



**#32 Behar 25:1-26:2
Torah Teaching
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
 Yĕhōvâh – 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)

This week is the Torah portion Behar which 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 in the Bible encourages us to keep His commandments a lot. They must be important.

The portions covered each week were instituted by God's holy prophets at the time of Nehemiah or perhaps even way before that. The prophets were led by God and the Torah portions ensure us that we talk about the various commandments and history that God gave us and wanted us to understand.

I want to begin today by talking about truth. One person's truth is sometimes different than someone else's truth. What is the truth? There must be a right way and a wrong way to do something. Just like $2+2=4$ or a square block fits best the same size square block, life should best work with a best approach to a situation. What is the best first approach to life?

The best approach to life is no mystery to those who follow God's commandments. For thousands of years, people have applied God's commandments to life and have been grateful to God for His good commandments. Just the commandment to not steal teaches us to be honest in the way we calculate what we sell. God's commandments apply to so many things in life and help us to do what is right. Isaiah 25:1 NKJV says, "O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." We are to live life by God's truths. Psalms 86:11 NKJV says, "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth."

If someone who was trustworthy told you where you could find a great treasure, you probably would go there immediately and look for the treasure. God's commandments in the Bible are a

great treasure for life. Psalms 119:162 NKJV says, I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." God's commandments were given to us by a merciful and kind God who wants what is best for us. Psalms 40:11 NKJV says, "Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me."

We are to live by God's commandments and know them so that we are ready to apply them. They are truths for life. Psalms 51:6 NKJV says, "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." Let the truth of God's word and His good commandments guide you. Proverbs 3:3 NKJV says, "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart."

Some people say that we should live by our heart instead of doing what God says to do. They will say things like, just follow your heart as though everything that we think will be fine. Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Some things may be okay, but not everything that we think is good. The heart can be filled with facts, ideas, intentions, and emotions.

For example, people will make the environment their god and it is the all-important thing in their life. They have good intentions and are emotionally attached to their feelings. While taking care of the environment is a good thing and I deeply care about the environment, it is not god. Some even believe it is okay to murder people for a better environment. Someone I know who lives in the jungle says that Greenpeace will put ropes across the rivers and capsize boats. I have seen people with their families going to town on the river. Perhaps their child was sick, or they needed food. The next thing they know, their boat capsizes and their family and perhaps their sick child is thrown into the river. Someone told me Greenpeace has killed people doing this.

Some claim there is no truth. How can that be? They will say that anything is okay as long as we do not hurt others. They suppose that good intentions will not hurt others. How do we know that our good intentions does not hurt others. Good intentions are often based on feelings. That is the basis for communist society. For example, in communist societies, the people believe in the state and exist for the state. Years ago, one city in communist Russia needed food so they went into the country and took their food and left them to starve. Their good intentions led to the starvation of the people they took food from. Intentions are often emotionally driven and have no basis in fact.

What we believe can make a big difference. The Bible says we are to work and provide for ourselves and that what we work for is ours. Leviticus 19:13 NKJV says, "You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him." Exodus 22:1-3 NKJV says, "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution." A person is to make restitution for stealing. People can own land and they are not to be defrauded of what they own. Deuteronomy 19:14 NKJV says, "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark."

Not everyone believes that. Some say that the best society is one that has equity for its people. So, some governments will decide what people can have. They decide who gets what. In that kind of society, there is a lack of incentive to be productive because what they work for can be taken from them. The people in these cultures do not work for the needs of the people but for the government. Sometimes they do not care about their work. I know of someone who went to the doctor in England where medical care is controlled by the government, and he almost died. The medical person he went to prescribed the wrong medicine. The medical person did not care enough about their work so that they knew what the right medicine was to give the person. The person who went to the doctor found the right medicine for his treatment online! The more that incentive is taken from the people, the less they will accomplish.

There is truth but, in our era, more and more people think that truth is defined by the individual, by feelings, or by intentions instead of the truths of God's commandments. The truths of the Bible are a great treasure to those who find them. We need truth and not just good intentions.

Be a strong carrier of the light.

Philippians 2:15 NKJV says, "Become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Light in the Bible refers to God's wisdom and understanding that comes from keeping His commandments (see Deuteronomy 4:6). Psalms 119:105-106 NKJV says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments." God's judgements, His law is a light for life so that we know how to live right.

We should not take God's commandments lightly. It is worth the effort to know them and keep them. Psalms 19:7-8 NKJV says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

God's law is perfect and makes wise those who know little. God's law is right and can give us joy. God's commandments enlighten us to what is right for life. God's commandments can be a delight for life because they can help us in all of life. Psalms 1:2 NKJV says, "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."

God gave us free will to choose the direction we will go in life. What are we conforming our life to? Proverbs 3:7-8 NKJV says, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones." People often want what is best for life, they want health, and they want a good life. God's commandments have been proven to help us and do that for us because they come from and an all-knowing and good God.

Are our efforts taking shape? Some people change their life instantly when they believe, but others must work at changing their life. Work on the easy things first and then begin applying yourself towards keeping the other commandments. I knew of one person that had a problem with stealing. They had to make an effort over time and repeatedly confess that they would

never steal again. We all have weaknesses where we need to apply ourselves and tell ourselves over and over that we have decided to keep God's commandment, whatever that might be.

