

LAMPLIGHTER

26 Iyar
Behar-Bechukosai
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week we read two Torah portions, Behar and Bechukotai. Behar contains the commandments of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years: "Count for yourself seven Sabbaths of years, seven years seven times...and you shall sanctify the fiftieth year." Every seventh year is a Sabbatical year; the fiftieth is a Jubilee. Then the cycle begins anew.

Concerning the Jubilee year the Torah states, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land for all its inhabitants." According to the Talmud, this means that there can only be a Jubilee year "when all its inhabitants" are living in the land. Thus, "When the tribes of Reuven and Gad and half of Menashe were exiled, the Jubilee was abolished."

Nonetheless, the Talmud relates that in the times of the Second Holy Temple the fiftieth year was still officially sanctified, even though the mitzva of the Jubilee was no longer in effect. This was done to maintain the same cycle as before, i.e., with the counting commencing again in the fifty-first year.

After the Second Temple was destroyed (and during the Babylonian exile), the fiftieth year ceased to be sanctified. The cycle of counting Sabbatical years began on the fiftieth year itself.

Thus, there have been three ways of relating to the Jubilee.

Chasidic philosophy explains that the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are symbolic of spiritual levels in a Jew's service of G-d:

The Sabbatical year relates to the negation of the sense of self. The person perceives himself as an individual, yet willingly nullifies himself before G-d.

The Jubilee year relates to a higher level, of freedom from all limitations, a level that will be realized in the Messianic era.

This also explains why the Sabbatical year applies today, whereas the mitzva of the Jubilee was only fully observed during the First Temple period. The very highest level of spirituality could only be attained at a time when the Divine Presence was manifested in the world so strongly.

The Second Temple period was somewhere in the middle. G-dly revelation illuminated the world, but in a less obvious manner. The Jubilee was therefore counted and sanctified but not observed.

The lowest level occurred after the Destruction, when it was no longer possible to even comprehend the intense spirituality of the Jubilee and it ceased to be counted.

Today, our service consists of "only" accepting the yoke of heaven and nullifying the ego, but in a sense this gives us the greatest advantage, as it enables us to access the soul's essence. It also helps us prepare for the Sabbatical of the Messianic era, may it commence at once.

(Adapted from Volume 7 of Likutei Sichot)

The Productive Human

By Yitschak Meir Kagan

"And proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants..." (Leviticus 25:10).

Perhaps because liberty is so highly valued in today's society, deprivation of liberty is considered the ultimate punishment. And so the prison system has become the punishment for a variety of crimes, severe and mild. But how has the system fared as a rehabilitative force? Our jails are the breeding grounds for further crime: a "first offender" sent to prison finds himself in an "intense course" for bigger and better ways of breaking the law. The jails reek of violence, dope-addiction and sexual misconduct. Social workers and government agencies alike have despaired of penal servitude as a method of rehabilitation of the criminal. Yet many are thankful that we have reached an "enlightened" age where corporal punishment (such as lashes, etc. as mentioned in the Torah) is no longer imposed.

Though very rarely implemented under Torah-law, corporal punishment is part of Torah; penal servitude is not. Why? Because "Man is born to toil." The human being must fulfil his *raison d'être* -- to be a productive element of society; man must work in order to retain his human character. A criminal who received physical punishment under Torah-law, suffered pain and anguish, but he was shortly able to return to his place in society as a working, productive human being, to continue his mission on this earth as a creation of the Al-mighty. (In extremely severe cases, a man could be judged incapable of continuing his mission on this earth, and it is then that capital punishment would come into operation.) By contrast, when an individual stagnates in a prison cell and is prevented from functioning as a productive part of society, his human character deteriorates, and, in a sense, this is worse even than death.

"The law of the kingdom is law" -- until the system of penal servitude is replaced by a better and more rehabilitative method we must work within the system. But, as Jews, we certainly have the obligation of bringing aid, comfort and mitzvot to the Jewish prisoner. This is a great act of *ahavat yisrael*, "brotherly love." It raises their spirits; it inspires them with the hope that if they will resolve to eliminate the negative factors in their lives that brought about their imprisonment, they will eventually enjoy a good, long and happy life.

