

Parshas Behar Bechukosai

This week, once again, is a double parsha of Behar and Bechukosai, which discuss the Shnas Hashmita and the Yovel year that follows the 7 cycles of shmita (i.e., the 50th year). In Bechukosai, Hashem affirms that keeping the laws will result in material success and safety. These two Parsheos convey a messianic message: there is a cycle of time before society must rest. In the case of the cycle of seven, this refers to the epochs since the beginning of creation, which end with the final Jubilee, that is, the time when Hashem's supremacy will be revealed to the entire world. The next parsha, Bechukosai, highlights and affirms that the path to achieving spiritual and physical safety is by following the Mitzvas. Part of the Avoda of Shemita and Yovel is complete trust in Hashem, as is the importance of keeping Shabbos. Meaning, taking a rest on Shabbos from the mundane is not about the physical "rest" we get; rather, it is a declaration of the kingship of Hashem, that we trust He takes care of us, and that we are given over to Him.

A side point: in the Parsha, it speaks about not deceiving your fellow, specifically regarding selling land at a lower price because of its proximity to the Jubilee, when it will be returned to its original owners. The Posuk says 25:17 that man may not abuse his fellow man. Rashi explains that, in this context, the

Torah refers to verbal abuse, meaning a person should not advise their friend badly. This statute is fascinating because it is something so easy to trip up on, yet it happens all the time. It is a commandment from the Torah. One should be mindful that, in their actions, there are many Mitzvos they may keep as part of the routine, but there is also the way to act like a Jew, as in adages like the one mentioned in 25:17, which goes beyond an action. This is a Jewish way of life. Posuk 18 says that if you keep these statutes, you will live securely in the land. Then Perek 26, the beginning of the new Parsha Bechukosai, is about keeping the Mitzvos, specifically learning Torah. At the end of Behar, one may not excuse their behaviour because they are in the presence of an immoral master. In the Rashi on Posuk Aleph of Perek 26, Rashi explains that the repetition of not taking idols is so that we cannot excuse our behaviour if we are in an immoral master's house. This is on a specific level, but on a general level, where Jews are in an immoral master's house, i.e. the nations of the world under which we find ourselves, that is, we are not in a messianic era where we are sovereign, we cannot excuse our behaviour, that "I am in an immoral master's house." Therefore, the Posuk tells us that we are in control of our own destiny. Furthermore, Rashi highlights the potential for lust for money to degrade, leading the person to sell themselves to the gentile master. This is preventative; if,

like the beginning of Bechukosai, we keep
the statutes of Hashem, specifically
learning Torah.