

Behar Bechukosai

May 7-8, 2021

25-26 Iyar, 5781

Faith

This week's pairing of Parshas is about emuna. Hashem reiterated in the beginning of Behar, the laws that were stated at Har Sinai originally. One may ask, why did Hashem repeat here, that which was said on Har Sinai, versus every set of laws before this that theoretically was stated in some form at Har Sinai as well? The answer lies in what was being stated.

This week's parsha in addition to telling us what punishments could befall someone who doesn't guard the mitzvos, it also tells us of extremely faith-based commandments. Hashem therefor reminds us, just as at the moment of the giving of the tablets, it was unequivocally true the ability of a Jew to follow in Hashem's ways, and furthermore it was undeniable what Hashem said at that moment, so too the commandments listed in beginning of Behar require huge leaps of faith. This begins with the laws of sabbatical, and Jubilee, in which a person whose entire sustenance and livelihood comes from farming, is required to halt production, because Hashem says so. One can rationalize that land resting, and taking a sabbatical has great value, this is post-hoc analysis. We take a rest because Hashem said so.

The next set of laws included taking a Jewish slave and charging interest. The Maharal points out that it is not obvious that there should be Jewish slaves. This is a similar sentiment I wrote about in Parshas Mishpatim, but notwithstanding the legal

method by which a Jewish person can be enslaved to another Jew, one ought to treat them with respect and dignity. Similarly, one may not take advantage of someone in a financial predicament, such that they charge predatory loans, or for that matter, interest at all, as this will disbenefit more likely, the borrower. Plus, by charging interest, one does not put their faith in Hashem that He provides a livelihood. (There are legal ways that are condoned in Judaism, as a method by which the "lender" is helping the borrower, or Heter Iska)

There are two things in life the Gemara says are equated to the splitting of the red sea, that is finding a shidduch and parnasah. This is a massive leap of faith, to rely on and believe that Hashem provides sustenance for us all.

Then all this culminates in Bechukosai, where Hashem reminds us where sustenance comes from, and that rain in its time, is literal, and allegorical, that sustenance is from Hashem in its time.

May we have the faith to know that it is all from Hashem, and may we be blessed with Parnasah, health, and Nachas in abundance.

Good Shabbos.