



Parsha B'Har-B'Chukotai
We've Been To the Mountain, So Let Us Return.
Beit Emet Congregation ~ Vancouver, WA
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Text: B'Har-B'Chukotai: Torah: VaYikra 25:1-27:34; Haftarah: Yirmeyahu 16: 19-17:14 & 32:6-27; B'rit Chadashah: Luke 4:16-21; 17:20, 21; Yochanan 4:20, 21 23; 14:15-21; 15:9-11.

Theme: On the Mount, By My Regulations, In My Statutes.

I. Introduction.

Today we look at a double portion or parashot of Scripture called **B'Har-B'Chukotai (On the Mount, By My Regulations, In My Statutes)**.

The Portion **B'Har (VaYikra 25)** focuses on legislation intended to ensure that people, especially people in distress, may enjoy a secure life. The Land itself must be taken care of. Land sold reverts to the original owner in the fiftieth year, the Year of Jubilee. **VaYikra 25:2, 10 When you enter the Land that I am giving you. Let the Land observe a Shabbat in honor of YHVH. Six years you shall sow your field, but in the seventh year there shall be a Shabbat of complete rest for the land. You shall proclaim liberty throughout the Land to all its inhabitants.** We are tenants, not owners, of the ground we walk on.

The Portion **B'Chukotai (VaYikra 26)**, last of the **Sefer of VaYikra**, promises a time of security, shalom, and prosperity for those who are faithful to YHVH. **VaYikra 26:5 You shall eat your fill of bread and dwell securely in your land. I will grant shalom in your land, and you shall lie down untroubled.** Would not a people blessed in this manner have reason to be grateful, to rejoice? But even when it goes less well for us, we are wise to count our **b'rukhot (blessings)** and to live with gratitude in our hearts. That, too, is faithfulness.

II. Free At Last, Thank YHVH.

VaYikra 25:9-10 You shall sound a broken blast on the shofar, in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Kapparah (Atonement) you shall sound the shofar throughout your land. You shall set-

apart the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom throughout the Land for all its inhabitants; it shall be the Jubilee Year for you.

The interesting thing in this particular passage of Scripture is not just about the Year of Jubilee but about the fact that the Jubilee Year begins on **Yom Kippur** the **Day of Kapparah (Atonement)**. Today, **Yom Kippur**, is a Day of Fasting, as it was in early times but it has also become a day of sadness and yet the accounts we read elsewhere about the **Day of Kapparah** is that it was a festival day and a happy occasion because it was on this day that the **Kohan HaGadol (High Priest)** made **kapparah** for the entire People of Yisra'el. It was a day of celebration as the **Kohan HaGadol** would enter the **Kadosh Kadoshim (Set-apart of Set-aparts)** or the **Most Kadosh Place** and stand in front of the Ark of the Covenant and place blood from the sin **korban (sacrifice)** upon the **Rachamim (Mercy) Seat** or the top cover of the Ark and YHVH would meet the **Kohan HaGadol** and either accept or reject his offering of **kapparah** on behalf of himself and the people of Yisra'el.

So even though the Year of Jubilee was a time ushered in at **Yom Kippur** it foreshadowed the freedom that we have through Mashiach Yahshua Who gives us our freedom from the bondage of sin. We do not have to wait for **Yom Kippur** or even for the Jubilee Year, which came every 50 years, to enjoy the freedom that we can have through Yahshua, our sin korban and Jubilee celebration.

In the year of Jubilee every Yisra'eli that was sold to be a slave, must be released and receive his freedom back, both he and his children with him.

VaYikra 25:55 " For unto Me B'nai Yisra'el are servants; they are My servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Mitzrayim: I am YHVH your Elohim."

Is it really so, that the meaning of the freedom, intended by YHVH for His people, is fully expressed by that?

Do you remember, Yahshua in **Luke 4:16-21 "came to Natzeret, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Shabbat day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the Sefer of the Navi Yesha'yahu. And when he had opened the Sefer, He found the place where it was written, The Ruach of YHVH is upon Me, because he has anointed Me to preach the Tov News to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the Acceptable Year of YHVH. And He closed the Sefer, and He gave it again to the Shammash, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."**

This **Acceptable Year of YHVH** is the very **Jubilee** granted by YHVH to set His people free. It is the beginning of the time when everyone, that calls upon the Name of YHVH will obtain freedom. This is the liberation from the slavery to corruption, from the bonds of sin and unrighteousness. The freedom from the fear of death and slavery to haSatan.

