

Yad Avraham Institute
Weekly Torah Commentaries Series
Behar – Bechukosai

May 6, 2010

Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita

<i>Inside This Week's Edition</i>	<u>Page</u>
1. Man Ascending in Holiness Through the Study of Torah	2
2. The Secret of Being Satisfied with One's Lot	2
3. The Subliminal and Obvious Message of G'd	3
4. G'd's Place in Existence	4
5. "Ten", the All Encompassing Number	5

About the Yad Avraham Institute

The Yad Avraham is a Torah learning institute located in midtown Manhattan. Classes are offered every day during the week starting at 5:50am and throughout the day. Classes in Chumash, Halacha, Hashkofa, Gemara, and general topics are well attended by businessmen, professionals, and students. The Yad Avraham invites you to participate in our extensive offerings of classes and events.

If you would like to receive this Weekly Torah Commentary Series by email

Please call 212-371-9555 or email:

info@yadavraham.org

TUNE IN TO OUR LIVE VIDEO BROADCAST OF CLASSES

And over

60,000 online classes 24 hours a day

Yad Avraham Institute
New York
May 6, 2010

B"H

Behar – Bechukosai

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita

Dean

1. Man Ascending in Holiness Through the Study of Torah

The Torah states, **“If you will follow My Statutes and observe My Commandments and perform them...”** Rashi cites the *Toras Kohanim* which states, “The verse **‘If you will follow in My Statutes’** is referring specifically to toiling in the Study of Torah’. If one toils in the Study of Torah and is dedicated to the performance of its mitzvos then one will merit unlimited bounty.” The Torah continues, **“...I will place My Sanctuary among you; and My Spirit will not reject you.”** Rashi cites Chazal who explain, “This is referring to the building of the Holy Temple.” If one follows the dictates of the Torah and diligently engages in its study, one will merit that “I (G’d) will walk with you in the Garden of Eden and you will not be afraid of Me.”

The Torah tells us that before the sin of the Golden Calf the Jewish people were elevated to the level of prophecy of face to face with G’d (they prophesized in a wake-state). However, after they had sinned with idolatry they could not gaze upon the face of Moshe when he descended from the mountain because of the radiance that emanated from him. Rashi cites Chazal who explain that before the sin of the Golden Calf they had the capacity to tolerate the holiness of the Divine Presence because of their pure spiritual state. However, after the sin of the Golden Calf, because they had become tainted and diminished they could no longer even gaze upon the radiance of Moshe.

Chazal tell us that before Adam had sinned with the Tree of Knowledge, the location of the Divine Presence was intended to be on the terrestrial plain. However, after Adam putrefied existence by eating of the Tree, physical existence was no longer qualified to be the location of the Divine Presence. The Torah tells us that after the Sinai event, G’d commanded the Jewish people to build the Mishkan so that He could dwell in their midst. The Mishkan was to be the location of the Divine Presence. If the Jew becomes fully invested in Torah through toiling in its study and performing its mitzvos,

then the Jewish people will assume as state of spirituality that will be the equivalent of the Mishkan. They will have the capacity to contain the Holy Presence of G’d.

The Torah tells us that the Tribe of Levy did not receive a portion in the Land or in the spoils of war, because they were set aside to serve G’d, **“Who is their portion.”** It was G’d Himself Who provided for the Tribe of Levy. Rambam at the end of the Laws of Shmitta and Yovel writes, “Not only the tribe of Levy (was chosen to be G’d’s portion) but any individual who dedicates his spirit for Him and is willing to separate himself and stand before G’d to serve and worship Him- to know G’d and walk a straight path as G’d had made him. If this individual chooses to throw-off the yoke of the concerns of the masses, which humanity seeks out, he has sanctified himself to be the equivalent of the Holy of Holies. G’d will be his portion and his lot forever. G’d will provide for him in this world with his needs as He provided for the tribe of Levy.” If the Jew dedicates himself to his spirituality, he will ascend to the level of the Tribe of Levy and is provided for by G’d. It would seem that this prescription to be able to assume the holiness of the Sanctuary is stated explicitly by the Torah, **“If you will follow My Statutes and observe My Commandments and perform them...(you will merit unlimited bounty) and I will place My Sanctuary among you .”**

