

BECHUKOTAI

ABOUT THE STORY OF BECHUKOTAI

The word *Bechukotai* means "you will follow My decrees and laws." But according to Kabbalah, there aren't any laws—there is only Cause and Effect. Positive actions create positive outcomes, and negative actions create negative ones. In this chapter, we have blessings and curses to show us that what we get in life depends entirely on our actions.

MICHAEL BERG ON BECHUKOTAI

Usually, when there's a message from the Creator to the Israelites, there's a conversation that begins with the name of the Creator being revealed, most of the time through Moses and through Moses to us. However, the portion *Bechukotai* begins without those words. It's one of the only portions where there's a message, a teaching, from the Creator with no mention of the name of the Creator; this gives us an idea that there's something unique in the Light that is revealed this week.

Bechukotai is dealing with things that are above both human understanding and human ability; what we want to come to learn this week is that so much of what we need to do and what we need to correct are things that we really can't control. So, the question is then, if we really come to the understanding that the assistance we need, the blessings we need, and the correction we need is often beyond our possibility to control, then what do we do? How do we correct what is not in our control?

The way to start this consciousness is by first truly understanding that what we need spiritually and physically to either accomplish, create, draw, or correct is beyond us. Logically, we know we control the very small sphere of influence, but obviously what we need to do in this world is far beyond that. How do we get there?

Here's the answer. We have to begin with the clarity that in order to accomplish everything our soul came into this world to accomplish, both physically and spiritually, we have to be able to get to the state where our influence goes beyond what is natural and normal. We have to be able to come to the state where we can influence beyond what is natural for an individual to be able to influence.

We need to influence the world, and that is why we desperately need to be constantly pushing to maximize our internal work. And we can influence the world, because we are made up of everything in the world. But we can only influence the world to the degree that we are influencing and maximizing the work of our internal world. That's what this Shabbat is about. The Creator is not mentioned in the beginning of the portion because it's not about the Creator; it's about how we influence all that is outside of us.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

As we approach the portion of *Bamidbar*, it's in our best interest to pay attention to the details, the so-called little things in life. The kabbalists teach that there is no 'small thing' in spiritual terms, for everything we do or say – no matter how observably small – is a seed that has the potential to sprout into a full-grown tree. This week, work on dispelling small bits of negativity that come into your reality and look for the positive seeds ready to grow in your life.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.