



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL OF THE PALISADES

קהילה קדושה בית ישראל של הפלייס

*An egalitarian Conservative community
where 'welcome' is not just a word!*

PARSHAT BEHAR + B'CHUKOTAI
MAY 8, 2021 - IYYAR 7, 5781



The Lord spoke to Moses in Mount Sinai saying, Speak to the children of Israel and tell them, When you come into the land that I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath to the LORD. Leviticus 25:1-2.

בהר/בחקותי

PARSHOT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI
SHABBAT M'VAReCHIM HaCHODESH
TORAH – LEVITICUS 25:1 – 27:34
HAFTARAH – JERAMIAH - 16:19-17:14

Behar (בְּהַר — Hebrew for "on the mount," the fifth word, and the first distinctive word, in the parshah) is the 32nd weekly Torah portion in the annual Jewish cycle of Torah reading and the ninth in the Book of Leviticus. It is the shortest of the weekly Torah portions in the Book of Leviticus (although not the shortest in the Torah). It is made up of 2,817 Hebrew letters, 737 Hebrew words, 57 verses, and 99 lines in a Torah Scroll.

PARSHIOT BEHAR – BECHUKOTAI

This Shabbat we bless the new month of Sivan and Rosh Chodesh is Wednesday, May 12th. May it bring to us the blessings of Hashem.

We read the double portion of Behar - Bechukotai. We also complete the Book of Vayikra with the reading of Bechukotai.

Parshat Behar begins with a great vision of what shall be when B'nai Yisroel arrives in the Land of Israel. For six years fields are to be sown, vineyards pruned and produce gathered. However, in the seventh year the Land shall rest. "U'vashana Hash'veet Shabbat Shabbaton Y'hiyeh Laaretz..." (Vayikra 25:4). Hashem requires a complete Shabbat for the Land that will last an entire year. Imagine, a whole year without work!

Far more than an advanced agricultural plan to keep the crops growing, Shmittah is an essential part of the education of our people. Indeed, throughout our history, the Shmittah year was a time for increased Torah study and spiritual growth.

One of the great gifts given to us by Hashem is the sense that we are the masters of our own destiny. We work hard, we achieve a measure of success and we truly feel that our rewards are entirely of our own doing. Yet the Torah mandates that when we earn our salary, we immediately give tithes. When we build our home, we must place a Mezuzah on each door post right away. One might wonder what's the hurry? Give me a chance to spend my money and to enjoy my home before you demand your part. But is it really our money? Is it really our house?

It is Hashem who blesses our efforts and turns them into a livelihood, and it is He who gives us the door before requiring the Mezuzah that is placed upon it. Everything is provided in advance, and Hashem asks so little of us in return.

Recently, a parent was overheard disciplining his child. "When you do good, you will get everything. But, when you do bad, you'll be punished." What a simple idea!

Parshat Bechukotai, Vayikra 26:3 teaches that Hashem promises us just that, and Jewish history has confirmed that our fate is directly related to our deeds. Like it or not, our people are judged by a higher standard.

Each morning we say, "Rayshit Chochma Yirat Hashem" the foundation of all knowledge is a fear of Hashem. As we learn in this week's Parsha - V'Io Tonu Ish Et Amito, V'yareta Ma'elokecha, Ki Ani Hashem Elokechem (Vayikra 25:17). And do not wrong your fellow, and fear your G-d, for I am the Lord your G-d.

This fear, this awe and reverence, is reinforced in our minds when we thank Hashem for the many gifts we receive daily. Indeed, the morning blessings can be seen as an exercise in "Hakorot Hatov" - recognition of and appreciation for what Hashem constantly does for us. When we become aware of each individual gift that is renewed to us each day, our eyes, our clothes, our very selves, we are naturally filled with love and awe of Hashem. This must result in positive actions that demonstrate those feelings!

A fellow was once in desperate need of a job and a place to live. The Rabbi of the community searched tirelessly for an apartment for the man and his family and gave him some work at the synagogue. Rather than being grateful, however, the man questioned the Rabbi's motives! "You only helped me so that you would benefit too, your motives weren't pure," the man stated.

Does one have to show Hakorat Hatov when the giver also gains? Can we truly judge another person's intentions?