2. The Secret of Being Satisfied with One’s Lot

The Midrash cites a verse from Proverbs, “ ‘The one who is overwhelmed with the desire for wealth has an evil eye, he does not know that diminishment shall come upon him.’ This verse is referring to many individuals. An example of one who was overwhelmed with a desire for wealth to his detriment was Cain. G’d said to Cain, ‘Your desire for wealth was so great that you wanted to possess the world. I swear on your life, that you will have diminishment.’ What was the consequence of his drive for wealth? He became a wanderer (After he had killed his brother Abel, he wandered from place to place until the end of his life). Thus, his drive caused him to have no permanence in existence. Another example of one who

was overwhelmed by his desire for wealth was Ephron the Hittite. (He was the one who had sold the cave of Machpelah to Avraham our Patriarch to be the burial location for Sarah, his wife.) After Avraham had entered into negotiation to purchase the Machpelah, Ephron responded, **'My lord, heed me! Land worth four hundred shekels; between me and you what is it?'** (Although he was asking Avraham for an enormous sum, he attempted to make it seem trivial between the two of them.) Avraham began to weigh out an unprecedented amount of silver before him...When Ephron saw the enormous pile of silver he became overwhelmed and excited. G'd said to him, 'Because you were so taken by the enormous amount of silver in the end you will have deficiency.' What was the deficiency? Reb Yehudah bar Levy Bar Shalom said that until Ephron had taken the silver from Avraham, when his name is mentioned in the Torah it is written in its full spelling. However, after he had taken the payment that Avraham had given him, his name is written in a deficient form, with the letter 'vav' deleted. In addition, the one who lends money with interest or who derives financial benefit from the produce of the Sabbatical year shall not succeed, but rather he shall be diminished..." It is interesting to note that Rabbeinu Bachya explains that the numerical value of the name "Ephron" with the letter 'vav' deleted is the equivalent value of the words *'ayin rah-* evil eye).The one who is not satisfied with his lot is one who feels needy and thus has relevance to the evil eye. Consequently, he looks upon others with envy.

The Gemara in Tractate Shabbos states, "One's material allocation is set from Rosh Hashanah to Rosh Hashanah." Meaning, G'd allocates one's financial needs for the entire upcoming year on Rosh Hashanah. One cannot earn more than what G'd had allotted to him, regardless of his initiatives. In order to draw upon his allocation, he needs to take a sufficient level of initiative. The guidelines for those initiatives are determined by the parameters that are set forth in the Torah by G'd. If one were to lend money with interest to a fellow Jew, which is a violation of a negative commandment, although one may believe that it is an easy way to succeed financially, Chazal tell us, through the words of Proverbs, that he will ultimately be diminished.

It is stated in the Ten Commandments **"Do not covet your fellow's house...your fellow's wife...nor anything that belongs to your fellow."** How is it possible for one who envies another to control that envy? Ibn Ezra explains this with an allegory. A commoner is not envious of a prince when he chooses the princess for his bride. Regardless of the beauty and qualities of the princess, there is no envy because he understands that she

has no relevance to him because he is a commoner. She is not within his context of choice. Identically, if one would understand that every individual's personal predicament is unique and tailored by G'd for that person, then he will realize that what his fellow possesses has no relevance to him. Consequently, he will have no envy. If one in fact has designs on his fellow's possessions, it is only because he did not internalize this belief.

When one lives his life within the context of the guidelines of the Torah and sufficiently addresses his spirituality, then his material initiatives will be considered commendable because they are only a means and not an end. He will be following the principle, stated in the Mishna in Ethics of Our Fathers, "Your Torah shall be primary and your work shall be secondary." However, if one chooses to pursue material success at the cost of his own spirituality, then he will surely be diminished because he does not grasp the fact that G'd has already set his financial capacity. Rather this individual believes that he is the one who determines his financial destiny. This individual will surely be compromised and diminished because he has relevance to the evil eye.

