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*Eternal Heritage...*

*Rabbi Alon Meltzer*

*A New Page of Talmud –  
Ki Tavo 5782*



To understand a book, we need to know to what genre it belongs. Is it history or legend, chronicle or myth? To what question is it an answer? A history book answers the question: what happened? A book of cosmology - be it science or myth - answers the question: how did it happen? Torah is not a book of history, even though it includes history. It is not a book of science, even though the first chapter of Genesis - as the 19th-century sociologist Max Weber pointed out - is the necessary prelude to science, because it represents the first time people saw the universe as the product of a single creative will, and therefore as intelligible rather than capricious and mysterious. It is, first and last, a book about how to live. Everything it contains - not only commandments but also narratives, including the narrative of creation itself - is there solely for the sake of ethical and spiritual instruction.- **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**<sup>1</sup> You shall then recite as follows before the LORD your God: “My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meagre numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation. **Devarim 26:6**<sup>2</sup> The LORD your God commands you this day to observe these laws and rules; observe them faithfully with all your heart and soul. – **Devarim 26:16**<sup>3</sup> Now Moses finished explaining the Torah to them and issuing all the new commandments which G-d commanded him to declare to them.

You shall then recite as follows before the LORD your God ...

וְעִנִּית וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
**Devarim 26:6**

Therefore he said, “This day the Eternal thy God commanded thee to do these statutes and ordinances, for I have already completed everything for you.” He mentioned, and thou shalt observe and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.<sup>41</sup> I have already explained the terms “heart” and “soul.” – **Ramban on Devarim 26:16**<sup>4</sup> You entered into the covenant with him. The “covenant” comprised the undertaking by Israel to keep God’s statutes as something that would ensure their welfare, something He had not done for any other nation. – **Seforno on Devarim 26:16**<sup>5</sup> [This] means to say, since I have already finished explaining the commandments, there is no need to speak about their explanation any more; but rather to command you about their performance and observance. – **Arbarbenel on Devarim 26:16**<sup>6</sup> Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly.– **Pirkei Avot 1:1**<sup>7</sup> This suggests: each day they (God’s commandments) should be to you as something new (not antiquated and something of which you have become tired), as though you had received the commands that very day for the first time – **Rashi on Devarim 26:16**<sup>8</sup> **A new page of Talmud - Rabbi Alon Meltzer**