



NEWS & VIEWS

July 19, 2018 | 7 Av 5778

Blog Edition



Posts from this <u>Hebrew College-hosted blog</u> are published weekly in <u>Patheos</u>.

Take These Words: Deuteronomy and Carrying Torah with Us on our Journey

Parashat Devarim (Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22)

By Rabbi Minna Bromberg, Rab `10 Coordinator, Year-in-Israel Program Rabbinical School of Hebrew College



"Kyewwwww!" my nearly two-and-a-half year old daughter shrieks as she grabs hold of the object of her desire and lifts it high above her head. It is purple and spongy and covered in red polka dots and it is, in fact, a capital letter Q. To say that "Q" is her favorite letter would not be quite accurate. "Q" is actually, as far as I can tell, the only letter she knows. It's not only this spongy bath-toy "Q" that she loves; she loves the green fridge magnet "Q" as well, and she also loves to point out other places that "Q" appears. What "Q" means to her, I cannot begin to guess, but her attachment to it is clear. She often carries a "Q" around the house with her or even takes it to bed.

This week we begin reading the Book of Deuteronomy, called in Hebrew "Devarim" for its opening verse which begins "These are the words that Moses spoke to all the people Israel...." This is Moses' farewell speech to the people he has lead through the desert for forty years. Over the course of the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses retells the people's story -- sometimes at quite a variance to the version we have read in the previous books of the Hebrew Bible. Moses has this one last chance to instill in the people all that he hopes will sustain them as they cross into the Promised Land without him. He knows he cannot accompany them; he hopes his words will.

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