Slice of LIFE

TWO GOLD MEDALS AND ONE SILVER

Moshe Feiglin

The aristocratic atmosphere in the elegant hotel that hosted Israel's wine competition did not disclose the scene that was about to take place: A small boutique winery, Hararai Kedem, won two gold medals and one silver medal. Hundreds of professional and amateur sommeliers watched in astonishment as the man with the beard and long sidelocks -- who did not look particularly relevant to the glamorous event -- hesitantly ascended the podium to accept his medals.

"There are two factors in this achievement," said Ariel. "The first is that our vineyard is located in the blessed Biblical inheritance of Joseph. The second is that we fulfilled the laws of the *Shmitah* year. We simply did not attend to the vineyard, as dictated by the Torah, and didn't take finances into account."

Ariel thankfully accepted his medals and walked off the stage. His award-winning wines were produced from the grapes of the sixth year of the seven year *Shmitah* cycle. The experts told him that if he would not prune his vines during the *Shmitah* year, his entire vineyard would collapse. But just the opposite occurred - precisely what the Torah promises to the Jews who fulfil the laws of *Shmitah*: "And I will give you my blessing in the sixth year and it will make produce for three years." (Leviticus 25:3). In the sixth year of the seven year cycle, Ariel's vineyard produced more than three times its annual average. Usually, quantity reduces the quality of the grapes. But in Ariel's case, both quantity and quality were extraordinary, as attested to by the medals.

At the beginning of the *Shmitah* year, Ariel divided his time between the permissible tasks in his vineyard and a strictly Jewish construction company that he had established. One of the major projects built by the company was the beautiful synagogue and yeshiva perched on a ridge overlooking his vineyard. The building permits were issued eleven years ago and the Housing Ministry even helped with some partial funding for the project. But the majority of the funding was from donations, while the building was painstakingly erected -- stone by stone -- by Ariel and his friends.

Ariel thought that during the *Shmitah* year, he would divert most of his energies from

agriculture to construction. But a work accident forced him to change his plans. "I guess that our Father in heaven wants me to learn Torah during the *Shmitah* year," he said with a smile. When he was released from the hospital he joined the many young men learning Torah in the new study hall.

You may want to know where you can find Ariel and other dedicated lovers of the Land like him is in Yitzhar, an important but persecuted settlement in the Shimron (Samaria).

RABBI MOSHE FINSTIEN

The Torah is G-d's law. It teaches us how to sanctify every detail of the world. But it takes an unusual talent to know what the law is in every situation and this is exactly the talent possessed by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. He was one of the greatest 'Poskim' (deciders of Torah law) of all time.

The story is told about him that in 1933 when he was a rabbi in the U.S.S.R. in the city of Liubon, the Communists, in their ruthless drive to eradicate Judaism, announced one day that the women's Mikva was 'unhealthy' and had it unceremoniously demolished and rebuilt as a public swimming pool and bathhouse.

[The Mikva is an 'immersion pool' for women and is one of the most important edifices in every Jewish community and destroying it means threatening the very essence of Judaism, G-d forbid.]

We must remember that in those days the murderously evil dictator Stalin totally ruled the minds and bodies of all Russia. It is said that he killed some 50 million of his own people. Opposing him, even in thought, meant certain imprisonment and probable death. But this did not bother Rabbi Moshe.

Fully realizing that his life was at stake he made his way to the local government office and explained to the officials that although the bathhouse was a welcome change to the small and inefficient 'Jewish' one they used to have nevertheless it presented another health problem. The new bathhouse was for men and women together and religious Jews would not use it. Unclean Jews would eventually bring disease and even epidemics that could spread to the entire population!

So he suggested an easy solution; that every evening (or perhaps it was a few times a week) after hours, there would be a special time for men to wash alone and a special time for women. This would totally alleviate the problem and assure total hygiene and health to the area.

