

LAMPLIGHTER

19 Iyar
Parshas
Behar
1245
27 May
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Behar, begins with the words "G-d spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai...and the land shall keep a Sabbath-Shemittah-to G-d." The commentator Rashi asks: What does the subject of Shemittah have to do with Mount Sinai? We're not all of the commandments given at Sinai? He answers his own question: Just as all the details and minutiae of the laws of Shemittah were given at Sinai, so were all the details and specifications of the other commandments given at Sinai.

The commandment of Shemittah teaches something about all the other mitzvot of the Torah. We must recognize that just as all the details of Shemittah were given to Moses by G-d on Mount Sinai, so were all the other mitzvot and their details given in the same manner. If the Torah has chosen the particular commandment of Shemittah to illustrate this fact, it must be that this mitzva expresses the general Jewish approach to life.

On the one hand, a Jew is enjoined "six years shall you sow your field and six years shall you prune your vineyard." A Jew must conduct himself and his affairs according to the laws of nature. One must plant and toil in order to eat. A Jew is not required to retreat from the world and sequester himself only in learning Torah and praying; on the contrary, he must fully participate in a normal lifestyle.

At the same time, the Torah commands that every seven years the Jew must abandon the land and allow it to have a Sabbath, and devote himself to learning, praying, and worshipping G-d. He then asks, "What will we eat during the seventh year, if we don't sow and reap our grain?" The Torah answers: "And I will command my blessing to be on you during the sixth year, and the land will produce enough grain to last for three years." Here the Jew is being asked to rely solely on G-d and not on natural law for his sustenance.

At first glance the two approaches appear contradictory. How can we be required to live according to the laws of nature, and simultaneously be asked to rely on the supernatural? But this is exactly what the Torah wants from us. We must synthesize both approaches to life. We must do everything possible according to natural law, at the same time believing in G-d's supernatural powers to sustain us.

Six years of active work followed by one of rest highlights this approach in a Jew's daily life. The six years of work are the obligation we have to elevate the world by imbuing it with holiness through our actions. The Shemittah year allows us to recognize that despite all of our accomplishments, we are ultimately dependent on G-d for our well-being, and that trust in man and nature is misplaced. Once every seven years we sever ourselves from the natural world and rely solely on G-d. A Jew draws spiritual strength from the Shemittah year, rededicating himself to the knowledge that our task is not to be subservient to nature, but rather to rule over the natural world and imbue it with holiness.

Similar cycles are to be found within a Jew's daily life as well. All day a Jew works in business or commerce, earning a living for his family, providing food, clothes and the like. But he must also dedicate certain times of the day for study and praying, thereby elevating himself from the mundane and connecting to G-d. Jews live their lives with a special combination of the natural and the supernatural.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

It IS His Business

By Naftali Silberberg

This week's Torah reading talks of the prohibition against performing agricultural work during the Shemittah (Sabbatical) year.

If you shall say, "What will we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we will not sow, nor gather in our produce!" I will command my blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce for three years. You will sow in the eighth year, while [still] eating from the old crops until the ninth year; until the arrival of its crop, you will eat the old [crop].

Very few people can financially survive taking an unpaid leave of absence from work for an entire year. We can only imagine what a country would look like of entire segments of its population decided to take a year of vacation; it would take years for the economy to lift itself out of the ensuing shambles. Just think: strikes by small groups which last for mere days cause billions of dollars of damage to nations' economies.

Yet it actually happened. We neglect to mention this awesome miracle which occurred in the Land of Israel every seventh year! Regularly, citizens of an agrarian nation dropped their plows and sickles and "sabbaticaled" every seventh year, and survived and flourished! We speak often of miracles such as the splitting of the Red Sea and the Jordan River, of the ten plagues and Elijah's wonders, but we neglect to mention this awesome miracle which occurred in the Land of Israel every seventh year! For centuries, every sixth year the crop would be so abundant that it lasted for three years for those who were committed to abstain from work on the seventh.

Perhaps it can be posited that greater than the miracle of the abundant crops is the trust the Jews demonstrated in G-d.

