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**RABBI WEIN'S
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BLOG**

There is a subdued sense of frustration and even disappointment in the words of Moshe as he speaks to the Jewish people throughout this entire book of D'varim. This sense of frustration is akin to that of a parent speaking to a recalcitrant teenage child who simply does not understand the ramifications of his/her behavior and the reality of the ways of the world.

Since perhaps many if not most of us have been in such a situation in our lifetime, we, as parents, can all empathize and sympathize with Moshe. His main complaint to the Jewish people, if it can be summed up in a vernacular phrase, is that they just don't get it. By now, after all the miracles that God has wrought for them; the granting of the Torah and making them a special people with an exalted purpose, they still seem to cherish being ordinary and not in any way special or unique.

This attitude of theirs will later be summed up in the books of prophecy of Israel in the statement "...that the House of Israel is just the same as all of the other nations of the world." It is this inability of the Jewish people to appreciate its true role and to understand its Godly mission of eternity that gnaws at Moshe and is reflected, even subliminally, in his words. He feels personally dissatisfied that this central message of Jewish life did not com-

pletely register with a large portion of the Jewish community. To him, the message is so clear that it is beyond debate. Nevertheless, he senses that as far as a large portion of the Jewish people is concerned, this is certainly not the case.

This problem has dogged the Jewish community throughout its long and difficult history. In our generation it has pretty much achieved an acute if not even mortal status. If Jews do not feel special, if they do not maintain their internal self-identity and self-worth, then eventually all the forces of assimilation will overwhelm them.

There was a time when Jews could rely ruefully on the hatred and discrimination of the nations of the world to keep them Jewish, so to speak. Although this hatred and discrimination has not disappeared completely, it has abated in much of the Western world. It can no longer be relied upon to keep Jews Jewish.

In our time one must want to be Jewish and be willing to make binding commitments to remain part of the Jewish people. There is no doubt in my mind that even in the eternity of the truth of the words of Moshe, he glimpses the problems in the situation of the Jewish people in our time. I hope that we will somehow be able to alleviate his sense of frustration and disappointment and that he will see within us a generation, especially a younger generation, of Jews who are dedicated and loyal and who in their essence really get it. 🕯️