

Parshas Behar-Bechukosai

This week's pairing of the Parshas ends the book of Vayikra. The theme of the Sefer is sacrifice, as most of the sefer deals with Korbanos, and the goal is to work on being holy, which covers both Israelites and Kohanim. The concluding two Parshas, in some ways, culminate with commandments that require a leap of faith that can be achieved through the work of the previous Parshas.

On the name of the first Parsha, "Behar," Rashi asks why the Parsha tells us that these Mitzvos were said at Har Sinai, weren't all the Mitzvos said at Har Sinai? The answer Rashi explains, and I covered in previous versions since these laws weren't covered again by Moshe Rabbeinu (in Devarim) they are stated here, and this tells us that all the rules were taught at Har Sinai, even if Moshe Rabbeinu didn't repeat them. I elucidated further that we can learn that these following laws require much faith (i.e., leaving your land for Shemitta and trusting in Hashem for your sustenance) is a reminder that the Mitzvos come from Hashem, and therefore Hashem's blessing will be imbued in the activity. Moshe Rabbeinu repeating this may construe for a person that Moshe somehow will guarantee the outcome, but we are reminded that no, it is Hashem who provides. Therefore, we are told to remember that these laws are from Hashem, as stated at Har Sinai. It is not just a snapshot from the period the words were transmitted; it is written for all eternity, including us in our generation. What is the first set of laws? To

acknowledge and participate in Shemitta¹. And what happens, says the Torah, if you listen to the ordinances (posuk 18)?

Hashem will provide sustenance in its time (and more protections or blessings are supplied).

Parshas Bechukosai begins with the statement, "If you will fulfill my laws faithfully and you perform them...." (I will give the rain in its time etc.). A Chok is a statute that is told to perform without reason other than Hashem wanting us to do that mitzvah. A Chok is also an etching or scratching into something. The Alter Rebbe explains that every Jew is likened to a letter in the Torah. But unlike a note in a Torah scroll, the Freidieker Rebbe explains that we are like the etching of a letter found on the Luchos, i.e., in stone, i.e., permanent. So even if the etching is covered by dust and dirt, it can be revealed with some work. Ibn Ezra states on the first posuk that the commandment here is to study, teach and observe Torah. All three must be a part of our lives as servants of Hashem. The Torah, being the language of Hashem, is the way we communicate and connect with Hashem, but that is not enough; we must then act on the communication and connection, but that isn't enough; we must teach others to do the same (as the Baal Shem Tov elaborated, when you know Aleph, you must teach Aleph).

Posuk 6 says peace will be in the land, and Ibn Ezra points out peace means among yourselves. This can mean, between one and themselves, between a person and others, between Jews and other Jews, between Jews and the rest of the world, or

¹ The Torah states that there are 7-7-year cycles that end in Yovel. This is an annual version of the 49 days of Sefiras Haomer which ends on the "50th" day, i.e., the giving of the Torah. It also models the 6 millennia

before welcoming Mashiach on the 7th millennium (i.e., Shabbos). The 7-year cycle is like the 7 days of the week.

the rest of the world and itself. The point is that with Torah, peace can be achieved upon the land. Why is Torah the antidote for hate and fighting? Because Torah and Hora'ah are rooted in the same. Hora'ah, to teach or give guidance. Teaching something means exuding it, making it public, and living as an example. It should be observable behaviour. Living with the Torah will result in a meaningful positive impact on the world because you will also come to realize that this is Hashem's world, and Hashem creates everything. Therefore, everything has a spiritual role to play. So, when we live in a world telling us to be mindful of the environment or respect other humans, it isn't because of all the bad things that have happened; it's the opposite. Because this world is so beautiful, and Hashem's world, how dare we destroy it.

Whether we will feel like this can be accomplished, it is optics and training; it starts from ourselves and will result in changing the world around us, so we can "Venischazek" (be strong as stated at the end of the sefer Vayikra). In this merit, we will count the days of Omer until we receive the Torah, with Mashiach, Good Shabbos!