



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ אייר תשפ"ב - בהר - 21st May 2022 - Volume 14 - Issue 45

News This Week

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to Rabbi YY Katz who has Yahrzeit for his mother on Weds 24th Iyyar

Home Free – For All **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

It is probably the most famous Biblical verse in American History. Each year thousands of people come to see its bold raised lettering prominently encircling the rim of the revered icon of our country's independence. Many visitors hardly notice the verse. Instead, their gaze is transfixed upon another, much less divine symbol, that bears the painful message of that sacred verse. But the large crack they come to see has no inherent meaning. It is only the result of the constant resounding of the words that are sacredly enshrined on its oxidized metal. Those words are from this week's portion, "proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all its inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10).

Truth be told, however, those words refer not to a revolution or liberation, they refer to the mitzvah of Yovel — Jubilee. Every 50 years, all Jewish servants, whether employed for only a six-year period or on an extended docket, and even those who desire to remain as servants to their masters, are freed. They return home to their families, and their careers of indenturage are over.

But the verse is confusing. It says, "proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all its inhabitants thereof." Isn't the Torah referring to the freedom of slaves and the servants. Isn't that a proclamation of freedom for only a select few? Why would the Torah use the words "and to all its inhabitants," when only some of its inhabitants are going free? The masters and employers were never slaves. They are not going free. Or are they?

In the first volume of his prolific Maggid series Rabbi Paysach Krohn relates the following story.

It was a cold and blustery day and Rabbi Isser Zalman Melzer, the dean of the Eitz Chaim Yeshiva in Jerusalem, was returning home from a long day in the Yeshiva. Accompanied by his nephew, Reb Dovid Finkel, who normally walked him home, Rabbi Melzer began to ascend the steps to his Jerusalem apartment. Suddenly, Reb Isser Zalman stopped and retreated down the old staircase as if he had forgotten something. As he reached the street, he began to wander aimlessly back and forth, in thought. His nephew began to question the strange actions of the Torah sage. "Did Reb Isser Zalman forget something?" "Why didn't he enter the home."

The winds began to blow, and despite the chill Reb Isser Zalman walked back and forth outside his home. About 15 minutes passed and once again, Rabbi Melzer walked slowly up the stairs, waited, and then headed back down.

His nephew could not contain himself, "Please, Rebbe," he pleaded. "What's the matter?" Reb Isser Zalman just shrugged and said, "just wait a few more moments. Please."

"But, uncle, it's getting cold. Please answer me. What are you waiting for?"

Rabbi Melzer realized that he could no longer keep his motivations to himself. "I'll explain. As I walked up the steps I heard the young woman who comes once a week to help with the housework in the kitchen. She was mopping the floor and singing while she mopped. I knew that if I were to walk in she would have become embarrassed and stopped her singing. The singing helps her through her work, and I did not want to make her work any bit harder, let alone deny her the joy of her singing. Despite the cold, I decided to wait outside until she finishes her work and her song. Then I'll go in."

The Torah uses a very significant expression this week that synthesizes the true meaning of ownership and servitude. "Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all its inhabitants thereof." When one employs he is also indebted to his employee. In addition to the paycheck he is responsible for the workers feelings, working conditions and welfare. He is responsible to provide a safe environment, suitable provisions, and above all mentchlichkeit. And when

Ladies Save The Date!

Guest speaker Rabbi Dovid Eisenberg will be giving a pre-Yom Tov Shiur to ladies on Sunday evening 29th May, details to follow.



Yovel arrives and the workers and servants return home, they are not the only ones going free. A great burden is lifted from the shoulders of the master. Freedom is declared for all the inhabitants of the land. The servants are not the only ones who are "home free." As we used to say in the heat of the game of ring-o-lee-vio, we are, "home free — all."

A Time for Belief and a Time for Heresy

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

This year (5782) is Shemittah in Eretz Yisrael, so the land must lie fallow. The laws of Shmittah are spelled out in Parshas Behar in great detail. There are farmers in Eretz Yisrael who observe this mitzvah meticulously every seven years. It is a great mitzvah to support them financially during this time, to help compensate them for their loss of income. After the mitzvah of Shemittah, Parshas Behar moves on to the mitzvah of Yovel. After seven cycles of seven years, there is a Mitzvas haYovel on the fiftieth year.

Right after these agricultural laws, the Torah speaks about a person who falls on hard times (Ki Yamuch Achicha...) and how we must treat him. The Gemara [Eruchin 30b] comments on the juxtaposition of these two parshiyos—the parsha of Shemittah-Yovel and the parsha of helping an impoverished brother: "Come and see how harsh is the 'dust of the Shemittah' prohibition. For if a man does business with produce of the Shemittah year, hoping to profit thereby, in the end poverty will force him to sell his movable property." The Gemara goes through stage by stage. First, he needs to sell his movable property, then he needs to sell his land, then he needs to sell this and that. Finally, he becomes so poor that he needs to sell his daughter and himself into slavery as well. This all came about, says the Gemara, because he illicitly tried to make a fortune selling fruits of the Shemittah year (which are supposed to

Davening Times

פרשת בהר

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.20pm
Candle Lighting	7.31pm - 7.45pm
Hashkomo	7.25am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.02am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm - 6.00pm
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.15pm
Motzei Shabbos	10.20pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.20pm

be hefker – ownerless).

