

# עפרת השבוע

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

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י"ב אייר תשס"ה  
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כ"ז בעומר - יסוד שבנצח

Candle Lighting:	7:53
First קריאת שמע:	8:36
Second קריאת שמע:	9:12
Latest שחרית:	10:26
Earliest הבדלה:	9:01

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EHUD TZVI

## DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

Dani Gottlieb, 12th Grade

וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשת את התבואה לשלש השנים [כה:כא]

I WILL COMMAND MY BLESSING FOR YOU IN THE SIXTH YEAR  
AND IT WILL YIELD A CROP SUFFICIENT FOR THREE YEARS

Rav Avraham Pam *zt'l* explains a *pshat* of the Dubno Maggid with a fascinating insight. The *mitzvah* of *shmitah* is the ultimate test of a Jew's *emunah* that *parnasah* comes from Hashem. As Rashi explains, *shmitah* begins in the middle of the sixth year, runs through the seventh, and ends in the middle of the eighth. Farming only returns to normalcy in Succos of the ninth year. Still the Torah promises us that we shouldn't be worried that there won't be sufficient produce to supply the farmer's needs until the end of *shmitah*. Yet the *pesukim* seem to indicate that the produce will only last for three years ('לשלש השנים') if the Jew possesses a lack of faith and *bitachon*. We see this from the context of the *pasuk*, "as he will ask himself what shall we eat in the seventh year?" Does this imply that if a Jew *does* have *bitachon*, his crop won't last to the end of *shmitah*?

The Maggid answers that Hashem will grant two kinds of financial success to help him through *shmitah*. One type is a vast overabundance of produce that will last him throughout the three years. While this is a great blessing, it has its drawbacks as well. For instance, he will have to acquire extra man power and financial burdens to help harvest the extra large crop.

The other type of blessing is when the produce is the normal amount; the same as the fourth or fifth year. It is '*mi'ut hamchazik es hamirubah*'. As it says in Bereishis Rabbah, "there wasn't any losses

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## I TOLD YOU SO!

Avi Lieberman, 12th Grade

וידבר אל משה בהר סיני לאמר . . .

Rashi learns from these words that all *mitzvos*, including ones that are listed throughout the Torah, were commanded at *Har Sinai*. It is therefore peculiar that our *parsha* this week begins by telling us that the *mitzvah* of *shmitah* was commanded "בהר סיני, on *Har Sinai*." All the *mitzvos* were commanded at *Har Sinai* – so why does our *parsha* have to tell us that this *mitzvah* of *shmitah* was also commanded there as well?

Let us travel back to *Sefer Bereishis* where Hashem commanded the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach* - the seven Noahide laws that all the nations are obligated to keep. They were given over after the destruction of the entire world everyone – at a time when laws were needed to keep civil order. These laws however were not commanded for the purpose of becoming a holy people, but were given so that pandemonium wouldn't break loose.

There is problem however, of laws being decreed that *make sense* rather than because Hashem said to follow them. Let us use the Noahide law of not killing another person as our example. Since this law is in order to keep people civilized, then the law not to kill is obviously because you wouldn't want to be killed yourself. However, if a person stole something valuable from me, then according to my reasoning he deserves death! If the reason for not killing is to keep everything civilized and not because it was decreed by a Higher Power, then when someone else acts contrary to the needs of a civilized society, I should be allowed to take the laws into my own hands. Eventually, over the years of people

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evaluating the laws the way they see fit, these laws would cease to exist – everyone will interpret the law according their own understanding or have them completely abolished altogether.

Now we come back to *Har Sinai* at the time of *kabolas HaTorah*. Every *mitzvah* we were given as the Jewish People – *chok* and *mishpat* alike; all have the ultimate reason of 'Ani Hashem, I am Hashem your G-d' and have commanded this law to you because *I said so*. The *mitzvos* were all given for our benefit, but the only reason we should follow the laws of the Torah is simply because "Hashem said so." That is why the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach* were repeated at *Har Sinai* as well; because in order to last they cannot be left up to people's own reasoning, but rather to the fact that Hashem said so.

Let us return to our original question of why the commandment of *shmitah* was introduced by telling us that it was given at *Har Sinai*, when we know that all the *mitzvos* were given there as well. The answer to this question is that the laws of *shmitah* don't make any logical sense! If the laws of *shmitah* were because it was for our benefit, they would have most likely been abolished over the passage of time. Rather, the main reason for this *mitzvah* is "*behar Sinai*," it was given with all the other *mitzvos* at

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## FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Yoni Feder

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l

Part I

23 Tammuz 5670 / July 30, 1910 – 20 Adar I 5755 / February 20, 1995

- On Shabbos Parshas Matos in the year 5670, Rav Yehuda Leib Auerbach and his Rebbetzin were blessed with a son whose name was to become world renowned in years to come by Jews and non-Jews alike. The infant was named Shlomo Zalman.
- He was frail from birth, which, coupled with the shortage of food at home often left the young *talmid chacham* feeling weak. Yet, he always found comfort in his learning.



damages caused by cattle. Young Shlomo Zalman digested this information and argued, "What would be the halacha if the chickens in our courtyard would damage or eat someone else's possessions? Would the owner be responsible?" His father later commented that his child already then revealed his talent for *posek halacha*, for a *posek* must be able to apply his learning to real life situations.

