

**At Har Sinai – Rashi** notes that it is interesting that Shmitta was taught at Har Sinai in order to tell us that the general laws and the fine details were both given at Har Sinai. **Rav Yehuda Amital ztl** notes that in regard to the study of Torah, one both cannot only get the ‘general idea’ without getting and committing to the details while at the same time cannot only see the detail without focusing on the general idea. Both the general Torah attitude and the specifics of the Torah were given at Har Sinai – highlighting their double focus demanded of every Jew.

**Tell Bnei Yisrael that when we come into the land that I am giving them then the land shall observe a Shmitta (25:2)** – Why does the Possuk mention that the land is being given to them by Hashem?

**Maharam Shif** explains that the whole key upon which receiving Eretz Yisrael rests, is the understanding that it is a gift from Hashem. If one gets that idea then s/he will observe Shmitta. If you do not observe the Shmittah, it will be apparent that you don’t get the message and as a result will not get the land. **Rav Shmuel Yaakov Borenstein shlita of Yeshivas Kriyas Melech** utilizes this idea to explain why the year they enter the land it is already recognized as V’Shavs HaAretz – that the land must rest – because even in the working years, Shmittah needs to already be on our minds.

**You shall work the land for six years...and gather the crops (25:3)** – What is to be gained by telling us to work the land for 6 years? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** explains that the Mitzva comes to add to the reward for not working on Shmitta. Only one used to working the land on the six years could be able to appreciate the sanctity of Shmittah observance. In fact, one needs to harvest crops in order to demonstrate that we are not merely playing around on the land, in order to properly fulfill Shmittah.

**It is Yovel for you (25:10)** – Why is Shmittah called Shmitta for Hashem while Yovel is identified “for you?” The **Meshech Chochma** explains that Shmitta the rules are like those of Shabbos. Its sanctity is not dependent on Bnei Yisrael. Bnei Yisrael merely get to OBSERVE it. Yovel is PROCLAIMED by Bnei Yisrael. Yovel creates a social reset within the Jewish people. Shmittah is inherently Kadosh. Yovel is a declaration of Jews in their faith in the process and system of Torah.

**When you sell to your neighbor (25:14)** – The Midrash Tanchuma (Behar 1) notes that this Parsha has an upper limit and a lower one – it opens with Behar Sinai and closes here. This style comes to teach us that if one does not observe Shmittah and Yovel properly, then in the end, he will be forced to sell his land. **Rav Dovid of Kotzk** pointed out that the concept of an upper and a lower limit is a reference to the tests provided to man in the world. If man passes his current test, then he will be tested at a higher level. If he passes that test he again, moves up a level. If one fails the test, then we move down a level until we pass that test and move onward. This is the intention of an upper and a lower level – the tests of life that we have spiritually as well – if we pass them, we will be successful. If not, we need to start a bit lower until we merit to move “up”.

**The land is Mine (25:23)** - There is a uniqueness in the connection of Bnei Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Mordechai Greenberg Shlita** notes that the connection between the Nation of Israel and their land is spiritual, and is unlike that of all other nations and their lands. History teaches that a nation becomes attached to its land through a three-stage process. First, a large group of people gathers in a certain place to settle in a permanent manner. Then, over the course of time, they jointly experience many events. This creates within them a historical love for the area, and thereby an emotional bond is formed

to their country. This is not the case, however, regarding the Nation of Israel, who forged a bond with their land even before becoming a nation. Our forefathers went to Egypt as only seventy people. They settled there for merely three generations, and even there they were only foreigners. Still, they left Egypt with their eyes and hearts set on the Land of Israel. Ours is a connection that predates our experience with the land. Thus, the connection is truly an expression of our connection to Hashem.

**When your brother stumbles, hold him up (25:35)** – Rashi comments that this is comparable to a burden that is laid upon a donkey. As long as it is on the donkey, one person can keep it from falling. But when it falls to the ground, five cannot pick it up. **Rabbi Bernard Berzon ztl.** used to add that the process of catching someone before s/he hits the ground is a process that is more strengthening and more useful than having the person hit the ground and trying to build him up afterward. It is similar to preventative medicine. **Rav Shach ztl.** adds that this is the secret to Chessed – foresight. When we have it, it keeps us from stumbling. When we don't, we have more work for us to do.

**Haftorah:** In the Haftorah, Yirmiyahu is instructed to purchase land at the time of the Churban. The action, somewhat illogical on the surface, is followed by the Novi immediately without any challenge or question. Only after following instructions does Yirmiyahu ask Hashem to explain. **Maran HaRav Schachter Shlita** often notes that Yirmiyahu wrote two documents about the sale – one open and one closed. This symbolism represents the fact that in life sometimes the future is apparent and at other times, it is hard to tell. Notwithstanding, we are commanded to follow Hashem even when apparent logic defies following Him.