



Parshas Devarim 2023, we are one

The Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia.

This Shabbos has a unique name, "Shabbos Chazon - the Shabbos of vision." We read a special Haftorah beginning with the words "Chazon Yeshayahu - the vision of Yeshayahu." Yeshayahu prophesied both punishments for rebellion against G-d and the ultimate redemption with the coming of Moshiach!

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 tribe. He recounts the spies frightening reports of Israel and the drastic consequences that stemmed from it. He describes their journeys through the desert and the wars with the nations of Sichon, Bashon, and Emor.

However, a question comes to mind: The Parsha concludes with Moshe recounting how the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe wanted their portion of the land outside of Israel. The compromise they agreed to was the tribes joining the battle to conquer Israel before they settled in their desired portion.

Following that Pasuk, Moshe reminds his successor, Yeshua Ben Nun, not to fear because G-d is on their side. (3:22) **לא תיראום כי יהוה אלהיכם הוא הנלחם לכם** "*Do not fear them, for the Lord your G-d will fight for you.*"

But If G-d was fighting for the nation, then why did the tribes need to join the others for the conquest of Israel? Why is Moshe recounting this compromise and the statement to his successor simultaneously?!

One of the answers is that the last two Pasukim are Moshe repeating what he said to Yeshua and not the nation, as the Pasuk writes (3:21), "And I command Yeshua at that time." Since Yeshua was to lead the Jewish army into battle, Moshe gave him encouragement and perspective before he assumed the leadership.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rav Chaim Ben Attar, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He reiterates his commentary in last week's Torah portion, Parshas Matos, where he details the definition of the tribes going to battle.

He quotes the Pasuk from last week's Torah portion (32:6), ויאמר משה לבני גד ולבני ראובן "Moshe responded to the tribes of Gad and Reuven, *"Your brethren are coming to war and you will stay here?!"*

The precise translation of the words "יבאו למלחמה" is **come to war**, not fight a war. There are specific words like להלחם, which indicate going to war or fighting a battle, but they are not used in this Pasuk.

According to the Ohr Hachaim, G-d ran the show in the battle for Israel like He did when the Jewish people left Egypt. All the nation had to do was follow the path set forth for them by G-d, which they mostly did. So the Jewish army was basically superficial and only necessary to create a physical channel to put His plan into action.

The Ohr Hachaim answers the questions by defining another purpose for the army, unity within the Jewish nation. They can go to war with many thousands of soldiers and defeat a mighty nation like Amalek. Or they can battle with just a few thousand soldiers as they did when they conquered Moav, for the goal is **oneness and unity**.

The compromise that Moshe made with the tribes of Reuven and Gad was to signify their solidarity with the nation.

They publicized and demonstrated that they were a part of the single cohesive unit called the Jewish people. Although their land is ready to be inhabited, they will not settle until the entire land is conquered and populated.

Moshe Rabbeinu reminds the nation before he passes away that no amount of distance or separation can change the intrinsic connection of the Jewish people. Our destiny is interwoven with the community as a whole. Our future depends on the Jewish people reminding themselves that we are one.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh's profound lesson is appropriate and relevant as we prepare for 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.

As it is widely known, one of the reasons for the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash was baseless hatred. In fact, many of the horrific tragedies in history stem from conflict and division within our nation.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe gives the remedy for the intense division within our community, **uninhibited** love and care for each other. As we say daily, "**We are blessed when we are One.**"

**"The Jewish people are bound together not just by shared history,
but by a common destiny."**

-Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, known as the Beis Halevi

Have a meaningful Shabbos,

Rabbi Sholom Yemini