



South Head Youth Parasha Sheet



PARASHAT BECHUKOTAI

Hashem desires for the Jewish people to observe His Torah and perform His Mitzvot. Hashem has promised us that if we perform His Mitzvot He will bring wonderful blessings upon us. Unfortunately, however, if we do not observe Hashem's Torah He will punish us. He warns us not to forsake His ways as he does not want to punish His special nation. Hashem foretells six main punishments. The blessings Hashem has promised us were given on Har Grizim, a mountain alive with grass and vegetation. The punishments however, were given on Har Evel, a barren mountain. We mention these blessings and curses every day in the Shema prayer. The five blessings Hashem promises us are listed below:



1. The blessing of rain - Hashem will provide pure drinking water; ensure the rain falls in the right season in order for crops to grow; and will ensure that the rain doesn't fall at inconvenient times when it will bother us. The blessing of 'rain at the right time' only applies to the Jewish people. The nations outside of Israel will not receive this blessing and therefore might not have enough grains and will need to come to

Israel to purchase produce. As a result, the Jewish people will become wealthy from selling such a large amount of produce.

2. The blessing of an abundance of food - Hashem will ensure the trees in Israel constantly produce fruit for the Jewish people. In fact, He blesses us with so much produce that the Jewish farmers will always be busy threshing the grain and harvesting the crop. Hashem also promises that the Jewish people will feel satisfied after eating just a small amount of food.
3. The blessing of peace - Hashem promises that no countries will invade the land of Israel or attempt to attack the land. Generally speaking, when a country is rich, its enemies try to invade the land. However, Hashem promises to keep the armies of the surrounding lands outside of Israel.
4. The blessing of large families - Hashem will bless the Jewish people with large families and long life. The Jewish people need not worry about feeding their large family as Hashem will ensure that they always have enough food.
5. The blessing of the Shechina - Hashem promises that He will dwell amongst us. He also promises us the third Beit Hamikdash. The third Beit Hamikdash will be eternal. Hashem's holy presence will rest in the Beit Hamikdash and wherever Jewish people are. This will allow all Jewish people to feel close to Hashem, no matter where they might be.

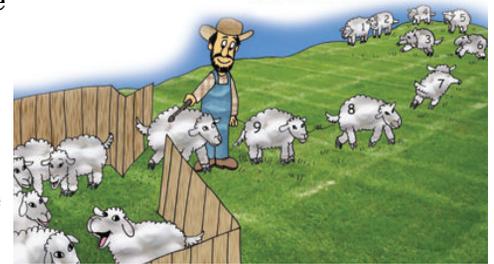
One of the punishments for disregarding the Torah is the exile of the Jewish people from the land of Israel. While the exile of the people from the land is quite depressing, Hashem provides the Jewish people with some hope. He tells them that while they are exiled from the land, the land will not come under the possession of another nation. Hashem also tells the people that even while in exile He won't forsake them, but will send prophets to assist them in doing Teshuva. As we know, this is exactly what occurred when the Jewish people were exiled into Babylon. Hashem sent the prophet Ezekiel to direct the Jewish people to repent, and after seventy years they were permitted to return to the land of Israel. Hashem

also promises that He will remember His treaty with our forefathers and end our exile. He says that if the Jewish people repent immediately, He will bring an instant end to the exile. However, if they do not repent, He will end the exile when the right time arrives.

The Parasha also tells us that a Jew may donate a sum of money in the value of himself or another person. This donation is known as 'Erkecha', which means, 'the value'. The Torah reveals the value of each man, woman and child performing the Mitzvah of 'Erkecha'. The money the Kohanim received for this Mitzvah was used to make repairs to the Beit Hamikdash.

The Parasha also speaks about the Mitzvah of 'Ma'aser Beheima'. This Mitzvah commands a Jewish farmer who owns cows, sheep or goats to give Hashem every tenth newborn. The farmers had a whole method of fulfilling this Mitzvah. Once a year the farmer would gather all the newborn animals in a stable with a very small door which only allowed one animal to exit the stable at any given time. The farmer would then make each animal exit the stable, one at a time, counting every single animal. When the tenth animal exited the barn, the farmer touched it with a stick dipped in red paint and called out, 'this animal is 'ma'aser'. The owner would then take all the marked animals to the Beit Hamikdash in

Jerusalem and offer them as sacrifices on the Mizbeach. The Kohen offering the sacrifice would give the farmer the meat to be eaten only in Jerusalem. Hashem gave the Jewish farmers this Mitzvah for a specific reason. He feared that the farmers would become so engrossed in their farming that they would forget about Torah study. Hashem therefore gave them Mitzvot which would force them to visit



Jerusalem. Some of the other Mitzvot which involve visiting Jerusalem are visiting the Beit Hamikdash on the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. Aside for being the holiest city in the world, Jerusalem was also the city in which many of the great Torah scholars dwelled. When a Jew visited Jerusalem he would meet with a Torah scholar of whom he could ask many Torah questions. This would remind the Jew how important it is to engage in Torah study.

Our Parasha this week teaches us that Hashem is very good to us. He gives us life, food, the ocean, the sun and everything that we need. But if Hashem is good to us then why is there also bad in the world? Why are there sad people, why are people starving, why do people become sick and why do some people pass away young? We have just mentioned that Hashem rewards us when we do something good and some terrible things may happen if we do something not so good. But does this mean that when something bad happens it's a punishment? Definitely not! There is no such thing as bad in the world, instead there are two types of good. There's a good that looks good for example, the birth of a baby, and there is a good that looks like bad. An example of this is when a person becomes sick. Everything that Hashem does is for good. We may think that it's bad, but that's only because the good is hidden from us. There is a saying 'think good and it will be good'. Even when something appears to be bad, we should always think good. When Hashem sees that we are thinking positively and when He sees that we are trusting Him, He will surely make sure that things turn out well.

Mission: When something goes wrong this week remember to say to yourself, 'This too is for the best'.

It was great seeing you in Shule!

**We hope you enjoy reading this Parasha Sheet and quizzing your family!
Shabbat Shalom from Brookie and the South Head Youth Crew**

