



חומש ויקרא

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*
יצוקללה"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

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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

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

Published in the United States of America



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32 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 Uziel*, 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.

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 ותימר להון ארי תעלון
 לארעא די אנא זהב לכו ונתשט
 ארעא שמשתא קדם יי: 3 שית
 שני תורע חקלך ושית שני
 תבסח פרמך ותכנוש ית עללמה:
 4 ובשתא שביעתא גיח שמשתא
 יהי לארעא דתשט קדם יי חקלך
 לא תורע ופרמך לא תבסח: 5 ית
 פתי דחצדך לא תחצד וית ענבי
 שבך לא תקטוף שנת שמשתא
 יהי לארעא: 6 ותהי שטת ארעא
 לכו למיכל קף ולעבדך ולאמתך
 ולאגידך ולתותבך דירין עמך:
 7 ולבעידך ולחיותא די בארעא
 תהי כל עללמה למיכל: 8 ותמני
 קף שבע שמטן דשני שבע שני
 שבע זמני ויהו קף יומי שבע
 שמטן דשני ארבעין ותשע שני:

25:1 וידבר יהוה אל־משה בהר סיני לאמר: 2 דבר
 אל־בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם כי תבאו אל־הארץ
 אשר אני נתן לכם ושבתה הארץ שבת ליהוה: 3 שש
 שנים תזרע שדך ושש שנים תזמר פרמך ואספת את־
 תבואתה: 4 ובשנה השביעת שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ
 שבת ליהוה שדך לא תזרע וכרמך לא תזמר: 5 את
 ספיח קצירך לא תקצור ואת־ענבי נזירך לא תבצר
 שנת שבתון יהיה לארץ: 6 והיתה שבת הארץ לכם
 לאכלה לך ולעבדך ולאמתך ולשכירך ולתושבך
 הגרים עמך: 7 ולבהמתך ולחיה אשר בארצך תהיה
 כל־תבואתה לאכל: 8

8 וספרת לך שבע שבתות שנים שבע שבע
 פעמים והיו לך ימי שבע שבתות השנים תשע וארבעים
 שנה:

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: **קף ולעבדך ולאמתך**. לפי שצאמרי:
 "ואכלו אבני עמך", יכול יהיו אסורים באכילה
 לעשירים? תלמוד לומר: "קף ולעבדך ולאמתך",
 הרי בעלים ועבדים ושפחות אמורים כאן: **ולשכירך**
ולתושבך. אף הגוים: 7 **ולבהמתך ולחיה**. אם חיה
 אוכלת, בהמה לא כל שכן, שמונותיה עליה, מה
 תלמוד לומר "ולבהמתך"? מן מקיש בהמה לחיה: כל
 זמן שחיה אוכלת מן השדה — האכל לבהמתך מן
 הבית, כלל לחיה מן השדה — כלל לבהמתך מן
 הבית: 8 **שבתות שנים**. שמשות שנים. יכול יעשה
 שבע שנים רצופות שמטה ויעשה יובל אחריהם?
 תלמוד לומר: "שבע שנים שבע פעמים", הוי אומר:
 כל שמטה ושמטה בזמנה: **והיו לך ימי שבע וגו'**.
 מגיד לך, שאף על פי שלא עשית שמשות, עשה
 יובל לסוף ארבעים ותשע שנה. ופשוט של מקרא:
 יעלה לך חשבון שנות השמשות למספר ארבעים
 ותשע:

1 **בהר סיני**. מה ענין שמטה אצל הר סיני, והלא
 כל המצות נאמרו מסיני? אלא, מה שמטה נאמרו
 כללותיה ופרטותיה ודקדוקיה מסיני, אף כל נאמרו
 כללותיה ודקדוקיה מסיני. כך שניה בתורת כהנים,
 ונראה לי שכן פרושה: לפי שלא מצינו שמטת
 קרקעות שגשגית בערבות מואב במשנה תורה,
 למדנו שכללותיה ופרטותיה כלן נאמרו מסיני,
 ובא הכתוב ולמד כאן על כל דבור שנדרש למשה,
 שמוסיני היו כלם כללותיה ודקדוקיה, וחוורו ונשנו
 בערבות מואב: 2 **שבת לה**. לשם ה', כשם שנאמר
 בשבת בראשית: 4 **יהיה לארץ**. לשדות ולפרמים:
לא תזמר. שקוצצין ומורותיה, ותרגומו: "לא
 תבסח", ודומה לוי: "קוצים בסוחים", שרפה באש
 בסוחה: 5 **את ספיח קצירך**. אפלו לא זרעתה והיא
 צמחה מן הזרע שנפל בה בעת הקציר, הוא קרוי
 "ספיח": **לא תקצור**. להיות מחזיק בו כשאר קציר,
 אלא הפקר יהיה לכל: **נזירך**. שהנורת 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 לג, 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 וְתַעֲבֹר שׁוֹפָר תְּרוּעָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבַעִי בַּעֲשׂוֹר
לַחֹדֶשׁ בַּיּוֹם הַכְּפָרִים תַּעֲבִירוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּכָל־אַרְצְכֶם:
10 וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם אֶת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וְקִרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר
בְּאַרְץ לְכָל־יֹשְׁבֵיהָ יוֹבֵל הוּא תִהְיֶה לָכֶם וּשְׁבַתָּם אִישׁ
אֶל־אֲחֻזָּתוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ תָּשֻׁבוּ: 11 יוֹבֵל הוּא
שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה תִהְיֶה לָכֶם לֹא תִזְרְעוּ וְלֹא תִקְצְרוּ
אֶת־סִפְיָהּ וְלֹא תִבְצְרוּ אֶת־נִזְוִיהָ: 12 כִּי יוֹבֵל הוּא
קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם מִן־הַשָּׁדָה תֹּאכְלוּ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָהּ:

