

1 – Topic – A thought on the beginning of Parshas Behar. The lesson of (יוֹבֵל הוּא)

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Behar – Bechukosai and the excitement is building as we march towards Kabbalas Hatorah. A Leil Shavuot like no other. A Leil Shavuot that follows a Shavuot where most of us at least were homebound or on lockdown and Boruch Hashem we will be able to return to our Batei Medrashim.

I would like to begin with a thought on Parshas Behar. The beginning of Parshas Behar which we Lained this morning says as is found in 25:11 (יוֹבֵל הוּא) it is Yovel. The Gemara Rosh Hashana 9b (top of the Amud) Darshens it as a Mi'ut. The Gemara says there are three conditions to Yovel. This is of course in addition to the fact that Yovel only applies when the Jewish people are in Eretz Yisrael. When Rav Yisrael are Al Admanasan. There are three conditions and each one is M'akeiv. First of all you have to have a central Sanhedrin blowing Shofar, there have to be lands that are returning to their original Nachala or the current Nachala the way that Eretz Yisrael is divided and you have to have an Eved Ivri that is going free. But when Moshiach will come we have none of these three today. Even if all Jews would return to Eretz Yisrael there would be no Yovel at all.

When Moshiach will come we will have a Sanhedrin that will blow Shofar. No problem. We will have land in Eretz Yisrael that will be divided according to the Shevatim and the Batei Av. No problem. However, we will need an Eved Ivri going free on Yovel. Since slavery (Avdus) today is considered inappropriate, it is not likely that there will be any Avadim at all and it seems that Yovel will not apply. This is because if you don't have at least one Eved Ivri going free, the Rambam says that it is M'akeiv and it is not Yovel.

Rav Zilberstein in his Chashukai Chemed on Rosh Hashana 9 suggests that when Moshiach comes we are going to have to look for one volunteer. Somebody to sell himself to be an Eved Ivri in order that Klal Yisrael, all the Jewish people are going to depend on that one volunteer who is going to sell himself as an Eved Ivri in order to be able to go free at Yovel and Klal Yisrael will then be able to have a Yovel. Even though you are not supposed to sell yourself as an Eved, Rav Zilberstein brings Rayos that for a Dvar Mitzvah you are allowed to because the Gemara says in the end of the third Perek of Rosh Hashana that a Mamzer can have children who are not Mamzeirim if he sells himself as an Eved Ivri and marries a Shifcha. So we see that a person is allowed to sell himself as an Eved Ivri to facilitate a Mitzvah. So the same thing Zagt Rav Zilberstein we are going to have volunteers as when Moshiach is going to come we will call out that we need a volunteer to be an Eved Ivri so that he can go free on Yovel and Klal Yisrael will have a Yovel.

As an aside I want to tell you something. When they make that announcement and they are looking for a volunteer and you will tell yourself that it is going to take a lot of Mesiras Nefesh. I want to tell you a secret, it won't be so bad. This is because a person can sell himself as an Eved Ivri just days before the beginning of Yovel and on Yovel he goes free. There is a Parsha called Hanuka where significant gifts are given to an Eved Ivri when he goes free. So whoever it is that volunteers, you should know that when you go out you will get your Mat'nas Secharam B'tzida. We are eager to see Moshiach and wait for all of this to happen.

2 – Topic – A thought on the beginning of Parshas Bechukosai. The lesson of (וְאַשְׁכַּח מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם)

Let's move on to the beginning Bechukosai. The beginning of Parshas Bechukosai has as is found in 26:3 (אֲם-בְּחֻקָּי, תֵּלְכוּ). Before the Tochacha it has the Berachos, the blessings that will come when Klal Yisrael

goes in the way of the Torah. The Ramban says they are Berachos of L'asid Lavo, IY"H in the Yemos Hamoshiach. It is beautiful Berachos to read. (וְנִפְּלוּ לְפָנֶיכֶם, לְהָרֵב). (וְנִתְּתִי שְׁלוֹם בְּאַרְצְךָ). The Berachos end with Hashem saying (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם). I will break the yoke that weighs down upon you. If you read the Pesukim in order it is very difficult to understand.

