



## Torah Reflections on *Parashat Behar*

Leviticus 25:1 - 26:2

*“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

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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