

Behar Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

We learn about some very important mitzvot that apply in the land of Israel. First is shemittah. The same way the seventh day of the week is Shabbat, every seventh year is a Shabbat for the land when the land gets to "rest." This means that for six years, farmers may work on the land, sowing seeds so things should grow, pruning to help the plants grow better, and harvesting the fruit and vegetables so they can sell it and make money. But in the seventh year, the year of shemittah, the land must be allowed to rest, and there can be no planting or harvesting.

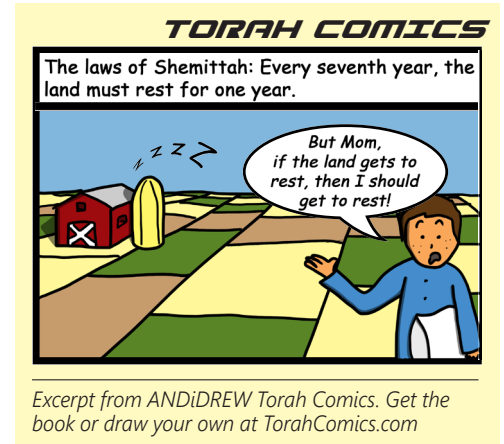
Instead, anything that grows becomes free for anybody who wants to just pick and enjoy.

After seven cycles of shemittah, the fiftieth year ($7 \times 7 = 49$, it's the year fol-

lowing the 49th, so it's the 50th), is called yovel or the jubilee. It is also a year of rest for the land, but in addition to that, all servants go free, and all property returns to its original owner. That means that whenever somebody buys a plot of land he knows he will only keep it until the year of yovel when the land will go back to the original owner.

Then the Torah tells us that we shouldn't worry that we won't have enough to eat during shemittah and the following year because we can't plant and harvest. Because G-d promises that the year before shemittah--the sixth year--will produce enough food for three whole years--the sixth year, the year of shemittah, and the following year, when things won't grow because there was no planting during shemittah.

We also learn in this Parshah that it's



forbidden to charge a Jew interest. That means that when we lend someone money, we can't take a little extra back as a thank you for doing them the favor and lending them the money. Rather, all loans must be free--the person only has to pay back exactly what you lent them.

Bechukotai Wrap-Up

by Sammy Schaechter

In Parshat Bechukotai, we read about the promises that G-d gives us if we keep the Torah and do the mitzvot: Rain will come when we need it to make the crops grow. There will be enough food and everybody will eat until they are satisfied. We will have peace and security in the land. No wild beasts or armies will pass through the land. We will be successful in our battles and victorious over armies much larger than ours. And G-d will be with us.

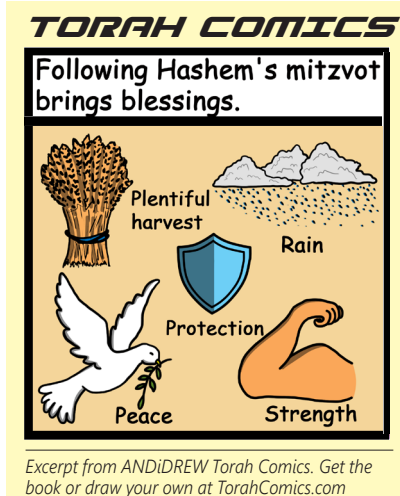
But then the Torah tells us that if the people don't keep the commandments, and forget about their agreement with G-d, then many unfortunate things will

happen. But even if G-d is angry at the Jews and must punish them, he will never forget or abandon them.

The last thing we learn in the Parshah is how to calculate the value of different types of gifts that people promise to G-d.

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Bee Honey and Fig Honey

Do not deceive one another (25:14)

R'Chananya was a great Sage who lived in Tzipori in Eretz Yisrael. While he devoted most of his time to Torah study, he would not accept any money for it, but supported his family from the sale of honey. His warehouse held many barrels of both bee and fig honey.

Once a group of merchants arrived in town. They had come from a different city and wished to purchase a large quantity of honey. They went to R' Chananya's warehouse, bought their many barrels of honey and paid a large sum in cash. Their business completed, they loaded the barrels upon their camels and donkeys and set out homeward, very satisfied.

