

# TORAH WEEKLY



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## Field of Trust

By: Rabbi Nesanel Kipper (Originally Published 2019)

The Torah describes the commandment of shemithah (Sabbatical year) by stating that a farmer may work his field for six years, but must stop all work during the seventh year. Furthermore, his field becomes open to the public (see Rashi 25:5). What gives a simple farmer the ability to walk away from all that he has worked on and simply trust in G-d that he will have what he needs? Let us attempt to gain an understanding into the source of this strength and see what we can learn from this in our daily lives.

The Torah makes a point of noting that G-d gave Moshe the mitzvah of shemithah at Sinai. There is a famous question asked by Rashi: What does shemithah have to do with Mt. Sinai? Why does the Torah deem it necessary to let us know that shemithah was given at Sinai? Rashi cites the Toras Kohanim which answers that the Torah is teaching us that just as the mitzvah of shemithah was given at Sinai in its entirety with all its details, so, too, all the commandments in the Torah were given at Sinai with all their details.

In the Medrash Rabbah (Vayikra 1:1), we find another connection between shemithah and Sinai. King David (Psalms 103:20) refers to "the strong warriors who do His bidding." The Medrash says that this is referring to those who keep the shemithah. They see their fields empty and they remain silent. The Medrash seems to praise the farmers for being quiet while describing this silence as might. Why is remaining silent an act of might?

Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr (1910-1979) explains that the commandment of shemithah is primarily based upon bitachon (trust in G-d). For the farmer to be able to abandon his field for an entire year and allow the public to access it, he must be able to put aside his own calculations and misgivings. He must rise above his own notions of how things should be and allow himself to put his trust in G-d. The praiseworthiness of silence refers to the ability to quiet one's personal concerns and to subject himself to G-d's will. This is true might.

The Medrash (ibid.) cites another opinion that the aforementioned verse in Psalms is referring to the Jewish People at Sinai, when they proclaimed na'aseh vinishma ("we will do and we will listen") and accepted the Torah, even before knowing its demands. Under normal circumstances, a person wouldn't enter into a deal without knowing all the details so as to ensure that he is fully comfortable with the conditions. When the Jewish People accepted the Torah without inquiring what was in it, they were setting aside all their personal interests and devoting themselves completely to G-d. This is another instance of the aforementioned "silence" - quieting their own personal interests.

We can now understand the connection between Sinai and shemithah. As we explained, when the Jewish People accepted the Torah, they portrayed the strength of quieting their apprehensions and misgivings to devote themselves completely to G-d. Shemita, specifically, requires trust in G-d. For the farmer, not knowing where his source of sustenance will come from, must completely rely on G-d. Here, too, the farmer is silent, as he quashes all his worries and relies on G-d.

For a person to be fully devoted to the Torah and to follow along G-d's path, one has to be able to silence one's personal apprehension and uncertainties in any situation. Although this may not seem like an easy task, our Sages have already told us (Avos 2:16) that "it is not incumbent upon you to complete the work, nor are you free to be idle from it." Each of us must put in effort to achieve whatever level is possible in achieving bitachon.

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