



BEHAR – BECHUKOTAI

This week's double Torah portion (which concludes the book of Vayikra) sets forth the blessings that we are supposed to see in this world in response to our deeds.

It then continues with the Tochachah, words of admonition, "If you will not listen to Me and will not perform all of these commandments..." There are seven series of seven punishments each. Understand that G-d does not punish for punishment's sake; He wants to get our attention so that we will introspect, recognize our errors and correct our ways. G-d does not wish to destroy us and will never annul His covenant with us. This is the Almighty's guarantee to the Jewish people: "I will not grow so disgusted with them nor so tired of them that I would destroy them and break My covenant with them, since I am the Lord their G-d." He wants to prevent us from becoming so assimilated that we disappear as a nation.

The Parsha states, "And I will place peace in the land". Why is peace considered such a great blessing?

Rashi, the great commentator, explains, "If there is no peace, there is nothing." There are many people who would really feel satisfied with what they themselves already have. However, because they see that others have more, they feel envious of those people. They actually feel pain when they see that someone else has what they do not.

When a person feels sincere love for someone else, he is not envious of that person. It does not bother him if that person has more than him. Therefore, the only way for people to really experience a total blessing with what the Almighty has given them is for there to be true peace amongst people. This is the peace in which people feel love for one another and are happy for each other's good fortunes.

The only way a person can be able to enjoy what he has is to master the attitude of feeling good for the good fortune of others. Envy prevents you from living life to its fullest. The more joy you feel for others, the better your own quality of life.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Cohen