RASHI

אִישׁ אֶל אֲחֻזָּתוֹ. שֶׁהַשְּׁדוֹת חֹזְרוֹת לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן: וְאִישׁ
אֶל מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ תָּשֻׁבוּ. לְרִבּוֹת אֶת הַנֶּרְצָע: 11 יוֹבֵל הוּא
שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה. מִה תִּלְמֹד לֹמֵר? לִפִּי שְׁנָאֵמֶר:
"וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם" וְגו', כִּדְאִיתָ בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וּבַתּוֹרַת
כְּהֻנִּים: אֶת נִזְוִיהָ. אֶת הָעֲנֻכִּים הַמְּשֻׁמְרִים, אֲבָל
בּוֹצֵר אֶתָּה מִן הַמִּפְקָרִים. כֶּשֶׁם שְׁנָאֵמֶר בְּשִׁבְעִיעִית,
כֶּף נֶאֱמַר בַּיּוֹבֵל. נִמְצְאוּ שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים קְרוּשׁוֹת סְמוּכוֹת
זו לָזוּ: שְׁנַת אֲרָבָעִים וְתִשְׁעֵי שְׁמֹשֶׁה, וּשְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים
יוֹבֵל: 12 קֹדֶשׁ תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם. תּוֹפֶסֶת דְּמִיָּה כִּהְקֹדֶשׁ.
יְכוֹל תִּצָּא הִיא לְחִלּוֹ? תִּלְמֹד לֹמֵר: "תִּהְיֶה",
בְּהִינְיָתָהּ תִּהְיֶה: מִן הַשָּׁדָה תֹּאכְלוּ. עַל יְדֵי הַשָּׁדָה אֶתָּה
אוֹכֵל מִן הַבֵּית, שְׁאֵם פֶּלֶא לְהִיָּה מִן הַשָּׁדָה, אֶתָּה
צָרִיף לְבַעַר מִן הַבֵּית. כֶּשֶׁם שְׁנָאֵמֶר בְּשִׁבְעִיעִית, כֶּף
נֶאֱמַר בַּיּוֹבֵל:

9 וְתַעֲבֹר. לְשׁוֹן: "וַיַּעֲבִירוּ קוֹל בַּמִּחְנֶה", לְשׁוֹן
הַכְּרוּחַ: בַּיּוֹם הַכְּפָרִים. מִמִּשְׁמַע שְׁנָאֵמֶר: "בַּיּוֹם
הַכְּפָרִים", אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁהוּא בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ, אִם
כֵּן, לָמָּה נֶאֱמַר: "בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ"? אֵלָּא, לֹמֵר לָּהּ:
תְּקִיעַת עֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ דּוֹחָה שְׁבַת "בְּכָל אֲרָצְכֶם",
וְאֵין תְּקִיעַת רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה דּוֹחָה שְׁבַת בְּכָל אֲרָצְכֶם,
אֵלָּא בְּבֵית דִּין בַּלְבָּד: 10 וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם. בְּכַנִּיסְתָּהּ
מִקְדָּשִׁין אוֹתָהּ בְּבֵית דִּין, וְאוֹמְרִים: מִקְדָּשֶׁת הַשָּׁנָה:
וְקִרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר. לַעֲבָדִים, בֵּין נֶרְצָע, בֵּין שְׁלֹא כָּלוּ לוֹ
שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים מִשְׁנֹמֶכֶר. אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: מִדּוּ לְשׁוֹן
"דְּרוֹר"? "כְּמַדִּיר בֵּי דִירָא", שְׁדָר בְּכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהוּא
רוֹצֵה וְאֵינוֹ בְּרִשׁוֹת אֲחֵרִים: יוֹבֵל הוּא. שָׁנָה זֹאת
מְבַדֶּלֶת מִשְׁאָר שָׁנִים, בְּנִקְיַת שֵׁם לָהּ לְבִדָּה, וּמִה
שְׁמָהּ? "יוֹבֵל" שְׁמָהּ, עַל שֵׁם תְּקִיעַת שׁוֹפָר: וּשְׁבַתָּם

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 בַּשָּׁנָה דִּיּוּבֵלֵא הָדָא תְּתוּבֹן
גְּבֵר לְאַחֲסִנְתָּהּ: 14 וְאִי תִּזְבְּנוּ
זְבִינִין לְחִבְרָא אוּ תִּזְבְּנוּ מִיָּדָא
דְּחִבְרָא לֹא תִּזְבְּנוּ גְּבֵר יֵת אַחֲוֵי:
15 בְּמִנְיָן שְׁנִיָּא בְּתֵר יוּבֵלֵא תִּזְבְּנוּ
מִן חִבְרָא בְּמִנְיָן שְׁנִי עֲלֵלְתָא יִזְבְּנוּ
לָךְ: 16 לְפֻם סְגִיאוֹת שְׁנִיָּא תִּסְגִּי
זְבִינֵי וְלְפֻם זְעִירוֹת שְׁנִיָּא תִּזְעֵר
זְבִינֵי אֲרִי מִנְיָן עֲלֵלְתָא הוּא
מִזְבֵּן לָךְ: 17 וְלֹא תִזְבְּנוּ גְּבֵר יֵת
חִבְרָה וְתִדְחַל מֵאֲלֵהָ אֲרִי אֲנָא
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ: 18 וְתַעֲבֹדוּן יֵת קִיָּמִי
וְיֵת דִּינִי תִשְׁרוּן וְתַעֲבֹדוּן יִתְהוּן
וְתִיתְּבוּן עַל אֶרֶץ לְרַחֲמֵינוּ:

13 בַּשָּׁנָה הַיּוֹבֵל הַזֹּאת תֵּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אֲחֻזָּתוֹ:

◆ שְׁנִי 14 וְכִי-תִמְכְּרוּ מִמֶּכֶר לְעַמִּיתְךָ אוּ קָנָה מִיָּד עַמִּיתְךָ
אֶל-תּוֹנוֹ אִישׁ אֶת-אֲחֻזָּתוֹ: 15 בְּמִסְפַּר שָׁנִים אַחֵר הַיּוֹבֵל
תִּקְנֶה מֵאֵת עַמִּיתְךָ בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁנֵי-תְבוּאוֹת יִמְכְּרֶךָ:
16 לְפִי | רַב הַשָּׁנִים תִּרְבֶּה מִקְנָתוֹ וּלְפִי מַעֲט הַשָּׁנִים
תִּמְעִיט מִקְנָתוֹ כִּי מִסְפַּר תְּבוּאוֹת הוּא מִכָּר לָךְ: 17 וְלֹא
תּוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת-עַמִּיתוֹ וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 18 וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת-מִשְׁפָּטַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם עַל-הָאָרֶץ לְבִטָּח:

