

BS"D

To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com  
From: crshulman@aol.com

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BECHUKOSAI - 5763

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From: Don't Forget [sefira@torah.org]  
To: Counting The Omer Reminder List  
Subject: Day 37 / 5 weeks and 2 days  
Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 23, will be day 37, which is 5 weeks and 2 days of the omer.

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[http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/ryud\\_bechukosai.html](http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/ryud_bechukosai.html)  
TorahWeb [from last year]

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN  
HE DOES NOT SLUMBER NOR SLEEP

At the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai, in enumerating the special blessings that the Jewish people will receive, the Torah includes, as Rashi notes: "Even five of the weakest of you will pursue on hundred, and one hundred of you will pursue ten thousand (and not "five hundred ten pursue ten thousand" as expected proportionately), as there is no comparing a small number of Torah observers to a large one". A large number of Torah observers constitute a tzibur (community), and a tzibur has its own rights, privileges, and benefits.

The Gemara Berachos (7b) teaches that even if one can not daven together with the tzibur in shul, they should try to daven at the time that the tzibur is davening, for that is an especially propitious moment. The Gemara understands this to be true based upon the pasuk "va'ani t'filasi l'cha Hashem ais ratson" ("but as for me, my prayer is to you, Hashem, at a favorable time") (Tehillim 69:14). When is a favorable time? At the time the tzibur davens. Moreover, Rav Nassan taught that Hashem does not despise the tefila of the rabim (numerous).

The same is true regarding the study of Torah. The Gemara in Berachos (8a) teaches that one should always complete the Torah portion of the week, shnayim mikra veechad targum (reading the Hebrew text twice and the Targum once) with the congregation. What is the relevance of finishing with the congregation? Is not the main purpose to understand the weekly Torah portion? This teaching demonstrates that in addition to the actual learning, there is also the significant ingredient of communal involvement. In Judaism the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

This is further substantiated by the Talmud Rosh Hashana (18a) commenting on the verse from Isaiah (55:6) "Dirshu hashem behimatzo..", "Seek Hashem when He can be found, call upon Hashem when He is near," when is He near? During the ten days before Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. This refers to an individual, however, a tzibbur can always repent and overturn an evil decree.

The city of Yerushalayim is described by King David as, "a city that is united together," (Psalms 122:3). The Sforno explains this to mean that when they needed to expand the city to accommodate the multitudes of pilgrims that converged upon it

thrice yearly to celebrate the festivals, the newer sections blended perfectly with the original sections. In addition, Yerushalayim served as a unifying social force, uniting young and old, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. Throughout the year these groups were divided by social barriers, but on the festivals, Yerushalayim integrated and united them into chaverim, comrades, who embraced each other as parts of one indivisible nation. Moreover, the Talmud in Bava Kamma (82b) teaches that all of the Land of Israel was divided among the tribes, except for Jerusalem, which remained the property of the entire nation. Through their coming to Yerushalayim the people were privileged to not only "nor did any man say to his fellow 'the space space is insufficient for me to stay overnight in Jerusalem'" (Avos 5:7), but in addition they were afforded the special divine protection of "no man shall covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your G-d three times in the year" (Shmos 34:24).

Hashgacha Pratis (Divine involvement in the affairs of man) may be seen in both positive and negative circumstances. King David in Hallel (Tehillim 118:21) says, "odcha ki anisani va'thi li l'yeshua" ("I thank you for you have answered me and become my salvation"). While Targum Radak and Sforno understand "anisani" as "answered me", others, including Midrash Socher Tov and Malbim, interpret "anisani" as referring to suffering, in which case Dovid is thanking Hashem for causing him to suffer, because the suffering purged him and made him worthy of being answered and saved. Hashem revealed Himself to Dovid through the suffering.

This idea is very powerfully portrayed in the following Talmudic passage. The Gemara Berachos (7b) is perplexed by the introduction of perek 3 of Tehillim – "Mizomor l'Dovid" ("a song of David"). The perek recounts the tragic episode in his life, when David had to flee from his son Avshalom, who wanted his life and his throne. The Talmud asks, would not "kinah l'Dovid" ("a lament of David") have been a more appropriate beginning? The Talmud answers that when King David had been told through Nasan the prophet that G-d "will raise evil against you from your own house" (Shmuel II, 12:11), David became dejected. He was only afraid that a servant or an illegitimate child of his household would lead a rebellion against him, and would certainly not show him any mercy. When he saw that his own son Avshalom, he was relieved knowing that his son would not act cruelly to him.

Reb Yonasan Eibshitz zt"l asks, how is Dovid consoled by the fact that his son wants to kill him? He answers very sharply, if Dovid would be challenged by a servant who desired his throne, this would be a common, ordinary happening. Uprisings of this sort happen throughout the world constantly. This trouble would not be so obvious that it was emanating from Hashem, and would not serve to purge him entirely. However, a son rebelling against his father is a most unusual occurrence, and once he saw that the pain he was experiencing was supernatural in nature, he realized it was coming from "Hashem Elokainu (G-d of Justice) Hashem (G-d of Mercy) echad (is one)". Thus he was able to respond to his difficulties Mizmor L'dovid.

Rav Elyashiv applied this interpretation of Reb Yonasan Eibshitz to today's difficult situation in Eretz Yisroel. People have gone to war against their enemies many times in history, but never have they employed suicide bombers. Never have children been recruited as suicide bombers. From the painful supernatural nature of these acts of terror, may we aspire to the immediate supernatural intervention of Hashem on behalf of His tsibur. Finally, the inspiring words of the Bnei Yisaaschar are especially comforting today. Dovid in Tehillim (121:4) declares, "hineh, lo yanum v'lo yishan shomer Yisrael" ("behold, the guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps"). At first glance the poet is using his poetic license and repeating the same idea (i.e. sleep and

slumber). However, upon further reflection, the Bnei Yisaaaschar explains that there is a difference between slumber and sleep. The Talmud (Megillah 18b) defines "yanum" (slumber) as dozing – that if one calls his name, he responds. In contrast the one who is sleeping ("yishan") does not respond. Thus, when we were privileged to have prophets, they would call to Hashem, and He would respond, telling them what was the cause of the punishment and its remedy. Thus the Guardian of Israel does not slumber. However, sleep is that state wherein one calls upon the individual and he does not answer. Similarly, in a time of hester panim, when Hashem is more concealed, one could get the impression that He does not answer. Therefore Dovid promises that even at such a time, He does not sleep. Remember, we close with that with which we opened, Hashem does not reject the davening of the tzibur. Reach out to your fellow Jew, join the tzibur, thereby helping Klal Yisrael.

