



**S. FLORIDA ZMANIM**

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**7:59 PM**

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**8:36 PM**

*"Written by a Multifaceted Student Body, Whose Ambition is to Enrich and Enhance Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion"*

## PARSHAT BEHAR

פרשת בהר

~ י' אייר תשע"א ~

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## STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK BONES, BUT WORDS CAN DO WORSE

RABBI BEN SUGERMAN

The Gemara in *Bava Metzia* (58b) makes the following observation: In our *pasha* (25:14) the Torah states: *"When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow, do not aggrieve one another."* However, three *psukim* later the Torah states: *"Each of you shall not aggrieve his fellow, and you shall fear your God, for I am Hashem your God."*

Is it merely a repetition of the prohibition? The Gemara teaches us that the second *pasuk* is not talking about financial abuse. Rather it's prohibiting verbal assault. We are prohibited from the Torah to verbally abuse another in any way that is hurtful.

The Gemara's point can be further supported by a closer look at the *pasuk*. The *pasuk* continues to state, "and you should fear Hashem". The Gemara in *Kiddushin* (32b) tells us that anytime something is not empirical, or objective, but is based solely on the intent of the person, the Torah reminds us to fear Hashem. This is to say that Hashem knows not only that which is demonstrable, but He knows what is in our heart as well. Had the second *pasuk* been discussing a financial assault, the violation would have been evident and would not need Divine scrutiny to assess the assault. (See *Vayikra* 19:14 and 19:32 for more examples of this idea).

The Gemara quotes in the name of R' Shimon Ben Yochai, that a verbal taunt is more egregious than monetary assault. A monetary assault does not affect the offended himself, merely his money, while a verbal assault is a direct affront. Rabbi Shmuel ben Nachmeini adds that while a monetary offense can be reimbursed, a verbal attack can never be undone.

The Gemara provides some simple examples: if someone is a *ba'al teshuva*, one should not remind him of his past. If someone asks for directions, don't send him on a wild goose chase. Don't ask a vendor the cost of something knowing full well that you have no interest in buying it. The *Sefer Chinuch* (mitzvah 338) points out that it is simply impossible for the Torah and the Gemara to illustrate all the examples that are encompassed under this prohibition.

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# HOW TO ATTAIN INNER-FREEDOM: JEWISH STYLE

KELLEY TRIPP ('13)

*Parshat Behar* offers the world an insight on how to build a society of freedom, justice, and human dignity. But, these guidelines on how to live a life of freedom are also revealed on a daily basis to the millions who visit Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love. Engraved on the Liberty Bell are the words "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land, onto all the inhabitants thereof." These words of freedom are words of the Torah, in fact found in *Parshat Behar* 25:10.

The fundamentals of how to achieve freedom are further defined in *Behar*, where it is written, "If your brother becomes impoverished with you and is sold to you; you shall not work him with slave labor. Like a laborer or a resident shall he be with you; until the Jubilee Year shall he work with you." The meaning of these *psukim* are clear: slavery is wrong. So then why does the Torah not abolish slavery completely, rather than promulgate it to go on with these concessions? Herein lays the key to a Jewish revolution. Inherent in the rules of Jewish slavery is a mechanism whereby slavery, over time, will become extinct. Any slave that is given the freedom of Shabbat, the freedom of his own time and his own day as prescribed by the Torah, cannot be a true slave. That is why, hundreds of years after the Torah has been given, the institution of slavery amongst Jews has dissolved.

The Rambam comments on the necessity of the element of time in transforming a people, where in *Parshat Beshalach* it states, "G-d did not lead them by way of the Philistines, for G-d said 'The people will be fearful when they see a war, and will return to Egypt'" (13:1). The Rambam asks, "Why did Hashem not give Bnei Yisrael courage, why did God not change the nature of man?" To be Jewish means that we, as a nation, are awarded the free will to make our own decisions, devoid of the input of Hashem. In miracles, God alters nature, but He never alters human nature. Therefore, man can only abolish slavery if he so chooses, and this process takes time. The attaining of liberty can only truly be achieved through man's own effort, as guided by the Torah, combined with man's valuing of time.

With the strategic placement of the *psukim* in *Behar*, Hashem teaches us that attaining true freedom is an evolving process; change is not instantaneous. Hashem is handing us the *midah* of patience as the essential ingredient for reaching inner freedom.

## MOUNTAIN DO

ELIANA FELDAN ('13)

Mount Sinai. The place where Hashem gave Bnei Yisrael the *Aseret Hadibrot*, uniting them into a single nation.

This week's *parsha* opens up with the words: "Hashem spoke to Moshe on the mountain of Sinai," *be-har Sinai*.

But, the word "mountain" and "Sinai," when separated, imply contrasting ideals. When hearing the word "mountain," one pictures a large mountain, tall and strong.

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On the other hand, the word "Sinai," originating from the Hebrew word *s'neh*, or thorn bush, symbolizes humility and simplicity. From the duality of the phrase *Har Sinai*, we experience the meshing of both confidence and modesty.

There are three stages in our spiritual growth. The first is represented by the single word "Sinai," the second by the combination of the two, and the third by the word "mountain."