— RASHI —

וְרִבּוּתֵינוּ דְרִישׁוּ מִכָּאן, שֶׁהַמוֹכֵר שָׁדָהוּ אֵינוֹ רִשְׁאִי
לְגַאֲל פְּחוֹת מִשְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים, שֶׁתַּעֲמִיד שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים בְּיַד
הַלּוֹקֵחַ מִיּוֹם לְיוֹם, וְאִפְלוּ יֵשׁ שְׁלֹשׁ תְּבוּאוֹת בְּאוֹתָן
שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים, כְּגוֹן שֶׁמְכָרָה לוֹ בְּקֻמוּתָהּ. וְ"שְׁנִי" אֵינוֹ
יֹצֵא מִפְּשׁוּטוֹ, כְּלוּמֹר, מִסְפַּר שָׁנִים שֶׁל תְּבוּאוֹת וְלֹא
שֶׁל שְׁדִפּוֹן, וּמַעֲוֵט שָׁנִים שְׁתֵּים: 16 תִּרְבֶּה מִקְנָתוֹ.
תִּמְכְּרֶנָּה בִּיקָר: תִּמְעִיט מִקְנָתוֹ. תִּמְעִיט בְּדִמְיָה:
17 וְלֹא תּוֹנוּ אִישׁ אֶת עַמִּיתוֹ. כָּאֵן הַזִּהִיר עַל אֲנָאֵת
דְּבָרִים, שֶׁלֹּא יִקְנִיט אִישׁ אֶת חִבְרֵי וְלֹא יִשְׁאֲנוּ עֲצָה
שְׁאִינָה הַגִּנָּת לוֹ, לְפִי דְרָכּוֹ וְהִנָּאֵתוֹ שֶׁל יוֹעֵץ. וְאִם
תֹּאמַר: מִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם נִתְּכֹנְתִי לְרַעָה? לָךְ נֹאמַר:
"וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ", הַיּוֹדֵעַ מִחֻשְׁבוֹת הוּא יוֹדֵעַ. כֹּל
דְּבַר הַמְּסוּר לְלֵב, שְׁאִין מִכִּיר אֱלֹא מִי שֶׁהִמְחִשְׁבָה
בְּלִבּוֹ, נֹאמַר בּוֹ: "וִירֵאתָ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ": 18 וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם
עַל הָאָרֶץ לְבִטָּח. שְׁבָעוֹן שְׁמָשָׁה יִשְׂרָאֵל גּוֹלִים,
שְׁנַאמַר: "אֲזָ תִרְצֶה הָאָרֶץ אֶת שְׁבִתְתֶיהָ, וְהִרְצָתָ
אֶת שְׁבִתְתֶיהָ". וְשְׁבָעִים שָׁנָה שֶׁל גְּלוּת בָּבֶל, כְּגִיד
שְׁבָעִים שְׁמֻטוֹת שְׁבָטְלוֹ הָיוּ:

13 תֵּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ אֶל אֲחֻזָּתוֹ. וְהִרֵי כָּבֵד נֹאמַר: "וַיִּשְׁבְּתֶם
אִישׁ אֶל אֲחֻזָּתוֹ"? אֱלֹא, לְרִבּוֹת הַמוֹכֵר שָׁדָהוּ וְעַמִּד
בְּנוֹ וְגֵאֲלָהּ, שְׁחֻזְרָת לְאֲבִיו בִּיּוּבֵל: 14 וְכִי תִמְכְּרוּ
וְגו'. לְפִי פְּשׁוּטוֹ, כְּמִשְׁמַעוֹ. וְעוֹד יֵשׁ דִּרְשָׁה: מִנְיָן,
כְּשֶׁאֲתָה מוֹכֵר, מִכָּר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל חִבְרָא? תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר:
"וְכִי תִמְכְּרוּ מִמֶּכֶר — לְעַמִּיתְךָ" מִכָּר. וּמִנְיָן שְׁאִם
בֹּאֵת לְקִנּוּת, קָנָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל חִבְרָא? תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר:
"אוּ קָנָה — מִיָּד עַמִּיתְךָ": אֵל תּוֹנוּ. זוֹ אֲנָאֵת מִמוֹן:
15 בְּמִסְפַּר שָׁנִים אַחֵר הַיּוֹבֵל תִּקְנֶה. וְהוּא פְּשׁוּטוֹ לִישָׁב
מִקְרָא עַל אֲפָנוֹ: עַל הַאֲנָאֵה בֹא לְהַזְהִיר, כְּשֶׁתִּמְכֹּר
אוּ תִקְנֶה קֶרֶקֶע, דַּע כְּמָה שָׁנִים יֵשׁ עַד הַיּוֹבֵל, וּלְפִי
הַשָּׁנִים וְתְבוּאוֹת הַשָּׁדָה שֶׁהִיא רֹאיוֹהָ לְעִשׂוֹת, יִמְכֹּר
הַמוֹכֵר וְיִקְנֶה הַקּוֹנֶה, שֶׁהִרֵי סוּפוֹ לְהַחֲזִירָה לוֹ בַּשָּׁנָה
הַיּוֹבֵל. וְאִם יֵשׁ שָׁנִים מְעֻטּוֹת וְזֶה מוֹכְרָה בְּדִמְיָם
יִקְרִים, הִרֵי נִתְּאָנָה לֹקֵחַ, וְאִם יֵשׁ שָׁנִים מְרִבּוֹת וְאֵכֶל
מִמֶּנָּה תְּבוּאוֹת הִרְבֶּה וְלִקְחָה בְּדִמְיָם מוֹעֲטִים, הִרֵי
נִתְּאָנָה מוֹכֵר. לְפִיכָּה צְרִיךְ לְקִנּוּתָהּ לְפִי הַזְמָן, וְהוּא
שְׁנַאמַר: "בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁנֵי תְבוּאוֹת יִמְכֹּר לָךְ", לְפִי מִנְיָן
שְׁנֵי הַתְּבוּאוֹת שֶׁתִּהְיֶה עוֹמֶדֶת בְּיַד הַלּוֹקֵחַ, תִּמְכֹּר לוֹ.

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, Geneivah 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 וְתַתֵּן אֶרְעָא אֲבָה וְתִיכְלוּן
לְמַשְׁבַּע וְתִימְרוּן לְרַחֲצֵן עֲלֵיהּ:
20 וְאִרִי תִימְרוּן מָא נִיכּוֹל בְּשִׁתָּא
שְׂבִיעִיתָא הָא לֹא נִזְרַע וְלֹא
נִכְנָשׁ יֵת עֲלֵתָנָא: 21 וְאִפְקֹד
יֵת בְּרַכְתִּי לְכוּן בְּשִׁתָּא שְׂתִיתָא
וְתַעֲבֹד יֵת עֲלֵתָא לְתֵלַת שָׁנִין:
22 וְתִזְרַעוּן יֵת שְׂתָא תְּמִינִיתָא
וְתִיכְלוּן מִן עֲלֵתָא עֲתִיקָא עַד
שְׂתָא תְּשִׁיעִיתָא עַד מַעַל עֲלֵתָא
תִיכְלוּן עֲתִיקָא:

◆ שלישי (שני במחזורין) 19 וְתַתֵּן הָאֶרֶץ פְּרִיָּהּ וְאֶכְלֶתֶם
לְשִׁבְעָה וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם לְבִטָּח עָלֶיהָ: 20 וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מַה
נֹאכֵל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית הֵן לֹא נִזְרַע וְלֹא נֶאֱסָף אֶת־
תְּבוּאָתָנוּ: 21 וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת־בְּרַכְתִּי לָכֶם בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁשִׁית
וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת־תְּבוּאָהּ לְשָׁלֹשׁ הַשָּׁנִים: 22 וְזִרְעֶתֶם אֶת
הַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁמִינִית וְאֶכְלֶתֶם מִן־תְּבוּאָהּ יָשָׁן עַד הַשָּׁנָה
הַתְּשִׁיעִית עַד־בּוֹא תְּבוּאָתָהּ תֹאכְלוּ יָשָׁן:

