

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

It was one of the great moments of personal transformation, and it changed not only Moses but our very conception of leadership itself. By the end of the book of Bamidbar, Moses' career as a leader seemed to have come to its end. He had appointed his successor, Joshua, and it would be he, not Moses, who would lead the people across the Jordan into the promised land. Moses seemed to have achieved everything he was destined to achieve. For him there would be no more battles to fight, no more miracles to perform, no more prayers to make on behalf of the people.

It is what Moses did next that bears the mark of greatness. For the last month of his life he assembled the people and delivered the series of addresses we know as the book of Devarim, literally "words." In them he reviewed the people's past and foresaw their future. He gave them laws, some he had given them before but in a different form, others that were new and that he had waited to announce until the people were about to enter the land. Linking all these details of law and history into a single overarching vision, he taught the people to see themselves as an *am kadosh*, a holy people, the only people whose sovereign and lawgiver was G-d himself.

If someone who knew nothing about Judaism and the Jewish people were to ask you for a single book that would explain them both -- who Jews are and why they do what they do -- the best answer would be Devarim. No other book so encapsulates and dramatizes all the key elements of Judaism as a faith and way of life.

In a much-watched TED lecture, and a book with the same name, Simon Sinek says that the transformative leaders are those who 'Start with Why.' (The lecture can be seen at <http://youtu.be/qp0HIF3SfI4>). The book is: Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, Portfolio, 2011.) More poetically, Antoine de Saint-Exupery said, "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

In Devarim, Moses gave the people their Why.

They are G-d's people, the nation on whom He has set his love, the people He rescued from slavery and gave, in the form of the commandments, the constitution of liberty. They may be small but they are unique. They are the people who, in themselves, testify to something beyond themselves. They are the people whose fate will defy the normal laws of history. Other nations, says Moses, will recognise the miraculous nature of the Jewish story -- and so, from Blaise Pascal to Nikolai Berdyaev and beyond, they did.

In the last month of his life Moses ceased to be the liberator, the miracle-worker and redeemer, and became instead *Moshe Rabbenu*, "Moses, our teacher." He was the first instance in history of a leadership type in which Jews have excelled: the leader-as -- teacher.

Moses surely knew that some of his greatest achievements would not last forever. The people he had rescued would one day suffer exile and persecution again. The next time, though, they would not have a Moses to do miracles. So he planted a vision in their minds, hope in their hearts, a discipline in their deeds and a strength in their souls that would never fade. When leaders become educators they change lives.

In a powerful essay, 'Who is fit to lead the Jewish people?' Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik contrasted the Jewish attitude to kings and teachers as leadership types. The Torah places severe limits on the power of kings. They must not multiply gold, or wives, or horses. A king is commanded "not to consider himself better than his fellow Israelites nor turn from the law to the right or to the left" (Deut. 17:20). (Reflections of the Rav, Abraham R. Besdin, World Zionist Organisation, 1979, 127-139.)

A king was only to be appointed at the request of the people. According to Ibn Ezra, the appointment of a king was a permission, not an obligation. *Abraham* held that it was a concession to human frailty. *Rabbenu Bachya* regarded the existence of a king as a punishment, not a reward. In short, Judaism is at best ambivalent about monarchy, that is to say, about leadership-as-power.

In their commentaries to Deut. 17:15, *Rabbenu Bachya's* point is that the people should in principle have needed no other king than G-d himself. In support of his view he quotes *Hosea*: "They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval"

**TORAS AISH IS A WEEKLY PARSHA
NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL
AND THE WEB AT WWW.AISHDAS.ORG/TA.
FOR MORE INFO EMAIL YITZW1@GMAIL.COM**

The material presented in this publication was collected from email subscriptions, computer archives and various websites. It is being presented with the permission of the respective authors. Toras Aish is an independent publication, and does not necessarily reflect the views of any synagogue or organization.

**TO DEDICATE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE CALL
(973) 277-9062 OR EMAIL YITZW1@GMAIL.COM**

(8:4); and "So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away" (13:11).

On the other hand, its regard for teachers is almost unlimited. "Let the fear of your teacher be as the fear of heaven," says the Talmud. (Pesachim 108b) Respect and reverence for your teacher should be greater even than respect and reverence for your parents, rules Rambam, because parents bring you into this world, while teachers give you entrance to the world to come. (Hilkhos Talmud Torah 5:1)

When someone exercises power over us, he or she diminishes us, but when someone teaches us, he or she helps us grow. That is why Judaism, with its acute concern for human dignity, favours leadership-as-education over leadership-as-power. And it began with Moses, at the end of his life.