R' Chananya rearranged the barrels in the warehouse, moving some here, others there to make room for the next batch of honey. When R' Chananya was about to lock up his warehouse and return to the beis midrash, he, suddenly, realized that he had mistakenly not sold his last customers bee honey, as he had thought, but fig honey! He rushed out to the street, hop-

ing to catch the men and correct his mistake before it was too late. Perhaps, they had stopped somewhere, for a drink . . .

He looked right and left; he asked the people in the marketplace if they had seen the caravan of merchants, but was told that they had already gone, some time ago. R' Chananya went to his beis midrash, hoping that the men would return themselves, when they realized the mistake.

His error troubled him; it lay on his conscience for days and days. He had cheated people by not selling them what they had asked for. How he longed to set things straight!

Time passed and those same merchants returned to Tzipori to buy a fresh stock of honey. R' Chananya recognized them immediately. He rushed up to them and apologized profusely. "I am so sorry! I made a terrible mistake last time you were here. Instead of bee honey, I gave you fig honey. You must forgive me! I cheated you, I deceived you! Please, now that you are here, you must come to my warehouse

and let me repair the damage. I will give you the same amount of honey, bee honey this time, for free!"

"No," they said to R' Chananya. "You have no reason to feel sorry. On the contrary, the fig honey which you gave us was even better for the purpose we needed. We were very satisfied with it and want more of the same. How much can you sell us this time?"

R' Chananya sighed with relief. He had not cheated anyone, after all! How relieved he was! That matter had been disturbing him all this time. He did not want to charge them, but they refused.

R' Chananya was left, holding the money. He did not feel good about accepting this money even though there was no question about it rightfully belonging to him. He had certainly given the people their money's worth. Last time and this time. In fact, they had been especially pleased!

Yet, he went beyond the letter of the law and set aside that entire sum, a large one, for public welfare; he donated it for the building of a new beis midrash in Tzipori!

TALES OF TZADIKIM

Two Cents' Worth

Do not deceive one another (25:14)

R'Avraham Galanti, a great sage who was a fellow townsman of the Arizal, once came to him with a request.

"Rabbenu," he said, very humbly, "I am very troubled. My soul is not at rest. I feel that there is some sin which I have committed, but it eludes me. I would like to do teshuvah, but I cannot, since I do not know where my fault lies. I know that you are a holy man who can read souls. Tell me, by looking at my forehead — what have I done wrong? Give me a tikun, a way of mending what I have damaged."

The Ari was taken aback. R' Avraham was a very holy man himself. How could he have sinned? And who was he, the Ari, to tell R' Avraham what to do?!

With tears in his eyes, R' Avraham begged him just to look at his forehead and see if he saw anything written there.

The Ari studied R' Avraham's face, looked intently at his forehead, then said with a sigh, "I do see a trace of something. Your sin has something to do with stealing."

R' Avraham was horrified! "What

have I become," he cried, "to be guilty of theft!"

R' Avraham went home feeling worse than ever. Now, he was certain that he had sinned, but he did not know how he had stolen.

R' Avraham owned a textile mill. He employed people who worked his looms and produced fine fabrics which he sold. Could he have cheated his customers? He did not think so. He let them determine the worth of his merchandise and would accept what they paid him. It must be that he had cheated his workers.

PARSHA STORIES

When R' Avraham reached home, he ripped his clothing and put on sackcloth and ashes, as if he were in mourning. Then, he went to his factory and called the workers to attention. They were horrified to see R' Avraham thus, for they loved him dearly.

"What is the matter, R' Avraham?" they said as they swarmed around him. "Why are you in mourning?"

R' Avraham replied, "I am only flesh and blood; human. When I die, I do not want to go to gehinnom for having stolen or cheated anyone. As long as I am still alive, I wish to right any wrongs I have done to you, each and everyone of you. If I have not paid any of you what is due, I wish to make amends."

He opened a purse full of coins and emptied it out on a large table. "Take! Take! Anyone who feels that I owe him anything should take."

