



TAL

BEHAR
BECHUKOTAI
5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Warriors of 2015

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



With Lag Baomer behind us and the famous conservatives win in the UK, we are told that the economy is back on track and happy days lie ahead. But working for a livelihood has never been so hard. Not physically, but mentally draining, due mainly to the influx of technology that beckons our everyday life. Business is tough and competition ripe. How should we view our competitors and how should we cope in the 21st Century?

The Gemara (Megillah 31b) states that Parashat Bechukotai should be read before Shavuot because Shavuot is a New Year's Day and day of judgment - on Shavuot G-d determines the success of the year's fruit harvest. Accordingly, we wish to "dispense with the year's curses as the year ends." Parashat Bechukotai contains curses on those who abandon the Mitzvot. However, in order not to enter Shavuot with the curses on our minds, we separate them by one week by reading Bamidbar. (Tosfot Megillah 31b.)

We are always certain to have read this week's Parshiot Behar Bechukotai in the run up to Shavuot. There is a special lesson to be learnt from these wonderful Parshiot.

Behar deals mainly with the mitzvah of Shemita - the Sabbatical year. All agricultural work in the Land of Israel must stop during every seventh year in the Shemita cycle. The laws of

are organisations that support farmers for the entire year in order to keep Shemita. Last year the Israeli government approved a \$28.8 million budget to prepare farmers for the Shemita!

Interestingly right in the middle of the laws of Shemita, the Torah teaches us the following: "When you sell an item to your fellow man, or buy from the hand of your fellow man, one man should not cheat his brother" (Vayikra 25:14).

It seems peculiar, to say the least, that the Torah taught this particular law of "Ona-ah" (cheating) right in the middle of the halachot of



Shemita. Why is "Ona-ah" located in the middle of the halachot of Shemita?

The Bet Av explains that the fundamental concept that underlies the mitzvah of Shemita is that one's livelihood comes from G-d. If a person works long enough and hard enough and is successful enough in

Shemita require that the land must remain fallow.

This special Mitzvah is kept till today, and there

his business, he usually becomes lulled into thinking, "it is ME who is making all this money". People attribute their successes to their own wisdom, skill, acumen, diligence, etc.

Through this wonderful mitzvah of Shemita we are able to remember that it is Hashem that grants us our livelihood. A person's sustenance is determined yearly on Rosh Hashanah. Of course, one must exert the appropriate amount of effort, but the amount and the success that one enjoys when it comes to Parnasa (livelihood) is provided by G-d. The proof to that is the Sabbatical year.

During the entire Shemita year, we do not do any work -- and somehow or another, we have a livelihood. This Sabbatical makes us stop and think that it is not we who provide for ourselves. It is G-d alone who provides our livelihood. That being the case, it becomes eminently clear why the commandment against cheating is right in the middle of the portion of Shemita. Imagine the following scenario, someone goes out and steals £1000. Has his income now increased by £1000? You would say yes. But it is Hashem alone that grants this person his Parnasa and this £1000 can easily be cancelled out by a £1000 fine, medical bill, lawsuit etc. It all works out in the end. If a person honestly believes that G-d is the One who ultimately writes and signs all the cheques, there is absolutely no motivation for cheating -- not a friend, not a business, not the Government-- no one.

p.t.o.

B.R.E.
BRAMPTON REAL ESTATE
 SALES - RENTALS - MANAGEMENT
 Tel: 020 7101 3737
 www.bramptonrealestate.co.uk
 Shommer Shabbat

020 8806 2528 Proud Sponsors of TAL

SEALOM MOTORS
 EST 1967
 TAKING CARE OF YOUR MOTORING NEEDS.

Proud sponsors of TAL

elias
 LONDON'S PREMIER DRY CLEANER

If a person truly believes in what Shemita is all about -- that G-d provides us with our livelihood -- then why would he cheat his fellow man? Such an attitude can only come from one who thinks that HE is making the livelihood himself. That is why "Ona-ah" is located in the middle of Shemita.

There is a famous story of a shop keeper that came to Rabbi Meir of Premislan.

"Rabbi, I am ruined. Do you know what is happening across the street from my shop? Someone else is opening another shop. He will take all my business. I will lose my livelihood!"

Rabbi Meir said to the frantic man, "Sit down. Have you ever taken your horse to drink from a pool of water?" "Yes, Rabbi. But you don't understand, I am not talking about my horse, it's my shop, he will ruin me!"

The rabbi continued. "Have you ever noticed how the horse stamps in the water before drinking?"

"Yes, of course."

"Do you know why?"

"No!"

