

Veze Habrachah – Rabbi Lerner – September 1, 2013

The Final Perek of the Torah – the Death of Moshe Rabbeinu

34:1: *Moshe goes up from the plains of Moav to Har Nevo to the summit of the cliff that faces Yericho, and Hashem showed him the entire land, the Gilead as far as Dan.*

Ibn Ezra: According to my thinking, Yehoshua wrote the final part of the Torah from this pasuk until the end; because once Moshe was told to ascend, he was not in a position to write and come back down and say what happened at the end. They were not written by Moshe. They were written by Yehoshua with Ru'ach Hakodesh, with the aid of prophecy. The proof for this is that this pasuk is written in the third person – Hashem showed *him* the land – as opposed to the rest of the sefer of Devarim which is in the first person, with Moshe talking. Since here it is in the third person, it must be someone else talking about Moshe's final hours, namely Yehoshua. How did he know about Moshe's final hours? It must have been with prophecy. This is an extraordinary statement that goes against the Gemorrah that Rashi quotes in 34:5: *So Moshe, the servant of Hashem, died there, in the land of Moav, by the mouth of Hashem.* **Rashi** there says is it possible that Moshe wrote that he died – he was already dead – how could he write it? The Tanah Kammah says that until this point everything was written by Moshe, and from this pasuk and on, it was Yehoshuah. Rabbi Meir though says is it possible that the Torah is missing anything, that he left something deficient for the people when he took the Torah and gave it to the people? It must be that Hashem told Moshe to write what He told him – Hashem told Moshe what his death would be like, and Moshe wrote it all down with tears rolling down his face. So, the gemorrah clearly talks about the final 8 pasukim, with up to that point all written by Moshe and a machlokes about who wrote these pasukim; the Ibn Ezra says that is really an issue from the beginning of the perek, where Yehoshua wrote the last 12 pasukim, contrary to the Gemorrah.

Rabbeinu Bachya: quotes the Ibn Ezra and says that his interpretation is incorrect – the entire Torah to the very end is Toras Moshe – he wrote what was dictated by Hashem, each and every letter, just as Rabbi Meir says.

34:2: *All of Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Menashe; the entire land of Yehuda as far as the western sea.*

Ramban: what Hashem is showing Moshe is the entire Eretz Yisrael, including the land of Yehuda in the south – that is the lower half of the country, from the Yarden to the Mediterranean; all of this was the land of Yehuda. All of this was shown to Moshe by a miracle. He was not allowed to enter it, but he was allowed to see every inch of this beloved land, the entire inheritance. And the Rabbeinu tell us in the Sifri that the land is full of goodness in many different ways, and Moshe had intense love for the land and desperately wanted to see all of it; if he couldn't see it in person, he was at least allowed to see the incredible land and all of the goodness that would be bestowed upon his beloved nation – this made Moshe very happy, that he was able to see all of this with his own eyes. **Rashi:** He didn't just show him the land as it was, but the entire future of B'nai Yisrael. Hashem showed him the entire land when in peace and all of the different oppressors who would wage war against his people. He not only showed him the future enemies, but also when the Jews would sin – when He showed him the portion of Dan, He showed him the idol that they would set up. In Naphtali He showed him the land in

peace and war, the battle of Devora and Barak. With Yehuda He showed Moshe the future of the Davidic dynasty and all of the kings and all of their victories and battles. He shows Moshe everything until Techiyas Hamaisim, all of the constant fighting until the resurrection. He gets to see not only all of the treasures of Eretz Yisrael, but the entire history until the end of time. So Moshe gets to know everything before he passes on from this world.

34:4: *And Hashem said to him "This is the land that I promised to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaacov, saying 'I will give it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross over to there."* **Rabbeinu Bachya**: why say the word

Laymor? The Gemarrah in Brachos says that how do we know that the neshamos of the dear are actually communicating with each other? From this word Laymor – that Moshe should tell the Avos when he comes up to the heavens that this land is being given over to their children. He must tell it to them. Would they otherwise be unaware of it? Do they not know what is going on anymore in this world? It is not true – they know what is going on in Olam Habah as well as Olam Hazeih. So why does Moshe have to tell them this if they are aware of it? Hashem wanted Moshe to become ingratiated in the eyes of the Avos. Even though they were fully aware of what was going on, Hashem wanted Moshe to tell them this news so that they should love Moshe that much more, that he had helped take the Jews out of the land and guide them to the land, to fulfill the promise made to them by God.