3. The Subliminal and Obvious Message of G'd

The Torah tells us that it is forbidden to derive financial benefit from the produce of the Sabbatical year. The Gemara in Tractate Kiddushin states that if a person engages in commercial transactions with produce of the Sabbatical Year he will face many severe consequences which will evolve over time. This person will have to initially sell his movable assets and subsequently his fixed assets (properties and house). Eventually because of his financial difficulties will need to sell his daughter into slavery, and ultimately be forced to sell himself as a slave. The Gemara tells us that when one initially is confronted with these difficulties he should appreciate that it is because he had transgressed and thus should be motivated to correct his wrongdoings. However if he glosses over the problem and remains oblivious to his circumstance, G'd will further complicate his financial state and ultimately cause him to lose everything (including his freedom).

The Midrash states, "If a problem arises in one's life and he repents, then G'd will save him from it. G'd will alleviate an individual's difficulties once, twice, and every time he repents. However, if one experiences tragedy and does not repent, then G'd will intensify his problem. (It is because G'd only brings difficulties upon

the individual to alert him to repent.) How does G'd test the Jewish people to see if they will repent? He initially brings tragedy upon the nations of the world so that the Jewish people should take heed. As it states, 'I have destroyed nations and made their corners desolate. When they (the Jewish people) see My Wrath they will repent.'...If they repent it will be good for them. If not, they will suffer financially. As it states, 'The strangers took what they had invested...' If after experiencing financial difficulty they repent, it will be good for them, and if not, then the one Jewish city will be consumed in a conflagration. One should not say, 'If there are difficulties, it is not because of me.' One must understand how difficult it is for G'd to punish living beings. Because of this, G'd initially exacts punishment by diminishing one's possessions."

The Midrash continues, "Elimelech the Prince of Israel, Naomi, and their two sons left the Land of Israel because there was a famine in the Land. G'd saw that they had left the Land desolate and became enraged. Since he was the Prince, Elimelech had responsibilities to the Jewish people. G'd said, 'You abandoned My children and left the Land desolate.' As a result Elimelech died. Then tragedies came upon his family. They should have taken heed and returned to the Land, but because they did not, their children married Moabite women. Ultimately they died..." G'd initially tries to alert the Jewish people to repent by bringing cataclysmic events upon the world. If they do not, then He will bring financial loss upon them. If they still do not repent, then He will bring greater tragedy upon them.

If one reflects upon what has transpired in the world in recent times, one cannot avoid taking heed. From cataclysmic natural disasters (tsunami, earthquakes, volcanoes), to financial instability, to the destabilization of the security of existence, one must begin putting these events in perspective. One must understand that all that has taken place is clearly being orchestrated by G'd. Chazal tell us that one cannot say, "It is not because of me that these events occur." The Jewish people must take heed that all these upheavals are intended to cause them to reflect upon their behavior and repent. If G'd forbid we should chose to ignore G'd's call for repentance, then the tragedies will increase in intensity. However, if the Jewish people repent, then G'd will surely bring the ultimate redemption.

4. G'd's Place in Existence

The Torah states, "When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a Sabbath rest for Hashem. For six years you may sow your field and for six years you may prune your vineyard; and you may gather in its crop." During the Sabbatical year (seventh year), the Land must remain fallow. The reason the Land must remain fallow on the seventh year is not because it needs to be rejuvenated (based on the rotating crop method of agriculture), but rather it is "a Shabbos for Hashem."

Sforno explains, "The year that the Land should remain fallow is considered to be a Shabbos for Hashem. One should establish the year for His service as we find regarding the Shabbos of Creation. As it states, **'It shall be a Sabbath for Hashem, your G'd.'**" Just as the Shabbos at the end of every week should be a day designated for spirituality and service of G'd so too should the Sabbatical year.

