



KINDER TORAH

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PARASHAS BECHUKOSAI

THE BLESSING OF HEALTH

"What a beautiful day, Chaim."
"It sure is, Avi. It stopped raining a few minutes ago, and the sun is now shining brightly. The air is so fresh."

"Take a deep breath, Chaim. It smells so good. Look at that creek. The rainfall made the flowing water so clear and clean."

"Clean air and clean water are such blessings. They make fruits and vegetables grow bigger and better. Better produce, as well as clean air and water, are very good for a person."

"Have you been reading up on good health, Chaim?"

"As a matter of fact, I have been, Avi. I read the Ramban's commentary on the second verse of this week's parasha."

"Really? What does he say?"

"The verse states, 'If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them; then I will provide your rains in their time' (Vayikra 26:3,4). Verse four is the first of ten verses which list all of the blessings that will come to Klal Yisrael as a result of our following Hashem's decrees (by toiling in Torah) and observing His commandments. We all know that we will receive reward in *olam habo* for fulfilling Hashem's commandments. What we may not realize is that we also receive blessing in this world for the mitzvos! That is astounding! Peace, security, prosperity, children, and the Divine Presence will all come to us here in this world when we serve Hashem properly. The Ramban points out that 'rains in their time' is the first blessing listed. The first item in a list always has a special importance."

"What is the significance of 'rains in their time,' Chaim?"

"They clean and purify the air. They provide fresh water to the rivers and wells. This makes the fruits and vegetables grow well. Clean air and water also contribute directly to the good health of a person. His body lives in a pure environment. He also gets proper nourishment by eating fruits that grow with good air and water. The Ramban plainly states that there will be no sickness, miscarriages, or childlessness among our people. Our bodies will be big and healthy, thereby living to a ripe old age."

"Wow! What a blessing!"

"Correct. The Ramban sums it up by saying that rain in its time is the biggest blessing of all."

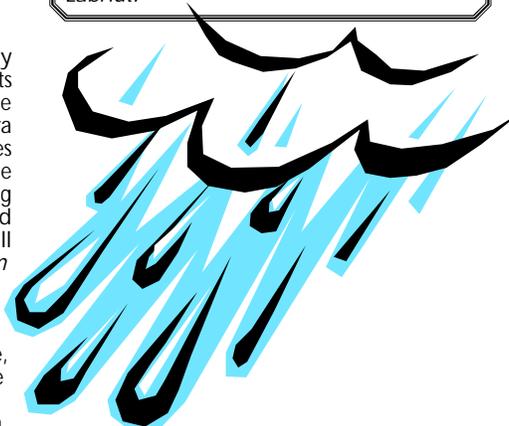
"I want rain, and the good health that comes from it, Chaim. I want to toil in Torah and fulfill all of Hashem's precious mitzvos. I want reward in *olam habo* as well as blessing in *olam haze*."

"May Hashem fulfill all of your wishes, Avi."

Kinderlach . . .

Good rains lead to good health – a big blessing. It is proper to express our gratitude to Hashem every day for His blessings of good health. We do this in the morning when we bless Hashem; thanking Him for eyesight, the ability to move, stand straight, and walk. We also thank Him for giving us strength. After we use the washroom, we thank the Almighty for the workings of the wondrous body that He made for us. If anything would go wrong with it, we would find it impossible to exist and stand before our Creator.

How do we take care of our health? The Ramban reveals to us that toiling in Torah, and keeping mitzvos brings blessings down to Klal Yisrael. First and foremost of those blessings is rain in its time. This leads to good health. Kinderlach, learn well! Labriut!



TRAVELING MAN (1)

"If you will travel in My decrees, and guard My mitzvos and perform them (Vayikra 26:3)." How does one "travel" in Hashem's decrees? One observes His decrees. This does not involve traveling. Or does it? The Kedushas Levi zt"l has a beautiful elucidation of this verse. A mitzvah can accomplish many things. It earns reward (in the next world) for the one who performs the mitzvah. It may also change the person in this world. It can move him up to a higher *madrayga* (spiritual level). At the new *madrayga*, he finds a new mitzvah to perform. He does it, thereby moving up to another *madrayga*. And so, the tsaddik is called "mehalech" – a traveler. Because he is traveling from *madrayga* to *madrayga* by virtue of the mitzvos that he performs.

This can lend a novel explanation to a passage in Tanna DiBei Eliyahu. "Every one who 'shoneh halachos' (learns Torah laws) each day is guaranteed a place in the World to Come." The Kedushas Levi explains that the word "shoneh" can also mean "change". The word "halachos" can

also mean "travels". One who changes his travels each day, by traveling up from *madrayga* to *madrayga* is guaranteed a place in the World to Come.

Kinderlach . . .

Let's hit the road. We have places to go. Where? Higher madraygos (spiritual levels). Don't be satisfied with today's madrayga. You can be in a much higher place tomorrow. And an even higher place the day after. Just keep doing mitzvos. And keep moving up and up. This road leads to wonderful places.

TRAVELING MAN (2)

"Shalom aleichem Akiva! I haven't seen you for a long time!"

"I've been traveling, Benny."

"Where have you been?"

"I have been in many places. This trip was unique. I never ended up in the same place twice."

"How so, Akiva?"

"Many times I went hiking. I started on the same path as the day before. When I reached as far as I had gone yesterday, I pushed myself and went even farther. I was constantly expanding my horizons."

"Fantastic."

"If you will travel in My decrees . . . (Vayikra 26:3)." The Maharal muses why the word "travel" is used in this verse. Hashem's decree is called a "chok". It is too deep for us to completely understand. Like the laws of meat and milk. The ultimate meaning is so profound, that we cannot hope to understand it completely. However, that does not exempt us from trying. Laws that are simple require very little effort. Profound wisdom takes a lot of time and mental exertion. You may spend an entire day working on understanding a "chok". And you will understand more than yesterday. Tomorrow you will work even harder and understand even more. You are like the "hiker" in our story. Each day he traveled a little farther. There is no end to the wisdom of a "chok". So too, there is no end to how far you can "travel" in trying to understand it.

Kinderlach . . .

Did you learn well today? Did you understand everything that you learned? Some Torah subjects are very deep and difficult. You may work very hard on them and still not understand them as well as you like. Don't get discouraged, kinderlach. Try again tomorrow. You may get a little farther. You may understand a little more. He next day you may understand even more. The Maharal says that learning "chukim" is like a road. Happy travels, kinderlach!