

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Devarim	25 July 2020	4 Av 5780	Deut. 1:1-3:22	Isa. 1:1-27	Matt. 24:1-22

It is written (Deut. 1:8-10), “See, I have set *ha'aretz* (the land) before you; go in and possess *ha'aretz* which Hashem swore unto *Avoteichem*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, to give unto them and to their *zera* after them. And I spoke unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear the burden of you by myself alone; Hashem Eloheichem hath multiplied you, and, see, ye are today as numerous as the *kokhavei HaShomayim*.”

Or HaChaim questions why the Hebrew word רָאָה (*re'eh*) “see” (v. 8) starts with a singular form and then concludes by saying, לְפָנֶיכֶם (*lif-nei-chem*) “before you” in plural form. He explains that in regard to seeing, all the Yisraelites were equal, like one man, and there was no difference between them; all of them saw the same thing. That is, everyone was able to perceive equally that Hashem was giving them Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, when telling them to see, Hashem addressed them in the singular.

But, as individual people, they could not all be classified together as each person was on a different level. For this reason, when referring to the people themselves, Hashem said, “before you” in the plural. Therefore, Hashem says in subsequent verse “go in and possess” (בָּאוּ, וּרְשׁוּ; *bo'u, u-re-shu*) in the plural form. Because it is not in the category of things that people can do or have in uniformity as one. Unlike ‘seeing’, which everyone was able to do together and in the same way, each individual would have to “come and possess” his own are of land Therefore, the nation could not be described as a single entity in this regard.

It is written (v. 10), “Hashem Eloheichem hath multiplied you.” This verse is difficult to understand since there has not been a noticeable increase of population within the Yisraelites after they left Mitzrayim. A second census was taken in the second year of Exodus (2449). At that time Moshe said to the children of Yisrael, “I cannot carry you alone” (Num. 11:14). The plain meaning of our verse today describes the event just before the nation journeyed from Chorev, which was in the second month of the second years from Exodus. On the first day of that month, Moshe counted the nation for the second time, the first time having been when they began donating items for the Mishkan (Num. 1:1)

Or HaChaim says that there was a slight increase in population from the Exodus until the second count, since they left Mitzrayim they numbered 600,000 including the Leviim, whereas at the time of the second count they numbered 603,550 excluding the Leviim. This increase apparently is not significant enough to warrant Moshe’s saying, “Hashem Eloheichem hath multiplied you.”

The sages said that Hashem elevated you over your judges. Meaning, Hashem has given the people an advantage over their judges, by removing the punishment for distorting justice from the people and placing it on the judges instead. So, Moshe is not saying that Hashem had increased their numbers, but that He had increased their privilege or advantage.

The Zohar explains that by mentioning the abundance of good that someone else enjoys, one inflicts an eye from that person and empowers the accusing angel to harm him<sup>1</sup>; also, the forces of evil have no authority over anything upon which one invokes the Divine Name.<sup>2</sup> In previous verse, Moshe said, “I cannot carry

<sup>1</sup> Zohar, Vol. 3, 211b

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 51b

you alone,” indicating that the people were too numerous for him to judge on his own; and as a result, there exists a concern that they might be subjected to an evil eye.

Therefore, Moshe immediately declared, “Hashem Eloheichem hath multiplied you,” to ensure that there would be no room for the evildoer, that is, the accusing angel to harm them.

It is written (v. 11), “May Hashem, the Elohim of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves, and bless you as He has spoken of you.” Rashi says, “May Hashem...add to you” is itself a blessing, so why does the verse set it apart from “and bless you as He has spoken of you?” Or HaChaim explains that there are two blessings on this verse.

For the righteous, Moshe said, “May Hashem...add to you a thousand times yourselves,” meaning a thousand times yourselves in righteousness. This analogy<sup>3</sup> derives from the verse, “And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to *tzedakah* (righteousness) as the *kokhavim* (stars) *leolam v'ed* (forever and ever)” (OJB, Daniel 12:3).