For twenty-two years, as a Chief Rabbi, I have carried with me the following quotation from one of the greatest leaders of the Zionist movement, Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. Although he was a secular Jew, he was enough of a historian and Bible scholar to understand this dimension of leadership, and said so in eloquent words: "Whether you hold humble office in a municipality or in a small union or high office in a national government, the principles are the same: you must know what you want to achieve, be certain of your aims, and have these goals constantly in mind. You must fix your priorities. You must educate your party, and must educate the wider public. You must have confidence in your people -- often greater than they have in themselves, for the true political leader knows instinctively the measure of man's capacities and can rouse him to exert them in times of crisis. You must know when to fight your political opponents, and when to mark time. You must never compromise on matters of principle. You must always be conscious of the element of timing, and this demands a constant awareness of what is going on around you -- in your region if you are a local leader, in your country and in the world if you are a national leader. And since the world never stops for a moment, and the pattern of power changes its elements like the movement of a kaleidoscope, you must constantly reassess chosen policies towards the achievement of your aims. A political leader must spend a lot of time thinking. And

he must spend a lot of time educating the public, and educating them anew. (Ben Gurion Looks Back in Talks with Moshe Pearlman, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York, 1965, 52. I owe this quotation to Jonathan (now Lord) Kestenbaum, Executive Director of the Office of the Chief Rabbi, 1991-1996.)

The poet Shelley once said that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Whether this is true or false, I do not know, but this I know: that there is all the difference between giving people what they want and teaching them what to want.

Teachers are the unacknowledged builders of the future, and if a leader seeks to make lasting change, he or she must follow in the footsteps of Moses and become an educator. The leader-as-teacher, using influence not power, spiritual and intellectual authority rather coercive force, was one of the greatest contributions Judaism ever made to the moral horizons of humankind and it can be seen most clearly in the Book of Devarim, when Moses for the last month of his life summoned the next generation and taught them laws and lessons that would survive, and inspire, as long as there are human beings on earth. ©2014 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

There are two important issues which must be studied when approaching this week's Torah portion, the first theological and the second textual. The theological question strikes us from the moment we open this fifth Book of the Bible: Moses is speaking with his voice to the people of Israel. Each of the other four Biblical books are written in the third person, in G-d's voice, as it were, recording the history, narrating the drama and commanding the laws. This fifth book is written in the first person. Does this mean that the first four books are G-d's Bible and the fifth Moses' Bible?

The fifteenth Century Spanish Biblical interpreter and faithful disciple of Maimonides, Don Isaac Abarbanel, queries "whether Deuteronomy was given by G-d from heaven, containing words from the mouth of the Divine as the rest of the Torah, or whether Moses spoke this book by himself... what he himself understood to be the intent of the Divine in his elucidation of the commandments, as the Biblical text states, 'And Moses began to elucidate this Torah'. (Deut 1:5)."

Abarbanel concludes that whereas the first four Books of the Bible are G-d's words written down by Moses, this fifth Book of the Bible contains Moses' words, which G-d commanded the prophet to write down. In this manner, Deuteronomy has equal sanctity with the rest of the five Books.

Perhaps Abarbanel is agreeing with a provocative interpretation of the verse, "Moses will

“speak, and the Lord will answer him with a voice” (Ex. 19:19), which I once heard in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe, who asked: “What is the difference whether G-d speaks and Moses answers Amen, or Moses speaks and G-d answers Amen?”

The second issue is textual in nature. The Book of Deuteronomy is Moses’ long farewell speech. Moses feels compelled to provide personal reflections on the significance of the commandments as well as his personal spin on many of the most tragic desert events.

From the very beginning of Moses’ monologue, he cites G-d’s invitation to the Israelites to conquer the land of Israel. This would be the perfect introduction to a re-telling of the sin of the scouts whose evil report dissuaded the Israelites from attempting the conquest. Indeed, he does begin to recount, “But you all drew near to me and said, ‘Let us send out men before us, and let them scout out the land and report to us on the matter...’” (Deut. 1:22). But this retelling comes fourteen verses after G-d’s initial invitation and these intervening fourteen verses are filled with what appears to be recriminations against a nation which Moses “cannot carry (bear) alone” (ibid 1:9). Only after this excursus from the topic at hand does Moses discuss the failed reconnaissance mission. Why the excursus? How does it explain the failed mission?