The Torah continues, "**But the seventh year shall be a complete rest for the land, a Shabbos for Hashem; your field you shall not sow...**" Sforno explains, "When the farmer will cease to work during the Sabbatical year, he will be aroused to serve G'd." Even the unlearned laborer, who ordinarily is not motivated to engage in spiritual matters, because of the special Divine Assistance that is available in that year, will become aroused to serve G'd. The Jew becomes spiritualized to a greater degree. G'd's association with the Land of Israel during the seventh year not only impacts upon the individual, it also affects the produce of that year- giving it a holy status. Because of its holy status, it must be dealt with and consumed in a special manner. During the seventh year of the Sabbatical Cycle, one is not permitted to exercise any degree of ownership rights relating to the agricultural aspects of the land. This demonstrates that the world belongs to G'd.

The Gemara in Tractate Beitzah tells us that since the beginning of existence, the sanctity of the Shabbos is set and fixed in place, regardless of the existence of the Jewish people. However, the sanctity of the Festivals and other Holidays are determined by the declaration of the Sanhedrin. They establish and determine the beginning of the month based on their Sanctification of the New Moon. When the Festival coincides with Shabbos the blessing of the Holiday and Shabbos concludes, "...Blessed are you, Hashem Who sanctifies the Shabbos, Israel and the festivals." Meaning, that G'd initially sanctified the

Shabbos and subsequently He sanctified the Jewish people. Thus, because of their own sanctity, the Jewish people have the ability to sanctify time to establish the sanctity of the Festivals. The sanctity of the Jew is thus an extension of the sanctity of Shabbos. It is the Jew's observance and adherence to the laws of the Shabbos, which establishes his relationship with G'd and is thereby sanctified.

Similarly, the sanctity of the Sabbatical year is fixed and in place. During this time, because of G'd's proximity, the Jew becomes spiritualized to a greater degree. G'd's association with the Land of Israel during the seventh year not only impacts upon the individual, it also affects the produce of that year giving it a holy status. Because of its holy status, it must be dealt with and consumed in a special manner. The sanctity of the produce of the Sabbatical year cannot be removed just as the sanctity of the Shabbos cannot be affected.

During the Sabbatical year, the Jewish people must rely completely on G'd providing for their needs since they are not permitted to engage in any agricultural activities. While the Jewish people were in the desert for forty years, regardless of their level of initiative, G'd provided what was needed for every individual. The setting in the desert was a semblance of the world to come because the Jewish people were engulfed in the Divine Presence. They had no material concern because He provided for them in every way. The Torah tells us that on the Shabbos, G'd's Presence enters into existence and permeates it, regardless of the sin of Adam or any subsequent spiritual decline of the Jewish people. The Sanctity of the Shabbos remains unchanged since the time of Creation because G'd's Presence in the world is not diminished on the Shabbos. It is because of this, it is referred to by the Gemara as being "a semblance of the world to come." The Sabbatical year in the Land of Israel is also possesses a semblance of the world to come because of its level of sanctity that is rooted in Shabbos which is permanent.

One should engage in spiritual pursuits during the Sabbatical year not only because they have the time to do so since they are not burdened with their agricultural responsibilities, but rather it is because G'd is more available to the Jew during this time. Since the Sabbatical year has a semblance of the world to come, one may be able to access greater levels of Divine Assistance during it. We recite at the conclusion of the Amidah (silent prayer) "May it be Your will, Hashem our G'd and the G'd of our forefathers, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt, speedily in our days. Grant us a share in Your Torah..." Why do we mention having a share in G'd's Torah in conjunction with

the rebuilding of the Temple? It is because when His Divine Presence is in our midst then we will have greater relevance to sanctity and holiness. Therefore we will have greater access to our share in Torah which is rooted in His Holiness.

5. "Ten", the All Encompassing Number (from Emor)

The Torah states, "**When an ox or sheep or a goat is born...**" These are the only three domesticated species that qualify to be brought as an offering. The Midrash cites a verse from Micha, " 'My nation, what did I do to you? I want you to attest to the fact that I did not make you weary by burdening you with My mitzvos...' Reb Yehudah b'Reb Simon said, 'G'd said to the Jewish people, 'I have given you ten kosher species. Three of the species are under your jurisdiction and seven of them are not. The ox, sheep, and goat are domesticated and are easily available to you. The other seven undomesticated species...I did not want to inconvenience you by asking you to ascend the mountains or to exhaust yourselves by traversing the fields in order to bring those species that are not under your jurisdiction to Me as a sacrifice. Rather, I chose the species that grow and develop in your domain and are nurtured with your feedbag and trough. Therefore these domesticated species are a testament that I did not want to burden you with My mitzvos.'"

