

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHIOT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI · 24 IYAR 5773 - MAY 4, 2013 · VOL. 20 NO. 32

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### HIDDEN MIRACLES

“If you walk in My laws...” (26:3)

The purpose of this world is to be a factory to produce a product called *Olam Haba* — the World-to-Come. That is our only target, and the *mitzvot* our only passport.

However, you can read the Torah from cover to cover and you won't find one specific promise about the reward for keeping the *mitzvot* in the next world. Promises of reward in this world abound. We are promised the rains in their time. The land will give its produce and the trees will bear fruit. There will be an abundance of food that we will eat to satiety. We will dwell securely in our land. No one will walk down a dark street and be frightened. No one will worry about sending his children off on the bus in the morning. There will be abundance and peace.

Why is it that the Torah makes no open promises about the reward for keeping the *mitzvot* in the next world, but is replete with details of their reward in this existence?

All reward and punishment in this world is through hidden miracles. When a person eats bacon or a cheeseburger and dies prematurely, nobody knows that he died because he ate bacon or a cheeseburger. People die at his age even when they don't eat bacon or cheeseburgers. They die younger.

A person gives *tzedaka* and becomes rich. You don't see that he became rich because he gave *tzedaka*. There are plenty of rich people who don't give *tzedaka* — they inherited it or they won the sweepstake. The hidden miracle is that this person wasn't destined to become rich or wasn't supposed to die young, but because he gave *tzedaka* or

because he ate the bacon or cheeseburger, G-d changed this person's destiny. It's miraculous, but it's hidden. It looks like nature, but if it were actually the work of nature, then nothing that a person did in this world could have any effect on him. For a person is born under a certain *mazal*, a certain “destiny”, and without the intervention of an outside force — the hidden miracle — nothing that a person did, whether for good or bad, would have any repercussions in this world.

That's why the Torah speaks at great length about the outcome of the performance or non-performance of the *mitzvot* in this world. For it is truly miraculous that our actions should affect anything in this world, a world that, aside from these hidden miracles, is run by a system of *mazal* and nature.

However, as far as the next world is concerned, it's obvious that our actions will have repercussions there. The Torah doesn't need to stress the reward and punishment in that existence because it's obvious that people who engage in spiritual pursuits and serve G-d faithfully should receive spiritual rewards. But it is certainly *not* natural that people who are immersed in the work of the spirit, the study of Torah and the performance of *mitzvot* should receive their reward in this world as well. Thus the Torah stresses the reward for keeping the *mitzvot* in this world because that is something that no one could surmise without being told of its existence.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### Behar

The Torah prohibits normal farming of the Land of Israel every seven years. This “Shabbat” for the Land is called “*Shemita*”. The year 5768 was a *Shemita* year in Israel. After every seventh *Shemita*, the fiftieth year, *Yovel* (jubilee), is announced with the sound of the shofar on Yom Kippur. This was also a year for the Land to lie fallow. G-d promises to provide a bumper crop prior to the *Shemita* and *Yovel* years. During *Yovel*, all land is returned to its original division from the time of Joshua, and all Jewish indentured servants are freed, even if they have not completed their six years of work. A Jewish indentured servant may not be given any demeaning, unnecessary or excessively difficult work, and may not be sold in the public market. The price of his labor must be calculated according to the amount of time remaining until he will automatically become free. The price of land is similarly calculated. Should anyone sell his ancestral land, he has the right to redeem it after two years. If a house in a walled city is sold, the right of redemption is limited to the first year after the sale. The Levites’ cities belong to

them forever. The Jewish People are forbidden to take advantage of one another by lending or borrowing with interest. Family members should redeem any relative who was sold as an indentured servant as a result of impoverishment.

### Bechukotai

The Torah promises prosperity for the Jewish People if they follow G-d’s commandments. However, if they fail to live up to the responsibility of being the Chosen People, then chilling punishments will result. The Torah details the harsh historical process that will befall them when Divine protection is removed. These punishments, whose purpose is to bring the Jewish People to repent, will be in seven stages, each more severe than the last. *Sefer Vayikra*, the Book of Leviticus, concludes with a detailed description of *Erachin* – the process by which someone can make a vow to give to the *Beit Hamikdash* the equivalent monetary value of a person, an animal, or property.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## THE “SEVEN SPECIES” – HOW THEY REPRESENT ERETZ YISRAEL

“For the Lord, your God, brings you to a good land a land of wheat and barley, of grape and fig and pomegranate; a land of oil-rich olive and sweet date.” (*Devarim* 8:7-8)

This is how the Torah introduces the seven species of grain and fruit with which Eretz Yisrael is blessed.

These species are mentioned in a number of places throughout Tanach. In many cases there is a comparison between them and our people to whom G-d gave this Land.

Our Sages (*Mesechta Succah* 5b) even saw in these seven species hints to the various measurements of substance and time that play a crucial role in halachic matters.

We pay special tribute to G-d after consuming any of these species by making a special blessing, different from the

one we make after all other food and drink. Whether it is the *birkat hamazon* (grace after meals) we say after eating bread made from wheat or barley and their three sub-species, or the condensed version (*m’ein shalosh*) said after partaking of cake, wine or the rest of the species, we offer thanks to G-d not only for the food but also for the Land with which it is identified.

