries and therefore got hurt. Once I faced the hard truth, I was able to forgive and release the father as well as myself and begin a journey of healing and restoration.



Timothy was born June 24th 1993

It is only the truth that will set us free. Some people never stop blaming others. One man I know who molested his daughter said it was his wife’s fault because she did not ‘meet his needs.’ How many times do we excuse our wrong behaviors by blaming it on the other person? *“He/she made me mad; they ‘made’ me do it.”*

Healing happens when we grow up and take responsibility for our actions, realizing that there are consequences to sin. For every action there is a consequence. As we sow, so shall we reap³. When my marriage failed, it did not help me to keep blaming my husband for his sins. This only

² You may order my DVD, [Walking Through the Wilderness](#), by mail or through website: www.voiceforisrael.net

³ Galatians 6:7

kept me bound in bitterness and self-pity. I needed to face my own part in the destruction of the relationship, forgive myself and release it to the Lord.

This is the only way out of the wilderness; our only hope to cross the Jordan – face the truth, forgive, release and move on, trusting in the Lord’s mercy and lovingkindness.

Preparing to Cross the Jordan

Moses told this new generation, **“You have dwelt long enough in this mountain. Turn and take your journey and go...behold I have set the Land before you. Go in and possess it.”** (Deuteronomy 1:6-8)

The Hebrew word for ‘dwelt’ in this case is **shevet** which means **to sit**. Some of us have been sitting around long enough. We’ve been going around the same mountain long enough. We need to say enough is enough! It is time to turn, (the Hebrew meaning of repentance – t’shuvah from the root ‘shuv’), and take our journey towards our Promised Land.

First, however, a time of recounting our journey may be in order, so that we don’t just repeat the same dumb mistakes again.

“Recall to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former thing of old, for I AM God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like Me.” (Isaiah 46:8-9)

Even in the wilderness, the Israelites lacked nothing – their clothes and shoes did not wear out and they had sufficient manna to survive. But it was still the ‘*same old, same old*’...the land of ‘*just barely enough*’.

Some people are still in Egypt (the land of lack and suffering and bondage) and need deliverance. But many others are still wandering around in the land of just enough – living from paycheck to paycheck – just enough to squeak by with. Same old boring life day and day after dreary, dry day. This is not how God intends for us to live.

It may be for a season; but I believe that God wants to give this message to many people to say that now is the time to take up our journey and prepare to cross the Jordan. Only we must be strong and of good courage, people of faith – believing that God is with us and will help us overcome every challenge.

God wants to take us from the land of just enough into the land of abundance: a land flowing with milk and honey, of streams and brooks and fruit of every kind. We are not to live a small, miserable existence, but to have an adventure with God and bring forth much good fruit for our Father’s glory. Halleluyah!

**“You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip with abundance.”** (Psalms 65:11)

Haftarat D'varim

This week's haftarah (prophetic portion) is called the Haftarah of Rebuke – a reading which precedes the fast of Tisha B'av, which is a day of mourning for the destruction of both of the Holy Temples. The first was destroyed by the Babylonians (423 BCE) and the second by the Romans (68 CE). Though separated by hundreds of years, the Temples were both destroyed and Jerusalem conquered by foreigners on the exact same day.

More recently, World War I began also on the 9th (tishah) of the month of Av. Therefore this time period is one of somber reflection and much prayer. It is a time for facing the truth about our sins and asking God's forgiveness.



The haftarah for parashah Devarim

Many Jewish people still do not realize that Jerusalem was overthrown, the Temples destroyed, and all the people sent into exile because of God's judgment against their sins. The Babylonians and Romans were only God's agents to carry out His judgment.

We need to look at the destruction in our lives, assess the damage, and repent for the sins that may have caused it. History has a way of repeating itself if we don't learn from it. It was the breakdown of the moral life of the nation of Israel that was directly responsible for the devastation, famine, defeat, exile and death. Today we are seeing a similar breakdown in the moral foundation of our modern society as God's commandments are rejected.

Jeremiah tried to warn the people but to no avail. Today we have modern day prophets also calling for the nation to repent and return to God's standards of morality and holiness.

The truth is that some people will simply not be corrected by mere words; they will not listen. Therefore, they must learn through the rebukes of life. Unfortunately, some people never learn and therefore suffer destruction, as did Jerusalem. **"He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."** (Proverbs 29:1)

We must be careful that we don't stand as a continual buffer zone between people's wrong actions and the resulting consequences; because we may find ourselves standing in the way of something necessary that God wants to do in a person's life.

