

THE WEISS EDITION

# בהר-בחוקותי

*Behar - Bechukosai*



Out of Control

Well Paid

Chores or Passions?

Exchange Rate

# Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE  
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

# *Lightpoints*

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא

ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם

נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב

תנצב"ה

# בהר *Behar*

כה:נה | 25:55

כִּי לִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים עֲבָדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר  
הוֹצֵאתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.

*For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are  
My servants, whom I took out of the land of Egypt.*

## *Out of Control*

Why does the verse repeat itself, saying “Bnei Yisrael are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I took out of the land of Egypt”? Would it not have been enough to say only once, “Bnei Yisrael are My servants, whom I took out of the land of Egypt”?

This double expression reflects the twofold nature of Bnei Yisrael’s servitude to G-d. One degree of servitude is the obedience to G-d’s will to which they committed themselves on their own; the other is an inescapable debt of servitude—a condition on which G-d redeemed them from Egyptian bondage.

Before the giving of the Torah, Bnei Yisrael said of their

own accord, “*na’aseh v’nishma*, we will obey and we will listen,” emphatically announcing their readiness to obey G-d’s will even before (and not conditional upon) “listening” and understanding what He would expect of them. This pledge stemmed from their profound eagerness to be His servants and to carry out His wishes, whatever they may be. G-d acknowledges this pledge in the Torah, saying, “For the children of Israel are servants to Me”—they have committed themselves to Me.

However, since the declaration of *na’aseh v’nishma* expressed the *people’s* choice to accept G-d’s sovereignty, their pledge hinges on and reflects the “participation,” as it were, of those making the commitment. The servitude generated thereby is thus not entirely independent of their will and desire. This personal and mortal commitment to G-d does not contain the *limitlessness* of Bnei Yisrael’s “inescapable” debt of servitude owed to G-d for redeeming them from Egypt.

That is what the verse adds by saying, “They are My servants, whom I took out from the land of Egypt,” after already noting our acceptance of G-d as our master—“Bnei Yisrael are servants to Me.” The debt we owe to G-d for redeeming us from Egypt is independent of any pledge of ours, giving our obligation to Him an element of “inescapability.” This “compulsory” servitude to G-d, which was revealed at the giving of the Torah when G-d said, “I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of Egypt,”<sup>1</sup> is what makes Bnei Yisrael “My servants”—infinitely committed to G-d, with an unnatural devotion that transcends all circumstances.

—*Toras Menachem, Sefer Hamaamarim*  
*Melukat, vol. 3, pp. 357-358, fn. 32*

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1. Shemos 20:2.

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 כו:א-ב | 26:1-2
 

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לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֱלִילִים... אֵת שִׁבְתֵּי תִשְׁמְרוּ... אֲנִי ה'.

*You shall not make idols for yourselves...*

*You shall keep My Sabbaths... I am G-d.*

## Well Paid

The final verses of Parshas Behar caution us in the observance of a number of mitzvos stated previously in the Torah. Rashi explains that the Torah directs these warnings at the person discussed in the preceding verses—a Jew who has sold himself into slavery to a gentile. He might assume, says Rashi, “Since my master has illicit relations... worships idols... desecrates the Shabbos, I may also be like him.” The Torah therefore warns that despite his subjugation to a non-Jew, he must still observe the mitzvos. The Parshah then concludes, “I am G-d”—“Who is faithful to give reward”;<sup>2</sup> i.e., the slave’s devotion to the Torah despite his circumstances will not go unrewarded.

Though every person who observes the mitzvos elicits a Divine response, the Torah specifically mentions that G-d will reward this slave, because the slave might otherwise suspect that in his current situation he is incapable of receiving Divine compensation.

To explain:

Everything we have comes from G-d: our rains and our crops, our health and our livelihood. Still, the “G-dliness” of

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2. Rashi ad loc.

our blessings, i.e., the degree to which their Divine source is revealed, varies.

During the Shemittah year, for example, when agricultural work in the Land of Israel is prohibited, the survival of the Jewish people living in Israel is distinctly and recognizably supernatural. In truth, a Jew's needs are *always* provided for supernaturally—just as the Jewish nation has been miraculously preserved by G-d throughout history. But in the non-Shemittah years, when G-d instructs us, “Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard,” our *truly supernatural* blessings come to us through a natural vehicle—our physical toil and the workings of nature.

The garb through which G-d provides for non-Jews, however, is even more concealing, and their sustenance more subject to the limited forces of nature.<sup>3</sup> As such, since the Jewish slave of a non-Jew is dependent upon his gentile master to provide for him—provisions that are indeed subject to the forces of nature—he might assume that though his observance of the mitzvos surely generates a Divine reward, he is (currently) incapable of receiving the reward for observing Shabbos and refraining from idol-worship—rewards which certainly outstrip any natural disguise whatsoever.

The Torah therefore reiterates that G-d Himself—“Who is faithful to give reward”—has given the commandments, and He can and will fully compensate all who observe the mitzvos, regardless of their current circumstances.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 7, pp. 183-187*

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3. See Devarim 4:19. A non-Jew is thus more prone to believe that the forces of nature determine his sustenance, and that they are not merely carrying out the will of G-d. See Rema, Orach Chaim 156:1; Toras Menachem, Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat, vol. 1, pp. 321-324.

בחוקותי

# *Bechukosai*

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26:9 | כו:ט

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וּפְנִיתִי אֵלֵיכֶם.

*I will turn towards you.*

## *Chores or Passions?*

After stating that if you follow G-d's statutes and observe His commandments, G-d will grant you prosperity, security and peace, the Torah adds that G-d will also "turn towards you" and grant you additional blessings as well. Rashi comments on the words "I will turn towards you," and interprets this to mean, "I will turn away from all My preoccupations to pay your reward."

The expression "I will turn away from all My preoccupations"—not "from My *other* preoccupations," but from "My preoccupations" in general—implies that the payment of additional reward described here is *not* among G-d's preoccupations or chores. Why not? What is it then?

In addition, the placement of this promise after the verse has already enumerated some of G-d's other promised rewards

implies that there are two degrees of reward promised here: the earlier blessings are indeed among G-d's preoccupations, while the latter blessings are not. What does this mean?

The term "(My) preoccupations," or עסקי in Hebrew, denotes tasks that occupy your mind but are essentially "outside of you," imposing on and distracting from your internal desires and interests. These "preoccupations" represent a descent from your truest and most natural self. "Turning away from all your preoccupations" thus means that you are now concentrating on an expression of your truest self—the essence of who you are.

We can now understand the two degrees of reward that G-d promises for toiling in Torah study and observing His commandments. One degree of reward is for fulfilling the mitzvos to the extent required of you; the other is for devoting yourself to the fulfillment of G-d's will *beyond* what the law requires.

By going beyond the law's demands, such as toiling in the study of Torah more than is required, you demonstrate that this is not merely a duty or chore, but your truest passion. Commensurately, G-d's reward for such devotion emanates not, as with the blessings enumerated in the earlier verses here, from a level of Divine effluence that is a "descent" from His essence—analogueous to a "preoccupation" or "chore"—but from the Divine essence itself!

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 17, pp. 324-329*

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 כז:לג | 27:33
 

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וְלֹא יִמְרְנוּ וְאִם הִמְרֵנוּ וְהָיָה הוּא וְתַמּוּרְתּוֹ יִהְיֶה קֹדֶשׁ.

*And he shall not substitute for it. If he shall exchange it, then it will be, and its exchange will be, holy.*

## Exchange Rate

According to the teachings of Kabbalah, the twelve possible configurations of the four letters of G-d's name Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey each represent a distinct Divine revelation, and are each alluded to by a verse in the Torah.

One of these combinations derives from the verse in the Torah that prohibits substituting an animal consecrated as a sacrifice with a different (unconsecrated) animal. If one attempts to do so, the animals must both be offered as sacrifices, as the Torah states, “If he shall exchange it, then it will be, and its exchange will be, holy.” The first letter of each of the four words, “המר ימירנו והי הוא—he shall exchange it, then it will be,” spell out one of the twelve configurations of G-d's name.<sup>1</sup>

The suggestion that these four words are a distinct phrase that formulates a name of G-d seems to contradict the actual meaning of the verse. The context of this verse is the *prohibition* of making such exchanges. These four words on their own, however, form a phrase that implies that such an exchange is permissible and even obligatory: “He shall exchange it, then it will be!”

The unlikely use of these four words as an independent phrase teaches us a remarkable lesson. The prohibition of

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1. Siddur HaArizal, Kavanas Rosh Chodesh.

exchanges, as it relates to each of us spiritually in our service of G-d, refers to the substitution of our own spiritual growth with efforts to transform the mundane world outside of us into holiness. Under normal circumstances, “exchanges” are prohibited: one may not leave the shelter of a holy Torah environment, risking his own spiritual sensitivity, in an attempt to confer sanctity on the outside world.

There are times, however, when such exchanges are not a sin but a virtue, and the Torah in fact instructs us, “He shall exchange it!” Namely, when so many of our fellow Jews are at risk of assimilation and spiritual devastation, we are obligated to compromise the security we feel when staying within a Torah environment, and instead to go out and find those whose spiritual lives are at risk and draw them towards the lifegiving waters of the Torah.

And what of your own spirituality? To this, the Torah guarantees (in the final words of this four-word phrase), “then it will be!”—you will succeed not only in revealing holiness in others, but even your own spirituality “will *be*”—it will remain as strong as ever.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 26, pp. 90-92*

לזכות

הנערה **אסתר** תחי'  
בת הרה"ת שלמה אהרן  
וזוגתו מרת שפרה חנה שיחיו

### **שארפשטיין**

לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה שנה  
היא עונת בת מצוה בשעטו"מ ביום כ"ג אייר ה'תשפ"ו  
יה"ר שתקבל על עצמה עול מלכות שמים  
ועול מצוות בלבב שלם,  
ותצליח בקיום המצוות מתוך יראת שמים טהורה  
לנח"ר הורי' וכל משפחתה שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ת שלום דובער  
בן הרה"ת בנימין אליהו ע"ה  
גאראדעצקי

נלב"ע כ"ה אייר ה'תשפ"ב  
תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בנו  
הרה"ת מנחם מענדל  
וזוגתו מרת חי-ה פייגע שיחיו  
גאראדעצקי



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