

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

THE POWER OF TESHUVA

This week we read two Parshiot, and with them, we finish the book of Vayikra. The second Parsha – Bechukotai – starts with the famous words, Im Bechukotai Telechu Ve'et Mitsvotai Tishmeru Va'asitem Otam". The Torah informs us that if we walk in Hashem's statutes and guard His Mitsvot then many blessings will befall us.

One of the famous commentators of late, the Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh (Rebbi Chayim ben Attar), who lived over 200 years ago, brings 42 elucidations on this one Pasuk!

The story is told how he used to give out meat to his Talmidim for Shabbat. Once in a time of shortage, the Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh (OH'C) managed to acquire a generous supply of meat for his Talmidim. However, most of the community were left without. One of the men of the town came to him and complained. This was not fair, why should his students – who don't work, and only study all day, eat so well? The OH'C ignored the man. Shortly thereafter, the OH'C realized that he had belittled Torah by remaining silent and not reprimanding that man. He decided to put himself into exile. He packed a small bag and went wandering from town to town, come what may. The OH'C left home during this week of Parshat B'chukotai.

He reached a town and a kind homeowner took him in. That Friday night in Shul, the Rav of the town stood before the congregation and said, "The following Dvar Torah has been revealed to me from Heaven in the name of the OH'C." And he gave it over. The OH'C, from the back of the Shul shouted, "Ahhh! The OH'C is no big deal."

The OH'C's kind host was shocked as was everyone else. Nevertheless he quickly stood up for the man, explaining that he was a simpleton and didn't realize the foolishness of his words.

At that time, (accepting in a way the OH'C's regret and act of Teshuvah,) the Heavens opened and revealed to him 14 insights into the first verse.

That Shabbat morning, the Rav got up with another revelation, again in the name of the OH'C. The OH'C, once more insulted himself and his Torah. Again the crowd needed pacification by the host. Again the OH'C received a wellspring of Torah. Shabbat afternoon, there was a repeat performance. This time it could not be tolerated. The town Rav ordered the vagrant locked up till it could be decided what punishment to give him. That Motsai Shabbat, there was an unusual winter storm of gushing wind and rain pouring down outside. Nevertheless the Rav managed to get some sleep. He had a dream. The Sages tell us that on Shabbat, even Gehinom rests. Purification doesn't resume till we make Havdalah. (This is one reason for bringing out Shabbat as late as possible,

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DVAR TORAH
The Power of Teshuva
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil

DVAR TORAH
The Kind of Love that Lasts
By Rabbi David Baadani

DVAR TORAH
Parshat Bechukotai
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for we do not wish the Neshamot to suffer more in Gehinam.). The Rav dreamt that night that Gehinam had not yet began operations because the OH'C had not yet said Havdalah. The Rav woke, baffled. Why would he have such a dream...until it occurred to him...there was one man in town that was not in a position to make Havdalah! They had made a terrible mistake and thrown the Ohr HaChaim HaKodosh in jail!!! The Rav told the OH'C of his dream and the OH'C took it as a message his self imposed exile was over. He could go home. All together, 42 insights of the first verse were revealed to him that Shabbat.

Such is the power of Teshuva. The OH'C only made one simple "fault", yet he took upon himself to eradicate that fault totally from within him, and at the end not only was his Teshuva accepted, but Hashem also rewarded him with 42 new insights into the Torah. Lets take a look at the first (out of 42) explanation of the Pasuk given

by the OH'C. He brings a Drasha from the Midrash Torat Cohanim. What does it mean, asks the Midrash, "to walk in My statutes"? It can't mean, to keep the commandments, as that is mentioned immediately afterwards. It must therefore mean, to exert oneself in Torah study. Thus the Torah is telling us, if we want the real blessings to befall us, it is not enough just to sit and attend a Shiur, but we must exert ourselves further in trying to delve into and understand the depths of Torah.

The OH'C explains that the connection between the idea of a Chok - statute, (immutable law that we follow even without understanding its reason) and the exertion of oneself in Torah, is that the Chok mentioned in the Parsha, refers to exerting oneself to such an extent that he would even repeat the learning 2 or 3 times. In fact, Hashem loves the Torah learning of Israel so much, that He decreed, (made it part of "nature") in order that a Jew should continue learning his whole life with enthusiasm, he should learn and then

forget!! (Kohelet Raba 3,10).

Thus the book of Vayikra ends with an essential lesson that we must take with us and input into our daily lives. Although the OH'C was a Tsadik, he was only Zoche (merited) the 42 explanations after he had humbled himself and done Teshuva, for what would seem to any layman, nothing more than a normal reaction.

