



## Parshas Devarim 2020, the definition of a nation

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Shlomo Ben Edward, Edward Ben Efraim, Leah Bas Moshe, Yaakov Ben Issur & in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Shaul Ben Berta, Sasson Bezalel Ben Batia & Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Tova Basha.*

Our Parsha begins the last book of the Torah, Sefer Devarim. With just 37 days left to live, Moshe gathers the nation for his final address. He rebukes them for their past misdeeds and lack of trust in G-d.

Moshe expresses the burden of leadership and how he mitigated it by appointing leaders over each individual tribe. He recounts the spies frightening reports of Israel's land and the drastic consequences that stemmed from it. He describes their journey through the desert and their wars with Sichon, Bashon, and Emor.

However, a question comes to mind: The Parsha ends with Moshe Rabbeinu repeating his instructions to the tribes of Reuvain, Gad, and half of Menasha. They were not to live on the other side of the Yarden River until the other tribes conquered and settled in Israel.

As the Pasuk writes (3:20), *“Until G-d has given rest to your brothers as He did for you, and until they also possess the land which G-d is giving them on the other side of the Jordan. It is only then, you can return to your land, which I gave you.”* What prompted Moshe Rabbeinu to repeat these specific instructions before the entire Jewish nation?

The Alshich Hakadosh gives a powerful explanation. He explains that Moshe repeated these specific instructions before the entire Jewish people to teach them how to be a nation.

The Jewish people are a community of individuals who are inherently connected. Therefore, if even one Jewish person is not stable and established, the rest of the nation may not settle in the promised land.

G-d gave us the privilege and responsibility of each other's physical welfare and spiritual prosperity. As the Talmud relates (Shabbos 31a), the great Hillel told a potential convert, **“That which is hateful to you do not do to another. That is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation.”**

Moshe's message to the Jewish nation is ever more prevalent as we enter the nine days, a count down to the saddest day of the Jewish calendar, Tisha B'Av. A day that will live in infamy and sorrow until the ultimate redemption takes place. For many of the painful stories in our history took place during this short period.

Moshe sent the spies to scout the land and the destruction of both Batei Mikdash, the crushing of Bar Kochva's rebellion, and the slaughter of over 500,000 Jews in the city of Betar. More recently, the final solution in Germany and mass deportation of the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camps were approved.

The Gemara in Yoma (9b) writes that the first Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because of the violation of cardinal sins, idolatry, murder, and illicit relationships. But the second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because unfounded hatred prevailed amongst the Jewish people.

The Gemara explains that this teaches us that baseless hatred is as severe and equal to the three cardinal sins that should never be committed.

The Midrash Rabbah on Eichah writes that during the second Beis Hamikdash, **“people rejoiced over the downfall of others.”** This unfounded hatred led to their downfall and ruin.

Moshe repeated these specific directives before the entire Jewish people to teach them that we are one. We will fail if we act independently from our people. However, if we are joined together as a nation, we will be blessed with unimaginable success.

As the Parsha ends off, (3:21-22) *ואת־יהושוע צויתי בעת ההוא לאמר עיניך הראת את־ כל־אשר עשה ה' אלקיכם לשני המלכים האלה כן־יעשה ה' לכל־הממלכות אשר אתה עבר שמה* - *As I (Moshe) have told Yeshua at that time, “your eyes have seen all that G-d has done to these two kings. So will He do to all the kingdoms that you will pass. לא תיראום כי יהוה אלהיכם הוא הנלחם לכם* ***Do not fear them, for the Lord your G-d will fight for you.*”**

In our daily life, it is imperative that we stay together and be united despite all differences. We must appreciate and value the characteristic differences that make us individuals. For the Jewish nation is inherently connected; thus, the Jewish people’s physical and spiritual future lies in every Jewish person’s hands.

**“I don’t need you to agree with me; I need you to care about me!”**

*-Rabbi Jonathan Sacks*

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*