



Parshas Veschanan 2021, appreciate the journey.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Leah Mintche Bas Gittel and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

This Shabbos is affectionately known as Shabbos Nachamu, the Shabbos of comforting. This name is for this week's Haftorah, which is the first of seven where G-d comforts us for our pain and suffering. The prophet Yeshayahu reassures us that G-d has not forgotten us, heaven forbid.

The Haftorah begins with Yeshayahu telling the Jewish nation, **נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר ה'** - **comfort, oh comfort My people, says your G-d.** May we experience this comfort, reassurance, and the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.

This friday is the 15th of Av, a joyous day in the Jewish calendar. The Talmud in Taanis (30b) writes that Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel (*the leader of the Jewish nation in the following the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash*) declares there are no days in the Jewish calendar as happy as Yom Kippur and the 15th of Av.

Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel explains that on the 15th of Av, the Jewish people were finally allowed to marry people from different tribes. At the end of the book of Bamidbar in Parshas Massei (36:1-12), Moshe said that people can only marry in their own tribe.

However, that law was withdrawn after the Jewish nation conquered and settled in Israel. May we merit to celebrate only happy and joyous occasions with our family, friends, and the entire Jewish community as a whole!

Our Parsha begins with Moshe Rabbeinu continuing his last address to the Jewish people. He recounts how he begged G-d to let him enter the land of Israel and how G-d refused his request. Instead, he was instructed to climb a mountain where he would see the land from afar.

Moshe implores the Jewish people to cherish the Torah and value its wisdom. He reminds them that they are G-d's chosen people and the only nation He revealed himself to. Moshe then repeats the Ten Commandments to emphasize that G-d's covenant with us at Mt. Sinai is applicable forever.

However, a question comes to mind: After praying to G-d 515 times to enter the land of Israel, G-d said to Moshe to stop asking for that specific request. Instead, G-d told him to head up a mountain to see the land from a distance. Why did G-d **“tease”** Moshe by commanding him to see the only ground he truly wanted to step on from a mountain top?

Furthermore, the Pasuk writes (3:27) that Moshe should look in each direction, to the west, north, south and east, to gaze upon Israel. But Moshe was on the shore of the Jordan River in the east, yet he was commanded to look at the east! Why was Moshe told to essentially look behind him when Israel was west from where he was standing?!

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan commentary and Kabbalist*) answers these questions by explaining that G-d was actually comforting Moshe by having him look at the land. G-d told Moshe that he could obtain whatever he hoped to achieve by entering Israel just by seeing the land. Although Moshe would not enter Israel, he should be consoled because he has already received all the holiness it has to offer.

The Ohr Hachaim continues that since Israel is inherently spiritual, there is a spiritual component to seeing the land. He reasons that even with Moshe going high up a mountain, he could see only so far. Therefore, G-d told him (3:27), *“go up pisgah (the name of the hilltop) and lift up your eyes.”* Meaning, that Moshe should look as far as he can physically, then look upwards to G-d to visualize the rest of Israel. This G-dly vision was a 3D-like image that incorporated all four directions.

However, The Rabbeinu Bachya (*Rav Bachya ben Asher, a Spanish commentary*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation.

He writes why Moshe was told to look at Israel immediately following being denied entry to appreciate how far he has come. When Moshe was given his job as the leader, he went to the Jewish people who were slaves to Pharaoh and broke inside. They were mentally exhausted, physically depleted, and spiritually unaware.

But through Moshe's love and devotion to the Jewish people, he slowly and gently started to bring them back to life. He began by letting them know that their Father in heaven has not forgotten them and they will now be redeemed. He showed them G-d's retribution against the Egyptians for enslaving His chosen people.

Moshe awakened their souls and again filled their hearts with trust and faith in G-d. He split the Sea of Reeds so they could pass through and experience one of the most powerful miracles in our history. He led them to Mt. Sinai and brought down G-d's wisdom so they could fulfill their mission of illuminating the world with G-d's presence.

The Rabbeinu Bachya explains that Moshe was commanded to look at Israel right after being told he would never enter it, so he could comprehend how far he has indeed come.

He was told to look in the three directions in front of him but then look behind him. **So Moshe could recognize and realize that he has actually fulfilled his mission.** He led the Jewish nation out of Egypt to the promised land. He has taken a once broken people and transformed them into a proud and flourishing nation.

In our daily life, it is imperative we understand that we must value the journey we are on regardless of accomplishing our goals. We should take heed of the path we originated from and recognize how far we have come.

How we have changed our mindset, perspective, and most importantly, our actions to become a better version of ourselves. This self-awareness applies even if we have not achieved our specified goal because growth and progress are life's true objectives.

“Accomplishments will prove to be a journey, not a destination.”

–General Dwight D. Eisenhower

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*