



THANK YOU HASHEM For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Behar-Bechukosai

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לילות רפואה שלמה מלכה בת רחל, מיכאל בן שולמית, יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה ואברתם יחודה בן שרה הרבקה

HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

אם-בְּחֻקֵי תֵלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם:

If you follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments to do them...

THE TZADDIKIM TEACH that while an angel is referred to as an "Omeid", a being which stands, man is called "Mehaleich", his nature is to walk, to move, to proceed. Unlike angels which are static beings, man alone has the ability to surpass the circumstances of his condition and rise endlessly, to dizzying heights. It is only man, who, subject to the realities of time and space, has the ability to journey through life on an endless quest for greatness and closeness to his Creator. Only he can dare to dream of levels beyond anything the angels could ever imagine. The Berditchover tzaddik teaches that one of the most effective ways to ensure that we exist in a perpetual state of growth is to recognize our ever-present ability to choose greatness and constantly yearn for a higher level. This yearning for elevation will grant a person the strength to overcome the obstacles along the path. Having secured an unwavering commitment to a "why", he will be able to achieve any "how". The Torah values holy yearning so greatly that if a person yearns for a mitzvah and is ultimately unable to actualize it, Hashem considers it as if he had completed it, for had he not been prevented by a factor beyond his control, we assume this Jew would have overcome any lesser barrier and completed the holy act. The Kedushas Levi sees these ideas hinted to in the opening lines of our parsha. "Im b'chukosai

THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
IS WAITING TO SING
THE SONG OF SHABBOS

- Reb Shlomo Carlebach

teileichu": A Jew must see to it that he is a "mehaleich", one who constantly proceeds from level to level. **"V'es mitzvosai tishmoru"**: The word "shomer" can mean to guard, but it can also mean to yearn for something. These words hint to the necessity of the *mehaleich* to yearn for the levels of holiness above his current position. **"V'asisem osam**: If a person will actualize his potential to surpass his circumstances and set out on a journey of growth filled with yearning for a deeper bond to the Master of the world, it is considered, on a certain level, as if he has already achieved his goal. 🕎

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 🕎 Hashem speaks to Moshe on Har Sinai and teaches him the laws of *Shemittah*. Every seventh year, all work on the land should cease. Its produce becomes free for the taking for both people and animals.
- 🕎 Seven *Shemittah* cycles are followed by a fiftieth year of *Yovel* during which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants are set free, and all ancestral estates in Eretz Yisrael that have been sold revert to their original owners. Laws are also given regarding the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against cheating, interest, and overcharging.
- 🕎 Hashem promises that if klal Yisrael will keep His commandments, they will enjoy material prosperity and dwell secure in their homeland. But He also delivers a harsh "rebukey," warning of evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant with Him. Nevertheless, Hashem affirms that, come what may, He will never break His covenant with the Jewish nation.
- 🕎 The parshah concludes with laws regarding how to calculate the values of different types of pledges made to Hashem.

P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

WHILE MUCH OF parshas Behar deals with the laws of *Yovel* and *Shemittah*, it closes with warnings against *ribbis*, (interest) *ona'ah* (monetary deception), and *gezel* (thievery). In an astounding lesson, the Mei HaShiloach explains the connection between the messages of *Yovel* and *Shemittah* and these financial prohibitions in his inimitable, wondrous manner.

In Pirkei Avos, Chazal teach that a person whose interpersonal relationships are founded upon the dual notion of “*Sheli shelach v’shelcha shelach*”, “What’s mine is yours and what’s yours is yours” is of pious character. The holy Ishbitzer teaches that on a deeper level, this statement is applicable in a Jew’s relationship with the Master of the world and that *Shemittah* and *Yovel* represent its two clauses, respectively.

The facts of our lives seem to suggest that man owns his possessions and may choose to do whatever he wants with them. It seems as though it is up to a landowner whether to plow his field and prepare it for growing crops, whether to leave it fallow, or whether to develop the land and build houses or buildings. The message of *Shemittah*, which requires the Jewish landowner to rest his field every seventh year, is that “*Sheli shelach*” – even that which, as my property, appears to be exclusively subject to my own decision making is truly Yours and bound to Your unfathomable Will.

