

בס"ד
כ"א אייר תש"פ
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פרשת בהר-בחקותי

At the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai, Hashem says to Moshe, "אם-בְּחַקְתִּי, תֵּלְכוּ."¹ One question that puzzles many of the Rishonim is, "What exactly are the חוקים that Bnei Yisrael are being commanded to follow in this context?" The Baal HaTurim² explains that the acronym of this phrase is אבּת; this is a commandment for Bnei Yisrael to follow in the ways of the Avos and have Yiras Hashem. While one may initially think this is referring to the fulfillment of mitzvos, says Rashi,³ the *pasuk* continues with the phrase "וְאֵת מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ," so it would be a superfluous redundancy to teach the importance of fulfillment of the commandments twice in one *pasuk*. Rather, this is referring to עמילות, exertion in learning Torah. The *Gur Aryeh*⁴ provides a further elaboration this answer, saying that the verb of "תלכו" is specifically needed for Bechukosai, because walking involves toil and exertion, just as Torah does. Moreover, adds the *Toras Kohanim*, this comes to teach that Hashem craves for Bnei Yisrael to be עמל בתורה, and desires to watch as His nation endeavors to learn His Torah.

However, there is another big question on this phrase: Why is בחקותי written in plural form? The *Or HaChaim*⁵ gives three possible answers. One possible suggestion is that it is an allusion to two things: תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה. Another answer is that it is referring to the day and night, and is reiterating the importance of being קובע עיתים during both periods. The *Or HaChaim* also explains that "חקותי" refers to the dual obligations involving Torah, including the concept of "למוד וללמד" - the concept that a person must both learn Torah and teach it to others as well.

There is a Gemara in *Avodah Zara*⁶ which says that contextually, the word "ואם" in this *pasuk* is a לשון תחנונים, a term of supplication; Hashem is simply hoping that Bnei Yisrael will adhere to the Torah. Evidently, there is a strong yearning from Hashem for us to at least associate ourselves with Torah, and if we can, strive to acquire it to the best of our abilities. As we approach Shavuot, the anniversary of our acquisition of the Torah draws closer, reminding us of how fortunate we are to have the Torah in our lives. Thanks to the advancement of modern technology, the number of avenues from which we can learn Torah has proliferated at a dazzling pace, and there are an unprecedented amount of ways to acquire Torah and toil in it. Hopefully, we can take full advantage of these opportunities, and provide Hashem with the joy He seeks by following His statutes, having Yiras Hashem, and immersing ourselves in His Torah.

¹ ויקרא כו:ג

² בעל הטורים ויקרא כו:ג ד"ה אם בחקותי תלכו

³ רש"י ויקרא כו:ג ד"ה אם בחקותי תלכו

⁴ גור אריה ויקרא כו:ג ד"ה אם בחקותי תלכו

⁵ אור החיים ויקרא כו:ג ד"ה חקתי

⁶ עבודה זרה ה.