

Behar-Bechukosai in a Nutshell
(Leviticus 25:1-27:34)

On the mountain of Sinai, G-d communicates to Moses the laws of the Sabbatical year: every seventh year, all work on the land should cease, and its produce becomes free for the taking for all, man and beast.

Seven Sabbatical cycles are followed by a fiftieth year—the Jubilee year, on which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants are set free, and all ancestral estates in the Holy Land that have been sold revert to their original owners. Additional laws governing the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against fraud and usury, are also given.

G-d promises that if the people of Israel will keep His commandments, they will enjoy material prosperity and dwell secure in their homeland. But He also delivers a harsh “rebuke,” warning of the exile, persecution and other evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant with Him.

(continued next column)



It is a mitzvah to accept the Shabbos early; we are commanded to add from the mundane to the holy and commence our observance of the holy day before sunset. Similarly, we must cease working the land before the Sabbatical year begins. This also applies with regard to the seventh millennium. That era will be inaugurated before its chronological time.

– The Rebbe

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Nevertheless, “Even when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away; nor will I ever abhor them, to destroy them and to break My covenant with them; for I am the L-rd their G-d.”

The Parshah concludes with the rules on how to calculate the values of different types of pledges made to G-d. ❖



Tehillim - Psalms

**Join us this Shabbos morning
May 8 at 8:30 AM for
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.**

**This week's Tehillim reading is
dedicated to
a refuah sh'laima
for
Avrom Boruch ben Matile.**

***This week's Kiddush is
Sponsored by
Isaac Schwartz in
commemoration of his
mother's first
Yahrtzeit***

Halachic Zmanim

**Shabbos, May 8, 2021
Daylight Savings Time**

Earliest Tallis 4:41 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:17 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:30 PM
Plag Hamincha 6:36 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 8:32 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – May 7 / Iyar 25

Candle Lighting 7:42 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – May 8 / Iyar 26

Tehillim 8:30 am

Shacharis..... 10:00 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:50 am

Rabbi Drasha..... 11:15 am

Mincha 7:45 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 8:05 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 8:47 pm

Latest morning Shema is now **9:17 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm

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Chassidic Masters

Powerful Insights From the Rebbe

Compiled by Mordechai Rubin

1. The Era of Shabbos

Parshas Behar begins by describing the mitzvah of the Sabbatical year. Just as every week, we rest on the seventh day, in the land of Israel, every seventh year, the land is left to lie fallow.

This pattern is also reflected in the pattern of history as a whole. There are to be seven millennia in the history of man. The seventh, like the Shabbos and like the Sabbatical year, will be an era of peace and understanding.

It is a mitzvah to accept the Shabbos early; we are commanded to add from the mundane to the holy and commence our observance of the holy day before sunset. Similarly, we must cease working the land before the Sabbatical year begins. This also applies with regard to the seventh millennium. That era will be inaugurated before its chronological time.

This points to the importance of our present age. In terms of the total scheme of history, it's late Friday afternoon; we are already in the final quarter of the millennium. It is short moments before Shabbos, as it were. No wonder the world is beginning to look a little Shabbosdik.

Let's take an honest look at our world: We are in the midst of an information revolution. Resources of knowledge that have been gathered for centuries are now

only a few strokes of a keyboard away from any person with a PC. Instant communication from one end of the earth to another has transformed our world into a global village. We are producing enough food to feed all of mankind; it's only political strife that is preventing hunger from being eliminated. The search for spirituality has become so much a part of our lives that chroniclers of the major trends leading to the millennium place it among the top 5.

Today, when a person speaks about redemption, his words resound with the power possessed by an idea whose time has come. We can precipitate the coming of Mashiach by anticipating the spiritual awareness that he will introduce. By living in the spirit of the Redemption, we make that Redemption a reality not only in our lives, but also within the world at large. ❖

2. Engraving vs Writing

Parshas Bechukosai opens: Im bechukosai teileichu, "If you proceed in My statutes."

The Rabbis interpret this verse to be referring to the study of Torah. This, however, presents a difficulty because of the term Bechukosai. The root of that term, chok, refers to mitzvot whose motivating principle transcends understanding. Torah study, however, involves comprehension and understanding, giving man the opportunity to intellectually grasp and identify with G-d's truth.

There is, however, another way of interpreting the term Bechukosai, seeing it as related to the word chakikah, meaning "engraving."

According to this understanding, the implication of referring to Torah study with the word Bechukosai is that we must labor in the study of Torah until the words are engraved within us.

The advantage of engraving over writing is not merely that engraved letters are united with the surface unto which they are carved, for this is also true with regard to written letters. Although letters written on parchment are not part of the parchment itself, they become one with the parchment.