Yovel is even deeper. There are things in life which, when analyzed, are understood as being ultimately and essentially beyond our control such as human destiny, one’s position in society, financial status etc. However, under the illusion of independence from Hashem’s silent sovereignty, we attempt to manipulate and alter our destiny, position in society, and

financial status. This is most clearly embodied in the actions of one who sells himself as a slave and the one who purchases him. These individuals are attempting to change their inherent position in Hashem’s Master Plan; the servant by deliberately lowering his status through subjugation and the master by attempting to raise himself in lordship over others. Thus, the reversion of this arrangement each *Yovel*, when all slaves are freed, embodies the understanding that “*Shelcha shelach*”; Hashem’s plan regarding the realities of life which were never truly under our control will ultimately come to pass regardless of our attempts at subversion.

The Ishbitzer explains that this is the reason warnings against *gezel*, *ribbis*, and *ona'ah* are issued in our parsha. After the Torah has taught us the lessons of *Shemittah* and *Yovel*, of “*Sheli shelach*” and “*Shelcha shelach*”, it should be easier for one to come to the understanding that attempting to alter our financial status by going against Hashem’s Torah in stealing, collecting interest, and deceiving is a grossly futile endeavor. Ultimately, we are going to have exactly what Hashem has set aside for us - not a penny more, and not a penny less. Therefore, *Shemittah* and *Yovel* may be seen as the foundation upon which warnings against these foolish attempts at manipulation are built. 🕎



“*Sheli shelach*”; a Jew’s fragile control over the thing he owns is truly nullified to Hashem’s will – this is the message of *Shemittah*. “*Shelcha shelach*”; the underlying currents of my existence, which I never truly had control over despite my attempts at manipulation, will ultimately follow Your direction – this is the message of *Yovel*.

Zechus Avos

Yahrtzeit of the Week

26 Iyar (Tuesday night, Wednesday – May 20th)

Rebbe Shlomka Goldman of Zvhil (1869 – 1945)

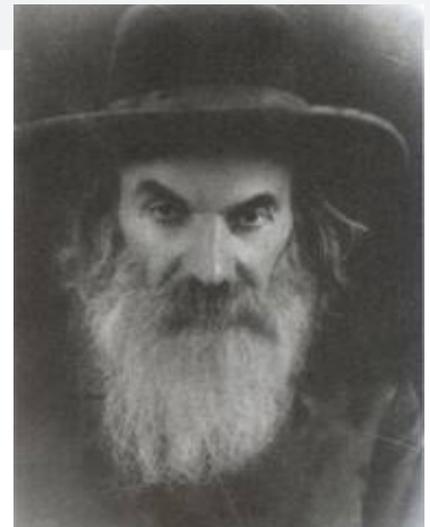
26 IYAR IS the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Shlomka Zvhiller zy”a (Reb Shlomo ben Reb Mordechai). He passed away in 5705/1945 and is buried on Har HaZeisim. It is said that he left the city of Zvhil in Ukraine for the holy land when it became public information that he was a great miracle worker. After arriving in Yerushalayim, he strove to remain anonymous, walking around the alleys of the city like a simple person. This would have continued for many years if not for a visitor from the Chassidic court in Zvhil who recognized him as the rebbe of thousands of chassidim and revealed his identity to the masses. In addition to the miraculous salvations wrought by his blessings, Reb Shlomka was known for his remarkable acts of chessed and the humility with which he went about his holy service.

Reb Shlomka was once asked why he lives in such poverty if he is such a great tzaddik. He answered that he is a צדיק יסוד עולם – “tzaddik who is the foundation of the world,” and the foundation of the world is the lowly and unimpressive earth! It is no coincidence that the *yahrtzeit* of this tzaddik falls out on the day of *sefirah* known as יסוד שביוסוד. Further, the words יסוד שביוסוד are numerically equivalent to 462, the same gematria as שלמה זי”ע.

