

Torah Portion D'varim

Shabbat beginning August 5, 2022

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D'varim gives Moses' final instructions to the Israelites, reminding them how they both followed and failed God. What does the word "God" mean in modern life? We can find answers in similarities between our lives and ancient events. Like our ancestors on the verge of the promised land, we sometimes shy away from what we need to do. Exploring new territories whether homes, jobs, friends, or even hobbies can be stressful as well as delightful. We can feel unworthy or try to impose our wills on others. So, exploration engenders triumphs and defeats, both small and great. Good sleep restores resilience after small defeats but too many defeats wear us down. Slavery wore down our ancestors, but wilderness survival prepared their descendants.

D'varim reminds us to ask what wore us down and what gave us strength? It tells how God warned the survivors who was off limits and who vulnerable. Do we still get such intel? To understand the bible, scholars ask who wrote it, when, where, and to whom. D'varim helps us ask how we know when to impose our wills and when to step back. Our answers give clues to our modern and personal meanings of "God."