



Parshas Bechukosai 2022, share the love

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Leah Mintche Bas Gittel and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha ends Sefer Vayikra, the third book of the Torah. We begin with the incredible blessings we will receive for doing Mitzvahs with dedication and enthusiasm. ***"There will be plenty of produce to harvest and it will keep us busy till the next harvest. There will be rain in it's proper time and abundance of sunlight to quickly develop the produce."***

We are also told the severe and terrifying punishments for rejecting and disobeying G-d's commands. Nevertheless, G-d states that He will never forsake or abandon us. For He has made a covenant with our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, that their descendants will be His nation.

However, a question comes to mind: The first Pasuk of our Parsha seems repetitive. (26:3) *"If you follow My laws, guard My commandments and observe them."* Following laws and guarding commandments imply the observance of them. Why does the Pasuk seemingly repeat itself?

The Rabbienu Bachya (*Rav Bachya Ben Asher, a Spanish commentary*) answers this question by looking at last week's Torah portion. At the beginning of the Parsha, we were told about two unique Mitzvahs, Shemitah and Yovel.

Shemittah is a seven-year cycle in which we may farm the land for six years and rest the land in the seventh year. The Yovel cycle, which also requires letting the land rest, is the first year after seven Shemittah cycles.

The Rabbeinu Bachya explains that since it takes an extreme amount of trust in G-d to let the land rest, the Pasuk reiterates it. If we follow the Shemittah and Yovel cycles, we will be rewarded with immense physical rewards.

The rain and sunlight will each be proportionate and on time. The harvest will be double the expected yield and the grain will be plenty. Hence, the Torah duplicates and emphasizes the observance of these difficult commandments.

However, the Ibn Ezra (*Rav Avraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra, a leading commentary from the Middle Ages*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He explains that the Pasuk is not truly repetitive because it refers to three separate actions. To study the laws and observe them, but most importantly, share and teach them to others.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ben Attar, a Moroccan commentary and Kabbalist*) adds that the third word of our Parsha is "תִּלְכוּ," which means follow. Usually, the term "**follow**" implies a journey where you follow others and others follow you.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that the rewards laid out in our Parsha are also contingent on sharing the laws and motivating people to join the journey. The duty of each Jewish person is not only to pursue a strong connection with our Creator. But also inspire and awaken the souls of people around us. This crucial aspect of our purpose can initiate a perpetual domino effect and help Jews worldwide.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, is a textbook example of this point. He was one of the most prominent followers of his father-in-law, the Frierdiker Rebbe.

When he assumed the leadership after the Frierdiker Rebbe passed away, the Rebbe started to accumulate his own followers. He began to send Rabbis across the globe to rejuvenate and re-energize world Jewry.

It is impossible to quantify the effect of Rebbe's mission and purpose. Because every person inspired by the Rebbe went on to share his lessons with their families, friends, and communities. Since classes on Rebbe's teachings is just a click away, millions of people are consistently being inspired by the Rebbe.

In our daily life, we must recognize that the Jewish nation has a unique purpose and mission. We are tasked with being "**a holy nation and light onto the world.**" This is achieved by being a vessel through which G-d can share His love, kindness, and compassion with the universe.

There is a beautiful poem that illustrates this point.

“When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world.

I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation.

When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town.

I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family.

Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself,

and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself,

I could have made an impact on my family.

My family and I could have made an impact on our town.

Their impact could have changed the nation

and I could indeed have changed the world.”

Have a meaningful Shabbos,

Rabbi Sholom Yemini