

Going Beyond the Natural

In this week's Parsha, Eikev, we have the second paragraph of the Shema. In it, Hashem says, "And I will give your land's rain in its time."¹ Rashi² explains the words, "and I will give your land's rain," as Hashem saying to the Jewish People, "You did what was upon you, I will also do what is upon Me." In other words, because we do what Hashem wants, He will do His part, by giving us the rain we need.

Rashi generally comes to explain difficulties in the simple meaning of the Torah. What is the difficulty in this verse that Rashi is clarifying?

In a previous Parsha, Bechukosai, Hashem says, "And I will give their rain, in their time."³ The question on our verse is, what is the difference between that blessing of rain in Bechukosai and in our Parsha? Rashi explains that over here, as explained, it means, "You did what was upon you, I will also do what is upon Me" – you did just what was asked of you, so I will keep my end of the bargain and send the natural rain that you need. However, in Bechukosai, the blessing is beyond the natural, as we see in the continuation of the blessing: "...and the tree of the field will give its fruit."⁴ Rashi⁵ explains that it is talking about plain trees that don't normally give fruit. In the future, they, too, will give fruit, which is not natural, but rather above the natural.

Why is the blessing in Bechukosai greater? This is because, as Rashi⁶ explains, the words, *Im Bechukosai tailaichu* – "if you will go in my statutes..."⁷ – means that you should toil in Torah. Toil means going beyond your norm, putting in effort that is beyond your nature, so that the blessing Hashem gives is also beyond nature.

How does Rashi know that in our Parsha, the blessing is within nature and not above nature? Because the verse says, "and I will give your Land's rain" – the rain is the Land's, and land is within nature. In Bechukosai, it says, "and I will give *their* rain," meaning, the Jewish People's rain, and Jewish People are above nature, so the rain referred to there is also above nature.

How does this blessing of rain manifest itself? In our Parsha, Rashi⁸ explains the word *B'ito*, "in its time," to mean "at night, so you won't be bothered."⁹ In other words, you won't be bothered by the rain during the day when you are working in the field, but the rain will be the natural amount necessary for the fields to produce its crop. In Bechukosai, Rashi¹⁰ explains the word *B'itam*, "in *their* time," to mean at the time that it is uncommon for people to go out, like Shabbos night (Friday night). This means that it will rain one night a week, and with that small amount of rain, the fields will yield their full potential, which is beyond the natural.

So, the blessing in Bechukosai is greater, because our effort is greater.

We need to strive for the greater blessing; it is not enough for us to get by with what comes naturally to us. Hashem expects more from us, to go beyond our nature, to toil in Torah and Mitzvos, to go the extra mile.

In a way, doing just enough, just what is within our nature, is not really an accomplishment. It is when we go beyond our nature that we've truly accomplished something. Hashem wants us to go beyond our nature, and when we do that, He showers us with blessings beyond the natural.¹¹

¹ Devarim, 11:14.

² Rashi to Devarim 11:14. Based on the Sifri Eikev end of Chap. 41.

³ Vayikra, 26:4.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rashi to Vayikra 26:4.

⁶ Rashi to Vayikra 26:3.

⁷ Vayikra, 26:3.

⁸ Rashi to Devarim 11:14.

⁹ Rashi gives a second reason, he says, "Another explanation, B'ito, in its time, on Shabbos night when everyone is found in their homes." However, the rule in Rashi is that his the first answer is the main explanation. For an explanation on why Rashi added the second explanation see *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 19, p. 119.

¹⁰ Rashi to Leviticus 26:4.

¹¹ *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 19, pp. 115–120.

I see this every day as my wife, Dina, goes beyond herself for our family, and to give to others. I used to do a lot for our family, but now, stuck in bed, it has all fallen on her shoulders. It is a daily struggle for her, but she finds a way to do it; through tears and love she supernaturally does it all. I am amazed by her every day. She is a Jewish mother, a miracle, and my hero.

On top of that, she goes all over giving talks, strengthening people, lifting their spirits, and filling them with Emunah and Bitachon (belief and trust in Hashem). What many don't know is that she has terrible stage fright, but she fights through it because she knows that this is what Hashem wants from her. I find that amazing and I am in awe of her.

We all have it in us to go beyond ourselves to do what Hashem wants. He created us to do just that, and when we do, we are doing what we are meant to do, and that brings supernatural blessing.

May our efforts and toil, going beyond the natural, bring the greatest blessing of all: the coming of Moshiach. May he come soon.