If society today is any indicator, people have a strong tendency to relegate G-d to the synagogue. Those who are more pious allow G-d into their personal lives as well. But fewer indeed are those who welcome Him into their businesses and pocketbooks. "I'll pray to G-d, I'll study Torah and do His mitzvot, but business is business . . ." The biblical law requiring ten percent of earnings to be given to charity and the prohibitions against lending with interest, cheating, deception, and working on Shabbat and holy days are swept under the rug in the interest of making ends meet.

Shemittah teaches us that we are not intrinsically weak; we do have the ability to trust in G-d. And He, in turn, has the ability to provide for those who do so. G-d pleads, "Is My hand too short to redeem, or do I have no strength to save? Behold, with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make rivers into a desert." Yes, the same G-d who split the Red Sea can even provide us and our families with a steady income.

This concept is as true today as it was in the Land of Israel millennia ago.

Slice of LIFE

My name is Dov Weiss, and I was one of a group of about thirty young men who started the moshav (agricultural settlement) of Komemiyut, in the south of Israel. It was in 1950, after we had completed our army service. I was still a bachelor then. Among the founders was also the well-known Torah scholar and rabbinical authority, Rabbi Binyamin Mendelson, of blessed memory. He had previously immigrated to Israel from Poland, and had served as the rabbi of Kfar Ata.

At first we lived in tents, in the middle of a barren wilderness. The nearest settlements to ours were several kibbutzim associated with the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair movement: Gat, Gilon and Negba. Several of our members supported themselves by working at Kibbutz Gat, the closest to us, doing different types of manual labour. Others worked in our fields, planting wheat, barley, rye, and other grains and legumes. I myself drove a tractor. Our produce, which grew throughout the 15,000 or so dunams (nearly 4000 acres) allotted us, we sold to bakeries and factories.

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our moshav. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry, rugged fields. Every few days we would make a trip to Kibbutz Negba, about 20 kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

The second year we were there, 5712 on the Jewish calendar (1951-52), was the Shemittah year, which comes every seventh year, in which the Torah commands to desist from all agricultural work. We were among the very few settlements in Israel at the time to observe the laws of the Sabbatical year and refrain from working the land. Instead we concentrated on building, and succeeded that year in completing much of the permanent housing. The moshav gradually developed and expanded, and more and more families moved in, as well as a number of young singles. By the end of the year we numbered around eighty people.

As the Sabbatical year drew to its completion, we prepared to renew our farming activities. For this we required seed to sow crops, but for this purpose we could use only wheat from the sixth year, the year

that preceded the Shemittah, for the produce of the seventh year is forbidden for this type of use. We went around to all the agricultural settlements in the area, near and far, seeking good quality seed from the previous years' harvest, but no one could fulfil our request.

All we were able to find was some old wormy seed that, for reasons that were never made clear to us, was lying around in a storage shed in Kibbutz Gat. No farmer in his right mind anywhere in the world would consider using such poor quality seed to plant with, not if he expected to see any crops from it. The kibbutzniks at Gat all burst into loud derisive laughter when we revealed that we were actually interested in this infested grain that had been rotting away for a few years in some dark, murky corner.

"If you really want it, you can take all that you like, and for free, with our compliments," they offered in amusement.

We consulted with Rabbi Mendelson. His response was: "Take it. The One who tells wheat to sprout from good seed can also order it to grow from inferior wormy leftover seed as well."

In any case, we didn't have an alternative. So we loaded all the old infested seed that the kibbutz had offered to us free of charge onto a tractor, and returned to Komemiyut.

The laws of Shemittah forbade us to plow and turn over the soil till after Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the eighth year, so we didn't actually sow the seed until sometime in November. This was two or three months after all the other farmers had already completed their planting.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the kibbutzim and moshavot gazed upward longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand dunams of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

The following days we were nervous in anticipation, but we turned our attention to strengthening our faith and trust in G-d. Anyway, it did not take a long time for the hand of the Almighty to be revealed clearly to all. Those wheat fields that were planted during the seventh year, months before the

first rain, sprouted only small and weak crops. At the same time, our fields, sowed with the old infested seed and long after the appropriate season, were covered with an unusually large and healthy yield of wheat, in comparison to any standard.

The story of "the miracle at Komemiyut" spread quickly. Farmers from all the agricultural settlements in the region came to see with their own eyes what they could not believe when they heard the rumours about it.

