

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Behar	25 May, 2019	20 Iyyar 5779	Lev. 25:1-26:2	Jer. 32:6-27	Luke 4:14-22

This week's Torah portion Behar (בְּהָר) deals with many social mitzvot (deeds). This week's portion is the heart of the Torah as in Hebrew a heart is lev (ל, ב) which has a numerical value of 32. Thus, our Torah portion Behar is the thirty-second portion of the Torah from B'resheet. The verses tell us when to rest the land, the year of Jubilee, and money. There is a saying, "Time is money." Smart people don't waste time. Many people waste their times in social media that isn't productive. Because time is precious, the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) kicks in to waste time on something that is not important. Thus, the *yetzer hara* works overtime for you to waste time. Because once the time is gone, we cannot have it back. Chafetz Chaim once said, "Life is like a postcard."

Most of us think that we understand the Shabbat. Hashem says, "Remember the Shabbat day, to set it apart. Six days you labor, and shall do all your work, but the seventh day is Shabbat of YHWH your Elohim. You do not do any work." (Exo. 20:8-11) So, we rest on the seventh day by not doing any work? It seems so simple. It is nice to have a day of rest after working so hard for six days to put your feet on the couch and relax. So, if we are not tired, then we can continue to work?

"And in the seventh day Elohim completed His work which He had done, and He rested in the seventh day from all His work which He had made." (Gen. 2:2) Hashem was tired and took a break on the seventh day? How do we know which is the seventh day? Can we choose any days to consider that this is the seventh day? Then another question arises, how did the Yisraelites know which is the seventh day? Did they keep Shabbat while they were exiled to Egypt? Who counted it from the time of Creation?

All these questions are answered when Hashem gave them manna. He said, "See, because YHWH has given you the Shabbat, therefore He is giving you bread for two days on the sixth day." (Exo. 16:29) This verse indicates that the Yisraelites did not keep the Shabbat during their exile because they did not know which day is Shabbat. So, on the sixth day, Hashem gave double portion of manna for Yisrael to rest the following day, Shabbat. Thus, the observation of Shabbat began and the exact day to keep the Shabbat.

So, on Shabbat we recall the Exodus and the miracle of the manna every time we celebrate the Shabbat. The two Challahs on the Shabbat table represent the double portion of manna that fell on every sixth day. The Shabbat tablecloth represents the dew that covered the ground before the manna fell. And the Challah cover is the dew covering the manna to protect it.

The Torah is divided into two parts: ethical and ritual laws. We understand ethical laws such as murder, kidnap, stealing, etc. Then the ritual laws, such as Kashrus laws, feasts are laws that strengthen man's relationship with Hashem. Many believe in Hashem, but they do not have faith in Hashem. Even an atheist believes in Hashem. Because in order for him to deny Hashem, he first has to establish the existence of Hashem. Thus, we are to have faith by performing the mitzvot (deeds). So, on Shabbat, we are reviving the relationship of closeness with Hashem, and live by the Word.

Hashem rested on the seventh day. What did He rest from? He rested when He stopped creating. Meaning, He no longer interfered with His world. So, the Shabbat, in a sense we are no longer interfering with the world by emulating Hashem. During the six days of Creation, Hashem asserted His mastery by actively changing the universe. And on the seventh day, He "rested" from interfering the world through His Creation. Because work, in essence we are showing mastery over the world by interfering the natural order through

intelligence and skill. Thus, on Shabbat we leave things as it is by not changing the world by stop displaying our mastery over nature, nor change it in any way.

Another question: If Hashem rested on the seventh day, how could He have finished on the very same day? The Midrash answers that on the seventh, Hashem created Rest. The ultimate purpose of our life is to emulate Hashem. He added tranquility and harmony to this world. Meaning, this world was no longer in process of changing, therefore this world was in tranquility and partaking Hashem's serenity. Thus, we say to each other "Shabbat Shalom" as the main idea of the Shabbat is peace. However, it is not just peace between man and his fellow, but peace between man and all creation.

All week long, we lack a certain freedom. We are bound by the material world, and in a sense we are a "slave" to it. The Yisraelites picked up manna from the ground, but this is also a part of the curse (Gen. 3:19) for we are to sweat to eat. The "slavery" makes us lack of creativity and freedom that drains our *ruach* (spirit). But on Shabbat, we are freed from this "slavery" to be creative and no longer have to fight the world. On this day, we are a king who is ruling over our destiny and defined by our occupation.

How do we keep Shabbat? The main Shabbat ritual is negative action. We observe the Shabbat by not "doing." As long as the person does not violate the forbidden categories of work, he is actually fulfilling the mitzvah of keeping the Shabbat. We can fulfill this mitzvah every second of the day, even while sleeping. All that is required is that one "not" do any work.

Where do these restrictions come from? When Adam Rishon sinned by eating the Tree of Knowledge, he brought 10 curses to man, woman, snake, and 9 curses to the earth. Thus we are not permitted to do 39 types of labor, known as *melachot* in Hebrew. Now, while these categories are of ritual work, it is meant to present the spirit rather than the details of the law. Here are the categories detailed by R' Areyh Kaplan:

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|--------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Carrying  | 2. Burning          | 3. Extinguishing | 4. Finishing  | 5. Writing       |
| 6. Erasing   | 7. Cooking          | 8. Washing       | 9. Sewing     | 10. Tearing      |
| 11. Knotting | 12. Untying         | 13. Shaping      | 14. Plowing   | 15. Planting     |
| 16. Reaping  | 17. Harvesting      | 18. Threshing    | 19. Winnowing | 20. Selecting    |
| 21. Sifting  | 22. Grinding        | 23. Kneading     | 24. Combing   | 25. Spinning     |
| 26. Dyeing   | 27. Chain-stitching | 28. Warping      | 29. Weaving   | 30. Unraveling   |
| 31. Building | 32. Demolishing     | 33. Trapping     | 34. Shearing  | 35. Slaughtering |
| 36. Skinning | 37. Tanning         | 38. Smoothing    | 39. Marking   |                  |

The Zohar begins with R' El'azar, "This is the teaching of the ascent offering. It is that which ascends..." (Lev. 6:2) It is an offering that burns on the altar until the morning. As soon as night enters and gates are shut, lower judgments are aroused in the world. It is not the sun that brightens the day nor the sunset that darkens the night. Rather, it is the Chesed that brightens the day, and the Gevurah that darkens the night. The Chesed is the blessing that is revealed during the day, and the judgment comes upon the earth that causes darkness.

When the night enters, the gates of heaven are closed and the blessing is stopped, and demonic forces are aroused. "At midnight a north wind is aroused, and from that lower altar darts a flame of fires." The direction of north symbolizes Gevurah, and a flame is Shekinah that chases away the demonic forces. The Talmud (Berakhot 3b) explains that when a north wind blew, King David's harp blew and play it by itself. He immediately arose and engaged in Torah until the break of dawn. It explains that when the sun goes down, the judgments come upon the earth. Thus, we are to work during the day and study the Torah in the evening when the darkness comes.

The Zohar says that at midnight, Hashem delights in the souls of the righteous in the Garden of Eden, and those who study Torah below here partake this joy. Rashi<sup>1</sup> says that when the rooster marks the divisions of the night. "When the kadosh barchu (Set-Apart One, Blessed be He) comes to the righteous in the Gan Eden, all the trees of the Garden spring spices before Him. Then the rooster praises." This rooster is identified as Gabriel who derives from Gevurah.

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<sup>1</sup> BT, Eruvin 53b