

Parshat B'Chukotai



Who Says the Curses are the Main Theme of Parashat B'Chukotai?

Fulfillment of Prophetic Blessings in Israel Today

I feel so grateful for all of Hashem's blessings. Thank you, Hashem, for giving me the opportunity to have traveled to three countries in less than three weeks in order to spread the light of Torah from Israel for the nineteenth time at least. Thank you for the opportunity to plant such a beautiful, memorial garden for my dear father, Shlomo ben Yisrael Leib z"l at Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, and to be able to build two new beautiful permanent dormitories. I thank all of you who organized events, hosted me, picked me up and dropped me off, supported, helped spreading the word and participated! I will let you in on a little secret. I'm writing all this in advance of the week I depart from Israel, and it's actually very therapeutic, to think ahead and imagine having returned from a successful tour in one piece, with Hashem's help and yours! Going on these kinds of speaking tours is like jumping into ice-cold water, with all the apprehension. At last, when we emerge from swimming the planned laps, we feel amazing! Actually, I really didn't want to leave Israel at this most beautiful time of year. As you can see in the photos, my garden is in fuller bloom than ever. Throughout the years, I've been crying out to Hashem about my flowerless garden. Every flower I planted would wither away in no time. Finally, with a sudden intensity, the colorful display of triumphant flowers, transformed my garden. Each flower, proudly lifting its head, nurtured by a mixture of heavy winter rains and my tears, gives me immense pleasure. How we marvel at Hashem's overflowing blessings this year, as we testify the prophecy of the opening blessings of *Parashat B'Chukotai* unfolding:

ספר ויקרא פרק כו פסוק ג אם בְּחֻקְתֵי תֵלְכוּ וְאֶת מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעִשְׂתֶּם אֹתָם: (ד) וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנָתְנָה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָהּ וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פְּרִיֹו:

“If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them. I will give your rains in their seasons, the Land will yield its produce, and the tree of the field will give forth its fruit” (*Vayikra* 26:3-4).

Without doubt Israel had more blessed rain this winter than in several decades. Northern Israel has exceeded the normal yearly rainfall, with most places in the north recording 130 percent of the average rainfall. Since rain is a reward for Torah observance, I was asking myself, “what did the people of Israel do to deserve such blessing?”

Finding Recent Merits for the Jewish Nation

Answering such a question is a tall order for a person who doesn't have time to follow the news and in general lives in her own little 'Bat-Ayin-Bubble.' What do I know about Israel's national merit? Based on my own experience, it seems that families in our neighborhood and in most yishuvim (settlements) extend themselves more and more to fulfill the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim*, hosting Shabbat guests. Every Friday afternoon, the busses are bursting with visitors, consisting mostly of yeshiva students thirsting to experience a shabbat in the countryside of a religious Yishuv. Families open their homes to offer sleepover arrangements and meals to a multitude of guests they've never even met. Actually, I just found an article by the anti-religious paper, *Ha'Aretz*, complaining that the government has been sponsoring Orthodox Shabbat dinners. The article titled, *Why Israel is Spending Millions on Orthodox Missionary Work*, protests

the government funding for Orthodox 'indoctrination' in Israel that takes place, for example, through the *Garin Torani* movement, funded by the housing and agriculture ministries. The *Garin Torani*, which encourages young Orthodox Israelis to settle as a group in an urban area, where they can run religious, social and educational programs, has witnessed a major boom in recent years. In mixed Jewish-Arab cities, it has taken on the additional objective of helping tip the demographic balance. "We are talking about public financing of an apparatus that draws people into *chazarah b'tshuva* (Return to Judaism) and is active in pre-schools, public schools and community centers" (Recent report by Molad, a non-religious think tank dedicated to preserving Israeli democracy). From a Torah perspective, it is a great merit for the government of Israel to offer Torah education for secular Israelis and teach them about the beauty of Shabbat observance. I'm positive that such feats are contributing the merits which brought about this year's blessings of rain. Possibly, the fact that Naftali Bennett, the head of the national religious party, had, served as Israel's Minister of Education, also contributed some blessed 'Orthodox indoctrination' into the secular school system. Another great merit for Israel is that more and more diaspora Jews are making Aliyah. It seems that way, judging from all the women, who previously frequented my tour lectures, and who now live in Israel. [Actually, last year the Aliyah rate rose 5%](#). Please help me think of other merits of Israel that may have brought us the blessed rainfall this winter. It's a beautiful practice, rather than always complaining, to look for *nekudot tovot* (good points) within the Jewish nation.

Is *Parashat B'Chukotai* "The Parasha of Rebuke"?

People call *Parashat B'Chukotai* – פרשת התוכחה / *Parashat HaTochecha* – 'The Parasha of Rebuke.' Is this title justified when the Parasha actually starts off with blessings? We may think that the curses outweigh the blessings, since 30 verses deal with the curses, and only 13 describing blessings. Yet, we need to understand a general principle in the Torah, "The measure of goodness [reward] always supersedes the measure of punishment" (*Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 76a*). The reason why there are seemingly more curses than blessings in our parasha is only due to Hashem's kindness. If we walk in His statutes, we will receive all the abundance of the blessings immediately. However, if we, G-d forbid, break His covenant, Hashem only punishes gradually, in stages, in order that we may repent before receiving the worst punishments. The first stage of curses is light, but if we don't repent, G-d forbid, then a more severe set of curses kicks in. If Israel still does not repent, then G-d is compelled to send His worst curses. Since the curses don't happen all at once, there are more of them, as they are broken down into stages. Returning to our opening blessings, "...I will give your rains in their seasons" (*Vayikra 26:4*). The Divrei Yisrael asks, "in whose seasons?" He answers, "the seasons of the Jewish people, are beyond nature." We, the people of Israel, are gifted with a special blessing. For the rest of the world things follow a natural order, but in Israel things can happen outside of the natural course. When we believe in *Hashgacha Pratit* (Divine Providence) – that Hashem is constantly watching over us, then blessings can occur in the seasons of the Jewish people – even outside of what is natural. May we merit to experience both hidden and revealed miracles in our time! May we witness the continued blossoming of Israel both of the Land and the hearts of every yid!

