

# Snapshot Torah



**GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA**

**ISSUE 33**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**BEHAR**

**20<sup>th</sup> Iyar 5776**

**Kohen - First Aliya:**

**Chapter 25, verses 1 - 13**

- ✚ Whilst still on Mount Sinai, Hashem instructs Moshe the laws regarding Shmittah, (the seventh or sabbatical year.
- ✚ Once Bnai Yisrael have entered the land of Israel, they are allowed to cultivate and plough their land for six years but on the seventh year, It is forbidden to do work the land at all, including Sowing, harvesting etc. however during this Shmittah year, any produce naturally grown on the land can be harvested by the poor, the land owners slaves as long as the produce picked are not sold to anyone.
- ✚ After a cycle of seven consecutive Shmittah's, the 50<sup>th</sup> Yovel (jubilee year) is observed. All the laws which apply to Shmittah also apply on the Yovel year.

**Levi - Second Aliya:**

**Chapter 25, verses 14 - 18**

- ✚ Any land that was sold during the course of the previous forty-nine years must be returned back to their original owners. No land can be sold indefinitely because all the land belongs to Hashem.

**Sh'lishi - Third Aliya**

**Chapter 25, verses 19 - 24**

- ✚ Hashem promises that if Bnai Yisrael abide by these laws properly, he will guarantee enough produce will be grown in their fields in the year prior to the Shmittah which will sustain them over the three years, including the Shmittah and Yovel period.

**R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:**

**Chapter 25, verses 25 - 28**

- ✚ If a person becomes poor and is forced to sell their land, their relatives must redeem and buy it back for them. Once the poor person has enough money, they are obliged to buy their land back.
- ✚ If a property is sold in a walled city, the property must have redeemed within a year. If it isn't then the new owner is allowed to keep the property even after the Yovel year has passed.

**Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:**

**Chapter 25, verses 29 - 38**

- ✚ Any homes belonging to the Levi'im have an eternal ancestral heritage and can be redeemed at any time. These homes will always revert back to them during the Yovel year.

**Shishi - Sixth Aliya:**

**Chapter 25, verses 39 - 46**

- ✚ If any Jewish person has any financial problems, we are obliged to help and loan him funds, but it is forbidden to charge them interest, when they are able to pay you back.
- ✚ If a Jewish person is sold to another Jew, It is forbidden to make them perform any "Slave Labour"
- ✚ Even if the slaves' debts have not been fully paid back, when the Yovel comes around, the master must free the slave and their family. This is because Hashem is our one true master; who took us out of Mitzraim (Egypt) in order to do his bidding by performing Mitzvahs and bringing Kedusha (Holiness) into the world. A non-Jewish slave is not set free during the Yovel.

**Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:**

**Chapter 25, verse 47 - Chapter 26, verse 2**

- ✚ A Jew belongs to a non-Jew; their relatives must redeem them as soon as possible. They are still automatically redeemed on the Yovel year but the non-Jewish owner must be compensated for their loss.
- ✚ Erecting statues and serving them as idols is completely prohibited.
- ✚ Bnai Yisrael are reminded that the Shabbat must be observed properly and to always be in awe of the Mishkan.

## Haftorah – Yermeyahu (Jeremiah) Chapter 32 verses 6 to 27

### OVERVIEW:

- ✚ This week's Haftorah relates one of the most tragic yet uplifting episodes in the life of Yermeyahu and the history of the destruction of the 1st Bais Hamikdash
- ✚ Hashem orders Yermeyahu, to leave straight away and redeem his cousin's ancestral land.
- ✚ Even though Bnai Yisrael are on the verge of being destroyed by their enemies, by redeeming his cousin's land, Yermeyahu wanted to show them that there still was chance of the beis Hamikdash being saved. All they had to do was put all their faith and trust in Hashem and he would disperse their enemies.
- ✚ Yermeyahu allowed himself to hope that his beloved nation would recognise the errors of their ways and repent in order to avert the oncoming disaster. Alas it was not so, and he had to witness disaster would be averted. Unfortunately, it was not to be and ended up being a witness of seeing the 1<sup>st</sup> beis Hamikdash burnt to the ground.

### GEMATRIA LINKED TO SEDRA:

- ✚ If you happen to forget that it takes 50 years to complete a full Yovel Cycle, don't fret. Just look at the word **בִּיּוֹבֵל** B'Yovel (in a jubilee year) and it will remind you as its numerical value also adds up to 50.

### WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Even though the sedra of Behar deals primarily with the laws of Shmittah and Yovel. Incorporated within it there are other laws relating to slavery, aiding the poor, idol-worshipping and Shabbat. What links them all together?

The concept of resting the land of Israel every seven and fifty years is very similar to keeping Shabbat each week. Just as Hashem created the world in six days and relaxing on the seventh, we should follow suit and do the same. Hashem gave us Shabbat in order that we can take some time out and fully appreciate the world around us, acknowledging to the fact that Hashem has and will always continue to sustain it.

The Shmittah year is no different. Here too, we have to consciously recognise the Earth belongs to Hashem and we are just his hired help. True we are permitted to eat from Hashem's produce and take benefit and pleasure from all of Hashem's other creations but we must keep reminding ourselves (Vayikra 25:23) "The whole world belongs to me (Hashem)".

After completing seven cycles of Shmittah, The Yovel (Jubilee year) comes along. This time not only is any farming or agricultural work still prohibited. Any land that was sold over the past fifty years reverts back to its original owner free of charge. This serves to teach us that although any land or property can be sold or bought, the reality is nobody really owns any of it at all. To drive and strengthen this point home further. Every single Jewish slave must be set free also. The reason is because once again technically we are all considered to be 'Servants of Hashem' and therefore should never, for whatever circumstances that may have befallen upon a particular individual, become a slave to others.

All this makes logical sense but where does Avodah Zora (Idol worship) fit in? The answer is simple. Any person who dabbles and practices in such things are basically rebelling and going against all the principles and concepts I've just mentioned above. If a person believes there must be a pantheon of Gods ruling their own domain. Like the sun, sea, thunder for example. How can they acknowledge and accept at the same time that there is one 'Sovereign God' who rules over and governs everything? It's totally impossible.

In Summary: All the commandments discussed in this Parsha resolve around one vital and fundamental ideology. The concept of Hashem's insistence that we, the Jewish people recognise the fact that the whole world, including all its inhabitants ultimately belong to Hashem. Proving that no matter what possessions, commodities and entitlements you may think you have; is nothing more than a lavish loan given to us all by Hashem and we should always constantly be very humbled and gracious of having such a kind and generous host, allowing us to enjoy them