From G-d’s initial approach to Moses at the burning bush, Moses was a reluctant leader. The reason was clear: Moses called himself “heavy of speech.” I have previously explained this on the basis of an interpretation of the Ralbag, to mean that Moses was not given to “light banter”. He was so immersed in the “heavy” issues, that he had neither the patience nor the interest to convince an ungrateful and stiff-necked people to trust in G-d and conquer the Promised Land. Moses spent so much time in the companionship of the Divine that he lost the will – and ability – to consort with regular humanity.

Moses knew himself. The verses leading up to the sin of the scouts are hardly an excuse. They explain his failure to give proper direction to the delegation of tribal princes, his inability to censure their report, his unwillingness to convince them of the critical significance of the conquest of the land. He could not bear the burden, the grumbings, of a nation which was too removed from G-d to be able to follow Him blindly.

Back to theology. Maimonides explains that even at Mount Sinai, the entire nation only heard a sound emanating from the Divine, a kol; each individual understood that sound in accordance with his specific and individual spiritual standing, while Moses was the only one able to “divine” the precise will of G-d within that sound – the words of the 10 commandments (Guide to the Perplexed, II: 32). Moses internalized the will of G-d and thereby produced the words of the four Books of the Bible, which constitute G-d’s words internalized and written by Moses, the greatest prophet

of all. Moses communicated with G-d. Moses may not always have spoken successfully to his own generation; but he did write, for us and for Jewish eternity.

But Moses also had a legacy to leave and an interpretation to give – In the book of Deuteronomy, he spoke to his people, telling them not G-d’s words but his own and G-d commanded him to write down the words of this Book as well for all eternity, G-d was granting the Divine imprimatur of Torah to Moses’ Book of Deuteronomy – and making it His (G-d’s) Book as well. Moses spoke and G-d answered Amen. ©2014 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

People who attain blessed advanced age and many years tend to look back in time and concentrate less on the future. Old rabbis write autobiographies. Past events, which were previously sublimated and hardly ever recalled, suddenly become vivid memories worthy of meaningful contemplation.

An example of this is to be found in the words of our father Jacob to his children in his final days when he recalls for them the tragic incident of the sudden death of his beloved wife Rachel. Many decades had passed since that event and the Torah does not record for us his ever mentioning that bitter event during that long period of time. But now at the end of his days this painful and tragic occurrence in his life comes to dominate his memory and his conversation.

This natural tendency of humans to bring forth memory as one’s last testament, so to speak, of a life’s achievement helps to explain to us this final book of Dvarim – the ultimate conclusion of the written Torah. Our teacher, Moshe, delivers a long oration in which he recalls the events of his career, the triumphs and shortcomings of his leadership and the accomplishments and failings of his beloved people.

He attempts to relate to a new generation the experiences and lessons of the past generation of Israel that left Egypt and perished in the desert of Sinai. Every generation has a different take on past events. It is impossible to truly describe the past – its nuances, shadings, feelings and emotions – to those who did not actually live at that past time and were not therefore actual witnesses to those events. Nevertheless, Moshe feels impelled to make this attempt, for a generation that knows nothing of its past can hardly expect to create much of a future for itself.

So the words of Moshe are tinged with nostalgia and even a note of sadness. Nevertheless, the book of Dvarim on the whole is one of optimistic spirit, faith and unending wonder regarding the experiences of Moshe’s life and the destiny of the Jewish people.

The rabbis tell us that no human being departs

this world attaining even half of what one desired to own, achieve or accomplish. Such is the nature of our mortality and lives. Moshe's main sadness in his words to the Jewish people is in his realization that his great hope and dream of entering the land of Israel will never be fulfilled.

This disappointment weighs on all of his words in the book of Dvarim. In his recounting of the sins and rebellions over the forty years that he led the Jewish people, there is little bitterness in his voice and tone. However, one feels his pain and anguish at the fate that has befallen him, of being excluded from entering the promised Land of Israel.

As such, the book of Dvarim is a deeply personal work reflecting the feelings and memory patterns of the greatest leader of the Jewish people. Its recollections of events, review of the Torah and listing of specific commandments, makes this book, like all of the works of the Torah, a required object of study, reflection, analysis and ultimate faith. ©2014 Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Many events in the book of Bereishit (Genesis) repeat themselves in Devarim (Deuteronomy) with one major difference. Whereas Genesis is a narrative which focuses on individuals, Devarim focuses on the nations who have emerged from these individuals.

