Jewish Tribune – Behar Bechukosai

**Adapting to Imperfection**

“Thank you for agreeing to decorate my home” said the legendary Bobover Rebbe, Reb Shlomo Halberstam to the black non-Jewish decorator. “Before you begin, let me tell you something important.”

He knew what was coming. He had heard it before. Don’t slack, no paint drops on the carpet, no mess, no cutting corners.

But that wasn’t what the Rebbe told him. Instead, the bemused decorator was told that for the past two thousand years, the Jewish people no longer had a Beis HaMikdash and their world was no longer perfect. And therefore, if a bit of paint happens to fall on the carpet or the brush strokes are not exact, don’t worry. We are used to a world of imperfection. And with that, the Rebbe, who had discovered that his worker had not eaten breakfast yet, promptly made him something to eat.

This week’s parsha deals with the mitzvah of shemitta and the miraculous provision of crop for those who demonstrate *bitachon* and faith in Hashem.

The Seforno writes that the nature of Hashem's miracle varied according to the quality of *bitachon* shown by Klal Yisroel. If their *bitachon* was great, the miracle was that a year's quantity sufficed for three years. If not, they received three years' quantity of grain in the sixth year. The first was a hidden miracle; the second was obvious to everyone.

Notably, a lower level of *bitachon* evoked a more obvious miracle, i.e., the threefold quantity of grain?

Why is that?

The traditional answer is that HKBH avoids doing open miracles. Being satiated with smaller portions, so that one year's yield would last for three years is more of a hidden miracle. However, not everyone was on that high level and a person whose *bitachon* was weaker would grow worried if his sixth year crop remained the same as last year. He needed to see the grain for three years in front of him to feel secure.

In his wonderful sefer Outlooks and Insights, Rabbi Zev Leff makes a fascinating observation. HKBH responded to those on a lower level of *bitachon* and to the need to see the grain piled high, providing three times as much as normal, even though the need to do so was engendered by a lack of faith and trust in Hashem. What an astonishing kindness!

Rabbi Leff adds that Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin once asked the Vilna Gaon what Chazal mean when they say that one of the attributes of Hashem is that He is "שמח בחלקו - content with His portion." By definition, HKBH is complete and needs nothing.

The Gaon explained that the Jewish people are referred to as Hashem's portion. Although He would like us to be on a higher level, nevertheless He is content with us at whatever level He finds us.

We are enjoined to imitate Hashem in all His ways, and the manner in which He relates to us contains many valuable lessons in how we should relate to one another.

Many times our friends, colleagues, spouses (not mine of course!), or children (same again!) are not on the level we would like them to be. We must learn from HKBH that despite our hopes for their growth and for their perfection, we must accept the reality of the present situation and deal with them at their present level. Yes, can encourage growth but displaying dissatisfaction is not imitating HKBH.

With ourselves, too, we must not confuse our aspiration for higher levels with our present level. We must accommodate our present level and that of others, while always striving for greater and greater perfection.

By doing this, we will merit seeing the day when HKBH will grant us perfection.

**Rabbi Golker is the Menahel of Hasmonean High School. To listen to his shiurim, go to TorahAnytime.com or JewishPodcasts.Org**