The tzaddik passed away between the parshiyos of *Behar-Bechukosai* and *Bamidbar*. *Parshas Bechukosai* begins with the words אִם בַּחֲקֵי תִלְכוּ. The first letter, א, can equal 1000, as אלף means 1000. רבי שלמה בן מרדכי זי”ע is equal to 1000. He passed away on 26 Iyar, the 41st day of *Sefiras HaOmer*. This is hinted to in the word אִם. The letters כו in the word תִּלְכוּ hint at the 26th day of Iyar. The remaining letters, תל, are numerically equivalent to יסוד עולם. He was known to bring about salvation for Jews through *tevilah* in the *mikva*. Interestingly, the words שלמה מקוה are equal to בַּחֲקֵי, the week of his passing.

Parshas Bamidbar hints to a teaching from the Noam Elimelech who writes that a tzaddik makes himself *hefker* like a desert (*midbar*) in order to bring about the material needs for Klal Yisroel. Indeed, this *tzaddik yesod olam* devoted his life to caring for the material and spiritual needs of thousands. 🕎

This section is adapted from the *yahrtzeit remazim* of R’ David Friedman.



Rebbe Shlomka of
Zvhil zy”a

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

IN THIS WEEK'S parsha, the Torah teaches: *"Im bechukosai teileichu... v'nasati gishmeichem b'itam"*, "If you walk with My statutes... I will give rains in their season." Rashi comments that rains "in their season" means on Friday nights, when people are home. If rain falls only on Shabbos, it will never interfere with travel or cause other inconvenience. The Chernovitzer Rav explains that aside from the simple reason Shabbos is mentioned in the context of this parsha, there is a hidden reference in this verse to Shabbos as well. In previous weeks, we learned that the kiddush service and the songs preceding it achieves the rectification of harsh-judgments related to the energy of *Hod*, embodied generally in the five letters of the divine Name *Elokim*. The tzaddik focuses in on the word **"teileichu"** and the letters with which it is spelled, *tav*, *lamed*, *chaf*, and *vav*. The letters **tav** and **lamed** are together numerically equivalent to 430. This value is five times the name *Elokim*, alluding to the five *gevuros* of *Elokim* which are sweetened on Friday night through our *avodah*. The letters **chaf** and **vav** are numerically equivalent to 26, the value of the *Shem Havaya*, the essential Name of *Chessed* with which this sweetening is accomplished. The rain referred to by the word *"Geshem"* can be seen as symbolizing an influx of spiritual life-force and vitality. Thus, the verse may be read in the following manner: **"Im b'chukosai"**: When, making use of the halachic framework of the mitzvos, **"teileichu"**: a Jew sweetens the judgment of *Elokim* (*Tav-lamed*) with the *shem Havaya* (*chaf-vav*)... **"v'nasati gishmeichem b'itam"**: this triggers an awesome flow of divine blessing, light, and healing. On these words, Rashi comments: *"b'lelei Shabbasos"*, letting us know that the time of this rectification is on Friday night, during kiddush. 🕯

This section is adapted from the sefer "Sidduro Shel Shabbos" by R' Chaim of Chernowitz zy" a (1760-1816)

P'nimiyus Ha'Halacha

The Inner Dimension of Jewish Law

WITH HASHEM'S HELP, we will devote the next two weeks to some of the *halachos*, *minhagim*, and *inyanim* of *Shavuos*. While some *poskim* (Gra, R' Moshe Feinstein) held that it was *chukos ha'akum*, the prevailing minhag in most places is to decorate the shuls with flowers, trees, or pleasant-smelling fruits. (Maharsham, Rav Ovadya Yosef, see *Piskei Teshuvos* 494:10.) On *Shavuos* night, one should wait until *tzeis hakochavim* to make kiddush since we want the *"temimos"*- complete weeks of *Sefiras HaOmer* to extend to the very end of the 49th day and not end early. (See *Magen Avraham* and *Taz* 494:1.) The *Mishnah Berurah* adds that one should wait until after *tzeis* to daven *ma'ariv* as well. There is a minhag *Yisrael* (for which many reasons are offered) to eat dairy on *Shavuos*. Many have a minhag to stay up *Shavuos* night and study Torah until the morning. The Arizal taught that whoever stays up *Shavuos* night to learn will live out the year without being damaged. Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach ruled that if one has explicit *kavanah* for his first *shehakol* at the outset of the night to cover all other drinking of the night, one would not need to make a new *beracha* for each drinking. (*Halichos Shlomo* 12:3) However, if one did not have this intention, it is best to make a *shehakol* and *borei nefashos* for each drinking.

