Points to Ponder

Behar-Bechukosai 5780

**בְּהַ֥ר סִינַ֖י In Har Sinai (25:1) – Rashi** famously asks what the connection between Shmitah and Har Sinai is. **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl** explains that Hashem wanted to teach us that Torah and Mitzva observance is not just intellectually driven, it is the responsibility to follow Hashem’s command. This is the case with Shmittah and can be generalized to all Mitzvos given at Sinai.

ו**ְהָאָ֗רֶץ לֹ֤א תִמָּכֵר֙ לִצְמִתֻ֔ת You shall not sell the land permanently (25:23) – Rav Yaakov Tzvi Meklenberg ztl** noted that the root of the word Tzmeesus comes from the word Tzom or restriction. Is this the opposite of the word permanent? How are these connected? The **Chozeh of Lublin** was once approached by  a student seeking approval of the student’s schedule. The student had written out his intent and by each Kabbala, the Rebbe wrote “U’Amal Farkert – sometimes it will be the opposite”. The student wanted to know why? The Rebbe answered that in life sometimes, we need to make shifts in our plans. No matter how great the Kabbalos are, we need to know that there are times where something needs to override them**.  Rav Yisrael Reisman Shlita** added that this is the intent of the concept of Tzmitzus. Sometimes the idea of permanence can be restricting. Holding on to the option of utilizing your destiny for Avodas Hashem with flexibility is the job of a true Oved Hashem.

ו**ְהֶֽחֱזַ֣קְתָּ בּ֔וֹ  And you shall strengthen in him (25:35)** – Why do we use the word “Bo” instead of the more proper “Oso”? **Rav Simcha Bunim Sofer ztl.** explains that more than the rich man does for the poor, the poor man does for the rich. The rich man might be giving money to the poor, but the poor man is giving the rich an opportunity. Chofetz Chaim makes a similar comment about those who support Torah (laMachazikim BAH vs. Osah). Argument is that more than one supports Torah, s/he is supported BY Torah.

**כִּי־לִ֤י בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ עֲבָדִ֔ים עֲבָדַ֣י הֵ֔ם For Bnei Yisrael are servants to me (25:55)** – Why is it a contradiction serving both as slaves and servants to Hashem? Why can’t one person have both goals? **Rav Mattisyahu Solomon Shlita** explained that an Eved is a leniency in responsibility toward being a Jew. When one is an Eved, he can do Jewish things but always has the excuse that he was busy listening to his Adon. Hashem wants us to know we have one Adon – HIM!

**וְהִרְבֵּיתִ֖י אֶתְכֶ֑ם And I will make you greater (26:9) – Rashi** explains that you will become greater by walking tall and proud. What does that mean? **Rav Wolbe ztl.** notes that it does not refer to walking with a sense of haughtiness. Instead it refers to the sense of self-esteem and self-actualization wherein the person knows that s/he can grow and achieve much more than s/he thinks s/he can.

**וְנָֽתַתִּ֤י שָׁלוֹם֙ בָּאָ֔רֶץ I shall place peace in the land (26:6) – Rashi** notes that without peace you have nothing.  **Ramban** adds that when everyone follows the Torah and Mitzvos there will be no conflict within Bnei Yisrael. The **Or HaChaim** adds that when there is a separation in the mindset of Bnei Yisrael, it destroys us. Therefore there is no greater Kli for Beracha than Shalom.

**וְאִם־הָמֵ֣ר יְמִירֶ֔נּוּ וְהָֽיָה־ה֧וּא וּתְמֽוּרָת֛וֹ יִֽהְיֶה־קֹּ֖דֶשׁ And if he does replace it then both the first one and the replacement are Kodesh (27:33)** – It does not matter whether the person intended to do the illegal act of making Temurah or not. **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that this is an interesting scenario wherein kedusha is created because of the sinful act. Temurah is as a result of the transgression.

**Haftara: כִּסֵּ֣א כָב֔וֹד מָר֖וֹם מֵֽרִאשׁ֑וֹן As a throne of honor exalted from the beginning so is the place of our mikdash (Yirmiyahu 17:12) – Rav Soloveitchik ztl**. noted that our right to Eretz Yisrael rests on our concept of Kedusha. Even in its Churban state, these places are still identified as Kadosh (Mikdisheichem). The reason is that there is still a concept of Yirushalayim Shel Maala and as long as this one is not destroyed then the one on the bottom cannot lose its unique status no matter what they think they are destroying.