

## Parashah #33

(Updated for 5.21.11)

B'chukkotai ~ **בְּחֻקֹּתַי** ~ By My Regulations

**Torah:** Vayikra/Leviticus 26:3~27:34

**Haftarah:** Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 16:19~17:14

**B'rit Hadashah:** Yochanan/John 14:15-21; 15:10-12; Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John

We have finally come to the last portion of Vayikra, known as (b'koo-koe-tie) B'chukkotai (the "ch" is like "ch" in Bach).

This portion's title is taken from a root word, in Hebrew, (coke) **choke** meaning **law, regulation, ordinance**. However, we should not confuse it with Torah which is also sometimes translated as law. Each word actually conveys different concepts . . .

**choke = law;**

**Torah = teaching.**

## CHAPTER 26

This teaching introduces one of the central aspects of the covenant made through (Moe-sheh Rah-bay-new) **Moshe Rabbenu/Moses, our teacher**, which is **obedience**. It is very clear. Blessings are predicated upon obedience to Torah's (kook-keem) **chukkim/laws**.

This part of the Torah portion begins by saying "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments and do them . . ." (**Vayikra/Leviticus 26:3**). This seems a bit redundant, doesn't it? What's the difference between (1) walking in the statutes, (2) keeping the commandments and (3) doing them? In his classic commentaries on the Torah, Rashi wondered about this too and proposed a solution. He suggested the following:

- "Walking in the statutes" refers to intensive study of the Torah
- "Keeping the commandments" refers to learning how the commandments of Torah are properly kept.
- "Doing them" refers to actually doing what the commandments say to do.

In other words, we should study Torah for the purpose of learning it and we should learn it for the purpose of doing it! Additionally, Rashi explains "everywhere we walk we should be studying Torah."

Sometimes we study the Bible simply for the sake of learning the Scriptures but we never get around to **doing** what the Bible tells us to do. In other words, we often **hear** the Word of G~d and **learn** its message but **fail to put in into practice**. This is especially true with regard to the laws of Torah. In some Christian schools of thought, the laws of Torah are believed to have spiritual meanings instead of literal meanings. This suggests the laws of Torah were never meant to be kept. They were only meant to be understood as spiritual lessons. We are told the early church writings spoke about the spiritual meaning of the Torah's commandments while discouraging people from actually practicing the Torah. This certainly didn't take place in the

First Century!! At that time there was no “church” and the only scripture they had was Torah. Furthermore, Luke tells us in **Acts 15:21**, from the earliest of times Torah was read in the synagogues every Shabbat (7<sup>th</sup> day ~ Saturday) . . . and believers were there LEARNING!

To summarize Hebrew thought, the purpose for studying is more than simply the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge and learning are regarded only as a means for better serving HaShem. Therefore, we study to learn and learn to do.

Reading over this Parashah, I “fast forwarded” two months or so to **D’varim/Deuteronomy 28**, which is the BIG list of good and not-so-good “**IFs**”. This week’s list (**verses 3-13**) gives 24 blessings to be received **IF** HaShem’s regulations and His mitzvot are observed and obeyed. TWENTY-FOUR BLESSINGS!!! Just for being obedient!

- I will provide rain you need in its season.
- The land will yield its produce.
- The trees in the field will yield their fruit.
- Your threshing time will extend until grape harvest.
- Grape harvesting will extend until time to sow seed.
- You will eat as much as you want.
- You will live securely in your land.
- I will give *shalom/peace* in the land.
- You will lie down to sleep unafraid.
- I will rid the land of wild animals.
- The sword will not go through your land.
- You will pursue your enemies.
- Your enemies will fall before your sword; five of you will chase a hundred; a hundred of you will chase ten thousand.
- I will turn toward you.
- I will make you productive.
- I will increase your numbers.
- I will uphold my covenant with you.
- You will eat your fill from last year’s harvest.
- You will throw out what’s left to make room for the new.
- I will put my tabernacle among you.
- I will not reject you.
- I will walk among you.
- I will be your G~d.
- You will be my people.

(According to my book on numbers, 12 is the number of . . .

- divine gov’t.
- power
- rule
- apostolic authority

Twenty-four is a multiple of twelve and is significant of a higher form or double portion of that number which is . . .

- governmental perfection
- heavenly gov't. & worship
- and the priesthood

Moving right along, we find dire circumstances result from lack of obedience. **Verses 14-17** tell what the consequences will be for rejecting HaShem's rulings, for instance . . . "I will bring upon you . . .

