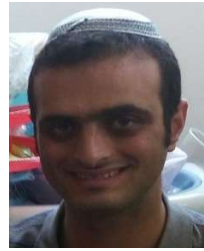


Pleading for a new Opportunity

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I pleaded with יהוה at that time, saying:

“O lord Hashem You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no god in heaven or on earth can equal! Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon.” But Hashem was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. Hashem said to me, “Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again!” (Devarim 3:23-26)

Our Parasha opens with “Vaetchanan” – Moshe tells of how he plead with G-d to get a chance to enter Eretz Yisrael. But Moshe’s plea receives its final rejection: **“Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again!”** Following this story, Moshe resumes his pre-entry to Israel sermon. As we can see, this Parasha is loaded with many of the fundamentals of the Torah: warning to keep the mitzvot once in Israel, rereading of the Ten Commandments, Shema, mitzva of telling the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim and more. In short, we could say this Parasha covers all the most basic corners of the Torah. Another interesting anecdote is, that this Parasha is always read on Shabbat Nachmu – the week following Tisha Be'Av. Could this all be connected? Why does this Parasha have to open with Moshe's plea to enter Eretz Yisrael? And why are the weekly portions synced so that this portion is read following Tisha Be'Av? At this point Moshe ends a long speech reviewing Bnei Yisrael's journeys through the desert from Mt. Sinai to the gateway to the land of Israel. It is important to remember that this process in which am Yisrael is extracted from Egypt and is granted Torah – isn't meant to end in the desert but rather is destined to be fulfilled through everyday life in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore it is essential to review the fundamentals of Torah prior to the entry to the promised land. Moshe's tragedy, is that after he led his people from Egypt, brought down the Torah and prepared them for their destiny – his journey ends at the border of the holy land. He will not live the destiny himself. He could see in arms reach but will not fulfill it. Moshe will not have the privilege. And he makes a point to stress how much he tried to persuade G-d to allow him to. But his efforts were in vain. **“But Hashem was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me”**. The Ha'amek Davar explains that G-d punished Moshe for the benefit of am Yisrael. Moshe received midat hadin so am Yisrael will get the treatment of mercy and will be allowed to accomplish their goal.

Perhaps Moshe saw the importance of telling this at this point of his ongoing pre-entry speech, to instill in Bnei Yisrael the yearning he had to fulfillment of the destiny in Eretz Yisrael. Moshe did not live it physically but must have lived it spiritually through learning the Torah and teaching it. Moments before reviewing all the commandments and warnings prior to their entry Moshe wanted them to learn the ambition and yearning for living a holy life in the promised land, hoping they will appreciate it and never let go. This could also be a connection to Shabbat Nachamu, following mourning the galut and churban. May the Parasha remind us of Moshe's longing to Eretz Yisrael, and may we never cease to aspire and pray to live our purpose in our land. As we can summarize from another pasuk in the Parasha:

"Do what is right and good in the sight of Hashem, that it may go well with you and that you may be able to possess the good land that your G-d Hashem promised on oath to your fathers" (Devarim 6:18)

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