בס"ד

Parsha Knowledge

TORAH THOUGHTS, STORIES, AND INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

פָּרָשַׁת בְּחֻקֹּתַי

כ"ד אייר תשפ"ד

Year 3 Issue 32

Parsha Sponsor: The Kenigsberg Family

אִם־בְּחֻקֹּתַי...

"If you follow…" (Vayikra 26:3)

In this week's Parsha, The Torah promises that if the Jewish people en masse keep the Torah, they will be blessed with every conceivable blessing. They will be blessed with prosperity, security, and satiety. Immediately after the pasuk (26:6) says, Hashem promises, I'll give you peace. There is a question here: You have every blessing under the sun - you every imaginable blessing. What's this blessing of peace? Why is it so important? I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita that Rashi and the Malbim say: *Im ein shalom ein klum* - If there is no peace, then there is nothing. You can have all the money and all the affluence. You can have all the prestige and all the honor - but if you don't have peace within your family, if you don't have peace with your fellow Jews then all the blessings in the world are worthless! If we don't have peace with one another all the blessings are pointless.

I would like to share an incredible story to illustrate this point: In a multi-family building in Yerushalayim, the families living there got along very well. One day, the Katz family, who lived on the first floor, decided to build a fence in the backyard to prevent robbers from entering. When their neighbors, the Friedman family who lived upstairs, found out, they were very upset. They feared that the fence would make it easier for a robber to climb up to the second floor and enter through their window.

The Friedmans said, "We don't give permission." The Katz family responded, "It's our property, and we're allowed to do whatever we want." This disagreement escalated into a heated argument, and these best friends stopped talking to one another. They

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began bad-mouthing each other. A major Machlokes ensued. One day, the Horowitz family from the third floor stepped in. They approached the contractor and asked him to build two fences: one for the first floor and one for the second floor. They reasoned that if the Friedmans were worried about security, a second fence would protect them too. The Horowitz family even offered to pay for both fences. Peace was restored in the building, and the Friedmans and Katz's became friends again.

The story doesn't end there. A year and a half later, it was Chanukah. The Horowitz family lit their menorahs and left the children in the apartment while they went out. Despite taking precautions, something terrible happened. One of the menorahs fell, and the apartment caught fire. Flames engulfed the room, and the children were trapped. The smoke was overwhelming, and the kids couldn't breathe. The fire department arrived but couldn't find a way into the apartment. Suddenly, someone shouted to the firefighters, "Wait! There's a way in!" They led the firefighters to the back of the building, where there was a fence on the first floor and another on the second floor. The firefighters climbed the fences and reached the third-floor window, managing to save all the children. Each child survived.

We know where those fences came from. When the Katz and the Friedman families were fighting, the Horowitz family paid for two fences, one for each of them. Little did the Horowitz family know that by promoting peace, they were saving their own children's lives. The lesson to us is as follows: We must ask ourselves what we will do to increase peace in our lives. We must ask ourselves what we will do to be more peaceful with our family members, and of course with our fellow Jews – our brothers and sisters. You never know - your decision may change your life.

Have a Great Shabbos!

By Aryeh F.

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