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From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2003  
To: daf-hashavua@shamash.org  
Subject: daf-hashavua Bechukotai- 5763/2003  
Bechukotai-5763 U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L  
O N D O N (O)  
Bechukotai 22 Iyar 5763

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THE ETHICAL JEW

Taken from Jewish Answers to Medical Ethics Questions - Questions and Answers from the Medical Ethics Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, by RABBI NISSON SHULMAN.

Question: ----- A woman has become a Baalat Teshuva, one who repents her past misdeeds. Previously, she had an ongoing relationship with a man who had two children by another woman. She often neglected contraception and yet did not become pregnant. There is nothing physiologically wrong with her, but she is now concerned lest she be infertile and if so might find a shiduch, an appropriate marriage, problematical. Should she now have herself tested in order to ascertain the true state of affairs? It is well known that there are many causes of infertility that are temporary, and many more that are correctable. How far must she go in this matter?

Answer ----- I have checked with Rabbi Moshe Tendler on this matter. He had discussed such questions with his father-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein of blessed memory. Rabbi Feinstein's opinion is reflected in pertinent sections of the book Practical Medical Halakhah. She is definitely not required to investigate, and it would be unwise for her to do so. There could be many reasons why she did not conceive, not least of them the fact that she did not want to conceive and could have been avoiding her fertile period. In any case, while there is no outright prohibition against investigating her status of fertility, she is strongly advised not to do so. She should trust in G-d that, in the merit of her return to observance, a marriage into which she should enter would be blessed with children and with joy.

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Produced by the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue.  
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From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]  
Subject: daf-hashavua Emor 5763/2003

THE ETHICAL JEW

Taken from Jewish Answers to Medical Ethics Questions - Questions and Answers from the Medical Ethics Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, by RABBI NISSON SHULMAN.

Cryonics

Question: ----- What does Judaism say about the attempt to freeze human corpses in preparation for a later time when science might be able to revive them?

Answer: ----- Judaism has always dealt in the real world and does not consider hypothetical and "science fiction" scenarios. Until cryonics becomes a real scientific possibility, the Rabbinic world will continue to give its attention to issues of immediacy in preference to hypothesis and conjecture.

Furthermore, Judaism has always considered death to be a blessing under certain conditions and in its proper time. This applies to all people. Rabbi Meir commented on the Biblical verse, "And the L-d saw everything He created, and it was very good", adding tov meod means - tov mavet; "What is good about creation is death!" He did not mean, of course, that death is good. Nor did he express a pessimistic view. After all, Judaism is very positive and optimistic in its view of life. He meant to say that one of the good things about creation was death, for it is needed.

Abraham is considered to have brought a great blessing upon the earth by stressing and teaching the values of old age. In fact, it is known that the seal of Abraham was a young man and woman on one side of a coin, and an old man and woman on the other, stressing the value of each age of life in its place.

Robert Browning, in his poem, "Rabbi Ben Ezra" ("Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be, the last of life for which the first was made"), captured an essential spirit of Judaism.

This gives some sense of what Judaism's view of cryonics might be when we are ready to discuss that question and consider it.

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]  
Subject: daf-hashavua Kedoshim 5763/2003  
U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L O N D O N (O)

THE ETHICAL JEW

Taken from Jewish Answers to Medical Ethics Questions - Questions and Answers from the Medical Ethics Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, by RABBI NISSON SHULMAN.

Question: ----- What is the Jewish view on in vitro fertilization (IVF) for infertile couples?

Answer: ----- Science has broken through many barriers in its attempt to combat infertility and help conception. Not everyone agrees that this is a good thing. Some faith communities have made a virtue of the natural, the unnatural being unclean or unholy. But Judaism maintains that the human being is given a task on earth to use nature for his benefit, and a responsibility to nurture and protect it, for he is a steward of the Almighty. For the world was purposely created with imperfections so that man can join with Almighty G-d in perfecting this world. In so doing, he becomes a partner with G-d in creation. Among his most important mandates is to heal the sick.

It would seem that helping fertilization is totally in keeping with this point of view. But this is not so simple. For birth techniques pose some risks. The procurement of the egg by means of laparoscopy involves a small risk of medical and surgical complications. Jewish law forbids a person to incur injury except in pursuit of therapeutic benefit. It must, therefore, first be

determined whether in vitro fertilization is in the category of therapy. If it is, then risks and benefits can be weighed to determine whether the procedure may be used. Judaism points to the pain of the Patriarchs who were barren - especially Rachel, who cried out in anguish, "Give me children, else I die" (Bereishit 30:1), to demonstrate that sterility, although not life threatening, may cause psychic trauma to a childless couple who desperately desire a child, be it for personal fulfillment or for social or religious obligations. This places sterility in the category of illness. So Judaism considers intervention in birth techniques a legitimate way to treat a condition of barrenness. The many rules and guidelines that govern what may and may not be done to cure illness apply to this area as well.

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]  
Subject: daf-hashavua Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach 5763/2003  
THE ETHICAL JEW

Taken from Jewish Answers to Medical Ethics Questions - Questions and Answers from the Medical Ethics Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, by RABBI NISSON SHULMAN.

Donor Cards

Question: ----- May we carry a Donor Card allowing our organs to be transplanted in the event of one's sudden death?

Answer: ----- No Divine and human service, no mitzva, is greater than saving life. The commandment to save life supersedes the prohibition against marring the body of a deceased person or deriving benefit from it.

Of course, a vital organ may not be donated before life is over. Afterwards, it must be done in conformity with Jewish law and, therefore, the usual donor cards are not permitted. Instead, a proxy could be appointed who would carry out your wishes in consultation with Rabbinic authorities, ensuring that the organs are indeed used exclusively to save life and not for training, anatomy classes, or any other purpose.

The Rabbinical Council of America has a detailed form for appointing a "Health Care Proxy". So does the Agudath Israel organization of America. Some Rabbis in the U.K. consider these forms to be cumbersome and unnecessary. They feel that if a proper proxy is appointed who knows you well and is informed of your wishes and, if proper Rabbinic and medical consultation is carried out, the decisions based on specific conditions of illness can be made at that time. If you truly trust the proxy and have conveyed what you have done to your next of kin, then the medical details need not be fully anticipated. The appointment note should state clearly that every decision of life or death should be made only with Rabbinic consultation.

