



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

True Faith

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

This week's Parsha begins with a discussion of the laws of *Shemittah*, the Sabbatical year during which the Torah forbids working the land in Israel. At the conclusion of this section, the Torah predicts that there will be those who will ask, "How will we be able to survive without working the land? What will we eat?" The Torah responds to this question with a guarantee that those who keep these laws faithfully will be provided with a bountiful crop in the year preceding the *Shemittah* that will suffice to provide for the following years as well. The Sforno notes that it seems as though the Torah only provided this guarantee in response to the questioner. Shouldn't this promise be necessary whether or not one would ask how we will survive the *Shemittah* year?

The Sforno explains that this promise of a bountiful crop in the year preceding *Shemittah* was, in fact, only necessary for those who worried about how they could survive while keeping this Mitzvah. Those people could only be comforted by seeing the extra food ahead of time. However, for those who trusted Hashem implicitly, and had no doubt that Hashem would provide for them, there was to be a different kind of miracle. Their fields would produce the same amount as in a normal year, but the crop would last double as long for they would miraculously be satisfied from half the amount of food that would normally be required.

In truth, Hashem is constantly providing for our needs without fanfare and without us necessarily seeing it happen. The more that we recognize it, however, the closer we will feel to Hashem and the more confident we will be when facing life's challenges – for we will be armed with the knowledge that Hashem is always there, ready to help us through whatever comes our way.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

If you will say, What will we eat in the seventh year?... I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year and the crop will yield a crop for three years. (25, 21 – 22)

Why does the verse say, "the crop will yield a crop for..."? Shouldn't it say, "the earth will produce a crop for..."?

Parsha Riddle

If one loses count of when Shemittah is, how can one quickly figure it out?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What was Nechemia's other name?

Answer: Hetershasa (Kiddushin 69b, see Rashi why he was called this name)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Behar begins with a series of commandments to allow the land in Eretz Yisrael to rest, and to refrain from engaging in certain forms of agricultural work, during the *shemittah* year. Planting, pruning, harvesting, and picking fruit (and plowing, according to some opinions) are Biblically prohibited, and other forms of working the land are Rabbinically prohibited (see the beginning of Rambam's *Hilchos Shemittah ve-Yovel*).

From the destruction of the Second Temple until relatively recently, the Jewish presence in Eretz Yisrael was generally small, and the practical *halachic* literature of the period contains relatively little discussion of the laws of *shemittah* (with some notable exceptions, in particular a number of important responsa on the topic by the sages of Tzefas during the city's heyday in the sixteenth century). The advent of the First Aliyah – also known as the "agriculture Aliyah" – in 5642 (1881), however, which involved, for the first time in many years, significant Jewish agricultural activity, triggered an outpouring of *halachic* discussion of *shemittah*, beginning with the *shemittah* of 5648 (1887-88) and continuing to the present day.

Perhaps the most heavily discussed and most controversial topic in this literature of *shemittah* in the modern era is the procedure of the *heter mechirah* ("dispensation via sale") – the sale of the land of Israel to non-Jews for the purpose of evading at least some of the Torah's *shemittah* strictures. *Halachic* authorities have generally agreed that ideally, *shemittah* should be observed as set forth by the Torah, without evasion, but in light of the great socio-economic difficulties that such observance was often claimed to entail, many authorities were willing to condone various forms of the *heter mechirah* in order to alleviate these difficulties. As the *heter mechirah*'s staunchest supporters argued, such legal fictions (*ha'aramos*) were already ubiquitous in other areas of *halachah*, such as the sale of *chametz* before Pesach! (*Shut. Yeshuos Molcho YD 53*) Other authorities, however, vehemently rejected such mechanisms for evading the laws of *shemittah* (see R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's classic survey of the controversy in the introduction to his *Ma'adanei Eretz*).

Today, the established rabbinate performs the *heter mechirah* on behalf of the whole country, and many leading rabbis continue to endorse its validity, although many *chareidi* authorities, such as the late R. Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, strongly reject it.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I am a life saver.
2. Open your hand.
3. G-d like.
4. I am not a righteous lady.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. I do not lag behind.
2. My number is my name.
3. Don't get burnt.
4. Glory of Glory.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Chalal (I am hollow, I am a Kohen who can't serve, I can be a sin to Hashem, I am similar to sand.)

#2 Korban (I must be wanted, I must be unblemished, I am in your place, I am brought close.)

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