When the farmers from Kibbutz Gat arrived, they pulled a surprise on us. After absorbing the sight of the bountiful quantity of wheat flourishing in our fields, they announced they wanted payment for the tractor-load of old rotten wheat they had scornfully given us for free only a short time before.

Even more startling: they said they would file a claim against us at a beit din, a rabbinical court, and with Rabbi Mendelson himself, no less! They must have figured that in a secular court, such a claim wouldn't have even the slightest possible chance of gaining them a single penny.

Rabbi Mendelson accepted their case seriously, and in the end judged that we should pay them. He explained that the reason they gave it for free was because they thought it worthless for planting, while in truth it really was excellent for that purpose. We were astonished to hear his ruling, but needless to say, we complied.

The whole story became an extraordinary kiddush Hashem (glorification of G-d) in the eyes of Jews across the country. Everyone agreed it was a clear fulfilment of G-d's promise in the Torah (Leviticus 25):

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit. But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath for G-d . . .

If you shall say: "What shall we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our produce!" I will command my blessing upon you . . .

Editor's note: Today, Komemiyut is world-famous for its high-quality shmurah matzah (lit. "matzah that has been watched")-round, handmade matzah prepared under exacting supervision from the time the wheat is harvested through the end of the baking to guard against the minutest moisture.

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ISSUE 1245

MOSHIACH MATTERS

There is a spark of Moshiach within every single Jew (the highest level of the soul - yechida). There also exists the reality of Moshiach in its simplest sense (the general yechida), as is known "that in every generation, someone is born from the seed of Judah who is fit to be Moshiach of Israel" (Bartenura, Megillat Rut). "One who is fit due to his righteousness to be a redeemer, and when the time will come, G-d Almighty will reveal Himself to him and will send him, etc." (responsa, Chasam Sofer, Choshen Mishpat, end of Sec. 98). Thus, in our times, all obstacles and delays have been nullified, etc., since there is in fact also the revelation of Moshiach, and now we only have to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed! (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shabbat VaYeira 5752-1992*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

21 Adar II, 5738 [1978]
Sholom uBrocho [Peace and Blessing]:

Thank you for your letter of 13 Adar II. I appreciate your comprehensive response to my letter and memorandum on the need to organize widespread use of T.M. and similar techniques in psychotherapy compatible with the Torah with the double objective of making such therapy available to Jewish patients in a kosher way and at the same time saving numerous Jews from getting involved with Avoda Zora [idol-worship] as now commonly practiced in the USA.

Needless to say, I noticed your suggestions and observations in this connection with understandable interest.

In reply, let me first say that, as a general principle, so long as the said two objectives can best be served, whatever project is determined to be most effective is most desirable, and, of course, acceptable to me.

There are, however, some points in your response which need careful assessment. For instance, the suggestion that an Institute employing the said healing techniques might be linked with a strictly orthodox, even Lubavitch, orientation should be examined in light of it being a possible, or even likely, deterrent for many candidates who might hesitate to turn to such an Institute for fear that it may impose upon them religious demands and commitments which they are not yet prepared to accept.

The above is not to say that the idea should be rejected out of hand, since there may be individuals who would not be deterred by it. But I believe that if the project is to attract a wider circle of candidates for therapy, it would have a wider acceptance if it is not overtly tied in with such an orientation, or discipline; at any rate, not in the initial stage.

Needless to say, the emphasis is on the overt orientation of the projected Institute, which should have no religious or other preconditions for anyone seeking its services. But the Institute itself should, of course, be run in strict keeping with the Torah, with a kosher, indeed glat-kosher, kitchen, strict Shabbos [Sabbath] observance, with Mezuzos on all doors - just as there are glat-kosher Hotels and institutions.

With regard to the basic point you make in your letter, namely, that most people for whom our plan is envisaged consider themselves "normal" and would not be interested in a program that offers professional (medical) services, but would prefer a more simplistic setup for relaxation, etc., - this should certainly be taken into account, since the ultimate goals of our plan would not be affected.

And, if as you suggest, this would be the more practical setup for attracting more people and achieving our two objectives - healing and elimination of Avoda Zora - then by all means, this method should be given due consideration.