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]  
Subject: daf-hashavua Metzora 5763/2003  
THE ETHICAL JEW

Taken from Jewish Answers to Medical Ethics Questions - Questions and Answers from the Medical Ethics Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, by RABBI NISSON SHULMAN.

GENDER SELECTION

Question: ----- Is it true that members of the Royal Family are circumcised by a Mohel?

Answer: ----- I, too, have heard the anecdotal report that they have used a mohel. Dr Sifman, the medical officer of the Initiation Society, Anglo-Jewry's organization for supervision of mohelim, assures me that Prince Charles was indeed circumcised by a mohel, the late Dr Snowman, who was a medical man as well. It

is an old royal family tradition that they be circumcised. A Jewish mohel had been chosen, probably following a tradition that dates at least from the time of Queen Victoria.

There were two possible reasons for such a choice. First, the mohel was considered to have better experience in the technique of the operation. Second, Queen Victoria was under the impression that the royal family of Britain was descended from ancient Israel, and possibly from the family of King David. In fact, it had long been the custom to call the first-born son of the royal family, David. Thus, King Edward the Eighth, who had abdicated, possessed the name David amongst his other first names and titles and, in the intimate circle of the family, was actually called David.

The detractors of circumcision among the practitioners of medicine convinced the Prince and Princess of Wales to dispense with circumcision. That is why the new generation of royalty is uncircumcised.

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org]  
Subject: daf-hashavua Tazria 5763/2003  
THE ETHICAL JEW

Taken from Jewish Answers to Medical Ethics Questions - Questions and Answers from the Medical Ethics Department of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, by RABBI NISSON SHULMAN.

GENDER SELECTION

Question: ----- Under what conditions will Judaism permit the use of foetal tissue and of eggs harvested from foetuses?

Answer: ----- Judaism does not prohibit the use of foetuses and foetal material to save life. There is no difference in this respect between tissue donation from the dead and non-vital tissue donation from the living. But there is a very serious difference in that every possible safeguard must be maintained to ensure that the source of foetal tissue be limited to "spares", so that abortions not be performed for the sake of harvesting tissue. It must also be ascertained that the foetus meets all the accepted criteria of human death before using its tissue.

Use of eggs harvested from foetuses is an entirely different and, in our view, an even more serious matter. We do not regard legal arrangements as able in any way to supersede or override biology. Since many eggs can be harvested from one ovary (not quite a million at birth), there is serious danger of several babies being born who are biologically half brothers or half sisters. Since the source of the eggs is not recorded, there is a real possibility of consanguineous marriages, considered incestuous in Judaism's view. We are, therefore, gravely concerned about this issue.

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From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org] Sent: May 21, 2003  
Subject: daf-hashavua Bechukotai- 5763/2003  
Bechukotai-5763 U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L  
O N D O N (O)

SIDRA INSIGHTS

Good Grandparents - An Advantage?

by RABBI Z M SALASNIK, Bushey & District Synagogue

The story is told of a young man from an illustrious family who strayed from his parents' path. He was arrested, brought to court and found guilty. He put in a plea of mitigation. "I am the son of such a person, a model citizen". Judge Lenient decided to lessen his sentence. He reasoned that the apple does not fall far from the tree. The scion of such a family cannot really be a criminal. The young man just fell into bad company. The accused then spoke about his even more distinguished grandparents. Yet

again, the judge was impressed and decreased the sentence further.

Encouraged, the young man spoke about the merits of his great-grandfather. The judge reduced the sentence even further. A person who had the advantages of being brought up in a family that had produced such distinguished people over three generations will eventually follow his forebears' good example, unlike other criminals, who lack such a saving grace.

A different story is told of a young man from another illustrious family who strayed from his parents' path. He was arrested, brought to court and found guilty. He put in a plea of mitigation. "I am the son of such and such a person, a model citizen." Not only did Judge Stringent not let him off, he decided to increase his sentence. The accused then spoke about his even more distinguished grandparents. Yet again, the judge increased the sentence. Not having learnt his lesson, the young man spoke about the merits of his great-grandfather. The judge increased the sentence even more. This person who had the advantages of being brought up in a family that had produced such distinguished people over three generations was all the more guilty when he acted wrongly. He, unlike other criminals, had a good role model to follow and he had continually failed to do so. Which judge was right? It is possible that both were. In today's Sidra, Bechukotai, there is the Tochachah, verse upon verse of national catastrophes that would come upon us for our neglect of the Torah. Towards the end of the Tochachah G-d spoke of the Patriarchs. "I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham I will remember" (26:42). Most commentators assumed this meant that G-d would act like Judge Lenient, recalling the merits of the Patriarchs - zechut avot - to our advantage. The Shelah, Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz (16th -17th century), represented an opposing viewpoint. He noted that the following verse, v.43, returns to the punishment in store for us - "they shall be paid the punishment of their iniquity." Surely, if the merits of the Patriarchs will ensure the lessening of the sentence, we would hear no more about the severity of punishment. However, it is only in v.44, that we receive some mitigation in the sentence - "and yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them". Therefore the Shelah interpreted G-d's recalling the Patriarchs as part of the "warning" and not as part of the "reassurance". For him, the recollection of the Patriarchs served as the basis of a stiffer sentence for their unworthy descendants, a sentence in the tradition of Judge Stringent.

Fortunately, even according to the Shelah, G-d does eventually play the part of Judge Lenient. V.45 starts with "But I will, for their sakes, remember the covenant of their ancestors". Even if we are punished more severely because of our descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we will eventually be beneficiaries of their merit.

Why were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob specified? Obviously, because they are the people from whom every Israelite is descended. But there could be other explanations. The verse commences by remembering Jacob, the Patriarch who was raised in a good home, the home of Isaac and of Rebecca, and stayed loyal to his parents' teachings. Recalling Jacob is certainly an embarrassment for the Jew who falls short of the standards achieved by his parents. Then, the verse recalls Abraham, the only Patriarch to be raised in a house of idolatry. He found G-d for himself. Abraham, who rose so far above the beliefs of his contemporaries, is even more an embarrassing reminder for the Jew who, in spite of the opportunities open to him, moves away from the Torah.

