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"See, I have set the land before you," Moses relates in this week's Torah portion, Devarim. "Come and possess the land G-d swore unto your fathers."

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator whose explanation on the text expresses its most literal meaning, explains that the Jewish people did not have to wage war in order to take possession of the land of Israel; had they not sent the spies, they would not have needed any weapons.

"There is no one to contest the matter," Rashi comments. Since G-d Himself promised the land to the Jews, no one in the whole world could have prevented this from happening.

Historically, however, we see that instead of a miraculous entry into the land, the Jewish people did indeed engage in battle with their enemies. Their lack of faith and insistence that Moses send spies to bring back a report spoiled their opportunity to enter the land unopposed, and made it necessary for them to follow a natural procedure instead of a miraculous one. In other words, it was their own negative attitude and conduct that forced them to wage wars in order to assert their Divine right to the land.

This contains a moral for our own times and present condition: The Torah tells us that the Final Redemption with Moshiach will be very much like our first redemption from Egypt, but will be accompanied by even more wonders and miracles. It follows that if the entry and settlement of the land of Israel was supposed to be accomplished in a supernatural manner the first time, how much more so will it be miraculous in our own times, with the Messianic Redemption!

Again, just as before, the entire matter depends on us. We must show absolute faith in G-d and His promise that the entire land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. We must not be afraid to inform the nations of the world—unequivocally—that the land of Israel is our eternal legacy.

As Rashi explains on the very first verse of the Torah, "The whole earth belongs to G-d; He created it and gave it to whom He saw fit. [The land of Israel] was given to [the nations] by His will, and by His will He took it from them and gave it to us!"

When we will demonstrate this true and absolute faith in G-d, we will immediately merit that "no one will contest this, and there will be no more wars nor the need for any weapons." (From: Living with Moshiach 5759, www.moshiach.net)

"Moshe began to explain this Torah" [1:5]. "In the seventy languages of the nations." -- Rashi

G-d knew that in the future Israelites would be scattered throughout the world. Therefore, He had Moshe explain in the seventy languages so that every language and every person would have a spark of the Torah. (From Sfas Emmes, translated from Sichat HaShavua 498, www.ascent.org.il)

Bring forth wise and understanding men, known among your tribes, and I will place them at your head (1:13) The word va'asimaim ("and I will place them") is written in the Torah lacking the letter Yud, so that the word can also be read as va'ashamam, "and their guilt." This comes to teach us that the faults of a generation rest with its heads and leaders. (Talmud; Rashi)

When someone comes to a Rebbe and seeks his counsel and assistance in dealing with a spiritual malady, the Rebbe must first find the same blemish, if only in the most subtle of forms, in his own soul; only then can the Rebbe help him to refine and perfect his self and character. This is the deeper significance of that which our sages have said, "the faults of a generation rest with its heads and leaders". (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok of Lubavitch) - chabadonline.com

MOSHIACH IS BORN ON TISHA B'AV

Tisha B'Av is known by our Sages as the birthday of Moshiach. In simple terms this means that at the moment of the destruction of the Holy Temple, the potential for the Final Redemption, through Moshiach, was born.

The Rebbe clarified the exact meaning of this: "Our Sages explain that this cannot refer to Moshiach's actual birth, because Moshiach will not be an infant when he redeems our people. But rather, it refers to a strengthening of his influence. For our Sages refer to a birthday as a day when mazalo govair, 'the spiritual source of one's soul shines powerfully.' On the day when Moshiach's spiritual source is powerfully revealed, there is a unique potential for the Redemption to come . . . Each year, for the past two thousand years, on Tisha B'Av, Moshiach receives new power and new strength, and from year to year, this influence grows more powerfully."

Thus, Tisha B'Av is a unique time, when the potential for the Redemption is at its peak. Through this insight into Tisha B'Av we are introduced to a basic concept in chasidic philosophy, which teaches that the greatest ascent comes after the greatest descent. Let us use the time properly and bring about the greatest ascent, the revelation of Moshiach and the Final Redemption, NOW. (From: Living with Moshiach 5759, www.moshiach.net)

AHAVAT CHINAM

Our Sages have taught that the Holy Temple was destroyed because of sinat chinam--unwarranted hatred. The rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the correction of our past failings will be brought about through ahavat chinam--unconditional love of our fellow Jew. What is unconditional love? When we love the other person just because he is a Jew.

There are two sorts of love, actually, love of two different "types" of Jews. One love is for the Jew I don't even know, and the other is for the Jew I know. A cynical Jew once said, "If you ask me to love the Jew that's in Russia, or the Jew that's fighting in the front lines in Israel, whom I've never met, I have no problem. But if you're asking me to love Yankel my neighbor, whose faults I know, now that is very, very hard."

In order to rebuild the Holy Temple, we have to have ahavat chinam for the people we know. Though we recognize through firsthand experience their good and bad qualities, their frailties and foibles, we must rise higher than the differences between us. And, if we look higher or overlook altogether what we don't like in another Jew, then the ahavat chinam will come much more easily. For, when we look deeper, we will certainly see the other Jew's source and essence, which, being a part of G-d Himself, are good and pure.

May each and every one of us be permeated with true ahavat chinam for those Jews whom we know as well as those Jews we don't know, thus helping to rebuild the Third and eternal Holy Temple, NOW. (From: Living with Moshiach 5759, www.moshiach.net)

THE SIX REMEMBRANCES (1) ARE RECITED EVERY DAY, INCLUDING SHABBAT, FESTIVALS, ROSH HASHANA, AND YOM KIPPUR.

FROM MY GRANDFATHER'S APHORISMS: WHAT GOOD IS CHASSIDUS AND PIETY IF THE MAIN QUALITY IS LACKING - AHAVAT YISRAEL, LOVE OF ANOTHER - EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF CAUSING (G-D FORBID) ANGUISH TO ANOTHER!
FOOTNOTE: 1. SIDDIR P. 86. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM, AV 8)

"That which is in your heart about your friend is what you think is in his heart about you."

- Rashi