Although the people sinned during their journey in the Wilderness, Moshe is relating in this verse, that the people entering the Land are all righteous. Moshe admonished the people for sins committed by the previous generation (v. 1). His reproof was intended for those who were younger than twenty when the first generation sinned, and were thus spared the decree of death in the Wilderness. Although they are righteous now, they deserved rebuke for their past actions.

And corresponding to their abundance, “May Hashem increase you” of their abundance “as He has spoken of you.” Both blessings pertain to their quantity, Moshe said: “This blessing of a thousand times is from me. Hashem, however, shall bless you as He spoke of you.”

Rashi said that the Yisraelites complained to Moshe by saying, “Why are you limiting our blessings?” Moshe responded, “The blessing of 1,000 is mine, but may He bless you infinitely as He promised you.” We derive from Moshe’s name (משה) which has a numerical value of 345 (5+300+40) which is also the numerical value of אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי (El Shaddai) (10+4+300+30+1). When *El Shaddai* is written out in full – אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי (yod, dalet, shin, lamed, alef), it has a value of 1,000. Therefore, Moshe is saying, “The one-thousand that I am giving you is absolutely all that I possess. I am giving you everything that is included in my name, and may Hashem bless you according to His Divine powers. (ADB 20190806)

It is written (v. 12), “How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?” This verse is actually the conclusion of verse 9 which says, “I am not able to bear you myself alone.” Moshe interrupted his narrative to praise and bless the people, in order to remove the pitfall that might result from the statement, “I am not able to bear you myself alone,” namely, the danger of the evil eye (v. 10). He now went back to complete the statement that he had begun to make, and related how he had said, in the second year, “How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? Get you, from each one of your tribes, etc.” (v. 12, 13).

---

<sup>3</sup> YT, Nedarim 3:8

Thus, verse 10 and 11 are not part of the narrative, but were inserted by Moshe in order to protect against the evil eye and to praise the people for their righteousness. In our verse (12), Moshe resumes his account of what he said to the people in Chorev.

It is written (v. 13), "Get you, from each one of your tribes, wise men, and understanding, and full of knowledge, and I will make them heads over you." It appears that the first part of the verse, "Get you, from each one of your tribes, wise men, and understanding, and full of knowledge", is contradicting with the following words, "and I will make them heads over you."

Moshe said in the first part that they are to appoint judges from their own tribe. The members of the same tribe are more similar in nature than members of different tribes. Therefore, a judge who is from the same tribe as those who are under his authority is more likely to understand their needs, and they are more likely to obey him, as he has insight to their wellbeing.

For the second part of the verse, Moshe said, "I will make them heads over you," meaning, he was going to appoint judges from them. He is saying that you will be the one to select the judges. But that does not mean that you can rule over or has authority over him even though you appoint him as a judge. Rather, I shall appoint them as heads over you, and empowering them to discipline you even with a staff or a strap if necessary.

It is written (Deut. 3:18), "All you sons of might, pass over armed before your brothers, the children of Yisrael." The conquest of the Land corresponds to our inner conquest of the animalistic side of our personalities in order to ensure that we lead our lives in a way Hashem desires. The power within us that leads us into this battle is our ability to risk our lives for our principles as the tribes of Reuben and Gad did. While their decisions to stay on the other side of Yarden reflect in a negative light, that is, they desired the land as they saw with their eyes. That being said, in a positive light, they stood on their principles to benefit their tribes.

Normally, we would be willing to lay our lives down for our principles that are threat to our Divine mission as it is a direct threat to our principles. Resisting our animal drives then becomes a much simpler matter. However, when we are confronted with a general challenge to our identity or life-style, we need to summon not only the recollection of our willingness to sacrifice everything for our principles, but the willingness itself. Our inner tribes of Reuben and Gad need to leap forth as a separate "battalion" and wipe out the enemy's threat in one fell swoop. By utilizing this inner strength, we can hasten our personal redemption as well as the true and final Redemption of all humanity.