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נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד  
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,  
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## Parashat Bechukotai

### A Wind of Peace is Blowing in the World

Our *parasha* teaches us (26:6-7), "*Ve'natati shalom ba'aretz ...*, And I will put peace in the land, and you will lie down and will not tremble, and I will cause wild animals to withdraw from the land, and a sword will not pass through the land: And you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before your sword."

#### *Shalom Al Yisrael*

The *sefer Nezer Yosef* quotes the famous *Yerushalmi darshan* Rav Shabsi Yudelevitch zt"l as relating that there were two friends, one was named Yisrael and the other Shalom. They were hiking together and reached a river. They said, "Why should both of us enter the water and get wet; it is better that one of us should carry the other on his shoulders - but who will carry who?" Shalom remembered the *pasuk* which states, "*Shalom al Yisrael*," that *shalom*, peace, will be on *Yisrael*. He therefore said that Yisrael should be the one to carry him. So Yisrael carried Shalom on his shoulders, but in middle of the way, Yisrael threw Shalom down to the ground. When Shalom asked why Yisrael did that, Yisrael answered, quoting the *pasuk*, "**And I will put peace (*shalom*) in the land.**" Therefore, he threw Shalom down onto the land.

#### Questions:

- 1- On one hand, the Torah promises, "And I will put peace in the land," which implies that there will be no more wars. Yet the following *pasuk* states, "And you chase your enemies and they will fall before your sword," implying that there will still be wars in the future, yet the Jews will be victorious.
- 2- The *sefer Maskil L' David* on *Vayikra* furthermore asks how the *pasuk* could state, "*Ve'natati shalom ba'aretz.*" For the word *natati* connotes "giving." However, it is only possible to give something physical; only a physical item can be transferred from one person to the other. Yet peace is not a physical item. Therefore, the appropriate expression seemingly should have been "I will **make** peace," and the like.
- 3- The *Ohr Hachaim* asks why the *pasuk* needs to state afterwards, "And you will dwell securely." Isn't this readily understood from the previous *pesukim*?

#### The Quest for Peace in All Aspects of Life

When we think about the world, we will notice that everyone is searching for ways to make peace, investing quite a lot of time and resources. World leaders speak about peace, both encouraging and praising taking steps towards peace. Yet we see that these efforts have not met with success, and in the



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end, they falter. The question is why. In truth, the quest for peace can be divided up into four categories: The first is *shalom bayit*; the second is peace amongst the *charedi* population; the third is peace amongst the Jewish Nation as a whole; the fourth is peace between the Jews and the nations of the world. Our holy Torah teaches us that meriting peace depends upon observing the Torah and mitzvot. Only if we fulfill "If you will follow in My statutes," can we hope that peace will rein in our homes and then amongst all the *chareidim*. This will, in turn, influence the Jewish Nation as a whole, and affect the gentile nations as well. The matter is dependent upon the *chareidi* population, who adhere to the Torah – for it is to them that the Torah is speaking, not to those who do not follow the Torah. Therefore, the more we expend effort in fulfilling the Torah and mitzvot, the more peace there will be. We must try to fulfill all that is included in the Torah, including rectifying the negative traits of jealousy, lust, and honor seeking, which drive man out of the world and breed strife amongst our population. This process obviously begins at home. *Baruch Hashem*, we have recently seen how peace has begun to rein in our Land, as *Chachmei Yisrael* from the *Sefardic Chareidi* factions have come together. We hope this will persist in the ensuing generation as well, and that we merit seeing the entire *chareidi* world unite as one to perform the Will of Hashem. This strengthens the power of the Torah and influences the Jewish Nation, and eventually, the whole world. *Baruch Hashem*, we have been witness to a very special time, when the US and Israel have united and identify with one another. This has taken place in several other countries as well, such as in Morocco, Spain, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. There is no doubt that all of this is from Hashem, and that the more we strengthen ourselves in Torah and mitzvah observance, the more the Jewish Nation will be blessed with peace.

### The Torah's Intention

Now we can begin to explain our *parashah*. Besides for Rashi's explanation, other commentators understand that the peace referred to in the *pasuk* refers not to peace from our gentile enemies, but between man and his fellow (see *Eben Ezra*, *Ramban* and *Ohr Hachaim* on our *parashah*). We mentioned earlier the question of the *Maskil L'David*, who asks that since peace is not a physical item, it seems unfitting to be "given," as the *pasuk* states. He therefore explains that when Hashem says *v'natati* (I will give), it refers to the promise of food and drink mentioned above. When will they be bestowed upon the Jews? When there is peace amongst Jews in the Land. For if there is no peace, than anything that is given is not truly received; one cannot enjoy anything when there is strife. Accordingly, we can understand why even though the Torah states, "And you will sit securely in your land," i.e., we will not need to fear our enemies, we are still in need of *shalom bayit*; this is why the *pasuk* states, "And I will give peace amongst you." On the other hand, even if *shalom bayit* reins, we still need to be safe from our enemies. This is why the Torah states, "And you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before your sword."

