

Parshat B'har B'Chukotai 5778

Sh'mittah: Full Trust in Hashem-

Vaydaber Hashem El Moshe B'har Sinai Leimor (Hashem spoke to Moshe on Har Sinai saying) (Vayikro 25:1)

So begins the instructions to Moshe about the Sabbatical Year when no sowing pruning or gathering in produce from the fields is allowed (*Sh'viis* – the seventh year - though commonly referred to as *Sh'mittah* meaning release of debts which also is required then). *Rashi* famously asks why these laws are stated to have been given on Mount Sinai. Weren't all the *Mitzvos* in the *Torah* given to Moshe on Har Sinai?

Rashi answers that the laws of *Sh'mittah* were a prototype for all the laws of the *Torah* and hence their Sinaitic origin is expressed. But why were the laws of *Sh'mittah* chosen to illustrate this.

Later, in *Vayikro* (25: 20, 22) the *Torah* explains that if *Bnei Yisroel* will observe the *Mitzvos*, Hashem will bless the land in the 6th year and it will bring forth enough produce for that year, the *Shmittah* year and the following year.

Kli Yakar likens the blessing of the sixth year to that of the *Mon* which fell on the day before *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* and provided sustenance for two days. According to *Kli Yakar* the harvest in the sixth year was ostensibly the same as every other harvest but the food expanded in the stomach satisfying people with less. The miracle of the sixth year was therefore neither open nor explicit but required complete trust in Hashem (*Bitochon*) and the recognition that it is He who provides for all our needs and not our own efforts.

The *G'moro* provides us with many illustrations of the heights of *Bitochon* which certain great *Tzaddikim* reached.

When *Rabbi Shimon Ben Gamaliel*, the *Nasi*, had decreed a fast, *Rabbi Y'hudah* did not come to the house where the Rabbis had gathered. The other attendees said that he did not come because he was so poor that he had nothing to wear. So *Rabbi Shimon Ben Gamaliel* sent a messenger with a garment to wear but he refused to accept it. *Rabbi Y'hudah* lifted his table cloth and coins appeared under it. He did not actually know that these coins would be there but had *Bitochon* that he would find money to prove that he was not in need of gifts and had money to buy a garment had he wanted to (*Gemoro, Nedarim* 49b). *Ben Y'hoyada* says he did this not for his own aggrandisement but so as not to appear rude in refusing to accept the *Nasi's* present.

The *Gemoro* in *Taanis* 25a tells of the wife of *Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa* whose neighbour knocked at their house to find out how smoke was coming out of the oven since she believed they were too poor to have anything to bake. *Rabbi Chanina's* wife felt embarrassed and went into the inner chamber. By a miracle the neighbour saw an oven full of bread and a kneading trough full of dough. The neighbour called to *Rabbi Chanina's* wife to bring a baker's shovel as the bread was getting burnt. She replied: that is why I went into the inner chamber, to get one. *Sfas Emes* says that she really did go to get the shovel and *Rashi* (as explained by *Maharsha*) explained that she kept a baker's shovel to hand as she was accustomed to having miracles done for her. (Of course we should not rely on miracles (*Gemoro Shabbos* 32a) but that is a different shiur!)

The same *Daf* (page) of *Gemoro* tells how *Rabbi Chanina's* daughter was sad because she mistook a container of vinegar for oil and poured it into the *Shabbos* lamp. *Rabbi Chanina* replied *Mi Sheomar Lashemen V'yidlok Hu Yomar Lachometz V'yidlok* "The One who commanded oil to burn, He can command vinegar to burn as well" and indeed the lamp continued to burn all through until the end of *Shabbos* when they used its flame for *Havdalah*.

True *Bitochon* is not only the passive intellectual recognition of Divine Providence but active tangible demonstration of confident expectation that Hashem will provide a person for all his or her needs (*Chovos Hal'vovos*: "the Duties of the Heart" by *Rabbenu Bachya*).

Gemoro Taanis 8b teaches that this level of *Bitochon* is attainable not only by especially righteous people but by everybody; and indeed is required from everybody. When the farmer goes into his granary to measure the grain collected there he recites a prayer that Hashem should make it increase. Once he has started to measure it he should pause and bless Hashem for providing the increase. He should have such trust in Hashem that he can make this blessing before the increase has come to fruition. If he measured it first and then recited the blessing it is too late. Blessing is not found in something that has been measured or counted or weighed, *Elo Badovor Somu Min Hooyin* "Only in something that is hidden from the eye" (i.e. its quantity is unknown).

The acceptance of *Sh'mittah* where the farmers first fulfil the laws of resting the land, suspending logic and reason to place their full trust in Hashem exemplifies *Naaseh V'nishmo* ("We will do and we will listen") which was said by *B'nei Yisroel* at *Har Sinai* and that is why *Sh'mittah* is the model for the acceptance of all the laws of the *Torah*.