I would like to make a further point, though entirely not in my domain, namely, in reference to hypnosis as one of the techniques used in psychotherapy, as mentioned in your letter.

I have always been wary of any method that deprives a person of the free exercise of his will, and which puts him in the power of another person, even temporarily - except, of course, in a case of Pikuach-nefesh [the preservation of life]. Certainly I would not favour the use of such a method on a wider scale, least of all to encourage psychologists and psychiatrists enrolled in our program to use it.

Finally, a point which for understandable reasons I did not want to mention in my letter accompanying the memorandum: If in the first stage of implementing the program there would be need for funding the initial outlay, my Secretariat would make such funds available.

Your further comments will be welcome, and many thanks again.

With blessing,

CUSTOMS CORNER

Education

The mitzvah of Chinuch kicks in for each mitzvah as soon as the child is capable of observing that mitzvah. Traditionally, we start teaching children from the age of three to recite the blessings on various foods and some basic prayers. That is when a little boy begins covering his head and wearing Tzitzis, and at about that age girls begin lighting Shabbat candles.

A WORD

from the Director

This week's Parsha, Behar, discusses the Sabbatical year, and stresses that these laws were given on Mount Sinai.

Rashi asks: "What is the connection between the sabbatical year and Mount Sinai?" Why does the Torah mention specifically here that it was given at Mount Sinai?

Upon deeper reflection, this question can be understood as a lesson to us in every aspect of our lives. Whatever we do there is one question that should be reverberating in our ears: "What is its connection to Mount Sinai?" The value of each and every experience should be measured by its ability to express the ideal of Mount Sinai.

At Mount Sinai, history's most momentous event took place - the giving of the Torah. It is the singular event that gave meaning and purpose to all the other events. The fact that the Torah was given on a mountain exemplifies the idea that we cannot stay in one place. We must continue to grow in our Judaism. And the fact that, as our Sages tell us, Mount Sinai is the lowest mountain in the region instructs us about the need for humility. As high as we climb in our spiritual lives we must never let our achievements go to our heads.

When we go to work - "For six years you may sow your fields..." - we must ask, "How does my work reflect the ideals of Mount Sinai?" When we go on holiday - "in the seventh year, the Land should have a complete rest..." - we must ask the same question: "How does Mount Sinai define my holiday?" How does the Torah and its message of continual growth with humility inform and affect my life?

The experience of Sinai was the precursor to the ultimate Redemption. In the Messianic Age we will scale the greatest spiritual heights without the attendant feeling of smugness and arrogance.

Standing on the threshold of the final Redemption, we must rephrase the question: How does the imminent coming of Moshiach inspire me today to do everything in my power to prepare myself for that momentous occasion by increasing in my study of Torah and observance of the Mitzvot with humility?

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED

Once...

Two Chassidim whose Rebbe had passed away travelled to visit the Tzadik Rabbi Meir of Premishlan in order to decide whether or not to choose him as Rebbe for themselves and for their fellow Chassidim. They arrived at Premishlan just in time for candle-lighting, on the eve of a Shabbat on which the weekly Portion of Shemini was read. They did not even have enough time to order meals for Shabbat at a hotel, but went straight to the synagogue of the Rebbe.

After prayers each of them was invited to the home of one of the local householders. One of the hosts was accustomed to eating very little, so his guest, though ravenously hungry, could hardly bring himself to eat a square meal in his presence. The other host ate, but did not slice the challah that was on the table, and since his guest did not take the liberty of slicing it for himself, he too remained hungry.

After the meal they both came to the tish [Yiddish: table-i.e. After-meal gathering] of the Rebbe at which he presided until after midnight. When it was over, they went to one of the local hotels and asked the proprietor if he had anything for them to eat. He explained that he only had a place for them to sleep, but since there were hungry he would give them some leftovers that required no preparations.

After the Shabbat morning prayers they went home with the same hosts, and exactly the same story repeated itself. In the afternoon they came to the synagogue of the Rebbe for the Shabbat Afternoon prayer, but Rabbi Meir was not yet there. Assuming that he was doubtless studying Torah in his room, they went to his house, but his attendant told them that he was out in the courtyard. They went out and, sure enough, Rabbi Meir was there - telling his attendant to feed the geese and chickens. When that was done, he said: "Let us go and pray Mincha."

