

Parshat Behar/Bechukotai

Esther Wein

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: Susan Gross - *in Zchus for a Refuah Shlaima for her uncle- Reuven Shaul Ben Miriam*

Living Through Our Senses

Or Living Through Our Minds

A. Tochacha and Atzeret / Shavuot

Megilla 31b

תנבא, רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר: עזרא תיקן להן לישראל שיהיו קורין קללות שבתורת כהנים קודם עצרת, ושבתשנה תורה קודם ראש השנה. מאי טעמא? אמר אביי ואיתימא ריש לקיש: כדי שתכלה השנה וקללותיה.

It is taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: Ezra enacted for the Jewish people that they should read the portion of the curses that are recorded in Leviticus before *Shavuot* and the portion of the curses that are recorded in Deuteronomy before Rosh HaShana. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Abaye said, and some say that it was Reish Lakish who said: *In order that the year may conclude together with its curses, and the new year may begin without the ominous reading of the curses.*

B. Tochacha and the Brit Avot

Vayikra 26:43-46

וְהָאָרֶץ תִּעְזֹב מֵהֶם וְתִרְחַץ אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתֶיהָ בְּהִשְׁמָהּ מֵהֶם וְהֵם יִרְצוּ אֶת־עֲוֹנֵם יַעַן וּבִיַּעַן בְּמִשְׁפָּטַי מֵאִסֹּו וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתַי גָּעְלָה נַפְשָׁם:

For the land shall be forsaken of them, making up for its sabbath years by being desolate of them, while they atone for their iniquity; for the abundant reason that they rejected My rules and spurned My laws.

וְאִפְּגַם־זָאת בְּהִיוֹתְכֶם בְּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם לֹא־מֵאַסְתִּים וְלֹא־גָעַלְתִּים לְכַלְתֶּם לְהַפֵּר בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם כִּי אֲנִי הֵ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Yet, even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or spurn them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them: for I am their God.

וְזָכַרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית רֵאשִׁימִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי־אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם לְהִיּוֹת לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי הֵ: I will remember in their favor the covenant with the ancients, whom I freed from the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God: I am YKVK

אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וְהַתּוֹרוֹת אֲשֶׁר נָתַן ה' בֵּינֹו וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהַר סִינַי בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה: {פ} These are the laws, rules, and instructions that יהוה established, through

C. First mention of Brit- before the Avot
Bereishis 6:18

וְהִקְמֹתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּךָ וּבָאתָ אֵלַי־הַתְּבָה אִתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וּנְשֵׁי־בְנֵיךָ אִתְּךָ: But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives.

Ramban:

נכון בדרך הפשט כי ענין "והקימותי את בריתי" לאמר בעת שיבא המבול תהיה ברית קיימת אתך שתבא אל התיבה אתה וביתך ושנים מכל הבשר להחיות כלומר שתחיו שם ותתקיימו לצאת משם לחיים והברית הוא דבר השם כשיגזור אומר בלא תנאי ושיור ויקיים והזכיר הברית והזכיר שיהיה קיים והוא כלשון קיימו וקבלו היהודים עליהם ועל זרעם (אסתר ט כז) שקבלו עליהם דבר להיותו קיים ועל דרך האמת הברית מעולם היא והמלה נגזרת מן בראשית ברא אלהים והנה בריתי כמו ברייתי והמלה כמו סמוכה כי היא סמוכה לעולמים שהיו לפנינו יצוה שתקום ותהיה עם הצדיק וכן ואני הנני מקים את בריתי אתכם (בראשית ט:ט) בריתי היתה אתו (מלאכי ב ה) והמשכיל יבין:

Bracha- nature fully participating with man

Klala- nature in malfunction mode -

D. The evolving bond between man and G-d

Brit Ben Ha Besarim

Brit Mila

Brit Sinai

E. Tochacha and the Brit of Sinai

Before Shavuot we read Tochacha in order to close the book on the past year and its Klalot which are results of not keeping the BRIT Hashem made with us.

F. How is Shavuot also the “New Year”?

Let's compare it to the well known New Year of Rosh Hashana of 1st of Tishrei

“zeh hayom techilas maasecha” - today is the first day of your deeds.

The Talmud in Tractate Rosh Hashana (10b) records a disagreement between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua regarding when the world was created. According to R' Eliezer, the world was created in the month of Tishrei. According to R' Yehoshua, the world was created in the month of Nissan. According to the Midrash (e.g., Midrash Rabbah, Parshat Devorim), even if one assumes the position of R' Eliezer, the world was actually created on the 25th day of Elul. ***However, since man, who represents the ultimate purpose of creation, was created on the sixth day which corresponds to the first of Tishrei, this day is considered to be the true beginning of creation*** (see Maharsha to Rosh Hashana 16a).

Just like Rosh Hashana is the anniversary of the creation of Man, So to the Rosh Hashana on Shavuot also relates to man. Shavuot is also “Techilat Maasecha”.

Original Man was designed to live through the mind and not through the senses. The “Etz HaDaat” story explains how one comes to exchange a life of never ending expansion in one's intellectual and emotional perception and understanding for a short term deathbound life of gratifying the sensual stimuli. Opting to live through one's

senses is opting into a life with no greater goal than catering to one's desires and fears.

At Matan Torah, the clarity we experienced broke through the fantasy of the “reality” of the material sensual realm and restored our self concept to that of thinking knowing understanding beings. For a moment we experienced the eternal life that only a human-Divine mindmeld can bestow upon us

The moment of clarity was a gift that one needs to be ready to accept. The Chet Ha Egel

Like the Etz HaDaat was a gut instinct response to the senses demanding satisfaction. The reality of death resumed its pull

While the generation of Matan Torah restored the decree of death it had temporarily escaped, the loss differed from Adam's. Something had changed

G. “Chaye Olam Nata B'Tocheinu”

Despite the Chet Ha Egel and the substitution of the first Luchot for the 2nd The potential for access to eternity through the Torah was not lost nor withdrawn

The Gemara explains that those who received the Torah died, and their souls floated upward with each commandment. In each instance, Hashem revived them with the dew with which He will perform Techiyat Hameitim, revival of the dead.

Therefore, when we received the Torah- we received an attachment to Techiyat Hameitim.

“Chaye Olam **Nata** B'Tocheinu”

Netia refers to planting trees specifically.

Fruits of the tree are the outgrowth of the tree and do not diminish or kill the tree Torah was a tree planted within our psyche (Etz Chaim He) , and our eternal life is the fruit of that planting

Nitka also means planted

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א פסקה טו ד () רבי יודן בשם רבי יודא ב"ר סימון ורבי יהודה ורבי נחמיה ר' יהודה אומר בשעה ששמעו ישראל אנכי ה' קאל יך **נתקע תלמוד תורה בלבם**... רבי נחמיה אמר בשעה ששמעו ישראל לא יהיה לך נעקר מלבם יצר הרע.

H. Two Roshei Hashana,

Both are “techilat maasecha”.

Rosh Hashana is the techilas maasecha of our hybrid human- Divine life.

As explained in regards to Noach - the Briah itself testifies to and exposes man's deficiencies in his synchronization with Hashem's plan and intentions for creation. This is the “Brit” of Creation

Shavuous is the “techilat maasecha” of our eternal life.

The Torah gives us the opportunity to opt into eternal life.

The Brachot and Klalot are evidence of how well we have observed the Brit of living in sync with our eternal life

I. The 2 “lifestyle” options

Mechalya Karna- eating the principle

Lo Mechalya Karna- not eating the principle