

Sworded Pride

PARSHA INSIGHTS - V'ZOS HABRACHA (5760)

OUR PRIDE IS... THE SWORD?

“Fortunate are you, Israel; Who is like you? A nation saved by Hashem, the shield of your help, Who is the sword of your glory (*va'asher cherev ga'avosecha*).” (33:29) This interpretation is saying that Hashem is the sword of our glory, the One Who fights our wars for us. A different translation of the words “*va'asher cherev ga'avosecha*” is: “And that the sword **is your glory**.” It is not referring to Hashem. Rather, it is stating that the sword is our grandeur and pride. The first explanation is definitely more popular, but the second one cannot be discounted. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin examines this alternate approach.

How can the Jews comfortably say that weapons are our source of pride? Don't we know that “the VOICE (of prayer and Torah study) is Yaacov's voice, and the HANDS (that wield swords and weapons) are Aisav's hands?” (*Toldos 27:22*) Rav Sorotzkin solves the mystery in two ways; we will explore only one of them today.

Hashem handed *Klal Yisroel* [the Jewish people] the sword, the military authority, to expel the seven wicked nations of Canaan (*Eretz Yisroel* [the Land of Israel]). This allowed us to settle there in spiritual security. Remember, *Eretz Yisroel* is “Hashem's palace”, and it does not tolerate abominable behavior. Since *Bnai Yisroel* [the Children of Israel] were to remain there and safeguard its extreme sanctity, our pride could be very easily attributed to that “sword”. That is one explanation for the sword being our splendor.

We see that even weapons, if used correctly, can sanctify Hashem's name and saturate the world with holiness. Of course, they are generally tools of death and destruction, and we do not wish to utilize them. However, in this instance, we could be proud of using our swords properly.

May Hashem help us channel all our energies and resources toward His service. *Mazel tov* [congratulations] on completing the reading and analyzing of the Torah once again. *Chazak* [Be strong]!

By Rabbi Moshe Heigh

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