"Good. I will tell you why the horse stamps his hoof." The rabbi leaned forward in his chair. "The horse sees his reflection in the water. He doesn't know he is seeing himself; he thinks there is another horse at the pool. The horse is afraid there won't be enough water for both of them. So he tries to chase away the other horse by stamping."

The rabbi paused.

"But there is plenty of water for many horses. G-d's abundance flows like a river."

The rabbi leaned back in his chair and smiled. For the first time that day, the shop-keeper smiled back.

Hashem created a wonderful world. He has given us his Torah and Mitzvot and told us not to worry. There is plenty of water for everyone.

So long as we keep the faith and understand that there is a G-d in charge, we cannot lose through the actions of others. Somewhere along the line, at some time, all will be complete.

Those that keep Shemita are termed by our Sages as Giborei Koach -- people that have immense strength. Their strength lies in allying all their blessings to G-d. They are aware that it is only G-d that provides for their everyday lives.

Before we enter Shavuot we are taught an important lesson. Torah is not just another intellectual book, studied by sages. Rather it is a book of life a gift from G-d and in order to receive such a wonderful Torah we must show our belief. It is Hashem that provides, He is in charge and it is from His blessing that we constantly live. Let us internalise this as we enter and rejoice once again in the giving of His Torah this coming Shavuot.

Shabbat Shalom

Imagine if you were going to introduce someone for the first time to the concept of Mitzvot. Would you tell them about a Mitzvah that has no reasoning or understanding, or would you rather tell them about the beauty of Shabbat or the great pleasure we have in fulfilling other Mitzvot that the person can understand or have a feeling for?

The Mitzvot can be divided into three categories:

Eidut -- Mitzvot that are testimonial of historical events such as Shabbat and Chagim. These are Mitzvot we would not have done on our own but once commanded to do them we understand their importance. Tzitzit, we wouldn't think of ourselves but now we know they are there to remind us of the Mitzvot, it makes sense.

Mishpatim -- Laws that we would implement on our own whether we were commanded to do them or

not, such as not lying, or not murdering, and the like.

Chukim -- Laws that are seemingly without rhyme or reason. We don't understand these Statutes logically, but we do them because we were

"G-d desires that certain Mitzvot remain above our finite, human mind and be fulfilled by us just because He commanded so."

commanded to do so by G-d, eg. Kashrut, or Shaatnez.

G-d felt it was important for us to humanly grasp the concepts behind

some of the Mitzvot. Although the Torah is G-d's Infinite Wisdom, He brought down certain elements to our level of understanding. However, in the case of Chukim, G-d desires that certain Mitzvot remain above our finite, human mind and be fulfilled by us just because He commanded so.

Why then does the second of this week's Parshiot begin with the words "Im Bechukotai Teilechu" -- if you will follow in my statutes. The Torah uses the word Chukotai which implies a Chok, a category of Mitzvot that has no logical understanding. It should have rather used the category of Eidut or Mishpatim, which describes Mitzvot which one can understand.

p.t.o.

Preparation!

Rabbi Menachem Junik



Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe explains in Lekutei Torah that the word Bechukotai comes from the Hebrew word Chakikah, which means engraved. On a Sefer Torah, Tefilin or Mezuzah, ink is used to write on the parchment and they bond together to become one. However, over time, the ink can fade away from the parchment..

When it comes to the Luchot – the Ten Commandments, we find that they were engraved through and through, the letters could never be removed or fade away.

This is what the Torah is trying to tell us. When you are doing a Mitzvah – not only a Chok but any other Mitzvah, we have to see to it that we become one with the Torah that we are learning or the Mitzvot that we are doing.

Seven years ago, at the end of the last Shemita cycle, a secular farmer whose produce is bananas decided that he would undertake to keep Shemita.

He approached the “Keren HaShvi’it” organization for assistance, and they stipulated that he would be registered in their program if he would also undertake to personally observe Shabbat throughout the Shemita year. He agreed and the organization undertook to cover his farming expenses, in return for which all the produce would become the property of “Otzar Beit Din” and would be distributed in full accordance with Jewish law. And then a major spell of cold weather gripped the Land of Israel for over 2 weeks. Bananas don’t like cold. When bananas get hit with frost while still growing, they turn brown and become rock-solid hard.

The banana farmer knew he was in deep trouble when the relentless cold hadn’t let up for over a week.

There are times that our relationship with G-d can be compared to a Sefer Torah. That whilst one is Davening or learning, we feel very connected and close to Hashem. But as soon as one has ceased doing the Mitzvah, life goes on and the inspiration fades away, and we don’t feel as connected as we did whilst performing the Mitzvah. This is just like the ink that could fade off the Sefer Torah.

