

**Hashem spoke to Moshe at Har Sinai (25:1) – Rashi** notes the famous obvious difficulty – why is Har Sinai mentioned in context to Shmittah? Rashi's explanation notwithstanding, **Rav Asher Weiss Shlita** notes that both the Shomrei Shviis and Bnei Yisrael around Har Sinai are identified as Gibborei Koach. Why are these two comparable? He explains that both had to overcome their own inclination. The Bnei Yisrael at the base of Har Sinai who placed Naaseh before Nishma which is in diametric opposition to the nature of a person who usually thinks first and then acts, is a gibbor Koach for the word of Hashem. Similarly, the agriculturalist who grows thinking that what he reaps is based on what HE sows, and then learns to not sow but rely on Hashem instead, is also a Gibbor Koach. The point of bringing Shmittah to Har Sinai then, is a chance to highlight the special ability Jews have of overcoming their own natural obstacles in order to serve Hashem.

**Don't give him your money with interest (25:37) – The Tchibiner Rav ztl.** quoted his father the Kochav Mi'Yaakov who asked why the word Titen is used here instead of the more precise word Halvaah or lend? He answered that the punishment for lending with interest is that you lose your wealth. It is as if you are merely giving the money away. Don't do it.

**And you shall establish them to their children after them (25:46) –** The Gemara Kiddushin (22b) learns that an Eved Cannanite is compared to real estate. **Rashi** (Kiddushin 7a) applies the rule to free man as well. **Rav Hershel Schachter Shlita explained in the name of Rabbi Soloveitchik** that many assume that life is here to be free today – that the outlook of one's life should be with a heavy focus on the here and now with no care for the past or future. However, Jewish life does not see man that way. Rather man is like a tree in the land – he is rooted in a strong past and in ideal form yields wonderful fruit – linking the glorious past to the bright future. Man has a responsibility to think about his place in history and in creating destiny.

**If you follow my Chukim (26:3) – Rashi** notes that this Possuk informs us of the responsibility to TOIL in Torah. Where do we find the concept of Torah TOIL mentioned here? **Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ztl.** explains that the word Halicha implies a constant movement or fluidity. That fluidity is impossible without depth in Torah or Ameilus.

**If you despise my Chukim (26:15) –** Is there no middle ground between the depth of total Torah immersion and despising Torah? **Rav Shach ztl.** explains that when one is accustomed to toiling in Torah then there are no debates. Everything you do is seen through the prism of Torah – even crises of faith can be explained through the Torah eye and even when not clear right now – the individual works on his strength to understand the crisis and does not let his faith be shaken until the Torah provides him a basis from within which to explain the crisis. If one does not toil in Torah, the chances are many and the questions vast – the slippage toward the track of hating Torah are not far behind.

**And if you walk with me B'Keri (26:21) – Rashi** explains that the word Keri refers to the concept of Arai or irregularity. Rashi is explaining that when one keeps the Torah irregularly, it creates many problems with the relationship with Hashem. **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** explains that the concept of Keri can be both quantitative as well as qualitative. One might quantitatively approach Torah only when it fits his schedule. This does not lead to punctilious observance but rather the opposite. At the same time, one can perform Mitzvos regularly but half-heartedly (Hergel?) Kevi'ut, entails the experience that

Torah and mitzvot are indispensable for our existence. It is that the feeling of "For they [the words of Your Torah] are our life and the length of our days," which leads us to, "And in them shall we involve ourselves day and night" (from the evening prayers).

**And even with all this, and them in the land of their enemies, I did not despise them (26:44) – The Lubliner Maggid** would often explain this possuk with a Moshol about a particular tailor who was hired to do a tremendous amount of work for the king. He and his family were moved into special quarters in the palace and all of his expenses were taken care of. The tailor then fell ill and was unable to work. Searching for the "right" doctors took a lot of time and since the expense was not related to work and thus not covered by the crown, it also added up financially. At one point, the tailor and his wife realized that they would need to sell possessions in order to pay their medical bills. She suggested that they sell his new high class sewing machine first. But he told her that this was one of the only possessions they could NOT sell. He explained that the king was being very patient with them and allowed them to live and be fed daily at the palace simply because he knew that the tailor was the best and eventually his waiting would pay off. However, if the tailor were to sell the sewing machine, it would be evident that he was not planning on finishing the job and would be thrown out or worse. The Lubliner Maggid suggested that the same was true about us. Despite the Galus, what keeps us functional in our relationship with Hashem is that we still confirm Ani Hashem Elokeichem – that we believe in him no matter what.

**Haftorah: Mikveh Yisrael Hashem – Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** noted that the concept of purification in the Mikvah is that man must engage the process himself. The same is true here: In order to make the move to Hashem, man must act first toward Him.