



Cincinnati Torah מסינסי

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B'har-B'chukosai

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI ARYEH PRIDONOFF



Listen to Your Messages

OTHER THAN WHEN WE FIND THE OCCASIONAL bell pepper from Israel, *Sh'mitta* (the seventh, Sabbatical year) seems irrelevant to us, who live outside of Israel. However, a closer look at Rashi's commentary on this week's Torah portion reveals the tragic progression of one who is suspected of cheating on *Sh'mitta*.

These passages [in our Torah portion] were said [by Hashem] in a specific order. At the beginning [of the Torah portion, the Torah] warns about [observing] the Sabbatical. If someone lusts for money, and he [acts in a way which is] suspect of violating the Sabbatical, he will eventually have to sell his possessions. Therefore [the Torah] immediately [follows the laws of *Sh'mitta* with] "When you make a sale to your fellow..." (25:14). If [this person] doesn't repent, he will end up selling his inherited portion of the land (25:25). If he still doesn't repent, he will end up selling his house (25:29). If he still doesn't repent, he will end up [facing the temptation to] borrow with interest (25:35-38). Each of these is worse than what preceded it. If he still doesn't repent, he'll end up selling himself (25:39). If he still doesn't repent, not only [will he sell himself] to a Jew—[he'll go to the extreme of selling himself] to a heathen! (Commentary to 26:1, quoting Talmud, Kiddushin 20a)

Rabbi Noach Weinberg ז"ל clues in on one word Rashi uses to describe this man's relationship (or lack thereof) with *Sh'mitta*: because he desires money, the farmer is *nechshad*, suspected, of violating *Sh'mitta*.

Rabbi Weinberg asks, who's suspecting him—Hashem?

The answer is that the farmer suspects himself! He desires money, and he thinks to himself, *maybe if I sell my fruit, I'll make more money.*

Imagine yourself a farmer in ancient times. You have no pesticides, no crop dusting, no GMO's to protect your crop. You are totally and utterly dependent on the rains, the insects, the wind, and the sun. You have very little control. The control you do have is that you don't let people wander into your field, eating what they please as they go. For six years, you've worked hard, putting your blood, sweat, and tears into this field. Finally, it's starting to look up. You're able to pay your bills on time. You might even be able to put a down payment on that new horse-drawn BMW everybody is talking about.

Then BAM! *Sh'mitta* hits you.

But wait! "If I guard my field, and I sell the fruits, maybe I'll still be able to get it..."

— CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE —

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On 20 Iyar, 5560 (1800), an English Jew named David Moses (D.M.) Dyte saved the life of King George III, when he thwarted an assassin's attempt to shoot the monarch. As reported by James Picciotto in *Sketches of Anglo Jewish History* (1875), "George III attended the Drury Lane Theater to witness a comedy by Colley Cibber; and while the monarch was acknowledging the loyal greetings of the audience, a lunatic named Hadfield fired a horsepistol pointblank at his Majesty. Two slugs passed over the king's head, and lodged in the [wooden paneling] of the royal box. The king escaped unhurt; but it was only subsequently realized that Hadfield had missed his aim because some man near him had struck his arm while in the act of pulling the trigger. This individual was Dyte." Hadfield was quickly subdued. As his reward for jostling the assassin's arms, Dyte requested and was granted a "patent" to sell opera tickets, which was then controlled by the monarchy. 🎭



THIS TUESDAY
STRIVING, THRIVING-- TOGETHER!

CHARIDY.COM/CKK

Kollel Women's Learning presents

Deepening
Our Belief in Torah
and
Our Belief in Ourselves

with Rabbi Meir Minster

8pm Wednesday evening, May 24
in the Kollel annex

FOR WOMEN ONLY

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Sadly, this farmer has failed in the seemingly simple mitzvah of *Sh'mitta*—but, truly, he is missing much more. Instead of appreciating all that Hashem has given him thus far, he relies on his own strength and will to determine how much money he will make.

So Hashem sends the farmer a message, called suffering. Rabbi Weinberg would say these troubles are messages from Hashem, but Hashem only sends messages to people who are listening. If the farmer does not do *t'shuva* (repent), then Hashem must send a louder message. If he still doesn't get it, Hashem will call him back, because He loves him!

If a person lacks a basic understanding of Judaism, it is his or her responsibility to find out what is true! Rabbi Weinberg would say to us, in yeshiva, "When you hear something, and it makes sense, that is your opportunity for growth!"

Real growth takes real effort. That is true of any mitzvah.

Wherever we are, and whatever our relationship is with the Almighty, we always have opportunities to either reflect on the goodness He bestows or focus on all that we don't have. *Sh'mitta* is, in that way, like Shabbos—a time to reflect.

I once heard Rabbi Moshe Zeldman say, in the name of the *D'var Avraham*, that since prophecy was eliminated, the only way Hashem can send us "messages" is through suffering. The question is: Are we listening? 🕊

at the
Lag ba'Omer
bonfire



At the Kollel

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

Sunday *Free brunch!*

👉 **Boys' Learning Program**
for fourth, fifth, & sixth graders—
Mishnayos

Rabbis Moshe Fuchs
and Izy Newmark..... 9–10 AM

*Parents who are interested can e-mail
Rabbi Fuchs—splashwen@gmail.com*

👉 **Beginner's Gemara**
(Maseches Sukkah)

Rabbi Ezra Stettin..... 9:10–10 AM

👉 **Beginner's Halacha & More**
(skills-building)

Rabbi Moshe D. Zeffren.. 9:30–10:30 AM

👉 **Shivti** (Self-contained learning,
geared toward practical halacha)
Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib..... 10 AM–noon

🕊 *Homemade refreshments served*

Monday

👤👉 **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

Tuesday

👤👉 **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Michael Soroka..... 8 PM

Wednesday

👤👉 **Downtown Lunch-n-
Learn at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

👤👉👉 **Yehoshua/Shabbos**
in the former Back Office
Rabbis Michael Soroka and
Moshe Dovid Zeffren..... 9:10–10 PM.

KEY: 👉 Beginners 👤 Intermediate 👤 Advanced 👤 for men and women

Chavrusos are available for private and group learning—

speak to Rabbi Chaim Heinemann! weekdays noon–1 PM • Sun.–Thurs. 8–9:45 PM

DAVENING TIMES CAN BE FOUND AT CINCYKOLLEL.ORG/MINYAN-SCHEDULE/

THE GREATNESS OF PEOPLE

RABBI Y. Y. MOSKOWITZ, A DIRECTOR OF *TOM-chei Shabbos*, a charity in Monsey, shared a story about his grandfather, Shalom:

Shalom was born to a poor family in Romania, where food was scarce.

One evening, just after his mother had served the children some soup, a stranger knocked at the door and pleaded for food. Young Shalom picked up his bowl and

brought it to the beggar. The poor man thanked the family and left.

Shalom's surprised mother exclaimed, "I have no other food to give you. Why did you share your soup?"

Shalom answered, "I realized that if I eat the soup myself, it will be gone forever. But if I give it to the poor man, the mitzvah will remain!" 🕊

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

When do we directly prevent someone from fulfilling a rabbinic mitzvah?

The answer will appear next week..

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE:

Q How many children did Bo'az have?

A Sixty-one! He had sixty (thirty boys and thirty girls) with his first wife (Shoftim 12:8–10, Bo'az being an alias for Ivtzan), and one son, Oved, with Rus (Rus 4:17). 🕊