



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 34

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BECHUKKOTAI

27th Iyar 5776

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 26, verses 3 - 5 and

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 26, verses 6 - 9

- ✚ Hashem informs Bnai Yisrael that if they walk and follow in his path by adhering to all the 613 mitzvot's then they will be blessed.
- ✚ These blessings include having a prosperous year in which the right amount of rainfall will descend at the right time, so the land will produce the best and maximum quantity of crops; and allowing the land of Israel triumph over all of her enemies, enabling her to be at constant peace.
- ✚ Hashem's Shekinah (spiritual essence) will forever dwell in the Mishkan as a sign that Bnai Yisrael are his chosen people.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 26, verses 10 - 46

- ✚ However if Bnai Yisrael don't listen to Hashem and defy him, then unfortunately they will have to suffer the consequences and be severely punished.
- ✚ Hashem lists forty nine different punishments he would mete out for their disobedience. Including: Physical punishments such as suffering from swelling of the joints, high temperature, as well as being constantly attacked by their enemies; Agricultural punishments i.e. drought and famine and Natural-orientated disasters, for example enduring a plague of wild animals, life threatening diseases etc.
- ✚ Other forms of punishments are also mentioned such as the land of Israel's total annihilation and being forced to flee once more into Golus (Exile).
- ✚ Yet despite all of this Hashem will always remember his covenant he made with Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaacov of not destroying Bnai Yisrael completely and will ultimately forgive them and return them back to their promised homeland to live in peace once more.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 27, verses 1 - 15

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe, if a person articulates a notion of donating a gift to the value a human life, for the Mishkan. They must follow a particular formula that takes into consideration the person's age, gender and how much they can realistically afford without harming their health and the wealth fare of their family.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 27, verses 16 – 21 and

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 27, verses 22 -27

- ✚ If a person pledges an animal, a house or a field to Hashem, they must be evaluated by a Kohen first. Once the value has been determined it is redeemed for the exchange of money which is then given to the Kohen.
- ✚ Land which was purchased and then consecrated by the buyer can also be redeemed, but it reverts back to its original owner when the Jubilee year arrives.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 27, verses 28 - 34

- ✚ Someone who wishes to redeem his Ma'aser (the Tithe that is set aside from the persons land and produce is set aside for Hashem) may do so, on the condition they add one fifth of the Ma'aser's value first.
- ✚ The correct method of how the Ma'aser is calculated and evaluated from either their herds of cattle or flocks of sheep is to count each animal individually as they are herded into a pen and every tenth one is put aside to be given as Ma'aser.

Haftorah – Yermeyahu (Jeremiah) Chapter 16, verse 19 – Chapter 17, verse 14

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ The Prophet Yermeyahu rebukes the people of Israel for their idolatrous ways and for not having faith in Hashem.
- ✚ Yermeyahu conveys Hashem's words of wrath towards those who do not put their trust in Him, by foretelling exile as their punishment and of Hashem blessing the ones who do.
- ✚ Yermeyahu emphasizes his point by comparing Man to a Tree. "If we put our faith in people, we will be like a tree craving for water in the desert. Not knowing if they are going to find enough to survive. However, if we place our trust in Hashem. We will be like a tree near a river. Never fearing where its water will come from, even during a drought."

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA

- ✚ 'And I will place my Sanctuary with you' Chapter 26:11. The Hebrew word for Sanctuary מִשְׁכָּן Mishkan has a gematria of 410.
- ✚ This represents the 421 years that the First Beis Hamikdosh remained standing before it was destroyed.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

This week we conclude the book of Vayikra with Parsha B'hukotai, which is commonly referred to as the Parsha of "tochacha" – rebuke. It is full of frightening threats of unimaginable punishment to be meted out to those who brazenly refuse to observe the Torah's laws. Strangely though, just after concluding this startling section of admonition, the Sedra abruptly switches to a section dealing with the laws of "Arachin" – the dedication of the value of oneself or another person to the Temple. This section seems completely misplaced. What is the relevance of these laws to the rebuke which dominates the rest of the Parsha?

To help shed some light on this, allow me to quote you an inspiring story told by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky. During the Holocaust, when many of the horrifying curses of this week's Parsha were being manifested before the Jewish people's very eyes, the Germans were taking sadistic pleasure in torturing and tormenting the great Rabbis who served as teachers and inspiration for the Jewish people.

In one particularly gruesome incident, a number of merciless Nazi officers were beating Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, known as the Klausenberger Rebbe (1905-1994), to the brink of death. After enduring seemingly endless continuous blows, the officers probed the bleeding and semi-conscious Rabbi Halberstam. If after being inflicted with all this suffering, can he honestly still say that he believes that the Jews are really G-d's chosen people? Despite the pain, the Klausenberger Rebbe, rose to his feet and responded unequivocally in the affirmative.

Amazed at his seemingly naive and misplaced faith, the officers pressed him for an explanation. He replied, "As long as I am not the cruel oppressor of innocent victims, and as long as I am the one down here on the ground maintaining my unwavering faith in my principles and traditions, I am still able to raise my head proudly and know that G-d chose our people."

Applying the lesson of this story to our original question, our great sages explains that after reading the terrifying curses contained earlier in the Parsha and seeing how they have tragically been fulfilled throughout history, We as Jews may begin to lose belief in our value and self-worth. As a nation, nobody has been persecuted more than any other people throughout the ages. Such intense national suffering could easily cause a person to give up hope and spend the rest of their days in total despair.

In order to counter this mistaken conclusion, the section outlining the painful times which will befall the Jewish people is immediately followed by the section dealing with the laws of Arachin. The Torah details how much a person is required to donate if they choose to dedicate the "value" of themselves another Jew to the Temple. This juxtaposition comes to remind us that even in the darkest times, after enduring the most inhumane suffering fathomable, although we may not be accorded respect by our oppressors, our intrinsic worth in Hashem's eyes is eternal and will never wane or dissipate.