The Chasam Sofer asks, it already said (וְנִתְּתִי שְׁלוֹם). It already said (וְנִפְּלוּ לְפָנֶיכֶם; אֶת-אֲבִיבֵיכֶם). There will be peace. Your enemies will fall before you. So which yoke remains? (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם). I understand that in Galus we have the yoke of our enemies. But once there is Shalom B'aretz and (וְנִפְּלוּ אֲבִיבֵיכֶם לְפָנֶיכֶם) and Klal Yisrael is in control, what (מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם) will remain?

In the Toras Moshe the Chasam Sofer says an extraordinary Pshat. It says earlier in 25:42 in Parshas Behar that the Jewish people are called (עֲבָדֵי הָ) the servants of HKB"H. Rashi says (שְׂטָרֵי קוּדֵם). My document of servitude comes first. The Derech of serving Hashem is that a person is supposed to say Rotze Ani (I would love) to wear Shatnez, I would love to eat Treif, however, what should I do Hashem made a Gezaira that I can't. That means to say the way it says in the Medrash as is brought in the Rambam. When it comes to a logical Mitzvah like stealing, a person should say Uch, who wants to steal. When it comes to eating non-Kosher food a person should say delicious, I would love to eat non-Kosher food. But I am an Eved Hashem who made a Gizaira that I can't eat that.

As an aside it is interesting that today people seem to be the other way around. When it comes to eating non-Kosher food people say Uch who is going to eat Chazeir. When it comes to stealing they say I would love to but what should I do HKB"H said don't do it so I will not do it. It shouldn't be that way. It is supposed to be that when it comes to taking something that is not yours you are supposed to say Uch, and Trief you should say Ah. Mitzvos Sich'lius you are supposed to abhor, but the Mitzvos that are Chukim like not eating Treif, the Rambam brings from the Medrash a person should say Rotzeh Ani (I want to eat it) U'ma E'sa Avinu Shebashamayim Gazeir Olai (Hashem said I can't eat it). The point here being (עֲבָדֵי הָ). HKB"H says there are things that you would like to do that are Aveiros and don't it because HKB"H said don't do it.

(וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם). There is an extraordinary Chasam Sofer. You know what he says? Moshiach will come, you will do Mitzvos, it will be a good time. Klal Yisrael will be in charge. The Ol of Mitzvos are difficult. Rotzeh Ani, I would love to do an Aveira, U'ma E'sa Avinu Shebashamayim Gazeir Olai. That is the Ol.

When a person is Zoche and has in purity of thought, it brings himself to a M'ain Olam Habo. He sees himself as doing the Ratzon Hashem because he wants to. (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם). The heavy weight, the Ol of Mitzvos will be broken.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashana 28a (21 lines from the bottom) says that (מִצְוֹת לֹא לִיהֲנוּת נִיתְּנוּ) Mitzvos Lav L'he'nos Nitnu, Mitzvos were not given for pleasure. Rashi says in Dibbur Hamaschil (לֹא לִיהֲנוּת נִיתְּנוּ) that (אֵלֶּא לַעוֹל עַל צוּאָרִיָּהֶם נִיתְּנוּ). We have a Yeitzer Hora and we say yes we are going to do it because Hashem wants. It is an Ol, it is a yoke on our neck and we are going to do it. But there is a higher level. A level of (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם) to break the yoke and train to be somebody who wants to do the Ratzon Hashem. If a person does it with great joy that is something else.

Rav Pam used to say about the learning of Hilchos Lashon Hora with the Sefer Chofetz Chaim that it is wonderful but it is treating the symptoms. If you want to treat the cause of the disease learn Sefer Ahavas Chesed. Ahavas Chesed tells you to love doing kindness, it tells you to love other members of Klal Yisrael. If you love members of Klal Yisrael you don't have a desire to say Lashon Hora. So while Hilchos Lashon Hora is very important to know how to treat the symptoms, but to know how to get at the disease be an Oheiv Chesed. (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם). It is hard to not say Lashon Hora, it is a yoke. Zagt

HKB”H I will give you a blessing of Ahavas Chesed (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם). You Jews will love one the other and it won't be a battle not to say Lashon Hora. It won't be a battle not to say things that hurt other people. That is a dream. Don't wait for Moshiach, do it now. Grab onto Ahavas Chesed, grab onto the Ahava of doing Mitzvos, grab onto a pride of doing Mitzvos and you will be Zoche to Mai'ain Olam Habo. (וְאַשְׁבֵּר מִטַּת עֲלֵיכֶם).