The guests were stupefied: throughout the entire Shabbat they had heard not a solitary word of Torah from his mouth. To make things worse, they had now seen what kind of spiritual preparations he made for his afternoon prayer. Besides, they were hungry, so they decided not to go to the Third Meal of the Rebbe, and to try their luck once again at the homes of their respective hosts. Their hosts were not at home though: they had gone to the tish of the Rebbe, so their would-be guests had no option but to go there too.

As soon as they arrived the Rebbe said: "Where are the two young men who are seeking a Rebbe who is possessed of divine inspiration?"

There was no answer.

Again the Rebbe asked: "Where are they? Why are they hiding from me?"

Not a word in reply.

The third time he said: "if they don't come before me at once, they will regret it."

The two guests approached him shamefacedly, and he greeted them and asked: "Where did you eat your Shabbat meals?"

When they named their hosts, Rabbi Meir called them to him and said softly: "The Torah gives us a mitzvah of hospitality - but one has to know how to conduct oneself when one has guests. When one invites a guest, the host should slice bread generously on the table to that his guest should not be obliged to do so or be too embarrassed to help himself. And even if a host does this, if he himself does not eat, his guest will not feel comfortable eating in his presence.

"There is a hint of this in today's Portion of the Torah: "the pig, for he does slice the bread..." [Actually, 'divide the hoof,' but here punningly mistranslated: parsu means 'hoof'; parusa means 'slice']; "...but does not chew the cud,..." that is, he himself does not eat; "...he is unclean unto you"; "the camel does chew the cud, but does not 'slice the bread'; he is likewise unclean unto you." Only one that does both is a kosher creature!

"And now," added the Tzadik, "these two young men are no doubt very hungry. We should give them something to eat."

With that, he gave each of them a slice of his Shabbat loaf with a piece of fish on it.

He went on to deliver a discourse, in the course of which he intimated to the two guests the mystical explanation for his having fed the poultry during the afternoon. None of those present understood his references to the cloven hoof and the chewed cud, nor his abstruse discourse - except the two hosts and their guests.

And on Saturday night, when the holy Shabbat had drawn to a close, the two visitors to Premishlan recounted the whole story, and concluded: "Here we have found a Rebbe on whom rests Ruach haKodesh, the spirit of G-d."

Thoughts THAT COUNT

When you come into the land which I am giving to you, then shall the land keep a Shabbat to G-d (Lev. 25:2)

Shabbat is not only the prized "possession" of the Jews. The Jewish land also has a Shabbat. The same way that a Jewish servant serves his master for six years and goes free in the seventh, so does the land work and produce for the Jew for six years, reverting to its true Master on the seventh. The value of the Holy Land is not limited to how much she can produce agriculturally; the Land of Israel has an independent value and worth. During the Shemittah year we honour that essential value. (*Rabbi Yitzchak Breur*)

For the Children of Israel are my servants (Lev 25:55)

The Jews are called both "servants" and "children" of G-d. Each term reflects the nature of the Jew's relationship with G-d. As far as the body is concerned, a Jew is G-d's servant. One must accept the yoke of Heaven as a servant must accept the will of his master and be totally subservient to him. But our souls serve G-d only through love, as a son serves his beloved father. (*Sefer Hamaamarim Kuntreisim*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 27 MAY 2016

BEGINS		ENDS
4.53	MELBOURNE	5.53
4.56	ADELAIDE	5.54
4.44	BRISBANE	5.39
6.10	DARWIN	7.01
4.42	GOLD COAST	5.37
5.04	PERTH	6.00
4.38	SYDNEY	5.36
4.43	CANBERRA	5.41
4.35	LAUNCESTON	5.37
4.57	AUCKLAND	5.56
4.45	WELLINGTON	5.47
4.30	HOBART	5.34
4.40	BYRON BAY	5.35



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD
PARSHAS BEHAR • 19 IYAR • 27 MAY

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4.53 PM
	MINCHA:	5.00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.30 PM
SHABBOS	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.48 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	4.50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5.53 PM
WEEKDAYS	SHACHARIS: SUN-FRI	8.00 AM / 9.15 AM
	MINCHA:	4.55 PM
	MAARIV:	5.45 PM