

BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

We Are Just Guests Here – פרשיות בהר - בחוקותי - חזק חזק ונתחזק תשפ"ו

וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְצִמְתָּת כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ
The land must not be sold permanently, for the land belongs to Me (Vayikra 25:23)

Three small words convey the totality of the Mitzvah of Shemita. They also convey the totality of the Mitzvah of Bitachon. Arguably, these words also encompass the totality of the Torah!

The words are **כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ**.

It's not just a statement. It's a calling. It's a way of life.

We can illustrate this point with a story about two landowners who had a dispute over a parcel of land, where each one claimed it was theirs. Reuven stubbornly insisted "it's mine!". Shimon, too, obstinately insisted "No, it's mine!" They refused to even hear about any compromise. They brought their dispute to the attention of Rav Chaim of Volozin Zatzal for adjudication.

After hearing the claims of both parties, Rav Chaim said, "Why don't we ask the land?" They went to the disputed plot of land, and Rav Chaim bent his ear toward the ground, while the two men looked on in disbelief. After a moment Rav Chaim stood up and declared "There is no room for dispute here. You say it's yours and you say it's yours, but the ground says "They are both mine!"

Yes, **כִּי עֲפַר אֶתָּה וְאֵל עֲפַר תֵּשׁוּב** (Bereishis 3:19), we all end up back in the ground; there is no point or rationale in spending our few years here on earth consumed with disputes, land grabbing or never-ending amassing of material wealth.

There is no permanence here; we are just passing through. Nothing is ours. **כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ**. It's all Hashem's, including us! Our very life is on loan from Hashem to use in service of Him, and to recognize that we need Him every step of the way, for every aspect of life, and for life itself.

This is what the Torah is teaching us in the Parsha of Shemita. The following Pesukim teach us key lessons in the fleeting nature of life here on earth:

בְּשִׁנַּת הַיּוֹבֵל הַזֹּאת תֵּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ אֶל אֲחֻזָּתוֹ (Vayikra 25:13) – We never truly own anything.

וְכִי תִמְכְּרוּ מִמְכַּר לְעַמִּיתְךָ אִו קָנָה מִיָּד עֲמִיתְךָ אֶל תּוֹנֶה אִישׁ אֶת אַחִיו (Vayikra 25:14) – Don't spend the few years you're allotted trying to undercut others and competing for land and possessions; what's yours is yours, what's his is his - **אִין - אָדָם נוֹעַ בְּמוֹכֵן לַחֲבִירוֹ אִפִּילוּ כְּמֵלָא נִימָא**

what is meant for another, by even a hair's breadth (Yoma 38b). The reality is even what's yours isn't yours; it's all Hashem's. כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ

לֹכֵי רֵב הַשָּׁנִים תִּרְבֶּה מִקְנֹתוֹ וְלֹכֵי מֵעוֹט הַשָּׁנִים תִּמְעִיט מִקְנֹתוֹ (Vayikra 25:16) – Nobody is guaranteed another day of life. Some live longer, some live shorter. Don't squander those precious days with the pursuit of frivolity. All that endless toil leads nowhere - **עֵשָׂר שָׁמוֹר לִבְעָלְיוֹ לִרְעֵתוֹ** (Koheles 5:12)

וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְצִמְתָּת כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ (Vayikra 25:23) – There is no permanence. **כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ**

One who recognizes that he's just a visitor here on Hashem's earth will understand that the way to maximize his time here is to live with Menuchas Hanefesh, with the knowledge that we are Hashem's guests, and He is the Owner Who controls everything.

We have no permanent home here, so there is no point in spending our lives consumed with investing in and furnishing our temporary home and amassing others like it.

**אָם ה' לֹא
 יִשְׁמַר עִיר
 שָׂוָא שָׂקֵד
 שׁוֹמֵר**

וְסִפַּרְתָּ לָךְ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים וְהָיָה לָךְ יָמֵי שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים תִּשַׁע וְאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה (Vayikra 25:8) – We count down the years in *Shemita* and *Yovel* to remind us that we are counting down our days here on earth as well, until we are taken to our true home in the next world.

All we take with us on that journey are the choices we made while visiting down here on earth. All we can pack in our suitcase for our journey home is our *Torah, Mitzvos, Emunah, Bitachon* and other spiritual assets.

When something difficult, challenging or frightening happens in our "temporary home" – be it a terrorist attack, a natural disaster or a personal or communal tragedy – we can be nosy guests who meddle, opine and gossip about it, consume the media drivel 24/7 and point fingers and participate in useless protests, or we can just leave it to the Owner of the home – Hashem – to deal with as He knows best, and keep our focus where it belongs: in the firm knowledge and belief of **אִם ה' לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת שָׂוָא עֲמָלוֹ בּוֹנִיָּו בּוֹ אִם ה' לֹא יִשְׁמַר עִיר שָׂוָא שָׂקֵד שׁוֹמֵר** - *If Hashem will not build a house, its builders have toiled in vain; if Hashem will not guard a city, its guards keep vigils in vain (Tehilim 127:1)*

One who lives with Bitachon knows his place, and does not meddle where he doesn't belong.

He knows the lesson of **כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ**, and thereby lives a tranquil life despite any surrounding storms - **וַיִּשְׁבְּתָם עַל הָאָרֶץ לְבַטַח**

Good Shabbos!