It is interesting to note that of the ten kosher species, seven of them are not under one's jurisdiction. Rabbeinu Bachya and Maharal of Prague explain that the number seven always connotes and symbolizes the natural order. The Creation of existence was a seven-day process, culminating with the Shabbos. The fact that there are seven kosher species that are outside of one's domain signifies that although one may believe that one's initiative in the material will cause one to succeed, factually it is G'd who determines one's destiny. In reality, the seven, which is nature is not under one's jurisdiction. This is the concept that is stated in the Gemara in Tractate Berachos states, "All is predetermined by heaven except the fear of heaven." Every aspect of one's life is predetermined by G'd with the exception of one's choice to be devoutly righteous or evil.

The Mishna in Ethics of Our Father states, "The world was created through the Ten Utterances of G'd." Rabbeinu Bachya explains in his commentary on the Portion of Bereishis that we find that the number "ten" manifests itself many times during the developmental period of the Jewish people. Because existence came about

through His Ten Utterances, Avraham needed to be given ten tests. In addition, G'd brought ten plagues upon Egypt, which precipitated and caused the exodus to allow the Jewish people to stand at Sinai and received the Ten Commandments. The number "ten" signifies something that touches upon every aspect of the spirituality of existence. If this is so, it would be logical to assume that all of the ten kosher species that were created by G'd should be qualified to be brought as sacrifices. Ramban explains that by bringing sacrifices, the Jewish people coalesce all of the spiritual influences that come into existence. However, G'd only chose three of the ten species, which are domesticated to be brought as sacrifices. He did not want to "inconvenience and burden" the Jewish people to bring animals that were no within their domain. Thus, the seven is out of the control of the Jew. However, there are three Kosher species that are qualified to be brought as a sacrifice because they are in the domain of the Jew and under his control. This signifies that the area of atonement which touches upon the spirituality of the Jew is the only are in which he is able to exercise free choice. Everything outside of the spiritual context is predetermined by G'd.

The value of bringing of the sacrifice is to bring about atonement, spiritual rehabilitation, and advancement. This process only exists within the context of the Attribute of Mercy. G'd has provide a mechanism for atonement, despite one's spiritual failing in order to allow one to regain his spiritual standing. This is connoted by the Torah identifying the sacrifice as "*Korban L'shem* – A sacrifice for Hashem (YKVK)", which is the appellation of G'd that connotes the Attribute of Mercy. We see that within this level of Mercy that G'd allows for the Jewish people, there is even another dimension of Kindness and Mercy. Although there are ten species which should qualify as sacrifices, which is the equivalent of the totality of existence, G'd wants the Jewish people to only bring three for the sake of not burdening His people. The three domesticated species touch upon all that the "ten" would have affected.

YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Through Friday

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Pirkei Avos (Maharal)
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar – Path of the Just
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Tractate Makkos
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna - Rabbi Rovner
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi- Bava Basra
2:00pm	Mincha

Special Weekday Classes

Monday

11:30 – 12:30pm	Talmud: Chagigah Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street
1:00-2:00 pm	Ramchal: Derech Hashem Location: Cedarview Capital 1Penn Plaza (45 th FL.)

Tuesday

12:10 - 1:10pm	Torah Insight Based on the Parsha Location: Yad Avraham
----------------	---

Wednesday

11:30 – 12:30 pm	Talmud: Chagigah Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street
1:00—2:00 pm	Rambam Hilchos Talmud Torah Location: Yad Avraham

Thursday

11:00 –12:00pm	Duties of The Heart Location: Yad Avraham
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Talmud: Chagigah Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL)