



TORAH



חומש ויקרא

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*
וצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

Chumash Vayikra
The Book of Leviticus

Parshat Behar



Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213
5772/2012

THE TORAH - CHUMASH VAYIKRA
WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Copyright © 2006-2012
by
Chabad of California

A project of
Chabad of California
741 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-208-7511 / Fax 310-208-5811

Published by
Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-774-4000 / Fax 718-774-2718
editor@kehot.com

Order Department:
291 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-0226 / Fax 718-778-4148
www.kehot.com

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book
or portions thereof, in any form, without permission,
in writing, from Chabad of California, Inc.

The Kehot logo is a trademark
of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-8266-0193-3
ISBN: 978-0-8266-0195-2 (set)

Published in the United States of America



GENESIS

Bereishit
Noach
Lech Lecha
Vayeira
Chayei Sarah
Toldot
Vayitzei
Vayishlach
Vayeishev
Mikeitz
Vayigash
Vayechei

EXODUS

Shemot
Va'eira
Bo
Beshalach
Yitro
Mishpatim
Terumah
Tetzaveh
Tisa
Vayakheil
Pekudei

LEVITICUS

Vayikra
Tzav
Shemini
Tazria
Metzora
Acharei
Kedoshim
Emor

Behar (32) בהר


Bechukotai

NUMBERS

Bemidbar
Naso
Beha'alotecha
Shelach
Korach
Chukat
Balak
Pinchas
Matot
Masei

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim
Va'etchanan
Eikev
Re'eh
Shoftim
Teitzei
Tavo
Nitzavim
Vayeilech
Ha'azinu
Vezot Habrachah



בְּהַר Behar

Overview

Behar means “at the mountain,” referring to Mount Sinai, the site of the Giving of the Torah. The first verse in this *parashah* reads, “And God spoke to Moses *at Mount Sinai*, saying...” Now, as we all know, the bulk of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers was given at Mount Sinai, so why is this fact suddenly emphasized? There is evidently something about the content of this *parashah* that is more intrinsically bound up with Mount Sinai than the rest of the Torah—but what is it?

As a matter of fact, the opening content of the *parashah* seems almost antithetical to the people’s exalted spiritual state at Mount Sinai. Let us recall that Mount Sinai was the scene of what was arguably the most intense Divine revelation ever experienced by any nation or individual in history, when the Torah was given. Here, as well, the bulk of the Torah’s laws were explained in detail, as God communicated with Moses over a period of almost a full year. At the foot of the mountain, the Tabernacle was first set up, in which God again revealed His presence to His people in the heavenly fire that consumed the daily sacrifices on an ongoing basis. In short, it was at this exalted mountain that our people attained the most sublime spiritual heights, thereby being freed from the confines of mundane existence and human experience.

In contrast, the commandments and human concerns that open *parashat Behar* are quite mundane. The injunction to refrain from working the land in the seventh year entailed grappling with very practical, material matters; the Torah itself seems to acknowledge this as it addresses the skeptical question, “If you should wonder, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year?’”¹ From there, until the end of the *parashah*, the subject matter gets progressively further from the spiritual heights we associate with Mount Sinai. We are told that should we not refrain from agricultural pursuits during the seventh year, we will eventually be forced to sell our assets, then our inheritance, then our home, then to borrow on interest. If we do not stop this downward spiral of spiritual descent, we will ultimately have to sell ourselves as slaves to a fellow Jew, then to a gentile, and then as an attendant in the service of idolatry.² The depths to which a human being can sink in defiance of God’s law stand in sharp contrast to the sublime images evoked by Mount Sinai.

The answer to this conundrum is, of course, that this contrast is intentional, that the

1. Below, 25:20.

2. *Kiddushin* 20b; *Sifra* 25:47, cited in Rashi *et al* on 26:1.

striking reference to Mount Sinai that constitutes the beginning and name of this *parashah* is meant to inspire us and instruct us how to overcome the darkness of a world that encourages and promotes the skeptical notions and degenerate materialism detailed in the rest of the *parashah*.

On our own, we are indeed incapable of elevating our environment, since we are “stuck” within it, functioning as a part of it. Nature follows the immutable laws of cause and effect, of biological, psychological, and sociological determinism, and every aspect of our lives is subject to these laws. As such, we are prisoners within nature, and, in the sages’ words, “a prisoner cannot free himself from his own imprisonment.”³ Only a force from without can release someone who is locked within.

It is the Torah—our link to God’s transcendent, infinite will—that endows us with the ability to overcome the limitations of nature and the natural mentalities of our environment. The spiritual bond we forge with God through studying the Torah and observing its commandments affords us the transcendent “strength” necessary to break out of the downward cycle of spiritual degeneration. Thus, *parashat Behar* opens with an allusion to the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Yet, it is not enough to possess this inner strength; we have to be able to channel it into our lives in order to make use of it. In order to channel Divine strength, we have to be selfless, transparent, and devoid of any desire for self-aggrandizement. This ability, too, we draw from the fact that God gave the Torah on Mount Sinai.



By naming this *parashah* with the single word *Behar* (“at the mountain”) rather than with the full phrase *Behar Sinai* (“at Mount Sinai”), Jewish tradition has chosen to emphasize the fact that the Torah was given on a mountain, rather than emphasize what mountain it was given on.

Yet, we are told in the Midrash that God chose to give the Torah on Mount Sinai because it was the *lowest*—i.e., humblest—mountain.⁴ But if God meant to teach us humility, logic would insist that He give the Torah in a valley, or at most on level ground. What is the paradox implied in the *lowest of mountains*?

Although the importance of humility and self-abnegation before God’s will cannot be overemphasized, integral to serving God is also a certain measure of pride.⁵ A totally selfless person will feel powerless when he encounters the challenges, doubts, cynicism, and mockery of a world that obscures Godliness. After all, what credibility does he have to stand up against these and oppose them? Hence, we must all be “mountains”; we must master the art of asserting ourselves as the representatives of God on earth. This lesson is so fundamental, so important, that the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Code of Jewish Law, opens with it, as if to imply that our fulfillment of all the laws that follow depends upon internalizing the awareness that we must never be ashamed in the face of scoffers, but boldly assert our commitment to God’s laws at all times.

Still, personal pride—assuming the credit for our accomplishments—has no place in Judaism. The constant awareness and consciousness of God that Judaism requires us to maintain does not allow us any aggrandizement of personal dignity or self-importance. The pride we are to feel is God’s pride: the recognition that we are charged with His mis-

3. *Berachot* 5b.

4. *Targum Yonatan ben Uzziel*, Judges 5:5; Psalms 68:17; *Midrash Tehillim* 68:17; *Likutei Torah* 3:15b ff.

5. See *Sotah* 5a; *Shabbat* 67a (“Every Jew is a prince/ss” [i.e., God’s child]); *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Orach Chayim* 1:1.

OVERVIEW OF BEHAR

sion. This is the source of our dignity and the impudence we must manifest in order to affront the cherished notions of the natural order. In fact, it is precisely true self-abnegation that enables us to exhibit true self-assertion: when we have lost all sense of ego, we are no longer aware of ourselves, including our self-abnegation; our consciousness of self has been supplanted by our consciousness of God. We are no longer “us”; we are God acting through us. Thus, the *parashah* is named *Behar* and not *Behar Sinai*, reflecting the fact that total humility annihilates even the consciousness of our own humility (*Sinai*), leaving only Divine self-assertion (*Behar*).

Thus, the mountain of choice for the Giving of the Torah was the most modest one, Mount Sinai—a mountain, indeed, but a mountain of absolute humility.⁶

6. *Sichot Kodesh* 5740, vol. 2, pp. 86-91; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, pp. 304-307; *ibid.*, vol. 22, pp. 159-163; *Sichot Kodesh* 5737, p. 755.

— ONKELOS —

25:1 ומליל י' עם משה בטורא
 דסיני למימר: 2 מלל עם בני
 ישראל ומימר להון ארי תעלון
 לארעא די אנא זהב לכוון ותשמט
 ארעא שמטתא קדם י': 3 שית
 שנין תורע חקלף ושית שנין
 תכסח פרמף ותכנוש ית עללתה:
 4 ובשטא שביעתא ניח שמטתא
 יהי לארעא דתשמט קדם י' חקלף
 לא תורע וכרמף לא תכסח: 5 ית
 פתי דחצדף לא תחצד וית ענבי
 שבקר לא תקטוף שנת שמטתא
 יהי לארעא: 6 ותהי שמטת ארעא
 לכוון למיכל לף ולעבדף ולאמתף
 ולאגירף ולתותבף דירין עמף:
 7 ולבעדף ולחיומא די בארעף
 תהי כל עללתה למיכל: 8 ותמני
 לף שבע שמטן דשנין שבע שנין
 שבע זמנין ויהון לף יומי שבע
 שמטן דשנין ארבעין ותשע שנין:

25:1 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר: 2 דַּבֵּר
 אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תִבְאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר אָנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וּשְׁבַתַּהּ הָאָרֶץ שִׁבְתָּ לַיהוָה: 3 שֵׁשׁ
 שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע שָׂדֶךְ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְמַר בְּרִמֶּךָ וְאִסַּפְתָּ אֶת־
 תְּבוּאָתָהּ: 4 וּבַשְּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית שִׁבַּת שְׁפִתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאָרֶץ
 שִׁבַּת לַיהוָה שָׂדֶךְ לֹא תִזְרַע וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תִזְמַר: 5 אֶת
 סְפִיחַ קְצִירְךָ לֹא תִקְצֹר וְאֶת־עֲנָבֶיךָ נִזְיֶרְךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר
 שְׁנַת שְׁפִתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאָרֶץ: 6 וְהִיְתָה שִׁבַּת הָאָרֶץ לָכֶם
 לְאֹכְלָהּ לָךְ וּלְעַבְדְּךָ וּלְאִמְתְּךָ וּלְשִׂכְרֶךָ וּלְתוֹשְׁבֶיךָ
 הַגֵּרִים עִמָּךְ: 7 וּלְבַהֲמֹתֶיךָ וּלְחֵיהָ אֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְצְךָ תִּהְיֶה
 כָּל־תְּבוּאָתָהּ לְאֹכֵל: 8

8 וְסַפְּרָתָ לָךְ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שִׁבְעַת
 פְּעָמִים וְהָיוּ לָךְ יְמֵי שִׁבְעַת הַשָּׁנִים תִּשַׁע וָאַרְבָּעִים
 שָׁנָה:

— RASHI —

אסרתים, אלא שלא תנהג בהם כבעל הבית, אלא
 הכל יהיו שוים בה, אתה ושכירך ותושבך: **שבת**
הארץ לכם לאכלה. מן השבות אתה אוכל, ואי אתה
 אוכל מן השמור: **לף ולעבדך ולאמתך.** לפי שנאמר:
 "וְאָכְלוּ אֲבִינִי עִמָּךְ", וכול יהיו אסורים באכילה
 לעשירים? תלמוד לומר: "לף ולעבדך ולאמתך",
 הרי בעלים ועבדים ושפחות אמורים כאן: **ולשכירך**
ולתושבך. אף הגוים: 7 **ולבְּהֵמַתְךָ ולחֵיהָ.** אם חֵיהָ
 אוכלת, בהמה לא כל שכן, שמוזונותיה עליה, מה
 תלמוד לומר "ולבְּהֵמַתְךָ"? מִקִּישׁ בְּהֵמָה לְחֵיהָ: כל
 זמן שחיה אוכלת מן השדה — האכל לבְּהֵמַתְךָ מן
 הבית, פְּלָה לְחֵיהָ מן השדה — פְּלָה לְבַהֲמַתְךָ מן
 הבית: 8 **שְׁבַתַת שָׁנִים.** שמשות שנים. יכול יעשה
 שבע שנים רצופות שמטה ויעשה יובל אחריהם?
 תלמוד לומר: "שבע שנים שבע פעמים", הוי אומר:
 כל שמטה ושמטה בנמנה: **וְהָיוּ לָךְ יְמֵי שִׁבְעַת וָגו'.**
 מגיד לך, שאף על פי שלא עשית שמשות, עשה
 יובל לסוף ארבעים ותשע שנה. ופשוטו של מקרא:
 יעלה לך חשבון שנות השמשות למספר ארבעים
 ותשע:

1 **בהר סיני.** מה ענין שמטה אצל הר סיני, והלא
 כל המצוות נאמרו מסיני? אלא, מה שמטה נאמרו
 בללותיה ופרטותיה ודקדוקיה מסיני, אף בלן נאמרו
 בללותיה ודקדוקיה מסיני. כך שנויה בתורת פהנים,
 ונראה לי שכן פרושה: לפי שלא מצינו שמטת
 קרקעות שנושנית בערבות מואב במשנה תורה,
 למדנו שכללותיה ופרטותיה בלן נאמרו מסיני,
 ובא הכתוב ולמד כאן על כל דבור שנדבר למשה,
 שמיסיני היו כלם בללותיה ודקדוקיה וחקורו ונשנו
 בערבות מואב: 2 **שבת לה.** לשם ה', כשם שנאמר
 בשבת בראשית: 4 **ויהיה לארץ.** לשדות ולפרמים:
לא תזמר. שקוצצין ומורותיה, ותרגומו: "לא
 תכסח", ודומה לוי: "קוצים כסוחים", "שרפה באש
 כסוחה": 5 **את ספיח קצירך.** אפלו לא ירעתה והיא
 צמחה מן הזרע שנפל בה בעת הקציר, הוא קרוי
 "ספיח": **לא תקצור.** להיות מחזיק בו כשאר קציר,
 אלא הפקר יהיה לכל: **נזירך.** שהנזרת והפרשת בני
 אדם מהם ולא הפקרתם: **לא תבצר.** אותם אינה
 בוצר, אלא מן המפקר: 6 **והיתה שבת הארץ וגו'.** אף
 על פי שאסרתים עליה, לא באכילה ולא בהנאה

1. ישעיה נב, יב. 2. תהלים פ, יז. 3. שמות כג, יא.

The Sabbatical Year

25:1 **God spoke to Moses**, continuing to communicate with him at the foot of **Mount Sinai**, saying,

2 **“Speak to the Israelites. You must say to them: ‘As I have told you,² when you enter the land that I am giving you, the land must periodically rest** by observing an agricultural **Sabbath** in honor of **God** and in acknowledgment of the fact that He created the world.³ Specifically —

3 **Once you have conquered and settled the land, you must begin counting the years. You may sow your field for six years, and you may prune your vineyard for six years, gathering in the land’s produce,**

4 **but in the seventh year, the land must be given a complete rest; this is its Sabbath** in honor of **God**.⁴ **You must not sow your field, nor may you prune your vineyard.**

5 **During this year, you may only gather produce that has been declared ownerless. If you do not declare the produce of your fields and vineyards ownerless, you may not even reap the aftergrowth** (i.e., whatever has grown on its own from the seed that fell to the ground during) **your previous harvest, and you may not pick the grapes that you have set aside for yourself, for this year must be a year of rest for the land** with respect to ownership, too.

6 **Once you have declared the produce that grows during the Sabbath of the land ownerless, it will be yours to eat. It must be equally available for you, for your Jewish bondmen and bondwomen, as well as for your non-Jewish hired worker and resident alien who live with you.**

7 **All of its produce must also be made freely available to eat for your domestic animals and for the undomesticated animals that are in your land**, on an equal basis. In other words, you may feed yourselves, your households, and your domestic animals from any particular type of produce that you have stored away as long as that type of produce is available and accessible in the fields or vineyards for undomesticated animals. Once it has ceased to be available outside, you must remove it from your storehouses, bring it into the open field, and declare it ownerless. You may then gather it along with the rest of the people.

From then on, every seventh year must be observed in this way.

The Jubilee Year

8 **Each period of six years of work followed by one sabbatical year will make up one sabbatical cycle. In addition to counting the years for the purpose of observing the sabbatical year, you must count for yourself seven sabbatical cycles, i.e., seven years seven times, observing each seventh year as a sabbatical year. The time-period of these seven sabbatical cycles will thus amount to 49 years.**

1. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, p. 279. 2. Exodus 23:10-12, 34:21; see also Deuteronomy 15:1-11, 31:10. 3. Exodus 20:9-11; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, pp. 108-113. 4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, p. 109, note 12.

— ONKELOS —

9 ותעבר שופר יבכא בירחא שביעאה בעשרא לירחא ביומא דכפוריא תעברון שופרא בכל ארעבון: 10 ותקדשון ית שנת חמשין שנין ותקרון חרותא בארעא לכל יתבאה יובלא היא תהי לכוון ותחובון גבר לאחסנתה וגבר לזרעיתה תחובון: 11 יובלא היא שנת חמשין שנין תהי לכוון לא תזרעון ולא תחצדון ית פתהא ולא תקטפון ית שבקהא: 12 ארי יובלא היא קדשא תהי לכוון מן חקלא תיכלון ית עללתה:

9 והעברת שופר תרועה בתוך השבעי בעשור לחדש ביום הכפרים תעבירו שופר בכל ארצכם: 10 וקדשתם את שנת החמישים שנה וקראתם דרור בארץ לכל יושביה יובל הוא תהיה לכם ושבתם איש אל אחוזו ואיש אל משפחתו תשבו: 11 יובל הוא שנת החמישים שנה תהיה לכם לא תזרעו ולא תקצרו את ספיחיה ולא תבצרו את נזריה: 12 כי יובל הוא קדש תהיה לכם מן השדה תאכלו את תבואתה:

— RASHI —

איש אל אחוזו. שהשדות חוזרות לבעליהן: ואיש אל משפחתו תשבו. לרבות את הנרצע: 11 יובל הוא שנת החמישים שנה. מה תלמוד לומר? לפי שנאמר: "וקדשתם" וגו', כדאימא בראש השנה ובתורת כהנים: את נזריה. את הענבים המשמרים, אבל בוצר אתה מן המפקרים. כשם שנאמר בשביעית, כך נאמר ביובל. נמצאו שתי שנים קדושות סמוכות זו לזו: שנת ארבעים ותשע שמשנה, ושנת החמישים יובל: 12 קדש תהיה לכם. תופסת דמיה כהקדש. יכול תצא היא לחלין? תלמוד לומר: "תהיה", בהויתיה תהא: מן השדה תאכלו. על ידי השדה אתה אוכל מן הבית, שאם פלה להיה מן השדה, אתה צריך לבער מן הבית. כשם שנאמר בשביעית, כך נאמר ביובל:

9 והעברת. לשון: "ויעבירו קול במחנה", לשון הכרזה: ביום הכפרים. ממשמע שנאמר: "ביום הכפרים", איני יודע שהוא בעשור לחדש, אם כן, למה נאמר: "בעשור לחדש"? אלא, לומר לה: תקיעת עשור לחדש דוחה שבת "בכל ארצכם", ואין תקיעת ראש השנה דוחה שבת בכל ארצכם. אלא בבית דין בלבד: 10 וקדשתם. בכניסתה מקדשין אותה בבית דין, ואומרים: מקדשת השנה: וקראתם דרור. לעבדים, בין נרצע, בין שלא כלו לו שש שנים משנמכר. אמר רבי יהודה: מהו לשון "דרור"? "כמדיר בי דירא", שדר בכל מקום שהוא רוצה ואינו ברשות אחרים: יובל הוא. שנה זאת מקדלת משאר שנים, בנקיבת שם לה לבדה, ומה שמה? "יובל" שמה, על שם תקיעת שופר: ושבתם

4. שמות לו, ו. 5. ראש השנה ט, ב. 6. ח, ב.

produce of the Jubilee year that you have stored away as long as that type of produce is also available for undomesticated animals to eat **from the field**. Once it has ceased to be available outside, you must remove it from your property, bring it into the open field, and declare it ownerless. You may then gather it along with the rest of the people.

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[12] **Subject to specific limitations:** The restrictions on the use of the produce of the sabbatical and Jubilee years include:¹⁴

- It may only be consumed (in the case of produce usually consumed as food) or used (in the case of produce usually used in some other way, such as burning olive oil for light) for per-

sonal use, not for monetary gain.

- It may not be bought, sold, or discarded.
- It may only be used optimally, not in any way that wastes more than is wasted in the course of its usual use (e.g., food normally eaten whole may not be juiced).

14. Shevi'it 8; Mishneh Torah, Shemittah veYovel 5:1-12.

9 Regardless of whether you will have observed the sabbatical years during this 49-year period, **you must proclaim** the following year, the 50th, to be a special year, by means of **shofar blasts: In the seventh month, Tishrei, on the 10th of that month**, i.e., **on the Day of Atonement, you must proclaim** this year to be special by sounding **the shofar throughout your land**.

Even if the high court sees fit in the future to prohibit the blowing of the shofar when *Rosh HaShanah* occurs on the Sabbath,⁵ this prohibition need not extend to *Yom Kippur* of the 50th year that occurs on the Sabbath.⁶

10 Although you are to blow the shofar only on *Yom Kippur*, **you**—via your representatives, the court—**must sanctify the 50th year** from its beginning, 10 days earlier, by declaring it to begin on that day.⁷

On *Yom Kippur* of this year, **you must proclaim freedom throughout the land for all** Jewish bondservants—whether they were indentured by the court in order to pay back what they stole⁸ or they indentured themselves out of destitution⁹—even if their original term of service is not yet up. The release afforded by this year applies only **to those bondservants who live in** the Land of Israel.¹⁰

You must designate this year as **the Jubilee**, so named after the horn of the ram (*yovel*) blown to announce it.

During this year, **each of you must return to his landed property**; thus, you must return any fields that you have purchased to their original owners.

Together with the other bondservants who are released during this year, **each of you** whose term of service has been extended by having his ears pierced¹¹ **must also return to his family**.

11 Even though the release of bondservants begins only on *Yom Kippur*, the observance of the Jubilee year does not extend until *Yom Kippur* of the following year. **You must treat only the 50th year itself as the Jubilee** and not apply any of its laws to any part of the year following.

Regarding agricultural work, this year must be treated just like the sabbatical year: **you must not sow** your fields or prune your vineyards. You must also declare this year's produce ownerless; unless you do, **you may not even reap its aftergrowth, and you may not pick** the grapes **that you had set aside** for yourself.

12 **It is the Jubilee** year: its holiness extends to its produce, rendering its use subject to specific limitations. Among these limitations is selling the produce commercially; you may only sell small amounts in order to purchase other articles. If you do purchase something with the proceeds of the sale of this year's produce, the sanctity of the produce (together with the attendant limitations on its use) transfers to the purchased article; however, the original produce **remains holy for you**¹²—it cannot be “redeemed” out of its sanctity, as other consecrated items can.¹³ The produce of the sabbatical year possesses similar sanctity.

Like the produce of the sabbatical year, **you may only eat** any particular type of

5. *Rosh HaShanah* 4:1. 6. *Mishneh Torah, Shemitah veYovel* 10:12. 7. See *Rosh HaShanah* 8b and *Mishneh Torah, Shemitah veYovel* 10:14. 8. Exodus 21:2; Deuteronomy 15:12. 9. Below, v. 40. 10. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, p. 250, note 13. 11. Exodus 21:3-6; Deuteronomy 15:16-17. 12. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, p. 133, note 23. 13. See below, 27:13, 15, 19, 27, 31.

ONKELOS

13 בשמא דיובלא הדא תתובן
 גבר לאחסנתה: 14 וארי תזבנון
 זבינין לחברך או תזבן מידא
 דחברך לא תזבן גבר ית אחוהי:
 15 במנן שניא בטר יובלא תזבן
 מן חברך במנן שני עללמא זבן
 לך: 16 לפום סגיאות שניא תסגי
 זבינוהי ולפום זעירות שניא תזער
 זבינוהי ארי מנן עללמא הוא
 מזבן לך: 17 ולא תזבן גבר ית
 חברה ותדחל מאלקה ארי אנא
 ?? אלהכון: 18 ותעבדון ית קימי
 וית דיני תשרון ותעבדון יתהון
 ותיתבון על ארעא לרחצון:

13 בשנת היובל הזאת תלבו איש אל-אחוזתו:

◆ שני 14 וכי-תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיד עמיתך
 אל-תזבנו איש את-אחיו: 15 במספר שנים אחר היובל
 תקנה מאת עמיתך במספר שני-תבואות ומכר-לך:
 16 לפי רב השנים תרבה מקנתו ולפי מעט השנים
 תמעט מקנתו כי מספר תבואות הוא מכר לך: 17 ולא
 תזבנו איש את-עמיתו ויראת מאלהיך כי אני יהוה
 אלהיכם: 18 ועשיתם את-חקתי ואת-משפטי תשמרו
 ועשיתם אתם וישבתם על-הארץ לבטח:

RASHI

ורבותינו דרשו מאן, שהמוכר שדהו אינו רשאי
 לגאל פחות משתי שנים, שתעמד שתי שנים ביד
 הלוקח מיום ליום, ואפלו יש שלש תבואות באותן
 שתי שנים, כגון שמכרה לו בקמותיה. ו"שני" אינו
 יוצא מפשוטו, כלומר, מספר שנים של תבואות ולא
 של שדפון, ומעוט שנים שתים: 16 תרבה מקנתו.
 תמכרנה ביקר: תמעט מקנתו. תמעט בדימיה:
 17 ולא תזבנו איש את עמיתו. כאן הוזכר על אונאת
 דברים, שלא יקניט איש את חברו ולא ישיאנו עצה
 שאינה הוגנת לו, לפי דרכו והנאתו של יועץ. ואם
 תאמר: מי יודע אם נתפונתי לרעה? לך נאמר:
 "ויראת מאלהיך", היודע מחשבות הוא יודע. כל
 דבר המסור ללב, שאין מכיר אלא מי שהמחשבה
 בלבו, נאמר בו: "ויראת מאלהיך": 18 וישבתם
 על הארץ לבטח. שבעון שמשה ישראל גולים,
 שנאמר: "אז תרצה הארץ את שבתתיה, והרצת
 את שבתתיה". ושבעים שנה של גלות בבל, כנגד
 שבעים שמשות שבתלו היו:

13 תלבו איש אל אחוזתו. והרי כבר נאמר: "ושבתם
 איש אל אחוזתו" אלא, לרבות המוכר שדהו ועמד
 בנו וגאלה, שחוזרת לאביו ביובל: 14 וכי תמכרו
 וגו'. לפי פשוטו, כמשמעו. ועוד יש דרשה: מנין,
 בשאתה מוכר, מכר לישראל חברך? תלמוד לומר:
 "וכי תמכרו ממכר — לעמיתך" מכר. ומנין שאם
 באת לקנות, קנה מישראל חברך? תלמוד לומר:
 "או קנה — מיד עמיתך": אל תזבנו. זו אונאת ממון:
 15 במספר שנים אחר היובל תקנה. והו פשוטו לישוב
 מקרא על אפניו: על האונאה בא להזכיר, כשתמכר
 או תקנה קרקע, דע כמה שנים יש עד היובל, ולפי
 השנים ותבואות השדה שהיא ראיה לעשות, ומכר
 המוכר ויקנה הקונה, שהרי סופו להחזירה לו בשנת
 היובל. ואם יש שנים מעטות וזה מוכרה בדמים
 יקרים, הרי נתאנה לוקח, ואם יש שנים מרבות ואכל
 ממנה תבואות הרבה ולקחה בדמים מועטים, הרי
 נתאנה מוכר. לפיכך צריך לקנותה לפי הזמן, וזהו
 שנאמר: "במספר שני תבואות ומכר לך", לפי מנין
 שני התבואות שתהא עומדת ביד הלוקח, תמכר לו.

7. תורת כהנים. 8. שם. 9. ויקרא כו, לד.

and then perform them. Then you will live on the land securely. If, however, you neglect the observance of the sabbatical year, you will forfeit the privilege of dwelling in your land.²²

15. V. 10, above. 16. Above, v. 12. 17. Rashi on 26:1, below. 18. Above, 19:35-37. 19. Tosefta, Bava Kama 10:15; Bava Kama 113ab; Mishneh Torah, Genevoh 7:8. See below, v. 50; Deuteronomy 25:13-16. 20. See Exodus 22:20; above, 19:33; Deuteronomy 23:17. 21. 19:14, above; Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, p. 146, note 37. 22. See below, 26:33-34.

13 As just stated,¹⁵ **during this Jubilee Year, each of you must return to his landed property**, meaning that all landed property that had been purchased during the previous 49 years must be returned to its original owner. This injunction includes the case of a person who purchases his father's field from the individual to whom the father sold it; the son must return this field to his father at the onset of the Jubilee year.

- ◆ *Second Reading* 14 As mentioned,¹⁶ it is forbidden to deal commercially in produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years. If a person transgresses this prohibition, he will suffer monetary loss and eventually be forced to sell some of his personal (non-landed) property in order to pay for his sustenance. Hence, I will now review some of the laws of selling personal property:¹⁷

As you have been taught,¹⁸ you must not cheat in business dealings, whether with Jews or with non-Jews.¹⁹ Thus, **when you sell something to your fellow Jew or buy something from your fellow Jew, you must not cheat one another**. On the contrary, you must assist your fellow Jew by trying to buy from him and sell to him whenever possible.

15 Therefore, when you purchase land, **you must purchase it from your fellow Jew** while reducing the price **according to the number of years** that have elapsed since the previous Jubilee year. For his part, **he must sell you his land according to the number of years** the land is expected to produce **crops** until the next such year.

16 Thus, **the more the remaining years**, the more **you** (as the seller) **may increase** your offer for **its purchase price**; **the fewer the remaining years**, the more **you** (as the buyer) **may decrease** your offer for **its purchase price**. The price is prorated **because** the landowner **is selling you** not the land outright—since the land must return to him in the Jubilee year—but is merely leasing the land to you so you can produce **a specific number of crops**. In this way, both of you will be ensured of not cheating each other.

In any case, once he sells you his land, he may redeem it only after two years have elapsed since the sale.

17 Besides not cheating each other by buying or selling at unfair prices, **none of you may taunt your fellow Jew**²⁰ or, as you have been told,²¹ mislead him by giving him business advice that is in your best interest rather than his, even if it is not to his detriment. Even though you may be able to deceive other people into believing that you advised him in his interest, you cannot deceive Me; **you must therefore fear your God. I am God**, who may be relied upon to punish you if you transgress this prohibition.

The Sabbatical Year, continued

18 **You must carry out My rules** pertaining to the sabbatical year, **and safeguard My ordinances** pertaining to the sabbatical year by studying them thoroughly,

— ONKELOS —
 19 ותתן ארעא אבה ותיכלון למשבֿע ותיבתון לרֿחֿצן עלה: 20 וארי תימרון מא ניכול בשתא שביעתא הא לא נזרע ולא נכנוש ית עללתנא: 21 ואפקד ית ברבתי לכוּן בשתא שתינתא ותעבד ית עללתא לתלת שנין: 22 ותזרעון ית שתא תמיניתא ותיכלון מן עללתא עתיקא עד שתא תשיעיתא עד מעל עללתא תיכלון עתיקא:

◆ שלישי (שני במחוברין) 19 ונתנה הארץ פריה ואכלתם לשבע וישבתם לבטח עליה: 20 וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעת הן לא נזרע ולא נאסף את תבואתנו: 21 וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשית את התבואה לשלש השנים: 22 וזרעתם את השנה השמינית ואכלתם מן התבואה ישן עד השנה התשיעת עד בוא תבואתה תאכלו ישן:

— RASHI —

התשיעת. עד חג הסוכות של תשיעית, שהיא עת "בוא תבואתה" של שמינית לתוך הבית, שכל ימות הקיץ היו בשדה בגרנות ובתשרי הוא עת האסוף לבית. ופעמים שהיתה צריכה לעשות לארבע שנים: בששית שלפני השמטה השביעית, שהן בטלין מעבודת קרקע שתי שנים רצופות, השביעית והיובל, ומקרא זה נאמר בשאר השמטות בלן:

19 ונתנה הארץ וגו' וישבתם לבטח עליה. שלא תדאגו משנת בצרת: ואכלתם לשבע. אף בתוך המעים תהא בו ברכה: 20 ולא נאסף. אל הבית: את תבואתנו. כגון זון, ופרות האילן, וספיחין הבאים מאליהם: 21 לשלש השנים. למקצת הששית, מניסן ועד ראש השנה, ולשביעית ולשמינית — שיוזרו בשמינית במרחשון ויקצרו בניסן: 22 עד השנה

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

live financially sound lives, when we see our non-Jewish neighbors, who are not "handicapped" by any of these obligations, struggling to earn their livelihood?

This is the lesson of the Sabbatical year. If we do what God requires, He will bless us—not only spiritually, but materially as well.²⁵

I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year: Allegorically, the six years during which work is permitted are compared to the six millennia of the world's present state of existence. The seventh year corresponds to the seventh millennium, when the world will "rest" from its present state. Thus, we are now in the latter part of the sixth millennium, i.e., towards the end of the sixth "year."

In this context, the same question posed in the preceding verse applies: Aware of how the Divine consciousness and spiritual strength of the latter generations cannot compare to that of the earlier ones, we may wonder: how can it be that the sixth "year," the weakest one, will be the one to provide for the seventh? How can our feeble attempts at Divine service usher in the Redemption, when that of our holy ancestors did not?

To this, God replies that in the merit of our simple faith, expressed in our dedication to our Divine mission despite all obstacles and beyond the con-

straints of logic, He will increase the yield of the "sixth year," and bring us the Redemption.

Moreover, there are three levels of redemption, alluded to in the verse, "He will bring us to life after two days; on the third day, He will raise us up and we will live before Him."²⁶ The first level is the preparatory period before the advent of the Messiah, in which we experience a foretaste of messianic reality as we witness the final days of exile. The second level is the period immediately after the coming of the Messiah, in which the world will once again function as it is meant to, but still within the limitations of nature. This is the period the sages referred to when they that "the only difference between this world and the messianic era is with regard to the subjugation [of the Jewish people] under the [non-Jewish] nations."²⁷ The third level will begin with the Resurrection of the Dead and be characterized by a complete existential reversal of nature, in which what we presently consider miraculous will become natural.²⁸

Thus, in this context, God's promise that the sixth year will produce enough for three years means that the merit of our dedication to our Divine mission throughout the sixth millennium will suffice to bring us to all the three following "years," the full flowering of the final Redemption.²⁹

25. *Likutei Sichot* vol. 2, pp. 548-549. 26. Hosea 6:2. 27. *Berachot* 34b. 28. *Or HaTorah, Nach*, vol. 1, pp. 433-434. 29. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 190.

◆ *Third Reading (Second when combined)* 19 Moreover, if you observe the sabbatical year properly, **the land will yield its produce, you will eat to satiety**, for the food will be miraculously filling,²³ **and you will live upon the land securely**, i.e., without fear of drought.

20 **If**, now that you have heard these assurances of abundance and satiety, **you should wonder**, “**What, indeed, will we eat in the seventh year?** How will these blessings be materialized?²⁴ **We cannot sow** and reap a harvest, and moreover, **we cannot even gather our produce** that grows by itself—such as fruit and the aftergrowth of the preceding harvest—**into our homes**, for it all must be declared ownerless!”

21 Know then, that **I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield enough produce for the better part of three years**: the second half of the sixth year, after the harvest in Nisan; the entire seventh year; and until Nisan of the eighth year, when you can harvest what you sowed in Marcheshvan of that year.

22 **for you will sow in Marcheshvan of the eighth year, while still eating from the old**, sixth-year **crops**. You will then harvest the eighth-year crop in Nisan of that year, but nonetheless, **you will still eat** mostly from **the old** crop while the eighth-year crop remains in the fields and granaries to dry, as usual, **until Tishrei of the ninth year**, which is the time of **the arrival of its crop** from the fields and granaries into your homes.

Moreover, once every 50 years, when the 49th year—which is a sabbatical year—is followed by the Jubilee year, in which agricultural work is also forbidden—I will make the sixth year yield enough produce for *four* years!

— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

21 **I will command My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it will yield produce for three years**: Although we should strive to understand the lessons that God’s commandments hold for us, we should not fall prey to the tendency to rationalize them, i.e., to think that the logical benefits we discern in fulfilling the commandments is their ultimate purpose. For example, with regard to the sabbatical year, it is very tempting to suppose that it is nothing more than a means of naturally improving the fertility of the soil. After planting for six years in a row, the nutrients in the ground need to be replenished, and so we leave it fallow for a year. After the rest, the field will understandably produce more and better produce than it did before.

The most serious danger in rationalizing the commandments lies in proceeding to the next logical step: presuming to evaluate the relevance of the commandments based on the rational explanation for them we suppose to be their purpose. In the case of the sabbatical year, for example, we could think

that with modern agronomical advances, such as crop rotation and fertilization, etc., there is no need to let the land lie fallow for a year, so the observance of the sabbatical year is no longer relevant.

It is in order to disprove this argument that God promised His blessings specifically for the sixth year. Were the purpose of the commandment to allow the soil to be replenished, we would expect the Torah to promise increased yields in the years *following* the fallow year. By promising the increased production in the *sixth* year—which should naturally be the weakest—God shows us that it is specifically and exclusively His blessing that is the source of the increased production.

Although the laws of the sabbatical year apply only in the Land of Israel, its lessons are applicable in our day-to-day lives wherever we live. As Jews, we must spend time every day in prayer and studying the Torah study; we must give charity and support Jewish schools and yeshivas; we cannot work on the Sabbath and the holidays. How can we hope to

23. See Genesis 23:2, 24:67; below, 26:5; Deuteronomy 11:15. 24. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 183-188.

— ONKELOS —

23 וארעא לא תודבן לחלוטין ארי דילי ארעא ארי דרין ותותבין אתון קדמי: 24 ובכל ארע אחסנתכון פרקנא תתנון לארעא: 25 ארי יתמספן אחורף ויזבן מאחסנתה וייתי פריקה דקריב לה ויפרוק ית זביני אחוהי: 26 וגבר ארי לא יחי לה פריק ותדבק ידה וישכב כמסת פרקנה: 27 ויחשב ית שני זבינוהי ויתיב ית מותרא לגבר די זבין לה ויתוב לאחסנתה: 28 ואם לא אשפחת ידה כמסת דיתיב לה ויהי זבינוהי בידא דזבן יתה עד שתא דיובלא ויפוק ביובלא ויתוב לאחסנתה: 29 וגבר ארי זבן בית מותב קרתא מקפא שור ויהי פרקנה עד משלם שתא דזבינוהי ערן בערן יהי פרקנה:

23 והארץ לא תמכר לצמתת פילי הארץ פיגרים ותושבים אתם עמדי: 24 ובכל ארץ אחזתכם גאלה תתנו לארץ: ם

◆ רביעי 25 פיימוה אחיה ומכר מאחזתו ובא גאלו הקרב אליו וגאל את ממכר אחיו: 26 ואיש כי לא יהיה לו גאל והשיגה ידו ומצא כדי גאלתו: 27 והשב את שני ממכרו והשיב את העדף לאיש אשר מכרלו ושב לאחזתו: 28 ואם לא מצאה ידו די השיב לו והיה ממכרו ביד הקנה אתו עד שנת היובל ויצא ביכל ושב לאחזתו: ם
◆ חמישי (שלישי במחוברין) 29 ואיש פיימכר בית מושב עיר חומה והיתה גאלתו עדתם שנת ממכרו ימים תהיה גאלתו:

— RASHI —

מספר התבואות כפי חשבון של כל שנה. אכלת אותה שלש שנים או ארבע, הוצא את דמיהן מן החשבון וטל את השאר, וזהו: "והשיב את העדף", בדמי המקח על האכילה שאכלה, ויתנם ללוקח: לאיש אשר מכר לו. המוכר הזה שבא לגאלה: 28 די השיב לו. מכאן שאינו גואל לחצאין: עד שנת היובל. שלא יבנס לתוף אותה שנה כלום, שהיובל משמט בתחלתו: 29 בית מושב עיר חומה. בית בתוף עיר המקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון: והיתה גאלתו. לפי שנאמר בשדה, שיכול לגאלה משתי שנים ואילך כל זמן שירצה, ובתוף שתי שנים הראשונות אינו יכול לגאלה, הצרף לפרש בזה שהוא חלופ, שאם רצה לגאל בשנה ראשונה גאלה, ולאחר מכאן אינו גאלה: והיתה גאלתו. של בית: ימים. מי שנה שלמה קרויים "ימים", וכו': "תשב הנערה אתנו ימים":

23 והארץ לא תמכר. לתן לאו על חזרת שדות לבעלים ביובל, שלא יהא הלוקח כובשה: לצמתת. לפסיקה, למכירה פסוקה עולמית: פי לי הארץ. אל תרע עינה ביה, שאינה שלף: 24 ובכל ארץ אחזתכם. לרבות בתים ועבד עברי. ודבר זה מפרש בקדושין. ולפי פשוטו, סמוך לפרשה שלאחריו, שהמוכר אחזתו רשאי לגאלה לאחר שתי שנים, או הוא או קרובו, ואין הלוקח יכול לעכב: 25 פי ימוך אחיה ומכר. מלמד שאין אדם רשאי למכר שדהו אלא מחמת דחק עני: מאחזתו. ולא כלה, למד דרף ארץ שישיר שדה לעצמו: וגאל את ממכר אחיו. ואין הלוקח יכול לעכב: 26 ואיש כי לא יהיה לו גאל. וכי יש לה אדם בישאל שאין לו גואלים, אלא גואל שיוכל לגאל ממכרו: 27 והשב את שני ממכרו. כמה שנים היו עד היובל, כך וכה, ובכמה מכרתיה לה, ככה וכה, עתיד היית להחזירה ביובל, נמצאת קונה

10. כא, א. 11. בראשית כד, נה.

commercially with produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years, he will incur still greater loss and be forced to sell his home. Hence, I will now review some of the laws of selling houses:³⁸

In contrast to farmland, **when a man sells a residential house situated inside a city** that was walled when you entered the Promised Land—even if it is no longer walled when the house is sold³⁹—its redemption may take place only until the end of the year of its sale. Thus, its period of redemption is one full year.

38. Rashi on 26:1, below. 39. Rashi on v. 30, below.

Real Estate

23 As stated,³⁰ in the Jubilee year you must return all land you may have purchased during the previous 49 years to its original owners. This injunction is also subject to a passive commandment: **The land must not be sold** in such a way as **to sever** it permanently from its original owner. Do not feel as though you have been dealt with unjustly by having to return the land that you paid for, **for the land belongs to Me**. You should never consider yourselves the land's owners, **for in reality, you are transient sojourners and temporary residents dwelling with Me** on My land.

24 For the same reason, **throughout the land of your possession, you must also allow the land its redemption** before the beginning of the Jubilee year, according to the following rules:

- ◆ *Fourth Reading* 25 Land should only be sold on account of destitution; even under such circumstances, one should never sell all his land, but always leave some for himself to live off of.

It was mentioned that it is forbidden to deal commercially with produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years,³¹ and that if a person transgresses this prohibition, he will suffer financial loss and eventually be forced to sell some of his personal (non-landed) property in order to pay for his sustenance.³² If he nonetheless continues to deal commercially with produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years, he will incur even greater loss and be forced to sell his landed property. Hence, I will now review some of the laws of selling landed property:³³

If your brother Israelite becomes destitute and therefore sells some of his inherited land, this land may later be "redeemed," i.e., repurchased: **His redeemer who is related to him may**, two years after the sale,³⁴ **come forth and redeem that which his relative had sold**. The purchaser may not refuse to sell back the land.

26 **If a man does not have a relative who has the means to act as the redeemer of his land, but he obtains sufficient means on his own to afford its redemption,**

27 **he must calculate the years for which the land has been sold**, i.e., the number of years from the sale until the Jubilee year, **and return the difference** between the sale price and the prorated value of the years remaining until the Jubilee year **to the man to whom he sold it, and then he may return to his inheritance**.

28 **But if he cannot afford enough to repay** the purchaser the full prorated amount due him, he may not redeem his land piecemeal; **his land-sale must remain in the possession of the one who has purchased it until the beginning of the Jubilee year. It must go out of the purchaser's possession in the Jubilee year and revert to the original owner's inheritance**.

- ◆ *Fifth Reading (Third when combined)* 29 It was mentioned that it is forbidden to deal commercially with produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years;³⁵ that if a person transgresses this prohibition, he will suffer financial loss and eventually be forced to sell some of his personal (non-landed) property in order to pay for his sustenance;³⁶ and that if he continues to do so, he will incur even greater loss and be forced to sell his landed property.³⁷ If, even after this, he continues to deal

30. Above, vv. 10, 13. 31. Above, v. 12. 32. Above, v. 14. 33. Rashi on 26:1, below. 34. Above, v. 16. 35. Above, v. 12. 36. Above, v. 14. 37. Above, v. 25.

ONKELOS

30 ואם לא יתפרק עד משלם לה שתא שלמתא ויקום ביתא די בקרתא די לה שורא לחלוטין לדובן יתה לדריה לא יפוק בויובלא: 31 ובתי פצחאי דלית להון שור מקף סחור סחור על חקל ארעא יתחשב פרקנא תהי לה וביובלא יפוק: 32 וקריו לואי בתי קריו אחסנתהון פורקן עלם תהי ללואי: 33 ודי יפרוק מן לואי ויפוק זבין ביתא וקריו אחסנתה בויובלא ארי בתי קריו לואי היא אחסנתהון בגו בני ישראל: 34 וחקל רוח קרויהון לא יודבן ארי אחסנת עלם הוא להון:

30 ואם לא ינאל עד מלאת לו שנה תמימה וקם הבית אשר בעיר אשר לא (לו) חמה לצמיתת לקנה אתו לדרתיו לא יצא ביבל: 31 ובתי החצרים אשר איך להם חמה סביב על שדה הארץ יחשב גאלה תהיה לו וביבל יצא: 32 וערי הלויים בתי ערי אחוזתם גאלת עולם תהיה ללויים: 33 ואשר ינאל מן הלויים ויצא ממכר בית ועיר אחוזתו ביבל כי בתי ערי הלויים הוא אחוזתם בתוך בני ישראל: 34 ושדה מגרש עריהם לא ימכר כי אחוזת עולם הוא להם: ס

RASHI

שנה: 33 ואשר ינאל מן הלויים. ואם יקנה בית, או עיר מהם — וינאל ביבל" אותו ממכר של בית או של עיר, וישוב ללוי שמכרו, ולא יהיה חלוט כשאר בתי ערי חומה של ישראל. ו"גאלה" זו, לשון מכירה. דבר אחר: לפי שגאמר: "גאלת עולם תהיה ללויים", יכול לא דבר הכתוב אלא בלוקח ישראל שקנה בית בערי הלויים, אבל לוי שקנה מלוי, יהיה חלוט? תלמוד לומר: "ואשר ינאל מן הלויים", אף לוי הגואל מיד לוי, גואל גאלת עולם: ויצא ממכר בית. הרי זו מצוה אחרת, ואם לא גאלה — יוצאה בויבל, ואינו נחלט לטוף שנה בבית של ישראל: כי בתי ערי הלויים הוא אחוזתם. לא היה להם נחלת שדות וכרמים, אלא ערים לשבת ומגרשיהם, לפיכך הם להם במקום שדות, ויש להם גאלה בשדות, כדי שלא תפקע נחלתם מהם: 34 ושדה מגרש עריהם לא ימכר. מכר גזבר, שאם הקדיש בן לוי את שדהו ולא גאלה, ומכרה גזבר — אינה יוצאה לכהנים בויבל, כמו שגאמר בישראל: "ואם מכר את השדה לאיש אחר לא ינאל עוד", אבל בן לוי גואל לעולם:

30 וקם הבית וגו' לצמיתת. יצא מכחו של מוכר ועמד בכחו של קונה. אשר לא חמה. "לוי" קרינו, אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה: אף על פי שאין לו עכשו, הואיל והיתה לו קדם לכן. ו"עיר" נקבה היא, והצריך לכתב "לה", אלא מתוך שצריך לכתב "לא" בפנים, תקנו "לוי" במסרת, זה נופל על זה: לא יצא ביבל. אמר רב ספרא: אם פגע בו יובל בתוך שנתו, לא יצא: 31 ובתי החצרים. בתרגומו: "פצחין", עירות פתוחות מאין חומה, ויש הרבה בספר יהושע: "הערים וחצריהם", "בחצריהם ובטירתם": על שדה הארץ יחשב. הרי הן בשדות הנגאלים עד היובל, ויוצאין בויבל לבעלים אם לא נגאלו: גאלה תהיה לו. מיד, אם ירצה. וכנה יפה כחו מכח שדות, שהשדות אין נגאלות עד שתי שנים: וביבל יצא. בחנם: 32 וערי הלויים. ארבעים ושמונה עיר שנתנו להם: גאלת עולם. גואל מיד, אפלו לפני שתי שנים, אם מכרו שדה משדותיהם הנתונות להם באלפים אמה סביבות הערים, או אם מכרו בית בעיר חומה — גואלין לעולם, ואינו חלוט לטוף

12. ערכין לב, א. 13. יהושע יג, כח. 14. בראשית כה, טו. 15. פסוק לב. 16. ויקרא כז, כ.

year. The rules governing the redemption of a consecrated field are different for Levites, however: **A field from the outer strip of land surrounding the open areas of the Levites' cities cannot be "sold" to the priests in this manner, because it is the Levites' eternal inheritance.** It does not become the permanent property of the priests in the Jubilee year (whether or not the treasurer sold it to a third party), and the Levite may redeem it even after that year.

These special rules apply only to the Levites' original 48 cities, not to additional cities they may build for themselves afterward, nor to any house that a Levite owns in some other city.⁴²

42. Rashi on v. 33, above.

30 If it is not redeemed by the end of a complete year since its sale, **then that house in the city that had a surrounding wall** when you entered the land **will remain permanently** the property of the person who purchased it, **throughout his generations. It will not leave his possession in the Jubilee year**, even if the Jubilee year begins during the year of its sale.

31 In contrast to houses in walled cities, houses in open cities that do not have a surrounding wall are to be considered, for the purpose of redemption, as the field of the land, and may therefore be redeemed throughout the entire period between the sale and the beginning of the Jubilee year. But whereas fields may be redeemed only beginning two years after their sale, such houses must be allowed their redemption even immediately after their sale, if the original owner or his relative can afford it; there is no two-year minimum wait. Otherwise, the house will leave the purchaser's possession in the Jubilee year.

Type of Property	May be Redeemed...	In the Jubilee Year...
Field	after two years from sale	returns to the original owner
House in a walled city	until end of one year from sale	remains in the possession of the purchaser
House in an open city	immediately	returns to the original owner

Figure 1. Redemption of Real Estate

32 You will be taught later⁴⁰ that when you enter the land, you must set aside 48 cities for the Levites to live in, and that these cities are to be surrounded by a 1000-cubit strip of open space, which is further surrounded by another 1000-cubit strip of cultivatable land. Regarding **the cities of the Levites: the Levites will have unlimited rights of redemption** both of **the houses of their cities** and of **their landed property**. They will not have to wait two years to redeem their fields, and will be able to redeem their houses even after a year subsequent to the sale.

33 If someone purchases a house—or even an entire city—**from the Levites, the purchased house or inherited city will leave** the possession of the purchaser **in the Jubilee year** and return to the Levites, **because the houses of the cities of the Levites are their sole inherited property amid the Israelites**. They will not be allotted any other tribal inheritance as will the rest of the tribes.

The rule that the Levites have unlimited rights of redemption applies also **if** the Levite who **is redeeming** a house or an entire city is doing so **from other Levites**, i.e., a Levite relative who has redeemed the house or city from a non-Levite buyer. Likewise, if the house or city is not repurchased by its original owners from the Levite redeemer by the beginning of the Jubilee year, **the redeemed house or inherited city will** automatically **leave** the possession of this Levite redeemer **in the Jubilee year** and return to its original owners, for the same reason.

34 You will be taught later⁴¹ that a person may consecrate his field to the Temple treasury, and if he does so, he may afterwards redeem it until the Jubilee year; and that further, if he fails to redeem it by then (or someone else redeems it before he has a chance to), it becomes the permanent property of the priests in the Jubilee

⁴⁰. Numbers 35:1-8. ⁴¹. Below, 27:16-21.

ONKELOS

35 וְאָרִי יִתְמַסְכֵּן אַחֲרָי וְתַמּוּט יִדְהַ עֵמֶךָ וְתִתְקַף בַּה דִּיר וְתוֹתַב וְיַחֲי עֵמֶךָ: 36 לֹא תִסַּב מִנֶּה חֲבוּלֵי־א וְרִבִּיתָא וְתִדְחַל מֵאֲלֵהֶךָ וְיַחֲי אַחֲרָי עֵמֶךָ: 37 יֵת בְּסַפֵּר לֹא תִתֵּן לֵהּ בְּחֲבוּלֵי־א וּבְרִבִּיתָא לֹא תִתֵּן מִיִּכְלָךָ: 38 אָנָּא יִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ דִּי אִפְקִית יִתְכּוֹן מֵאַרְעָא דְמַצְרַיִם לְמַתָּן לְכוּן יֵת אַרְעָא דְכְנַעַן לְמַהֲוֵי לְכוּן לְאַלְהֵי:

35 וְכִי־יִמּוֹךְ אַחֲיֶיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךָ וְהִחֲזַקְתָּ בּוֹ גֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב וְיַחֲי עִמָּךָ: 36 אֲלֵ־תִתְקַח מֵאֲתוֹ גִּישָׁךְ וְתִרְבִּית וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיַחֲי אַחֲיֶיךָ עִמָּךָ: 37 אֶת־כֶּסֶפְךָ לֹא־ תִתֵּן לוֹ בְּגִישָׁךְ וּבְמִרְבִּית לֹא־תִתֵּן אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְתֵת לָכֶם אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים: ם

RASHI

מְעוֹתָיו בְּנִכְרֵי כְּדֵי לְהַלוֹתָם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִבִּית, הָרִי זֶה דְּבַר הַמְּסוּר לְלַבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם וּמִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ, לְכַף הַצֶּרֶף לֹא־מֵר: "וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ": 38 אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי וְגו'. וְהִכְחַנְתִּי בֵּין בְּכוֹר לְשֵׁאִינוֹ בְּכוֹר, אִף אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ וְנִפְרַע מִן הַמְּלוּהַ מְעוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִבִּית וְאוֹמֵר: שֶׁל נִכְרֵי הֵם. דְּבַר אַחֵר: "אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם", עַל מִנְתַּ שֶׁתִּקְבְּלוּ עֲלֵיכֶם מִצְוֹתַי, אֲפִלוּ הֵן כְּבִדּוֹת עֲלֵיכֶם: לְתֵת לָכֶם אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן. בְּשֶׁכֶר שֶׁתִּקְבְּלוּ מִצְוֹתַי: לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים. שֶׁכָּל הַדָּר בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל — אֲנִי לוֹ לְאֱלֹהִים, וְכָל הַיוֹצֵא מִמֶּנָּה — כְּעוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה:

35 וְהִחֲזַקְתָּ בּוֹ. אֵל תִּנְיַחְהוּ שְׂיָרֵד וְיִפֹּל וְיִהְיֶה קֶשֶׁה לְהַקִּימוֹ, אֲלֵא חֲזַקְהוּ מִשְׁעַת מוֹטֵת הַיָּד. לְמָה זֶה דוֹמָה? לְמִשְׁאֵי שֶׁעַל הַחֲמוּר, עוֹדְהוּ עַל הַחֲמוּר — אֶחָד תּוֹפֵס בּוֹ וּמַעֲמִידוֹ, נֶפֶל לְאֶרֶץ — חֲמִשָּׁה אֵין מַעֲמִידִין אוֹתוֹ: גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב. אִף אִם הוּא גֵר אוֹ תוֹשֵׁב. וְאִיזְהוּ תוֹשֵׁב? כָּל שֶׁקָּבַל עָלָיו שְׂלָא לְעַבֵּד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, וְאוֹכַל נְבִלוֹת: 36 גִּישָׁךְ וְתִרְבִּית. חֵד שְׂוִינְהוּ רִבְנָן, וְלְעִבֵר עָלָיו בְּשָׁנֵי לְאוּיִן: וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ. לְפִי שְׂדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם נִמְשַׁכֵּת אַחֲרֵי הָרִבִּית, וְקִשָּׁה לְפָרֵשׁ הַיִּמְנוֹ, וּמוֹרָה לְעַצְמוֹ הֵתֵר בְּשִׁבִיל מְעוֹתָיו שֶׁהֵיוּ בְטוֹלוֹת אֲפִלוּ, הַצֶּרֶף לֹא־מֵר: "וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ". אוֹ הַתּוֹלָה

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

to us, and thus our money is “working” for us. We may therefore be said to have earned the profit that the venture returns. In contrast, a loan transfers the ownership of the principal to the borrower with no more than an obligation to repay it later. Thus, taking interest on a loan is profiting from someone else’s effort without having participated in that effort. The lender is collecting interest based only upon the fact that the money used to belong to him. As such, taking interest on a loan is the very antithesis of the way God intended the world to run. God created the world in such a way that we must work for our achievements. Both spiritual and material reward is achieved only through effort. In the words of the sages, “If someone says to you, ‘I have toiled but not found [results],’ do not believe him. If he says, ‘I have not toiled, but nonetheless found [results],’ do not believe him either. Only if he says, ‘I have toiled and found [results],’ believe him.”⁵⁰ To be sure, God could have arranged for us to receive His beneficence without having to earn it; this would have seemed to better accord with His intrinsic benevolence. But then we would have felt like the objects of charity, or worse, like parasites. We would have been denied both any sense of accomplishment and the great satisfaction of enjoying the fruits of our labors.