Miraculously the officers agreed.

Afterward he told his congregation that when the new 'bathhouse' was in the process of

being built he convinced, at great cost and even greater risk, one of the architects to arrange the pipes, water ducts and other structures according to his directions so as to conform to Torah standards. The communists actually provided the Jews a 'kosher' mikva.

Rav Moshe's willingness to die for Judaism saved an entire community.

But after a while he moved to the U.S.A and became a very famous Torah personality.

Because of his uncanny knowledge, memory and unique ability to determine the most difficult legal questions he was flooded with inquiries constantly, day and night often by some of the greatest Rabbis from the four corners of the earth who sought his opinions on the most difficult legal issues.

In addition to this he was also the head of a Torah Academy with several hundred pupils and was a spiritual mentor to thousands of religious Jews. So, as you can imagine, he was a very busy man.

But nevertheless every Tuesday his door was open to the public so Jews of all sorts and levels could come and ask their questions.

So was his custom for tens of years until 1987 when, at the age of 91 after a long and debilitating illness, he passed away and was mourned by the entire Jewish world.

But it seems that not everyone knew of his passing.

One Tuesday, a few weeks later, an old lady came to his home and asked why there was no line of people, perhaps the Rabbi changed his schedule? Perhaps she arrived late?

When she heard the bitter news she began weeping. But when she calmed down one of the young Rabbis there told her that if she had questions he would be glad to try to help her.

After all, he reasoned, how difficult could such a simple woman's questions be? She probably wanted to know if her chicken is kosher or something similar.

"Oy!" The woman replied. "He was such a wonderful man!! I don't know if there exists such a person like him. He was such a help. But I suppose you are right, if you are his pupils you can probably answer my problems. Do you understand Russian?"

"Russian?" Asked the Rabbi. "No, I don't think any of us knows Russian. But what difference does that make?"

"Ahh! So I guess you can't help me then." She sadly replied. "You see, for the last twenty years, once every few weeks I would get a letter from my sister that lives in Russia. But I don't understand a word of Russian so I used to come here to the Rabbi and he would sit for fifteen minutes to translate it and explain it for me.

"Such a wonderful man!"

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ISSUE 1035

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The period of the Resurrection of the Dead in the Messianic Era is the time of reward for the observance of mitzvot (commandments). The ultimate reward will be the fusion of the Commander with the commanded. Instead of prohibitions and obligations, the world will be so filled with the knowledge of G-d that it will fulfil the Divine Will spontaneously. This is the meaning of "delighting in the radiance of the Divine Presence." At that time a mitzva will not be perceived as a step towards a Divine reward: a mitzva will be its own reward - the immersion of man in the Divine Will. (To Live and Live Again, Rabbi N.D. Dubov)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

26 Tammuz 5725 [1965]

Blessing and Greeting:

I am in receipt of your letter of July 13th, in which you ask for guidance how to influence an old friend who had been quite frum [Torah observant] in the past but has weakened in his conviction.

Needless to say, it would be difficult for you to accomplish much by way of correspondence alone. Therefore, it would be well for you to find some mutual friends on the spot, who could exercise their influence in the desired direction, while your correspondence with the party in question would act as a further stimulus from time to time, being guided by the mutual friends on the spot as to when and what to write to your friend.

As a general observation, I want to tell you of my experience which has convinced me that in most cases such as you describe, the true reason for the weakening in the convictions was not the result of a more profound study or deeper insight, but rather on the contrary, it came as a result of the fact that the convictions which one has held have proved an obstacle to the enjoyment of certain material aspects in life. And, human nature being what it is, one wishes to appease one's troublesome conscience by trying to find faults with the convictions and spiritual aspects.

In view of the above, the most effective approach in most cases is not to attempt to debate the spiritual matters, convictions and beliefs, but rather to try to bring the person closer to the kind of daily life and activity which bring their fruits also in this material world. I have in mind an activity in the Jewish community, or in the field of kosher education in particular, where he could see the good results of his work, and at the same time gain personal satisfaction from his success. The discussions mentioned above would only be of secondary importance, so as not to leave any of his questions unanswered.