The Son of Elohim gave us the freedom through His death on the Tree. In the year of Jubilee everyone that turns to the Elohim of our Salvation can return to his possession, to his own inheritance. YHVH Himself is our inheritance. Having returned back to Him, we become coheirs with the Mashiach. We inherit His esteemed kingdom, together with Him.

Our **tefillah (prayer)** is for our own people, **B'nai Yisra'el (Efrayim and Y'hudah)**. Let everyone of B'nai Yisra'el return to his inheritance, to the Living and Mighty Elohim, the Elohim of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov! Let us taste and obtain the freedom given by the Kadosh One of Yisra'el in His Son Yahshua HaMashiach, as it is written: **He whom the Son sets free, shall be free indeed!**

III. Who Owns the Land?

The Command that the Land rest indicates that it belongs to YHVH. We are only tenants there. **VaYikra 25:23 23 The Land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the Land is Mine; for you are sojourners and residents with Me.**

Some of Yisra'el are violating this Commandment of YHVH as we speak. Trading land for peace will not work when YHVH tells you cannot do that with what is not yours. The Land is a gift from YHVH and only YHVH can do with it as He chooses. He chose to give it to His children, B'nai Yisra'el, both native born and the companions who has been grafted in. Olam, don't play el with what is not yours! YHVH tells us we are but sojourners and residents in Him. The final decision is His and He has decided that the Land, His creation, belongs to Him and He will do with it as He chooses not as we choose. Our inheritance is in Him as the House of Y'hudah and the House of Efrayim united as the House of Yisra'el through Yahshua our Mashiach.

IV. VaYikra 26:11 "And I shall set My Dwelling Place in your midst."

The word "**among**" is the Hebrew word from the root "**tokh**" meaning "**within, in the middle or center**", and "**khem**" on the end of the word means "**of, to or for you**" and is first person plural. Thus, one valid translation of this sentence is "**I will Miskhan (Tabernacle, Dwell) within you**". This is supportive of Yahshua's words in **Luke 17:21 "the Malchut (Kingdom) of Elohim is within you."**

We have become more than servants. We are the "**sons of the Most High Elohim**" if we obey Him and do His Commandments. We are heirs according to the Promise and have the authority to break through to the tov and greatness of the **Malchut (Kingdom)** of Elohim.

Yirmeyahu 17:12-14 Like the Throne of Kavod (Esteem), exalted from the beginning, is the place of our Sanctuary. The Hope of Yisra'el is YHVH, all who forsake You will be shamed "Those who forsake Me will be inscribed for earthly depths" for they have forsaken YHVH, the Source of living waters. Heal me, YHVH, and I will be healed; save me, and I will be saved, for You are my hallel (praise).

Each and everyone who places their **emunah (faith-trust)** in YHVH finds a sanctuary in Him. In Him is the Hope of Yisra'el. Reside in the Living Word of YHVH being filled with the Living Waters of YHVH Who is the Source of all things in **shamayim (heaven)** and on the earth. YHVH will heal those who want to be healed and this is a spiritual healing because in the same verse, **verse 14** it says immediately after the healing that ask YHVH to be saved and you will be saved.

The hope of Yisra'el is YHVH! It is in Him that we are kept safe from the trails and tribulations of this life. That does not mean that we will never go through trials and tribulations but that we have a place of refuge and that place is within the Sanctuary of our Elohim and in the One who sits upon the throne, Yahshua! If we lift up the Name of YHVH and Yahshua in hallel we will be saved. Through that salvation we receive healing, healing within our ruach. Yahshua is the source of our hallel. He is the source of our healing and He is the source of our salvation through whom we will be saved!

Receive Him and receive the source of living waters. **Dwell** within His tent, the place that He has chosen above all others, and you will **dwell** in the House of YHVH forever!

V. By My Regulations or In My Statutes.

The first part of this double portion, **B'Har**, gives us the rules for Sabbatical and Jubilee years. The second part, **B'Chukotai**, meaning '**By My Regulations or In My Statutes,**' lays out the rewards if one obeys YHVH's Commandments and the consequences for not. **VaYikra chapter 26** records a bargain between YHVH and the Nation of Yisra'el.

VaYikra 26:3, 4, 6, 9: "If you follow My Laws and faithfully observe My Commandments, I will grant you rains in their season, so that the earth shall yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit. I will grant shalom in the

Land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone; I will give the Land respite from vicious beasts, and no sword shall cross your land. I will look with favor upon you, and make you fertile and multiply you; and I will maintain My Covenant with you."