3 – Topic - The lesson of (וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ)

There is a Lav of 25:17 (וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ, וְיִרְאַתָּ מֵאֲלֹרֶיךָ). Don't do Ono'as Devarim. What is Ono'as Devarim? Words that cause pain to other human beings. There is a Lav not to say words that cause other people Tzar. It is not easy. In life you interact with people and it happens that people say things that cause other people Tzar. That is Ono'as Devarim. We are all afraid. Anybody who is an active human being, who is involved with real things is sometimes going to cause people Tzar.

So I want to tell you some good news. The good news is and maybe I shouldn't let too many people know about this but those listening won't mind and they are on the right Madreiga, is that in Choshen Mishpat, Siman 228 where the rules of Ona'a are brought, the rules of cheating someone in business are brought and the Shulchan Aruch brings also (אֲסוּר לְהוֹנוֹת בְּדִבְרִים). The prohibition against saying words that cause other people pain.

There the Rama says an incredible thing. He says Yeish Omrim Mi'she'ain Lo Yir'as Cheit Muttar L'ho'niyu. The Issur of saying words that cause other people pain applies to a Yid who has Yir'as Chait, who has fear of sin. Somebody who doesn't have fear of sin, to him (וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ) does not apply. That is a Chiddush. Think about it for a minute. The Rama says Mi'she'ain Lo Yir'as Cheit, someone who doesn't have fear of sin. Who is that?

In the second Perek of Pirkei Avos in Mishna Hei it says (אֵין בּוֹר יֵרֵא חֵטָא). An Am Ha'aretz, somebody who doesn't learn can't possibly be a Yir'ai Cheit, have fear of sin. Which means that you can have a Jew who does all the Mitzvos, keeps Shabbos, does no Aveiros, Davens a good Davening. He is a Boor, unfortunately he is an Am Ha'aretz, he never learned. To such a person the Issur of Ono'as Devarim doesn't apply. It only applies (וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ) if you are a (וְיִרְאַתָּ מֵאֲלֹרֶיךָ). Someone who is in the Parsha of Yir'as Cheit it applies to him.

So am I telling you something good? Yes, because L'asid Lavo you will defend yourself. If you cause people Tzar you will defend yourself that the Rama says it only applies to somebody who is a Yir'ai Cheit. It doesn't apply necessarily to everybody else. But that needs an explanation. Not causing people pain is a simple obligation of every human being. Why is the Rama making it Muttar for so many people? What is going on here?

The answer is this. When the Torah says in Vayikra 19:18 (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ). It means that you have to show love for every Jew. That is every Jew. If they are a Yir'ai Cheit or not it applies to everybody. You have to show love to every other Jew. No exceptions. However, you should be aware that the Torah tells you that when it comes to people who are Yir'ai Cheit, people who are careful in the way they behave. They are afraid of sinning. There has to be a higher bar of interaction with them. A higher level of interaction with them. There has to be greater care. We say Ono'as Devarim, don't cause people pain. People think of it like baseball and apple pie, be a good American. Be a nice decent human being. No. It is much more than that. (וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ) is a much higher level of obligation. As much as (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ), you have to be good, kind, pleasant to every human being. But to somebody who is a Yir'ai Cheit you have to respect them, you have to look at him, you have to see him in a different way. Such a person, be careful in every word you say. (וְלֹא תוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ).

So it is a lesson, a Kula? Yes. But it is a Kula that comes with a greater obligation in being extra careful to people who are Yir'ai Cheit, people who are Talmidai Chachamim in the way you treat them.

And with these three lessons for the week, the lesson of (יִדְבֵּל הוּא), the lesson of (וְאֶשְׁבֵּר מִטַּח עֲלֵכֶם) and the lesson of (וְלֹא תִוְנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ) we are ready to go into Parshas Behar – Bechukosai looking B'ezras Hashem, Klal Yisrael looks for a week of Nechama as we prepare for Kabbalas Hatorah. May it be a wonderful Shabbos for one and all!