Yet, we are remembered. After G-d exiled us following the Destruction of the Temple, He recalled our ancestors' merits in

our favour and ensured our survival. In truth, G-d is both Judge Stringent and Judge Lenient in one. It is our hope that we will only deserve and receive His mercy and leniency.

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From: National Council of Young Israel  
[YI\_Torah@lb.central.com]

Parshat B'chukotai 22 Iyar 5763 May 24, 2003 Daf Yomi: Avodah Zara 72

Guest Author: RABBI MOSHE GORELIK

Rabbi Emeritus, Young Israel of North Bellmore, NY  
Yom Yerushalayim will be celebrated during the forthcoming week on the 28th day of Iyar which occurs next Friday. During the Six Day War in 1967 the IDF gained control over the Temple Mount and liberated what is called erroneously "occupied territories". At the very moment when the IDF reached the Kotel Maaravi, Rav Shlomo Goren zt'l sounded the shofar. The Israelis and Jews throughout the world were emotionally charged.

This military triumph was miraculous. Israel was attacked by six hostile Arab nations who were determined to erase Medinat Yisroel from the map of the world. The nations of the world sat back and watched and, as today, the U.N. was ineffectual. The liberation of the territories and the Temple Mount was an extraordinarily historic event that cannot be fully grasped unless one takes into account the presence of HaShem in our history. In terms of number of soldiers, Israel should have been defeated or, at least, have been forced to be at a standstill. True, Israel's generals were brilliant strategists and the Israeli soldiers were infused with a highly charged mission to prove to the world that Israel is here to stay. However, Israel's feat cannot be understood in human terms. Logically, Israel should have become, in Toynbee's terms, a fossilized nation. But Israel's existence has defied the laws of history. The Psalmist said it best, "some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we call upon the name of the L-rd, our G-d" (Tehillim 20:8).

The recapture of Yerushalayim after 1900 years of galus is the most extraordinary historic event alongside the establishment of Medinat Yisrael. In recent history, they signified the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. They are no longer stateless. Theologians and religious leaders debate the meaning of Israel's statehood. Some suggest we live in a pre-messianic age. Others are of the opinion one must not engage in such speculation, this is risky, there are, also, elements who negate the historical significance of the Medinah though they may reap its benefits. But, be as it may, it matters not what religious value is applied to the Medinah. One should put these conjectures aside momentarily and, instead, pause and consider the reality.

Parshas B'chukotai records the tochacha, that is, foretelling the punishing consequences for violating Israel's covenant with HaShem. The tochacha is recorded a second time in Parshas Ki Tavo with additional graphic descriptions of Golus. In Parshas B'chukotai the concluding passages foretell the return of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael. Thus, the Torah declares definitively the reestablishment of Israel in the land of Israel. That prophecy has become a reality and Yerushalayim is its capital. What does this all mean for us? First and foremost to respond affirmatively to this reality and to acknowledge the centrality of Eretz Yisrael, especially Yerushalayim in Israel's covenant with HaShem. This article of faith is time and again pronounced in our tefillos and in our mesora.

Second, and equally important, is our obligation to translate our ideals into action. There are several avenues for one to exercise one's ideals. One avenue is aliyah, each additional presence adds to the physical strength and spiritual vitality of the country. In

the brief period of living in Israel, I have witnessed the enormous contribution olim, including professionals, academics, businessmen, etc. and even retirees, are making to Israeli society while at the same time fulfilling the mitzvah and z'chut of living in Eretz Yisrael. If one is unable to take this step then support and encouragement should be given to prospective olim.

To introduce another point, I wish to share with you a telling incident. A few years ago, before I made aliyah, I received a phone call from a woman in New York. She asked me whether I had information regarding the kashrus of a hotel in Italy. Since my family name and that of the Rav HaMachshir are similar she felt that I may verify the kashrus claim of the hotel. After responding to her query I then asked when she would be visiting Italy. She replied that she intended to spend the Yomim Noraim in Italy. I was aghast. I said to her would it not be more appropriate to spend this special period set aside for intense religious experiences and teshuvah in Israel rather than in Italy. Italy is the land to which our people were exiled so is it not absurd to return there for our religious holidays?

Regrettably, this attitude is prominent in our contemporary religious culture. Months before major Yomim Tovim there is a proliferation of enticing ads beckoning the Jews to celebrate Yomim Tovim in such exotic places as Hawaii, Hungary, Spain, etc. or perhaps spend the Yom Tov on a cruise. Would it not be in the spirit of Yom Tov to enjoy these days in Eretz Yisrael? The costs would not exceed the costs of other inducements.

A commitment to Israel is more than a political activity. It implies more than a philanthropic contribution. Israel is the heart and soul of our history. HaShem blessed our age 54 years ago with Medinat Yisrael which culminated with the recapture of Yerushalayim in '67. Yom Yerushalayim is the time to redouble our commitment and efforts to translate L'Shana Habaa B'Yerushalayim - next year in Jerusalem, into a reality. NCYI's Weekly Divrei Torah Bulletin is sponsored by the Henry, Bertha and Edward Rothman Foundation - Rochester, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; Circleville, Ohio

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From: Shlomo Katz [skatz@torah.org] Sent: May 20, 2003 To: hamaayan@torah.org Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Bechukotai Hamaayan / The Torah Spring EDITED BY SHLOMO KATZ

Bechukotai: Cruel to Oneself Sponsored by the Katz family in honor of Leora's bat mitzvah

A significant part of this parashah is devoted to the Tochachah / Rebuke, which foretells the troubles and punishments that will (and have) come upon the Jewish People when they sin. The Tochachah warns repeatedly that we will continue to suffer as long as we attribute our suffering to "keri" / "chance" rather than to our sins.

Rambam (Hil. Ta'anit ch. 1) writes that the Torah commands us to react to suffering with prayer and repentance. Rambam adds that one who does not do this, saying that his suffering is simply the way of the world, is "achzari" / "cruel."

What does Rambam mean by this expression? asks R' Shimson David Pinkus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel). At first glance, Rambam is saying that a person who fails to repent is "cruel" to himself, for he brings additional punishments upon himself. But that cannot be correct, says R' Pinkus, for every person who sins makes himself liable for punishment. Why would Rambam single out a person's failure to repent from all other sins?