In the first 11 verses of the parashah, YHVH promises several forms of reward for obedience: food, security, shalom and health.

Following these statements of hope are 29 verses of threatened curses that will be delivered **"If you do not obey Me and do not observe all these Commandments."** A sampling:

VaYikra 26:19, 20, 22, 25: "I will make your skies like iron and your earth like copper, so that your strength shall be spent to no purpose. Your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. I will loose wild beasts against you, and they shall bereave you of your children and wipe out your cattle. I will bring a sword against you to wreak vengeance for the Covenant."

Here are the counterparts to b'rukhot: famine, sword and disease.

Read literally, these verses say that nature and history are YHVH's agents, loyal to His Decree. His purpose is registered in their actions.

R. Gillman writes: "A major part of this week's Torah portion is called the **Tochechah**, literally **"The Rebuke."** It is an extended, very graphic description of the punishments Elohim will visit upon the Yisra'elim should they choose not to obey Elohim and Elohim's commandments. **VaYikra 26:14-45** is, in fact, one of two such rebukes in the Torah, the second even longer **Tochechah** being found in **D'varim 28**.

In the liturgical reading of the Torah, both of these passages are commonly read quickly and in an undertone. No one wants to dwell on these prophecies, most of which incidentally have proven in the course of our history to be painfully accurate."

In paraphrasing R. Gillman we see that there is, however, one major difference between the two passages. In **D'varim**, the message is unrelieved doom and disaster. In **VaYikra**, however, a glimmer of potential consolation is allowed to emerge. YHVH promises that in the midst of Yisra'el's sufferings, YHVH will remember the Covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, the Covenant with the Community of the **Sh'mot**, and the Land. However harsh the punishment,

YHVH will not utterly destroy Yisra'el and annul YHVH's Covenant with us.”

Our consolation, then, lies in the **B'rit**, in the **Covenant**.

Again, R. Gillman writes: “Theologically, this is an extraordinarily powerful claim. It is the Covenant that, so to speak, binds Elohim's hands. This omnipotent Elohim, whose power is unquestioned, freely chooses not to exercise that power. Elohim's own promises simply preclude that outcome. It is that irreversible Covenant which gives us the right to make demands and to entertain expectations from, and even to challenge Elohim. It is precisely the Covenant that assures us of Elohim's eternal concern for us.”

Nu, to render this idea we note also that YHVH's limited power is not YHVH's essence but YHVH's choice. This is not a sign of some current notions of an Elohim whose limited power is a matter of YHVH's very nature. YHVH's nature, here, remains all-powerful, except when YHVH chooses not to be. It is as if the greatest manifestation of YHVH's power lies specifically in the ability to curb that power.

Further, this notion of YHVH's grace flowing to us because of the Covenant, is expanded to include the power of **t'shuvah (repentance with turning toward YHVH)**, specifically preemptive t'shuvah, the kind of t'shuvah that will lead YHVH to forget about imposing any punishment at all.

True, Scripture alludes to the fact that in the midst of its misery Yisra'el will **do kapparah (atone)** for its iniquity, and then YHVH will remember the Covenant, after the punishment has been meted out. However, t'shuvah also can cancel out before hand any punishment that is to come as a result of our sins.

For example, in the **Sefer of Yonah**, we see that YHVH can decree that a nation be destroyed. But should that nation turn back from its wickedness, YHVH can change its curse to a b'rukhhah, and vice-versa. The image then is of an all-powerful YHVH whose plans for a people are can be shaped by the behavior of that people. YHVH's decision can depend on our own. We can have the power to determine our fate. That gift is part of YHVH's grace to us. Nu, in the **Sefer of Yonah** we see the preemptive power of t'shuvah. Yonah himself did not understand the full power of his own prophecy, but YHVH was willing to change Ninveh's fate from disaster to b'rukhhah simply because of the people's genuine t'shuvah.

Remember **T'hilli 103 Verses 7-13** to be reminded of how totally and utterly compassionate YHVH is in the face of our sins, how YHVH has the power to

remove our sins "**as east is far from west.**" Why? **Verse 14** provides the answer: Because YHVH knows how we are formed; YHVH is mindful that we are dust.

Why then is YHVH so ready to forgive us, even before He punishes? Simply because He remembers how we were created, in fact how He created us, out of the dust. Now, He waits for us.

YHVH uses history and nature as His agents. The believer knows of one clear way He intervened in history, by giving Laws and Commandments. "**If you walk in My Statutes, and keep My Commandments, and do them**", then you will have done them, and that is the reward.

