

"But in the seventh year a Shabbos of solemn rest shall be for the land, a Shabbos unto Hashem." (25:4)

The *Midrash* suggests that the *pasuk* in *Tehilim* (103:20) - "Bless Hashem, O' His angels, the strong warriors, who do His bidding, to obey the voice of His word," refers to those who observe the laws of *Shmittah*. Their strength of character is compared to that of the angels. What is the nature of this strength? What uniqueness is found in the obedience of angels which is similarly reflected in the farmers' compliance to the laws of *Shmittah*?

Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz Z"l cites the *Talmud* in *Shabbos 85a* which reveals the source of the character strength of the angels. It lies in *that angels first "do" and then "listen"* - i.e. seek to understand. This attribute was also demonstrated by *Bnei Yisrael* at Mount Sinai when they proclaimed, *We will do and (then) we will listen!* He explains that this is precisely the pillar of strength upon which the faith of the observers of *shmittah* rests. If they approach *shmittah* purely from a rational perspective, their scientific conclusions would not support permitting their fields to remain fallow. Because these *shomrei mitzvos* have the ability to act in conformance with Hashem's mandate before they strive to understand, they are able to attain a level of strength and faith comparable to that of the angels.

It is a sign of the greatness of *Bnei Yisrael* that we are expected to sustain the same level of *bitachon* (trust) as the angels. He concludes that the approach of "*naase venishma*", reflects the true essence of *bitachon*. Rather than merely representing an intellectual recognition of Hashem's providence, *bitachon* is primarily the ability to relate directly to Hashem's Omnipotence as a vivid reality.

Horav Yosef Breuer Z"l decries the attitude of those who use *bitachon* as a means of accepting an inevitable fate. This hopeless apathy, which leads to fatalistic despair, is not a product of true *bitachon*. *Bitachon* should not serve as the last resort to cope with adversity, a final despairing sign by which one attempts to find solace during difficult situations. Rather, *bitachon* requires of us complete devotion to Hashem's will and to the fulfillment of His precepts throughout our lives. *Bitachon* should inform our lives even in times of personal empowerment. In response to our devotion, *bitachon* becomes the magic strengthening agent which has dried our tears and alleviated our grief throughout our tumultuous history. *Bitachon* will continue to be the source of courage to raise our heads erect while we await that day when all mysteries and ambiguities will be clarified.