

Bahar-Bechukotai 5777

BS"D Parshiot Bahar-Bechukotai 5777

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The Answer to so many Questions Lie in HaShem's Promise

The parasha begins with hilchot (laws of) Shmita and Yovel (Sabbatical and Jubilee years), while emphasizing the point that these halachot were presented to Am Yisrael at Har Sinai (Mount Sinai).

Rashi and other commentators of the Torah, seek, each in their own way, to clarify the emphasis placed on Mount Sinai as being the site where these agricultural laws were presented when, in fact, the whole Torah was presented at Mount Sinai.

My understanding is as follows.

Imagine parents right after bringing their newborn baby home, sitting down to arrange the seating plans for the boy's wedding. It would seem a bit premature.

The nascent Jewish nation was standing at the foot of Mount Sinai in the heart of the reptile infested, arid desert when they heard the laws regarding land and agriculture. It would not be irrational to say that many people had in their minds that the whole matter was so very premature as to be delusional. They were still in the desert of Sinai. They had yet to traverse the hundreds of kilometers to get to Eretz

Yisrael, and then destroy 31 city states dotting the entire land, then distribute the land to the tribes and to individuals, and only then could they begin working the land for six years before declaring a Shmita year and 49 years before declaring a Yovel year.

It all seemed so untimely and so far from reality, no less than mountain climbers who are planning their celebration that will come after ascending Mount Everest when they are still in Katmandu, or the new parents contemplating the seating arrangements for their child's wedding in 20 plus years.

However, by pointing out the site of Mount Sinai, the place of HaShem's revelation to His chosen people for these agricultural laws, the Torah is telling us that whatever HaShem said there, or through his prophets, created an historic imperative; a compulsive religious inevitability and a national determination which would never be deflected or negated.

HaShem had created an historic imperative that the Jewish nation would traverse the desert; they would enter the land and destroy its illegal occupiers; they would divide the land and work it, and would celebrate Shmita and Yovel. And in our time, the Bet Hamikdash will be built, the Davidic monarchy will be restored, as will the Sanhedrin and the return of prophecy.

Historic Imperative at Work Today

This historic imperative is at work today in front of our eyes, as stated in the Devarim (30-,3-5):

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theology.

From time immemorial, the Jewish nation has been for the gentile a mystery cloaked in a dilemma, wrapped in an enigma, enshrined in perplexity.

How is it that we are still around? How after 3500 years do we still speak the same language, live by our strict halachic code of law, cling to a God whom we cannot see and has not contacted us in over 2500 years, and has often acted toward us as a very strict disciplinarian – to say the least.

How did the Medina come about by a vote in the UN by nations who were and are anti-Semitic? How have we been victorious in all our wars when the chances to survive even one was nil?

The questions abound!

When these questions are asked of any observant Jew, the answer will be the same: it is not our genius, nor our power of persuasion or diplomatic skills, nor our unique agility to stay “under the radar”. Our survival is the result of HaShem’s promise to Avraham that his descendants would live on forever, in this world and in the next.

We are approaching the realization of the prophetic words of Jeremiah (16:19):

Lord, my strength, my fortress, my refuge in time of distress. To You the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, ‘Our ancestors possessed false gods, worthless idols that did them no good’.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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