



ב"ה

Parshas Behar in a Nutshell

(Leviticus 25:1-26:2)

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.

Behar also contains additional laws governing the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against fraud and usury. ❖

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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.

-- The Rebbe

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If you sell aught to your fellow, or buy aught from your fellow's hand, you shall not defraud one another (25:14) . . . You shall not defraud one another; but you shall fear your G-d (25:17)

The first verse refers to financial fraud. The second verse forbids verbal fraud—speaking hurtful words or giving bad advice. That is why the second verse adds “but you shall fear your G-d,” lest a person say: Who will know that my intention was to do him evil?

-- (Torat Kohanim; Rashi)

*Thank You to:
The Baal Korei, and
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Join us each weekday morning Mon-Fri as we delve into the mysteries of Chassidic concepts. 5:55 am, followed immediately by Shacharis.

**Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, May 21, 2022
Daylight Savings Time**

Earliest Tallis 4:26 AM
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:11 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) . 1:31 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 6:46 PM
Earliest Evening Shema.... 8:46 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 20 / Iyar 19

Candle Lighting 7:54 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – May 21 / Iyar 20

Shacharis10:00 am*

Torah Reading..... 11:00 am

Kiddush..... 12:00 pm

Mincha 8:00 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 8:20 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 9:01 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:11 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

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

This week's kiddush is sponsored by Isaac and Eileen Schwartz in commemoration of the 2nd yearzeit of Isaac's mother

Chassidic Masters

The Power of What

By Lazer Gurkow

Farmers in the Land of Israel are instructed by the Torah to work their land for six years and to let it lie fallow on the seventh. But when all the fields in a country are permitted to lie fallow for an entire year, does the nation not face a very real risk of famine?

In the following verses, the Torah addresses this concern:

If you say: "What will I eat in the seventh year? . . ." I will command My blessing upon the sixth year, and it will yield produce for a three-year period.

When the Torah offers an answer, it usually leaves us to deduce the question for ourselves. In this case, the Torah chooses to articulate the question. Is there anything unique about this particular question?

Societal or Divine Morality

Society at large lives by a moral code. Governments legislate laws against immoral acts such as murder and theft, and encourage ethical behavior such as charity and modesty. If you ask why murder is forbidden, the curt response would probably be, "Because taking the life of another is just plain wrong."

If you persist and ask, "But why is it wrong?" the answer may very well be, "Because it is!" If you further ask what makes it so, you can expect to hear something like "If you don't sense it intuitively, then there is no point in trying to explain it to you."

This would indeed be the correct answer. Murder is wrong because society intuitively senses the immoral nature of this act. Thus, Al Gore, former vice president of the United States, commented that "democratic laws derive their moral authority from the national consent of the people."

Somehow, a Jew knows that moral authority is more profound than the mere consent of a nation.

If you ask a Jew why murder is wrong, the answer is, "It's one of the Ten Commandments!" If you persist and ask why it is one of the Ten Commandments, the answer is, "Do you expect to research and understand the divine?"

Of course, the Jew also intuitively senses that murder is wrong. But to a Jew, there is more to it than mere intuition. If G-d ordained this prohibition as a divine commandment, then it must be immoral for reasons beyond human intuition.

Beyond the Human Mind

Why does a Jew believe that divine commandments are beyond human intuition?

The mitzvot are generally divided into two categories: a) ethical commandments that are easily understood, such as the prohibition of theft; b) inexplicable decrees that defy human comprehension, such as the mitzvah of the red heifer.

The ethical commandments and the inexplicable decrees enjoy a symbiotic relationship, each affecting the way we view the other. The ethical commandments demonstrate that it is possible to

gain a semblance of understanding of G-d's commandments. The decrees demonstrate that in the final analysis, G-d's wisdom exceeds ours.

If we were only given the decrees, then our lack of understanding would have alienated us from the mitzvot. We would be unable to internalize the commandments, and thus be prevented from developing an affinity and enthusiasm for them.

On the other hand, if we were only given the ethical commandments, we would have assumed that all divinity is within the grasp of human comprehension. Naturally, this would have caused us to dismiss all theistic notions that are beyond our understanding.

The inexplicable decrees teach the Jew to view even the easily understood mitzvot through the prism of divine wisdom, recognizing that even ethical commandments such as the prohibition of murder are beyond our cognitive or intuitive grasp.

Two Questions, One Word

This is the meaning of the question asked by the wise son (as told in the Passover haggadah): "What (mah) are the . . . decrees and laws that G-d our L-rd has commanded you?"⁴ The wise son understands that even the easily understood "laws" have dimensions that defy human comprehension, and so he asks to understand the true meaning of all the mitzvah categories, not only the decrees, but the laws too.

(Continued next page)

We now return to the question posed in our original verse: "If you shall say: What (mah) shall we eat in the seventh year?" The only other questions that the Torah introduces in this manner are those of the four sons of the haggadah. It is therefore possible to assume that this question is also asked by one of the four sons. Which of the four sons asks this question?