Furthermore we learn from his first explanation that if we exert our efforts into Torah learning then we will be successful, and Hashem will shower upon us all the blessings mentioned in our Parsha. Even if we are forgetful, this should not deter us, as Hashem has purposely put forgetfulness in the world so that man remains constantly interested, and continuously yearns to fulfil His Torah. This should be a great consolation to anybody who suffers from forgetfulness. Let this not deter us from learning - Hashem has promised us reward for every second.

Shabbat Shalom



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

THE KIND OF LOVE THAT LASTS

Our sages teach: "Any love that depends on something—when that thing is gone, the love disappears. But a love that does not depend on anything will never fade." (Avot 5:16)

This Mishnah teaches us a powerful lesson about the nature of true love.

Some love depends on what someone gives us—how they look, how successful they are, or how they make us feel. This kind of love can seem strong, but it's actually fragile.

As soon as the condition changes, the love often fades. It wasn't really love for the person, but love for the benefit.

That's not real love. Real love doesn't depend on anything outside. It's love for the person just because of who they are. It's the kind of love that sticks through good times and hard times, through change and challenge. This is the love we hope to build in marriage, friendship, and family.

This message also applies to our relationship with G-d. If we only feel close to G-d when life is easy or when our prayers are answered, that

love may disappear when things get hard. But if we love G-d simply because He is our G-d, then that love can carry us through anything.

The Mishnah invites us to build this kind of lasting, unconditional love. Whether we're young or old, whether we're thinking about friends, family, or faith—it's a love that asks for nothing in return, and yet gives everything. It is this kind of love that brings peace, strength, and holiness into our lives and our communities.

Because the love that doesn't depend on anything... is the love that lasts forever.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PARSHAT BECHUKOTAI

In this week's Sedra we find the tochochos given to the Yidden, the second time in Ki Sovo.

When one looks closely at the two Parshiyos, we see that in fact the tochochos given are very different to each other and not merely a repeat of the same calamities that will befall the Yidden.

Why is this so? There must be a deeper significance to this.

The Ramban explains that the tochochos in Parshas Bechukosai are corresponding to the calamities that will befall, the Yidden after the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash. In addition, the tochochos of this week's Sedra Ki Sovo are related to the punishments that come to the Yidden after the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash.

One example the Ramban gives is in relation to the concept of Avodah Zorah. In Parshas Bechukosai ל פרק בו פסוק, the Possuk states "and I will destroy your

towers and your avodah zorahs", however the tochochos in Ki Sovo make no mention of avodah zorah. During the time of the first Beis Hamikdash idol worship was rampant amongst the Yidden, and a factor for the Beis Hamikdash being destroyed. However, there was no idol worship during the second Beis Hamikdash, hence the tochochah relating to the second Beis Hamikdash in Parshas Ki Sovo make no mention of it.

Another example is concerning the actual nation who will destroy the Beis Hamikdash, the Possuk states in Parshas Ki Sovo "Hashem will carry against you a nation from afar, from the end of the world as an eagle will swoop". This reference is referring to the second Beis Hamikdash, and therefore is hinting to the Roman Empire who entered Eretz Yisroel and destroyed the Beis Hamikdash. The Romans were "A nation unknown to you and a nation whose language you will not understand." Compare this to Baval who destroyed the first Beis Hamikdash, there is no mention in the first set of tochochos of a nation

coming from afar, since Baval was close to Eretz Yisroel and known to them.

Yet we know that even within the tochochah and amidst the hardships, Hashem is still with us. The Possuk says, "I will make the land desolate and your enemies who dwell on it will be desolate". This seems like a terrible thing, that the beautiful land of Eretz Yisroel will be barren and desolate. Yet Rashi explains that this is ultimately a brocho for Klal Yisroel. The fact that Eretz Yisroel will be desolate and bare, empty fields and wasteland, will result in no other nations entering and taking over the incredible land. They will have no interest in doing so, as it will not benefit them. They will be unable to farm the land, unable to grow crops. This will leave Eretz Yisroel empty and ready waiting for Klal Yisroel to return and live in the land once again, farming the fields and reaping the produce. This is a true brocho from Hashem, that even though we were sent into Golus, the land of Eretz Yisroel was preserved and saved only for us.

Good Shabbos



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Power of Learning Mishnayot

The Hid"a (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1807), in his work Moreh Be'esba (2:41), discusses the unique significance of studying Mishna (listen to audio recording for precise citation). He notes that the word "Mishna" has the same letters as "Neshama" ("soul"), indicating that studying Mishna has the capacity to cleanse and rectify the soul.