Rather, explains R' Pinkus, Rambam's meaning is as follows: One who believes that suffering occurs by chance is accusing G -

d of cruelty. He is suggesting that G-d created us, but then abandoned us. The teachers of Mussar / character development and ethics teach that one generally sees in others the faults that he himself has. Thus, one who would wrongly attribute cruelty to G-d must himself be cruel. (Tiferet Torah)

"If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments . . ." (26:3) Rashi writes that "If you will follow My decrees" refers to toiling in Torah study. If so, writes R' Akiva Yosef Schlesinger z"l (Hungary and Yerushalayim; died 1922), we can understand why this verse follows immediately after the verse, "My Sabbaths you shall observe." Specifically, the Midrash Tanna D'vei Eliyahu states that the primary time for Torah study is on Shabbat, when one is free from working. (Torat Yechiel)

"I will make the land desolate . . . And you--I will scatter among the nations . . . During all the days of her desolation, the land will rest; those sabbaticals that it did not observe while you were on the land, it will observe now." (26:32-35)

R' Avraham Yitzchak Kook z"l wrote: Upon being exiled, the Jewish people were freed of any national concerns; they rather turned their eyes and hearts heavenward. Jews were no longer preoccupied with the same concerns that draw the attention of the other nations, and at the same time, Jews ceased to chase after the idols [literal and figurative] of the nations. The spirit of Hashem prompted the Jew to recognize the value of every soul, and particularly, the spiritual worth of the Jewish nation. The Torah was appreciated more than fine gold and silver, just as in the nation's youth. Because of their holy faith, the Jews in exile went to martyrdom with love and happiness.

The Jew in exile always turned toward his land [Israel], but not as one who yearns for his home because it satisfies his hunger and his other physical needs. The Jew looked toward his land with a gaze filled with holiness; he looked toward its inner nature as the land that complements his yearning for G-d.

The time of the redemption is hidden. Who is privy to G-d's secret, knowing when the land and the nation will have been completely purified, that beloved time when the land and the nation will be reunited? Our sages have said that there is no greater sign of the onset of the redemption than the fulfillment of the verses from the Prophets: "And you, mountains of Israel, give forth your branches, present your fruits to My nation, Yisrael, for they are near to arrive." "And the cities will be settled and ruins will be rebuilt, and I will increase men and animals on the land and they will multiply . . ." (Introduction to Shabbat Ha'aretz)

#### Pirkei Avot

"There are four characteristics among those who sit before Torah scholars: (1) a sponge; (2) a funnel; (3) a strainer ('mishameret'); and (4) a sieve." (Chapter 5)

In 1946, R' Yoel Teitelbaum z"l (the Satmar Rav) was invited to speak at Yeshivat Bet Avraham - Slonim in Yerushalayim. He introduced his lecture with the following explanation of the above Mishnah: The Gemara mentions that certain pious individuals used to spend nine hours a day either preparing for prayer or actually praying. The Gemara asks, "How then is their Torah accomplished?" The Gemara answers, "Because they are pious, their Torah is 'mishtameret'."

The Gemara's answer is usually understood to mean that their Torah knowledge is "protected" by the merit of their prayer. However, this answer is difficult to understand, said R' Teitelbaum. If "mishtameret" means being "protected," it can only refer to the Torah which these pious individuals have already learned. How, however, will they learn more if they are so occupied with prayer?

Rather, the Gemara means "mishtameret" in the sense of the "mishameret" / "strainer" of our Mishnah. The Mishnah describes a mishameret as something that lets the wine pass through but keeps out the dregs. For the ordinary person, accomplishment in Torah requires extraordinary effort; for the pious, who spend the bulk of their time in prayer, Torah is easily "strained." True insights are acquired with less effort, while the "dregs" / false leads and misunderstandings fall by the side. (Mimayanot Hanetzach, p.274)

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (Poland; died 1869) understands our Mishnah to be speaking not of Torah scholars but of the supporters of the Torah. This is based upon the verse (Devarim 33:18), "Rejoice, Zevulun, in your excursions, and Yissachar, in your tents"--a reference to the fact that Yissachar and Zevulun shared the profits of Zevulun's business and the rewards of Yissachar's Torah study. Note that Zevulun is mentioned before Yissachar in the verse.

There are four types of Torah supporters, the Mishnah says: a sponge, a funnel, a strainer, and a sieve. The first is someone who "absorbs" all requests for charity, whether the recipient is deserving or not. The second steals in order to give charity; the money just passes through his hands, as through a funnel. The third--the "strainer"--accepts requests only from those who are not worthy, just as a strainer passes the wine, and retains the dregs. Finally, the fourth is like a type of sieve which holds the finest flour and allows the bran to pass through--he accepts requests only from the worthy. (Magen Avot)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adira"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives are available starting with Rosh HaShanah 5758 (1997) at <http://www.torah.org/learning/hamaayan/> . Text archives from 1990 through the present are available at <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/> . Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org)

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From: Ohr Somayach [ohr@ohr.edu] Sent: May 21, 2003 To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Bechukotai \* TORAH WEEKLY \* For the week ending 24 May 2003 / 22 Iyyar 5763 from Ohr Somayach | [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu)

Israeli Secret Weapon Unmasked! - SHH!

"If you will follow My decrees...you will dwell securely in your land. I will provide peace in the land, and you will lie down with none to frighten..." (26:1-6)

Can you keep a secret?

Every year, nations spend billions of dollars on defense. Every country wants to have the latest secret weapon - a "smarter" bomb that can pinpoint military headquarters and take it out without touching a hair on the heads of the babies in the maternity hospital that some beneficent dictator has built next door; a anti-missile missile that can discriminate one hundred percent between an enemy rocket and a planeload of tourists; a foolproof WMD detector, a super-snooper surveillance system that forewarns of global terrorist activity; the list goes on.

But there's one weapon that beats all other secret weapons and (keep this to yourself and lean very close to the computer screen) we have it!!! Shh! (I don't want this article to be picked up by a web-crawler and find its way onto Arabnet, so you better delete it as soon as you have finished reading it, okay?!)

What is it about this weapon that beats all other secret weapons?

This weapon prevents your enemy from ever launching an attack on you in the first place.

And I don't mean a deterrent. I mean a device that stops your enemies either thinking about attacking you or if they think about attacking you, it ingeniously stops them from being able to carry out the attack. The weather stops them, or their billion dollar research program turns up a dud, or their entire army gets the dysentery.

Not only does such a weapon exist, but we have that weapon.

It's called...

Lean a little closer to your monitor so not everyone sees this, okay

It's called...