— RASHI —

הַתְּשִׁיעִית. עַד חֹג הַסְּכוּת שֶׁל תְּשִׁיעִית, שֶׁהִיא עַת
"בּוֹא תְּבוּאָתָהּ" שֶׁל שְׁמִינִית לַחֹדֶשׁ הַבֵּית, שֶׁכָּל יָמוֹת
הַקֶּץ הָיוּ בַּשָּׁדָה בְּגָרְנוֹת וּבְתִשְׂרֵי הוּא עַת הָאֶסֶף
לְבֵית. וּפְעָמִים שֶׁהִיָּתָה צְרִיכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת לְאָרְבַּע
שָׁנִים: בַּשָּׁשִׁית שֶׁלִּפְנֵי הַשְּׁמִטָּה הַשְּׁבִיעִית, שֶׁהֵן
בְּטָלִין מִעֲבוֹדַת קֶרֶקַע שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים רְצוּפוֹת, הַשְּׁבִיעִית
וְהַיּוֹבֵל, וּמִקְרָא זֶה נֶאֱמָר בְּשָׂאֵר הַשְּׁמִטּוֹת כָּלִין:

— 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-

19 וְתַתֵּן הָאֶרֶץ וגו' וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם לְבִטָּח עָלֶיהָ. שֶׁלֹא
תִדְאָגוּ מִשְׁנֵת בַּעֲצַת: וְאֶכְלֶתֶם לְשִׁבְעָה. אֵף בְּתוֹךְ
הַמַּעֲשִׂים תִּהְיֶה בּוֹ בְּרַכָּה: 20 וְלֹא נֶאֱסָף. אֶל הַבֵּית: אֵת
תְּבוּאָתָנוּ. כְּגוֹן יֵין, וּפְרוֹת הָאֵילָן, וּסְפִיחֵי הַבָּאִים
מֵאֲלֵיהֶם: 21 לְשָׁלֹשׁ הַשָּׁנִים. לְמִקְצַת הַשָּׁשִׁית, מִנִּסָּן
וְעַד רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, וְלְשִׁבְעִית וְלְשְׁמִינִית — שִׁינְיָרָעוּ
בְּשְׁמִינִית כְּמִרְחֻשֵׁן וְיִקְצְרוּ בְּנִסָּן: 22 עַד הַשָּׁנָה

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 the 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 וְאַרְעָא לֹא תִזְדָּבֵן לְחִלוּטִין
אַרְי דִּילִי אַרְעָא אַרְי דִּירִין
וְתוֹתְבִין אֲתוֹן קְדָמִי: 24 וּבְכָל אֶרֶע
אֲחֻסְתָּבֹן פֶּרְקָנָא תִתְנֹן לְאַרְעָא:
25 אַרְי יִתְמַסְכֵּן אַחֻרָּא וְיִזְבֹּן
מֵאֲחֻסְתָּנָה וְיִיתִי פְרִיקָה דְקָרִיב לָהּ
וְיִפְרוֹק יֵת וְיִבְנִי אַחֻרָּי: 26 וְגִבֵּר
אַרְי לֹא יִהְיֶה לָהּ פְרִיק וְתִדְבֵּק יְדָהּ
וְיִשְׁכַּח כְּמִסַּת פֶּרְקָנָה: 27 וְיִחְשָׁב
יֵת שְׁנֵי זְבִינוּהִי וְיִתִּיב יֵת מוֹתְרָא
לְגִבֵּר דִּי זְבִין לָהּ וְיִתּוּב לְאַחֻסְתָּנָה:
28 וְאִם לֹא אֲשַׁכַּחַת יְדָהּ כְּמִסַּת
דִּיתִיבִי לָהּ וְיִהְיֶה זְבִינוּהִי בִידָא
דְּזָבִין יְתָה עַד שְׁתָּא דִּיּוּבְלָא וְיִפּוֹק
בִּיּוּבְלָא וְיִתּוּב לְאַחֻסְתָּנָה: 29 וְגִבֵּר
אַרְי זְבִין בֵּית מוֹתֵב קָרְתָּא מְקַפָּא
שׁוּר וְיִהְיֶה פֶרְקָנָה עַד מִשְׁלָם שְׁתָּא
דְּזְבִינוּהִי עַדן בְּעֵדֵן יְהִי פֶרְקָנָה:

23 וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמָּכַר לְצִמְתָּת בִּיְלֵי הָאָרֶץ בִּי־גֵרִים
וְתוֹשְׁבִים אֲתֶם עִמָּדִי: 24 וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזְתְּכֶם גֹּאֲלָהּ
תִּתְּנוּ לָאָרֶץ: ס

◆ רביעי 25 כִּי־יָמוּךְ אֶחָיו וּמָכַר מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ וּבָא גֹאֲלוֹ הַקָּרֵב
אֵלָיו וְגֹאֲלָהּ אֶת מִמְכָּר אֶחָיו: 26 וְאִישׁ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה־לּוֹ גֹּאֵל
וְהִשְׁנִיָּה יָדוֹ וּמִצָּא כְּרִי גֹאֲלָתוֹ: 27 וְהִשָּׁב אֶת־שְׁנֵי מִמְכָּרָו
וְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הָעֵדֹף לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר מָכַר־לּוֹ וְשָׁב לְאֲחֻזָּתוֹ:
28 וְאִם לֹא־מִצָּאָה יָדוֹ דֵּי הָשִׁיב לוֹ וְהָיָה מִמְכָּרוֹ בְּיַד
הַקָּנָה אֹתוֹ עַד שְׁנַת הַיּוֹבֵל וַיֵּצֵא בִּיבֹל וְשָׁב לְאֲחֻזָּתוֹ: ס
◆ חמישי (שלישי במחזורין) 29 וְאִישׁ כִּי־יָמָכַר בֵּית־מוֹשָׁב
עִיר חוֹמָה וְהִיתָה גֹּאֲלָתוֹ עַד־תֶּם שְׁנַת מִמְכָּרוֹ יָמִים
תִּהְיֶה גֹּאֲלָתוֹ:

— RASHI —

מִסְפַּר הַתְּבוּאוֹת כְּפִי חֲשׁוֹבֹן שֶׁל כָּל שָׁנָה. אֲכַלְתָּ
אוֹתָהּ שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים אוֹ אַרְבַּע, הוֹצֵא אֶת דְּמִיתוֹן מִן
הַחֲשׁוֹבֹן וְטַל אֶת הַשָּׂאָר, וְזֶהוּ: "וְהָשִׁיב אֶת הָעֵדֹף",
בְּדָמֵי הַמִּקָּח עַל הָאֲכִילָה שְׂאֵבְלָהּ, וְיִתְּנָם לַלּוֹקָח:
לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר מָכַר לוֹ. הַמוֹכֵר הֵזָה שָׂבָא לְגֹאֲלָהּ: 28 דֵּי
הָשִׁיב לוֹ. מִכָּאֵן שְׂאִינוֹ גּוֹאֵל לְחֻצְאִין: עַד שְׁנַת הַיּוֹבֵל.
שֶׁלֹּא יִכְנַס לְתוֹךְ אוֹתָהּ שָׁנָה כְּלוּם, שֶׁהַיּוֹבֵל מְשַׁמֵּט
בְּתַחֲלָתוֹ: 29 בֵּית מוֹשָׁב עִיר חוֹמָה. בֵּית בְּתוֹךְ עִיר
הַמִּקְרֶפֶת חוֹמָה מִיָּמוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון: וְהִיתָה גֹּאֲלָתוֹ.
לְפִי שְׂנָאֵמֶר בְּשָׂדֶה, שֶׁיִּכּוֹל לְגֹאֲלָהּ מִשְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים
וְאֵילָף כָּל זְמַן שִׁירְצָהּ, וּבְתוֹךְ שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים הִקְרָאוּנוֹת
אֵינוֹ יִכּוֹל לְגֹאֲלָהּ, הִצְרָף לְפָרֶשׁ בָּזָה שֶׁהוּא חִלּוּף,
שֶׁאִם רָצָה לְגֹאֵל בְּשָׁנָה רִאשׁוֹנָה גּוֹאֲלָהּ, וְלֹאֲחֵר
מִכָּאֵן אֵינוֹ גּוֹאֲלָהּ: וְהִיתָה גֹּאֲלָתוֹ. שֶׁל בֵּית: יָמִים.
יְמֵי שָׁנָה שְׁלֵמָה קְרוּיִים "יָמִים", וְכֵן: "תִּשָּׁב הַנֶּעְרָה
אֲתָנוּ יָמִים":

23 וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמָּכַר. לִתֵּן לָאוּ עַל חֻזְרָת שְׂדוֹת
לְבַעֲלִים בִּיּוּבֵל, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה הַלּוֹקָח כּוֹבֵשׁ: לְצִמְתָּת.
לְפִסְיָקָה, לְמִכִּירָה פְּסוּקָה עוֹלָמִית: כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ.
אֵל תִּרַע עֵינֶךָ בָּהּ, שְׂאִינָה שְׂלָף: 24 וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ
אֲחֻזְתְּכֶם. לְרִבּוֹת בְּתִים וְעַבְדֵי עֲבָרִי. וְדָבָר זֶה מִפְּרֶשׁ
בְּקִדּוּשֵׁינִי. וְלִפִּי פְּשׁוּט, סְמוּךְ לְפָרֶשׁ שֶׁלֹּאֲחֵרִי,
שֶׁהַמוֹכֵר אֲחֻזָּתוֹ רָשָׁא לְגֹאֲלָהּ לְאַחֵר שְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים, אוֹ
הוּא אוֹ קְרוֹבוֹ, וְאֵין הַלּוֹקָח יִכּוֹל לְעַכֵּב: 25 כִּי יָמוּךְ
אֶחָיו וּמָכַר. מִלְּמַד שְׂאִין אָדָם רָשָׁא לְמָכַר שְׂדֵהוּ
אֵלָּא מִחֻמַּת דִּחָק עֲנִי: מֵאֲחֻזָּתוֹ. וְלֹא כָלָה, לְמַד דֶּרֶךְ
אֶרֶץ שִׁשְׁיֵיר שְׂדֵה לְעַצְמוֹ: וְגֹאֵל אֶת מִמְכָּר אֶחָיו. וְאֵין
הַלּוֹקָח יִכּוֹל לְעַכֵּב: 26 וְאִישׁ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ גֹּאֵל. וְכִי
יֵשׁ לָהּ אָדָם בִּישְׂרָאֵל שְׂאִין לוֹ גּוֹאֲלִים, אֵלָּא גּוֹאֵל
שִׁיּוּכָל לְגֹאֵל מִמְכָּרוֹ: 27 וְהָשִׁיב אֶת שְׁנֵי מִמְכָּרוֹ. כְּמָה
שָׁנִים הָיוּ עַד הַיּוֹבֵל, כֶּף וְכָף, וּבְכֻמָּה מִכְרְתִיהָ לָהּ,
בְּכָף וְכָף, עֲתִיד הָיִיתָ לְהַחֲזִירָהּ בִּיּוּבֵל, נִמְצָאתָ קוֹנָה

10. כא, א. 11. בראשית כד, נח.

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 יתפסק עד משלם לה שתא שלממא ויקום ביתא די בקרתא די לה שורא לחלוטין לחזון יתה לדרוהי לא יפוק ביובלא: 31 ובתי פצחא 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 יפרק מן לואי ויפוק זבין ביתא וקריו אחסנתה ביובלא ארי בתי קריו לואי היא אחסנתהון בגו בני ישראל: 34 וחקל רוח קרויהון לא יודון ארי אחסנת עלם הוא להון:

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

RASHI

שנה: 33 ואשר ינאל מן הלויים. ואם יקנה בית, או עיר מהם — וינאל ביכל" 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 התוב 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: וינאל ממכר בית. הרי זו מצוה אחרת, ואם לא גאלה — יוצאה ביובל, ואינו נחלט לסוף 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 ביובל, 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: חמה. "לו" קרינו, אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה: אף על פי שאין לו עכשו, הואיל והיתה לו קדם לכן. ו"עיר" נקבה היא, והערך לכתב "לה", אלא מתוך שצריך לכתב "לא" בפנים, תקנו "לו" במסרת, זה נופל על זה: לא יצא ביכל. 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 ביובל לבעלים אם לא נגאלו: גאלה תהיה לו. מיד, אם ירצה. וקנה יפה כחו מבח שדות, שהשדות אין נגאלות עד שתי שנים: וביכל יצא. בחנם: 32 וערי הלויים. ארבעים ושמונה עיר שנתנו להם: גאלת עולם. גואל מיד, אפילו לפני שתי שנים, אם מכרו שדה משדותיהם הנתונות להם באלפים אמה סביבות הערים, או אם מכרו בית בעיר חומה — גואלין לעולם, ואינו חלוט לסוף