Instead, the advantage of engraving is that the letters are not an independent entity. Their existence cannot be separated from the object onto which they have been engraved; the two form one integral whole.

This is the lesson the term Bechukosai communicates with regard to the study of Torah. The intent is not merely that a Jew who studies the Torah should be united with the subject matter. Instead, the phrase teaches that a person must engrave the Torah he studies within his very being. Studying in a manner resembling writing — in which two separate entities come together — is not sufficient. Instead, one must study in a manner that resembles engraving; the student ceases to see himself as an independent entity, rather, his entire existence is the Torah. ❖

3. Era of Redemption

This Torah reading contains the verse: "I will remove beasts of prey from the land."

(Continued next page)

Powerful Insights From the Rebbe (continued)

The commentaries interpret this as a reference to the era of Mashiach, because in the present gestalt, there have been and always will be beasts of prey.

Among the concepts derived from this verse: There is a difference of opinion among our Sages if there will be outright miracles in the era of Mashiach or not. The Rabbis who maintain that there will be such miracles use this verse as a proof text to prove their assertion, for the removal of beasts of prey is certainly a miracle that transcends the limits of nature. Others, however, maintain that the verse is merely an analogy: the beasts of prey represent the gentile nations that prey on the Jewish

people. The intent is that in the era of Mashiach, they will dwell peacefully with the Jews.

The conception which understands this as a prophecy of miracles is a subject of expanded discussion. What exactly will that miracle be? One view maintains that the beasts of prey will cease to exist. Another maintains that the beasts of prey will continue to exist, but their predatory nature will cease, as the verse states: "The lion will lie down with the lamb." This represents the ultimate perfection of the era of Mashiach: that the undesirable entities will be transformed into good, not merely banished from existence. ❖

From Our Sages

When you come into the land which I give you, the land shall rest a sabbath unto G-d (Leviticus 25:2)

Taken on its own, this verse seems to imply that "a sabbath unto G-d" is to be observed immediately upon entering the Land. But in practice, when the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel they first worked the land for six years, and only then observed the seventh year as the Shemittah (sabbatical year)—as, indeed, the Torah clearly instructs in the following verses.

The Torah is telling us that a Shemittah is to both precede and follow our six years of labor: to follow it on the calendar, but to also precede it—if not in actuality, then conceptually.

We find a similar duality in regard to the weekly seven-day cycle. The weekly Shabbat has a twofold role: a) It is the day "from which all successive days are blessed"—the source of material and spiritual sustenance for the week to follow. b) It is the "culmination" of the week—the day on which the week's labors and efforts are harvested and sublimated, and their inner spiritual significance is realized and brought to light.

But if every week must have a Shabbat to "bless" it, what about the week of creation itself? In actuality, G-d began His creation of existence—including the creation of time—on Sunday, which is therefore called the "First Day." But our sages tell us that there was a primordial Shabbat which preceded creation—a Shabbat existing not in time but in the mind of G-d, as a vision of a completed and perfected world.

The spiritual harvest of a Shabbat or Shemittah can be achieved only after a "work-week" of dealing with the material world and developing its resources. But it must be preceded and predicated upon "a sabbath unto G-d" that occupies the fore of our consciousness and pervades our every deed.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Haftorah for Behar-Bechukosai in a Nutshell

Jeremiah 16:19-17:14

The haftorah discusses the punishments that await those who disregard G-d's law, and the blessings that are the lot of those who follow the Creator's wishes. This follows the theme of this week's Torah reading which details at length the blessings and curses.

The prophet Jeremiah rebukes the people of Israel for their idolatrous ways and for not having faith in G-d. He conveys G-d's words of wrath towards those who do not put their trust in Him — foretelling exile as their punishment — and of blessings for those who do.

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man and relies on mortal flesh for his strength, and whose heart turns away from the G-d. He shall be like a lone tree in the desert, and will not see when good comes, and will dwell on parched land in the desert, on salt-sodden soil that is not habitable. Blessed is the man who trusts in the G-d, to whom G-d will be his trust. For he shall be like a tree planted by the water, and which spreads its roots out into a stream, so it will not be affected when heat comes, and its leaves shall be green, and in the year of drought will not be anxious, neither shall it cease from bearing fruit."

The haftorah ends with the following poignant verses: "G-d who is the source of the hopes of Israel, all that forsake You shall be shamed, and they who turn away from me shall be marked out on the earth that they have forsaken G-d, the source of living waters. Heal me, O G-d, then shall I be healed; help me, then I shall be helped, for You are my praise!" ❖

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Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

