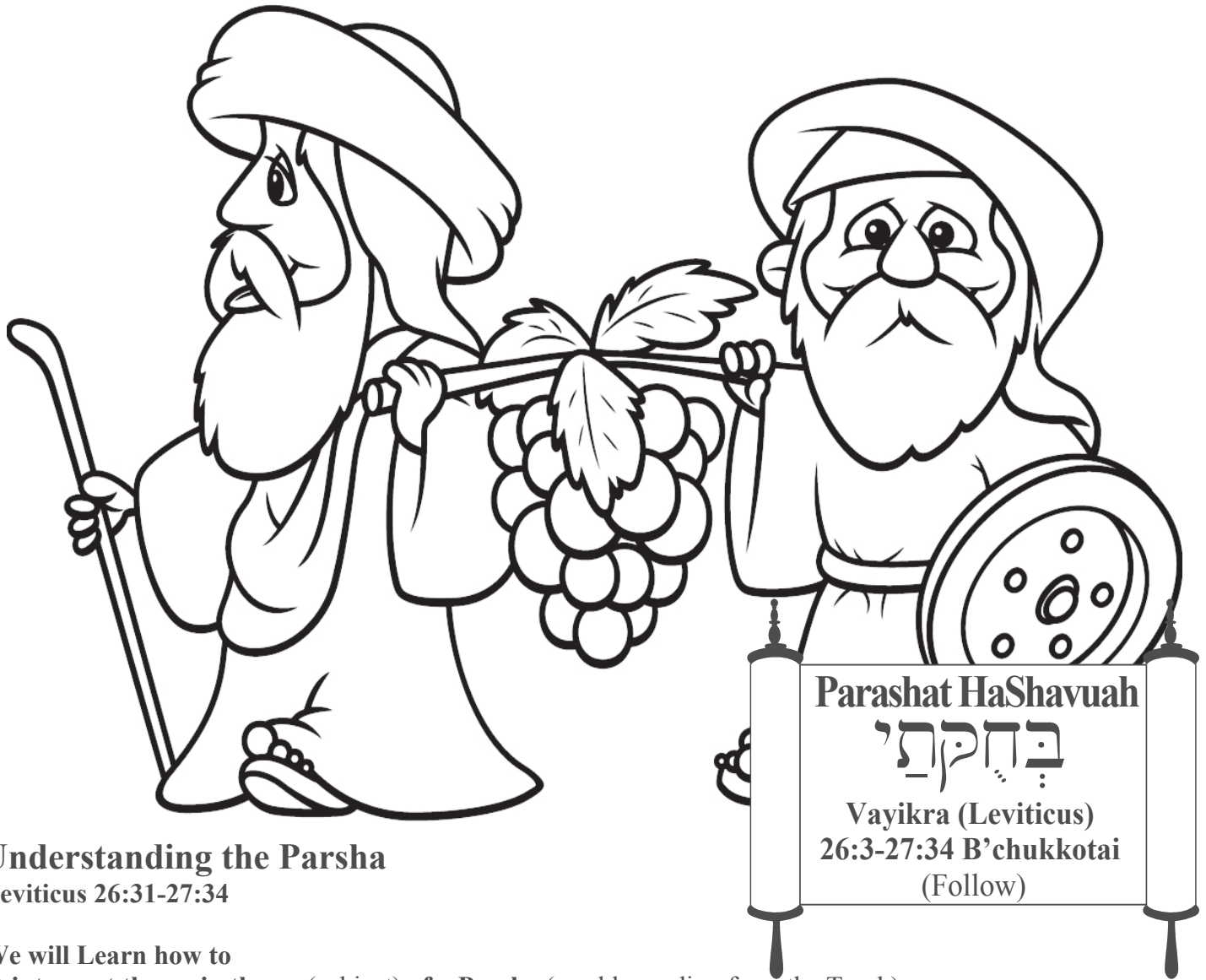




Understanding the Parsha

Leviticus 26:31-27:34

We will Learn how to

- 1) **interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha** (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) **make thematic connections to that Parsha** (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) **learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.**

Normally, Parashat Behar and B'chukkotai are read together as one sidra (portion). In leap years—where an extra month has been added—these two portions are read separately. Because of this, we should expect these two sidras to be closely related. This week, we will look at the first Parsha P'tuchah by making many thematic connections. The sum of these connections will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of this Parsha and the sidra as a whole. By making thematic connections to other portions of Scripture, we can receive new understanding and knowledge from a passage that will blossom in hidden wisdom.

Read Leviticus 26:4. In what two ways will the earth respond to rain sent from Adonai?

The l land will give of its produce and the trees will produce their f fruit.

Can you think of a place earlier in Scripture that is thematically connected to earth/land, plants and trees?

Genesis 1:9-13, the first living things, plants that grow from the earth/ land, and trees that produce fruit, were created!

That's right! This verse is clearly thematically connected to the creation account in Genesis. In Genesis, **Adonai blessed the land** so that it would produce vegetation. **AND, He blessed the trees to produce fruit**. These will be the two primary sources of blessing for Am Yisrael should they obey Adonai's statutes and judgments.

Read Leviticus 26:6-9. How is Leviticus 26:6 thematically related to Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden)?