I never had a problem with stealing, but I decided to make it a point that I would not take even the littlest things like even a piece of paper. I could have easily made copies at my company's expense. I asked the company if I could make copies and the company charged a small amount of money for people who wanted to make copies. So, I paid for the copies I made at work. If they had not allowed me to do that, I would have made my copies elsewhere. I am very careful that I do not even walk off with a pen by accident. We form good habits as we apply ourselves to God's commandments over and over again. It is true what Yeshua said in Luke 16:10 NKJV, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." I am ready to keep Shabbat because I make sure I am ready every Shabbat. I do not work until the Sun sets. I am already resting by the time Shabbat arrives.

You will see the difference as you apply yourself and when you fail, you can confess your sin and commit yourself to not do that ever again.

Psalms 103:10-13 NKJV says,

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.

God has great forgiveness towards those who deeply respect Him. If you do not deeply respect God, you need to make a decision to do so. He is the creator and provider of all that is and that includes a place in the future kingdom of God for those who keep His commandments.

Philippians 2:12 NKJV says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

That is the process we need to apply and possibly you have other ways to accomplish that and things that you need to do to stay out of temptation. For example, men, do not be alone with a woman you are not married to. If you have trouble with lying, immediately correct yourself when you realize that you have lied. If you have trouble with stealing, you may need to not put yourself in a position where you can steal. Take God's commandments seriously and form godly habits.

How we live speaks to others and to ourselves in all of life.

Perhaps we have never thought that our life speaks to others. What does our life sound like? What do others think about us and what do they say about us? I have a Messianic rabbi friend that I deeply respect for his goodness, his hard work, his kindness, and his genuine concern for others.

Our life needs to speak loudest about keeping God's commandments. 1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV says, "Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Are we committed in every way possible to keep God's commandments? Psalms 119:1 NKJV says, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD!" Don't you want to feel blessed and good? Walk in God's laws. Psalms 119:34 NKJV says, "Give me

understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Keep God's laws with your whole heart.

Do not follow your own heart. Instead do what is right. Psalms 10:13 NKJV says, "Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, 'You will not require an account.'" Psalms 19:14 NKJV says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer." Clean up your thoughts and keep your thoughts in the right place. Submit to God.

James 4:7-10 NKJV says,

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

One person's truth is sometimes different than someone else's truth. What is the truth? There must be a right way and a wrong way to do something. For thousands of years, people have applied God's commandments to life and have been grateful to God for His good commandments. Be a light bearer in life. Philippians 2:15 NKJV says, "Become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." God is the creator and provider of all that is and that includes a place in the future kingdom of God for those who keep His commandments. Philippians 2:12 NKJV says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." People will learn from our behavior. 1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV says, "Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Our life needs to speak loudest about keeping God's commandments. Be committed to keeping God's commandments.

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 in the Bible 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 Testament 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 blessings 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 the yoke of the 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 this another way. He says if we sin, we are slaves to sin (see 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 (a 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; see Leviticus 25:19. God says we should not desire the lusts of the flesh nor covet what others have (see Exodus 20:17 and Leviticus 18). Riches can be a trap to some (see Psalm 69:22). We are to instead, trust in God; He "will not leave you or forsake you" (see Joshua 1:5 NKJV). We have no other King, Ruler, Provider, or God. In Deuteronomy 4:35 NKJV it says that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) "Himself is God; there is none other besides Him." Yě-hō-váh is God's real name forever (see Exodus 3:15) as seen pointed that way in over 2,300 different 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. You would disrespect a person by not using their real name. So, we need to use God's name, but with respect.

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 to keep God's commandments will be redeemed by God. The Yovel year is not only a shadow picture of Yeshua redeeming us, but 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 (see 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 significance of numbers in scripture.

The Yovel year comes every 50 years after 7 times 7 years. There are numbers that are used frequently in the Bible and the number 7 is one of those numbers and carries with it the idea of completeness. There are 7 days in a week and there are 7 weeks counting the Omer until we get to the 50th day, Pentecost, which means 50. Just like the number 7 carries with it a meaning, so other numbers are used in the Bible with significance. Number in Scripture by Bullinger is a good book about the meaning of numbers in scripture.

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 Neriya, 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!

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

We are not to sow in our field or work on our trees on a sabbatical year. Leviticus 25:4.

We are not to harvest what grows wild in the sabbatical year. Leviticus 25:5. It does not say we cannot eat what grows wild. Harvesting is working the field for storing or for selling. Since harvesting is picking to store or sell, it would be different than a day to day picking for what you need.

A Jubilee Year occurs every 50 years and begins with the sounding of the shofar on Yom Kippur. The commands for a Sabbatical Year are the same as the Jubilee Year. Leviticus 25:8-11.

We are commanded not to wrong others when buying and selling. Leviticus 25:14.

We are not to wrong others in any way. That would include verbal and nonverbal behavior. Leviticus 25:17.

Land is not to be permanently owned in Israel. Leviticus 25:23.

Land is to be returned to its original owner in the Jubilee year. In a city land must be redeemed within a year. Leviticus 25:24, 29-30.

Levites have a perpetual right of redemption and the open land around their cities is not to be sold. Leviticus 25:32-34.

We are not to charge believers interest. Foreigners can be charged interest. Leviticus 25:37; 23:20-21.

Fellow believers who are working off debt are not to be given difficult work like other servants. Leviticus 25:39, 43, 53.

Fellow believers are not to be sold like other servants. Leviticus 25:42.

Unbelieving servants and their offspring can be passed on to the owner's heirs. Leviticus 25:45-46.

No idol or stone figure that is bowed down to is to be put on your land. Leviticus 26:1

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. 2,363 different 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:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׁמְרֶכָּ
 יְאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלְיָךָ, וַיַּחַנְךָ
 יְשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלְיָךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

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.

Thank you for being with us today.