



## Torah Reflections on *Parashat Behar-Beḥukkotai*

Leviticus 25:1 - 27:34

22 Iyyar 5769

May 16, 2009

*“You shall not make idols for yourselves, or set up for yourselves carved images or pillars, or place figured stones in your land to worship upon, for I the Eternal am your God.”*

Leviticus 26:1-2

We live in a world that inundates us with the “right way” to act, talk, feel. It seems that everywhere there is an advertisement, class, workshop or book to give us a head start on everything from buying real estate to finding a mate. While there certainly can be important information to gain, the down side is that we can ignore our own deeper impulses for good and then sacrifice our unique God-created way of being in the world. And so it seems that we find that there are “right” ways to be sick, or age, or grieve. How many times have we been told (or even said to someone we care about) that our grief is part of a “stage”, or that our aging has to go down a specific path, or that we have to do something important in our adjustment to a chronic or terminal illness? Sometimes we even emulate someone we think has done it all better than we have. How burdensome it can all become if we pay homage to the gods of “the right way”.

But, if we are all uniquely created in God’s image, isn’t our diversity a testament to God’s unfathomable creativity? And isn’t it possible that our greatest impulse for good will lead us down a path that has not yet been written in a “how to” book? What if the best example we offered was the gift of empathy for someone’s unique ability to adjust to aging, an illness, or loss?

The truth is that we always learn from others, others learn from us, and somehow we come into our own wholeness. Perhaps just for today, in the vulnerability of life, we can look to the text of our lives as the wisdom we “read” and let it be its own “how to” book. May we move, ever-more, toward the many good, yet undiscovered ways, each of us can be and act in the world.

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*This Torah Reflection was written by Rabbi Eric Weiss, Executive Director of the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center in San Francisco. The Torah Reflections series is published by the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center (a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties), an affiliate of the Institute on Aging. More information and healing-oriented resources can be found at [www.Jewishhealingcenter.org](http://www.Jewishhealingcenter.org).*



The Bay Area Jewish Healing Center provides Jewish spiritual care for people coping with illness, loss and dying, regardless of affiliation or ability to pay.

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- Rabbinic care, chaplaincy, counseling and spiritual direction—at home or in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes or other care facilities
- Spiritual support groups for patients, caregivers, and the bereaved
- Healing and memorial services, and specialized rituals

Whether through prayer, study materials, or simply a listening presence, the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center is here to support you during difficult times.