No one moved. No one lifted a finger to the pile of glittering coins on the table. After a few moments, his workers said, "R' Avraham, did we ever complain about being mistreated? On

the contrary, you are the best employer that anyone could possibly wish for! You give us a monthly salary, without ever checking if we worked the full time or not. You have always been more than fair; you are very generous and so, we never bothered to reckon up each minute of work, even if we stayed late to finish up an urgent order. We are very happy to work for you and never felt that we deserved more than we got. You never told us to measure our exact production by what you paid us and so we never did, being happy to work and take the money you gave us. But why do you, suddenly, suspect that you cheated us? And even if you did, we forgive you wholeheartedly!"

R' Avraham looked around at his staff of workers. How loyal they all were! How devoted! And how honest! But perhaps he had cheated someone after all. He tried again,

"Think carefully. Think back. Perhaps I did not pay someone his full due? The money is yours. Feel free to take whatever you think you deserve."

Not a soul moved. Finally, however, after a long pause, one woman drew near the table and took two pennies. Then she went back to her place. R' Avraham waited, but no one else stepped forward. He decided to return to the Ari. He wanted to know if there was anything else he should do.

R' Avraham Galanti went back to the Ari and begged him to look at his forehead again. The Ari looked carefully, then shook his head.

"There is nothing there now. Your sin has been erased. Do you know what your sin was? I will tell you now. There is a woman on your staff who is an expert weaver. She works faster and better than the rest and thus, really deserves a little more money, though she never took any. Now, that you insisted, she took two pennies more than the others. In heaven, they took you to task for not recognizing her superior talent and paying her for it. Now that you have, your 'sin' is canceled and the mark, the stigma, is erased from your forehead!"

TALES OF TZADIKIM

First Things First

Do not deceive one another (25:14)

R'Yisrael Salant, father of the musar movement, taught people how important it was to be honest and to do one's duty towards one's fellow man.

Once a new chazzan was appointed to the shul where R' Yisrael prayed. The chazzan, who was conscientious, came to R' Yisrael and asked, "What holy thoughts must I bear in mind while I am standing before the congregation and leading it in prayer?"

R' Yisrael replied, "The first thing that you must do is to learn the proper niggu-

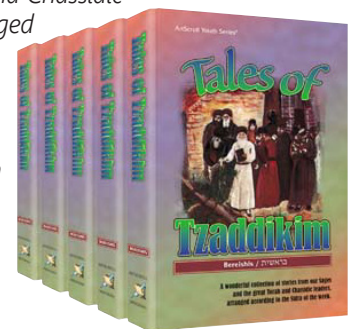
nim (melodies) for all of the prayers! You must be able to sing the prayers well."

The chazzan had not expected such an answer. He looked surprised. He had not asked about melodies, he had asked about inner sublime thoughts — kavanos!

"Yes, indeed!" R' Yisrael nodded. "The most important thing, as far as your job is concerned, is that you know how to sing the correct tunes to the prayers, that you lead the davening as is expected of you. If you are not a good chazzan, if you do not sing well, then you are defrauding your congregation and not doing the job for which you were hired. First and foremost,

you are being paid to sing well. That is your primary obligation. For if you do not do so, are you not cheating your employers?"

Tales of Tzadikim by G. Matov is a wonderful collection of stories from our Sages and the great Torah and Chassidic leaders, arranged according to the Sidra. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or online at artscroll.com.



PARSHA PUZZLERS

Behar Questions

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter
and Dovid Saleman
Answers on page 7.

EASY Qs

1. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?
2. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
3. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
4. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50th year)?
5. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved (slave) to a non jew?
6. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemittah?
7. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemittah, and then shemittah comes before the loan is paid back?
8. When does a yovel year come?
9. What does keeping the laws of shemittah demonstrate?
10. Which year is shemittah?

MEDIUM Qs

1. What happens if you do this?
2. Where must "ma'aser sheini" be eaten?
3. Who decides the value of a house

EASY Qs

11. From whom may you buy avadim?
12. For how long do these avadim work?
13. May he lock his field up so that he is the only one that is able to eat the fruit?
14. Can the farmer take any food for himself?
15. If someone who lived in Eretz Yisrael during the time of the Beit hamikdash sold his field, could he ever get it back for free?