What has been said above is in general terms which would apply to most cases. However, there are undoubtedly special factors connected with the individual himself, especially with his personal character, etc. Therefore, any action directed at influencing him should first be consulted with people who know him personally and would know his reaction to such efforts.

A further point which is also valid almost always is that in such a situation a wife or a fiancée can accomplish a great deal, perhaps not so much directly as indirectly. This should therefore also be considered as a channel of influence. For as I gather from your letter, the person in question is still single. Therefore, it would be very well for him if his friends could find him a suitable shidduch.

Incidentally, insofar as "scientific proof" that the Torah is G-d-given is concerned, which seems to bother your friend, the fact is, however strange this may seem, that the best proof is still the oldest, namely that the Torah was transmitted from generation to generation in an unbroken and uninterrupted chain of tradition, from the time of the Divine revelation at Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Torah in the presence of 600,000 adult male Jews (several million Jews in all), to the present day. There is no stronger scientific verification of any fact than the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, which has been attested to by so many witnesses from generation to generation.

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

If a foreign thought comes to one during the prayer, one should be silent until the thought has ceased. One must reflect on matters that subdue the heart and direct it towards one's Father in Heaven and should not think of matters which involve light headedness.

In the work *Eliyahu Rabba*, the author cites from the abridged *Shelah* a remedy for removing an extraneous thought before one prays: One should pass his right hand over his forehead three times and say each time, "A pure heart create for me G-d and an upright spirit renew inside me". (Psalms 51:12) Likewise, if an extraneous thought comes to one in the middle of the prayer, he should be silent a little and then pass his right hand over his forehead and think the aforementioned verse.

A WORD

from the Director

We are in the midst of the Sefira time period approaching and readying ourselves for the Giving of the Torah celebrated on Shavuot. The public revelation of the Torah, which occurred before millions of people, is the central and most definitive event in the history of the world.

Our Sages explained that one of the prerequisites for receiving the Torah was Jewish unity. As it is now right before Shavuot, it is an especially appropriate time to increase our Ahavat Yisrael (love for our fellow Jews) and strengthen a sense of true Jewish solidarity and brotherhood among our ranks.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that we must love every Jew without exception, regardless of merit. To illustrate, he used the following analogy:

G-d performs the same mitzvot He commands the Jewish people to observe. We keep Shabbat, He keeps Shabbat. We put on tefilin, He puts on tefilin. G-d's tefilin, however, do not consist of parchment and leather straps but are the Jewish people themselves, as it were.

G-d's tefilin "shel rosh" (the tefilin that are worn on the head) are the learned Jews, who have utilized their intellect to acquire the Torah's wisdom. His tefilin "shel yad" (tefilin that are worn on the arm) are the simple Jews who perform His mitzvot. Both the tefilin of the head and the tefilin of the arm are necessary components in the mitzva. And yet, in actual performance, the tefilin of the arm take precedence; the tefilin of the head are donned only after the tefilin shel yad have been wrapped on the arm.

From this we learn just how important it is to love every Jew, regardless of social standing or intellectual achievements. For even in G-d's scheme of things the simple Jews come first!

May our firm resolve to increase in Ahavat Yisrael tip the balance in our favour and bring about the immediate revelation of Moshiach now.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

THE CRAZY SON-IN-LAW

Two of the wealthiest men of Prague paid a visit to the central Yeshiva around the same time. Each one was seeking -- and found -- a promising young Torah scholar as a match for his precious daughter of marriageable age. After the weddings, however, the townsfolk praised one of the young husbands for his friendliness and pleasant character. The other one tended to be more aloof. Soon, his father-in-law became jealous of the other father-in-law whose son-in-law was so popular.

One day, a man walked in to the *beit midrash* (study hall). His face showed he was deeply upset. The friendly son-in-law walked over to the distraught stranger and persuaded him to tell him what was bothering him. "Maybe I can help, and anyway, haven't our sages said that a person should share his worries with others, to find relief."

