Points to Ponder

Behar Bechukosai 5783

**וּקְרָאתֶ֥ם דְּר֛וֹר בָּאָ֖רֶץ לְכָל־יֽשְׁבֶ֑יהָ And you will proclaim liberty throughout the land (25:10) -** Why is it Yovel for the inhabitants? I thought only the slaves go free – what happens for the inhabitants? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin** notes that the Gemara (Kiddushin, 20a) compares the acquisition of an Eved Ivri to purchasing a master. **Tosafos** notes that the slave in some respects is on a higher level than his master. Therefore, when the Torah declares the Yovel as a time of release for all its inhabitants, it is including the servants and the masters. **Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky** adds that the Torah is telling us that just as much, or maybe, more than the servant owes a debt to his master for the work, the employer is indebted to his employees for all that he has to provide for them. The employer’s obligations extend beyond a salary.  He has to consider and be responsible for proper working conditions, the worker’s physical and mental well-being, and treat them with proper derech eretz and respect.

**אִ֚ישׁ אֶל־אֲחֻזָּת֔וֹ וְאִ֥ישׁ אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתּ֖וֹ תָּשֻֽׁבוּ: Each man to his inheritance and each to his family (25:10)** - What is the connection between Yovel and the family?  **Meshech Chochma** suggests that on a simple level, one purpose of Yovel is to bring families back together. People move away from their family for various reasons and yovel requires families to get back together. We can learn that families can sometimes drift apart and we should look for opportunities to resolve tension and get back together.

**תָּשֻׁ֕בוּ אִ֖ישׁ אֶל־אֲחֻזָּתֽוֹ In this year of Yovel you shall return, each man to his inheritance (25:13)** -  During Yovel, slaves are liberated, farm work is prohibited, and the land returns to its original owners. Why does the Torah mandate voiding the purchaser’s rights after he has worked the land? In his introduction to Shabbat HaAretz **Rav Kook** identifies  4 reasons: Reason 1: To remind man that the earth belongs to God. Reason 2: To counter man’s acquisitive instincts. Reason 3: To promote justice and equity. Reason 4: To facilitate holiness and to invest the  nation with forgiveness, repentance, and to remedy the injustices of the past – each one can be learned from the reset of Yovel.

**אִם־בְּחֻקֹּתַ֖י תֵּלֵ֑כוּ If you follow my Chukim (26:3) - Rashi** says that אם בחקתי תלכו means ameilus baTorah. Why then does the Torah use the word תלכו and not תלמדו? The answer seems to be in the midrash that says that Dovid HaMelech said that while he walking to fulfill various tasks, his feet always took him to the beis medrash. **Rav Henoch Leibowitz** asks: Dovid HaMelech had important things to do and talmud Torah is put aside for important matters. How did Dovid HaMelech give up on these important matters to learn? He answers that there are a lot of things that we think are important, but in reality, they aren’t as important as we think. If we have a love of learning and pull ourselves to the beis medrash, we will find that if we don’t spend as much time on these other “important matters,” we will still be able to properly handle them.

**וְזָֽכַרְתִּ֥י לָהֶ֖ם בְּרִ֣ית רִֽאשֹׁנִ֑ים אֲשֶׁ֣ר הוֹצֵֽאתִי־אֹתָם֩ מֵאֶ֨רֶץ מִצְרַ֜יִם לְעֵינֵ֣י הַגּוֹיִ֗ם And I will remember the covenant of the earlier ones whom I’ve taken out of Mitzrayim (26:45)** - **Rav Schachter & Rav Dr. Sol Roth** both highlighted the idea of 2 separate covenants – the Bris Avos and the Bris Sinai – highlighted in this Parsha. Rav Schachter noted that while Bris Avos might not carry into the Galus – Bris Sinai certainly does as is evidenced by the possuk which notes that Hashem will not forget us even in the Galus He has sent us into since He recalled those whose lessons came from Mitzrayim (out of Eretz Yisrael).

**אִ֕ישׁ כִּ֥י יַפְלִ֖א נֶ֑דֶר בְּעֶרְכְּךָ֥ נְפָשֹׁ֖ת When a person makes a Neder for Erachin (27:2)** - Why does the Torah give us the parsha of arachin right after the tochecha? **The Mei HaShiloach** explains that the Torah is teaching us that  even if we have reached a level where we deserve the tochecha, we still have value. We are still redeemable and we can still redeem others.

Haftara

**אֲנִ֧י ה חֹקֵ֥ר לֵ֖ב בֹּחֵ֣ן כְּלָי֑וֹת וְלָתֵ֚ת לְאִישׁ֙ כִּדְרָכָ֔יו I am Hashem who checks the insides and to give to a person based on his path (Yirmiyahu 17:10) - Rav Aharon Kotler** quoted the Yalkut Shimoni which notes that Hashem gives a Malach to follow him based on what he wants and believes – if you believe in truth, the malach will speak to you truthfully etc. The Talmud (Yoma 39a) takes this one step further noting that when a person wants to defile himself a little, he will become defiled majorly, Yet, the Gemara (38b) also notes that one who wants to become Tamai we open the door – not necessarily to make him Tamai but let him fall into it more. How do we understand the difference? Rav Aharon answers that when it comes to Tumah, merely opening the door and not holding the person back will make his choice to be Tamai that much stronger.