Regardless of whether these species grow in Eretz Yisrael or elsewhere, this special blessing is made simply because a species which is described in the Torah as one of the blessings of Eretz Yisrael sets it apart from everything else just as Torah sets the Land and the people apart from the rest of the world.

This is the ultimate expression of our people’s love of the Land.



## Remembering Rav Weinbach

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

### Behar

1. Why does the Torah specify that the laws of *Shemita* were taught on *Har Sinai*?
2. If one possesses *Shemita* food after it is no longer available in the field, what must he do with it?
3. The Torah commands, "You shall sanctify the fiftieth year." How is this done?
4. Which two "returns" are announced by the shofar during *Yovel*?
5. From where does the *Yovel* year get its name?
6. What prohibitions are derived from the verse "*v'lo sonu ish es amiso* — a person shall not afflict his fellow"?
7. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of *Shemita*?
8. If *Shemita* is observed properly, how long is the crop of the sixth year guaranteed to last?
9. After selling an ancestral field, when can one redeem it?
10. Under what circumstance may one sell ancestral land?

### Bechukotai

1. To what do the words "*bechukosai telechu*" (walk in My

statutes) refer?

2. When is rain "in its season"?
3. What is the blessing of "*v'achaltem lachmechem l'sova*" (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?
4. What is meant by the verse "and a sword will not pass through your land"?
5. Mathematically, if five Jewish soldiers can defeat 100 enemy soldiers, how many enemy soldiers should 100 Jewish soldiers be able to defeat?
6. How much is '*revava*'?
7. Which "progression" of seven transgressions are taught in Chapter 26, and why in that particular order?
8. What is one benefit which the Jewish People derive from the Land of Israel's state of ruin?
9. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
10. How many years did the Jewish People sin in Israel up till the time the northern tribes were exiled?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

### Behar

1. 25:1 - To teach us that just as *Shemita* was taught in detail on *Har Sinai*, so too, all the *mitzvot* were taught in detail on *Har Sinai*.
2. 25:7 - Remove it from his property and declare it ownerless.
3. 25:10 - At the beginning of the year the Beis Din declares, "This year is *kadosh* (sanctified)."
4. 25:10 - The return of the land to its original owner, and the "return" (freedom) of the slave from slavery.
5. 25:10 - From the sounding of the shofar. A ram's horn is called a *Yovel*.
6. 25:17 - One may not intentionally hurt people's feelings, nor give bad advice while secretly intending to reap benefit.
7. 25:18 - Exile.
8. 25:21,22 - From Nissan of the sixth year until Sukkot of the ninth year.
9. 25:24 - After two years following the sale, until *Yovel*. At the beginning of *Yovel* it returns to the family automatically.
10. 25:25 - Only if one becomes impoverished.

### Bechukotai

1. 26:3 - Laboring in Torah learning.
2. 26:4 - At times when people are not outside (e.g., Shabbos nights).
3. 26:5 - You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
4. 26:6 - No foreign army will travel through your land on their way to a different country.
5. 26:8 - Two thousand.
6. 26:8 - Ten thousand.
7. 26:14,15 - Not studying Torah, not observing *mitzvot*, rejecting those who observe *mitzvot*, hating Sages, preventing others from observing *mitzvot*, denying that G-d gave the *mitzvos*, denying the existence of G-d. They are listed in this order because each transgression leads to the next.
8. 26:32 - No enemy nation will be able to settle in the Land of Israel.
9. 26:35 - 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 *Shemita* and *Yovel* years.
10. 26:35 - 390 years.

## ERUVIN 58 - 64

Rabbi Shmuel bar Inia said in the name of Rav, “Torah study is more important than the offering of the daily sacrifices.”

• Eruvin 63b

“One who is slightly intoxicated (“shatui”) should not pray, but if he prays his prayer counts; whereas one who is significantly intoxicated (“shikur”) should not pray, and if he prays his prayer is considered an abomination.”

The above halacha is taught on our Daf by Rava bar Rav Huna and is codified in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 99:1).

What is the difference between *shatui* and *shikur*? The former refers to one who drank a *revi'it* (approximately 86-150 cc) of wine or other intoxicating beverage, but is sober enough to speak in front of a king. The stricter status of “*shikur*” applies when the drinker is unable to speak coherently in front of a king.

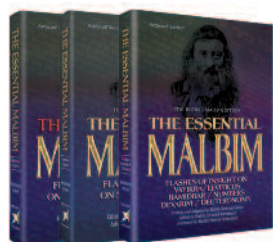
There are other factors that need to be taken into account in any ruling today (see Mishna Berurah in *siman* 99), and a Rav should be asked for a *psak* in any actual case as always. But the message is clear: Don't drink and *daven*.

• Eruvin 64a

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## MOUNT SINAI

Leo G. wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
I've heard that Mount Sinai is called by other names.  
Is that true? Thanks.