### The Passing of the Arizal at a Young Age was Due to Strife



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It is known that the Arizal did not live many years, and on the fifth of Av in the year 5332, his soul ascended to Heaven in the 38<sup>th</sup> year of his life. The *sefer Kol Sasson* and also the *sefer Emek Hamelech*, as well as the *Toldot Ha'Arizal* write that the reason for his early passing was as follows: There is a rule that as long as there is peace in the house and peace between man and his friend, the *Satan* cannot cause harm. However, once he causes them to have conflicts with one another then he can harm them, *chas ve'shalom*. We can learn this from the story involving the students of the Arizal. When the Arizal started teaching his student Rav Chaim Vital, he took an oath that he would not conceal anything from him. One time Rav Cham Vital asked the Arizal to explain to him a deep passage in the *Zohar*. The Arizal, however, did not wish to reveal it, for it was a very deep secret of the hidden Torah. Yet Rav Chaim Vital told the Arizal that he was bound by oath to do so. But the Arizal responded that if he did reveal it, than Rav Chaim would regret it greatly. However, since he was required to do so, he told Rav Chaim to say that he wished to learn the *Zohar* nonetheless, and he did. Once having revealed the secret, however, the Arizal said that it was decreed in Heaven that he would die that year, and that Rav Chaim had caused it. He said that he was not saddened about his own fate, but about his students, for how could he leave them prior to their souls being rectified? His students were very sadden by this. However, he said that as long as there was peace amongst them and in their households, without any strife at all, the Angel of Death will not be able to approach him. But after five months, one *erev Shabbat*, a fight broke out amongst the students' wives and the wives told their husbands. This finally resulted in the students fighting themselves, and in doing so, they violated the warning of their Rav. That night the Arizal went out to the fields with his students to greet the Shabbat, and he returned to the *beit kneset* with an angry countenance. He sat through the entire davening as if he was in mourning. When Rav Chaim saw his *rebbe* in such a state he got scared, because this was not the way his *rav* would normally act. When he asked him for an explanation for his anguish, he responded that in *kabbalat Shabbat* he saw the *Satan*, who quoted to him a *pasuk* that hinted to his demise. He therefore realized that the decree had been sealed, and it happened only because of the conflict that broke out amongst his students. For as long as there is peace between them, no harm could befall them. On *erev Shabbos Parashat Matot Masei*, which took place on *Rosh Chodesh Av*, the Arizal took ill from a plague that had stricken at that time. His students and the great men of the city prayed excessively, and when they came in to see him he asked about his student, Rav Chaim Vital. They said to him that he was going from one *beit hakneset* to the next to pray for the Arizal. The Arizal said to tell him that he cannot nullify the decree, because it was a decree that came about because of an oath that cannot be nullified. He told them to call Rav Chaim Vital so that he could bless him. Once again, he warned them not to argue and that *shalom* should always rein amongst them, and they should honor one another. From this we see that even though a decree of death was cast in Heaven, nevertheless if there would have been peace and strife would have been avoided, the *midat hadin* would not have been able to strike them.

Words of Mussar



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We have learned how vital peace is to man, both in his private life as well as in his public life. For without peace, everything is worthless, as Rashi wrote. However many err and believe that they can achieve peace with deeds that defy the Will of Hashem. For the Torah guarantees that only "if you follow in My ways and adhere to My mitzvot," will I place feelings of peace into the hearts of man, both in the house, with your wife and family, as well as in the Jewish Nation as a whole. This is the demand on each one of us, to strengthen ourselves in performing the Will of Hashem and then peace will reign in our homes. Furthermore, there is an obligation upon the *chareidi* population, the ones who adhere to the Torah and mitzvos, to especially strengthen themselves, for it is only us whom the Torah is encouraging and not those who do not follow the Torah. By us joining as one, we have the ability to spark a revolution in the hearts of the rest of the Jewish Nation, even amongst Jews far away from Torah and mitzvos, and even upon the entire world. This is because we are the heart of the world. Specifically in our time, we have begun to see slightly less strife amongst our population, and peace has begun to rein. This is something that has not taken place in the last seventy years. Therefore, it is our obligation to continue to increase this feeling of *shalom*. Our Sages have very much praised the benefits of peace, as they have taught, "*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has not found a better vessel to hold *beracha* for the Jews than peace. By doing so, we will all merit Hashem blessing His nation with peace. *Amen v'Amen*."

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka