

In this week's *Parashah*, the Torah commands, "The land shall observe a Sabbath rest for *Hashem*. For six years, you may sow your field and for six years you may prune your vineyard, and you may gather in its crop. But the seventh year shall be a complete rest for the land, a Sabbath for *Hashem*; your field--you shall not sow and your vineyard--you shall not prune." This is the *Mitzvah* of *Shemittah*.

R' Aryeh Finkel z"l (1931-2016; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mir Yeshiva in Modi'in Ilit, Israel) writes: Early commentaries write that this *Mitzvah* teaches us *Bitachon* / trust that *Hashem* will provide our needs even if we do not work the land. One who does not observe *Shemittah*, effectively denies that *Hashem* created the world, for if He is the Creator, He certainly can provide.

R' Finkel continues: *Midrash Tanchuma* applies to those who observe *Shemittah* the verse (*Tehilim* 103:20), "Bless *Hashem*, His angels; the *Gibborim* / strong warriors who do His bidding, to obey the voice of His word." This verse, says the sage Rabbi Huna, refers to those who said, "*Na'aseh ve'nishma*" / "We will accept the Torah without knowing what it says." The sage Rabbi Yitzhak Nafcha says: The verse refers to those who observe *Shemittah*, who have the strength to declare their crops ownerless and watch others collect them. [Until here from the *Midrash*]

- Continued in box on page 3 -

Bitachon

This year--a *Shemittah* year--we will iy"H devote this space to discussing the related subject of *Bitachon* / placing one's trust in *Hashem*.

We began last week to address the question: Does having *Bitachon* guarantee a "good" outcome, i.e., the outcome that I want? As discussed, R' Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz z"l (1878-1953; Bnei Brak, Israel; the "*Chazon Ish*") describes that understanding of *Bitachon* as "an old misconception rooted in the hearts of many." Understood correctly, he writes, *Bitachon* is the conviction that nothing happens by chance; rather, everything that occurs is decreed by *Hashem*. We noted that the *Chazon Ish*'s understanding of *Bitachon* is also the view of R' Avraham ben Ha'Rambam z"l (son of Maimonides; Egypt; 1186-1237).

R' Baruch Aryeh Halevi Fischer shlita (rabbi and educator in Brooklyn, N.Y.) counters: If the view the *Chazon Ish* rejects is "old" and "rooted in the hearts of many," it is incumbent upon us to understand its origins and basis. Accordingly, among other sources, R' Fisher offers the following:

We read (*Shmot* 15:23-24), "[*Bnei Yisrael*] came to Marah, but they could not drink the waters of Marah because they were bitter . . . The people complained against Moshe, saying, 'What shall we drink?'" R' Moshe Sofer z"l (1762-1839; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Pressburg, Hungary; the "*Chatam Sofer*") writes that this verse is a rebuke to those who earn money dishonestly when, if they would only be patient, they would earn the same money honestly. He explains: In this verse *Bnei Yisrael* asked Moshe: "A person who is parched can quench his thirst even with murky, foul tasting water. Should we drink this bitter water, or, if we are patient, will *Hashem* give us better water and we will regret having drunk the bad water?" Because of their insightfulness, *Hashem* sweetened the water. And, the Torah continues (verse 25), "There He established for [the nation] a decree and an ordinance," i.e., He taught them that one who is patient is assured of finding wealth honestly.

(*Torat Moshe*)

- Continued in box on page 2 -

Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-593-2272

Send e-mail to: TheTorahSpring@gmail.com

Back issues at: www.TheTorahSpring.org

Donations to *Hamaayan* are tax deductible.



Sponsored by the Rutstein family in memory of father Mendy Rutstein
(Menachem Mendel Shmuel ben Nachman Halevi a"h)
and grandmother Bessie Rutstein (Pesha Batya bat R' Zemach a"h)

“If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in proximity to you, you shall strengthen him--stranger and resident--so that he can live with you.” (25:35)

R' Moshe Yehoshua Hager z"l (1916-2012; *Vizhnitzer Rebbe*) teaches: There are two kinds of poor people. One type of poor person lacks money, while the other type lacks *Da'at*--here referring to a person who lacks proper appreciation of Torah study and prayer. The latter type of pauper is more in need of our pity than the former, for a person who lacks money at least knows he is poor, while the person who lacks *Da'at* might not know he is missing anything. He may even attend *Shul* or Torah classes every day, yet it may be a meaningless routine to him.

This verse is instructing us to help both types of paupers. How does one help the person who lacks the type of *Da'at* describe here? The *Vizhnitzer Rebbe* answers: By having him experience a proper *Shabbat*, for we read (*Shmot* 31:13), “You shall observe My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, *La'da'at* / to know (from the same root as “*Da'at*”) that I am Hashem, Who makes you holy.” This strategy is alluded to in our verse, as well: “Stranger and resident--so that he can live with you.” If he is distant like a stranger, make him a “*Toshav*” (“תושב”), which has the same letters as “*Ve'shabbat*” (“וישבת”). Invite him for *Shabbat* so that he will live with you, *i.e.*, so that you can give him a feeling for a deeper spiritual life. (*Yeshuot Moshe: Ma'adanei Ha'shulchan* p.194)

– Continued from front page –

Where does one acquire such strength? asks R' Finkel. Certainly, human nature does not allow one to stand by silently while someone else enjoys his crops!

R' Finkel answers: If one has *Bitachon* that *Hashem* will give him this strength, then *Hashem* will indeed do so. On the other hand, if one resigns himself to being a prisoner of his nature, he will remain a prisoner of that nature. This, continues R' Finkel, is the secret that was revealed to *Bnei Yisrael*, which enabled them to say, “*Na'aseh ve'nishma*.” They did not worry that *Hashem* would give them a *Mitzvah* that was too difficult for them to observe. Instead, they trusted that, if it is *Hashem's* will that we perform a given *Mitzvah*, nature cannot get in the way.

R' Finkel adds: Our Sages say that, when *Hashem* offered the Torah to the gentile nations, they asked, “What does it say?” Ultimately, they did not accept the Torah because its commandments contradicted their inborn desires. When one sees nature, rather than *Hashem's* will, as the reality, he cannot grasp that man can overpower his natural desires and change his nature for the better. (*Har Yei'ra'eh*)

“If you will say - What will we eat in the seventh year? -- Behold! We will not sow and not gather in our crops.” (25:20)

R' Avraham Saba z"l (1440-1508; Spain and Italy) writes: There are many deep secrets relating to the *Mitzvot* of *Shemittah* / the Sabbatical year and *Yovel* / the Jubilee Year. But, even on a revealed level, they are the foundation of the Torah and of the world.

He elaborates: The world could not exist without both poor people and rich people living side-by-side. [See *Devarim* 15:11--“For destitute people will not cease to exist within the Land.”] But, while the poor live in suffering and privation and, at all times, are looking Heavenward for their next meal, the rich live in happiness and comfort, oblivious to their poor brethren's pains.

The *Shemittah* and *Yovel* make the poor and the rich equal. For one year--and, sometimes, for two consecutive years--the wealthy man also must look Heavenward for his sustenance. In this way, he feels the poor man's pain, and he performs *Chessed* / acts of kindness, which is the foundation of the world, as we read (*Tehilim* 89:3), “The world will be built through *Chessed*.” (*Tzror Ha'mor*)



“The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for you are sojourners and residents with Me.” (25:23)

Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi z"l (Spain; 1320-1376) writes: Even if the buyer and seller would agree amongst themselves that the land being sold will not revert to the seller at the *Yovel*, their agreement would be void, for the Torah says, “For the land is Mine.” The very purposes of this *Mitzvah* are to remind us, first, of the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael* and, second, that everything we possess is *Hashem's*, not ours.

(Quoted in *Perushei Ha'Ran Al Ha'Torah Ve'Nach*)

– Continued from back page –

Not only were the waters sweetened, notes R' Fisher, *Bnei Yisrael* found at their next stop in the desert (verse 27), “Twelve springs of water and seventy date-palms.” We see, R' Fisher concludes, that every member of *Bnei Yisrael*, from the greatest to the simplest, was permitted to ignore the water that was readily available, even though it was adequate for their basic needs, and to wait, with *Bitachon*, for *Hashem* to give them what they wanted--in this case, better tasting water. This would be seem to be a source for the understanding of *Bitachon* that the *Chazon Ish* views as incorrect, *i.e.*, that if I trust in *Hashem*, He will give me what I want--even something that is not a true need. (*Lev Ha'ari* p. 47)

– To be continued –