

Our *Parashah* begins: "This shall be the reward *Eikev tishme'un* / if you listen to these ordinances, and you observe and perform them . . ." *Rashi z"l* comments on the wording: If you will listen even to the lighter *Mitzvot* that a person usually treads on with his *Eikev* / heel. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R' Ben Zion Rabinowitz *shlita* (*Biala Rebbe* in Yerushalayim) asks: What is meant by a "lighter" *Mitzvah*? Are we not taught in *Pirkei Avot* to treat all *Mitzvot* with equal seriousness, as we do not know the reward for any *Mitzvah*?

He explains: In the marketplace, we find that goods are not priced based on their inherent value, but rather based on supply and demand. Out of season clothing, for example, is hard to sell at full price no matter how high its quality.

*Mitzvot*, too, seem to have seasons. *Teshuvah* and prayer with extra concentration are "in season" around *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, but neglected at other times. Torah study is neglected by many, especially the youth, during the summer months. This is not how it should be! We all know deep down that there are no times that are more appropriate or less appropriate for serving *Hashem*. Nevertheless, we treat different *Mitzvot* "lightly" at various times.

The *Biala Rebbe* adds: R' Yitzchak Luria z"l ("The *Arizal*"; 1534-1572) teaches that, from the time of Creation until the End of Days, no two moments are alike. Each instant was created for a unique purpose, such that Torah study, prayer, or another *Mitzvah* missed today can never fully be made up. There is no moment when we are not called upon to serve *Hashem*. (*Mevaser Tov: Chiddushei Shabbat*, Introduction)

## Shemittah

In addition to the seven-year cycle, in which we may farm the land of *Eretz* for six years and then must let the land "rest" for one year--the *Shemittah*, there is a longer cycle. Specifically, after seven *Shemittah* cycles--49 years, we must let the land rest for another year. That year is the *Yovel* / Jubilee. (In our era, when there is no *Bet Hamikdash* and the majority of Jews live outside the Land, the *Mitzvah* of *Yovel* is not applicable.)

Besides not working the Land, there are other *Mitzvot* associated with the *Yovel*. One of them is that land in *Eretz Yisrael* that was sold during the preceding 49 years returns automatically to its hereditary owner. The Torah states (*Vayikra* 25:23), "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for you are sojourners and residents with Me."

R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) explains: Do not feel bad about needing to return land that you purchased, "for the land is Mine," and I do not wish it to be sold in perpetuity. Even though you are residents on the land, behave as if you are sojourners, *i.e.*, just passing through. When the land is Mine, then it is yours, *Ramban* concludes, paraphrasing this *Mitzvah's* message. [Until here from *Ramban*]

R' Aryeh Leib Hakohen Shapira *shlita* (*Menahel Ruchani* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, Israel) elaborates: From *Ramban's* words, we learn a foundational principle--what a person's perspective on this world, and on life in general, should be. When the land is *Hashem's*, then it is ours, meaning that *Hashem* created the world for our use, but only on His terms, for the sake of serving Him.

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 35a) teaches: One verse (*Tehilim* 24:1) says, "The world and everything in it is *Hashem's*." Another verse (*Tehilim* 115:16) says, "He gave the earth to mankind." There is no contradiction! Before one says a *Berachah*, it is *Hashem's*; after one says a *Berachah*, it is his. This, R' Shapira writes, is the same idea that *Ramban* is teaching based on the *Yovel*. When is our food ours? When we recognize and acknowledge that it is *Hashem's*.

(*Chazon La'mo'ed: Shabbat Ha'aretz* p.60)

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in memory of her father, Shlomo ben Zvi Koplowitz a"h (28 Av)

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**“You (plural) shall teach them to your (plural) children to discuss them, while you (singular) sit in your home, while you (singular) walk on the way, when you (singular) retire and when you (singular) arise.” (11:19)**

Why does the Torah change plural to singular in the middle of the verse? R' Yitzchak Menachem Weinberg *shlita* (Tolner Rebbe in Yerushalayim) explains: The Torah is teaching that successful parenting requires a person to work on himself. “You” (singular) means “You alone!” Do not rely on the merits of distinguished ancestors. Do not think that your behavior when you are alone, when no one sees you, does not matter. If a person serves *Hashem* even when he sits alone at home, when he walks alone on the way, when he retires to bed alone and when he arises alone, then he can teach his children.

