

Dvar Torah for Parshat Behar-Bechuqotai

Based on Rebbe Nachman's story *The Exchanged Children*

“If you follow My laws and are careful to keep My commandments...you will live securely in the land. I will grant peace in the land so that you will sleep without fear...the sword will not pass through your land. You will chase away your enemies...Five of you will be able to chase away a hundred, and a hundred of you will defeat ten thousand...But if you do not listen to Me and do not keep all these commandments; if you denigrate My decrees and grow tired of My laws...I will bring upon you feelings of terror...You will be defeated by your foes and your enemies will dominate you. You will flee even when no one is chasing you.”

Leviticus 26:3, 5-8, 14-17

Ruyik.

No, it's not the capital of Iceland. Nor is it the name of a Danish playwright.

It's Yiddish for “tranquil.”

In *The Exchanged Children*, the real prince - whom everyone, including himself, thinks is a commoner - seeks to find his true identity and fulfill his destiny. Nearing the end of the search, he must come to “The Wise Land with the Foolish King” and prove to its ministers that he, the prince, is wise enough to become its new king.

The ministers explain to him the first test he must pass. Their previous king had left behind a garden, which was extraordinarily beautiful and an awesome wonder—but impossible to enter. Anyone trying to enter the garden is pursued. He begins to scream because he has no idea who chases him and sees no one. He is pursued until chased out of the garden.

The prince asks, “Is the person beaten in any way?”

“Primarily, he is chased, unaware of who chases him. He flees in great terror.”

The prince solves the problem. Near the entrance to the garden is a statue of a man. A tablet above the statue says the man was once-upon-a-time a king, in whose reign there was peace, never war. The prince understands that success depended on this man. Standing near the man will save him from harm. Having the statue placed in the middle of the garden, will allow *anyone* to enter in peace.

Until the end of the story the prince remains unsure of who he really is. At the very, very end....

No one needs to be told of the tragedy of death and fear that currently attends our home, the Promised Land. There is another tragedy, unseen, which torments Jews around the world, the identity crisis. It is born of Adam's sin, reinforced by personal suffering, exacerbated by sin and seemingly sealed by the media.

Many Jews don't know what their status is. “Am I really special? How? Are we Jews really chosen? In what way? Is “the garden,” the Land of Israel, really ours? If I am and we are and it is, why does God make us suffer so?” Where can we look for a solution?

The prince understood that success depended on this man. Who is this man?! The man is Shabbat and Shabbat is many things.

Shabbat is protection. As a result of his sin, Adam was sentenced to expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Shabbat protected him and he was not expelled till after Shabbat. This is reflected in the psalm Adam composed, Psalm 92.

Shabbat is Torah. The Torah was given at Sinai on Shabbat and Moshe Rabbeinu's final transmission of the Torah in toto was on Shabbat.

Shabbat is understanding. The self-control to step back and not impose one's ego on Creation is born from a seed of understanding that one is not the final arbiter. This seed yields fruit of deeper understanding.

Shabbat is peace. “The holy name is ‘Peace.’ Come, see. The world can only endure if there is peace. When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the universe it couldn't stand until He and placed peace on it. What is ‘peace’? Shabbat” (*Zohar* 3:176b).

Why do we have Eretz Yisrael? As a reward for accepting Hashem's mitzvot (Rashi on *Leviticus* 25:38). Accepting Shabbat—outwardly as well as inwardly - is equivalent to accepting the entire Torah. If one keeps Shabbat it is as if he keeps the entire Torah (*Zohar* 2:47a).

One who can stand next to Shabbat has no fear of being in the garden. One who can has to make Shabbat an integral part of the garden. Then every Jew can say,

“Now I understand, that in fact I am the true prince....”

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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