- He was very beloved by his Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer zt'l, who drew him close as a talmid

and chavrusa.

~ Years later, Rav Isser Zalman commented, "As a 23 year old, he possessed abilities in learning which were rare among scholars forty years older".

- By the age of 18 Reb Shlomo Zalman published a penetrating commentary on the *Shev Shma'atza*.

~ His father studied the *sefer* and saw that it revealed his son's mastery of Shas, Shulchan Aruch and other works. Worried that his son may come to haughtiness from all that praise that would surely be given to him, he instructed him not to publish the *sefer* at that time. In fact, the *sefer* was only published by his family three years before his death.

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אל תקח מאתו נשך ותרבית ויראת מאלקיך וחי אחיך עמך [כה:לו]

by Tzadok Picker

DO NOT TAKE FROM HIM INTEREST AND INCREASE; AND YOU SHALL FEAR YOUR G-D, AND LET YOUR BROTHER LIVE WITH YOU

The Baal HaTurim on this *pasuk* explains the extent of how bad the sin of charging *ribbis*; interest, is. Firstly, we learn from the fact that the Torah says in the same *pasuk* "do not take interest" and "let your brother live with you", that whoever lends money with interest will not live. Furthermore, the word '*neshech*; interest,' has the same *gematria* as "*zeh nochosh*; this is the snake." This is because by *techiyas hameisim*, just like the snake will not be healed, so too, one who charged *ribbis* will not return to life. In addition, the *gematria* of the word '*ribbis*' is equal to 612, showing that it goes against the other 612 *mitzvos* of the Torah.

DANI GOTTLIEB (continued from page 1)

or leftover waste like all the other years.” The food supply itself lasts much longer, since the person will need to eat just a small amount and still be satisfied. This *bracha* comes without all the extra side expenses of the other *bracha*.

Rav Pam further explains that this message of *shmitah* goes way beyond the seven years of *emunah*. Bnei Torah worry, “how will we be able to devote ourselves to intense *shteiging* after marriage and still be able to make ends meet? The above thought should help them realize that Hashem can help them support themselves and their families even on minimal Kollel paycheck. If they put their full trust and *emunah* in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, it is possible that Hashem will let their limited salary stretch and it will be sufficient for all their needs, wants and desires. As Shlomo HaMelech says in Mishlei, “It is the blessing of Hashem that enriches, and one doesn’t need to add toil to it.”

Let us heed Rav Pam’s *heilige* message, imbuing ourselves with pure faith and *bitachon* in the way Hashem runs the world, and ultimately meriting our final redemption, speedily in our day.

FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 2)

• Just three years later he enthralled the Torah community with his *sefer Me’orei Eish*, an analysis of the principals of electricity and their application in Halacha.

~ Many of the leading gedolim of his time praised Reb Shlomo Zalman’s *sefer*. From far away Vilna, after studying the *sefer* and being informed that its author was a mere 25 years old, the renowned Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzensky *zt’l* exclaimed, “a new light will shine up on Tzion!”

• On Purim Meshulash 5690 (1930), Reb Shlomo Zalman married Chaya Rivka Ruchamkin, daughter of Reb Aryeh Leib Ruchamkin, one of the cities highly respected *talmidei chachomim*. Reb Ruchamkin was prepared to support his son-in-law financially for the rest of his life so that he could devote himself entirely to Torah.

~ At the funeral of his rebbetzin on 12 Teves, 5744 (December 18, 1983) Reb Shlomo Zalman pronounced, “Though it is customary to ask forgiveness of the deceased, I will not do so. My wife and I lived together according to the dictates of the *Shulchan Aruch*. We never offended each other or hurt each other in any way. There is no reason for me to ask forgiveness.

• Reb Shlomo Zalman’s reputation spread like wildfire throughout Eretz Yisroel, and he soon after accepted the position as Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Kol Torah.

~ Before receiving the position, Reb Shlomo Zalman was invited to deliver a Shiur before the heads of the Yeshiva. Not long after the start of the shiur, Rav Yonah Martzbach interrupted with a question. After a few moments of silence Reb Shlomo Zalman declared “*Ta’isi* – I have made a mistake,” and began a new topic, building up to a second approach on the matter. When asked by his rebbetzin how it went he said, “Not so well, the shiur had hardly begun when I admitted to a mistake. Actually, I had three different answers to offer, but I felt that the question was closer to the *emes* than any of my answers.”

Part II next week!



Reb Shlomo Zalman together with his son Reb Shmuel Auerbach *shlit’a*

AVI LIEBERMAN (continued from page 2)

*Har Sinai* for the reason that “Hashem said so” – not because of any logical explanation.

