



Parshas Behar & Bechukosai 2021, the bottom line

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the speedy recovery of Sasson Bezalel ben Batya and Shaul Ben Berta.

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated to the memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Edward Ben Shaul. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parshas begins with an overview of the laws of Shemitah and Yovel. Shemitah is a seven-year cycle in which we may farm the land for six years; however, we must let the land rest in the seventh year.

The Yovel cycle, which also requires letting the land rest, is the first year after seven Shemitah cycles. All Jewish slaves must be released this year, and all properties must be reverted back to their original owners.

The Torah then lists the amazing rewards that G-d will bestow upon us for following the Torah and listening to His Mitzvahs. However, the Parsha also informs us of the punishments that will be given if we disobey G-d's commandments C "V.

However, a question comes to mind: Why do we end off the book of Vayikra, which is primarily focused on laws for Kohanim (**priests**) in the Mishkan with the Mitzvah of shemitah? Shouldn't we finish Vayikra with mitzvahs that connect with the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash?!

Furthermore, this is not the first time that we have the Mitzvah of Shemitah. We learn about Shemitah in Parshas Mishpatim (Shemos 23:10-11), *"Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield. But in the seventh year, you shall let it rest.*

- *Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave, let the animals eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.*” Why does the Torah repeat this special Mitzvah at the beginning of our Parsha?!

The Chizkuni, Rav Chezekiah ben Manoah, answers this question by explaining what is added at the beginning of our Parsha. He writes that our Parsha attaches another Mitzvah with the laws of Shemitah, Yovel.

Since the Yovel cycle is inherently connected with Shemitah, for it is the year after seven Shemitah cycles. The Torah found it fitting to repeat Shemitah when commanding us about the Yovel cycle.

The Chizkuni continues that it was the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court’s responsibility to keep count of the Shemitah & Yovel cycles. The Lishkas Hagazis (*the chamber of stone*) in the Beis Hamikdash courtyard served as the Sanhedrin seat; the Torah finishes off Sefer Vayikra with these unique Mitzvahs.

However, Rabbi Sacks of blessed memory in his book *Covenant & Conversation* gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He explains that the Mitzvah of Shemitah is the culmination of all the holiness and spirituality that can be achieved and earned from the Beis Hamikdash. Because resting the land during Shemitah requires a vast amount of trust and belief in G-d.

This is why the Torah mentions in the first Pasuk of our Parsha that Shemitah was given at Har Sinai. For Har Sinai teaches us that we must have a slight ego and Jewish pride to have the courage to hold firm in our belief in G-d.

When a terrible tragedy like what happened at Meron on Lag B’Omer this year, we still keep our trust and even strengthen our connection to G-d.

The Talmud in Shabbos writes (31A) that the first question a person will be asked when they reach the Heavenly Court will not be if they had time to study Torah? But instead, did they conduct and manage their business dealing honestly and ethnically?!

Rabbi Sacks explains that the pinnacle of holiness is when it directly affects and changes your physical life. That your daily routine and activities are changed not only to fit the laws of society but to the sanctity of G-d.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that beyond all religiosity or devotion to G-d, we first must be a kind and benevolent people. We can never use our faith in G-d to be hostile and combative with any person, for we are all part of G-d's creations.

Moreover, the fact that we have a connection to G-d obligates us further to be sympathetic, understanding, and charitable to the less fortunate.

This idea was displayed and demonstrated after the horrific tragedy at Meron last week. When thousands of people lined up to donate blood to those in need. This was done irrespective of knowing or agreeing with those who were injured.

In the merit of this amazing demonstration of unity, may G-d comfort the families that have lost their fathers, husbands, or children. May He give a complete and speedy recovery to those who were injured.

“Individually we are a drop but together, we are an ocean.”

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*