


CHABAD  
  
 RESEARCH UNIT

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

Friday 7 May 2010 - 23 Iyar 5770  
 Sedra Behar-Bechukotai

גה


### PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

**H**AVE YOU EVER WATCHED THE MAN REPAIRING THE WASHING MACHINE or doing something drastic to the car? He seems to take it apart, or even *break* it apart. If he were to stop half-way through the process of repair, the machine would certainly be unusable!

Nonetheless, you do not worry. In fact, you watch with equanimity as the various parts are removed. You know that eventually they will all be put together again and the thing will start working properly.

Can we apply the same approach when viewing the Jewish people as a whole, and indeed humanity? To some extent, perhaps. Let us see.

The second section of the Torah reading<sup>1</sup> this week describes the idyllic atmosphere when the “machine”, in this case Creation, works as intended. The Jewish people - the key agent in the process - will be following the teachings of the Torah in every detail of their lives. Consequently the rain will fall at the right time, produce will grow abundantly from the earth, there will be peace, security and fertility.



Dedicated by Mrs Tzipora Sufrin װj , to the memory and merit of her father k"z ihætk rgcus hfsrn װ װ j "vrv

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There will be a general sense of wellbeing, goodness and holiness.

However, the machine has gone wrong. We, the key players, the little bit in the middle on which everything else depends, at various times made some serious mistakes. As a result there is something deeply wrong in the whole system of existence.

The effect of this, as described in the Sedra, is terrible suffering and anguish. It looks like utter chaos.

Now, according to Chassidic teaching, this is not the chaos of destruction. It is part of the positive process of Repair, called in Hebrew *Tikkun*. This chaos - with all its horrors - is the way the world looks while it is being repaired. Therefore, although the description in the Sedra sounds terrible and although it really does look terrible at times, in fact this is all part of the process of positive transformation of the world, leading forward to goodness and wholeness.

So can we just sit back and watch peacefully, as we do while the washing machine is being repaired?

No, not at all. While G-d is the Controller of the whole procedure, we are the ones who are actually carrying it out. Every moment of our lives is an opportunity to carry the process of Repair forward in a positive way, putting all the parts back together, making this bit work properly, and then that bit. In this situation, we cannot sit back at all.

We have the instruction book, how to carry out the Repair: this is the Torah with all its detailed rules and laws. Our individual efforts to bring Torah teachings into our lives, even if just as regards one tiny detail, is having a transformative effect on the rest of existence.

According to our great Sages, we are on the brink of that time of peace and harmony which is the real goal of Creation. Then the process of Repair will be complete...<sup>2</sup>

1. The double Sedra comprises Leviticus chs.25-27. See 26:3 ff. 2. See the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol.22 p.335.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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*SEDRA BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI*

**THE LAND OF ISRAEL**

It was Monday and Leah's history teacher Mrs. Lewis was giving the girls essays to do for the end of the week. "Girls," she said, "the essay should be about something in Israel, modern day Israel or ancient Israel, whichever you like, anything that happened in Israel. If you like you can research the material in pairs, but each of you should produce your own essay." With those words the school bell rang and Mrs. Lewis motioned with her hand that everybody is dismissed.

Leah met up with her friend Sonya for the walk home. "You know the essay for Mrs Lewis," said Leah. "Yes, what about it?" asked Sonya. "Shall we research it together?" "Okay," said Sonya. They decided to meet at six o'clock at Leah's house.

Leah came bolting into the kitchen looking like a hungry lion, and she grabbed a biscuit and started munching it down.

"Hey, hey, hey," said her mother "no biscuits before supper, you won't have a appetite, wait ten minutes and supper will be ready". "Okay, sorry, I was just a little hungry" Leah replied.

"In the meantime you could tell me how school was" said her mother. "Well, we got an essay to write about Israel. Sonya is coming here to research it with me after supper."

"Very interesting," said her mother. "I am sure you will find plenty of material to write about". "Like what?" asked Leah. "You know what we need? We need ideas to write about".

“Well actually this week’s Sedra speaks about special laws that only apply to Israel” Leah’s mother said.

“Oh really,” said Leah “what are they?”

“Do you know what Shemittah is?” asked her mother. “Yes,” she answered. “It’s the seventh year when you cannot work the fields in Israel.”

“Okay, let’s sit down after supper and talk some more about it” her mother said. “There may be a book about it here as well.”

She poured the pasta into the drainer. “Supper everybody” Leah called out.

Later they waited till Sonya came over, and then the two girls and Leah’s mother sat down to talk about Shemittah. Leah’s mother opened the Chumash and they read about the seventh year, when the farmers did not work the land, and also about the Jubilee year which came every fifty years.

“What about nowadays?” asked Sonya.

“Well,” said Leah’s mother, “we don’t keep the Jubilee year today, but the Shemitta year is very important. The year 2007-2008 was a Shemittah year, and a lot of Israeli farmers observed it.”

“Really” said Leah, “we could have something about ancient Israel, and the Jubilee year, and something about Israeli farmers keeping the Shemitta year today. That’s a start! And we could have something about when Moshiach comes, we will keep the Jubilee year again.”

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