SUMMARY OF PARASHAT BEHAR

Our Perasha Behar Sinai contains 24 commandments or Mitzvot. We will briefly look at some of them.

SEVENTH YEAR

God orders Moshe the Mitzvah of the Shemitah or sabbatical year: *"When you arrive in the land that I am giving you, the land will observe a year of rest. For six years you will be able to sow your field, prune your vineyard and reap the harvest. But in the seventh year the land will have a year of rest… you shall not sow your field, nor prune your vineyard…".* God promises that if the people of Israel faithfully observe His laws, they will not lack food. I will "ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year so that the land may produce a harvest sufficient for three years." That is, the sixth year will produce enough food for that year, and the next two years (during the eighth year, the land is plowed and sown, but it is not harvested until the end of the year. Which is why it is necessary that the sixth year would produce for three).

JUBILEE

The Torah also mentions the year of Jubilee or Yobel: Every 50 years the land is returned to its original owners. The land then was never sold in perpetuity but up to a maximum term of 50 years. Debts were also canceled in a similar way. All of this prevented some people from becoming too poor and others too rich in the long year. In the Jubilee year, all the slaves were freed, who at that time were the people who, given their poverty, were employed as servants to survive or to pay for their debts.

INTEGRITY

The laws of buying and selling objects and property must be followed with absolute integrity. It is forbidden to deceive

or harm others financially. The Tora also indicates that one must avoid harming others with words that would damage them emotionally.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

When one of your Jewish brothers is in financial trouble and is forced to sell part of his property to support himself, the closest relative who can redeem that land must do it. If a man has no one to redeem it or if he lacks sufficient means to recover it, what he sold will remain with the buyer just until the year of jubilee. The Parasha also refers to compassion and social justice: helping a fellow Jew who is in financial difficulty. It is necessary to prevent someone from falling into poverty, by offering them a loan that can sustain them financially. The Tora reminds us, however, of the prohibition against charging interest on a loan to a Jewish brother and the imperative to treat servants in a dignified and respectful manner. “For the children of Israel are My servants, whom I rescued from the land of Egypt. I am HaShem Your God.” The Parasha concludes with a final exhortation to observe the Shabbat day and to show the utmost respect for our Temples and Sanctuaries.