



Parshas Ki Teitzsi 2020, a warrior mindset with a Jewish heart

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Cohen family. May Hashem bless them with much success, health, and happiness.

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward. May his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.

Our Parsha contains over 70 Mitzvahs, we begin with the laws of a soldier who wants to marry a female captive of war. Moshe continues with the rule that a firstborn son always has a right to a double portion of his father's inheritance. The Parsha concludes with the essential Mitzvah of remembering what Amalek did to the Jewish nation during their journeys through the desert.

However, a question comes to mind: Our Parsha Parsha begins with the Pasuk (21:10) *“Ki Teitzsi Lamilchamah Al Oyveycha Unesano Hashem Elokeycha Beyadecha Veshavisa Shivyo- When you go to war against your enemies, G-d will deliver them into your hands, and you will take captives.”* Why did Moshe use the words *“Ki Teitzsi-when you go out”* instead of the common Hebrew word for waging war *“Nelcham”*?!

Rashi explains why Moshe used the term *“Ki Teitzsi-when you go out”* because he is speaking about a voluntary war. For there are two types of wars in the Torah, an obligatory war and an elective war. Every Jewish soldier from each tribe is mandated and required to fight during an obligatory war. An example of such wars is the battles against the seven nations of Cana'an and Amalek.

But participation is purely voluntary during an optional battle, like King David's wars for the sake of expanding Israel (Sota 44b). Nevertheless, the rules, requirements, and standards apply to all soldiers fighting on behalf of the Jewish people.

However, the Chida (*Rav Chaim Yosef Azulai*) in his *Sefer Nachal Kedumim*, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that not only are there two types of war, but rather two separate and very different ways of fighting a battle.

The first method is going to battle with a mindset of war. Simply put, it is a **mentality of vengeance, violence, and savagery**. An attitude of anger leads to desolation, death, and misery. On the other hand, the second approach is fighting just for security and peace. **It is an ethos of less destruction and ruin and more construction and improvement.**

The Chida explains that Moshe used the term "*Ki Teitzsi*" rather than "*Nelcham*," the Hebrew word for waging war so that the Jewish nation never goes to battle with a mindset of war. For part of the Jewish people's mission is to be a shining example of morality in this chaotic and corrupt world.

As Moshe relates the laws of war at the end of last week's Torah portion. The Jewish people must always offer peace terms before they engage in battle. They may not cut down fruit trees when laying siege on a city. **They must fight with a moral mindset.**

In our daily life and during this decisive time, it is ever more prevalent to be a beacon of morality and kindness. This can be achieved by appreciating all the differences that make each one of us an individual. When we are united, we can accomplish goals far beyond our imagination.

"I hate war only as a soldier who lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its violence, its stupidity."

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*