Shh!

(the Torah!)

Okay? Mum's the word - right?

The Talmud teaches that learning Torah is greater than saving lives.

How can that be? How can anything be greater than saving a human life?

The answer is that there's one thing better than saving a human life and that's preventing someone from getting into a life-threatening situation in the first place.

The power of Torah learning is that it is magen u'matzil- It doesn't just save us from our enemies, it protects us as from them as well.

That's our secret weapon.

Shh! Keep it a secret!

You promised.

Source: Shir Ma'on; thanks to Rabbi C. Z. Senter                      Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

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From: Menachem Leibtag [tsc@bezeqint.net] Sent: May 21, 2003 To: Pareg; Lite1 Subject: [Par-reg]Parshat Bechukotai Dedicated by Yitzchok and Barbie Lehmann Siegel, in memory of their father Manfred R. Lehmann z"l (Menashe Refael ben HaChaver R'Hayyim v'Fayge) THE TANACH STUDY CENTER [<http://www.tanach.org>] In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag [BY RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG]

PARSHAT BECHUKOTAI

THE CONCLUSION OF SEFER VAYIKRA

The 'tochacha' (chapter 26) describes the reward (/or punishment) for keeping (/or defying) G-d's laws. Considering that Sefer Vayikra is primarily a book of laws, this tochacha would certainly have been an appropriate conclusion for the entire Sefer - for it describes the consequences of these laws. So why doesn't Sefer Vayikra conclude with the tochacha? Why is chapter 27 [the laws of 'erchin'] 'added on'? In this week's shiur we attempt to explain the reason for this conclusion.

INTRODUCTION Let's begin by clarifying our opening question. Recall how Parshat Bechukotai forms the last Parsha in Sefer Vayikra, and contains two distinct sections:

(1) the tochacha (chapter 26) - Bnei Yisrael's reward [and/or punishment] should they obey [/or disobey] G-d's commandments;

(2) The laws of 'erchin' (chapter 27) - A set of specific laws pertaining to the monetary evaluation of people or property dedicated to G-d.

Considering that Sefer Vayikra is a book that contains a collection of mitzvot, a tochacha would form an appropriate conclusion - for it outlines how G-d rewards (or punishes) Am Yisrael as a function of how they keep those mitzvot. The first section of our shiur will explain how (and why) the tochacha should indeed be considered the conclusion of Sefer Vayikra.

Afterward, we'll attempt to explain why the Torah may have 'added on' chapter 27 to form a significant 'epilogue'.

PART ONE - A PERFECT FINALE Recall our explanation of how Sefer Vayikra divides into two distinct sections:

A) Kedushat mishkan - chapters 1 -> 17. focusing on laws pertaining to the mishkan, such as korbanot, tum'a & tahara, etc. B) Kedushat ha-am ve-haaretz - chapters 18 -> 25. focusing on a wide range of laws of 'kedusha' outside the mishkan, to make Am Yisrael an 'am kadosh'.

As you review both the 'positive' and 'negative' sides of the tochacha, note how the reward and punishment relates to both these sections, i.e. the mishkan and the Land: \* On the positive side, should Bnei Yisrael obey the mitzvot, then: B) "and I will put My mishkan in your midst..." (26:11)

A) "and the land shall give its produce..." (26:4).

\* On the negative side, should Bnei Yisrael disobey these laws, then:

A) "I will make your mikdash desolate..." (26:31) B) "the land will not give its produce..." (26:20,34-35).

This only strengthens our claim that the tochacha should have been the last chapter of Sefer Vayikra! However, the best 'proof' is found in its 'final' pasuk.

**THE FINAL PASUK** - Let's take a look at the final pasuk of the tochacha, to show how it relates to both halves of Sefer Vayikra: "These are the chukim & mishpatim, and the torot which G-d had given between Him and Bnei Yisrael on Har Sinai to Moshe" (26:46).

Clearly, this pasuk forms a summary of more than just the tochacha itself. Let's explain why. Note how this final pasuk mentions two categories of mitzvot that we are already familiar with: 1) chukim & mishpatim, and 2) torot.

This implies that whatever unit this pasuk does summarize - that unit includes both 'chukim & mishpatim' and 'torot' (that were given to Moshe on Har Sinai). Hence, this pasuk must summarize more than the tochacha, for the tochacha itself does not contain chukim & mishpatim, nor torot.

Aware of this problem, many commentators attempt to identify the wider unit that is summarized in this pasuk. For example:

\* Rashbam suggests that it summarizes both Parshiot Behar & Bechukotai, i.e. chapters 25 & 26. This is quite logical, for the laws of shmitta and yovel could be considered chukim & mishpatim. This also makes sense since both these chapters are included in one 'dibbur' which began in 25:1. However, Rashbam does not explain which laws in this unit fit under the category of torot. Furthermore, recall our explanation in Parshat Tzav that a 'torah' implies a procedural type of law, e.g. 'torat ha-chatat' - how the kohen executes the chatat offering, etc. Within chapters 25 & 26, it is difficult to pinpoint any such 'procedural' law.

\* Ibn Ezra claims that this pasuk summarizes not only Parshat Behar (i.e. Vayikra chapters 25 & 26), but also Parshat Mishpatim, i.e. Sefer Shmot chapters 21 - 23! Ibn Ezra's interpretation is based on his understanding that the tochacha in Parshat Bechukotai is none other than the 'sefer ha-brit' mentioned in Shmot 24:7 [i.e. in the Torah's description of the ceremony at Ma'amad Har Sinai when Bnei Yisrael proclaimed 'na'aseh ve-nishma']. (See Ibn Ezra on Vayikra 25:1 and Shmot 24:7.) However, it seems rather strange to find a summary pasuk for Parshat Mishpatim at the end of Sefer Vayikra!

\* Ramban agrees with Ibn Ezra that this pasuk forms a summary of the mitzvot in Parshat Mishpatim as well. However, he reaches this conclusion from a different angle. Ramban claims that this parshia of the tochacha was actually given to Moshe Rabbeinu during his second set of forty days on Har Sinai, and serves as a 'replacement' covenant - to replace the conditions of the original na'aseh ve-nishma covenant (as described in Shmot 24:7). As such, this summary pasuk summarizes the mitzvot in Parshat Mishpatim as well. [See Ramban on 25:1, towards the end of his lengthy peirush to that pasuk. This complicated (but important) Ramban is based on his approach to the chronological order of Chumash, but it is beyond the scope of this shiur.] In any case, our above question regarding Ibn Ezra's approach would apply to Ramban's as well.

