



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



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MENASHE'S ROLE IN BUILDING UNITY

In this week's parshiyot, we encounter the famous request of the tribes of Reuven and Gad to settle just outside of Eretz Yisrael. Moshe Rabbeinu eventually agrees and grants the land to Reuven, Gad, and *chatzi* Menashe. Wait a minute—when did the tribe of Menashe get involved?

Some suggest that Moshe Rabbeinu, in an effort to ensure there would never be a disconnect or lack of unity between the tribes living inside Eretz Yisrael and those outside, chose to split a single tribe. A tribe would never forget its other half, so effectively, the two groups living on opposite sides of the Yarden could never fully forget each other.

But why Shevet Menashe specifically? Why not any other tribe?

Shevet Menashe had a unique and deep connection to Eretz Yisrael. Moshe was confident they would not lose that connection even while living outside the Land—a risk he may not have been willing to take with other tribes. We see this connection most prominently in the episode of the daughters of Tzelafchad, who was from Shevet Menashe. They argued that their family should not lose their father's portion in the Land. Later, the elders of

Menashe insisted that their tribe should retain that land, and that the daughters should marry within the tribe to prevent the land from transferring to another shevet.

Additionally, Yosef HaTzadik—Menashe's father—made his brothers swear to bury him in Eretz Yisrael. The Gemara in *Bava Batra* even brings an opinion that Tzelafchad died as one of the *ma'apilim*—those who attempted to enter Eretz Yisrael after Hashem decreed that their generation would die in the desert.

The half of Shevet Menashe that remained outside the Land should never lose their connection to it, and should always yearn to return. And those fortunate enough to live in Eretz Yisrael should carry that same deep appreciation and connection to our homeland.



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HOLDING BACK, TO MOVE FORWARD

Our parsha begins by exploring the laws of oaths and vows, particularly those made by women.

Throughout this section, we find a repeated phrase: "וְיָהִי יִסְלַח לָהּ". Though the *p'shat* of this phrase is unclear, Rashi explains that it refers to a case where a

woman takes an oath to prohibit something upon herself, and her father or husband nullifies the oath without telling her. She then violates the oath, still believing it to be valid. According to Rashi, even though she hasn't technically transgressed, she still needs Hashem's forgiveness—hence, “וְהָיָה לְךָ כְּחַטָּאת.”

Understandable, right?

The *Da'at Mikra* offers a similar explanation but adds that even when a woman is informed that her oath has been nullified, she must refrain from violating it until she has mentally accepted its invalidation. She must internalize that the oath is no longer binding before acting otherwise.

Throughout Jewish history, many safeguards and prohibitions have been established to help prevent sin or to reflect evolving ethical standards. These don't just apply on a national or rabbinic level; they should also be embraced personally. A person must create boundaries for themselves—prohibitions that help them avoid sin or align with their values. And just as one treats rabbinic safeguards with the seriousness of Torah law, they should view their personal boundaries as equally binding—just as the *Da'at Mikra* suggests. ■

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