Points to Ponder

Behar 5779

**Rav Wolbe ztl**. understood the underlying theme of these last 2 Parshiyos of Sefer VaYikra to be about Eretz Yisrael and the Halachos applicable there. It is interesting to note that it only took 40 days to prepare to receive the Torah but took 40 years to merit the life in Eretz Yisrael. Once we achieved it, we held on to the land for a grand total of just over 800 years. We need to fully appreciate the value and the proper way to live in the land -- which is Hashem’s palace and this is the function of these Parshiyos.

**Shmitta and Yovel - Rav Yonasan Sacks Shlita** noted that Shabbos and Yom Tov demonstrate 2 models of Kedusha. Shabbos is a set day of Kedusha. Yom Tov requires Beis Din in order to establish that same Kedusha. The ***Meshech Chochma*** explains that a similar distinction can be made between *Shemitah* and *Yovel*.  *Shemitah*, like *Shabbos*, possesses a fixed *kedusha* which is not dependent on *kedushas beis din*. The beginning of the *Shemitah* year automatically renders fields ownerless and prohibits the farmer from guarding and tending his field. Simply, the very purpose of *Shevi'is*, which is to reaffirm "*ki li kol ha'aretz*", is an essential theme of *Shabbos* itself. *Yovel*, however parallels *yom tov*. Just as *Rosh Chodesh* and *yom tov* require *kiddush beis din*, so too the Torah emphasizes “*v'kidashtem es shnas hachamishim shana*.”  Just as *yom tov* serves as a *zecher l'yetsias Mitzrayim*, where we acknowledge our freedom, so too *Yovel* is a time when all Jewish slaves must be freed. Rav Sacks added that both models of *kedusha* characterize *kedushas Eretz Yisroel*. On one level, *Eretz Yisroel* possesses an inherent and intrinsic *kedusha*, independent of *Keneses Yisroel*. Complete *kedushas ha'aretz* however, requires the active participation of *Bnai Yisroel*.

**בְּיוֹם֙ הַכִּפֻּרִ֔ים תַּֽעֲבִ֥ירוּ שׁוֹפָ֖ר On the day of Yom HaKippurim (25:9) - Rav Nebenzahl Shlita** pointed out that the Torah highlights the plural when identifying Yom Kippur since the Kappara of the day comes in many forms (Par, Sayir, Shayir Hamishtaleiach etc) but we tend to call the day Yom Kippur since we do not have access to each of the Kapparos -- only the Eetzumo Shel Yom.

**וּקְרָאתֶ֥ם דְּר֛וֹר בָּאָ֖רֶץ לְכָל־יֽשְׁבֶ֑יהָ You shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants (25:10)** - What is the intent of the phrase -- “To all its inhabitants? Didn’t most of the people go free many years ago? The **Pnei Yehoshua** answers that when one purchases a slave s/he purchases a superiority complex. That complex goes free at the time of Yovel as well. **Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld** ztl added that the Gematria of Ish is the same as “L’Reieihu” teaching us that a man is not fully a man if he cannot consider his fellow man.

**וְצִוִּ֤יתִי אֶת־בִּרְכָתִי֙ לָכֶ֔ם  I will command my blessing in the sixth year (25:21) - Rav Michel Feinstein ztl.** explained that Hashem gave the Beracha together with the command here. By keeping Shmittah we are insured to have tremendous success working the land and getting the Beracha from the land at the same time.

**וְהָאָ֗רֶץ לֹ֤א תִמָּכֵר֙ לִצְמִתֻ֔תAnd the land shall not be sold forever (25:23) - Rashi** comments that we should not look poorly on the land and our own situation with it simply because it is not ours. The question needs to be asked -- no one “owns” the land. Whenever one purchases land in Eretz Yisrael it was known that it was not a purchase but merely a rental for an extended period of time. What is the basis for a fear of Tzarus Ayin? **Rav Dovid Povarsky ztl.** explained that we learn that when someone works on something s/he attaches Baalus over it even when it is undeserving. This is one of the dangers of Baalus.

**כִּי־לִ֖י הָאָ֑רֶץThe land is mine (25:23)** - What is the message to be learned from Hashem’s declaration? **Rav Mordechai Greenberg Shlita** explains that the idea of Eretz Yisrael belonging to Hashem is not only legal but also a statement in the value of the land. We find the same idea in the bentching. In the second Beracha we thank Hashem for giving us the bountiful land and for taking us out of Mitzrayim. Sequentially, the order seems displaced. **Rav Yaakov Emden ztl.** explains that while historically the exodus happened first, it was but a mere step in the total plan -- that of giving us the land. We forged our bond with the land before we became a nation -- it is part of us more than a land is for a regular nation.

**וַֽאֲשֶׁ֤ר יִגְאַל֙ מִן־הַֽלְוִיִּ֔ם And that which is redeemed from the Leviim (25:33) - Rashi** explains that if you buy a home or a city from the Leviim. Why then do we not use the word “Mechira” instead of the word Geulah? **Rav Chaim Feinstein Shlita** suggests that initially all of the cities of the Leviim really belonged to the other Shevatim. When one purchases them, lest one think that such a purchase is new from the Levi whose tribe previously owned it -- the Torah uses the word Geulah -- as it is a redemption ad not a new sale.

**Haftara: וָֽאֵדַ֕ע כִּ֥י דְבַר־ Purchase the field for yourself and I knew that this was the word of Hashem (Yirmiyahu 32:8) - Rav Schachter Shlita** reminded us that Yirmiyahu did as he was commanded despite the fact that logic dictated that purchasing a field was not ideal given the impending destruction. This is similar to Avraham’s conduct at the time of the Akaida and is the responsibility of all believing Jews -- to fulfill Hashem’s command even when it seems entirely illogical.