



#32 Behar Leviticus 25:1-26:2

Torah Teaching and teaching, Making Adjustments to Life By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
in the Greek means to be smudged
Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus' real name
Yĕhōváh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah
(There are also transliterations from Hebrew)

Introduction

Make an effort to reach out to God and what He wants for us. God has reached out to mankind since the Garden of Eden and given mankind grace. Adam and Eve received the promise of a future Messiah to come. The word grace means favor. The Bible says that Noah received grace. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." Genesis 6:8 NKJV. Mankind received grace when God saved us from the flood through Noah. Noah was a righteous man who did what was right.

We received God's grace when God gave us His commandments. Just like Noah was a righteous man, God has called us all to be His righteous and holy people and keep His commandments. In the portion Kedoshim in Leviticus we are told to be holy 3 times. Leviticus 19:2 NKJV says "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." Kefa quotes this in 1 Peter 1:16 NKJV "Be holy, for I am holy." We are to keep God's commandments and be holy.

Most of us are familiar with the favor (grace) that we received through the Messiah and the giving of the Holy Spirit through our faith in Yeshua. God wants us to keep His good commandments and receive the help of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we wonder what we could have done to deserve God's help. The Old Testament teaches us that our God is a good, merciful, and caring God. Exodus 34:6-7 NKJV says, "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.'"

He has given us His help; it is up to us to make the effort to receive and keep His commandments and receive and utilize the Holy Spirit. God has given us His favor; it is up to us whether we will accept His favor.

Open up our hard hearts, allow God's word and the Holy Spirit to infuse our lives, and be strong and stable in our eternal God and King. Proverbs 28:14 NKJV, "Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity." The Hebrew word in this verse for reverent means to fear or to shake in fear. We should always live our lives in awe of God and not harden our hearts to God. Hebrews 3:13 NKJV says, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." This verse is emphatic; we are to do it "daily" and "today."

Make your life easier by doing what is right. Infusion is the process of absorbing something. Some popular energy drinks are said to infuse us with energy. We need to be infused with God's word and the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 40:28-31 NKJV

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Those that wait on Yēhōvāh are those who have expectations in Him. We know God's word to be true and brings blessings; we also have expectation on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17 NKJV says, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,¹ but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The kingdom of God is doing what is right (righteousness, as in keeping God's commandments), peace, and joy. And for those who endure, a resurrection into the future kingdom of God. In Matthew 24:11-13 NKJV Yeshua says, "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because **lawlessness** will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

The word **lawlessness** is the Greek word *anomia*. *Nomia* is the word used for the Torah by the ancient rabbis. The "a" negates the word in the Greek. *Anomia* is then not to keep the Torah. Yeshua says that those who teach others to not keep the Torah are false teachers. We must keep doing God's commandments until the end. Be faithful and stay strong in Yēhōvāh.

This week is sometimes a double portion of the Torah. The portion for this week is Behar. The portions covered each week were instituted by God's holy prophets at the time of Nehemiah or perhaps even way before that. It ensures us that we talk about the various commandments and history that God gave us.

Some of you have heard my stories before, but I do that to give glory to God and show that He is an active and loving God. Also, I share my stories to help you to seek your own stories. For example, every year we are to remember what God did for us at the time of the Passover. God wants us to talk about what He has done for us; it is not bragging; it is 'the power of God and

¹ The context in Romans 14 is about some who only ate vegetables because they didn't want to take the chance to eat meat that came from a pagan temple. Shaul said it is okay to eat kosher meat if they knew it didn't come from a pagan temple, but not to cause those who only ate vegetables to stumble. Yeshua said not to eat meat sacrificed to idols in Revelation 2:14.

not of us.' We also need to hear God's word over and over, daily. Consider what part of the Shema says in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NKJV, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." This is also an emphatic statement.

More to Consider

We can carry blessings with us as believers in the Messiah; we are often unaware of the extent of that blessing. God is at work in us through the Holy Spirit as we live out life. Believers in the Messiah are given the Holy Spirit to help us. Shaul said in 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 NKJV, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." The treasure he is talking about is the Holy Spirit.

It seems strange that people say they believe in God, but some people deny His ability as God. Some people are great speakers, but there is no power behind their ministry or some even deny God's power. Shaul said in 1 Corinthians 4:19-20, "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." So, the people are wrong who are saying that God created everything and then walked away and left us to ourselves. We have a treasure and the power of God at work in us.

I wish that life was more automatic at times. We all are learning and growing no matter how long we have been a believer. 1 John 1:8 NKJV says we all sin at times. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." That is part of life; we must keep applying godly behaviors and make them become automatic. When we cooperate with God, our lives can be powerful because it is not only us at work, but the Holy Spirit can inspire and use us; we can become ready vessels for the work of God both in word and power.

When we do sin, God will forgive us if we are truly sorry and decide not to do it again. Yochanan said 1 John 1:9 NKJV, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God is generous with His forgiveness. It says He will forgive us, so do not keep bringing back the past.

We have a choice how we want to live. Some think that what we do is just a matter of preference. As you can see, the Bible says there is a right way and a wrong way of doing things. I remember this story about an electrician shorting out some high-power wires behind some offices. He blew a hole in the wall! Doing what is wrong has effects; sometimes not much happens, but you do not want to be the one to blow a hole in the wall.

Are we powered by our own ideals? Taking chances with our spirituality can lead to disaster. Telling yourself that there are not any consequences for committing sin is completely wrong. Accepting sin is like telling God that you do not care about what He says. Sin can bring pain and hurt; for sure it is rejecting God. You can say you believe in Him, yet by not listening to God,

you are not giving God honor and respect. Yeshua said about those who live in sin in Matthew 25:46 NKJV, "These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." God will give those who live right (righteous) a wonderful and amazing eternal life. It says that Noah was righteous because he did what was right. Some say we have a stamp of righteousness through our faith; that is false doctrine.

If we have faith in God, we will trust in what He says and do what He says.

In Jewish thought, we are blessed by Abraham. They think that Abraham was not able to have all the blessings he should have, so his blessing has passed on to them. Some take this to mean they are blessed by Abraham no matter how they live. Some believers in the Messiah Yeshua have a similar attitude about Yeshua. They say they are made right (eous) by the Messiah no matter what. It should be obvious that we are right (eous) by actually doing what is right. Do not be tricked by their false doctrine. Yochanan said 1 John 3:7 NKJV, "Let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous." He is saying a person is righteous by actually doing what is right. In verse 8 he says, "He who sins is of the devil." The Bible says that those who are practicing sin are of the devil so watch out for their false doctrine.²

Man-made doctrine and mysticism is a broken way of living. Wearing all black clothes is a man-made doctrine. The Polish aristocracy wore black many years ago, so some Jews just kept on wearing black. Made up doctrine is not a commandment of God. Some things are logical and may be good to do. Using good sense is a commandment of God, but do not succumb to being micromanaged by man-made commandments. I remember being offended by the lack of sensitivity of some Gentiles toward my Jewish man-made beliefs. That should not have bothered me. On the other hand, we are to hate sin. Amos 5:15 NKJV says, "Hate evil, love good." I shared this last week. Follow what God says, not what man says. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Many are just following what man says and not what God says.

Sin often brings with it evil, pain, sorrow, destruction and hurt. Doing things God's way brings good so we are to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is **right and good** in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you."

*Doing what is **good** is to keep God's commandments.*

² Matthew 3:9 NKJV says "And do not think to say to yourselves, we have Abraham as our father. For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones." With the above Jewish understanding we would just think that the blessings of Abraham will also be given to others (including them). The Hebrew manuscripts of Matthew says that God is able to raise up Abraham from these stones. This makes more sense. God then would give Abraham the blessings he deserves, and these people would then be left out. Perhaps Yeshua was referring to His own resurrection and the blessing that was to come through Him. If they do not follow the Messiah, they would be left out. Also, of interest there is a triple Hebrew play on words going on in Matthew 3:9. For example, we see in the Hebrew manuscripts, "Yeshua will yoshia (will save) His people from their sin.' The play on words is *Yeshua – yoshia*.

Superstition, amulets, good luck charms, praying to dead people, kneeling before objects, consulting devil spirits, witchcraft along with other forms of mysticism is wrong. People who do these things are trusting in their artifacts or false powers instead of God's power. It is a form of sorcery; it is also idolatry to trust in anything like you would trust in God; it is heresy because they are following false doctrine. Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV says, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**" Instead, why not help the world be a better place and do what is right and good.