Consider for example the story in this week's portion of the children of Yaakov (Jacob), Am Yisrael, asking the children of Esav (Esau) for permission to go through their land on their way to Israel. It is a reversal of the story of the confrontation between Esav and Yaakov as found in the Genesis narrative.

In Bereishit Esau comes from the field tired and buys food from Yaakov. (Genesis 25:34) Here in Devarim, it is the Jews weary from years of wandering in the desert, who try to buy food and water from the children of Esav. (Devarim 2:6)

In Bereishit, Yaakov rejects traveling with Esav, but promises to rendezvous with him one day in Seir. That promise is never fulfilled in their lifetime. (Genesis 33:14) Yet, here in Devarim, the Israelites finally connect with the children of Esav in Seir, and are rejected. (Numbers 20:21; Devarim 2:8)

Note also the similarity in language. In preparation for his meeting with Esav, Jacob wrestles with a mysterious stranger and is struck in the hollow (kaf) of his thigh (Genesis 32:26). In Devarim, G-d tells the Jews not to antagonize the children of Esav, "For I shall not give you of their land, even the right to set foot

(kaf) there." (Deuteronomy 2:5) Rabbi Yitzhak Twersky notes that the use of the uncommon term kaf in both places point; the reader to a similarity between these episodes.

Indeed, both stories also intersect in that they deal with fear. In Genesis it is Yaakov who is afraid before meeting Esav. In the words of the Torah, "Yaakov became very frightened." (Bereishit 32:8) Here, in Devarim it's the children of Esav who are frightened as the Israelites draw near. As the Torah states: "The Lord said to me (Moshe)...command the people saying 'you are passing through the boundary of your brothers, the children of Esav, who dwell in Seir; they will fear you.'" (Devarim 2:4, 5)

One can't help but note that the parallel stories in Devarim are often the reverse of the Bereishit narrative. Thus, events in Devarim could be viewed as a corrective to what unfolded in Bereishit. A real appreciation of feeling the pain of another only comes when one feels that very pain. Perhaps Am Yisrael, the children of Yaakov, had to learn this lesson before entering the land of Israel. ©2011 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

In the introduction to the words Moshe spoke to the nation shortly before his death, the Torah tells us that they were said "after he smote Sichon and Og" (D'varim 1:4). Rashi explains why Moshe waited until after Sichon and Og were defeated before beginning his rebuke: "Moshe said, 'if I rebuke them before they enter part of the land, they will say 'what does this one (Moshe) have on us (that he can rebuke us)? What did he do for us? He is only doing this to be quarrelsome and to find an excuse for his inability to bring us into the land.' Therefore, [Moshe] waited until he brought Sichon and Og down before them and had them take over [Sichon and Og's] land, and then he rebuked them." There is much to discuss about this Rashi in order to better understand what he is trying to say.

Rav Yitzchok Sorotzkin, sh'lita (Rinas Yitzchok III) asks how this Rashi, which says that until Moshe defeated Sichon and Og the nation didn't think he had done anything for them, can be reconciled with Rashi's comment regarding Moshe's death (32:48), which occurred "in the middle of the day" to counter the blustering comments of the nation, who said they wouldn't let Moshe go up Mt. Nevo to die because of all he had done for them -- including taking them out of Egypt, splitting the sea, bringing them food and drink, and giving them the Torah, all of which were done well before Sichon and Og were conquered. Did the nation recognize all that Moshe had done for them or not?

Although Rav Sorotzkin leaves his question unanswered, there are numerous reasons why these two comments are not mutually exclusive. First of all, it would not be going out on a limb to say that not everyone in our wonderful nation has the same mind set. There very well could have been a contingent of people who didn't think Moshe did much for them, while there were others who were very appreciative of all he had done for them. Therefore, Moshe wanted to wait to rebuke the nation until even those who hadn't been appreciative would be (especially since they were likely the ones who needed the rebuke the most), while G-d was showing those who were appreciative all along that they couldn't prevent Moshe's death. Secondly, not everyone Moshe was addressing had been around when he did all of the things listed. Those who were now the "elders" were younger than 20 when the nation left Egypt, but many were born in the desert, and knew no other existence. Without having experienced hunger and thirst soon after leaving Egypt, the younger generation didn't experience the "benefit" of receiving miraculous food and drink the same way the older generation did. Therefore, it could have been those who hadn't been slaves in Egypt and who took this food and drink for granted that Moshe was concerned about, while it was the older generation that would have done whatever they could to prevent Moshe's death. (Bear in mind that Rashi's first comment was about Moshe's perception of what the people were thinking, while his second comment was about what they were really thinking.) Additionally, the list of things Moshe did for them only includes fixing problems (ending slavery, being saved from the pursuing Egyptians, providing food and drink, and providing a necessary framework for society); the reluctance to being rebuked was attributed to not being given anything above and beyond their basic needs, and by conquering Sichon and Og the nation took over all of their stuff. (B'er BaSadeh makes a similar point, framing it as a comparison between providing things that were only needed after they left Egypt and were in the desert with being given something they wouldn't have had even if they were still in Egypt; baruch she'kivanti, sort of).

