

"Arm from among you men for the military that they may go upon Midyan to bring Hashem's retribution in Midyan." (31:2)

Rashi comments that the word "men" denotes "righteous men". These were the type of individuals chosen to wage war against the Midyonites. After stating *Klal Yisroel's* successes in battle, the *Torah* states that the soldiers brought all the spoils to Moshe (31:11). *Rashi* comments: *This teaches us that they were honorable and righteous and were not suspected of robbery to send forth their hands to take from the booty without permission.* This statement seems superfluous, since the *Torah* had previously made note that those chosen to serve as soldiers were righteous people.

To respond, we must analyze the effects of war on an individual. Participating in war is a great test of a man's character, since war can bring out the very worst in an individual. Take note of the moral decline which whole nations experience following their involvement in war. Now imagine the individual soldier who is on the actual battlefield. When he faces the enemy he must muster all his courage, quell his faintheartedness and gird himself to face the enemy. By war's end, if he was once viewed as gentle and compassionate, he has now been transformed into a callous and insensitive person. This transformation will affect all of his other character traits. The men who left for battle against Midyan were righteous, but what effect had the war had on their personality and character? Were they changed into uncaring, selfish and corrupt individuals, or had they maintained an awareness, that their bloodshedding was solely in fulfillment of Hashem's will to avenge *Am Yisroel* from those who had lured them to sin? When they did not participate in the spoils of war they saliently illustrated their righteousness. Had they been corrupted they easily would have rationalized that they were entitled to the spoils of war. That they did not, proved they were the same individuals who were worthy of being referred to as *anashim*. We must be aware that when spiritual dangers are great, we must intensify our personal vigilance and maintain a higher degree of spiritual involvement.