- Terror
- Wasting disease
- Chronic fever
- Dim your sight
- Sap your strength
- Enemies will eat your crops
- Enemies will defeat you
- Those who hate you will hound you
- You will flee when no one is pursuing you

Furthermore, if there is continued disobedience . . .

- in **verse 18** He says He will discipline **seven times** over;
- in **verse 21** another increase of **sevenfold**;
- again in **verse 24** He will strike another **seven times over**
- and in **verse 27**, He will chastise yet **seven times more!**

I'm not sure my brain can wrap around all of those sevens (2,401)!!! Gosh, wouldn't it be easier to obey than to go through all of that???

I believe, if the Israelite Nation as a whole had understood the central meaning behind the teaching of the Torah, legalism and mistrust would not have been the result. HaShem would not have resorted to punishing them so severely for their gross disobedience. According to ***Sha'ul/Paul*** in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:11 "These things happened to them as prefigurative historical events, and they were written down as a warning to us who are living in the ***acharit-hayamim***." (Ah-kha-reet hah-yah-meem = last days; literally ***the end of the days***) We have been given this historical Torah so we might learn its lessons and avoid the same pitfalls.

Many believers in Messiah Yeshua specifically believers without a formal background in Judaism and those who identify with the Scriptures of Israel, have questions about what it means to be (Show-mehr Meets-vote) ***Shomer Mitzvot*** or ***Torah Observant***. Walking out the new life is sometimes referred to, in Hebrew, as (hah-lah-khah) ***halakhah/walk***.

Because Torah is **written on the hearts** of all who truly name יהוה as L~rd, it is meant to be followed to the best of our ability. We have no reason to fear condemnation or the trappings of legalism as we find in the following scripture:

- **D'varim/Deuteronomy 10:12-22** “. . . all that Adonai your G~d asks from you is to fear Adonai your G~d, follow all His ways, love Him and serve Adonai your G~d with all your heart and all your being; . . .”
- **Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 31:33** “. . . I will put My Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their G~d and they will be My people.”
- **Yechezk'el/Ezekiel 36:25-27** “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit inside you and cause you to live by My laws, respect My rulings and obey them.”
- **Yochanan/John 14:21** “Whoever has My commands (Torah) and keeps them is the one who loves Me and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.”
- **Yochanan/John 15:10 & 11** “If you keep My commands (Torah), you will stay in My love – just as I have kept My Father’s commands and stay in His love. I have said this to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.”
- **Romans 8:1** “Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah Yeshua.”
- **Ivrim/Hebrews 8:10** “For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Adonai: I will put My Torah in their minds and write it on their hearts; I will be their G~d and they will be My people.”

Here’s an interesting quote from “**Torah Rediscovered**” by Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz. “For those who trust HaShem for the promises, the proper order for faith and obedience is set by the sequence in which the covenants were given. In other words, faith must precede obedience. But the kind of faith accepted by HaShem is one, which naturally flows into obedience. True obedience never comes before faith, nor is it an addition to faith. It is always the result of true biblical faith.”

Sometimes, “faith” is a big word for folks. The Complete Jewish Bible uses the word “trust” or “trusting” in its place, especially in **Ivrim/Hebrews Chapter 11**.

Torah Observance is a matter of the heart. It always has been and always will be. The Torah Proper (first Five Books of Moshe) in **D'varim/Deuteronomy 6:5** instructed (Ahm Yis-rah-el) *Am Yisrael*/the *People of Israel* to “love Adonai your G~d with all your heart, all your being and all your resources”. This is where *Shomer Mitzvot* begins – by loving HaShem, and accepting Him on His terms. By this, I mean, accepting His means of covenant obedience. For

today, I believe, this means acceptance of Yeshua, His only Son, for Judah, Ephraim and the other nations. (The “other nations” includes “the church”.)

This idea of commandment-keeping is a state of mind, as well as a daily function. We should never fall for the age-old compulsory reasons for keeping the commands of HaShem! Keeping Torah for the sake of salvation or merit with HaShem (making yourself better than your fellow man in the eyes of HaShem) is simply NOT Scriptural! To be sure it is a misuse of the Torah itself! **Torah observance is a matter of the heart!!!**

In summary, this chapter’s importance cannot be overemphasized. HaShem is not a liar. What He says He will do, **He will do!** However, instead of having these judgments scattered throughout one’s lifetime, they will be compressed into the shorter time frame of the end times, consequently the Tribulation. Remember “Judgment begins in the house of the L~rd”. He will judge His own to bring them back to Him and their obedience to the covenant they agreed to follow. Those who don’t come back will be like the five foolish virgins Yeshua talked about.