Another point that shouldn't be lost is that Rashi's focus (here) is not whether or not Moshe did anything for them, but whether his rebuke would be perceived as a defense mechanism for not having brought the nation into the Promised Land. The 40 year journey in the desert was supposed to lead to getting their own homeland, and until that happened, it would be difficult to accept criticism. Which leads us to two other questions: (1) Since the point Rashi (and the Sifre) is making is that until they entered the land any rebuke Moshe gave would be dismissed as blaming them for not accomplishing the mission instead of accepting the blame himself, why even mention that Moshe hadn't done anything for them? (This aspect is

not included in the Sifre.) And (2) if the issue was entering the Promised Land, how did conquering Sichon and Og take care of this? Moshe still couldn't enter the Promised Land!

[Although it is possible that this is why Rashi added the part of needing Moshe to have done something for them, as it was accomplished when he conquered Sichon and Og, this would mean that rather than Moshe showing he could bring them into the land, conquering Sichon and Og provided enough of a distraction to make them forget that he couldn't. This seems to be how Midrash Lekach Tov understands it, but, as we shall see, is not consistent with the Sifre, which not only doesn't mention Moshe having to do something for them, but indicates that conquering Sichon and Og did address the perception that Moshe was unable to conquer the land.]

A Midrash is quoted in Otzer HaMidrashim (attributed to Midrash Tanchuma and indicated as Rashi's source) that only mentions Moshe not having done anything for them, with conquering Sichon and Og and enriching the nation by giving them the spoils of the war taking care of this concern. (I guess the spoils from Egypt and from the sea didn't count.) I haven't been able to find this Midrash (if anyone knows where it is, please contact me at RabbiDMK at Yahoo dot com), and am puzzled that the Sifre isn't quoted there at all. Nevertheless, if Rashi had such a Midrash (and the same idea is expressed in Midrash Aggadah, even though it is not the same Midrash as quoted in Otzer HaMidrashim), he could be combining it with the Sifre. The question still remains, though, why he felt the need to use both, especially since the focus of one is the nation's perception of Moshe's inability to bring them into the Promised Land, which was (somehow) taken care of when he defeated Sichon and Og, while the focus of the other is whether he did anything for them, which was accomplished by giving them the spoils of the war.

Elsewhere (Bamidbar 21:31), Rashi tells us that the nations in Canaan depended on Sichon to prevent Israel from conquering their land. Based on this, Sifsay Kohain and Oznayim LaTorah say that once Moshe was able to conquer Sichon (and Og), there was no longer any thought that they wouldn't be able to conquer Canaan. This is borne out by the wording of the Sifre, which equates the ability to conquer the land (i.e. Canaan) with the ability to defeat Sichon and Og. [It should be noted that in the first printing of Rashi, rather than saying "part of the land" (or "the edge of the land"), Rashi just says "the land." It is likely that since Moshe never conquered "the land," only Sichon and Og, the word "part of" was added. However, if conquering Sichon and Og was tantamount to conquering the land (since they were its gatekeepers), such a change is unnecessary.] However, the question still remains as to why Rashi added onto what the Sifre

said, and included Moshe's concern that the people will say he didn't do any thing for him.

When discussing the rebuke Moshe was about to give the nation, Rashi tells us about various things Moshe did so that his rebuke would be most effective. It was done in front of the whole nation so that no one could say if they had been there they would have refuted what was said (1:1), he waited until he was about to die (1:3; several reasons to wait until then are referenced), and he waited until he defeated Sichon and Og. It could be argued that the most important factor for effective rebuke is whether the rebukee perceives it as an attack or as constructive criticism, and that the best way for it to be taken as constructive criticism is for it to be clear that the rebuker has the best interests of the rebukee in mind.