The Ribono shel Olam starts punishing him, but he does not get the message. He goes from level to level, until he needs to sell his daughter and then himself into slavery.

Rabbeinu Yakov Yosef was the first and only Chief Rabbi of the City of New York. He came to the United States circa 1890, and was literally driven to death in New York by the tumultuous treatment he was given as Chief Rabbi of that Jewish metropolis. He was, nevertheless, a great man in the full sense of the word. They thought that such a person would be able to tame the “Wild West” that was New York at the end of the nineteenth century. He was not successful, even though he was a great Talmid Chochom and a tremendous orator. People walked for miles to hear his Shabbos Teshuva Drasha.

Rav Yakov Yosef gave a different interpretation of the juxtaposition between the laws of Shemittah and the laws of a person falling on hard times. He based his interpretation on a Medrash Rabbah in Parshas Behar. The Medrash links the pasuk “And when your brother becomes poor...” [Vayikra 25:25] with the pasuk “Happy is the person who takes care of the poor (‘maskil el dal’) Hashem will save him from the day of evil.” [Tehillim 41:2].

Rav Yakov Yosef notes that the expression ‘maskil el dal’ is a peculiar use of words. If I had to choose an expression to describe someone who is good to a poor person, I would use the expression ‘merachem el dal’ (one who has mercy on the poor) or ‘chas al dal’ (has pity on the poor). There are a whole variety of words that could be used here. The word ‘maskil’ comes from the etymology of sechel (intelligence, logic). This would be equivalent to saying ‘someone is smart’ – he uses his sechel to take care of the poor person. Why does Dovid HaMelech use the expression ‘maskil el dal’ in this pasuk?

(I will mention as an historical aside, in the not-too-distant Jewish history there was something known as the ‘Haskalah movement’. These were people who felt that parts of the Jewish religion were superstitious and outdated. They felt it was necessary to practice religion “with sechel”. That’s why the movement was called “the Haskalah.”)

To answer this question—why the pasuk uses the expression ‘maskil el dal’—I need to mention a pithy saying from Rav Yisrael Salanter. He used to say that regarding a person’s own situation, he must be a Ba’al Bitachon (have unlimited faith in G-d’s power of deliverance); however, regarding someone else’s situation, he must be a kofer (a heretic – i.e., have the feeling that Hashem will not help and it is up to me to do something to help this other person).

When a poor person approaches you and tells you his tale of woe, it is NOT appropriate to give him a mussar lecture (“Have Bitachon! The Almighty will take care of you!”) In such situations, a person must act as if he were a kofer. He must have the attitude: No! The Ribono shel Olam is not going to take care of him. If I feel for this fellow’s needs, I must take care of him myself! This is the fundamental rule, formulated by Rav Yisrael Salanter.

In light of this basic principle, let us revisit the juxtaposition of these pesukim. It is the Shemittah year. I observed Shemittah. I did not work my fields the entire year. The bills were mounting. My financial situation was precarious. Why did I do it? It was because I am a Ba’al Bitachon. HaKadosh Baruch Hu promised that if someone keeps Shemittah, He will take care of him. The Help might not always come immediately but we have a Divine Promise that we will be taken care of. So, when I was in the situation that I didn’t know where my next meal was coming from, I employed Midas HaBitachon.

Now a poor person comes to me and pleads with me: “I can’t make it. I am drowning.” A person may be tempted to say “Hey fella, I just went through the Shemittah year. I employed the Attribute of Bitachon (Faith). You should do the same thing. Daven to the Ribono shel Olam. Tell Him your troubles!”

The Torah says, do not act like that. “When your brother becomes poor and comes to you” – you need to take care of him. That is why, says Rav Yakov Yosef, the pasuk in Tehillim uses the expression Maskil el Dal. Do not give him your pious sermon about having faith. Use logic (sechel) rather than religious conviction here. This fellow has debt. The creditors are at his doorstep. They want to take away his house. Now is not the time for moral platitudes and theological lessons. Now is the time to write the fellow a generous check! A check is what keeps the creditors away from the fellow’s door. Happy is the one who is Maskil el Dal. When it comes to the poor, be a Maskil, as it were. Be like a Maskil of the nineteenth century who was cynical about matters of Belief and Bitachon.

This is how Rav Yakov Yosef viewed the juxtaposition of the parsha of Shemittah and the parsha of “V’chi yamuch achicha.”

Confluence of Events Is the Almighty Speaking to Us

Another Medrash on the above-quoted Pasuk [Vayikra 25:25] – “When your brother becomes poor, you shall support him” [Ki Yamuch Achicha...] – links this pasuk with a pasuk in Mishlei [22:2] – “The rich and the poor meet, Hashem puts them all together.” What does this pasuk in Mishlei have to do with the pasuk “Ki Yamuch Achicha”?