When we go through our daily routine of performing *mitzvos*, we will sometimes look for ways to “get around” or simply diminish our *zerizus* in performing them. “Do I really need to daven everyday with a minyan?” “I worked so hard at work – my learning can wait till tomorrow.” We must realize that it is through the daily challenges we face that we can grow higher, and we shouldn’t try to find reasons to avoid our *avodas Hashem*. If we stop making excuses and realize that we must do everything because “Hashem said so,” it will open up new meaning and purpose to our lives. Living with the attitude that we must do things because Hashem said so, without making excuses and skipping the spiritual growth that we require, will give our lives new significance. Is the true meaning of life to stop our growth in *avodas*

*Hashem* once we begin our business profession; to stop our learning and growth in *tefillah* once we reach our mid-twenties? Such people lack the vibrancy of life. The true reason for life is to constantly grow in *yiddishkeit*, and even young teenagers who are being prepared to go into business must be prepared to go into business as a Jew – by making learning and growth in Judaism a constant part of life. Growing in business is not the superlative situation stated *behar Sinai*, because if a person is based on their job – what are they without their job? Nothing. On *Har Sinai* we were given the laws that set up a life of growth through the *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus* which Hashem presents us; for without everything physical we are still able to reach greatness. Let us truly reach our potential and hear the call that emanates from *Har Sinai* today; the call beckoning us to be the best Jew we can be.

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

One of the topics discussed in Parshas Behar are the halachos of Yovel, where land that has been sold goes back to its original owner. The *pasuk* says, "והארץ לא תמכר לצמיתות כי לי כל הארץ, The land will not be sold permanently, for Hashem is the true



R' Yaakov with R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach at the Sixth Knessiah Gedolah, Jerusalem, 1980

owner of all the land." Through this halacha, we learn the lesson concerning Yovel that 'our' land cannot be sold permanently, and we are therefore reminded that in truth, our land does not really belong to us, but like everything else in the world, it belongs to Hashem.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l points out that the day Yovel was attached to was Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur of a Yovel year, the three extra *brachos* that are recited on Rosh HaShanah (Malchiyos, Zichronos and Shofros) are added into Mussaf. The *gemara* in Rosh HaShanah [27] asks how this is possible? Included in these three Brachos is the phrase, "זה היום, Today is the day on which Hashem created the world." Rav Yaakov says that based on what we just established, that the lesson of Yovel is the belief in *maasei Bireishis*, and that the day Yovel was dependant on was Yom Kippur, we can now answer the *gemara's* question. Even though the world was not created on Yom Kippur, Yom Kippur is still a day of remembrance of creation.

Rav Yaakov continues by pointing out that this idea can be applied to *halacha lema'ase*. There is a halacha that someone who is purposely

*mechalel Shabbos* in public, knowing that it is wrong, and with the intention to mock the Shabbos, is not considered a Jew. If such a person cooks, the food is considered *bishul akum*; food made by a non-Jew, and if such a person touches wine, the wine becomes *yayin nesech*; wine considered to be used by a non-Jew for idol worship. This is because Shabbos represents the fact that Hashem created the world. If a person rejects Shabbos, it is as if he is rejecting this belief. There is a discussion amongst the Achronim, as to whether this halacha applies only to Shabbos, or also to Yom Kippur. According to what we just established, that Yom Kippur is also a day that celebrates Hashem's creations of the world, this halacha would apply to Yom Kippur as well.

Rav Yaakov concludes, by offering a proof to this halacha. There is a *mishnah* in Megillah [1:5] that states, "אין בין שבת ליום הכיפורים אלא שזה, זדונו בידי אדם וזה זדונו בכרת Kippur, except that the punishment for desecration of Shabbos is death, and the punishment for desecration of Yom Kippur is kares." This *mishnah* implies that there are no other differences. We therefore see that the halacha as stated before applies to Yom Kippur as well. May we truly utilize the Shabbos and it's surrounding Yomim Tovim, until the day we will celebrate the greatest holiday of all.

Reb Hillel of Paritch lost his home in a fire. Upon returning to examine the ruins, his talmidim heard him recite a *bracha*. They were certain he was about to state the blessing that declares acceptance of harsh divine judgment with an expression of *emunah*, and were surprised when he said, "Blessed is Hashem who has not made me a non-Jew."

When they asked him about the relevance of this *bracha*, Reb Hillel replied, "It's simple. When the house of a non-Jew burns down, the flames consume his idols as well, and he thereby loses his gods. I am grateful that I am a Jew, because even though I have lost my home, my G-d wasn't destroyed in the fire - my G-d lives on."

Through all the suffering and anguish we bear during our arduous exile, we should be comforted that Hashem goes through our agony along with us, and continues to live on as our source of strength and salvation. May His protection save us from the pangs of this *galus* and lead us to our ultimate redemption.

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