R. Mishkin writes: This chapter and **D'varim chapters 27, 28** represent what may be the single most problematic issue in the Torah: reward and punishment. The Torah states repeatedly and unequivocally that man's actions have consequences and that Elohim will mete out reactions to his behavior. While it is generally assumed that man has been granted free will to decide whether to observe the mitzvot or to ignore them, it is also clear, that there is a right and a wrong choice. In the hands of the Rabbis, YHVH's providence over the **Olam Hazeh (present world of toil)** is linked to the acceptance of His omniscience, nothing goes unnoticed and everything yields a response.

The Rambam (R. Moshe ben Maimon) stressed the importance of believing in YHVH acting in this Olam Hazeh as he wrote the following in his Hilkhot Teshuva (10:1): "Let not man say, 'I will observe the precepts of the Torah and occupy myself with its wisdom in order that I may obtain all the blessings written in the Torah, or to attain life in the world to come; I will abstain from transgressions against which the Torah warns, so that I may be saved from the curses written in the Torah, or that I may be cut off from life in the **Olam Haba (world to come)**.' It is not right to serve Elohim after this fashion for whoever does so, serves Him out of fear. This is not the standard set by the Nevi'im and sages. Those who may serve Elohim in this way of fear are illiterate, till their knowledge shall have increased when they will serve out of love."

Yochanan 14:15-21 "If you love Me, you will keep My Commands; and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Ruach of Emet, to be with you forever. The olam cannot receive Him, because it neither sees nor knows Him. You know Him, because He is staying with you and will be united with you. I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you. In just a little while, the olam will no longer see Me; but you will see Me. Because I live, you too will live. When that day comes, you will know that I am united with My Father, and you with Me, and I with you.

Whoever has My Commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him."

Yochanan 15:9-11 "Just as My Father has loved Me, I too have loved you; so stay in My love. If you keep My Commands, you will stay in My love, just as I have kept My Father's Commands and stay in His love. I have said this to you so that My joy may be in you, and your joy be complete.

The word used, in the Greek, for Commands here is **Strong's 1785 evntolh, entole {en-tol-ay'}** meaning **1) an order, command, charge, precept, injunction 1a) that which is prescribed to one by reason of his office 2) a commandment 2a) a prescribed rule in accordance with which a thing is done 2a1) a precept relating to lineage, of the Mosaic precept concerning the priesthood 2a2) ethically used of the commandments in the Mosaic or Jewish tradition.**

Nu, in this passage of Scripture the Greek word used to describe Commands in both uses is **'entole'** and that word is defined as being the same as the Torah. Not 'nomos (law)'! The Commands that we are instructed to follow are those given by the Father to the Son and the Son to us. This definition describes these commands as those of the Mosaic or Jewish tradition. What is the Mosaic or Jewish tradition? Torah!

Nu, the word used in the Greek versions for **Commands** is the same as in the Hebrew. The Hebrew word is **mitzvot** and the Greek word used has the same meaning which shows us that the end result of the Commandments is that they are the Teachings of YHVH and His Gift of **life** to us, but in order to fulfill them we need to accept the Torah of YHVH as the source of our living water. That source is acceptance of YHVH Yahshua as Mashiach, the Anointed One, and our salvation.

VI. The Great Nefesh (Soul).

VaYikra 26:11-13 'And I shall set My Dwelling Place in your midst, and My Being shall not reject you. 'And I shall walk in your midst, and shall be your Elohim, and you shall be My people. 'I am YHVH your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Mitzrayim, from being their slaves. And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk upright.

The Hebrew word that is translated as **Being** is **naf-shee** better translated as the following: **Naf-shee** means **to take breath or refresh oneself** and is a form of the Hebrew word **nefesh**, which means **life, soul, creature, person, mind, etc.** So why is this so important? Because, what this word shows us is that YHVH has a **nefesh (soul)** as we have **nefeshin (souls)**. YHVH is a Living Being manifested as

YHVH Yahshua, because Yahshua had a nefesh and was flesh and blood whereas Scripture tells us that the Father is **Ruach (Spirit)**. And YHVH tells us that His nefesh will not reject us.

R. Silver relates that we relate to YHVH from a **nefesh** level the same as husbands and wives relate to one another and consider themselves to be **nefesh** mates. The Orthodox Jews believe that there are **nefesh** mates out there for each and every one of us and that they will seek one another out because of their desire to be with each other. YHVH does this and we do this.

