



Rabbi Josh Bennett

KF Kosher

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Parshah

A LESSON IN BITACHON

There are certain *mitzvos* in the Torah are very well known for the rewards that they provide. We all know of the *arichus yamim* promised for *shiluach hakan* and *kibud av' v'em*. Obviously, there are also lessons meant to be learned not only from the *mitzvos* themselves, but also from the rewards attributed to them. However, in certain cases, what seems to be a reward may not be quite the positive it appears to be at first glance, and the very fact that we receive that reward may indicate a lacking in our own behaviour. The lesson, therefore, becomes even more important.

We learn in this week's *parsha* about the *mitzvah* of *shemitta*. We are instructed to work the land for six years, and then to cease working it for the seventh year. In order to have enough to eat, we are told that there will be enough produce from the sixth year to cover the seventh and eight years as well. This is clearly an open miracle and Hashem allows us to test Him with it. The Chasam Sofer stresses that the miracle we are promised is actually bigger than we realise. Accepted agricultural theory proposes crop rotation as the best means of assuring bumper crops. However, with regards *Eretz Yisrael*, the Torah instructs us to use the land for six straight years, and not only will that not ruin the land, but we will be provided with a triple crop in the sixth year! This is an incredible reward for what seems like a wonderful example of *Klal Yisrael* exhibiting their trait of *bitachon*.

However, if we look at what R' Moshe Feinstein *z"l* writes about this *mitzvah*, we will see that it is still lacking something. He brings the Gemara in

Yoma that says that just like the *lechem hapanim* satiated the *Kohanim*, despite them not being particularly bulky, so too Hashem is willing to satiate us for three years with one year's worth of grain. It is only because we will ask what will we eat for three years that Hashem will create the miracle of a triple-crop. We therefore see that the abundance of the sixth year is actually a result of our lack of *bitachon*! He goes on to say that we should learn from this if we spend our time properly, davening for sustenance, and learning Torah as we should, we will have no worries of income whatsoever. He stresses that the curse to *Adam Harishon* of "*bzeiyas apecha tochal lechem*" only applies during free time, not when one is engaged in learning Torah.

We see a similar idea in *Navi*. *Yirmiyahu* instructed *Klal Yisrael* to spend their time learning Torah. When they asked him how would they sustain themselves, he pulled out the

tzintzenes haman, the flask of manna, that Moshe Rabbeinu had put away for posterity, and showed it them. He was showing them that Hashem has many ways to sustain us, and if He wants us to spend our time learning Torah, we should not worry about how we will have enough to eat.

The running theme here is that in truth, there is no connection between how hard we work and how much money we earn. That is all decided for us at the beginning of the year. All we have to decide is how exactly to spend our time between one *Rosh Hashanah* and the next. I'm not here to *masken* on each individual's level on *bitachon* and how much time he or she should be spending on *hishtadlus* - I certainly have enough to work on in that area myself. However, if we are honest with ourselves, we can see that *shemittah* is meant to be a lesson in *bitachon*, and increasing our level of *bitachon*. And perhaps a better question than "What will eat?" would be "What will we learn?"

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Hashkafah

GROWTH THRU GALUS

"*V'zacharti es brisi Yaakov, v'afes brisi Yitzchok, v'afes brisi Avraham ezkor, v'haaretz ezkor*". The names of the Avos in this pasuk represent not individuals, but examples of the way Hashem's bris has manifested in our past.

Each of the *avos* has a unique bris. We, as their children, are promised that our destiny will also involve changes of fortune, but despite that, we will be the object of Hashem's special *hashgacha* and guidance. Because we shine among the nations with our self-sacrifice and complete devotion to the

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