Moreover, God not only rewards us for our efforts but assures us that they are productive, for He knows that even the greatest reward will not satisfy a worker who feels that his work is pointless. This, in fact, was how the Egyptians tried to demoralize the Jewish people—not merely by making them work, but by making them perform utterly useless tasks.⁵¹ One who lends on interest is therefore contravening the fundamental principle of Judaism, denying the notion that the reward should be dependent upon and commensurate with the effort expended. The sages therefore assert that “Whoever accepts the yoke of [not lending with] interest has accepted the yoke of the kingdom of heaven; whoever rejects the yoke of [not lending with] interest has rejected the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.”⁵² From a somewhat deeper perspective, it could be argued that loaning on interest does not deny the principle of “reward for effort” completely; after all, the lender has enabled the borrower to invest and reap profits, and would seem to deserve some compensation for having done so. The crucial point, however, is that taking interest on a loan is receiving reward for a past deed: the one-time act that took place at the beginning of

50. *Megilah* 6b. 51. See on Exodus 1:13; below, on v. 43. 52. *Sifra* on this verse.

Charity and Interest

35 If, even after this,⁴³ an individual continues to deal commercially with produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years, he will incur still greater financial loss and be forced to borrow money at interest. Hence, I will now review some of the laws of charity and interest:⁴⁴

If your brother Israelite is becoming destitute, then you must take pains to support him, i.e., come to his financial aid, as soon as **his “hand,”** i.e., his financial power, begins to **falter beside you, so that he can continue to live with you** in financial solvency, for it is far easier to help him before his financial collapse than afterward. You must demonstrate this concern for him even if he be **a convert, and even if he be a resident alien**, who can only partially be considered your “brother.” If he ultimately does become destitute, you must loan him money or give him a gift of charity, as you have been taught⁴⁵ and will be taught in greater detail later.⁴⁶

36 When you loan him money, **you must not take interest** from him, as you have been taught.⁴⁷ This offense is so serious that I now repeat it: You must not take **interest from him!** I know that you will be tempted to consider interest just compensation for the earnings your funds would have produced had you not loaned them to your fellow, so I therefore admonish you: **You must fear your God** and resist this temptation. You might also be tempted to pretend that the money you are lending your fellow is really that of a non-Jew and that you are exacting interest from your fellow on behalf of this non-Jew; I therefore admonish you: **You must fear your God**, for I know the truth. Rather, enable **your brother Israelite to live with you** in financial solvency by loaning him money interest-free.

37 The prohibition against taking interest applies regardless of the form of the loan: **You must not give him your money on the condition of being paid back with interest;** similarly, **you must not give him your food** or anything else **on the condition of being paid back with interest.**

38 **I am God, your God, who took you out of Egypt:** Just as I was able to discern who was and who was not a firstborn in Egypt, so can I tell if you loan someone your money pretending that it is a non-Jew’s. Furthermore, I took you out of Egypt on the condition that you accept My commandments, even if they be difficult, such as this one,⁴⁸ and **in order to give you Canaan** as your reward for fulfilling all My commandments—so rest assured that your reward will be commensurate with the difficulty of fulfilling the commandment. Finally, I took you out of Egypt to give you Canaan **in order to be a God to you**, for the Promised Land is more receptive to Divine consciousness than any other place in the world;⁴⁹ therefore, relatively speaking, I consider Myself God to whomever lives in it, and consider whoever leaves it to be an idolater.

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

36-38 **You must not take interest:** There is a subtle investment and from a loan. When we invest in a yet crucial difference between profiting from an financial venture, the money we invest still belongs

43. See above, v. 29. 44. Rashi on 26:1, below. 45. Exodus 22:24. 46. Deuteronomy 15:7-11. 47. Exodus 22:24. See also Deuteronomy 23:20-21. 48. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 8, p. 97, note 27; *ibid.*, p. 98, note 29. 49. Cf. Exodus 15:17.

ONKELOS

39 וארי יתמסכן אחרך עמך ויזדבן לך לא תפליח ביה פליחן עבדין: 40 פאגירא כחוקבא יהי עמך עד שתא דויבלא יפליח עמך: 41 ויפוק מעמך הוא ובגוהי עמה ויתוב לזרעיתה ולאחסנת אבהותיה יתוב:

ששי (רביעי במחורבין) 39 וכי־ימוד אֶחֶיךָ עִמָּךְ וְנִמְכַרְךָ לָךְ לֹא־תַעֲבֹד בּוֹ עֲבֹדֶת עֶבֶד: 40 בְּשֹׂכֵר כְּתוּשֵׁב יִהְיֶה עִמָּךְ עַד־שְׁנַת הַיָּבֵל יַעֲבֹד עִמָּךְ: 41 וַיֵּצֵא מֵעִמָּךְ הוּא וּבָנָיו עִמּוֹ וְשָׁב אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וְאֶל־אַחֲזַת אֲבֹתָיו יָשׁוּב:

RASHI

41 הוא ובניו עמו. אמר רבי שמעון: אם הוא נמכר, בניו מי מכרן? אלא, מכאן שרבו חזב במוזנות בניו: ואל אחזת אבותיו. אל כבוד אבותיו, ואין לזלזלו בכך: אחזת. חוקת:

39 עבדת עבד. עבודה של גנאי שיהא נכר בה בעבד, שלא יולידו כליו אחריו לבית המרחץ, ולא ינעל לו מנעליו: 40 בשכיר כתושב. עבודת קרקע ומלאכת אפניות, כשאר שכירים התנהג בו: עד שנת היבל. אם פגע בו יובל לפני שש שנים, היובל מוציא:

tures himself to you, you are obligated to feed these children throughout his term of service.⁶⁴ When his term of service is up (or terminated by the Jubilee year), **he must leave you**—thereby ending your obligation to feed **him and his children with him. He must return to his family and reassume the social status of his fathers.** No one is allowed to despise him or belittle him on account of his having been a bondman.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

the transaction. In contrast, taking a return on an investment is receiving reward for the ongoing involvement that continues throughout the life of the investment. In this sense, too, taking interest is fundamentally opposed to how God wants the world to run. God does not “loan” us the powers He grants us, as a one-time act; He “invests” them in us, remaining intimately involved in our efforts to reap the rewards of our efforts. Denying His involvement in our lives is a form of deism, a heresy totally inimical to the notion of Divine providence that lies at the core of Jewish belief.

God has woven into the fabric of creation the mechanism that He will behave toward us in the same way that we behave towards our fellows. In this vein, the sages’ statement, “Know what is above you”⁶⁵ can be understood according to its literal translation, “know [that] what is above [is] from you.”⁶⁶ Similarly, the phrase “God is your shade”⁶⁷ is interpreted to mean, “God is your shadow,” i.e., He “mimics” our behavior towards others in His behavior toward us.⁶⁸

Thus, when we forego interest on our loans, God responds in kind: He not only grants us the initial potential to be successful both materially and spiritually but continues to assist us throughout our labors. When someone takes interest, God also responds in kind: He grants him the initial potential but refrains from extending him ongoing

supernatural assistance.

It is in this sense that the sages, explaining the mention of the Exodus in connection with the prohibition against interest,⁶⁹ tell us that “whoever acknowledges the commandment [not to take] interest acknowledges the Exodus from Egypt; whoever denies the commandment [not to take] interest denies the Exodus from Egypt.”⁷⁰ As we have seen,⁷¹ the Hebrew name for “Egypt” (מצרים) means “limitations,” so “going out of Egypt” means being released from the limitations of the nature, which is exactly how God treats us when we forego taking interest on our loans.

In a more abstract sense, resting on our laurels and relying on past successes is a form of taking interest. For example, once we have expended efforts in educating our children, students, or anyone else over whom we have had any influence, and have succeeded in inspiring them to teach others, we might be tempted to “retire” in order to focus exclusively on our own spiritual development, confident that we will duly receive our share of the sublime revelations of Divinity they elicit by inspiring others. However, benefiting from the results of such past labor is like taking interest on a past loan, the interest of which is forbidden. In contrast, if we continue to disseminate Judaism just as we taught them to, our work with them remains an “investment,” the “interest” from which is rightfully due us.⁷²

64. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 150-157. 65. *Avot* 2:1 66. *Tzava'at HaRibash* (ed. Kehot) 142; *Likutei Amarim* (ed. Kehot) 195; *Or Torah* (ed. Kehot) 480; see also *HaYom Yom*, 13 Iyar. 67. *Psalms* 121:5. 68. *Keter Shem Tov* (ed. Kehot, 2004), addendum 78 (= addendum 60 in 1998 and prior editions). 69. *V. 38. 70. Sifra* on this verse. 71. On Exodus 6:2, 12-13; “Inner Dimensions” on Exodus 1:15, 8:12, 12:14-15. 72. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 3, pp. 1007-1012.

The Hebrew Bondman

- ◆ *Sixth Reading (Fourth when combined)* 39 If, even after the above-mentioned warnings,⁵³ an individual continues to deal commercially with produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years, he will incur still greater financial loss and be forced to indenture himself as a bondman, as follows:⁵⁴

As you have been taught,⁵⁵ the court can indenture someone as a bondman if he steals something and cannot otherwise afford to pay back the value of what he has stolen. A man (but not a woman⁵⁶) can also indenture himself as a bondman if he becomes so poor that he has no other way to support himself.

If your brother Israelite **becomes destitute**, even though he is living **with you** and you are commanded not to let him become destitute,⁵⁷ **and he is indentured to you** as a bondman, **you must** nevertheless **not work him with labor** that makes him appear to be a **bondman**, i.e., publicly degrading work such as carrying your clothes behind you in public or putting your boots on you in public.

40 Rather, **he must be** employed by **you** as would be **an employee or a hired resident**: give him honorable craftwork to do and treat him respectfully. Just like a bondman who was indentured by the court in order to pay off his theft, he must work for six years, the sole difference being that **he may only work with you until** the beginning of **the Jubilee Year**. If this year occurs in the middle of his term of service, he goes free.

If the self-indentured bondman decides to remain in your service beyond his six-year term, you must take him to the court and pierce his right ear, just as is done with a bondman who was indentured by the court in order to pay back his theft.⁵⁸ He is given the relatively light punishment of having his ear pierced⁵⁹ since he only indentured himself on account of his abject poverty. Nonetheless, his *right* ear is pierced, because the right, better ear signifies proper use of the power of hearing. He heard Me say 'For the Israelites are servants to Me; they are My servants!'⁶⁰ on Mount Sinai, but he nonetheless went and found himself another master, and is not bothered by this—as evidenced by the fact that he is in no hurry to be a free man. (He is certainly not destitute *now*, since his master had to feed him and his family during his period of service, he has the money he was bought for, and his master will give him gifts when he releases him.⁶¹) The ear is pierced against a door, which in turn must be standing upright like a doorpost, because the door and doorpost were witnesses, so to speak, to how I liberated the people from slavery in Egypt,⁶² and this individual nonetheless chose to prolong his period of service.⁶³ After this procedure, he must serve you until the Jubilee year.

41 Although it might seem that by indenturing himself, the bondman agreed to subsist on whatever diet you might be inclined to provide him—even the most meager—you must nonetheless feed him properly, even if this detail was not stipulated when he was indentured. Furthermore, if the bondman has children when he inden-

53. See above, v. 35. 54. Rashi on 26:1, below. 55. Exodus 21:2-6, 22:2; see also Deuteronomy 15:12-18. 56. *Mishneh Torah, Avadim* 1:2. 57. Above, v. 35. 58. Exodus 21:2-6; Rashi on Exodus 21:6. 59. It was customary for men in those times to pierce their ears (see Exodus 32:2-3). 60. Below, v. 55. 61. Deuteronomy 15:14. 62. Exodus 12:7. 63. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 11, pp. 89-97.