Consider the awesome Mitzvah of honoring one's parents. "Kabayd Et Avicha V'et Emecha." The Torah does not specify how good the parent must be to deserve honor, nor what the intent of the parent was when the child was created. The good deed is what matters. All that is certain is that you owe them your life and as the root of the word Yehudi implies - a Yehudi says "Todah" - thank you.

Any good that is done for you must always be acknowledged, and as for motives...that's for Hashem to know!

"Chazak! Chazak! V'nitchazeik!" - Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!

THOUGHT QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Our Torah Gem this week talks about the Torah's view on reward and punishment and its effect on Jewish history. How does this relate to our connection to the Land of Israel?



Bechukotai (בְּחֻקֹּתַי *bəḥuqqōṭay* — Hebrew for "by my decrees," the second word, and the first distinctive word, in the parashah) is the 33rd weekly Torah portion in the annual Jewish cycle of Torah reading and the 10th and last in the Book of Leviticus. The parashah is made up of 3,992 Hebrew letters, 1,013 Hebrew words, 78 verses, and 131 lines in a Torah Scroll.

Behar-Bechukotai Aliyah Summary

General Overview: This week's double reading, Behar-Bechukotai, speaks about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, laws regulating commerce and the redemption of slaves. It also contains a vivid description of the rewards for observing G-d's commandments and the series of punishments that will befall us if we choose to disregard them. The Torah then discusses different types of gifts given to the Temple, and the animal tithe.

First Aliyah: G-d commands Moses regarding the Sh'mitah (Sabbatical) and Jubilee years. Every seventh year is a Sabbatical year, when it is forbidden to work the land (in the Land of Israel). After seven sets of seven years a Jubilee year is proclaimed. During Jubilee years all the laws of the Sabbatical year apply, and, in addition to the Sabbatical laws, all slaves are set free and all lands revert to their original owners. We are commanded to conduct business ethically. Since all land reverts to their original owners during the Jubilee year, the amount of years remaining until the next Jubilee year must be taken into account whenever a real-estate sale is conducted, and the price should be set accordingly. The end of this aliyah enjoins us not to verbally harass or intentionally mislead our fellows.

Second Aliyah: This section addresses an obvious concern: "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not sow or gather our grain?!" G-d reassures us that He will bless the sixth year's harvest, and it will produce enough to provide for three years! The Torah then gives the rationale for the prohibition against selling land for perpetuity (instead, land can only be "leased" until the Jubilee year) — "Because the Land belongs to Me; you are strangers and residents with Me." The seller of land, or his relative on his behalf, has the option of "redeeming" the land from the purchaser — provided that two years have past from the date of purchase.

Third Aliyah: The laws mentioned above apply to fields and homes in un-walled cities. Homes in walled cities, on the other hand, may only be redeemed up to one year after the sale; otherwise they become the permanent property of the buyer. Another exception to these rules is the property allotted to the Levites, which are always redeemable. We are commanded to assist our brethren by coming to their aid before they become financially ruined and dependent on the help of others. We are also forbidden from charging interest on a loan to a fellow Jew.

Fourth Aliyah: We are commanded to treat Jewish slaves respectfully, never subjecting them to demeaning labor. The Torah prescribes the redemption process for a Jew sold into slavery to a non-Jewish master. Either the slave himself or one of his relatives refunds to the master the amount of money for the years remaining until the Jubilee — when the slave will go free even if he were not to be "redeemed." Brief mention is made of the prohibition against idolatry, and the requirement that we observe the Shabbat and revere the Holy Sanctuary. We are promised incredible blessing if we diligently study Torah and observe the mitzvot. The blessings include plentiful food, timely rain, security, peace in the land, the elimination of wild animals from the land, and incredible military success.

Fifth Aliyah: And more blessings: An overabundance of crops and G-d's presence will be revealed in our midst. This section then describes the severe, terrifying punishments which will be the Jews' lot if they reject G-d's mitzvot. The punishments include disease, famine, enemy occupation of the land, exile, and desolation of the land. The non-observance of the Sabbatical year is singled out as the reason for the desolation of the land. The aliyah concludes with G-d's promise never to utterly forsake us even when we are exiled in the lands of our enemies.