HARD Qs

16. Is a Jew allowed to collect interest when he lends money to another Jew?
17. What is the definition of a "ger toshav"?
18. Where is it permitted to prostrate oneself on a stone floor?
19. Is a farmer living outside of Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemittah?
20. How could you figure out how much to sell the field for?

DISCUSSION Qs

21. Where else do we have counting

CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine
Answers on page 7.

1. Every 7 Y is the Y of S
2. No P, P,P or H, can be D during S
3. P must not be S during S, instead they become H
4. Every 7 S is the Y of Y, every 50th Y
5. You B the S on Y K of Y
6. All J S go F and L returns to its O O every Y
7. H P enough P for 3 Y if we keep S
8. You cannot G a J S any E or E work
9. It's a M to R a J who was S to a N J as a S
10. You cannot W, S, or even M any A Z
11. You must be careful to not B on a S F, even to H

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7x7 for a total of 49? What is the connection between these two counts?

22. Why does the Parsha end with a discussion of idol worship? It seems out of place

Bechukotai Questions

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter
and Dovid Saleman
Answers on page 7.

4. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesch?
5. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
6. What is one of the most important

that a Jew gives to hekdesch?

berachot?

7. What is temurah?
8. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?
9. What is the reward for observing the mitzvot of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?

PARSHA PUZZLERS

TORAH RHYMES & RIDDLES

Answers on page 7.

Parshat Behar

1. On this year you don't work the Land
For that is Hashem's command.
The _____
2. I come once in fifty years
Hebrew slaves greet me with cheers
This is the time when they'll go free
Do you know what I could be?
The _____
3. I lost all of my money
And was sold to be a slave.
But the Torah tells my master
How he must behave.
Treat me as a worker
And don't be cruel to me.
In the sixth year or the Yovel

You must set me free.

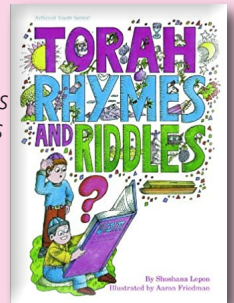
4. The Jewish people cannot be
Slaves to any man.
They became My slaves, alone
When freed from Egypt's land.

Parshat Bechukotai

5. If you follow G-d's laws and keep
His command,
I'll come in the right time to water
your land.
But if you don't listen to G-d's
words, at all,
Your skies will be iron and I will not
fall. The _____
6. If G-d's words you choose to hear,
Then you can sleep without a fear.

You'll defeat us with no fuss;
Five will chase a hundred of us.
But if you don't keep G-d's com-
mand,
You'll be fearful in your land.
And when your crops grow nice
and tall We shall come and eat
them all. Your _____

Torah Rhymes and Riddles by Shoshana Lepon (Author) and Aaron Friedman (Illustrator) is filled with rhyming riddles that test young children's comprehension of the weekly Parsha. For more great children's Torah books, visit artscroll.com



PARSHA PUZZLERS

Bechukotai (cont)

10. To what do the words "bechukotai telechu" (walk in My statutes) refer?

MEDIUM Qs

11. How much does one pay if he wants to redeem his maser?
12. Why does the Torah say in 26:46 "Torot" (plural) and not "Torah" (singular)?
13. How do we know that klal Yisrael have more strength when many people do the Mitzvoth than when a few do them?
14. What mitzvah is given immediately after the tochachah (rebuke)?
15. What is Eruchin?

HARD Qs

16. What is the blessing of "v'achaltem lachmechem l'sova" (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?
17. What is meant by the verse "and a

sword will not pass through your land?"

18. When a person redeems "ma'aser sheini" what happens to the food? What happens to the redemption money?
19. How does a person tithe his animals?
20. What are the seven steps which cause a person to stray from Hashem?

CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine
Answers on page 7.

