

Lesson 8 – Structure of Perakim 2-3

Objective: To find the structure of perakim 2-3, and figure out the purpose they serve within the context of Moshe’s first speech.

Notes on Peshat:

2:24 – In this pasuk Hashem commands Moshe to battle Sihon but in pasuk 26 Moshe tries to first make peace. Ramban explains that pasuk 24 actually occurred after the peace envoy. Pasuk 24 is therefore written in hindsight, after the failed peace negotiation and the war. See how Midrash Tanhuma (quoted in Nehama Leibowitz below) solves this problem.

Activity: (3 periods)

1. Handout worksheet for students to fill out in class in pairs.

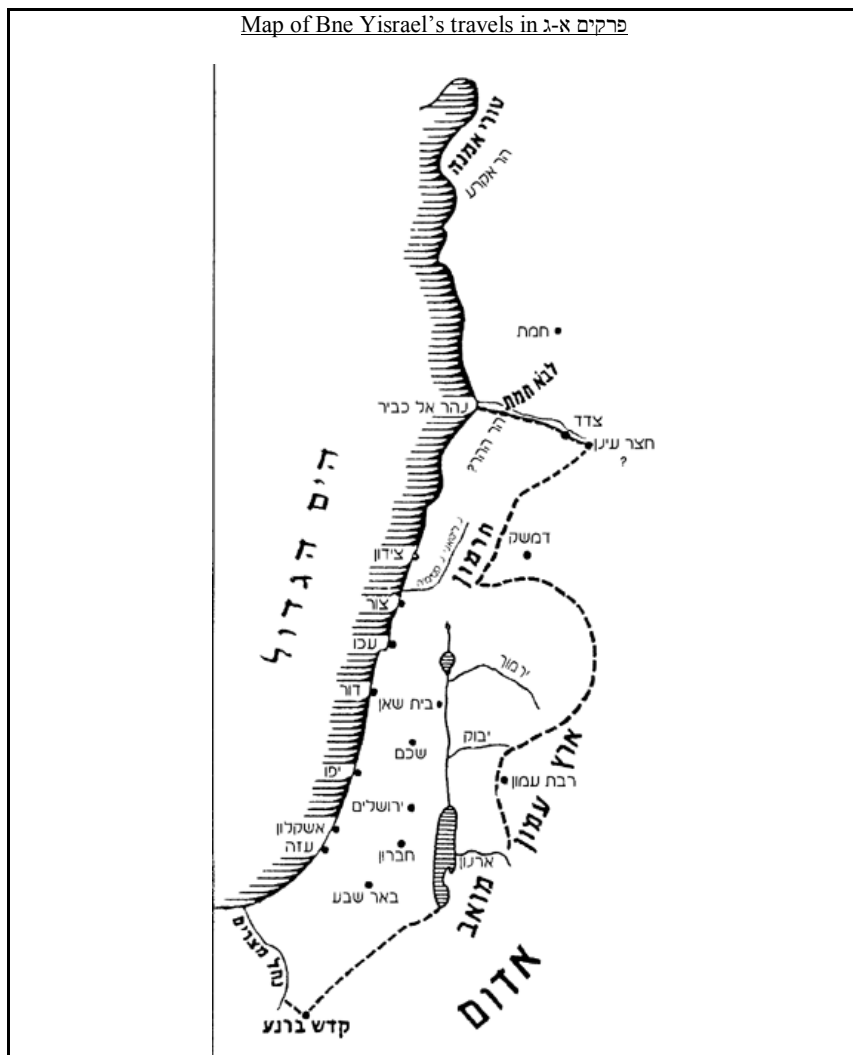
Structure of Perakim 2-3: Worksheet		
The second part of the historical speech lists the lands which בני ישראל had to go through in order to get where they are. Fill in the chart below based on Perakim 2-3.		
Do they fight?	Name of Land	Structure – Pesukim
	שעיר	ב:ב-ה

[L08 Perek 2-3 - Structure - Worksheet.doc](#)

2. Review worksheet and show each territory on a map. A projector or a big map is suggested.

Structure of Perakim 2-3: Summary Chart		
The second part of the speech lists the lands which בני ישראל had to go through in order to get where they are. Fill in the chart below based on Perakim 2-3.		
Do they fight?	Name of Land	Structure – Pesukim
לא	שעיר	ב: ב-ז
לא	מואב	ט-טז
לא	עמון	יז-כג
כן	סחון	כד-לז
כן	עג	ג: א-יא

[L08 Perakim 2-3 - Structure - Summary Chart.doc](#)



[L08 Perakim 2-3 - Structure - Map.doc](#)

3. Discuss – Why are these travels and battles included in Moshe’s first speech?

It is not simply a historical review to explain how they got to ערבות מואב. Since these travels happened only within the past few weeks, everyone present would remember them very well. Rather, Moshe brings up the first three territories with whom Bnei Yisrael do not fight in order to remind them that they may not take any territory that God gave to other nations. Just as Hashem has given territory to those nations and protects them, so to Hashem will give Bnei Yisrael their territory if Bnei Yisrael is willing to fight for it. Also, Moshe points out that Seir, Moab, and Amon themselves conquered their territories from giant people who lived there previously—proving that if those nations could conquer giant people then so can Bnei Yisrael. Moshe then reminds Bnei Yisrael of the last two territories which Bnei Yisrael do conquer to give them confidence that they can win and must trust that Hashem will help them conquer Israel (3:21-22). This, together with a reminder about the sin of the spies, all come together to form the central message of this speech: after Moshe dies, Bnei Yisrael must have the courage to battle for and inherit the land of Israel.

Why is Moshe’s prayer to enter the land included in this speech?

1. Moshe hopes that Hashem might reconsider after Moshe successfully led the conquest of the Transjordan.

2. Moshe wants to make sure nobody thinks that the reason he is not going into Israel is because he is afraid. Moshe explains that he entreated God to allow him to enter but God did not accept.

We can learn an important lesson from this passage about prayer. Sometimes we pray for things and do not get answered. We should remember, though, that even Moshe’s request was not granted. Prayer is not a magic formula. God may hear a prayer but still not grant it.

Further Discussions:

A. Og Melekh HaBashan is the subject of many colorful Midrashim. But, what is the peshat of Debarim 3:11? The pasuk says that his bed was 9 x 4 *amot* “by the standard cubit” (as opposed to a royal cubit). A cubit is the length from an average man’s (see Ibn Ezra) elbow to the tip of his middle finger, about 1½ feet. That would make Og’s bed 13½ x 6 feet. Ask the class: How tall do you think Og was? For homework have them look up how big the tallest man recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records is. Compare this to Goliath (1 Sam 17:4).

B. See Nehama Leibowitz, Devarim 3, about the importance of pursuing peace even if it contradict’s Hashem’s orders! The Midrash that she cites is quoted in the summary sheet after the summary chart. Compare the Midrash’s explanation to that of Ramban on 2:24. Use this as a point of departure to discuss the different views on the modern question of land for peace in Israel.