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 any 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 וְאֵרִי יִתְמַסְכֵּן אַחוֹר וְתַמּוּט יָדָה
 עֶמְקָה וְתַתְקַף בַּה דִּיר וְתוֹתַב וְיַחֲ
 עֶמְקָה: 36 לֹא תִסֵּב מִנָּה חֲבוּלִיא
 וְרִבִּיתָא וְתִדְחַל מֵאֲלֵהָ וְיַחֲ
 אַחוֹר עֶמְקָה: 37 יֵת בְּסַפֵּר לֹא תִתֵּן
 לָהּ בְּחֲבוּלִיא וּבְרִבִּיתָא לֹא תִתֵּן
 מִיכְלָה: 38 אֲנָא יִי אֲלֵהֲכֹן דִּי
 אִפְקִית יִתְכֹּן מֵאַרְעָא דְּמַצְרַיִם
 לְמִתֵּן לְכֹן יֵת אֲרַעָא דְּכַנְעַן לְמַהֲוִי
 לְכֹן לֵאלֹהִי:

35 וְכִי־יִמְוֶה אֲחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהִחֲזִיקָתָּ בּוֹ גֵּר
 וְתוֹשֵׁב וְיַחֲ עִמָּךְ: 36 אֶל־תִּתֶּנָּה מֵאֲתוֹ נִשְׁךְ וְתִרְבִּית
 וִירָאתָ מֵאֲלֵהָ וְיַחֲ אֲחִיךָ עִמָּךְ: 37 אֶת־כֶּסֶףְךָ לֹא־
 תִתֵּן לוֹ בְּנִשְׁךְ וּבְמִרְבִּית לֹא־תִתֵּן אִכְלָה: 38 אֲנִי יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לָתֵת
 לָכֶם אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים: ס

— RASHI —
 מְעוֹתָיו בְּנִכְרִי כְּדִי לְהַלְוֹתָם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִבִּית, הָרִי
 זָה דְּבַר הַמְּסוּר לְלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם וּמִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ, לְכָף
 הַצֶּרֶף לֹא־מֵר: "וִירָאתָ מֵאֲלֵהָ": 38 אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי
 וְגו'. וְהִבְחַנְתִּי בֵּין כְּבוֹד לְשֹׁאֲנֵינוּ כְּבוֹד, אִף אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ
 וְנִפְרָע מִן הַמְּלִיכָה מְעוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִבִּית וְאֹמֵר: שֶׁל
 נִכְרִי הֵם. דְּבַר אַחֵר: "אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ
 מִצְרַיִם", עַל מִנַּת שֶׁתִּקְבְּלוּ עֲלֵיכֶם מְצוֹת, אִפְלוּ
 הֵן כְּבוֹדוֹת עֲלֵיכֶם: לָתֵת לָכֶם אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. בְּשִׁכָּר
 שֶׁתִּקְבְּלוּ מְצוֹת: לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים. שֶׁכָּל הַדֶּר
 בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל — אֲנִי לוֹ לְאֱלֹהִים, וְכָל הַיּוֹצֵא מִמֶּנָּה
 — כְּעוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה:

35 וְהִחֲזִיקָתָּ בּוֹ. אֵל תִּנְיַחָהוּ שִׁירֵד וַיִּפֹּל וַיִּהְיֶה קֶשֶׁה
 לְהַקִּימוֹ, אֲלֵא חֲזָקָהוּ מִשְׁעַת מוֹטֵת הָיָד. לְמַה זֶּה
 דּוֹמֶה? לְמִשְׁאֵוִי שֶׁעַל הַחֲמוּר, עוֹדָהוּ עַל הַחֲמוּר —
 אֶחָד תּוֹפֵס בּוֹ וּמַעֲמִידוֹ, נָפַל לְאֶרֶץ — חֲמִשָּׁה אֵין
 מַעֲמִידִין אוֹתוֹ: גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב. אִף אִם הוּא גֵּר אוֹ תוֹשֵׁב.
 וְאִיזָהוּ תוֹשֵׁב? כָּל שֶׁקָּבַל עָלָיו שְׂלָא לַעֲבֹד עֲבוּדָה
 זָרָה, וְאוֹכֵל נְבִלוֹת: 36 נִשְׁךְ וְתִרְבִּית. חֵד שׁוֹיֵנְהוּ רִבְנָן,
 וְלַעֲבֹד עָלָיו בְּשָׁנֵי לֵאוּן: וִירָאתָ מֵאֲלֵהָ. לְפִי שְׂדַעְתּוֹ
 שֶׁל אָדָם נִמְשַׁכֵּת אַחֵר הָרִבִּית, וְקֶשֶׁה לְפָרֵשׁ הַיִּמְנוֹ,
 וּמִזָּרָה לַעֲצֻמוֹ הֵתֵר בְּשִׁבִּיל מְעוֹתָיו שֶׁהָיוּ בְּטוֹלוֹת
 אֲצִלוֹ, הַצֶּרֶף לֹא־מֵר: "וִירָאתָ מֵאֲלֵהָ". 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. *Megillah* 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 אחור עמך ויזדבן
לך לא תפלה בה פלחן עבדיך;
40 פאגירא כותבא ידי עמך עד
שמא דיוכלא יפלח עמך: 41 ופוק
מעמך הוא ובנוהי עמה ויתוב
לזרעיתה ולאחסנת אבהותיה
יתוב:

◆ ששי (רביעי במחורבין) 39 וכי־ימוד אֶחֶיד עִמָּךְ וְנִמְכַּר
לָךְ לֹא־תַעֲבֹד בּוֹ עֲבֹדֶת עָבֶד: 40 בְּשֹׁכֵר כְּתוּשָׁב יִהְיֶה
עִמָּךְ עַד־שְׁנַת הַיָּבֵל יַעֲבֹד עִמָּךְ: 41 וַיֵּצֵא מֵעִמָּךְ הוּא
וּבְנָיו עִמּוֹ וְשָׁב אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וְאֶל־אֲחֻזַּת אֲבֹתָיו יָשׁוּב:

— RASHI —

41 הוא ובניו עמו. אמר רבי שמעון: אם הוא נמכר,
בניו מי מכר? אלא, מכאן שרבו חיב במזונות בניו:
ואל אחוזת אבותיו. אל כבוד אבותיו, ואין לזלזלו
בכה: אחוזת. חזקת:

39 עבדת עבד. עבודה של גנאי שידיא נכר בה כעבד,
שלא יוליד בליו אחריו לבית המרחץ, ולא ינעל לו
מנעליו: 40 בשכיר כתושב. עבדת קרקע ומלאכת
אמנות, כשאר שכירים התנהג בו: עד שנת היבל.
אם פגע בו יוכל 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 אַרִי עֲבָדֵי אֲנֹן דִּי אַפְקִית יִתְהוֹן
 מֵאֲרֵעָא דְמִצְרַיִם לֹא יוֹדְבִנֹן וְבוֹן
 עֲבָדִין: 43 לֹא תִפְלַח בַּהּ בְּקִשְׁיֵי
 וְתִדְחַל מֵאֶלְהֵךְ: 44 וְעֲבָדֵךְ
 וְאִמְתֵּךְ דִּי יְהוֹן לָךְ מִן עֲמֻמַּיָא דִּי
 בְּסַחְרֵינִיכֹן מִנְהוֹן תִּקְנוֹן עֲבָדִין
 וְאִמְתֵּךְ: 45 וְאִף מִבְּנֵי תוֹתִבִּינָא
 עֲרִלְיָא דְדִירִין עֲמֻכוֹן מִנְהוֹן תִּקְנוֹן
 וּמִזֹּרְעֵיהוֹן דְּעֲמֻכוֹן דִּי אֲתִילִידוּ
 בְּאַרְעֵכוֹן וִיהוֹן לְכוֹן לְאַחְסָנָא:
 46 וְתִחְסְנוֹן יִתְהוֹן לְבְנֵיכֹן
 בְּתִרְכוֹן לִירְתָא אַחְסָנָא לְעֵלִם
 בְּהוֹן תִּפְלָחוֹן וּבְאַחֲכִיכוֹן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 גִּבֹּר בְּאַחוּהֵי לֹא תִפְלַח בַּהּ בְּקִשְׁיֵי:

42 כִּי־עֲבָדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֹא
 יִמְכְּרוּ מִמִּכְרַת עֶבֶד: 43 לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ וִירָאֶת
 מֵאֶלְהֵיךְ: 44 וְעֲבָדֶךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ־לְךָ מֵאֵת הַגּוֹיִם
 אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבְתֶיכֶם מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ עֶבֶד וְאִמָּה: 45 וְגַם מִבְּנֵי
 הַתּוֹשָׁבִים הַגֵּרִים עִמָּכֶם מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ וּמִמִּשְׁפַּחְתָּם
 אֲשֶׁר עִמָּכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִידוּ בְּאַרְצְכֶם וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאַחֲזָה:
 46 וְהִתְנַחֲלֶתֶם אֹתָם לְבְנֵיכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּ אֲחֲזָה
 לְעֵלִם בָּהֶם תַּעֲבֹדוּ וּבְאַחֲיֵיכֶם בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו
 לֹא־תִרְדֶּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ: ס

— RASHI —
 לָךְ לְעֲבָדִים: אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבְתֵיכֶם. וְלֹא שְׁבוּתָךְ גְּבוּל
 אֶרְצְכֶם, שֶׁהָרִי בָהֶם אֲמָרְתִּי: "לֹא תִחִיָּה כָל נִשְׁמָה":
 45 וְגַם מִבְּנֵי הַתּוֹשָׁבִים. שֶׁבָּאוּ מִסְבִּיבוֹתֵיכֶם לְשֵׂא
 נָשִׁים בְּאַרְצְכֶם וַיֵּלְדוּ לָהֶם, הֵבִין הוֹלֵךְ אַחֵר הָאֵב,
 וְאִינוּ בְּכָלֵל "לֹא תִחִיָּה", אֲלֵא אֶתְהָ מֵתָר לְקִנּוּתוֹ
 כְּעֶבֶד: מֵהֶם תִּקְנוּ. אוֹתָם תִּקְנוּ: 46 וְהִתְנַחֲלֶתֶם אֹתָם
 לְבְנֵיכֶם. הַחֲזִיקוּ בָהֶם לְנַחֲלָה, לְצַרֵּךְ בְּנֵיכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם.
 וְלֹא יִתְכַּן לְפָרֶשׁ: הַנְחִילוֹם לְבְנֵיכֶם, שֶׁאִם כֵּן, הִיָּה לוֹ
 לְכַתֵּב "וְהִתְנַחֲלֶתֶם אוֹתָם לְבְנֵיכֶם": וְהִתְנַחֲלֶתֶם. כְּמוֹ
 וְהִתְחַוְּתֶם: אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו. לְהַבִּיא נָשִׂיא בְּעַמּוּיֵי וּמְלֵךְ
 בְּמִשְׁרָתוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא לְרִדּוֹת בַּפֶּרֶךְ:

42 כִּי עֲבָדֵי הֵם. שְׁטָרֵי קוֹדֶם: לֹא יִמְכְּרוּ מִמִּכְרַת עֶבֶד.
 בְּהִכְרוֹה: כָּאֵן יֵשׁ עֶבֶד לְמִכְרֵי, וְלֹא יַעֲמִידוּ עַל אֶבֶן
 הַלְקָח: 43 לֹא תִרְדֶּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ. מְלֹאכָה שֶׁלֹּא לְצַרֵּךְ
 כְּדִי לְעֻנּוּתוֹ, אֵל תֹּאמַר לוֹ: הָחֵם אֶת הַכּוֹס הַזֶּה!
 וְהוּא אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ. עֲדָר תַּחַת הַגֶּפֶן עַד שֶׁאֲבֹא! שְׁמָא
 תֹּאמַר: אֵין מְכִיר בְּדָבָר אִם לְצַרֵּךְ אִם לֹא, וְאֹמַר
 אֲנִי לוֹ שֶׁהוּא לְצַרֵּךְ, הָרִי הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה מְסוּר לְלַבּוֹ,
 לְכָךְ נֹאמַר: "וִירָאֶת": 44 וְעֲבָדֶךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ לָךְ.
 אִם תֹּאמַר: אִם כֵּן, כְּמִי אֲשַׁתְּמֶשׁ, בְּעֲבָדֵי אֵינוֹ מוֹשֵׁל,
 בְּאֻמוֹת אֵינוֹ נוֹחַל, שֶׁהָרִי הוֹהֲרַתְנִי: "לֹא תִחִיָּה כָל
 נִשְׁמָה", אֲלֵא מִי יִשְׁמְשֵׁנִי? "מֵאֵת הַגּוֹיִם" — הֵם יִהְיוּ

17. דברים כ, טז.

— 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 cre-
 ated 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 con-
 sider 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 spiri-
 tuality and Divinity unhindered.⁷⁶

**43 You must not work him with backbreaking la-
 bor:** As mentioned above,⁷⁷ working without pur-
 pose is demoralizing and can even drive a person
 insane, whereas working with purpose—even if
 the task requires extraordinary effort—is richly re-
 warding. 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 וארי תדבק יד ערל תותב עמך ויתמסכן אחרך עמה ויודבן לערל תותב עמך או לארמי ורעית גיורא: 48 בטר דידבן פרקנא תהי לה חד מאחזיהי פרקנא: 49 או אח אבדוהי או בר אח אבדוהי פרקנא או מקריב בשנה מזרעיתה פרקנא או דתדבק ידה ויתפרק: 50 ויחשב עם זבנה משתא דאודבן לה עד שתא דיובלא ויהי כסף זבינוהי במנן שניא כימי אגריא יהי עמה: 51 אם עוד סגיות בשניא לפמנה ותיב פרקנא מכסף זבינוהי: 52 ואם זעיר אשתאר בשניא עד שתא דיובלא ויחשב לה כפום שנוהי ותיב ית פרקנא:

