

# Reb Chaim Kramer – Parshat Behar Bechukotai

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKo-SQXSABg>

This week is Parshat Behar and Bechukosai. Behar starts with Shmita, which is like Shabbos for God, as he takes care of the ground (and therefore our livelihood) most of the time, but asks to let it rest once every 7 years, and then we have Yovel (jubilee) as well once every 50 years. This is an immense sacrifice – imagine how crazy it would be for a lawyer or school to close for a year! But that's what Hashem asks of us, to teach us that Hashem doesn't need the work of man to provide for him. And as an aside, farmers have realized that crop rotation, leaving the land fallow for some time, is actually very good for the health of the soil.

The Parsha then talks about business – selling real estate, selling items, etc. And the Torah provides the associated laws – you have to be honest, selling things for what they are worth, not what you think you can get for them. And if you are honest, then Hashem will bless you.

The last two verses of the Parsha say not to put marble on the floor to bow, because that's what the non-Jews did at the time, so don't get in the habit of doing what the non-Jews do. The last verse talks about guarding the Shabbos and honoring the Temple, to teach us that as great as having the Temple was, it is even greater to observe the Shabbos. Reb Noson says that almost every time the Temple is discussed in the Torah it also talks about Shabbos, in order to tell us that Shabbos is even more important than the Temple, despite the fact that in the Temple all our sins were forgiven and we had Hashem's presence there. So that teaches us that if we try to observe Shabbos as best we can, then we can also merit His presence. The greatness of Shabbos cannot be understated! Reb Noson brings a Zohar that says Adam, who was created on Friday, ate from the Tree of Knowledge in the 10th hour of the day. He was judged in the 11th hour of the day to be banished from the Garden of Eden, and yet he didn't leave until after Shabbos. Why? If someone gets banished, then he must immediately get out! So the Zohar says that Shabbos protects, which is a big lesson for us to know that the greatness of Shabbos can even protect us.

Bechukosai starts with 10 verses about blessings we can get for listening to Hashem, and then 36 verses of curses we can get for not listening. Now this is very difficult, because Hashem blesses us, but then says if you don't listen, then you get cursed. So why does He open the avenues of sin, if He doesn't want people to do them? Today it's the same thing, people fight the internet, despite it being such a wealth of knowledge, because it can lead one down the darkest pits. So why did Hashem make the world this way? So the Sages teach

that the world was made for reward and punishment. He doesn't **need** us, so why did he create us? Because He loves us and wants us to serve Him! So then why make it difficult to serve Him? Because the reward far exceeds any earthly pleasure we could think of – but we need to **earn** it. How do we do so? Simply by fulfilling Mitzvos! That's why there are so many tests and temptations – one must serve with joy, avoid saying improper things, learn to behave properly and do the right things – and then you can expect and deserve the reward. And even if all you can do is try, that's also deserving of reward that far exceeds anything the physical world can offer.