Citing from the students of the Arizal, the Hid"a writes that when one learns Mishnayot from Seder Zera'im, the first section of the Mishna, which begins with Masechet Berachot, he should have in mind that he seeks to correct sins involving forbidden foods and Berachot recited in vain. The soul then receives a "Tikkun" (rectification) for these sins through the learning. When learning Seder Mo'ed, which discusses the laws of

Shabbat and holidays, one should have in mind to correct sins involving the desecration of Shabbat and Yom Tob. When learning Seder Nashim, one should have in mind to correct sins relating to immorality, and sins involving vows (as Seder Nashim includes the laws of vows). When learning Seder Nezikin, one should have in mind damage that he may have caused to other people. When learning Seder Kodashim, one should have in mind to atone for having profaned his sacred soul, and for laxity in the Halachot involving preparing meat for consumption (slaughtering and inspecting the animal), as these Halachot are discussed in Seder Kodashim. Finally, when learning Sefer Taharot, one should have in mind sins involving family purity, bodily emissions, and laxity in the obligation of Netilat Yadayim. (Incidentally, the fact that laxity in Netilat Yadayim requires a special

Tikkun reminds us of the importance of this Misva, and how careful we must be to fulfill the obligation of Netilat Yadayim properly.)

The Hid"a adds that there is nothing as valuable as the study of Mishnayot in a loud, clear voice. Furthermore, he writes, Asher, Yaakob's son, stands by the entrance of Gehinam, and rescues anyone who has studied Mishna. This is the meaning of the verse, "Me'Asher Shemena Lahmo" ("From Asher - his bread is hearty" - Bereshit 49:20). The word "Shemena" has the same letters as "Mishna," suggesting that Asher benefits people who study Mishna.

This is especially appropriate and worthwhile to bear in mind as we begin a new cycle of Daf Yomi, as the study of Mishna and Talmud offers us the special opportunity to rectify our souls and reach greater heights of holiness and spirituality.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Behar-Bechukotai

BEHAR

The Torah prohibits normal farming of the Land of Israel every seven years. This "Shabbat for the land" is called "Shemitta." After every seventh Shemitta, the fiftieth year, Yovel ("Jubilee") is announced with the sound of the shofar on Yom Kippur. This was also a year for the land to lie fallow. G-d promises to provide a bumper crop prior to the Shemitta and Yovel years.

During Yovel, all land is returned to its original division from the time of Joshua, and all Jewish indentured servants are freed, even if they have not completed their six years of work. A Jewish indentured servant may not be given any demeaning, unnecessary or excessively difficult work, and may not be

sold in the public market. The price of his labor must be calculated according to the amount of time remaining until he will automatically become free. The price of land is similarly calculated.

Should anyone sell his ancestral land, he has the right to redeem it after two years. If a house in a walled city is sold, the right of redemption is limited to the first year after the sale. The Levites' cities belong to them forever. The Jewish People are forbidden to take advantage of one another by lending or borrowing with interest. Family members should redeem any relative who was sold as an indentured servant as a result of impoverishment.

BECHUKOTAI

The Torah promises prosperity for the

Jewish People if they follow G-d's commandments. However, if they fail to live up to the responsibility of this calling, then chilling punishments will result. The Torah details the harsh historical process that will fall upon them when Divine protection is removed.

These punishments, whose purpose is to bring the Jewish People to repent, will be in seven stages, each more severe than the last. Sefer Vayikra, the Book of Leviticus, concludes with the details of erachin – the process by which someone vows to give the Beit Hamikdash the equivalent monetary value of a person, an animal or a property.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



1. Why does the Torah specify that the laws of shemita were taught on Har Sinai?
2. If one possesses shemita food after it is no longer available in the field, what must he do with it?
3. The Torah commands, "You shall sanctify the fiftieth year." How is this done?
4. To what do the words "bechukotai telechu" (walk in My statutes) refer?
5. When is rain "in its season"?
6. What is the blessing of "v'achaltem lachmechem l'sova" (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?



1. 25:1 - To teach us that just as Shemitta was taught in detail on Har Sinai, so too, all the mitzvot were taught in detail on Har Sinai.
2. 25:7 - Remove it from his property and declare it ownerless.
3. 25:10 - At the beginning of the year the Beit Din declares, "This year is kadosh (sanctified)."
4. 26:3 - Laboring in Torah learning.
5. 26:4 - At times when people are not outside (e.g., Shabbat nights).
6. 26:5 - You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.

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