One begins his or her spiritual journey with the word "Sinai," embracing his humility, and understanding the fact that he is in this world as a servant of Hashem. At this stage one realizes the insignificance of his worldly possessions, and learns to strip away his ego, finding his pure *neshama*.

Then comes the level of "Mount Sinai." This level combines both words, and is only achieved once one acknowledges his true connection to Hashem. Coupled with our humility, we are emboldened in our realization that we are created *betzelem Elokim*, in the image of God, and are directed by Him to bring His truth and love into this world. In this we find the perfect balance between negating ourselves and understanding that we are all Hashem's creations, and part of His beloved nation.

And finally, we are raised to the level of "*behar*," the mountain. In this phase, the word "Sinai," reminding us of the humility we must have, proves meaningless, for we are so close to Hashem that it is impossible to think otherwise. At this point, our strength comes solely from Hashem, our father, our creator.

Based on the ideas of Rabbi Ben A. of Chabad.org

## ההבטחה של שמיטה

SAGIV ZEHAVI ('12)

בפרשתינו נצטוינו במצות השמיטה, שכל שבע שנים, צריך החקלאי לעזוב את שדהו למשך שנה אחת.

נאמר בפרשה, וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית, הן לא נזרע ולא נאסוף את תבואתינו, וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית, ועשת את התבואה לשלוש השנים". (אין ההבטחה התורה לברכת השנה הששית, אלא בזמן שהיתה מצות השביעית מן התורה, מה שאין כן בזמנינו, שאינה אלא מדברי סופרים).

ובאמת יש מקום לשאול, מה טעם מצאה התורה להביא את טענתו של האיש הפשוט מן השורה "וכי תאמרו מה נאכל" וכו', והלא אם יבא אדם על כל מצוה וישאל ככל העולה על רוחו, נמצא שלא יקיים עוד מצות רבות מן התורה, כמו מצות מעשר וכיוצא בה, ובמה נשתנתה איפה מצות השמיטה משאר המצוות, שכאן מתחשבת התורה בשאלתו של האדם הפשוט?

אלא טעם הדבר הוא, שלא נמצא עוד נסיון קשה כל כך כמו מצות השמיטה, שיהא אדם עמל על שדותיו במשך שנים, וכעת הוא נאלץ לעזוב את שדהו למשך שנה תמימה אחת, ולראות איך ששדהו אינה מטופחת עוד, ובאים זרים ואוכלים פרי תבואתו, הלא זו גבורה שלא נמצאת כמותה כמעט בשום מצוה בתורה, עד שדרשו רבותינו על הפסוק "ברכו ה' מלאכיו גבורי כח עושי דברו", אלו שומרי שביעית.

כי אלו הזונחים את שדותיהם למען מצות ה', הנהגתם אינה על פי טבע, אלא מעל גדר הטבע, כעין המלאכים, גבורי כח, עושי דברו.

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ועל כן התחשבה כל כך התורה ברגשותיו של זה הנאלץ לעזוב את שדותיו, ומבטיחה לו, כי השם יתברך יברך אותו שמעמלו שבשנה הששית, תהיה לו ברכה בעמלו לכל שלוש השנים, ואל לו לדאוג לפרנסתו.

ומאחר וכך הם פני הדברים, שמצות השמיטה כל כך קשה היא, וגבורה גדולה צריך אדם לקיימה, אם כן מסתבר, כי ראוי שאמנם המקיים מצוה זו יקבל שכר רב על כך, אך לעומת זאת, מי שלא יוכל לעמוד בנסיון קשה כל כך, יש להתחשב בו, ולא ראוי להענישו קשות, על חטא זה.

ואילו התורה החמירה הרבה מאד בעונשים קשים למי שלא ישבית את שדהו בשנה זו, "אז תרצה הארץ את שבתותיה וכו'", והירצת את שבתותיה", שתשבות הארץ גם בשאר השנים כעונש על ביטול שביעית, ויגלו ישראל מארצם בעון זה, והדבר תימה, הלא אין כל הצדקה לעונש קשה כל כך על אי שביתת הארץ.

ועוד על כל זאת הוסיפו רבותינו חומרא על חומרא, ואמרו, מי שסוחר בפירות שביעית, לסוף מוכר את מטלטליו ואת ביתו. והדברים צריכים הסבר.

והביאור בזה, כי אמת הוא, שקודם שהבטיחה התורה "וצויתי את ברכתי", היה הנסיון במצות השמיטה גדול מאד, ולא היה ראוי להעניש את מי שימנע מלהשבית את אדמתו לשנה בעונש גדול.

אבל כעת, אחר שהבטיחה התורה "וצויתי את ברכתי", דורש ה' יתברך מכל אחד מישראל להאמין בדברי התורה בכל כוחו, ובכח אמונתו לא תיקשה עליו כלל מצות השמיטה, שהרי יודע הוא שכעת הוא נתון להשגחת ה' עליו שלא יאונה לו כל רע.

Rabbi Sugerman continued

The complexity and subtlety of human relationships lends itself for a person to offend his friend with a word, a smirk, or a simple roll of the eyes. It is incumbent upon us to raise our own awareness and be as conscious as possible as to make sure that we don't hurt others with words. The Gemara in *Megilla* (27b) reports that Rabbi Zakkai attributes his long life to never having affronting his friend.

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