



## פרשת חוקת-בלק

### "LIKE A LION'S CROUCH – THE PURPOSE OF EXILE"

12 TAMMUZ, 5740-1980

*Free Translation\**

With regard to the imprisonment and liberation, there is an oft repeated question:

Why would God do this? Why must there be an imprisonment first, and only later a redemption? All of the advantages and benefits of the liberation could have come about independently. Why must it come as a result of a period of imprisonment?

The question gets stronger:

During his time in jail, the Rebbe could not accomplish even what was possible before the imprisonment and liberation. Before he was imprisoned, the Rebbe did—in the prevailing conditions—all that he could: Taking full advantage of what the conditions permitted—in fact, even more than they permitted— through self sacrifice and dedication, spreading Torah and Judaism, in addition to his personal study and fulfillment of Mitzvot.

During his time in prison, however, even those possibilities and opportunities were not available.

This is connected with this week's Torah portion, where we read the verse: "They crouch and lie down like a lion and like a leopard, who will lift it." The Ba'al Shem Tov explains, regarding "they crouch and lie down like a lion and like a leopard," "it is stated, a lion does not crouch except to catch its prey."

We see in the nature of a lion that before springing forward to catch its prey, it crouches down. To crouch, the lion lowers itself, lies down, and bends its head and body. This gives it the ability to "catch its prey."

This, explains the Ba'al Shem Tov, is the idea of "seven times a Tzaddik falls down, and rises." The fact that we sometimes see a "low" in the life of a Tzaddik, is in order that he may afterwards rise to a high.

For he cannot reach this height, without having a low beforehand. Just as a lion; in order to "catch its prey" it must first "lie down"—it brings its head and body low, and that gives it the ability to jump up and catch its prey.

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\*) Taken from the Subtitles that appear on the screen



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Through the "Tzaddik falling seven times," through the Tzaddik's allowing himself to descend from his true state—in studying Torah and fulfilling Mitzvot, he descends from his lofty level, empathizing with the person he refines thus enabling him to raise that person. "He descends to *she'ol*—the ditch—and *brings up*," he elevates the person who was in "the ditch."

This elevation is such, that the Tzaddik himself also rises greatly compared to his earlier qualities and level.

This is also one of the explanations given for exile in general. God wanted there to be an exile so that Jews should achieve a higher degree of Divine service, of Torah study and fulfillment of Mitzvot "as You wish"—as it will be in the future, when Moshiach comes.

So why must it be preceded by an exile?

In exile we lack the ability to fulfill many of the commandments. In fact, most of the Mitzvot cannot be fulfilled.

The answer is:

God knows that this is the way in which we can "catch our prey." It is specifically after "God scattered them amongst the nations of the world"—we are "scattered." We are one nation, but "scattered and dispersed amongst the nations."

—It is specifically in this way that we are able to refine the world, one part at a time: "and you will be gathered one by one," until we reach the time when the Holy Temple can be rebuilt. We then merit the Torah's promise, "Israel grows in strength," Jews go from strength to strength in studying Torah and fulfilling its Mitzvot even while still in exile.

Which leads us to go from strength to strength to greet our righteous Moshiach, who will teach Torah to the entire nation. With their increase in Torah, there will also be an increase in Mitzvot—for "great is study since it leads to action"—in our diligence and added care in the fulfillment of Mitzvot, and definitely in their basic fulfillment. May this all happen speedily in our days!

