

**"When you will come into the land... and the land shall rest, a Shabbos to '?. Six years you shall sow your field... but in the seventh year a Shabbos of solemn rest shall be for the land."
- "And if you shall ask, what shall we eat in the seventh year? Behold we may not sow or gather our crops. And I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year. And it shall bring forth produce for the three years." (25:20-21)**

Studying the above *pesukim*, one is confronted with two simple, but striking questions. First, why was it necessary to state that we must first sow the land for six years? Is it not obvious that one must first "work" the land, so that it may later "rest"? It would have been sufficient simply to state "*At the end of the six years you shall make shmittah*"? Second, these *pesukim* provide the rationale for the question, "*What will we eat during the seventh year?*" Is it not customary to eat during the seventh year that which grew during the previous year? There must be a special message hidden in these seemingly ambiguous *pesukim*.

In response, we suggest the following interpretation: *Am Yisrael's* agricultural system is established in seeming deference to the laws of nature. While the other nations allow their land to "rest" by not working it, *Am Yisroel's* land strives for completeness only through constant development. Only then does the land attain true "*Shabbos*," by fulfilling its obligation to sustain its nation. This may be noted from the reading of the *pesukim*, "*And the land shall rest*," How will this "rest" transpire? "*Six years you shall sow your field*." Through the working of the land it will earn its "rest." If this is so, why do we stop during the seventh year? The response is that we do not grant rest to the land for physical reasons, but rather for spiritual purposes. *Shmittah* is a lesson in spiritual development.

We now turn to the question of "*what will we eat during the seventh year*". How will the land achieve its perfection during the seventh year, when it is allowed to remain fallow? The *Torah* responds that the land will be blessed during the sixth year, so that it will produce sufficiently to seem as if it had also "worked" during the seventh year. Thus, we see that ultimately perfection can only be achieved through intense labor, which, in return, also serves as the greatest source of reward.