This question is cited in the Torah only after all the laws of the Shemittah year are first outlined. We thus deduce that this question is asked by the wise son, who has studied the entire subject and who is left with but one question.

The wise son's questions are quoted twice in the Torah: "What is the meaning?" and "What shall we eat?" Though the questions seem unrelated, there is one word that connects them: the Hebrew word "mah."

The Meaning of What

The Jewish people are accustomed to this word. We are forever asking: What is the reason? What is the meaning? Like the wise son, we ask this question of all commandments and all occurrences, even those we supposedly understand. We realize that in the final analysis, our comprehension doesn't capture the divine thought process.

"What" is not only a question; it is also an answer. Because in the end, the question must be allowed to stand unanswered.

We ask G-d for His true reason or meaning, but we don't claim entitlement to His answer. We plumb the heavenly secrets to the extent that the human mind permits, but the rest is humbly left to G-d.

The word what thus demonstrates profound humility. We ask it not in quarrel, but in acceptance. We ask it not in arrogance, but in submission. We ask it not in confusion, but in serene faith.

The words "What shall we eat in the seventh year" are not a question as much as they are a statement. We don't know what the Sabbatical year will bring, but we are also not concerned about a famine. We humbly and confidently place our trust in G-d.

We can now understand why the Torah uses the words "if you say" rather than "if you ask." This is not a question as much as it is a statement of fact. We don't know what we will eat, but we trust that we will eat. (It is interesting to note that the haggadah also uses the same expression: "The wise son, what does he say?" rather than "what does he ask?")

The Torah assures us that G-d will not remain indebted to us if we approach this mitzvah with the humility prescribed by the word mah, "what." "He will command his blessing upon the sixth year, and it will yield enough produce for all three years." ❖

Haftorah for Parshas Behar in a nutshell

Jeremiah 32:6-22

This week's haftorah discusses the purchase of a field by Jeremiah, echoing one of the themes of this week's Torah portion—the purchase and redemption of real estate.

Jeremiah was confined in King Zedekiah's royal compound for having prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Jewish people. There, G-d revealed Himself to the prophet and informs him that he will be approached by his cousin Hanamel with an offer to purchase his ancestral lands. G-d instructs Jeremiah to accept this offer.

Indeed, Hanamel arrived in the compound with the offer, and Jeremiah accepted. Money was transferred and a document of purchase was penned in the presence of witnesses. The prophet then gave the deed to his disciple Baruch son of Neriah for safekeeping, and instructed him to store it in an earthenware vessel where it will remain for many years.

Jeremiah then conveys G-d's message, the symbolism inherent in this transaction: "So says the L-rd of Hosts, the G-d of Israel: 'Houses and fields and vineyards shall be purchased again in this land.'" Thus conveying a message of hope even on the eve of destruction and exile. Yes the Jews would be exiled, but they would also eventually be returned to their land.

The haftorah ends with the prophet's prayer to and exaltation of G-d. ❖

From Our Sages – Behar

G-d spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying . . . (Leviticus 25:1)

What has the Sabbatical year to do with Mount Sinai? Were not all commandments given on Sinai? But the verse wishes to tell us: just as with the Sabbatical year both its general principle and its minute details were ordained on Mount Sinai, so, too, was it with all the commandments—their general principles as well as their minute details were ordained on Mount Sinai.

-- (Toras Kohanim; Rashi)

Rabbi Ishmael says: The general principles of the Torah were given at Sinai, and the details [when G-d spoke to Moses] in the Tent of Meeting.

Rabbi Akiva says: The general principles and the details were given at Sinai. They were then repeated in the Tent of Meeting, and enjoined a third time in the Plains of Moab (i.e., in Moses' narrative in the book of Deuteronomy).

-- (Talmud, Chagigah 6a–b)

You shall not defraud one another (Leviticus 25:14)

Legally, it is only forbidden to defraud one's fellow. But a chassid must go beyond the letter of the law, and take care not to delude himself, either.

-- (Rabbi Bunim of Pshischa)

For they are My servants, whom I took out of the land of Egypt; they cannot be sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:42)

At the time of the Exodus, G-d made freedom the inherent and eternal state of the Jew. From that point on, no power or force on earth can subvert our intrinsic freedom.

-- (Maharal) ❖

The Paterson Shul @Seniors Tower of Paterson located at 510 E. 27th Street/Paterson will have a Shavuot Minyan on Monday, June 6 (second day of Shavuot) at 9:00 a.m.

This is a very important time to help make the Minyan.
Please email: JerrySchranz@Gmail.com for additional info.

With COVID restrictions lifted for masks, they are only required when entering/exiting the apartment complex. For more info visit: www.PatersonShul.org ❖

שבת שלום גוט שבת!



Good Shabbos to all!