Torah Study

Behar means, "on the mountain." This portion begins with God telling Israel that He will bless them if they keep His commands and that He would be against them if they did not. We talk about this a lot because God encourages us to keep His commandments a lot. God knows all; God knows what is best for us because He is the creator; and He is over all. Much like a father that hates to see his children suffering for doing what is wrong, He can prod us to do what is right, just as it says God would prod Israel for their sin in this portion. It talks about this in the New Testament portion too. The basis for the New portion is the Old Testament portion. We can only have a proper understanding of the scriptures by understanding the teaching of the Old Testament portion of the Bible.

If we follow God, He can bless us above all that we ask or think because He gave us His commandments as a tremendous guide filled with understanding and wisdom. Deuteronomy 4:5-6 NKJV says, "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Those that do not follow the Old Testament lose out on what God intended to give us. God can also bless us more than we imagine through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:20). We receive blessings by keeping God's commandments and also blessing through the Holy Spirit.

Also, in this portion, it says that God broke the yoke of the Egyptians over Israel. The rabbis understand the word "yoke" as sort of a technical term for either following the yoke of the Torah or following false gods and the ways of this world (for example see 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). In other words, Israel was set free from the idols and worldly ways of the Egyptians so they could live right and follow the yoke of God's instructions (the yoke of the Torah). Therefore, if we sin, we are under the yoke of sin. Shaul (Paul) says if we sin, we are slaves to sin (Romans 6:20).

Just as God freed Israel from the Egyptians so they could flee sin and do what is right, we are to flee sin.

The portion Behar begins by saying that every seven years the land was to rest and that every fiftieth year was a Yovel year (Jubilee year) and that the land was to rest that year. They could

eat what naturally grows; they were not to till the soil. They were not to take advantage of the rules regarding the Yovel year. God would provide for three years for Israel. The Yovel year would demonstrate they trusted in God's faithfulness. God promised they would eat their fill; Leviticus 25:19. God says we should not desire the lusts of the flesh nor covet what others have (Exodus 20:17; Leviticus 18). Riches can be a trap to some (Psalm 69:22). We are to instead, trust in God; He "will not leave you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5 NKJV). We have no other King, Ruler, Provider, or God. In Deuteronomy 4:35 NKJV, Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) "Himself is God; there is none other besides Him." Yě-hō-váh is God's real name (Exodus 3:15) as seen in over 2,300 manuscripts to date. Haggai 2:8 says that the gold and silver of this world belongs to Yě-hō-váh. We dishonor and disrespect Yě-hō-váh by avoiding using His name.

If a person had to sell their land, the person or a relative could redeem the land and they were to prorate its use when redeeming the land. At the year of Yovel year, the land should be returned except in a walled city where it must be redeemed within a year. The Levites will always be able to redeem their land. They were to take no interest from a poor person. They could have slaves from the nations, but Israelite slaves were to be set free in the Yovel year or they could be redeemed beforehand; they were not to be treated harshly. If they were redeemed it was to be prorated. The Israelites belonged to God. They were not to make any idols and they were to keep God's Shabbats.

Wouldn't it make sense that as God's people, we would also keep the days we are supposed to meet with Him?

In Behar it talks about redeeming the land in the Yovel year (year of Jubilee) and we will see Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) doing this in Jeremiah 32 as a sign that Israel will return to ha-aretz, the land of Israel (from captivity). In the Brit Chadashah we see Yeshua (Jesus) rising from the dead and it is a sign that we, the believers in Yeshua HaMeshiach, will rise from the dead. Those who remain faithful will be redeemed by God. The Yovel year is not only a shadow picture of Yeshua redeeming us, it is also a picture of the new heaven and earth that is to come where all will be set free and everything will be restored to what God originally intended for mankind. We are not to love this evil world; it is passing away (1 John 2:15-17). The portion ends by saying the Israelites belonged to God. Believers in Messiah also belong to God. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) says that we have been bought with a price; we belong to God through the Messiah.

The Haftarah for Behar is Jeremiah 32:6-27. Jeremiah tells Hanam'el that he intends to redeem a piece of property that God told Jeremiah to redeem. The deed was to be kept as a witness that land would again be bought in ha-aretz, namely Israel. Then Jeremiah gives praise to the all-powerful and merciful God. He is just and sees all, He did signs in Egypt and continues to show His power. The disaster prophesied about Jerusalem is nearly now fulfilled. Israel did not keep God's commandments; this is why Jerusalem is going to fall. When Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) redeemed the land, it was a sign that Israel would come back from captivity to possess their land. Yirmeyahu says that nothing is too hard for God.