Although Moshe had done a lot on behalf of the nation, everything he did could be attributed to his own needs/wants (and unfortunately often was). He could have taken the nation out of Egypt because he wanted to be a leader, and needed to have people to lead. [We may know that he was reluctant to be a leader, and was punished for his over-reluctance (losing the High Priesthood), but no one else was there with him at the burning bush when he tried to turn the job down.] He had to split the sea, or the Egyptians would have taken away the people he was leading. He had to feed them, not only to maintain the people he was leading but to stop them from complaining. But once he was going to die, did it really matter to him personally whether the nation made it across the Jordan River? Moshe knew that once the nation saw that he set things up for them even after he died, they would realize that he was doing everything for them, not for him, and his criticism would be taken more seriously. (Getting them the spoils of war wouldn't hurt either, especially since his Tribe couldn't share in those spoils.)

When it came to preventing Moshe dying, it didn't matter as much whether the things Moshe did was for selfish reasons or for altruistic reasons; many effective leaders are selfish while benefiting their people. When it came to having his rebuke accepted, however, it made a big difference. Therefore, Moshe was concerned that the people would brush off his rebuke by rhetorically asking what he had done for them, i.e. how do they know whether it was for their benefit to pay attention to his rebuke -- maybe his rebuke was meant to put the blame on them for not reaching the Promised Land. By waiting until after he conquered Sichon and Og, when it became clear that they would make it to the Promised Land, this alternate motive for rebuking them was removed, as was any doubt as to whether Moshe had their best interests in mind.

The focus of the Sifre is Moshe's concern about the nation dismissing the rebuke as a means of

deflecting his inability to get them into the Promised Land. Other Midrashim focus on Moshe's concern that the nation take his rebuke as constructive criticism. Rashi included both of these concerns to explain why Moshe waited until after he defeated Sichon and Og before rebuking the nation. ©2014 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN

TorahWeb

The Shabbos prior to Tisha B'Av derives its name from the haftorah, whereby Isaiah the prophet castigates Israel for its sins, and prepares us for the national day of mourning, reminding us why we lost the Bais Hamikdash. The Beis Hamikdash unified the Jewish nation. To begin with, the korbanos were for the nation. On a daily basis, the Korban Tamid, the one lamb brought in the morning and the one lamb brought in the afternoon, were on behalf of the entire populace. One Kurban Mussaf, additional offering was brought on behalf of the nation every Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, and Yom Tov. Even the atonement for each individual on Yom Kippur came about through the representative of the people, the Kohein Gadol.

The Ramchal (Daas Tvunos 160) teaches that the kohein officiating at the Korban Tamid had the challenging job of getting into the mindset of representing and reflecting all of Klal Yisrael. Just as they were represented by the kohanim in their avodah (actual performance of the offerings), the leviim with their singing and music, and Israelites with their ma'amad prayers, the kohein channeled the unique requests as per the character traits of the multitudes of the nation and offered them to Hashem.

King David expressed it in Tehillim (122:2) "Built up Jerusalem is like a city that is united together". The mishna (Avos 5:5) teaches that no one complained that the accommodations were stressful and crowded for the three pilgrim festivals in Jerusalem. The Chasam Sofer understands this to mean, that it was most certainly stressful, but the higher cause and privilege of being in close proximity to the Beis Hamikdash, united the people, and thus no one complained.

Moreover, the Beis Hamikdash was the vehicle whereby the Jewish nation experienced Hashgacha Pratis (Divine providence) on an ongoing basis. The above cited mishna enumerates 10 open miracles that occurred therein regularly showing His presence in their midst. Our observance of Tisha B'Av is a strong reminder of what we are missing today.

This Tisha B'Av is most unique. It is coming during the time of the unification for the Jewish people that we have not felt for a long time. I met two days ago with Mrs. Rachel Frankel, the mother of Naftali H.Y.D. After sharing with her our deepest personal sympathy and expressing condolences on behalf of our congregation and community in New Jersey, I told her

of monies that were donated in memory of the three boys to be used at the discretion of the families. Her immediate response was to use the funds to further the feelings of achdus and closeness that presently envelopes the land. Mr. Shaar, the father of Gil'ad H.Y.D hoped that this incredible outpouring of prayer and concern on behalf of world Jewry could help stem the tide of assimilation and intermarriage in the United States.