We seek YHVH because it is part of our very Being. YHVH seeks us and desires to be part of us because it is a part of His very Being. This is the part manifested in Yahshua who became Elohim in the flesh and desired to be with us, His creation.

We relate to one another and to YHVH, not through our **ruachim (spirits)** alone, but also through our **nefeshim (souls)** which give us **life**.

VaYikra 26: 40-45 Then they will confess their sin and the sin of their forefathers, for the treachery with which they betrayed Me, and also for having behaved toward Me with casualness. I, too, will behave toward them with casualness and I will bring them into the land of their enemies, perhaps then their unfeeling heart will be humbled and then they will gain appeasement for their sin. I will remember My covenant with Ya'akov and also My covenant with Yitz'chak, and also My covenant with Avraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land. The Land will be bereft of them; and it will be appeased for its sabbaticals having become desolate of them; and they must gain appeasement for their iniquity; because they were revolted by My ordinances and because their spirit rejected My decrees. But despite all this, while they will be in the land of their enemies, I will not have been revolted by them nor will I have rejected them to obliterate them, to annul My covenant with them--for I am YHVH, their Elohim. I will remember for them the covenant of the ancients, those whom I have taken out of the land of Mitzrayim before the eyes of the nations, to be Elohim unto them, I am YHVH.

We must confess our sin to YHVH and follow His Ordinances and Statutes that make up His Commandments that are contained in the Torah. If we treat His Commandments with a casual attitude then He will return the same to us. YHVH's Torah requires that we follow its teachings because these teachings originate from the very **nefesh** of YHVH, they originate from that Individual who became the very Living **Nefesh** of YHVH Elohim, YHVH Yahshua! And He goes on to say

that even if we revolt Him, He will not turn away from His Covenant with us. Why not? Because He is Elohim and His Word is eternal and that means His Covenant is eternal, so in the end YHVH Yahshua is eternal as the Living Word of Elohim.

Yirmeyahu 17:7-10 Blessed is the man who trusts in YHVH, then YHVH will be his security. He will be like a tree that is planted near water, which will spread its roots alongside brooks and will not see when heat comes, whose foliage will be ever fresh, who will not worry in years of drought and will never stop producing fruit. "The heart is most deceitful of all and it is fragile; who can know it? I, YHVH, plumb the heart and test the mind; to give to man according to his ways, like the fruit of his deeds.

YHVH does not look on the outside of man as man does but He looks into the very depths of our being into our **nefesh**. The **Nefesh** of YHVH reaches out to dwell with man and it ends in the same way, with YHVH searching the depths of our hearts and looking into our minds in order that He can give to us what we have earned either through our emunah in Him.

VII. Conclusion and Application.

B'Har means "**in or on the mountain or Mount.**" Notice how often YHVH spoke of "**in the mountain.**" (a quite place of reaching up). Yahshua our Rabbi and Mashiach went to a mountain often, to **daven (pray)**. Yahshua and His **talmidim (disciples)** visited a mountain and **the Kavod (Esteem)** of His **Malchut (Kingdom)** was shown to them. (**Mattityahu 17:1-9**)

Where is a close mountain located so we can all go there?

Luke 17:20,21 And when the P'rushim demanded when the Kingdom of Elohim would come, He answered them and said, The Kingdom of Elohim comes not with observation: Neither shall they say, look here! or, look there! for, behold, the Kingdom of Elohim is within you.

Yochanan 4:20, 21, 23 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; "Yahshua said unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Y'rushalayim, worship the Father. " But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in ruach and in emet (truth): for the Father seeks such to worship Him.

Yahshua told us we would find the Father in our closet with the door closed. We will find His **Nefesh** and **Ruach** within ourselves. We will find Him everywhere we truly look. Baruch HaShem YHVH!

No matter what the olam does to you stay the course and do the work that YHVH calls you to do and for your brothers and sisters in Mashiach do that much more. Help one another where you can, daven for one another, encourage one another in YHVH and help the family of Yisra'el, of Y'udah and Efrayim, come together as one in Him. Continue to pray for the shalom of Y'rushalayim, the House of Y'udah and for the House of Efrayim and the fulfillment of the prophetic promise for Y'udah and Efrayim to be reunited as the House of Yisra'el.

Fountain of **Rachamim (Mercies)** and unending love, sustain us with fruit from the Tree of Life, Your Word, the Torah, Your Son, the Living Word, the Living Torah, YHVH Yahshua.

Shabbat Shalom!