

OVERVIEW

Chapter 26 is entirely dedicated to the solemn warning that G-d directs at the Jewish people, cautioning them against any infidelity or rupture of the sacred bond. Peace and prosperity, national security and individual well being, will be the direct outcome of an impeccable conduct – both moral and physical – of the people. But the entire horror of the divine punishment will be triggered as soon as the sons of Israel “will reject the yoke”. The hard school of exile will take them through the nations of the world, until the day that they will regain conscience of their essential task – the old bond – that is never forsaken, that will put them back in the place and the rank that is their due, and at which time a new era of universal peace will accompany the reconciliation of the nation and its G-d. Ordinances regarding vows and tithes conclude the third book of the Torah.

COMMENTARY

The central theme of the sidra Bechukosai, is the famous passage of the blessings and the maledictions, for which it is almost superfluous to give a commentary, since our era has given us a sufficient demonstration of its meaning\*. The sole question remaining is whether we have really understood the lesson that has been inflicted so harshly upon us. It would certainly be criminal to associate the suffering of which millions of Jews have been the victim, to an individual act of disobedience towards G-d. However, it remains that the sum total of the factors of the Diaspora have concurrently provoked the disaster that we have participated in, and that these factors are the immediate result of our collective attitudes vis-à-vis the law of G-d. It is for that reason only that the Torah, all along its pages, emphasizes the inter-dependence of the moral attitude of Israel and its political lot. Those who think that they can better the one without taking care of the other, find themselves on a path that can only lead to the renewal of the listed maledictions.

If we meditate seriously about the betterment and rebirth of the nation, it is then necessary to take into account in the greatest measure this chapter of Leviticus, that can be considered as the real vade mecum of Israel.

In a different way this chapter is equally remarkable: If we take the phrases, word by word, line by line, and we compare these with the horrible reality that these are in charge of announcing. We will see

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\* **Publisher's Note: Please bear in mind the historical context of this commentary that was first published during the worst moments of WWII.**

from the first instant this flagrant identity of a promise and its accomplishment, which is proper of an authentic prophecy, and immediately it is then possible for us to proceed with the same manner with this other passage of our sidra where it is question of peace and well-being, of prosperity and the pure joy that will be the supreme gift that Israel will reap when they will have found back their G-d. Can we doubt for one instant that this second prophecy is less real, less authentic than the first? Can we pretend that its non-accomplishment until our days is in any way a proof of its inexactitude? Indeed, these two parts of Chapter 26 and 27 form a one whole and can be understood only in function (context and relation) of one another. It is incumbent upon us who have seen the reality of the malediction, to endeavor to reach the fulfillment of the benediction.

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(\*\*\*) **The manuscript for this week's Parsha is missing. The publisher translated this text from the original French text. As a result the text may be somewhat difficult to read. We trust that the reader will accept our sincere apologies for this unwitting result.**

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