

## Parshat Bichukotai

The portion, Bichukotai sets out the covenant between God and Israel. What is the agreement? What is the reason for the agreement? What happens if the people follow the agreement? What happens if they do not follow the agreement?

In the covenant between God and Israel all the requirements and all the punishments are for Israel, because God is much more powerful than Israel.

God states: “If you follow my laws and faithfully observe my commandments, I will grant you rains in the right seasons, so that the earth will yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit. You shall eat your fill of bread and dwell safely in your land. I will grant you peace in the land...

God promises that wild beasts will not attack and the Israelites will always win their battles.

Then God states the “why” of the covenant...the reason that the Israelites should obey: “I will be your God, and you shall be My people. I God am your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt.”

“BUT...if you break my covenant, I will do this to you: I will cause misery for you-illness and fever...and...your enemies will eat your crops. Your foes will rule over you. You shall flee even when no one is chasing you.”

God tells Israel that the punishment for not obeying will be seven times worse than the blessing. Rains will not fall, wild beasts will attack, the earth will not give forth fruit. The list of punishment goes on.

The Rabbis of the Talmud spoke of 613 commandments in the Torah. 247 of these commandments are mentioned in the book of Vayikra, nearly half.

The last laws of Bichukotai talk about how to turn sacrifices into funds to support the Temple.

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The book of Vayirka ends with the simple statement: “These are the commandments that God gave Moses for the Israelites on Mount Sinai.” We have seen, that this small book is not so simple after all. Almost all of the laws contained in it are for the priests.