\* Rashi offers the 'widest' understanding of this summary pasuk. He claims that this finale pasuk summarizes not only the entire 'written law' of the entire Chumash, but also the entire 'oral law' as well! It is interesting to note that from among all of the commentators, only Rashi deals with the problem of determining the precise meaning of torot. Rashi solves the problem by quoting the Midrash that it refers to 'Torah she-bikhtav u- ba'al peh'. However, this interpretation is quite difficult for (according to simple pshat) the word 'eileh' [these] at the beginning of 26:46 summarizes what has been written thus far, and not what has not been written yet.

\* Seforno follows a direction similar to Rashi, but appears to be a bit more 'realistic'. He claims that this pasuk summarizes all of the mitzvot that were mentioned in Chumash thus far, i.e. before Parshat Bechukotai. However, Seforno is not very precise concerning exactly which mitzvot are summarized by this pasuk. In our shiur, we will follow Seforno's 'lead' and show how this final pasuk may actually form a summary pasuk for all of the mitzvot found in Sefer Vayikra! Our approach will be based on identifying more specifically what the phrases chukim & mishpatim and torot (in 26:46) may be referring to.

**A FITTING FINALE** Recall once again how Sefer Vayikra divides into two sections (see above), and how the second half of the Sefer begins in chapter 18 with a set of five psukim that form an introduction. [See 18:1-5 and our shiur on Parshat Acharei Mot.] As you review those psukim, note how these psukim actually introduce an entire set of chukim u-

mishpatim. For example: "Observe My mishpatim and keep My chukim to follow them, I am the Lord your G-d. Keep My chukim & mishpatim..." (18:4- 5. See also 18:26-30!).

Therefore, the phrase chukim ve-mishpatim in our 'finale pasuk' (26:46) could be understood as the summary of the second half of Sefer Vayikra (chapters 18->25), as it refers to the numerous chukim u-mishpatim that are recorded in that section. Furthermore, note how often we have found this phrase in the second half of Vayikra: see 19:19 & 37, 20:8 & 22, and 25:18! In a similar manner, the word torot could be considered a summary of the laws found in the first half of the Sefer. Recall how the word torah was used numerous times to describe the various procedures regarding korbanot. The most obvious example would be Parshat Tzav where the phrase 'zot torat...' introduced each category of korbanot (see 6:2, 6:7, 6:18, 7:1, 7:11) and also formed its summary (see 7:37!). However, this phrase was also found numerous times in Parshat Tazria/Metzora as well (see 12:7; 13:59; 14:2,32,45; and 15:32). Furthermore, even though this phrase is not mentioned by the other mitzvot in this section, most of its laws are of a procedural nature and could easily fall under this category of torot. Certainly, the seven day 'milu'im' & 'yom ha-shmini' ceremonies (chapters 8 & 9) are procedures and hence could be understood as torot, as is the yearly 'avoda' of the kohen gadol on Yom Kippur (see chapter 16). Hence, the word torot in 26:46 can be understood as a summary of the procedural laws found in the first half of Sefer Vayikra. Thus, the final pasuk of the tochacha (26:46) becomes an almost 'perfect ending' for the entire sefer: "These are the chukim & mishpatim [summarizes the second half - chapters 18 thru 25] and the torot [summarizes the first half - chapters 6 thru 17] which G-d had given between Him and Bnei Yisrael on Har Sinai to Moshe" (26:46).

The phrase chukim & mishpatim summarizes Part Two of Sefer Vayikra, while the word torot summarizes Part One!

**THE TOCHACHA & SEFER SHMOT** Even though we have shown how this finale pasuk (26:46) forms a beautiful conclusion for Sefer Vayikra, it contains an additional phrase that explains why it could be considered a conclusion for the laws in Sefer Shmot as well. [If so, this would help us appreciate Ibn Ezra & Ramban's peirush as well, and the chiasmic structure discussed in our shiur on Parshat Behar.]

Let's take a closer look at this finale pasuk, noting the second half of the pasuk: "These are the chukim u-mishpatim, and the torot which G-d had given - beino u-vein Bnei Yisrael - between Himself and Bnei Yisrael, on Har Sinai through Moshe" (26:46). This special phrase: 'beino u-vein Bnei Yisrael' may highlight the covenantal nature of the mitzvot of Sefer Vayikra. To explain why, we need only quote a pasuk that we are all familiar with from 'shabbos davening' [our sabbath prayers]. Note how the Torah uses an almost identical phrase as it describes how Shabbat should be considered a 'brit': "Ve-shameru Bnei Yisrael et ha-shabbat... - to keep it as a day of rest for all generations - brit olam - an everlasting covenant - beini u-vein Bnei Yisrael - an eternal sign..." (see Shmot 31:16-17).

In fact, this very concept of brit is emphasized several times by the tochacha itself: "... ve-hakimoti et briti itchem" (26:9) "... lehafrechem et briti" (26:15) "ve-zacharti et briti Yaakov ve-af et briti Yitzchak..." (26:42) "ve-zacharti lahem brit rishonim asher hotzeiti..." (26:45).

If this interpretation is correct, then we have found an additional thematic connection between the laws of kedusha in Sefer Vayikra and the purpose of Matan Torah as described at brit Har Sinai. As we have explained, the mitzvot of Sefer Vayikra function as a vehicle thru which the goal of brit Sinai - "ve-atem tiheyu li mamlchet kohanim ve-goy kadosh" - can be achieved. (See Shmot 19:4-6.) [Once again, note how this thematic connection can also explain the chiasmic structure that connected the laws in Sefer Shmot & Sefer Vayikra, as explained in our shiur on Parshat Behar.]

Hence, the phrase 'beino u-vein Bnei Yisrael' in this summary pasuk may emphasize how the mitzvot of Sefer Vayikra strengthen the covenant between G-d and Bnei Yisrael, as forged at Har Sinai, where Am Yisrael took upon themselves to become G-d's special nation.

