

Teruma 5778

BS"D Parashat Truma 5778

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The half aspires to become a whole

In our parasha, Moshe is commanded to fashion the vessels for the Mishkan (Tabernacle).

Most of the dimensions of the vessels were a measure and a half. The Aron (Holy Ark) was 2.5 amot long (ama = half a meter) by 1.5 wide and 1.5 high.

The Shulchan (Table for the showbread) was 1.5 amot long by 1 ama wide and 1.5 high.

The width of each pole that formed the Mishkan was 1.5 amot

The mitzva of contributing to the purchase of the public sacrifices was a half shekel for each male.

The lesson to be learned from these fractions is that a half aspires to become a whole. In spiritual terms, HaShem seeks to complete His creation by joining the absolute material world of Am Yisrael with the absolute spiritual world of the Creator – each one providing one half of the equation.

HaShem began the world, but He requires the Jewish people to make its completion through the mitzvot.

What could have been

Chapter 13,1 of the book of Yehoshua:

וַיִּהְיֶה כִּי הָיוּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל זָקֵנִים וְיָשָׁן וַיֹּאמֶר הָשֶׁם אֶל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְאֶל כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
:כִּי הָיוּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל זָקֵנִים וְיָשָׁן

When Yehoshua had grown old, HaShem said to him, “You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken.”

The chapter continues by enumerating the vast areas which had not yet been liberated.

However, chapter 21,41-43 states:

וַיִּתֵּן הָשֶׁם אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר אֶתְּתֶנּוּ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
:וַיִּתֵּן הָשֶׁם אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר

וַיִּתֵּן הָשֶׁם אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר אֶתְּתֶנּוּ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
:וַיִּתֵּן הָשֶׁם אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר

וַיִּתֵּן הָשֶׁם אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר אֶתְּתֶנּוּ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (13)

43 So HaShem gave Israel all the land He had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there.

44 HaShem gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; HaShem gave all their enemies into their hands.

45 Not one of all HaShem’s good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

That is to say, the Jewish nation under Yehoshua had liberated and settled in every area of the promised land, contradicting what is stated in chapter 13,1 as quoted above. So, did the generation of Yehoshua receive and settle every piece of land in Eretz Yisrael or not?

The illustrious biblical commentator Ralbag (Rabbi Levi ben Gershom, scientist, mathematician, medical doctor, engineer and philosopher in 14th century Provence in southern France) suggested that there is no discrepancy between the two verses. HaShem decreed that the time had arrived for the Jewish people to possess all of the Promised Land from the Euphrates River to the Nile – it was theirs for the taking. All they had to do was go and establish their claim. HaShem was handing them the land on a silver platter. However, they declined to complete the liberation process because of laziness, apathy, lack of idealistic energy and motivation.

So, on the one hand, it was true that “HaShem gave Israel all the land He had sworn to give their ancestors.” However, it was equally true that “there are still very large areas of land to be taken.”

We, the generation following the Shoah, are following in the bad footsteps of our ancestors.

In the War of Independence, we fought and survived the onslaught of seven Arab standing armies. The war never really ended, but the ceasefire gave us a respite to catch our collective breath in order to rearm and absorb the more than one million refugees who had come to these hallowed shores.

The situation was vastly different at the end of the Six Day War.

The future will prove that HaShem opened the gates to all of Eretz Yisrael for the Jewish nation. Our troops could have overrun Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. We could have established the greater Medinat Yisrael or, at the minimum, established puppet governments through which we could have maintained control over all of biblical Eretz Yisrael. We could have forced our enemies to hand over all their weapons and left them with plough shares and shovels.

However, the Jewish people here and in the galut were partners in lacking the idealistic enthusiasm and vision of redemption to take HaShem's invitation to greatness. We were bitten by the virus of apathy and were satisfied with the minimum land west of the Jordan River. Of course, there would have been international repercussions, but these were to be expected after everything the Jewish State would have done.

At the end of the War of Independence, we could have put an end to the Yishmaelite presence in the land. But the bleeding hearts of our leaders – both secular and religious – allowed many of them to remain here. Today, the Galilee's majority is non-Jewish. Wadi Arah, running from Caesarea to the Jezreel Valley and cutting the country in two, has a majority of Yishmaelites. The Bedouin in the Negev are grabbing land with their families of 25-50 and more children.

At the end of the Six Day War, we could have resettled all the Yishmaelites to east of the Jordan River and have had more than one million Jews living in Judea and Samaria.

At the end of the Yom Kippur War, when our soldiers were 35 kilometers from Damascus and 101 kilometers from Cairo, we could have dictated conditions that would have provided the Medina with peace for 100 years. However, the avoda zara of "humanism" conquered the ideals of God's chosen people, leaving us with the situation that we and our children will have to deal with for many years to come.

We have no claims or complaints against our Father in Heaven. He wants the Jewish redemption even more than we. The accusing finger is pointed toward our own lethargic and egotistical faults, as were first displayed by our ancestors at the time of Yehoshua (as explained by Ralbag).

What is left to be completed

HaShem began the creation process, but He requires the Jewish people to complete it through the mitzvot.

HaShem presented us with the Promised Land. We must complete our side of the covenant by liberating all of it from gentile hands and then give forth the life spirit of Torah in every place.

As the illustrious Ramban says in his comments on the Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvot (Book of Mitzvot) on the verse (Bamidbar 33,53):

וְהָיָה לָכֵן לְכָל הָעָם וְלִי אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְלִי אֶת הָעָם

וְהָיָה לָכֵן לְכָל הָעָם וְלִי אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְלִי אֶת הָעָם
,וְהָיָה לָכֵן לְכָל הָעָם וְלִי אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְלִי אֶת הָעָם ,וְהָיָה לָכֵן

We were commanded to inherit the land that HaShem gave to our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. We are prohibited from leaving the land in the possession of any other nation or from leaving it fallow.

There is still much work to be done. We must regain our holy inheritance, gather in all the Jews remaining in the galut, rebuild the Bet Hamikdash, re-establish the Davidic dynasty,

restore halacha as the law of the land, reestablish the Sanhedrin, and reeducate the nation in the ways of the Torah.

Now is the time for renewed energies, restored idealism, clarity of vision for the future and authentic Torah leadership. These qualities will not come from the Jews in the galut. The geula shelaima (total redemption) will arise from the batei midrash (yeshivot) of our youth who learn Torah and devote their lives to the defense of our people and homeland.

Shabbat Shalom,

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