

## This weeks Parsha

### Parshat Behar-Bechukosai 5780

**Ezra:** In Bechukosai, Hashem warns what happens if we don't follow His Torah. The Gemara (Megillah 31b) says that Ezra instituted that these warnings be read before Shavuos and those in Ki Savo before Rosh Hashanah - so that we get our difficulties "out of the way" before the end of the year and before a Rosh Hashanah.

**Shavuos new year:** So to the obvious question: We "get" that warnings in Ki Savo are read before Rosh Hashanah. But is Shavuos a Rosh Hashanah? Well ... it is! The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16a) tells us there are four days of judgment per year. On Shavuos the world is judged regarding the fruits of the trees.

But why is Shavuos the beginning of a new year more than Pesach when the world is judged for produce or Succos for rain? Ezra could have organised our weekly readings so the warnings could have been read before these!

**Souls on Hashem's Tree:** The Shlah Hakadosh writes that on Shavuos we should be extremely happy, rejoicing with a spiritual dimension, because on this day we merited to receive the Torah. He says that we must make an effort to improve our deeds and sanctify ourselves so that we are worthy to be crowned with the Torah. He also says that we must realise that we are being judged on Shavuos. Scary stuff!

On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem investigates our deeds because there is a renewal of the entire creation. But on the day the Torah was given – Shavuos - it is also a day of renewal when Hashem investigates our deeds. The Shlah quotes the Kabbalists who explain that when Chazal say that on Shavuos there is a judgment regarding the fruits of the tree, on a deeper level this refers to our souls that "grow" on Hashem's Tree. We are being judged on this day regarding our relationship with the Torah. Hashem investigates whether we, the "fruits", have "bloomed" and "ripened" in our Torah and Mitzvos.

**Renewal and judgment:** Since Shavuos is also a day of renewal and judgment, it is also sensible to analyse where we are "holding" - on a personal level and as a community. Just as before Rosh Hashanah we read the warnings in Parasha Ki Savo as an omen that all calamities and other difficulties shall be of the past, so do we read the warnings in this week's parsha with the hope that no more difficulties shall befall any individual or community. With Covid-19 that takes on a new meaning!

May Hashem help us to understand His message, and may the warnings in this week's sedra be a sign that all our difficulties be part of our past. As we approach the Judgment of Shavuos, may all the "fruits" be blessed with a good judgment that they shall develop fully and continue to "grow" on Hashem's tree.