

Spiritual Hunger (Behar–Bechukotai)

“The soul is not nourished by what it takes in, but by what it gives.” — Viktor Frankl

Much has been written about nourishment in its most tangible sense, about what sustains the body and allows it to function and thrive. Yet human life is not measured by physical sustenance alone. Beneath the visible rhythms of daily life, there is a quieter longing, a search for meaning, connection, and purpose that can't be satisfied by material means only.

Ibn Ezra, in his commentary on Leviticus 26:26, reflects on hunger as it appears in the Torah's description of distance and blessing. He describes two forms of hunger. One is a hunger that remains even when only a small amount would be enough to satisfy. The other is a hunger that persists despite abundance. In both cases, the experience is not defined by quantity, but by the absence of true satisfaction.

In the language of the Torah, such hunger reflects a deeper dissonance, a gap between what one has and what one feels, between external reality and inner life. The blessing, by contrast, is not merely the presence of provision, but the presence of fulfillment, a state in which what one receives is enough and is experienced as enough.

This suggests that nourishment is not only about intake, but about alignment. When a person is connected to something greater than themselves, when their inner world is attuned to purpose and meaning, the same act of receiving becomes sustaining in a fuller sense. Spiritual awareness does not replace the physical, but deepens it, allowing sustenance to reach beyond the surface.

Behar and Bechukotai, with their themes of cycles, rest, and renewal, point toward this balance. They remind us that a life of blessing is not defined by excess, but by harmony, by a sense that what we are given meets us where we are, and fills what truly needs to be filled.

May we each come to know a life in which nourishment and meaning meet, where what we receive sustains us, and where a deeper sense of wholeness gently takes root.

Shabbat Shalom,

Ben-Tzion

Dedication

To Israel having surplus(!) jet fuel: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-895288>