Those of us with a gift of mercy and compassion, a calling of a rescuer must beware that we don't cross the lines of wisdom and common sense. We can become so involved with someone else's never ending stream of problems caused by their own wrong actions, that our own family or personal life can suffer.

Even a child must learn from rebuke and consequences: **"The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."** (Proverbs 29:15) Adult children need to let go of blaming their parents for all of their troubles and, by the grace of God, overcome them. As parents of adult children who may be suffering and in trouble we also need to keep this

in perspective and not blame all of their woes on our past failures as parents. We cannot (and should not) be the eternal savior of the world, rescuing everyone from the consequences of their sins, but at times allow them to experience the rebukes of life. There is only one eternal Savior.

For ourselves, we must not despise the rebuke or correction of the Almighty (Shaddai), because it is for our own good to listen. If we will listen to the rebuke of the Holy Spirit in time, then we need not fear even in times of war or disaster or economic downturns – we will be kept safe under the shelter of His wings.

But woe to the person who will not listen to the counsel and rebuke of the Spirit of the Living God: “Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my rebuke, I also will laugh at your calamity I will mock when your terror comes...

Then they will call on me, but I will not answer, they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke...but whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.” (Proverbs 1:24-30 & 33)

I truly believe that in the days to come, we have nothing to fear as long as we are listening to the counsel and rebuke of the Lord; we will dwell safely and securely in Him. However, we must not, in our arrogance, think that we are somehow above reproach.

God allowed the destruction of Jerusalem, His holy city, and the Holy Temple, the very dwelling place of His shechinah glory. Jerusalem, the capital of God’s presence, the beautiful Bride, the queen, had been reduced to a common harlot through her whoring after other gods. The relationship between God and Jerusalem has always symbolized the faithful love between a husband and wife.

The word of the Lord is destined to come from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3) But the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah compared Jerusalem to an Egyptian prostitute⁴ and to Sodom.⁵

How terrible the betrayal of adultery! God warns a husband not to deal treacherously with his wife.⁶ How deeply the heart of God must be wounded when, like an unfaithful spouse, we forsake Him, the fountain of living waters for a cistern that cannot hold water.

If even these holy places, Jerusalem and the Temple, were not immune from His judgment because of the people’s sin, how can we think that we can sin and still be not be held accountable?

God is not some kind of indulgent father who turns a blind eye to the sins of his children and never disciplines them. For those who love their children discipline them promptly. Of course

⁴ Ezekiel 23:3

⁵ Isaiah 1:9

⁶ Malachi 2:15

God is full of mercy, and we have an advocate with the Father, Yeshua Hamashiach, who has paid the price for all of our sins through His precious blood. But we must sincerely repent of our sins, asking for the grace and ability to walk pure and holy as He is holy (kadosh).

Today, the whore is Babylon, and God implores us to come out of the world system and be set apart. **“Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”** (Revelations 18:4)⁷

We must, by necessity, be *in* the world but we must not be *of* the world. More and more in these last days, we must live a set apart (kadosh) lifestyle, not according to the standards of the world but according to the standards of God.



Babylon – Prince of Persia - Wiki

No longer can we excuse the breaking of any of the Ten Commandments (including the keeping of the Sabbath on the seventh day) just because ‘everyone else is doing it’. If we follow the morality and standards of those around us, we are making the very same mistake that brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple on Tisha B’av.

The Spirit of God no longer dwells in a Temple made of hands, but rather in the heart of every true Believer. (Acts 17:24) Our bodies are now a temple for the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

So let us be sanctified, cleansed and made holy (kadosh) in body, mind and spirit for the coming of our Lord, Adonai Yeshua Hamashiach (The Messiah). Shabbat Shalom.

⁷ You may order the book, [Come out of Her My People, Flee Babylon](#), by mail or through the website: www.voiceforisrael.net

D'varim Study Questions

1. What is the spiritual connection between 'words' and 'things' as revealed to us in the Hebrew language? What Scriptural evidence do we have for this idea?
2. Do you think that this revelation has had an impact on the words you choose to speak now and in the future? If so, in what way? Share and discuss.
3. What is the meaning of 'lashon harah' and why is it such a serious sin?
4. What kind of story are we telling about our life? Is it one of being a victim or a victor?
5. Do you think there is ever a time to go back over our history and review our choices and the consequences that have brought us to where we are today?
6. How can facing the truth about our past and taking responsibility set us free to embrace the better future God has for us?
7. Do you feel that you've been wandering around and around the same mountain for long enough and are ready to move on? Discuss and share.
8. What does it tell us that even Jerusalem and the Holy Temple were not exempt from God's judgment?
9. How does this relate to Tisha B'av?

About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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