1. The T P R for keeping the M
2. One R is: R will F at its P T, and everything will G
3. B Y will be so S that 5 J will C A 100 E
4. The T also W us of the P for not K the T
5. The L will not G, and your E will B you
6. The F we go from H, the F H goes from U
7. The V of a M 20-60 Y O, is 50 S
8. If you R from the B H M, you must A O 1/5
9. Every 10th A, is B to the B H M as a K. It is called M B

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PARSHA STORIES

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

Enough for Three Years

"If you will say: What will we eat in the seventh year? — behold! we will not sow and we will not gather our crop!" (Vayikra 25:20)

In the year 5712 (1952), the Jewish Agency decided to plant orchards in several settlements throughout Israel. One of the designated orchards was slated for Moshav Komemiyus. The moshav's residents stipulated one condition: No work was to be done in the orchard during the Shemittah year. The Jewish Agency rejected this condition, and the planting of the orchard was delayed. Though efforts were made over time to come to an agreement, the issue of Shemittah stood like a rock in the negotiators' path. No agreement was reached. | :

In 5718 (1958), the year before a Shemittah year, the moshav's Rav had a lengthy discussion with the Jewish Agency administrator in charge of the orchard plantings. Eloquently, the Rav explained the significance and the holiness of Shemittah, how beloved it is to Hashem, and how inextricably it is linked to the coming of the Mashiach. The Jewish Agency man, caught up in the Rav's enthusiasm, authorized the planting of an orchard in Komemiyus in which all the laws of Shemittah would be faithfully observed, in accordance with the Rav's

instructions.

The orchard cost the Jewish Agency about half a million lirot. The Shemittah came in the second year after its planting, when young saplings require constant care. This care was tendered only at the Rav's orders. Those responsible at the Jewish Agency warned the Rav that he was endangering the orchard and that the entire investment was likely to be lost, but the Rav was firm in his faith in Hashem, in the merit of the mitzvah of Shemittah.

In the month of Av, near the end of the Shemittah year, the Jewish Agency administrator in charge of the orchards came to see the Rav, highly excited. He said that, out of the twelve orchards in his care, only one of them — the one planted in Moshav Komemiyus — observed the laws of Shemittah. And it was this very orchard that had flourished more than all the others!

"How can you explain this?" the man asked the Rav. With the fervor and simplicity of his emunah (faith in Hashem), the Rav answered, "I believe with complete faith that the Creator alone, may His Name be blessed, created, creates, and will create all creations — including the orchard. Because we are fulfilling His

will, Hashem showered His blessing on the orchard!"

The years of orlah (the initial three years when fruit may not be eaten) passed. The trees were tended like the trees of other orchards. The yearly yield was approximately 700 containers of citrus fruit. Then the year before Shemittah arrived once again. The Jewish Agency staff could not believe the report that came in: That year, Moshav Komemiyus's orchard had yielded more than 2,000 containers of citrus fruit! At first, they suspected a serious counting error. The figures were checked and re-checked — and were proved to be accurate. That year's yield was triple that of every other year!

Once again, they came to the Rav for an explanation. The Rav smiled, opened a Chumash Vayikra, and read, "If you will say: What will we eat in the seventh year? — behold! we will not sow and we will not gather our crop! | will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year and it will yield a crop sufficient for the three years."

The Jewish Agency people, though distant from Torah observance, needed no further explanation. With their own eyes, they had witnessed the fulfillment of the Torah's words!

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

A Meal for the Rebbe

"And you will eat to satisfaction" (Vayikra 25:19)

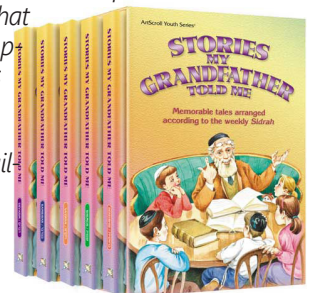
On the day that R' Chaim was to begin serving as Au Beis Din of Sanz, he arrived in that city before dawn. After davening Shacharis, the city's Torah scholars came in an endless stream to talk Torah with R' Chaim, coming and going all through the day. Near evening, the chassid, R' Yosef Rafeh, one of the Rebbe's oldest friends, noticed that no one had remembered to give R' Chaim anything to eat. As a result, the Rebbe had not tasted a morsel all day. R' Yo-

sef hurried home and returned a short time later with a dish of potatoes which he concealed beneath his clothes.