Adonai promises peace in Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). This peace is between Am Yisrael and other nations and between Am Yisrael and the wild beasts. In Gan Eden, man enjoyed peaceful relations (Adam and Chava) and there was peace between man and the animals.

It seems as if the Torah is trying to draw our attention to the peaceful relations that existed between man, God, the animals and the creation **before** sin entered the picture! The Torah is painting a picture of the ultimate potential of Am Yisrael. If they **obey** Adonai's statutes and judgments, their society will be one similar to Gan Eden, where peace and harmony existed throughout the creation!

How is Leviticus 26:9 thematically connected to Gan Eden?

The phrase, "I will make you

fruitful and

increase you," is a clear hint to the Garden when Adonai blessed the plants, animals and man, commanding them to be fruitful and multiply...



Read Leviticus 26:12. How is this verse thematically connected to Gan Eden?

In Genesis 3:8, it states that Adonai walked in Gan Eden!

Once again, the Torah hints to Gan Eden by using the phrase, "I will walk among you."

Read Leviticus 26:6, pay attention to the phrase concerning the sword. This first Parsha P'tuchah is a promise of blessing for obedience. If you read further in the sidra, you will see that curses are promised for disobedience. One of the curses is that the sword will come after Am Yisrael (Leviticus 26:33).

What is the thematic connection between the curse of the sword (for disobedience) and Gan Eden?

After Adam and Chava (Eve) sinned, Adonai placed cherubs with flaming swords at the east of Gan Eden to prevent man from returning to eat from the Tree of Life!

We have seen a few themes connecting this Parsha to the Genesis story of creation. The Torah wants for us to see this (there are even more connections to Genesis in the remainder of the sidra). So, we know that the story of the creation will

help us understand the true/full meaning of this sidra, especially this first Parsha. Let's return to Leviticus 26:3, focusing on the first half of the verse.

Since most of this Parsha is thematically related to Adam and Chava in Gan Eden, how do you think we should connect Leviticus 26:3 to the events in Gan Eden? Write your ideas below:

There are so many thematic connections, we can see that Adonai's offer ("If you will follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them") to Am Yisrael is a lot like His offer to Adam and Chava in Gan Eden when He set before them the choice of Life (Tree of Life) and Death (Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil)!

To Sum Things Up

In Parashat Yitro, we said that Exodus 6:6-8

6 Therefore say to the children of Israel: "I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD."

contained an overview of Adonai's plan for fulfilling the promises to the Patriarchs. Right now we are at the fourth "I Will" — I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Once we start the book of Numbers we will be at the fifth "I Will"— And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At this point in Am Yisrael's redemption, they have received the **instructions** that will make them a Holy Nation—Adonai's People—and they are about to journey to the Promised Land to fulfill their Divine destiny.

The Torah uses many themes connecting Am Yisrael's calling to the calling of Adam, the first man. Just as Adam was the first man, called to obedience and called to set an example for his descendants, so likewise, Am Yisrael have been called to obedience as the first nation to be called the people of Adonai. In other words, thematically, the Scripture teaches us Adonai dwelled with man until sin entered the world (Genesis 1-3). Adonai tried to encourage mankind to seek Him for restoration; however, mankind continually failed to reach out to Him (Cain, the generation of the flood, and the tower of Babel, Genesis 4-11). Realizing that mankind—as a whole—would not seek restoration with Adonai, He chose Abraham and His descendants to be a model nation so that they could be a witness of the one and only true God, leading the nations to repentance and faith in Adonai (Genesis 12). With this as a background, we can now understand that Adonai is appointing Am Yisrael just as He appointed Adam in Genesis!

Write the thematic connections for these concepts:

- 1. Adam = A Y
Am Yisrael
- 2. Gan Eden = E Y (the Land of Israel)
Eretz Yisrael
- 3. The choice between the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil = Am Yisrael's choice whether or not to O be the statutes and commandments.

To further strengthen the thematic connection between Adam and Am Yisrael, read Hosea 6:7.

Hosea 6:7—But like A ^{אדם} they transgressed the covenant; There they dealt treacherously with Me.

Can you see where Adonai compares Am Yisrael to Adam!?

Could you imagine what would have happened if Am Yisrael had fully obeyed Adonai in these matters? Stop and think of the awesome, supernatural testimony Am Yisrael would have had to the nations. The Shekhinah presence of Adonai would have rested upon the Temple for all to see. The nations of the world would have been able to see a replica of Gan Eden whenever they traveled to Eretz Yisrael! Imagine an agrarian (a-gar-i-an, agriculture) society where the people don't work every seventh year, yet the land produces enough for them to easily survive for three years! Imagine the testimony to the nations every Yovel (Year of Jubilee) when the nation would have not worked for two complete years (the Shemittah of the 49th year and the Yovel of the 50th year)! Truly, Am Yisrael would have been able to represent Adonai to the nations with **power and strength**. Although this did not happen, we know it will happen one day when Messiah comes. During His reign Am Yisrael WILL fulfill their prophetic destiny to be a light to the nations!

As we state at the end of each book of the Torah...

חֲזַק חֲזַק וְנַתְחַזֵּק! חֲזַק חֲזַק חֲזַק חֲזַק

Hazak, hazak, v'nit'chazek!

Be Strong! Be Strong! And May We Be Strengthened!

