

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT KI TAVO

28-29 AUGUST | 16 ELUL

"TODAY"



BY: **YOSEF KANTER**

Tribe gap year student

In this week's *parasha*, Moshe (Moses) and the Levi'im say: "Pay attention and listen, O Israel! This day, you have become a nation to the Lord your God". (*Devarim* 27:9). What does it mean that on 'this day' they became a nation?

Rashi quoting the Talmud (*Berachot* 62b) explains that the verse comes to tell us that 'On each day it should appear to you as though it were "today" that you have entered the covenant with God'. Each day is a new opportunity to do mitzvot, and it

is as important as the first day we accepted the Torah.

However, a question raised by Rabbi YY Jacobson still stands. Why does it take until now for Moshe to describe the Jews as an *am*, a nation? Over 100 years before this, Pharaoh had already given the Jews the title of *Am Bnei Yisrael*, the nation of the Children of Israel. Furthermore, we are told in our very *parasha* (*Devarim* 26:5) that we became a nation in Egypt. Why then does Moshe tell us that it was on 'this day'?

Rabbi YY Jacobson explains that when *Bnei Yisrael* are defined as a nation by Pharaoh, it is the hatred that Pharaoh has towards the people that binds them together; it is pure antisemitism.

However, what binds us as a people, says Moshe, is not that Pharaoh hates you but that God loves you and chose you as His ambassadors. This is why Moshe says it is 'today' that we became a nation, and not when the Pharaoh of each generation makes us the target of their hatred.

It is the new opportunity to serve God that we get each day that defines us as a nation. It is only after the Jews had received the Torah and consolidated that knowledge during the years in the desert that they could understand what it means to be a nation. We should therefore strive 'today' to realise the true glue that binds us as a nation, and not be defined by the hatred of others.

Trivia for Ki Tavo

1. How many curses are there in this week's *parasha*?
2. Which two mountains were the blessings and curses given on?
3. What mitzvah are the people commanded to do when they get to Israel?