— ONKELOS —

42 אַרְי עֲבָדֵי אֲנֹן דִּי אַפְקִית יִתְהוּן
מֵאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם לֹא יִדְבְּגוּן וְבוֹן
עֲבָדִין: 43 לֹא תִפְלַח בַּהּ בְּקִשְׁיֵי
וְתִדְחַל מֵאַלְהֵי: 44 וְעֲבָדְךָ
וְאַמְתָּךְ דִּי יְהוּן לָךְ מִן עַמְמֵי דִי
בְּסַחְרֵינִיכוֹן מִנְהוּן תִּקְנוּן עֲבָדִין
וְאַמְתָּן: 45 וְאַף מִבְּנֵי תוֹתְבֵינֵי
עַרְלֵיָא דְדִירִין עִמְכוֹן מִנְהוּן תִּקְנוּן
וּמְזוֹרְעֵיהוֹן דְּעִמְכוֹן דִּי אֲתִילִידוּ
בְּאַרְעֵכוֹן וִיהוּן לְכוֹן לְאַחְסָנֵי:
46 וְתַחֲסִנוּן יִתְהוּן לְבִגְיָכוֹן
בְּתַרְיָכוֹן לִירְתַת אַחְסָנֵי לְעֵלַם
בְּהוּן תִּפְלַחוּן וּבְאַחֲיָכוֹן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
גַּבְר בְּאַחוּזֵי לֹא תִפְלַח בַּהּ בְּקִשְׁיֵי:

42 כִּי־עֲבָדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא
יִמְכְרוּ מִמִּכְרַת עֶבֶד: 43 לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ וִירֹאתָ
מֵאַלְהֵיךָ: 44 וְעֲבָדְךָ וְאַמְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ־לְךָ מֵאֵת הַגּוֹיִם
אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבְתֵיכֶם מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ עֶבֶד וְאַמָּה: 45 וְגַם מִבְּנֵי
הַתּוֹשָׁבִים הַגֵּרִים עִמָּכֶם מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ וּמִמִּשְׁפַּחְתָּם
אֲשֶׁר עִמָּכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִידוּ בְּאַרְצְכֶם וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאַחֲזָה:
46 וְהִתְנַחֲלֹתֶם אֹתָם לְבְנֵיכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּ אַחֲזָה
לְעֵלָם כִּי־הֵם תִּעֲבָדוּ וּבְאַחֲיֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו
לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ: ם

— RASHI —

לָךְ לְעֲבָדִים: אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבְתֵיכֶם. וְלֹא שְׁבֹתוֹךָ גְבוּל
אַרְצְכֶם, שְׁהָרִי בָהֶם אֲמַרְתִּי: "לֹא תַחֲזִיחַ כָּל נַשְׁמָה":
45 וְגַם מִבְּנֵי הַתּוֹשָׁבִים. שְׁבָאוּ מִסְבִּיבוֹתֵיכֶם לְשֵׂא
נָשִׁים בְּאַרְצְכֶם וַיִּלְדוּ לָהֶם, הֵבֵן הוֹלֵךְ אַחֵר הָאָב,
וְאֵינוֹ בְּכָלֵל "לֹא תַחֲזִיחַ", אֲלֵא אֶתְהָ מֵתָר לְקִנּוּתוֹ
כְּעֶבֶד: מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ. אוֹתָם תִּקְנוּ: 46 וְהִתְנַחֲלֹתֶם אֹתָם
לְבְנֵיכֶם. הַחֲזִיקוּ בָהֶם לְנַחֲלָה, לְצַרְף בְּנֵיכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם.
וְלֹא יִתְכַן לְפָרֶשׁ: הִנְחִילוֹם לְבְנֵיכֶם, שְׂאֵם בֶּן, הִזִּיה לֹ
לְכַתֹּב "וְהִתְנַחֲלֹתֶם אוֹתָם לְבְנֵיכֶם": וְהִתְנַחֲלֹתֶם. כְּמוֹ
וְהִתְחַזְקֶתֶם: אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו. לְהַבִּיא נְשִׂיא בְּעַמְּיוֹ וּמְלָךְ
בְּמִשְׁרָתוֹ, שְׂלֵא לְרִדּוֹת בַּפֶּרֶךְ:

42 כִּי עֲבָדֵי הֵם. שְׁטָרֵי קוֹדֶם: לֹא יִמְכְרוּ מִמִּכְרַת עֶבֶד.
בְּהִכְרוֹהוּ: כָּאֵן יֵשׁ עֶבֶד לְמִכְרֵי, וְלֹא יַעֲמִידוּנוּ עַל אֲבָן
הַלְקָח: 43 לֹא תִרְדֶּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ. מִלֵּאכָה שְׂלֵא לְצַרְף
כְּדִי לְעַנּוּתוֹ, אֵל תֹּאמַר לוֹ: הֵחֵם אֶת הַכּוֹס הַזֶּה!
וְהוּא אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ. עֲדָר תַּחַת הַגֶּפֶן עַד שְׂאָבוּא! שְׂמֵא
תֹאמַר: אֵינִי מְכִיר בְּדָבָר אִם לְצַרְף אִם לֹא, וְאוֹמַר
אֲנִי לוֹ שְׂהוּא לְצַרְף, הָרִי הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה מְסוּר לְלִבּוֹ,
לְכָף נֶאֱמַר: "וְיִרֹאתָ": 44 וְעֲבָדְךָ וְאַמְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ לָךְ.
אִם תֹּאמַר: אִם בֶּן, בְּמִי אֲשַׁתְּמַשׁ, בְּעֲבָדֵי אֵינִי מוֹשֵׁל,
כְּאֵמוֹת אֵינִי נוֹחַל, שְׁהָרִי הַזֶּה־תִּנְיִי: "לֹא תַחֲזִיחַ כָּל
נַשְׁמָה", אֲלֵא מִי יִשְׁמַשְׁנִי? "מֵאֵת הַגּוֹיִם" — הֵם יִהְיוּ

17. דברים כ, טו.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

when the Sabbath comes, the "seventh year" when we are supposed to go free, we are loathe to release ourselves from the exhilaration of our work.

The Torah therefore teaches us that this is not right. We were created to serve God: to study His Torah and to fulfill His commandments. Since God created us for this purpose, He has certainly provided us with the wherewithal to implement it. Even when we work during the week, we must not consider ourselves enslaved to our work; rather, we should work in order to use the fruits of our labors for holy purposes. And on the Sabbath, we should rise completely above any association with our mundane lives.

By thus liberating ourselves from our personal enslavement, we hasten the general Redemption, when the whole world will be free to pursue spirituality and Divinity unhindered.⁷⁶

43 You must not work him with backbreaking labor: As mentioned above,⁷⁷ working without purpose is demoralizing and can even drive a person insane, whereas working with purpose—even if the task requires extraordinary effort—is richly rewarding. The satisfaction we gain from the sense of accomplishment is greater even than that which we derive from the wages we earn.⁷⁸

A wealthy landowner found it relaxing to observe his laborers rhythmically swinging their scythes, harvesting the wheat in his fields. Wishing to enjoy the same peace of mind constantly, he approached one of the peasants with a proposition:

"I will pay you double your wages," he told the peasant, "to stand in my living room and swing your scythe." The peasant agreed with undisguised excitement, as he would be doubling his pay while considerably easing his workload.

[continues...]

76. Likutei Sichot, vol. 11, pp. 97-98. 77. On v. 36. 78. Sefer HaMa'amarim Kuntreisim, vol. 1, p. 210.

42 For even though he was your servant for a time, **they**—the Jewish people—**are**, in reality, **My servants, whom I brought out of Egypt**. My deed of purchase, so to speak, predates yours. Thus, you all carry the distinction and prestige of being My servants, and therefore, when one of you is indentured as a bondman to another Israelite, it is not such an ignominy. For this reason, you may indeed be indentured as bondmen to one another, but by the same token, you must not treat your Israelite bondman as a true bondman but as an employee.⁷³

Accordingly, Israelite bondmen **must not be indentured as a non-Jewish slave is sold**, i.e., publicly, publicizing their names and forcing them to stand on a platform so prospective buyers can examine them.⁷⁴

43 In addition to not shaming the bondman in public, **you must not work him** even privately **with backbreaking**, i.e., demoralizing or unusual **labor**, by having him do unnecessary jobs or tasks for which you specify no time-limit. Even though you may be able to deceive other people into believing that you are not working him this way, you cannot deceive Me; **you must therefore fear your God** and do what I say.

Non-Jewish Bondservants

44 You will be taught later⁷⁵ that you must either kill or expel all members of the seven Canaanite nations currently occupying the Land of Israel. Thus, since, as just stated, you must not give your Jewish bondservants menial tasks, and you cannot employ any of the present occupants of the land for this purpose, it follows that the only **male bondmen or female bondwomen whom you may possess** for menial labor **must come from the non-Jewish nations** who reside not within the borders of the Promised Land but **around you**, outside its borders. **You may only purchase non-Jewish male bondmen or female bondservants from them.**

45 National identity among non-Jewish nations is transmitted patrilineally; thus, you are not required to kill or expel children of Canaanite women if these children are fathered by men from other non-Jewish nations. Therefore, **you may also purchase bondservants from among the children of female Canaanite residents who happen to live among you, as well as**—if these children have their own families—**from their family who happens to live among you, to whom they gave birth in your land** from non-Canaanite fathers. If you purchase such bondservants, **they too will become part of your estate.**

46 **You may retain ownership of them for your children after you as an inherited estate, and may thus have them work for you forever**, i.e., with no limitations on their term of service. **But as for your brethren, the Israelites, no man**—not even a tribal prince or your king—**may work his brother Israelite with backbreaking**, i.e., demoralizing or unusual **labor**.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

42 **They are My servants:** Some of us are so enslaved to our work during the six days of the work-week that it seems as if we have sold ourselves into the service of another person for six years. Even

73. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 165-167. 74. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-165. 75. Deuteronomy 20:16.

— ONKELOS —

47 וְאָרִי תִדְבֵק יָד עֶרְל תּוֹתֵב עִמָּךְ וַיִּתְמַסְכֵּן אַחֲרֶיךָ עִמָּה וַיִּזְדָּבֵן לְעֶרְל תּוֹתֵב עִמָּךְ אוֹ לְאֶרְמֵי וְרַעִית גִּיּוֹרָא: 48 בְּתֵר דִּיזְדָּבֵן פְּרַקְנָה תְּהִי לָהּ חֵד מְאֹחֻזֵּי יִפְרַקְנָה: 49 אוֹ אַח אָבוּהִי אוֹ בֵר אַח אָבוּהִי יִפְרַקְנָה אוֹ מְקָרִיב בְּשָׂרָה מְזוּרְעִיתָה יִפְרַקְנָה אוֹ דִתְדָבֵק יָדָה וַיִּתְפָּרֵק: 50 וַיַּחֲשֹׁב עִם זְבִנָּה מִשְׁתָּא דְאִזְדָּבֵן לָהּ עַד שְׂתָא דִּיּוּבְלָא וַיְהִי כְּסָף זְבִינָהוּי בְּמִנְיָן שְׁנֵינָא כִּיּוּמֵי אֲגִירָא יְהִי עִמָּה: 51 אִם עוֹד סְגִיּוֹת בְּשֵׁנֵינָא לְפָנֵיהּ יִתִּיב פְּרַקְנָה מְכַסֶּפֶת זְבִינָהוּי: 52 וְאִם זְעִיר אֲשַׁתָּאֵר בְּשֵׁנֵינָא עַד שְׂתָא דִּיּוּבְלָא וַיַּחֲשֹׁב לָהּ כְּפֹסֶם שְׁנוּהִי יִתִּיב יָת פְּרַקְנָה:

◆ שביעי 47 וכי תשיג יד גר ותושב עמך ומך אחיך עמו ונמכר לגר תושב עמך או לעקר משפחת גר: 48 אחרי נמכר גאלה תהיה לו אחד מאחיו ונאלנו: 49 או רדו או בן רדו ונאלנו או משאר בשרו ממשפחתו ונאלנו או השנינה ידו ונאל: 50 וחשב עם קנהו משנת המכרו לו עד שנת היבל והיה כסף ממכרו במספר שנים בימי שכיר יהיה עמו: 51 אם עוד רבות בשנים לפיהן ישיב נאלתו מכסף מקנתו: 52 ואם מעט נשאר בשנים עד שנת היבל וחשב לו כפי שניו ישיב את נאלתו:

— RASHI —

על פי כן, לא תבא עליו בעקיפין, מפני חלול השם, אלא כשכא לגאל ודקדק בחשבון, לפי המגיע בכל שנה ושנה ונכה לו הגוי מן דמיו: אם היו עשרים שנה משנמכר עד היובל, וקנאו בעשרים מנה — נמצא שקנה הגוי עבודת שנה במנה, ואם שהה זה אצלו חמש שנים וכא לגאל — ונכה לו חמשה מנים, ויתן לו העבד חמשה עשר מנים, וזהו: "והיה כסף ממכרו במספר שנים": 50 בימי שכיר יהיה עמו. חשבון המגיע לכל שנה ושנה, יחשב כאלו נשכר עמו כל שנה במנה, וינכה לו: 51 אם עוד רבות בשנים. עד היובל: לפיהן. הכל כמו שפרשת:

47 יד גר ותושב. גר והוא תושב, בתרגומו: "ערל תותב", וסופו מוכיח: "ונמכר לגר תושב". וכי תשיג יד גר ותושב עמך. מי גרם לו שיעשיר? דבוקו עמך: ומך אחיך עמו. מי גרם לו שימור? דבוקו עמו, על ידי שלמד ממעשיו: משפחת גר. זהו הגוי, כשהוא אומר: "לעקר", זה הנמכר לעבודה זרה עצמה להיות לה שמש, ולא לאלהות, אלא לחטב עצים ולשאב מים: 48 גאלה תהיה לו. מיד, אל תניחחו שיטמע עד שנת היובל, שהרי כל עצמו לא קנאו אלא לעבדו עד היובל, שהרי ביובל יצא, כמו שנאמר למטה: "ויצא בשנת היבל". ובגוי שתחת ידך הכתוב מדבר, ואף

18. פסוק נד.

chase price will then be divided by that number of years: the result will then be considered his working rate during his term as a hired worker.

51 If there are still many years remaining until the Jubilee year, he must accordingly return his redemption money to his purchaser out of the money for which he was purchased.

52 Similarly, if only a few years remain until the Jubilee year, he must make the same calculation. He must return the redemption money to the purchaser according to his years that remain until the Jubilee year.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

After several hours of his imaginary labor, however, the peasant quit. Even when the landowner offered to further double his wages, he refused. "When I don't see the result of my actions," he declared, "it is impossible to work."

The efforts we are required to expend in studying

the Torah and fulfilling its commandments may be great, but we know that our efforts here below have profound influence on the cosmic realm above. Our knowledge of the effect of our efforts in the spiritual realms enables us to perform it with strength, vitality, and joy.⁸⁷

87. Likutei Sichot, vol. 3, p. 1010.

The Hebrew Bondman, continued

- ◆ *Seventh Reading* 47 If an individual indentured himself to another Jew as a bondman as a result of becoming impoverished on account of having dealt commercially in produce of the sabbatical or Jubilee years,⁷⁹ and continues to transgress this prohibition after completing his term of service, he will again incur financial loss, but this time be forced this time to indenture himself as a bondman to a non-Jew, as follows:⁸⁰

As you know, if a non-Jew renounces idolatry, i.e., accepts monotheism, you will be allowed to let him live in your land as a “resident alien.” You have also seen⁸¹ and will see further⁸² how you must treat such a resident alien equitably and even charitably. Nevertheless, notwithstanding his commendable acceptance of monotheism, his reluctance to consummate this undertaking by converting to Judaism indicates that he is still attached to his non-Jewish mindset and/or milieu. You must therefore ensure that in your dealings with him, he be influenced by your commitment to Judaism rather than you be influenced by his ambivalent attitudes toward such a commitment. Indeed, I assure you that if you influence him, he will succeed in his material endeavors, but if he influences you, you will fail in yours.⁸³ Thus, **if a resident alien gains financial means**, it will be on account of associating **with you** and coming under your influence, **and if your brother Israelite becomes destitute**, it may well be on account of associating **with him** and coming under his influence.

For this same reason, I forbid you to indenture yourselves as bondmen to resident aliens if you become destitute; you may only indenture yourselves to your fellow Jews.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, if your brother Israelite **is indentured** in his destitution as a bondman **to a resident alien among you, or worse, to serve as an attendant of an idol of the non-Jewish family of a convert** or resident alien, the sale is valid, and the Israelite may remain in the employ of the resident alien or idolatrous cult until the beginning of the Jubilee year, even if this be more than six years from the date of the sale.⁸⁵ If the bondman has children when he indentures himself to his non-Jewish employer, the employer is obligated to feed these children throughout the bondman’s term of service.⁸⁶

48 Nonetheless, **after he is indentured, he must have unlimited rights of redemption. One of his brothers must redeem him** immediately in order to prevent him from assimilating into non-Jewish culture.

49 If the brothers cannot redeem him immediately, then **either his uncle or his cousin must redeem him; or, if they cannot, the next closest relative from his family must redeem him; or, if none of his relatives can redeem him immediately, then when he becomes able to afford it, he can be redeemed** on his own.

50 This redemption must be conducted as a fair and equitable business transaction; whoever redeems him **must calculate with his purchaser** how many years elapsed **from the year he was indentured to him until the Jubilee year. The pur-**

79. See above, v. 39. 80. Rashi on 26:1, below. 81. Above, vv. 6, 35. See also Exodus 20:10 (and Deuteronomy 5:14), 23:12. 82. Deuteronomy 10:18-19, 14:21, 29, 16:11, 14, 24:14, 26:12, 31:12. 83. See Deuteronomy 28:43-44. 84. Above, vv. 39-43. 85. Rashi on v. 54, below. 86. Ibid.

ONKELOS

53 כאגיר שגא בשגא יהי עמה לא
 יפלח בה בקשיו לעיניך: 54 ואם
 לא יתפרק באלין ויפוק בשתא
 דיובלא הוא ובגוהי עמה: 55 ארי
 דילי בני ישראל עבדין עבדי
 אנון די אפקית יתהון מארעא
 דמצרים אגא יי אלהבון: 26:1 לא
 תעבדון לבון טעון וצלם וקמא לא
 תקימון לבון ואבון סגדא לא תתנון
 בארעבון למסגוד עלה ארי אגא
 יי אלהבון: 2 ית יומי שבאי דילי
 תשרון ולבית מקדשי תהון דחלן
 אגא יי

53 כשכיר שגה בשגה יהיה עמו לא ירדנו בפרך
 לעיניך: 54 ואם לא יגאל באלה ויצא בשנת היכל הוא
 ובניו עמו:

◆ מפטיר 55 כילי בני ישראל עבדים עבדי הם אשר
 הוצאתי אותם מארץ מצרים אני יהוה אלהיכם:
 26:1 לא תעשו לכם אילים ופסל ומצבה לא תקימו
 לכם ואבן משכית לא תתנו בארצכם להשתחות עליה
 כי אני יהוה אלהיכם: 2 את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי
 תיראו אני יהוה:

ג"ו פסוקים. חטי"ל סימן. לאחוז"ה סימן.

RASHI

מטלטליו, לכך סמך לה: "וכי תמכרו ממכר", מה
 כתיב בה? "או קנה מיד עמי תך" — דבר הנקנה מיד
 ליד. לא חזר בו — סוף מוכר אחרתו, לא חזר בו —
 סוף מוכר את ביתו, לא חזר בו — סוף לונה ברבית,
 כל אלו האחרונות קשות מן הראשונות, לא חזר
 בו — סוף מוכר את עצמו, לא חזר בו — לא דיו
 לישראל, אלא אפלו לגוי: ואבן משכית. לשון כסוי,
 כמו: "ושכתי כפי", שמכסין הקרקע ברצפת אבנים:
 להשתחות עליה. אפלו לשמים, לפי שהשתחויה
 בפשוט ידים ורגלים היא, ואסרה תורה לעשות כן,
 חוץ מן המקדש: 2 אני ה'. נאמן לשלם שכר:
 חסלת פרשת בהר

53 לא ירדנו בפרך לעיניך. כלומר, ואתה רואה:
 54 ואם לא יגאל באלה. "באלה" הוא נגאל, ואינו
 נגאל בשש: הוא ובניו עמו. הגוי חב במזונות בניו
 בישראל: 55 כי לי בני ישראל עבדים. שטרי קודם:
 אני ה' אלהיכם. כל המשעבדן מלמטה פאלו משעבד
 מלמעלה: 1 לא תעשו לכם אילים. כנגד זה הנמכר
 לגוי, שלא יאמר: הואיל ורבי מגלה עריות — אף
 אני כמותו, הואיל ורבי עובד עבודה זרה — אף אני
 כמותו, הואיל ורבי מחלל שבת — אף אני כמותו,
 לכך נאמרו מקראות הללו. ואף הפרשיות הללו
 נאמרו על הסדר: בתחלה הזהיר על השביעית,
 ואם חמד ממון ונחשד על השביעית — סופו למכר

19. ויקרא כה, יד. 20. שמות לג, כב.

53 He must be considered by his purchaser as an employee hired on a yearly basis. The purchaser **must not oppress him with backbreaking**—i.e., demoralizing or unusual—labor; if the purchaser does so **in your sight**, the purchaser will understand any lack of response on your part as tacit approval.

54 If he is not redeemed through any of these ways, **he must leave** his non-Jewish employer **in the Jubilee year**—thus ending his employer’s obligation to feed **him and his children with him**.

- ◆ *Maftir* **55 He must be redeemed because the Israelites are servants to Me; they—the Jewish people—are, in reality, My servants, whom I brought out of Egypt.** My deed of purchase, so to speak, predates that of any other purchaser. **I am GOD, your God;** we are so intimately bound that whenever you are enslaved, it is as if I, so to speak, am also enslaved.

Inasmuch as I did not bring the non-Jew out of Egypt and thereby make him part of My inner circle of personal servants, so to speak, he does not carry this distinction or prestige. Therefore, although you can indeed be indentured to other Israelites as bondmen,⁸⁸ you cannot technically be indentured to non-Jews as bondmen, since that would conflict with your already-operative subjugation to Me as My servants. Rather, when you indenture yourself to him you do so only as an employee, i.e., you work for him, but you do not become his.⁸⁹

26:1 Even if you indenture yourself as an attendant to an idol, you must not interpret this Divine providence as My implicit approval that you engage in this idol’s cult: As you have been told, **you must not make idols for yourselves,⁹⁰ nor may you set up for yourselves a sculpted image⁹¹ or single-stone pedestal⁹²** worshipped as an idol.

On the other hand, you must not attempt to remain faithful to Me while in the non-Jew’s employ by devising sham means of worshipping Me. For instance, once the Temple is built, you will be forbidden to prostrate yourselves—even to Me—on any paved surface other than the paved Temple Courtyard. Thus, **you must not lay a pavement of stones on which to prostrate yourselves anywhere else in your land** (and all the more so, outside of it), **for I am GOD, your God**, whom you must worship according to the guidelines that I have established for you.

2 Similarly, if you are indentured into the employ of any non-Jew, you must not interpret this Divine providence as My implicit approval that you imitate his lifestyle. **You must continue to keep My Sabbaths and fear My Sanctuary** throughout your term of service to him. **I am GOD**, who may be relied upon to reward you for observing these commandments.’”

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Behar* is on p. 256.



88. V. 42, above. 89. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 165-167. 90. Exodus 20:3; Leviticus 19:4; Deuteronomy 5:7. 91. Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 4:16, 23, 25, 5:8, 27:15. 92. Exodus 23:24, 34:13; Deuteronomy 6:5, 12:3, 16:22.

Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