Sixth Aliyah: This section discusses various endowments pledged to the Temple coffers. A person can pledge the worth of an individual, in which case the Torah prescribes how much the person must pay — depending on the gender and age of the individual who is being "assessed." An animal which is pledged to the Temple must be offered on the altar if it is fit for sacrifice — otherwise it must be "redeemed" for its value. If the owner chooses to redeem it, he must add one fifth of its value to the redemption price. The same rule applies to a house which is pledged to the Temple.

Seventh Aliyah: This section discusses the endowment of land to the temple. If it is land which was part of the family lot (given to his ancestors when Israel was divided amongst the Tribes), and the owner chooses not to redeem it, it may be redeemed by any other individual. In this event, the land becomes the property of the priests during the next Jubilee year. Land which was purchased and then consecrated by the buyer can also be redeemed, but it reverts to its original owner when the Jubilee arrives. All firstborn livestock are sacrificed in the Temple. A person also has the option of dedicating and consecrating any of his belongings specifically for the use of the priests. The "Second Tithe," which must be consumed by its owners in Jerusalem, is briefly mentioned. Also discussed is the animal tithe — every tenth animal is offered as a sacrifice, and the meat consumed by its owners. With this we conclude the Book of Leviticus.

DID YOU KNOW.....

Were you ever called for an Aliya? “YA-AMOD.....” Everyone is familiar with the call. BUT did you ever listen carefully to the FIRST call – the one for the Kohein to be honored with the first Aliya? It is different, and goes like this:

וַיַּעֲזֹר וַיִּגַּן וַיּוֹשִׁיעַ לְכָל־הַחוֹסִים בּוֹ, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן. הַכֹּהֵן הַבּוֹ
גָּדֹל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ, וַתִּנּוּ כְבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה. [בֵּית כֹּהֵן, קָרַב. תַּעֲמֹד
_____ בֵּית _____ הַבֵּית כֹּהֵן.] בְּרוּךְ שָׁנְתָן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ.

LEARN!!!

LISTEN
FOR THIS!!



Now here is the point – after Gabbai 1 makes this call, WE ALL SHOULD ANSWER:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, חַיִּים כְּלַכֶּם הַיּוֹם.

V-atem had-vaykeem badonai Elohaychem chayeem kul-chem hayom.

You who cling to God have been sustained to this day.

ANSWER
WITH THIS!!



It will make Rabbi Stern *very* happy!!!!

COMPILED BY GABBAI FRED

Yahrzeits for: Friday 4/30/2021

*	Mr. Gerson Friedmann	Father of	Ms. Ellen Grawi
	Mrs. Selma Kamil		the Estate Kamil
	Tsvia bat Shmuel Ber (father)- Tsvia bat Chaya Ruchel (mother)		
	also		Mr. Jan Kamil
	Tsvia bat Shmuel Ber (father)- Tsvia bat Chaya Ruchel (mother)	Israel	
	also		Mrs. Rowena Kamil-Gianfredi
	Tsvia bat Shmuel Ber (father)- Tsvia bat Chaya Ruchel (mother)	Israel	
	also		Mrs. Shira Kamil-Rathjen
	Tsvia bat Shmuel Ber (father)- Tsvia bat Chaya Ruchel (mother)	Israel	

Yahrzeits for: Sunday 5/2/2021

*	Mrs. Rose Lena Kahn	No Observers	
*	Mr. Irwin Kolkin	No Observers	
*	Mrs. Lena Korsun	Grandmother of	Mr. Mark Weiss
*	also	Grandmother of	Mr. Philip Weiss

Yahrzeits for: Monday 5/3/2021

*	Mr. Benjamin Ballin	Father of	Mrs. Myrna Edelman
*	Mr. Morton Wernick	No Observers	

Yahrzeits for: Tuesday 5/4/2021

Mr. Nathaniel Gerald Cohen	Father-in-Law of	Rabbi Shammai Engelmayer
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Yahrzeits for: Wednesday 5/5/2021

Mrs. Sylvia Warner	Mother of	Mr. David Warner
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Yahrzeits for: Thursday 5/6/2021

Mr. Moshe Anidjar	No Observers	
Mr. Sol Zelmanowitz	Father of	Mrs. Gloria Laermer

Yahrzeits for: Friday 5/7/2021

Dr. Alan Belson	Father of	Mr. Adam Belson	
also	Father of	Mr. David Belson	
also	Husband of	Ms. Leslie Peterson	
*	Mr. Hyman Freesman	No Observers	