The unity in Israel today is unfortunately being continued by the war in Gaza. If only the West Bank were being rocketed, one could imagine some responding by asking, "why are they living there?" But when rockets fly towards Tel Aviv, Ashkelon, and the airport, it most certainly unites all Israel in imo anochi b'tzarah, we are all in this together. In addition, approximately a half million Israelis have on their phones an app that apprises them of when a siren goes off anywhere in the country, creating Kol Yisrael areivim zeh l'zeh, an intense feeling of camaraderie and concern one for another.

Moreover, we too have witnessed to date incredible Hashgacha pratis.

1. The iron dome was out of commission one day last week for eight hours outside of Ashkelon, and during these eight hours not a single rocket came. 2. Last week, when over 1,400 rockets had been shot into Israel and but one casualty, then the Turkish Prime Minister said "It cannot be true". He doesn't realize (Tehillim 121:4), "Behold, He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the Guardian of Israel". 3. A soldier was shot last night and the bullet was intercepted by the hand grenade he was wearing, which miraculously did not explode, neither damaging him nor his fellow soldiers.

The lists of the miracles that we witness daily are manifold.

Tisha B'Av reminds us that unity and Hashgacha pratis is to come from a positive source, the Beis Hamikdash, and not unfortunately from the horror of kidnapping of innocent teenagers and miracles from the battle front. Going into this Tisha B'av we are cognizant of (Tehillim 116:3) "Distress and grief I find, and I invoke the name of Hashem". Our prayers and Kinos are in response to the fifty three families that to date have made the supreme sacrifice for Am Yisrael. Our war with Gaza is but a continuation of the tragic circumstances that occur in the absence of the Third Beis Hamikdash.

The Gemara (Berachos 8a) teaches that since the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, Hashem takes refuge in the study of Torah. I understand this to mean that just as the Beis Hamikdash unified our people, Torah also has ability to unite our people. Case in point, notes the Aruch Ha'Shulchan in his introduction to Choshen Mishpat, Jews all over the world keep the same Shabbos, use the same esrog, keep Kosher, laws of family purity, we are all united through the

Torah.

As we prepare to sit low and fast this Tisha B'Av, and pine for the day that our unity will emanate from Tehillim (116:13) "The cup of salvations I will raise, and the name of Hashem I will invoke". I would like to suggest a few ways to perpetuate these remarkable feelings of unity, please G-d soon beyond the war. Firstly, take note: it is not Hillel, but Shamai who teaches (Avos 1:15) to greet everyone favorably, with a cheerful countenance. He does not mean only those in one's circle, who share your character and ideology, rather go out of your way to show kinship, respect and brotherhood to all. The Yerushalmi (Yuma 1) teaches that the destruction of the first Temple was but the roof of the building. The second Beis Hamikdash which was destroyed because of baseless and senseless hatred had its very foundation was destroyed. We need heavy doses of ahavas chinum, to love each and every Jew, because if we have one Father, then we really are brothers and sisters.

Secondly, don't just pray for our soldiers in Gaza, but get the name of a specific soldier, for when you focus on him among the rest, your prayer is more focused. May I suggest you keep Amatzya Chaim ben Chedva Malka who sustained serious injuries to his legs, and doctors hope he will walk in several weeks.

Finally, your acts of chessed, your prayers, your Torah study, are the parcels that we can send from abroad to the soldiers and the rest of Israel. ©2014 Rabbi B. Yudin and The TorahWeb Foundation, Inc.

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Oury Cherki, Machon Meir,
Rabbi of Beit Yehuda Congregation, Jerusalem

The story of the scouts is repeated in the Torah portion, revealing a unique trait of Moshe. The people decided that they would not be able to conquer the land because of the existence of the giants, and they said: "Because of G-d's hatred for us, He took us out of Egypt to deliver us to the hands of the Emorites, to destroy us." [Devarim 1:27].

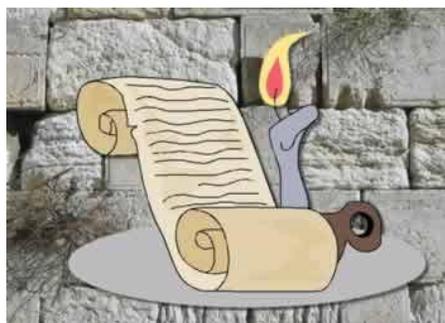
Moshe replies in a way that is in its very essence different from the reply of Kalev, who said, "Let us rise up and we will take possession of it, for we will be able to do it" [Bamidbar 13:30]. Moshe's reply was, "And I said to you: Do not be dismayed and do not fear them. Your G-d, who goes before you, will wage war for you, as He did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes" [Devarim 1:29-30]. Moshe attempted to calm the people by telling them that just as miracles took place in Egypt and in the desert, so there would be miracles in Eretz Yisrael. Have no fear, he said, the war will be a simple matter.

