

## **And in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath to be celebrated by the cessation of work for the land a sabbath unto G-d... and you shall sanctify the fiftieth year... a Yovel it is for you. (25:4,10)**

*Shabbos* and *Shemittah* have a common denominator - they are both spiritual entities. *Shabbos* implies the unbreakable bond that thrives between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael*. This bond is manifest in a cessation from one's secular affairs, as an opportunity and mandate to devote his time to *Torah* study and spiritual reflection. The *Torah* emphasizes that the seventh year is a period of time, an entire year, which one is to dedicate as a "*Shabbos l'Hashem*." The individual is to infuse himself with spirituality during his refrain from agricultural labor. *Yovel*, which derives its name from the blowing of the *shofar* on *Yom Kippur* of the fiftieth year, is parallel to *Shabbos* and *Shemittah* in perspective. That *tekiah*, sounding of the *shofar*, is the clarion call of freedom for all Jewish slaves; the land reverts to its original owner, as it conveys the message to *Klal Yisrael* that we are here only temporarily. We do not take permanent ownership of the land, because it ultimately belongs to Hashem. *Olam Haze*, this world, serves as a medium for enabling us to attain spiritual ascendancy in the Eternal World, *Olam Habah*. The *shofar* awakens us from our physical slumber, reminding us of our spiritual calling.

Thus, our *parsha* begins with the words, "When you come into the land that I give you." As long as *Klal Yisrael* sojourned in the wilderness, with no agricultural responsibilities and their sustenance provided directly by the Almighty, they were free to devote themselves to spiritual pursuit with no hindrance.

The *Torah* now assures *Klal Yisrael* that if they will observe the *Shemittah/Yovel mitzvos*, Hashem will sustain them as miraculously as He had in the desert.

Interestingly, the fiftieth year's sanctity was of a progressive nature. From *Rosh Hashanah* until *Yom Kippur*, the slaves left their posts and remained in the homes of their master. They were not yet free to go, but they were not obligated to work. They remained in the home, eating and drinking joyously, as royalty. On *Yom Kippur*, the *Bais Din* would blow the *shofar*, and they became free to go. We might question the manner in which they were released. For ten days, from the beginning of the year until *Yom Kippur*, the slaves were no longer slaves; yet, they were not free to go home. Why?

*Horav Avraham Kilav, Shlita*, offers two reasons for this "progressive" manner of freeing the slaves. First, as mentioned above, during *Yovel* one comes to realize that he is not in charge of his own life. Hashem directs the world and everything in it belongs to Him. It is ours to use temporarily. The slave that heretofore was ours, is now free. He is like us. Indeed, we feed him as royalty. It is almost as if the slave becomes the master, and the master becomes the

slave! In order to fulfill this *mitzvah*, the master has to swallow his pride and -- so to speak -- serve the slave. These ten days of service to the slave imbue the master with a deeper understanding of his own role in the world, clarifying what it is that Hashem expects of him.

Second, the slave must "upgrade" his mindset. Until now he has been a member of an inferior class, subservient to a master, not really having the proper perception of how to serve Hashem. It is difficult for one who has been subservient to a human master to transfer his whole heart and mind into service to Hashem. This ten-day period "eases" him into this new role. He is able to grow emotionally as he develops a sense of self confidence in the home of his master; He is no longer a slave, but an equal. He has the freedom to be a full time servant to the Master of masters - Hashem.