"I must speak with the Rebbe on an urgent matter," he said. R' Chaim stopped the Torah discussion he was immersed in, and went into a private room with R' Yosef. R' Yosef closed the door behind them, and asked the Rebbe to eat the food he had prepared for him. R' Chaim ate, and thanked R' Yosef for his thoughtfulness. R' Chaim was on the verge of collapsing, but in his tremendous absorption in Torah, he had not

noticed, until R' Yosef had interrupted his learning.

Stories My Grandfather Told Me by Zev Greenwald (Author) Libby Lazewnik (Translator) and Tova Katz (illustrator) is packed with short pleasant stories that teach children important life lessons from the weekly Parsha. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or at artscroll.com.



JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

Yoni Netanyahu

March 13, 1946 - July 4, 1967

Yoni Netanyahu was the commander of the elite Israeli army special forces unit Sayeret Matkal. He was the only Israeli soldier killed in action during Operation Entebbe in Uganda.

On July 4, 1976, Netanyahu led Op-

eration Entebbe, a mission to free 105 Jewish hostages being held in Entebbe, Uganda by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who had days earlier hijacked an Air France flight out of Athens headed for Tel Aviv. The mission was a huge success as the soldiers broke in and

rescued 102 of the hostages and killed all the terrorists and dozens of Ugandan soldiers. Netanyahu, however, was killed during the raid - the only Israeli casualty. In honor of Netanyahu, the raid was posthumously renamed Mivtza Yonatan (Operation Yonatan)

PUZZLERS ANSWERS

PARSHA CODE

BEHAR

1. Every 7 YEARS is the YEAR of SHEMITTAH
2. No PLOWING, PLANTING, PRUNING or HARVESTING, can be DONE during SHEMITTAH
3. PRODUCE must not be SOLD during SHEMITTAH, instead they become HEFKER
4. Every 7 SHEMITTAH's is the YEAR of YOVEL, every 50th YEAR
5. You BLOW the SHOFAR on YOM KIPPUR of YOVEL
6. All JEWISH SLAVE's go FREE and LAND returns to its ORIGINAL OWNER every YOVEL
7. HASHEM PROMISE's enough PRODUCE for 3 YEAR's if we keep SHEMITTAH
8. You cannot GIVE a JEWISH SLAVE any EMBARRASSING or ENDLESS work
9. It's a M ITZVAH to REDEEM a JEW who was SOLS to a NON JEW as a SLAVE
10. You cannot WORSHIP, SELL, or even MAKE any AVODAH ZARA
11. You must be careful to not BOW on a STONE FLOOR, even to HASHEM

BECHUKOTAI

12. The TORAH PROMISES REWARD for keeping the MITZVOS
13. One REWARD is: RAIN will FALL at its PROPER TIME, and everything will GROW
14. BNEI YISROEL will be so STRONG that 5 JEWS will CHASE AWAY 100 ENEMIES
15. The TORAH also WARNS us of the PUNISHMENT for not KEEPING the TORAH
16. The LAND will not GROW, and your ENEMIES will BEAT you
17. The FURTHER we go from HASHEM, the FURTHER HE goes from US
18. The VALUE of a MALE 20-60 YEARS OLD, is 50 SHEKEL
19. If you REDEEM from the BAIS HAMIKDASH, you must ADD ON 1/5
20. Every 10th ANIMAL, is BROUGHT to the BAIS HAMIKDASH as a KORBAN. it is called MA'ASER BEHAIMAH

BEHAR

1. The Shemittah Year (The Seventh Year)
2. The Yovel (The Jubilee Year)
3. Hebrew Slave
4. Hashem

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

BEHAR

1. Exile
2. No.
3. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
4. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur.
5. Redeem him
6. No.
7. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
8. Every fiftieth year.
9. a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us, b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
10. Every seventh year.
11. Non-Jews
12. Forever
13. No.
14. Yes. He may take as much as anyone else can.
15. Yes! He got it back for free when Yovel came.
16. No.
17. A non-Jew who lives in Eretz Yisrael and accepts upon himself not to worship idols.
18. In the Mikdash
19. Yes.
20. The closer it was to the Yovel year, the less the field cost. The further it was from the Yovel year, the more the field cost.