**Hebrews 8:10** makes it clear. When we enter into The New covenant and it is written on our heart, it is still the same set of rules as the written Torah (My Laws – KJV). Consequently, to dispel confusion, notice the laws are the same but the covenant group is new. “Them” in **Hebrews 8:8** means people because covenant in **verse 7** is not the original Greek.

It is a natural action of ours, urged on and empowered by the (Roo-ahk Ha Koe-desh) ***Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit*** within us. It is the result of having Torah placed in our inward parts, our inner most being, as new creations in Messiah Yeshua. Study of the apostles’ original salvation message tells us they taught the believers they became recipients of all the benefits of HaShem’s covenants. Therefore obedience is the lifestyle AFTER entering into the covenant.

## **CHAPTER 27**

Torah Teacher, Mark Ensign, from Amarillo, TX with Adot Adonai Assembly, made the very astute observation concerning the (Say-fer Vah-yeekrah) ***Sefer Vayikra/Book of Leviticus***. According to him, the first and the last chapter are like book ends. The first chapter opened with the offerings of (Oh-lah) ***Olah*** and (Sh-lah-meem kore-bah-note) ***Sh’lamim korbanot / voluntary offerings***, followed by the (Khah-taht) ***Chatat/Sin*** and (Ah-shahm) ***Asham/Guilt*** offerings which were required. Remember? Now, this parashah ends with the voluntary offering of the value of a person, animal or field, followed by the required mitzvot of (B’kore) ***B’chor/first born*** and the (Mah-ah-sehr) ***Ma’aser/tithe***. While the offerings at the beginning of Vayikra were actually offered on the (meez-bach) ***mizbach/altar***, the offerings here deal with the value of objects which cannot be offered (like a home) so their value is given instead to the general fund of the (Bay-eet Mick-dahsh) ***Beit Mikdash/Temple***.

During the entire time in our study of *Vayikra/Leviticus*, HaShem has greatly impressed upon me, how His people were always bringing offerings to Him. Now, the tithe is a tithe and is commanded. But, it seems to me, the offerings are of the heart. My personal belief is I should never come empty handed before the One Who gives me life each day. There have been times when I had no more than a few coins. However, because I was faithful to Him, He has ALWAYS been faithful to me. As a single mom with three stair-stepped children, I can honestly say we never went hungry, was always able to make the house and car payments, etc. And, speaking of children, it's never too early for them to learn. My children received an allowance they learned to tithe (which I taught them was 10%). They always had "Jesus money" on Sundays. No, I haven't always been Torah pursuant; I didn't know. But when my Bridegroom started wooing me, oh my!, what I started learning!!! How could I not obey what He was teaching me from His Word (beginning to end)?!

Before we leave this portion, I thought it was interesting the value HaShem told Moshe to assign to individuals, according to the standard of the sanctuary shekel (**verses 3-7**).

- For a man, 20-60 years of age ~ 50 shekels of silver (one and a quarter pounds)
- For a woman, 20-60 years of age ~ 30 shekels
- For a boy, 5-20 years old ~ 20 shekels
- For a girl, 5-20 years old ~ 10 shekels
- For a baby boy, 1 month to 5 years old ~ 5 shekels
- For a baby girl, 1 month to 5 years old ~ 3 shekels
- For a man past 60 years of age ~ 15 shekels
- For a woman past 60 years of age ~ 10 shekels

### **B'chukkotai ~ בְּחֻקֹּתַי ~ By My Regulations**

#### **Haftarah: Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 16:19 ~ 17:14**

In this Haftarah, we find (Year-meh-yah-hoo) *Yirme'yahu's/Jeremiah's* instructions very similar to our Torah portion's of HaShem's "**IF**" and "**THEN**". Jeremiah told them if they, the Israelites, were devoted to Torah, they would enjoy . . .

- |           |              |            |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| • Respect | • Prosperity | • Blessing |
|-----------|--------------|------------|

If they chose to forsake the Torah, they would suffer . . .