(Chamin B'Motzai Shabbat: Devarim p.82)

### **From the Haftarah . . .**

**“Can a woman forget her nursling, withdraw from feeling compassion for the child of her womb? Even were these to forget, I will not forget you.” (Yeshayah 49:15)**

*Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* on this verse records a conversation between the Jewish People and *Hashem*. The Jewish People said, “*Hashem*, since You never forget, perhaps You will never forget the sin of the Golden Calf.” *Hashem* replied, “I will forget that!” The Jewish People said, “If You are capable of forgetting, perhaps You will forget the events at *Har Sinai*.” *Hashem* answered, “I will not forget! In reality, I never forget, but for the good of the Jewish People, I act as if I have forgotten.” [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R' Yerachmiel Shulman *z"l Hy"d* (*Menahel Ruchani* of the Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva in Pinsk, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) observes: Human nature is to forget the good others do and to remember only the bad. Even one hurt caused by another person can make someone forget a thousand kindnesses. *Hashem's* way, however, is the opposite: He “remembers” the good event--the Giving of the Torah--and “forgets” the bad event--the making of the Golden Calf--even though the good event occurred earlier than the bad one. R' Moshe ben Maimon *z"l* (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes that the Torah calls upon us to emulate this--for example (*Devarim* 23:8), “You shall not despise an Egyptian, for you were a sojourner in his land.” Although the Egyptians enslaved our ancestors, they first took them in in their time of need (during the famine), and we must remember that.

(*Peninei Ha'shlaimut: Sha'ar Ha'savlanut* 1:7)

**“Your heart will become haughty and you will forget *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, Who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery . . . And you might say in your heart, ‘My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!’ Then you shall remember *Hashem*, your *Elokim*--that it was He Who gives you strength to make wealth . . .” (8:14, 17-18)**

R' Nosson Lewin *z"l* (1857-1926; rabbi of Rzeszów, Poland) writes: The Torah commands us here to remember at all times that *Hashem* is Good and does good, and that everything that any created being has is from His “Hand.” Therefore, all created beings are obligated to thank *Hashem* for everything He does for them.

He continues: *Rambam z"l* teaches in his *Moreh Nevochim*, “The verse (*Tehilim* 16:8), ‘I have set *Hashem* before me always!’ is a major principle of the Torah and an attribute of the *Tzaddikim* who walk before *Hashem*. By following this verse’s teaching, a person attains *Yir'ah* / fear, subdues himself before *Hashem*, and is afraid to sin against Him. [Until here from *Rambam*]

It follows, continues R' Lewin, that one who forgets *Hashem* will lose the trait of *Yir'ah* and its place will be taken by haughtiness. [Ed. Note: R' Lewin appears to be reading our verse to say, “Your heart will become haughty and you will already have forgotten *Hashem*.”] This, writes R' Lewin, is why our Sages say that one who is haughty is considered to have denied G-d. (*Bet Nadiv* p. 59-60)

**“With seventy *Nefesh* / soul[s] your ancestors descended to Egypt.” (10:22)**

*Midrash Vayikra Rabbah* (4:6) observes that Yaakov’s family numbered seventy people, yet they are called “*Nefesh*” / soul (singular). In contrast, even when speaking of a time that Esav’s family numbered only six people, the Torah calls them “*Nefashot*” / souls (plural).

R' Yitzchak Shmelkes *z"l* (1828-1906; rabbi of Lvov, Galicia) explains: A *Rasha* / wicked person doesn’t want others to be as wicked as he is, for then they might act wickedly toward him. A thief doesn’t want others to steal, for then they might steal from him. Thus, the wise king [Shlomo] says (*Mishlei* 21:10), “The soul of the evildoer desires evil; his companion [in evil] will not find favor in his eyes.” Since evildoers can never truly unite, the Torah calls them *Nefashot*.

In contrast, the ultimate desire of a *Tzaddik* is that all mankind be righteous, just as he is. This, concludes R' Shmelkes, explains the *Gemara* (*Yevamot* 61a) which says that only the Jewish People are called “*Adam*”--a word that has no plural form, paralleling the unity of purpose that the righteous desire. (*Bet Yitzchak*)