

BS"D Parashat Devarim 5786

Boots on the Ground

In November 1991, our then Prime Minister Yitzchak Shamir led an Israeli delegation at the Madrid conference held to discuss events in the Middle East. At a press conference the PM was inundated and attacked with questions regarding his opposition to a "Palestinian" state in Judea and Samaria. To every question, the PM answered with one Hebrew word "KACHA", which simply means "because" (as when a child asks his mother why he has to eat an egg every day and she replies "because"), meaning I have my reasons.

When the reporters had their fill of "KACHA" and questioned his refusal to relate to the issue, Mr. Shamir explained that he had ten great reasons why he opposes another terrorist state west of the Jordan River. But, if he were to begin to enumerate them one by one, the unfriendly reporters by use of sophistry (i.e., fallacious arguments, especially with the intention of deceiving) would negate each one until they convinced themselves that his position is indefensible and unreasonable. Therefore, by answering 'because' no one could argue with him.

Similarly, when one is questioned regarding a particular decision, one might offer a reasonable motive but is not obligated to voice all his motives. Additionally, there is always the unknown variable of where HaShem comes into play when influencing that individual to make such his decision. Let's call it the "God particle" (borrowed from a subatomic particle discovered in 2012 at the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland). For we cannot know the far-reaching implications of our actions over time, which is in the sole realm of HaShem who quietly, behind the scenes,

directs all our decisions in the first place.

Dear reader, by now you should be asking where is all this leading? *Patience*. To a classic example of these three elements: a simple stated reason, an unrevealed reason, and the unknown Godly involvement in the decision they are making, as follows:

In this week's parasha, Moshe begins his repetition of the Torah to Bnei Yisrael by reviewing events and laws. In parashat Matot, the nation was about to liberate the western side of Eretz Yisrael (Eretz Canaan), beyond the Jordan River. While Moshe was instructing the leadership regarding the equitable division of the land among the nation, the tribes of Reuven and Gad requested that their homesteads not be in the western side, but in the fertile grazing lands of the eastern side of the Jordan since they were blessed with cattle and sheep.

Moshe understood this to mean that they would not take part in the war of liberation against the seven Canaanite nations and reacted with great anger (Bamidbar 32,6):

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעָם וְלֵאמֹר הָאֵלֹהִים הָאֵלֹהִים:

Will your brothers go to war, and you will stay here!?

An agreement was arrived at, whereby the tribes of Reuven and Gad would serve in the dangerous reconnaissance units in the west and would return to their families to the eastern side of the Jordan only after all the other tribes were settled, each man in his homestead.

I suggest that there was an unspoken reason for their preference to be on the eastern side far from raising livestock. At that time the situation was that all 12 tribes would be settled on the western side of the Jordan while none

would be in the also holy eastern side – except for one Jew – Moshe who would pass away and be buried on the eastern side – alone!

Reuven and Gad concluded that Moshe was denied the privilege of crossing the Jordan River to the west, but if Jews would settle on the eastern side Moshe would be in the holy part of Eretz Yisrael. Their motive was to bring the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael to Moshe. That was their holy motive behind their request.

But now to the third element – where was HaShem in this saga?

It would take over 3500 years for this matter to emerge. The holy soldiers of Tzahal are at the present time in Gaza, in Southern Lebanon, and Syria.

We have legitimate claims – Biblical and Historical – to these areas since they were part of the tribes of Am Yisrael before our exile. We are now for the first time in over 2700 years in control of 10 of the 12 tribal areas. But where are the last two: 11 and 12? They are the tribes of Reuven and Gad now in the fictional country called Jordan. HaShem placed them there at the time we were entering the western side of the Jordan in order to lay down our future claim to the eastern side 3500 years later in our time.

Here is the “God Particle” in the story of Reuven and Gad with the final stage to be realized in the very near future when the “boots” of Tzahal will march on the holy soil of the eastern Jordan.

Shabbat Shalom and Chodesh Tov,

Nachman Kahana

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