◆ 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 דדו או בן דדו ונאלנו או משאר בשרו משפחתו ונאלנו או השנינה ידו ונאל: 50 וחשב עם קנחו משנת המכרו לו עד שנת היבל והיה כסף ממכרו במספר שנים כימי שכיר יהיה עמו: 51 אם עוד רבות בשנים לפיהן ישיב ונאלתו 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 כשבא לגאל ידקדק בחשבון, לפי המגיע בכל שנה ושנה ינכה 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 — ינכה לו חמשה מנים, ויתן לו העבד חמשה עשר מנים, וזהו: "והיה כסף ממכרו במספר שנים": 50 כימי 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 שפרשתנו:

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 תניחו 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 כַּאֲגִיר שָׁנָא בְּשָׁנָא יְהִי עֲמָה לָא
יִפְלַח בֵּהּ בְּקִשְׁיוֹ לְעֵינֶיהָ: 54 וְאִם
לֹא יִתְפַּרֵּק בְּאֵלֶיךָ וְיִפּוֹק בְּשִׁתָּא
דְּיוֹבֵלָא הוּא וּבְנוּהִי עֲמָה: 55 אָרִי
דִּילִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִין עֲבָדִי
אֲנֹן דִּי אִפְקִית יְתֵהוּן מֵאַרְעָא
דְּמִצְרַיִם אָנָּא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ: 26:1 לָא
תַּעֲבִידוּן לְכוֹן טַעֲנוֹן וְצִלָּם וְקָמָא לָא
תִּקְמִינוּן לְכוֹן וְאָבֹן סִגְדָא לָא תִתְנֹון
בְּאַרְעֵכוֹן לְמִסְגֹּד עֲלֵה אָרִי אָנָּא
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ: 2 יֵת יוֹמֵי שְׂבִיָּא דִּילִי
תִּטְרוֹן וּלְבֵית מִקְדָּשִׁי תִּהְיוּן דְּחִלִין
אָנָּא יְיָ:

53 בְּשִׁבְרִי שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה יְהִיהָ עִמּוֹ לֹא־יִרְדְּנוּ בְּפִרְךָ
לְעֵינֶיהָ: 54 וְאִם־לֹא יִגָּאֵל בְּאַלְהָ וְיִצָּא בְּשִׁנְתָּ הַיָּבֵל הוּא
וּבְנָיו עִמּוֹ:

◆ מפטיר 55 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים עֲבָדִי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־
הוֹצֵאתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
26:1 לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֱלִילִים וּפֶסֶל וּמִצְבֵּה לֹא־תִקְיִמוּ
לָכֶם וְאָבֹן מִשְׁכִּית לֹא תִתְנוּ בְּאַרְצְכֶם לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת עֲלֶיהָ
כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 2 אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּמִקְדָּשִׁי
תִּירָאוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

נ"ז פסוקים. חטי"ל סימן. לאחז"ה סימן.

— RASHI —

מִטְלֵטְלִיו, לְכָךְ סִמְךָ לָהּ: "וְכִי תִמְכְּרוּ מִמְכָּר" ¹⁹, מָה
כְּתִיב בֵּהּ? "אוֹ קְנָה מִיַּד עַמִּיתָךְ" — דָּבָר הַנִּקְנָה מִיַּד
לֵיד. לֹא חֹזֵר בּוֹ — סוֹף מוֹכֵר אֲחֻזָּתוֹ, לֹא חֹזֵר בּוֹ —
סוֹף מוֹכֵר אֶת בֵּיתוֹ, לֹא חֹזֵר בּוֹ — סוֹף לוֹוֶה בְּרִבִּית,
כָּל אֵלּוּ הָאֲחֻזּוֹת קְשׁוֹת מִן הָרִאשׁוֹנוֹת, לֹא חֹזֵר
בּוֹ — סוֹף מוֹכֵר אֶת עַצְמוֹ, לֹא חֹזֵר בּוֹ — לֹא דִיו
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶלָּא אֶפְלוֹ לְגוֹי: וְאָבֹן מִשְׁכִּית. לְשׁוֹן כְּסוּי,
כְּמוֹ ²⁰: "וְשִׁכְתִּי כַפִּי", שֶׁמְכַסִּין הַקֶּרֶקַע בְּרִצְפַּת אֲבָנִים:
לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת עֲלֶיהָ. אֶפְלוֹ לְשָׁמַיִם, לְפִי שֶׁהִשְׁתַּחֲוָּה
בְּפִשׁוּט יָדַיִם וְרַגְלָיִם הִיא, וְאֶסְרָה תוֹרָה לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן,
חוּץ מִן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ: 2 אֲנִי ה'. נֶאֱמַן לְשֵׁלֶם שָׂכָר:
חֲסִלַּת פִּרְשַׁת בְּהֵר

53 לֹא יִרְדְּנוּ בְּפִרְךָ לְעֵינֶיהָ. כְּלוֹמֵר, וְאִתָּה רוֹאֶה:
54 וְאִם לֹא יִגָּאֵל בְּאַלְהָ. "בְּאַלְהָ" הוּא נִגָּאֵל, וְאִינוּ
נִגָּאֵל בְּשֵׁשׁ: הוּא וּבְנָיו עִמּוֹ. הַגּוֹי חִיב בְּמִזְוֹנוֹת בְּנָיו
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: 55 כִּי לִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים. שְׁטָרֵי קוֹדֶם:
אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. כָּל הַמִּשְׁעָבָדִין מִלְּמִטָּה כָּאֵלוֹ מִשְׁעָבֵד
מִלְּמַעְלָה: 1 לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֱלִילִים. כְּנֶגֶד זֶה הַנִּמְכָּר
לְגוֹי, שֶׁלֹּא יֵאמֹר: הוֹאִיל וְרַבִּי מְגֻלָּה עָרִיזוֹת — אֵף
אֲנִי כְּמוֹתוֹ, הוֹאִיל וְרַבִּי עוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה — אֵף אֲנִי
כְּמוֹתוֹ, הוֹאִיל וְרַבִּי מְחַלֵּל שַׁבָּת — אֵף אֲנִי כְּמוֹתוֹ,
לְכָךְ נֶאֱמָרוּ מִקְרָאוֹת הַלָּלוּ. וְאֵף הַפְּרָשִׁיּוֹת הַלָּלוּ
נֶאֱמָרוּ עַל הַסֵּדֶר: בְּתַחֲלָה הַזֵּהִיר עַל הַשְּׁבִיעִית,
וְאִם חָמֵד מִמּוֹן וְנִחְשָׁד עַל הַשְּׁבִיעִית — סוֹפוֹ לְמָכָר

19. ויקרא כה, יד. 20. שמות לז, 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