The *Mishnah* (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a) and *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 68b) refer to the yom tov of *Shavuos* as *"Atzeres"*. The *Kedushas Levi* explains this title with the following profound thought. The word *"atzeres"* is a form of the word *"ne'etzar"*, which means to be held back. The *Berditchover Rav* (*Kedushas Levi*, *Derushim L'Shavuos*) points out that while saturated with *minhagim* such as decorating the shul with flowers, eating dairy, reading *megillas Rus*, and staying up the whole night to learn, (perhaps to reinforce the notion that *"minhag Yisrael – Torah*) *Shavuos* seems to have no mitzvah unique to itself. What is the *mitzvas hayom* of *Shavuos*? Is there an action which might serve as a vessel for the tremendous spiritual lights that descend on this

glorious day? The *Berditchover* takes us back to the very first *Shavuos* at the foot of Har Sinai for the answer. He writes that before they gathered in preparation to receive the Torah, the Jewish nation were indeed given a single commandment – not to breach the boundary that was erected around the mountain. The *Chiddushei HaRim* taught that just as the non-Jews were tested with a commandment contrary to their nature when offered the Torah, the Jewish nation received this commandment which ran so contrary to their deepest desire for *deveikus* and yearning for their Source, to test their ability to control the urge to run up the mountain and leap into an ego-annihilation sense of spiritual ecstasy by remaining behind the boundary. The *Kedushas Levi* explains that this was the *mitzvas hayom* of the very first *Shavuos*, and this is the *mitzvas hayom* of every *Shavuos* subsequent: **"Atzeres"** - to allow oneself to be held back, to reign in the ultimately destructive desire to experience every possible spiritual level at once and proceed slowly, carefully, and in a calculated manner. But there is a deeper level as well. The *Meor Einayim* (*Emor*) writes that much like the seven days of *Niddah* serve to revitalize the physical relationship of a couple, the seven weeks of *Sefirah* represent a calculated waiting period in order for us to experience the sweetness of *kabbalas HaTorah* in the most intense possible way. The idea that less in a quantitative sense is more in a qualitative sense is a foundational concept of the Torah which enables us to understand many of the seeming "restrictions" detailed within and the general ebb and flow of the religious experience replete with rising and falling, running and returning. So foundational is this mature understanding that the primary name of this *chag*, *"Shavuos"*, refers to the weeks spent waiting for it amidst desperate yearning. The fact that the *mitzvas hayom* of *Shavuos* involves respecting a boundary and the understanding that 'not having' lends qualitative value to the eventual experience of 'having' points to the essentiality of this important concept to all of Torah. 🕯

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

It was once told to the holy Kozhnitzer Maggid that one of his Chassidim lived in great poverty. “He doesn’t have even a piece of bread to eat, he sits day and night learning Torah and praying. The entire town of Opatov is witness that after Maariv he learns until midnight, recites tikkun chatzos with great wailing and goes to sleep on an empty stomach on one of the benches in the Beis Medrash.” The chassid continued, “The sorrows of this Jew simply cannot be imagined. We must do something to improve this miserable situation!”

The great Maggid thought for a moment and replied. “It is understood that we must see to it that something be done for this precious Jew and I will certainly help him. However, I will not help him out of pity. On the contrary, I am deeply envious of such a Jew who lives his life focused solely on the very purpose of living. No, I don’t pity him at all. My pity is reserved for the Jew who does not learn, does not daven maariv, doesn’t know about chatzos and goes to sleep with a full stomach on a soft bed. This is the kind of Jew we should take pity on. This kind of Jew Hashem Himself must come and help.”

Even more so than physical discomfort, it is spiritual suffering that deserves to be the true object our pity. 🕯

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