So the man told him he owed the huge sum of three hundred gulden to his *poritz* (nobleman-landlord), and that today was the final deadline the lord had given him to pay. The *poritz* absolutely refused to grant any further extensions, and had threatened to punish him severely if he didn't pay the entire amount on time. "He might even kill me," the man said. And yet, he didn't even have a penny of the required sum.

The young husband thought for a moment and then said, "Wait for me here, please; I have an idea for how to get you the money." He then went straight to the father-in-law of the other newlywed, who was known to have lent money to many of the local nobility, and asked him to advance a loan to rescue the endangered tenant.

The jealous rich man immediately saw in this situation an opportunity to gain the upper hand over his friend. "I'll lend you the money," he said, "but only on one condition. I happen to have in my possession the robe of a Catholic priest. If you will put it on and walk up and down the main street and the marketplace so that all the storekeepers and their customers will see you, I'll do this *mitzvah* gladly."

"All right," said the young man, "I'll do it."

And he did. He went all around the main areas of the city dressed in the priest's robe. The townspeople stared and were astonished. They decided the poor fellow must have lost his mind. The word quickly circulated around town that the until-now popular new son-in-law of one of the rich men had gone insane.

His family and friends saw that he seemed to be completely normal. They couldn't understand why he had done such a thing. He, for his part, refused to divulge the reason for his strange performance, so those that were close to him remained perplexed, while everyone else assumed that he was crazy.

Years went by. The rich man had already sold the priest's robe to a Jewish tailor. The latter, seeing that the robe was made of pure linen, decided it would be perfect material from which to sew burial shrouds for himself. He did so, and instructed his children that when his time finally came, he should be en clothed in these shrouds before burial.

Eventually, the tailor went the way of all flesh. Several days after the funeral, the tailor appeared to the Chief Rabbi of Prague in a dream and requested that he arrange for the coffin to be opened.

He explained that by the extraordinary self-effacement and dedication the young man demonstrated in behalf of the endangered poor man had drawn into the garment itself an exceptionally lofty degree of holiness. As a result, the punishing angels were not able to do him any harm. However, since there hadn't been quite sufficient material in the robe for his shrouds, he had supplemented the deficiency by sewing in a small piece of a different linen, and the punishing angels were able to get at him through that. Therefore, the tailor wanted the Rabbi to open up his grave in order to cut away that patch of linen.

The Rabbi of course fulfilled the request of the deceased. He also told the full story of the young man's amazing deed to everyone in town. At last everyone realized that the friendly son-in-law's strange behaviour was not due to insanity, but *mesirat nefesh*, true self-sacrifice, to help a fellow Jew.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

There were 10 generations from Noah to Abraham to indicate how great is His patience...until Abraham our father came and received the reward of all of them (Ethics, 5:2)

The generations before Noah had no redeeming virtues whatsoever. They "repeatedly angered G-d" and lived in constant friction, conflict and discord. In contrast, although the generations before Abraham also "repeatedly angered G-d," they at least shared a kindred spirit and treated each other with love. But although their conduct generated reward, they themselves were unfit to receive it. Because Abraham, unlike Noah, sought to influence the people around him for good, he "received the reward" of all the comradely deeds of the generations that preceded him. (*Likutei Sichot, Vol. III*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 18 MAY 2012

BEGINS		ENDS
4:59	MELBOURNE	5:58
5:01	ADELAIDE	5:58
4:48	BRISBANE	5:42
6:11	DARWIN	7:02
4:45	GOLD COAST	5:40
5:08	PERTH	6:04
4:43	SYDNEY	5:39
4:48	CANBERRA	5:46
4:42	LAUNCESTON	5:43
5:02	AUCKLAND	6:00
4:51	WELLINGTON	5:53
4:37	HOBART	5:40
4:43	BYRON BAY	5:38



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI

27 IYAR • 19 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:59 PM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:45 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:46 AM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:58 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	MAARIV:	5:55 PM