I wish to explain this Medrash with a true story. In Ger, Poland, the custom

used to be that when a Gerrer Chosid could not pay his rent and his landlord wanted to evict him and put him on the street, the Gerrer community would get together and raise the money to pay off the fellow’s rent. The tenant would remain safe in his house and would not be put out on the street.

It once happened that a Gerrer Chosid was a tenant of another Gerrer Chosid. The tenant could not pay his rent and the landlord threatened to evict him. The tenant came to the Gerrer Rebbe and complained, “My landlord – a Gerrer Chosid – wants to put me on the street.” The Rebbe told the tenant to send the landlord to him. The Gerrer Chosid landlord came before the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him: “Don’t put this fellow on the street, swallow your loss!” The landlord Chosid complained to the Rebbe. He said, “I don’t understand. If the landlord is not a Gerrer Chosid then the whole community assumes the debt and the whole Kehilla pays for it. Now that I happen to be the landlord and I happen to be a Gerrer Chosid, why should I have to assume the entire problem? Why am I different from a Vizhnitzer Chosid or some other Chosid, or a non-Chosid who wants to evict his tenant? Why am I penalized just because I happen to be a Gerrer Chosid?”

The Rebbe said, “That is right. If the Ribono shel Olam put you in that position, then He is telling you ‘This is your problem.’ It is no coincidence that he is a Gerrer Chosid and you are a Gerrer Chosid and it happens to fall in your lap. A mitzvah that falls into your lap is a sign from Heaven that YOU need to take care of it.” Therefore, the Rebbe told the landlord “You need to assume the entire burden because that is what the Ribono shel Olam wants.”

That is how the Gerrer Rebbe explained the Medrash linking the pasuk in Behar with the pasuk in Mishlei. “When your brother becomes poor then you shall support him.” The Medrash links this with the pasuk “The rich man and the poor man met, Hashem did this for you.” This confluence of events was set up by the Almighty. For whatever reason, the Ribono shel Olam is giving the rich man this specific mitzvah. Therefore, he should not try to deny what Providence is demanding of him.

The Chazon Ish writes in his sefer Emunah u’Bitachon that today we have no prophets. We are living in a time of Hester Panim (the ‘Divine Face’ is hidden). Ruach haKodesh is also not very widespread. But, says the Chazon Ish, the Ribono shel Olam still talks to us. If something happens in a person’s life—a confluence of events—the Ribono shel Olam is telling you something. This is no coincidence. That is how the Almighty deals with us in our time. He does not have Nevi’im speak to us and most of us do not have Ruach HaKodesh, so we do not know what is going on. But events—how things just happen to fall into place—represent the Ribono shel Olam talking to us in our day and age. This is what the pasuk in Mishlei is saying: When the poor person and rich man happen to ‘meet’—this was the action of Hashem.

Therefore, “When your brother becomes poor” – the Gerrer Rebbe told his Chosid: If this fellow fell into your lap, it is a Sign from Heaven that it is your responsibility to take care of him. This is your mitzvah, this is what the Ribono shel Olam wants, and it will be good for you in the end.

The Strength to be Pure Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

“Angels – bless Hashem! The strong warriors who do His bidding, to obey the sound of His word.” One opinion in a midrash holds that these warriors are those who observe shmitah.

I believe that this is the proper explanation: A mitzvah which brings clear benefit to a person, or otherwise fulfils some need of his, is not easier to perform than one that offers no obvious perks. To the contrary, it is more difficult! The benefit from the mitzvah makes it harder to perform purely for the sake of Heaven. It takes strength and resolve to push the ancillary considerations out of mind, and act only in response to Hashem’s word. For that matter, every mitzvah comes with collateral benefit – the reward that Hashem promises for observance of the Torah. It is no easy feat to clear one’s mind of the expectation of reward, when its existence is so basic to Torah.

True tzadikim struggle with this constantly. Chazal tell us that Yaakov wished to live in tranquility. Immediately, he was beset by the loss of Yosef. We take this to mean that Yaakov tired of this struggle to avoid thinking of any sechar for the mitzvos. Heaven complied and assisted him. They took away his son. Yaakov mourned bitterly, arguing that he had been told that his passport to Heaven was the family of twelve that he was charged to raise. If Yosef was lost, so was his way to eternal reward. Now that he no longer expected this reward, he could live in tranquility, no longer having to struggle with the expectation of reward that interfered with the purity of his avodah!

The observance of shmitah is problematic for similar reasons. Everyone knows that it is good for the land; had the Torah not commanded it, we might have come up with some similar practice on our own. Yet, the Torah here demands that we should observe this Shabbos rest “for Hashem,” meaning just because He asks us to, and not for any ulterior motive. The “strong warriors” who observe shmitah properly wage a mighty internal war to “to obey the sound of His word,” i.e. to act entirely out of dedication to His word, without any admixture of self-interest.