Dear Leo G.,

According to the Midrash, Mount Sinai – the place where we received the Torah – has eight names, as follows:

*Har Sinai* - from the word *sneh* - "bush." This refers to the burning bush on *Har Sinai*. Also, *Sinai* is related to the word *sinah* - "hatred" and "rejection." By giving the Torah to human beings instead of to the angels, G-d thereby rejected the angels.

*Har Ha-Elokim* - "G-d's Mountain," because G-d revealed His Torah there to the Jewish people. Through the Torah, the Jews become a G-dly people.

*Beit Imi* - "My Mother's House." By accepting the

Torah the Jews were born as a nation.

*Har Chorev*, from the word "*cherev*" - "sword." The Torah invests special Torah courts, *sanhedrin*, with authority to try capital cases.

*Har Chemed* - "Desirable Mountain." G-d desired Mount Sinai as the place from which to give the most desirable of treasures, the Torah.

*Har Bashan* from the word "*shen*" - "tooth." Sustenance and blessing come to the world in the merit of Torah study and observance. Just as teeth prepare the food for digestion, so too the Torah brings nourishment to the world.

*Har Gavnonim*, from the word "*gevina*" - "cheese." Cheese is a metaphor for purity, probably because it's made from pure white milk.

*Har Moriah* - "Mountain of Teaching," where G-d taught Moses the Torah.

Sources:

- *Shmot Rabba 2*
- *Bamidbar Rabba 1*
- *Shir Hashirim Rabba 8*

## @ OHR Profiles of Ohr Somayach Alumni and Students

written by Daniel Keebler

**Rabbi Dovid Hirsch**

**Age: 54**

**Jerusalem**

**University of Florida – Major: History**

**Ohr Somayach: Zichron Yaakov & Jerusalem**

Rabbi Dovid Hirsch was a cartoonist for his school newspaper and heading for a law degree before coming to Ohr Somayach in 1981. Since then, Rabbi Hirsch has combined his expertise in halacha with his artistic talents to produce the highly accessible illustrated Mishnah Berurah entitled "Pe'er Halacha."

What began as sketchup drawings for his kollel colleagues turned into a booklet about *etrogim* that sold out its first printing of 1,500 copies.



Under the support of his Rosh Kollel of 15 years, Rabbi Mordechai Freidlander, Rabbi Hirsch's illustrations have expanded to cover the very technical areas of halachah such as the *arba minim*, *tzitzit*, *safrut* (how to write a *Sefer Torah*, *mezuzah* and the like), *tefillin*, and *Chanukah*. "A lot of *safrut* teachers come and buy 10 [copies] of 'Mishnat Sofrim' at a time," says Rabbi Hirsch of his book. In the age of technology's instant visual gratification, Rabbi Hirsch's illustrations give an opening to those who find the technicalities of the text too difficult to follow. His next project is on the laws of the *succah*.

Following encouragement he received from Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, *zatzal*, Rabbi Hirsch regularly learns Torah with young students in Ohr Somayach. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife of 25 years and their wonderful children.

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### A TIP TO DOERS

**Question:** As one very much involved in initiating and leading communal projects like school, synagogue and charity drives, I often wonder whether I am not foolish in taking on seemingly impossible challenges and if I am not guilty of demanding too much from the people whose help I solicit. What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** How fortunate are you to be counted among those whom all Jews pray for every Shabbat in the synagogue for being “faithfully involved in the needs of the community”!

Your question has already been answered by the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Gamliel, the son of Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi, in *Pirkei Avot* (2:2) in his counsel to those who strive for the welfare of the community. Following are the points he made, as

explained in the commentary of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura:

Be sure that your motivation is only for Heaven’s sake and not to gain glory from your success.

Be confident that you will succeed in your endeavors for the community, not because of your talents but thanks to the merits of the community and their ancestors.

Don’t hesitate to demand more help from the people you solicit for your cause than it appears they are capable of giving because the merit of their ancestors will enable them to meet your challenge.

Remember that even though it is not your talents that are achieving success and not your own money that is achieving your goal, Heaven will reward you as if you did it all by yourself.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### OLD BOOTS AND NEW ONES

Rabbi Simcha Wasserman was not only a great Torah educator and pioneer in Torah outreach, but also a bridge to the Torah legacy of pre-war Europe. He inspired his many disciples with stories about the Chafetz Chaim and his own great father, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, the Rosh Hayeshiva of Yeshiva Baranovich who perished in the Holocaust. The following story about father and son is taken from “Reb Simcha Speaks” by Yaakov Branfman and Akiva Tatz (ArtScroll):

“Once my father zt”l had to travel from Baranovich and I was accompanying him to the station; we were walking together and I was carrying a small suitcase. He was wearing

new boots that my mother had bought for him, which he had refused to wear until my mother gave away his very old and worn shoes to the girl who carried the water buckets through the snow, explaining to my father that the girl had no shoes and therefore needed them. Only then had he agreed to wear the new ones. I could see that something was bothering him. After a while he said, ‘These boots are bothering me.’ My father never spoke without a specific reason, so I knew that I was about to learn something. ‘What is bothering me is that they have laces, and I reckon that it is going to cost me half a minute a day to tie and untie them.’ He was teaching me the value of time.”

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