**THE TOCHACHA & SEFER BREISHIT** Thus far, we have shown how the tochacha forms a fitting conclusion for Sefer Vayikra, and thematically relates back to covenant at Har Sinai as described in Sefer Shmot. One could suggest that it may contain a certain element that thematically returns us to Sefer Breishit as well. Recall our explanation of how Gan Eden represented an ideal environment in which man was capable of developing a close relationship with G-d. In that environment, man's reward for obeying G-d was a prosperous life in Gan Eden; while his punishment for disobeying G-d's commandment was death - i.e. his banishment from Gan

Eden. The two sides of the tochacha describe a similar environment for Am Yisrael living in Eretz Yisrael. Should they keep G-d's laws, Am Yisrael can enjoy a prosperous and secure existence in their land. For example, 'im be-chukotai teilechu...', i.e. should you follow G-d's laws, then 've-achaltem le-sova be- artzechem' -you will enjoy prosperity in your land (see 25:3- 6). - This would be in contrast to man's punishment when he was expelled from Gan Eden with the curse of 'be-ze'at apcha tochal lechem' (see Breishit 3:17-19). Recall as well how G-d was 'mithalech' in Gan Eden (see Br.3:8). Similarly, He will now 'mithalech' in Eretz Yisrael together with His Nation: 'v'e-ithalachtu betochachem, ve- hayiti lachem l-Elokim, ve-atem tihyu li le-am' (see Vayikra 25:12).

On the other hand, should Bnei Yisrael not follow G-d's laws ('ve-im lo tishme'u..'), they will be faced with a troubled existence, culminating with their expulsion from the land (26:33), parallel to man's banishment from Gan Eden. (This parallel between Gan Eden and Eretz Yisrael was already introduced at the beginning of the second half of Sefer Vayikra - see 18:24-30). [In this manner, the Midrashim that identify Gan Eden as Eretz Yisrael relate to more than its geographical location; rather they underscore a major biblical theme.]

PARSHAT 'ERCHIN' - WHY HERE? We return now to our original question. If the final pasuk of the tochacha forms such an appropriate ending for Sefer Vayikra, why does the Torah place 'parshat erchin' immediately afterward (instead of beforehand in Sefer Vayikra)? After all, the laws of erchin, especially those relating to yovel (see 27:16-25), would have fit nicely within Parshat Behar, together with the other laws relating to yovel. [See Ramban on 27:1] Furthermore, the laws relating to the dedication of objects to the Temple treasury could have been included much earlier in Sefer Vayikra, possibly in Parshat Vayikra together with other laws concerning voluntary offerings. The simplest explanation is that the Torah did not want to conclude the Sefer on a 'sour note', i.e. with the tochacha, preferring instead to conclude with something more positive.

[Sort of like a adding on a 'happy ending' by selecting a 'parshia' that could have been recorded earlier, and saving it for the conclusion.] The Ibn Ezra offers an explanation based on 'sod', relating to the deeper meaning of 'bechor' and 'ma'aser' (see last Ibn Ezra in Vayikra). Seforno differentiates between these mitzvot (in chapter 27) that are voluntary, and the mandatory mitzvot summarized in 26:46. Because those mitzvot constituted the essence of the brit, they were summarized separately. Once those mitzvot were completed in chapter 26, chapter 27 records the mitzvot of Har Sinai that were not part of that covenant. (See Seforno 26:46.) One could suggest an alternative approach, by considering once again the overall structure of Sefer Vayikra. Recall from our study of Parshat Vayikra that the first five chapters (i.e. the laws of 'korban yachid') were given to Moshe Rabbeinu from the ohel mo'ed (see 1:1), while the next two chapters (the torot of the korbanot in chapter 6-7) we given from Har Sinai (see 7:37-38). Furthermore, since the laws of Parshat Vayikra were given from the ohel mo'ed, they must have been given only after the Shchina had returned to the mishkan on the yom ha-shmini, and hence after the story of the seven day 'milu'im' & "yom ha-shmini" - as recorded in Vayikra chapters 8-10. Therefore, it appears as though the laws in Parshat Vayikra were placed intentionally at the beginning of Sefer Vayikra, even though they chronologically belong in the middle of the Sefer.

Thus, we conclude that even though both the opening and concluding units of Sefer Vayikra belong within the sefer, the Torah records them as a 'header' and 'footer' instead. The following chart reviews this structure:

CHAPTERS	TOPIC
=====	=====
	* HEADER
1->5	the laws of korban yachid (mitzvot)
	I. TOROT of: [first section]
6->7	- how to bring korbanot
8->10	- how the milu'im were offered
11->15	- yoledet, metzora, zav, zava
16->17	- how to enter kodesh kodashim
	II. CHUKIM U-MISHPATIM [second section]
18->20	- kedushat ha-am
21->22	- kedushat kohanim
23->25	- kedushat zman u-makom
26	TOCHACHA ( & summary pasuk/ 26:46)
	* FOOTER
27	the laws of erchin (mitzvot)

Now we must explain why specifically these two parshiot were chosen to serve as the 'book-ends' of Sefer Vayikra?

SPECIAL 'BOOKENDS' Parshat Vayikra and the parshia of erchin share a common theme. They both deal with an individual dedicating an object to 'hekdesh'. Both also begin with cases where a person offers a voluntary gift (nedava): Parshat Vayikra begins with ola & shlamim while parshat erchin begins with the voluntary offering of the value of a person, animal, or field. [Vayikra deals with korbanot actually offered on the mizbeiach (kodshei mizbeiach) while erchin deals with the value of objects which cannot be offered, their value is given instead to the 'general fund' of the Temple - 'kodshei bedek ha-bayit'.]

One could suggest that the Torah intentionally chose parshiot dealing with the offerings of an individual, primarily the voluntary offerings, to form the 'book-ends' of Sefer Vayikra for the following reason. As we have seen, Sefer Vayikra focuses on the kedusha of the mishkan and of the nation. These lofty goals of the Shchina dwelling upon an entire nation can easily lead the individual to underestimate his own importance.

Furthermore, the rigid detail of the mitzvot of Vayikra may lead one to believe that there is little room for self-initiated expression in his own relationship with G-d, as our covenantal obligations could be viewed as dry and technical. To counter these possible misconceptions, the Torah may have placed these two parshiot at the opening and concluding sections of Sefer Vayikra - to stress these two important tenets of 'avodat Hashem'. Despite the centrality of the community, the individual cannot lose sight of the value and importance of his role as an integral part of the communal whole. Secondly, the rigidity of Halacha should not stifle personal expression. Rather, it should form the solid base from which the individual can develop an aspiring, dynamic, and personal relationship with G-d.

shabbat shalom menachem

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