But then there is a much deeper and stronger way to connect to Hashem, which is compared to the Luchot, which were engraved on both sides. That when one is learning Torah or performing a Mitzvah we become one with Hashem, that the inspiration of it is felt and seen in us long after the Mitzvah was concluded, i.e. Long after one finishes Davening, the inspiration of the Tefillah is with us throughout the day and keeps us inspired.

This is why the Torah uses the word Bechukotai. It stresses that all Mitzvot, whatever category they fall into, should be engraved in our hearts and minds, to the extent that us, and the Torah, become one, and part and partial of our existence, with long lasting effects.

One may ask how do I get to this level to be united to Hashem with a true oneness? The Medrash Tanchumah says that G-d made a dwelling place for His holiness in this world. It is Davka through transforming this physical world into a place for Hashem, through learning Torah and performing the Mitzvot, that we can achieve a true unity with G-d.

As the Torah writes in Parshat Terumah “Make for me a Mikdash and I will rest amongst you.” We all have the power to attain the greatest spiritual heights through our Mitzvot.

Our Chachamim



As his orchard was some distance from where he lived, he hadn’t seen the damage with his own eyes. His neighbouring farmers, whose orchards bordered his, started to call him, complaining bitterly that their entire banana crop had been destroyed by the frost. He decided it was time to inspect the damage, no matter how painful it might be.

He drove up close to Tiveria (Tiberias) to inspect his orchard. Passing by his neighbours’ orchards, one after another, he was overwhelmed by the damage. Not a single fruit had survived; no tree was spared. All the bananas were brown, hard as rock. He could only imagine how bad his trees must be.

When he finally got to his orchard, he couldn’t believe his eyes. Not one of his bananas was brown. It was as though his orchard was in a totally different place. His orchard bor-

dered those of his neighbours, but not a single tree of his was struck by the frost. It was as if a protective wall kept the damage away. At first he thought he was imagining it, but as he moved from one section of his orchard to another, he realized that “more than the farmer keeps the Shemita, the Shemita keeps the farmer”. He immediately called his contacts at Keren HaShvi’it and yelled into the phone, “Karah nes!, karah nes!” “There’s been a miracle! There’s been a miracle!”

A miraculous modern-day manifestation of “I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year...”

As a result of this miracle, his neighbors who previously refused to keep Shemita turned to the Keren and decided they were now ready to commit to Shemita observance.

PHONE CITY
020 8731 8887
Golders Green
Proudly sponsor TAL
90 Golders Green Road, London NW11 8LN

WHITE HOUSE
& express
ISOLA BELLA
CAFÉ - RESTAURANT
020 8203 2427
Proud sponsors of TAL

**KINGS WORLD REMOVALS**
SHIPPING TO ISRAEL
020 8338 3999
www.kingsremovals.com

- Why does the Torah specify that the laws of shemita were taught on Har Sinai?
25:1 - To teach us that just as shemita was taught in detail on Har Sinai, so too, all the mitzvot were taught in detail on Har Sinai.
- If one possesses shemita food after it is no longer available in the field, what must he do with it?
25:7 - Remove it from his property and declare it ownerless.
- The Torah commands, "You shall sanctify the fiftieth year." How is this done?
25:10 - At the beginning of the year the Beit Din declares, "This year is kadosh (sanctified)."
- Which two "returns" are announced by the shofar during yovel?
25:10 - The return of the land to its original owner, and the "return" (freedom) of the slave from slavery.
- From where does the yovel year get its name?
25:10 - From the sounding of the shofar. A ram's horn is called a yovel.



- What prohibitions are derived from the verse "v'lo tonu ish et amito -- a person shall not afflict his fellow"?
25:17 - One may not intentionally hurt people's feelings, nor give bad advice while secretly intending to reap benefit.
- What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?
25:18 - Exile.
- If shemita is observed properly, how long is the crop of the sixth year guaranteed to last?
25:21,22 - From Nissan of the sixth year until Sukkot of the ninth year.
- After selling an ancestral field, when can one redeem it?
25:24 - After two years following the sale, until yovel. At the beginning of yovel it returns to the family automatically.
- Under what circumstance may one sell ancestral land?
25:25 - Only if one becomes impoverished.

Printed with permission Ohr Samayach in English

TAL's Lag Ba'Omer BBQ



Knesset Yehezkel (R Bassous) & TAL hosted world renowned speaker Rabbi Jonathan Rietti for a fantastic shiur on Techiyat Hametim and Simchat Chayim.



MAZAL TOV TO - Rabbi and Rebetzin Kaplan on the birth of a grandson in Israel