Sforno: it says that Moshe will not cross there so that he would not enter as the holiest person there is, which would make the land too holy to ever be destroyed – there would never be able to have destruction of the temples if Moshe had entered the land. The whole history that Hashem was shown to Moshe would only happen because Moshe would not enter the land. There has to be a galus, and it would not happen if Moshe had entered the land. **Vilna Gaon**: Because the Jews did not fulfill the Bris Bain Habesarim, that it was necessary for them to leave Egypt early, that is why future Galus would be needed. That is why Pesach is always the same night as Tisha B'Av, to emphasize this point. Moshe could not enter the land in order to allow this to happen.

Oznayim LaTorah: there was a strange dichotomy of Moshe being allowed to see all of the future from Har Nevo. After he sees all of this, he dies and is buried in complete different place – in a valley in Arvos Moav, facing Bais Pe'or – it was a far distance. Why does he have to see everything from one place further north and then be buried in a totally different place further south? The name of the mountain Nevo comes from the word Bina, knowledge and foresight – that is where he needs to see all of the land and its future in a vision and to completely understand it. Why was he not buried there as well? He is buried opposite Baal Pe'or – he was to somehow serve as a kaparah for the sins of Bais Pe'or, that he should help the nation fight off the Yetzer Harah of Baal Pe'or, the sins of avodah zarah and gilui arayos, the two powerful sins that can destroy the nation. Moshe's burial space is to try to help the nation against these two sins. His mission was always to help B'nai Yisrael as the Eved Hashem, even in his death.

34:12: *and by all the strong hand and awesome power that Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel.* Rashi: the strong hand is that he was able to carry the heavy stone luchos down from Har Sinai by himself. The awesome power refers to the great miracles that he was able to bring about. What does it mean before the eyes of all of Israel? That Moshe's heart persuaded him to smash the Luchos before the eyes of all of the people at

the sin of the Egel. And Hashem agreed that it was the correct behavior. When it says that Moshe had destroyed the Luchos, Hashem was saying Yasher Koach to him, that he had the courage and guts to destroy them, to emphasize the point of how the Jews had shattered the covenant of the Torah. At the end of Moshe's career, the Torah confirms that in retrospect he deserved a big Yasher Koach. **Ramban:** quotes the Rambam, that before the eyes of all of Israel meant that he performed miracles in front of the entire nation, while most other Navi'im performed miracles only in front of individuals. But the Ramban says this was incorrect – Eliyahu performed many miracles in front of the entire nation; Yehoshuah likewise split the Yarden in front of the entire nation. But they did a few isolated miracles in front of the nation just for a few moments, while Moshe performed continuous national miracles, like the Manna, ongoing and repeatedly for 40 years.

Da'as Zekainim Miba'alei Tosafos: when the moment came for Moshe to die, Hashem called out to the neshama of Moshe, and Hashem said to the neshama “for 120 years you were stipulated to be the holy neshama of Moshe, and now it is time for you to leave – your end has come, the designated moment has arrive.” The Neshama answered that You are the God of all neshamos, You are the one who created me and placed me in Moshe's body; but is there a body holier than Moshe's that will never decay? I will not leave this body – it is the holiest place to be and I am not giving it up. Hashem answers, you cannot procrastinate, because the time for Moshe to die has arrived. You argue that there is no holier body than that of Moshe, but I am taking you back up to Me, and you will be right under my Kisai Hakavod accompanied by all of the angels. The Neshama answered that he did not want to be with angels; there were angels that were sent down to earth and got involved with human women and sinned, while Moshe gave up marital life for the last 40 years of his life after he had ascended Har Sinai; angels are nothing compared to Moshe. Hashem finally had to remove the Neshama with a Divine Kiss, Al Pi Hashem, that in reality sucked out the Neshama that was reluctant and refusing to leave. At that moment that Hashem took the Neshama out and Moshe dies, Hashem cried that he will stand side by side with me against all evil ones, and he will always defend the Jewish people with his prayers when Hashem will be angry. The angels are weeping and crying – where will they find another like Moshe. The earth is crying that there is no longer a righteous person like this; the world doesn't really get what was lost when he died.