Jeremiah 32:16-17 CJB says, "After giving the purchase contract to Barukh son of Neriyah, I prayed to Adonai: "Adonai, God! You made heaven and earth by your great power and

outstretched arm; nothing is too hard for you." Yeshua also said in Matthew 19:26 NKJV, "With God all things are possible." Keep praying and believing, have hope in the Messiah.

I have experienced some amazing healings in the past and have seen the power of God. This one time while I was in the jungle, I began to feel sick. I have seen what happens when some people get sick in the jungle; it is very ugly. I was starting to feel bad this one time and I had someone pray for me, and in about 15 minutes I felt better. Wow was I relieved, praise God! It was a big deal. Another time, as our group was on our way to the jungle, a friend of mine blew out her knee and had to be carried off the plane. We prayed for her right there in the airport and she was healed instantly and got up and walked. The people standing there watching began to shout and applaud. That is God at work!

Making Adjustments to Life **(an accompanying teaching for the Torah portion)**

God is there; seek Him. He is blessing and a light to those who find Him.

Psalms 119:105 NKJV says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." My friend took his motorcycle to a jungle town and could not remember which path led to the town, so he got off his bike and walked ahead by foot. As he was walking, he heard a crash and decided to check it out.

There was a panther (a very big cat) trapped in a pit that had been stalking him. Talk about being on the right path! God's ways are the best ways; God knows the best way to live, so follow Him. Make adjustments to life so you stay on God's path.

Watch out for ugly chatter. Is that how we want to live?

I often start my day by committing myself to do what is right and committing myself to being good and kind. Any time of day is a good time to do that. I found myself doing that later today as I was doing things. We often can get caught up in the moment; do not let things get to you; be who you want to be and do not live like those who are trying to impose their false philosophy of life on us.

Enjoy life and fellowship with God. Find ways to enjoy your relationship with God; sing and have joy.

Confess to doing what is right. Resist being drawn into the ridiculous behaviors that are pressing on our good nature and desire to live right. Shaul (Paul) suggests to sing some spiritual songs and have carefree joy in your heart. Ephesians 5:19-21 NKJV says, "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God."

Think of some good things to say instead of all the blah blah blah we hear. Shaul tells us to think those good things in Philippians 4:8. It must be the nature of humanity to get off track. We can make ourselves miserable by focusing on the negative. Why do that to yourself?

Name some ways that you can use to readjust your focus (thinking)?

- * Stop just thinking about yourself.
- * When we are faced with tension, we should remember to drop our defensive and aggressive behavior.
- * We should purposely avoid worldly talk and ideas.
- * We should talk about the productive things we are doing.
- * We can get involved doing things of value.
- * We can validate (give value and support) others; think good things about them.
- * We should guard against the urge to think and say negative things about others (lashon harah; evil speaking). Evil speaking is wrong (James 3:5-12).
- * We can validate what we do and make sure that includes using our abilities for the kingdom of God and our spiritual gifts.

What other ways can you think of?

Continue to focus on our spiritual lives. Seek to live in God's ways; seek His light; come out from the tunnel vision of darkness.

Have you even gone through a mountain and it seems like the tunnel goes on and on? I remember being relieved getting out of a long tunnel the first time I went through it. That is what we need to do; be focused on getting out of the tunnel of darkness and staying in a place and focus of doing right and keeping God's commandments and being at peace. Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever." Trust in God and be at peace; allow God to be your strength in life and how you live.

We can focus on worldly or evil thoughts or have good thoughts. God knows what you are thinking. Matthew 9:4 NKJV says, "But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'" Guard your life from evil thoughts and ways; be diligent and work at it.

Proverbs 4:23-27 NKJV

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you. Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil."

Keep your heart; stop focusing on worldly rhetoric and speech; think about what you are doing; and establish your life in godly ways. Do not get distracted and do evil.

God wants to bless us and give us wisdom and understanding that is better than all we can imagine it says in Deuteronomy 4:5-6. God knows what is best for us. God is real and can also bring us supernatural blessings as we follow Him. We need to seek Yě-hō-váh so we will have godly direction in our lives and His supernatural blessings. Why live by man-made ideas when we have a good God who wants to help us? Enjoy your good and godly life and stay focused. Readjust how you think and actively work at keeping your life in line with God and His commands. Stay on God's path. Watch where you are going; do not do evil; do not turn away from God.

The Aaronic Blessing

ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name.

The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. Over 2,363 manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה). Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ
 יְאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשְׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.