BECHUKOTAI

21. Both animals become holy.
22. In Jerusalem
23. Kohen

BECHUKOTAI

5. Rain
6. Enemies

24. He should add a fifth
25. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 shemita and yovel years.
26. Shalom (peace)
27. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesch animal.
28. NO
29. a. Rain in its time, b. When people aren't outside (like Friday night)
30. Laboring in Torah learning. 2.
31. Add a fifth
32. To teach that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah were given to Moshe on Har Sinai.
33. 5 pursue 100 (1:20 ratio), 100 pursue 10000 (1:100 ratio)
34. Eruchin
35. This means that if a person pledges to donate "his value" to the Beit Hamikdash, then he must contribute a certain amount, depending on his gender and age.
36. You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
37. No foreign army will travel through your land on their way to a different country.
38. The food becomes permissible to him outside of Jerusalem. The redemption money must be brought to Jerusalem and used to purchase food to be eaten there.
39. He passes them through a door individually and every tenth animal he marks with a rod smeared with red dye.
40. a. Not learning Torah, b. Stop doing mitzvot, c. Be upset with others doing mitzvot, d. Hate the Rabbis, e. Prevent others from being observant, f. Deny that Hashem gave mitzvot, g. Deny the existence of Hashem

PARSHA GAMES ION

by Sammy Schaechter

GOAL: In this week's parsha we discuss the laws of Shmittah and yovel where in these years we cannot work our field and must leave whatever grows for anyone who wants to come and take it. In this activity we will be discussing the idea of tzedakah and giving to others and that sometimes even though it's hard to do, it's still important.

TYPE: Moderate, indoor, group game.

HOW TO PLAY: Have the kids sit in a circle and pick one person to sit in the middle of the circle with a box under his chair. This person is blindfolded. For this game, it is very important that everyone remain quiet. One at a time, pick kids in the circle to try and put a coin into the box. The person in the middle listens and tries to tag anyone he hears approaching. After one or two rounds this way, you may want to liven up the game by changing it around and putting candies underneath the chair. Instead of putting coins underneath, the kids are then trying to take candy out.

DISCUSSION: we started off putting money into the tzedaka, and later took candy out of it. In many cities, something called a G'mach is set up. This is a type of tzedaka that lends money to people. If you need money, you are allowed to take from the G'mach, but must pay it back when you have sufficient funds. When you give money to the G'mach, you make sure there is always enough money in it for people to borrow. In the second game, it is a bit difficult to be able to give Tzedaka. First you

must get the coins, and then reach the tzedaka box to give them away. In real life, we often think about how hard we work to earn our money, and question whether it is "fair" for us to give it to someone for free. Is this fair? Everything we have really comes from Hashem. The money we have isn't really our own. Hashem commanded us to give tzedaka, so when we do so, we are what its real owner, Hashem, wants us to do with it.

In real life, it is not very difficult to find places to give tzedaka. What and who needs tzedaka in our city? Country? In the world? Which is the most important to give to? According to halacha, we must first look after our own city before giving tzedaka to other places.

We learn about the laws of shmittah in this week's parsha, where in the 7th year, just like the 7th day (Shabbos), we don't work our fields in Israel. We wouldn't be allowed to take any of our fruits or things we've grown, but instead we must leave them for anyone else to come and take. The Torah tells us not to worry about not having enough to eat during the shmittah year because we can't plant and harvest. Hashem promises that the year before shmittah, the 6th year, will produce enough food for three whole years- the 6th year, the shmittah year, and the following year.

Sometimes when giving tzedakah or helping people we worry that we won't have enough for ourselves or by helping other people we won't be able to help ourselves. We learn that Hashem will always look after us and help us if we help other people and that when we give tzedakah to others, Hashem will give us "tzedakah" as well.

TEFILAH TREASURES

Birkat Hashachar

Boruch... Rokah Ha-aretz Al Hamayim.

"Blessed are You... Who spreads out the earth upon the waters."

You've got two dominating surfaces in this world, water and earth. Water will spread out over the earth, if you let it. Earth has no problem sinking below the water if that's what water

wants it to do. Of course, we wouldn't want to walk around wearing flippers all day! So the next time you take a solid step on the ground, thank Hashem for solid land!

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