

Parsha Va'eschanan Q&A

1

Q: How many times did Moshe daven to be allowed into Eretz Yisrael, and why does the Torah's word for his prayer hint at that?

A: 515 times — the word “va'eschanan” has that exact gematria (this specific detail comes from Baal HaTurim). Rashi adds that the word also comes from a root meaning “free gift” — even Moshe, with all his mitzvos, asked Hashem as a gift, not as something he'd earned. (*Rashi & Baal HaTurim 3:23*)

2

Q: What places was Moshe really asking to see when he said “this good mountain” and “this Levonon”?

A: Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdash. (*Rashi 3:25*)

3

Q: Why did Hashem tell Moshe “Rav lach” — stop asking?

A: Two reasons: so people wouldn't say “the Master is too strict and the student just keeps begging” — and because “Rav lach” also means “you have so much waiting for you” — a huge reward was already stored up for Moshe. (*Rashi 3:26*)

4

Q: Why did Hashem tell Moshe to climb the mountain and look at the Land, even though he couldn't enter it?

A: Moshe asked to “see the good Land” — and Hashem showed him all of it. He couldn't cross the Yarden, but Hashem still let him see every part of the Land with his own eyes. (*Rashi 3:27*)

5

Q: What comforting message did Moshe give Yehoshua before he took over as leader?

A: Yehoshua was afraid that just as his teacher Moshe was punished on account of the people, he too would eventually be punished. Moshe reassured him with Hashem's guarantee: Yehoshua himself would cross before the people and lead them successfully into the Land. (*Rashi 3:28*)

6

Q: The Torah says not to add to the mitzvos. What's an example of “adding” that's actually wrong?

A: Taking a fifth species with the lulav, or wearing a fifth string on tzitzis instead of four. (*Rashi 4:2*)

7

Q: What event did Moshe warn the people never to forget?

A: Standing at Har Sinai and seeing and hearing Hashem there. (*Rashi 4:9–10*)

8

Q: Is Hashem always described as “a consuming fire”?

A: No — that description applies specifically to punishing idol worship; Hashem is merciful in every other area. (*Rashi 4:24, see 4:31*)

9

Q: Why did Moshe set aside three cities of refuge on the east side of the Yarden if they couldn't be used yet?

A: Those cities couldn't actually protect anyone until three more were set up inside Eretz Canaan — years later. But Moshe didn't wait. He said, “Any mitzvah I can do right now, I'll do!” (*Rashi 4:41*)

10

Q: Why did Moshe have to stand between Hashem and the people to teach them the Aseres Hadibros?

A: The people were too scared of the fire on the mountain to get close, so Moshe stood in the middle to hear from Hashem and pass the words on. (*Devarim 5:5*)

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11

Q: The Aseres Hadibros here say “Shamor” (guard) Shabbos, but in Shemos they say “Zachor” (remember). How could Hashem say two different words at once?

A: Hashem said both words at the very same time — a person can't do that, but Hashem could. It teaches that “remembering” and “guarding” Shabbos are one mitzvah. (*Rashi 5:12*)

12

Q: After the people begged to hear the rest of the mitzvos through Moshe instead of directly, what did Hashem wish for them?

A: That they'd keep that same closeness to Hashem forever. (*Devarim 5:26*)

13

Q: Is “Shema Yisrael” only describing how things are right now?

A: No — it's also a promise that Hashem, who is our G-d today, will one day be recognized by the whole world as the one true G-d. (*Rashi 6:4*)

14

Q: What does it mean to serve Hashem “with all your heart”?

A: To serve Hashem with both your inclinations — the part of you that wants to do good, and the part that wants to do the wrong thing. (*Rashi 6:5*)

15

Q: What does it mean to teach Torah “sharply” to your children?

A: To know it so well that if someone asks you a question, you can answer right away without stumbling. (*Rashi 6:7*)

16

Q: Right after “teach these words to your children,” the Torah tells us to bind them and write them on our doorposts. What two mitzvos come from this pasuk?

A: Tefillin (bound on the arm and head) and mezuzah (written and fixed to the doorpost). (*Rashi 6:8–9*)

17

Q: What earlier event does “do not test Hashem” remind us of?

A: Massah, where the people complained about water and asked, “Is Hashem among us or not?” (*Rashi 6:16*)

18

Q: The seven nations in the Land were bigger and stronger than Bnei Yisrael. How would Bnei Yisrael win?

A: Not through their own strength — Moshe told them: if you say in your heart “these nations outnumber us,” remember what Hashem did to Pharaoh and Egypt. Hashem Himself would fight for them. (*Rashi 7:17–18*)

19

Q: Why did Hashem choose Bnei Yisrael?

A: Not because of their numbers — Rashi teaches that “you are the fewest” really means Bnei Yisrael made themselves small, humble, the way Avraham called himself “dust and ashes,” and Moshe and Aharon said “what are we?” Hashem chose them for that humility. (*Rashi 7:7*)

20

Q: The Torah says Hashem keeps kindness for many generations but punishment for only a few. What does that teach us?

A: Rashi explains a precise distinction: for those who serve Hashem out of fear, the Torah here says kindness lasts 1,000 generations; earlier (5:10), where it describes those who serve out of love, it says “thousands” (at least 2,000). Either way, Hashem's measure of good is always far greater than His measure of punishment. (*Rashi 7:9; Devarim 5:9–10*)

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