



Yeshivat Ma'alot
Parashat Behar- Bechukotai
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ישיבת מעלות
 פרשת בהר - בזוקתי
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The Light at the End of the Tunnel

Parashat Bechukotai opens with the *bracha* and *tochecha*, the blessings and rebuke. With all the difficulty of the *tochecha*, there are a few p'sukim that give hope for a better future. The pasuk states¹: "And I will give your cities to destruction and I will desolate your Mikdash and I will not smell your fragrant offerings." The Mishnah² derives from this pasuk that a destroyed Beit Knesset still retains its holiness. This is because the pasuk says that Hashem will desolate our "Mikdash", derived from the word *kadosh*, holy. Even though it is desolate it is still holy.

Places that were sanctified during the time that Klal Yisrael was living as a nation in Eretz Yisrael do not lose their holiness, even during the years of the Galut. This innate holiness is not dependant on outward factors, and remains forever. The fact that this holiness is eternal gives us strength to be able to persevere during the difficult hours of the Galut. If the holiness is still intact then there will come a time when it will once again be fully displayed in the world. The Mikdash will be rebuilt and the *avodah* will be renewed. This belief is a ray of hope throughout the Galut.

Further on in the *tochecha* Hashem says³ "I will make the Land desolate, and it will be desolate for the nations who live in it." The Ramban explains in the name of Chazal that even during the years that Klal Yisrael is in the Galut, Eretz Yisrael will not allow her enemies to settle upon it. Nowhere in the world is there such a place that was inhabited and flourishing which is now destroyed, and despite the efforts of the nations to settle it, it is to no avail.

These words which were proclaimed by Chazal and echoed by the Ramban hundreds of years later have continued to be true throughout history. It is only since the beginning of *Shivat Tzion*, our return to Eretz Yisrael that we see the Land bloom once again. There is no stronger proof that testifies Klal Yisrael's connection with her Land.

Eretz Yisrael is waiting for her children to return and since then no nation has been able to make her blossom. These two p'sukim, which are found in the thick of

¹ Vayikra 26, 31

² Megillah 3,3

³ Vayikra 26, 32

tochecha, give Am Yisrael both hope and faith that at the end of the dark tunnel of the Galut awaits a great light.

At a second glance, these p'sukim seem out of place. If the Torah is coming to rebuke Bnei Yisrael then why would it bring p'sukim which seem to defeat their own purpose?

The answer to this question is hidden in the Midrash on Megillat Eicha⁴. There the Midrash explains the pasuk in Eicha that says that Yerushalayim was like a widow. The Midrash exacts that Yerushalayim was only *like* a widow, like a woman whose husband had gone far away but will return. The Galut does not mean that Am Yisrael is totally severed from her Land. Eretz Yisrael is not, God forbid, a widow. During the Galut the connection between Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael might not be outwardly seen but under the surface it is alive and dynamic. The difficult times teach us just how strong this connection really is. The wife who waits for her husband to return comes to teach us that she is not only connected to her husband when they are close to one another. Their connection is something that is rooted much deeper. This deep connection is only seen though when they are separated from one another.

In the depth of the *tochecha*, when the Mikdash is destroyed and Eretz Yisrael is desolate, the true connection between Klal Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael shines. The *kedusha* of the Mikdash is something independent, something which can never be extinguished or snuffed out. When Am Yisrael returns to her Land this inner connection surfaces with great strength and might.

The same is true in our day and age. When going through difficult times, times when we feel far from Hashem, a fire is ignited. People discover within themselves a closeness to Eretz Yisrael, to Am Yisrael and to Hashem. These difficult times show just how deep our connection is and that this connection can never be broken.

⁴ Eicha Rabbah, Parasha 1, 3