It would seem at first glance that this behavior by Moshe was a bit strange. After all, the most important factor in our entry into Eretz Yisrael was to go

through a natural process. The sanctity of the nation of Yisrael, and the sanctity of the Shechina which dwelt within them, are revealed by natural ways and not by miracles. Our sages have taught us that we should never depend on miracles (Pesachim 64b). A miracle is an after-the-fact event. If there is no alternative, when the person is too weak to cope himself with the challenges that confront him, then the Holy One, Blessed be He, performs a miracle. But this is not the most desirable path as a positive choice. Why did Moshe react the way he did? The answer is that he felt that the nation was too weak. But then we can have a legitimate criticism of Moshe -- Why didn't he encourage the people to fight in a war, just as Yehoshua and Kalev did in the Torah portion of Shelach?

And here Moshe describes a very strong Divine reaction: "And G-d heard your words, and He became angry and took an oath: No individual from this evil generation will see the good land which I have promised to give to your fathers, except for Kalev Ben Yefuneh. He will see it, and I will give to him and to his sons the land on which he walked, because he followed my path." [Devarim 1:34-36]. And this is followed by a very harsh verse: "G-d was angry with me too because of you, saying, you will also not go there" [1:37]. We usually see the reason that Moshe was not allowed to enter the land as the sin of striking the rock at 'Mei Merivah,' but here we see that there was another entirely different issue. Moshe did not have faith in the power of the nation to fight without depending on miracles.

We see from this that in order to stand strong at the "Protective Edge" of Eretz Yisrael, without any weakening of our hold on the land, we must not depend on miracles. Rather, we must believe that G-d is with us



as we follow the path of nature, and that He will support us in all of our natural wars.
©2014 Rabbi A. Bazak and Machon Zomet.
Translated by Moshe Goldberg

RABBI KALMAN PACKOUZ

Shabbat Shalom Weekly

The Torah portion begins with the words: "These are the things which Moses spoke to all of Israel" (Deut. 1:1). The Torah then enumerates what is seemingly a list of places the Jewish people had traveled. The Siphre elucidates that out of respect for the Jewish people, Moses alluded to their transgressions by the name of each place, without

being explicit. What can we learn from this?

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman of the famed Hebron Yeshiva comments that a person who is sincerely interested in self-improvement and growth only needs a slight hint that he has done something wrong in order to realize that he needs to improve. Such a person looks for opportunities to make positive changes in himself and uses his own ability to think to fill in the details when someone gives him a hint that he has made a mistake. The Jewish people only needed a hint. *Based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin ©2014 Rabbi K. Packouz & aish.com*

RABBI YOCHANAN ZWEIG

Respecting Human Life

"Then Moshe designated three cities" (Devarim, 4:41) The Talmud teaches that the three cities of refuge on the east bank of the Jordan River only became functional after the three on the west bank were established. Although Moshe knew that the latter three would only be established fourteen years after his passing, he insisted on establishing the three on the east bank. The Talmud uses this as an example of Moshe's alacrity in the performance of mitzvos. (Makkos, 10a)

Generally, alacrity in the performance of a mitzva leads to the mitzva being accomplished sooner. However, in Moshe's case, since the cities offered no refuge until after they all were completed, what was there to be gained by his promptness?

The cities of refuge served a dual purpose. One function was as a safe haven for the perpetrator of an accidental murder, while the second was to create a higher degree of awareness amongst Bnei Yisroel concerning the sanctity of human life. The mere presence of the city sent a message to everyone to be more cautious with their actions. Although the first function did not take effect until after the conquest of Eretz Yisroel, Moshe was able to immediately set the second function into motion. ©2014 Rabbi Y. Zweig & torah.org

Parsha Puns!

**Instead of just ZAMZOOMIN around as FAST
as you AR able, stop to mayBEE read a bLOG,
THINGk for yourself and have
EILAT of fun this Shabbos!**

Follow @ParshaPuns

**Can't figure them out? Sign up for the solution
by emailing yitzw1@gmail.com**