

Moshe gives his final instructions.

**וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:**

“And Moshe went, and he spoke these things, to all of Yisroel.” (Devarim 31:1).

Where did Moshe come from that “he went?” Why were these final instructions specifically given after ‘he went?’ We already know from a previous pasuk that he talked to the entire Bnei Yisroel. Why does it mention “to all of Yisroel” again?

Midrash says, *he said these things. These the things before and after this pasuk. He told them about the brochos and klalos and then he sang them the song of Haazinu.* (Lekach Tov Dev. 31:1).

Ibin Ezra and Chizkuni say, *Moshe went to every tribe to tell them he was dying. This was a personal message given among the Yisroel camp. He “went” means he came back from blessing the tribes, even though the brochos are later (Devarim 33 et seq.).*

Chizkuni adds, *he had to address them separately because he could no longer use the trumpets to gather the people as he was passing leadership over to Yehoshua and it was inappropriate to use the holy trumpets on his day of death.*

Ramban says, *after instructing them when they stood before him (Ibid 29:9) they all returned. He then went out to the camp to talk to them and show them honor.*

Sforno points out that *וַיֵּלֶךְ* can mean self-propelled like Amram went to marry (Shmos 2:1) or when the Yisroel idolaters went on their own volition. (Devarim 17:3). Most of Yisroel only knew Moshe their whole life. Moshe just concluded the covenant with them. He went to give them comfort over his dying.

According to these comments, why did Bnei Yisroel return to their camp? Rashi says previously, *אַתֶּם נֹצְרִים הַיּוֹם* “You are standing today” means it was the day of his death. (See Rashi to Devarim 29:9). However, why would Moshe gather them just to disband them and then go out to talk to them again?

“Today” signifies something special about that day. The day that Moshe gave Bnei Yisroel the covenant was not necessarily the same day as the day he died. He says, “I am a hundred and twenty years *today*.” (Ibid 31:2). Previously, he said “You are standing, all of you, *today*.” (Ibid 29:9). He also said, “See that I have set before you *today*, Life and Good.” (Ibid 30:15). “Today” is significant not in that they are all the same day but it is a day that Moshe wants to repeat throughout history. Reuel (Yisro) asks his daughters, “How are you back so soon, *today*?” (Shmos 2:19). Something happened that day that was significant. Moshe commands them in Mitzrayim to observe “today” the day of Pesach, throughout the ages. (Ibid 12:17). It was the day of freedom. “And you who cling to Hashem, your Lord, you are all alive *today*.” (Devarim 4:4). There are many examples.

This is different than “הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה” (e.g. Devarim 2:22, 25, 3:14) that refers to a specific day. Moshe was telling them *today is different*. It was different because they were all together. “All of you are before Hashem, your Lord.” (Ibid 29:9). And it says here “to all of Yisroel.” They were all together as one. There was a unique *achdus* that Moshe wanted replicated throughout history. However, it may not have been repeated after this point.

“And Moshe went.” It can also mean “Moshe led.” The servant of Avraham led Rivkah to Yitzchok. (Bereishis 24:61). It also means going with a purpose to do something. “And Avraham lifted his eyes and saw, behold, a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. Avraham *went* and took the ram.” (Ibid 22:13). “And a man from Levi *went* from his house and he took a daughter of Levi.” (Shmos 2:1). “Moshe went and then he returned to his father-in-law, Yaser.” (Ibid 4:18). He went on a mission to speak to Pharaoh and then returned. “And Aharon went and met Moshe at the Mountain of the Lord.” (Ibid 4:27). Aharon went to meet Moshe so they can go to Mitzrayim together. There are many other examples of purposeful goings. It can also mean when business is concluded as in “And Hashem went, after he was finished speaking to Avraham.” (Bereishis 18:33).

Until now, Moshe was instructing Bnei Yisroel on behalf of Hashem. Hashem instructed Moshe, *נָקָם נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחֵר תֵּאָסֵף אֶל-עַמִּיךָ*: “You shall surely avenge Bnei Yisroel from the Midianites. After you shall be gathered to your people.” (Bamidbar 31:2). From then until now he was finishing his business. He took vengeance against Midian and then gave Hashem’s final instructions to Bnei Yisroel. At this point, he was finishing his last personal business. Therefore, while before they were standing together, on the day of his death he “went.” *Moshe went to fulfil this last mitzvah, to be gathered up to his people*. He gave his final instructions along the way. On this, his final day, he walked from his tent to his final resting place.

“And he spoke these things.” This expression means after an episode. That is usually signified by “after” preceding “these things.” (See Bereishis 15:1, 22:1, Esther 3:1). However, in connection to Moshe, it refers to the Aseres Hadibros. (Shmos 19:7, 20:1, 24:8). Moshe reminded Yisroel about the importance of their covenant with Hashem, how the Aseres Hadibros made them His people, and that when they travel to the Land they must live by His Law.

“To all of Yisroel.” They were no longer the “Sons of Yisroel.” They were “Yisroel” one complete nation. They included the twelve tribes – to be as one people – and also the converts and naturalized residents. The people that would cross the Jordan and take the land must be one unified nation, living under one set of laws, serving one Hashem. This pasuk signified Moshe’s entire leadership and his entire purpose. He constantly led them, walked among them, taught them the Torah, and made them a single cohesive nation.