- |            |           |         |
|------------|-----------|---------|
| • Contempt | • Poverty | • Curse |
|------------|-----------|---------|

**Verses 19-21** are very significant. They deal with the heathen (gentiles who are experiencing affliction/Tribulation) coming to HaShem for truth because their traditional religions are finally recognized to be false. "Our fathers have inherited lies". This is apparently one last

chance for them (verse 21). This is definitely End Times as it is tied to the greater exodus (verses 14-16).

Jeremiah points out how they, as a nation, are ingrained in the sin of idolatry. Additionally, their lack of faith in HaShem coupled with their absolute faith in frail man will be their downfall. He goes on to warn them, all of this will be in vain and any good which does come from them will be short lived and end in humiliation and tragedy.

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:5** says “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from HaShem.” Through **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah** HaShem makes clear the negative results of a self-reliant life. Whatever it may look like in the short term, trusting in ourselves will eventually lead to a fruitless existence and to death, followed by an eternity without G~d and goodness.

It doesn't help our society has placed a high value on self reliance. We are encouraged to make it on our own, to prove ourselves. In general, getting help, whether it is from HaShem or another person is viewed as weakness. (This is not to be confused with expecting the government to take care of your every thing!!!!) However, this is not how we were intended to live. **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah** also says, “But blessed is the man who trusts in HaShem, whose confidence is in Him.” (**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 17:7**) We were not created to be self reliant. G~d's intention was for us to live as His children. As part of G~d's family we are to live life, trusting in HaShem, in His love, power, provision and goodness. Placing our roots deep in Him, we can then live fruitful lives and richly bless others.

As in all our (Hahf-tah-rote) Haftarat, this one concludes with words of hope and consolation. No matter how terrible the present and how foreboding the imminent future, HaShem does not forsake Israel forever, nor does Israel completely cut its bond to HaShem. The covenant of HaShem remains in tact, hope and healing will come. To quote many of the Sages, as well as many verses (list follows) from the Tanakh, “. . . for HaShem is our salvation and praise.” (What is the Hebrew word for salvation? . . . Yeshua!!!)

- Sh'mot/Exodus 15:2
- Tehillim/Psalms 13:5
- Tehillim/Psalms 27:1
- Tehillim/Psalms 35:9
- Tehillim/Psalms 40:10
- Tehillim/Psalms 40:16
- Tehillim/Psalms 50:23
- Tehillim/Psalms 62:1
- Tehillim/Psalms 62:2
- Tehillim/Psalms 62:6
- Tehillim/Psalms 62:7
- Tehillim/Psalms 67:2
- Tehillim/Psalms 69:13
- Tehillim/Psalms 69:29
- Tehillim/Psalms 74:12
- Tehillim/Psalms 85:9
- Tehillim/Psalms 91:16
- Tehillim/Psalms 118:18
- Tehillim/Psalms 118:21
- Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 12:2
- Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 25:9
- Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 33:2

- Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 49:6
- Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 51:6
- Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 51:8
- Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 3:23
- Yonah/Jonah 2:9

(I just counted how many scriptures are listed . . . 27. In my book of scriptural numbers, the number twenty-seven means exaltation. Baruch HaShem!!!)

**B'chukkotai ~ בְּחֻקֹּתַי ~ By My Regulations**  
**B'rit Hadashah: Yochanan/John 14:15-21;**  
**Yochanan/John 15:10-12; Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John**

**Yochanan/John 14:15-21** David Stern, author of *The Complete Jewish Bible*, has some very interesting commentary on **verse 15**. “**If you love me, you will keep my commands**, my *mitzvot*. It is wrong to think of Messianic Judaism or Christianity as “easy”, requiring only pleasant feelings of love but no actions to prove it. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bibles* lists 1,050 New Testament commands which, according to this verse, are to be obeyed by those who love Yeshua. The distinction drawn between Old Testament Judaism as a religion of law and New Testament faith as a religion of love is unfounded. In both the *Tanakh* and the *B'rit Chadashah* biblical religion is based on both love and law, both mercy and justice; it has always been so and always will be.” After all, doesn't' scripture say in **Mal'akhi/Malachi 3:6** “. . . I, Adonai, do not change . . .” Our Abba Father is NOT schizophrenic!!!! The instructions He gave us “in the beginning” have not been trashed!

