

HAFTORAH SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS CHUKAS

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Judges: 11 1:33

In the year 2779 Yiftach HaGiladi became Judge - Shofet. Yiftach is described as a gifted warrior who was seemingly unworthy of becoming the Shofet. His brothers had cast out Yiftach because he was the son of a concubine. While away from his family Yiftach gathered around himself an army of outlaws. Due to the oppression and tyranny of Ammon, Yiftach was asked by the elders of Gilad to return to the family and lead them against the forces of Ammon. Yiftach was victorious and remained Shofet for six years.

There are a number of reasons why the story of Yiftach was selected to complement Parshas Chukas. First of all the issue of leadership. The Talmud tells us that "Yiftach in his generation was like Samuel in his generation."

Although Yiftach was not the greatest scholar, he nevertheless was the recognized leader and a prophet. As such he was accorded the absolute support of the Halacha and the people. This support can at times appear as dogmatic as the law of the Red Heifer. However, our absolute support for our acknowledged Torah leadership is the foundation of our legal system and the transmission of Torah from generation to generation.

The second reason has to do with the battle with Sichon. Sichon was king of the Ammonites who had taken possession of lands once belonging to Moab. Sichon refused to allow the Bnai Yisroel to pass through his lands and went to war against them. Sichon was destroyed and his lands were forfeited to the Bnai Yisroel. In our Haftorah, the king of Ammon, as cousins to the Moabites, claimed legal ownership to the lands which Moshe had taken from Sichon, who had taken them from Moab.