

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת בהר-בחקתי

**והעברת שופר תרועה בחדש השבעי בעשור לחדש ביום הכפרים תעבירו שופר
בכל ארצכם**

“You shall sound a broken blast on the shofar, in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Atonement you shall sound the shofar throughout your land” (25:9)

The word "shevii" is spelled without a yud. This uncommon spelling can be read as "saveia," which means "satisfied." The Baal HaTurim explains that this is a hint to the fact that the seventh month referred to in the posuk, Tishrei, is a month satiated with mitzvos. With Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkos and Shemini Atzeres, Tishrei has more mitzvos than any other month. Our attitude toward Tishrei should be that we should look forward to the opportunity that we will have when that time comes again. That is why a mere mention of the month of Tishrei is immediately associated with its many mitzvos. Any opportunity to do a mitzva that is not common is something that we should anticipate and appreciate. We should appreciate the mitzvos that we do daily as well, but we should have a special feeling for those mitzvos that we can only do infrequently.

**ולא תונו איש את עמיתו ויראת מאלקיך כי אני ה' אלקיכם
“Each of you shall not aggrieve his fellow, and you shall fear your G-d; for I am Hashem, you G-d” (25:17)**

Rashi explains that this posuk refers to hurting someone verbally. The previous posuk refers to extorting someone monetarily. Rabbi Friedman suggests that these two ideas are juxtaposed to show that one is no less important than the other. We instinctively understand that stealing and other monetary damages are wrong but we have a more difficult time refraining from hurting a person verbally. By putting the two prohibitions side by side, the Torah emphasizes that they are equally important and we should approach a desire to verbally inflict pain on someone as we would the temptation to steal.

**אל תקח מאתו נשך ותרבית ויראת מאלקיך וחי אחיך עמך
“Do not take from him interest or increase; and you shall fear your G-d - and let your brother live with you” (25:36)**

The Torah prohibits taking interest because our money is a gift from Hashem and is merely on loan to us. We cannot make a profit from using money that belongs to someone else. As a reminder of who really owns our wealth, we are commanded not to collect interest from our fellow Jew. This is why this mitzva follows the mitzvos of shemitta and yovel. The mitzva of shemittah is the recognition that the world belongs to

Hashem by returning it to Him every seven years. When one keeps shemitta, it will become easier to keep the mitzva of not charging interest because the idea that Hashem owns everything will be ingrained in him. When we take the lessons of shemitta we can appreciate that our wealth comes from Hashem and it is not ours to charge interest.

Despite the prohibition to charge interest, it is still an obligation to lend money to an impoverished Jew. One should not refrain from lending money because he will not profit from it. Also, people often mistakenly believe that you can charge interest for business purposes. This is actually not the case. The prohibition applies equally to personal loans and business loans.

ורדפו מכם חמשה מאה ומאה מכם רבבה ירדפו ונפלו איביכם לפניכם לחרב
“Five of you will pursue a hundred, and a hundred of you will pursue a myriad; and your enemies will fall before you by the sword” (26:8)

This posuk seems strange. The proportion of 100 to 10,000 is much greater than the proportion of 5 to 100?! The answer is that there is power in numbers, and that power is exponential not just proportional. One more person who keeps Torah and mitzvos, one more person in a shiur, one more person at a minyan doesn't just mean there is one extra person but he also makes everyone else's power stronger. The presence of one more person influences all the others and makes everyone a little stronger. That is why when there are 100 instead of 5, their potential increases exponentially.

The power discussed in the posuk is also in the five people as a unified group, in the achdus that is displayed by these five people. When an extra person is included, the unity of the group is increased. The posuk shows us that it is achdus that protects us from our enemies.

והתהלכתי בתוכם והייתי לכם לאלקים ואתם תהיו לי לעם
“I will walk among you, I will be G-d unto you and you will be a people unto Me” (26:12)

The Seforno writes that this posuk is a promise that not only will the Divine Presence rest in the Bais HaMikdash, but it will be among everyone, in all our places. It will be walking among us. Every single person has the opportunity to create a type of atmosphere where the Divine Presence can be with him everywhere. The Divine Presence is not limited to places of worship but is a part of our daily lives and can accompany us every step of the way. When we do the right things, we will receive special guidance from Hashem and we will be helped in everything.

Rashi explains this posuk to mean "I will walk with you in Gan Eden." There will be a reward in store for us if we act as we should. These two explanations of the posuk are both true and they are not at all contradictory. If we follow the Torah and mitzvos and act in accordance with Hashem's wishes, we will be rewarded with Hashem's proximity to us in both this world and the next world.

Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur
Shiur given by Rabbi Mayer Friedman
Written by Michael Gutmann