Again in **verse 17**, Stern shares his comments concerning **The Spirit of Truth**, HaShem's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, . . . **will be in you**. This is an amazing promise for any person to read, because the *Tanakh* speaks of only a few persons as having the Holy Spirit “**with**” or “**upon**” them. Among them are . . .

- *Moshe/Moses* and the seventy elders ~ B'midbar/Numbers 11:17-29
- *Gid'on/Gideon* ~ Shoftim/Judges 6:34
- *Yiftach/Jephthah* ~ Shoftim/Judges 11:29
- *Shimshon/Samson* ~ Shoftim/Judges 14:6
- *Sha'ul/Saul* ~ Sh'mu'el Alef/1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 11:6
- *Dah-veed/David* ~ Sh'mu'el Alef/1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:13; Tehillim/Psalm 51:13 (11)
- *Sha'ul/Saul's* messengers ~ Sh'mu'el Alef/1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 19:20

And even fewer as having the Holy Spirit “**in**” them . . .

- *Yosef/Joseph* ~ B' resheet/Genesis 41:38
- Betzal'el ~ Sh'mot/Exodus 31:3”

**Yochanan/John 15:10-12** Recently, I read the words “I have kept my father’s commands” refers back to 14:31. We know Yeshua was Torah Observant and obeyed all of His Father’s commands or He could not have been our spotless, without blemish, Passover Lamb of G~d. Referring back to 14:31 “I do as the Father has commanded me” was stated when Yeshua was leaving the Passover Seder and just prior to going to (Gahn Gaht Sh’mah-neem) *Gan Gat Sh’manim/Garden of Gethsemane*.

**Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John 1** As I understand this chapter, I believe it deals with the relationship of a believer both to sin in general and also to particular sins. These verses point out . . .

1. There is an absolute call to put away sin.
2. It is impossible to live without sinning.
3. One does not have the right to just give up the battle against sin.

**Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John 2** Again, in this chapter, Yochanan is addressing sin. What we should do so we won’t sin prepares us for “when we do sin”. There are two ways not to have the truth.

1. One is to say we have no sin and . . .
2. the other is to say we “know” Him but we don’t obey His commands.

In verses 12-14 Yochanan uses the terms “children”, “fathers” and “young people”. These terms could refer to the chronological ages of the people he is talking/writing to. However, it could refer to the spiritual maturity level of those he is addressing.

**Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John 3** Verse 4 defines “sin” as “violation of Torah”. If we are united with HaShem as our Father, we will not continue to sin. Don’t be deceived! Anyone who continues to do wrong is not from G~d. Christians **do not** have a license to sin!

**Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John 4** One of the most important principles in our Torah Observant walk is to be aware of the spiritual realm. As verse 1 says, “don’t trust every spirit”. Many people do not have the discernment to know which spirits “are from G~d” and which are not. Not every inner voice or feeling is from HaShem. Some are merely from ourselves, caused by being overtired or overwrought or expressions of our own wishes and fears. Others may truly be from the spiritual realm, but unfortunately from Satan and his demons, not from HaShem and his angels. Likewise, not every prophet or religious teacher is from G~d. Therefore, we must test them with Torah. Torah is the sound doctrine we all need.

**Yochanan Alef/1<sup>st</sup> John 5** “There are three witnesses . . .

- the Spirit
- the water
- and the blood

... and these three are in agreement.” One cannot claim to accept the witness of the Holy Spirit if one rejects the witness of the water and the blood to the true character of Yeshua.

There are three things we know . . .

- Everyone who has HaShem as his Father does not go on sinning.
- And the evil one does not touch him, but he can tempt him.
- The whole world lies in the power of the Evil One.

The final warning is to “guard yourselves from false gods”, from anything that might distract you . . .

- from true life,
- from Yeshua, and
- from G~d.

**The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portions is: Psalm 105**

And as we end each book of our Torah study, it is tradition that we recite the following:

**Chazak!, chazak!, v’nit’chazek!  
(Kah-zahk, kah-zack, v’neat kha-zeck)  
Be strong!, be strong!, and let us be strengthened!**

**Next week’s lesson: Parashah #34**

**B’midbar ~ במדבר ~ In The Desert**

**Torah: B’midbar/Numbers 1:1~4:20**

**Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 2:1-22**

**B’rit Hadashah: Luke 2:1-7; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-31**

**Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.**

*Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim*

**Organize yourselves into classes for the study of Torah,  
since it can best be acquired in association with others.**

*Talmud: Berkot 63b*

*Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!*