



Shemitah—What It's All About

Shemitah in its original meaning requires taking a year off. When the Yidden lived in Eretz Yisroel, their primary occupation was working the land. By Torah mandating a year of rest for the land, the default is that most Yidden will not work for the whole year.

In addition to being out of work, they would seemingly also be out of food, for if the land is not worked,

nothing grows. The Torah therefore follows by saying that by keeping the *Shemitah* year, the Yidden display their trust in Hashem—that He will provide for them even when naturally abandoning the fields for a year would be detrimental.

But what are Yidden to do with their free time? Their faith may be displayed by not doing anything,

but do they have a whole year with nothing to do?

The answer is that the Torah does not need to tell you how to fill your free time! Every Yid has an obligation to fill every moment with *limmud haTorah*. If even one free moment was not spent learning Torah, a Yid is considered to be “shaming the word of Hashem” (as the Alter Rebbe highlights in the first *perek* of Tanya).



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לוי שיחי' וולבובסקי
לרגל יום הולדתו ר"ח מנחם אב
לשנת הצלחה בגשמיות וברוחניות שימשיך
ללכת מחיל אל חיל בכל עניניו
לנחת רוח כ"ק אדמו"ר

So obviously if one has a year off, the time should be spent learning extra Torah.

Although most Yidden in Eretz Yisroel today are not occupied with agriculture, and those outside of Eretz Yisroel do not have the obligations of *Shemitah*, the message of *Shemitah* is still relevant: To fill every free moment with *limmud haTorah*.

In fact, even before the *Shemitah* year starts, we were commanded to let the land rest and not sow the land for 30 days before Rosh Hashanah of *Shemitah*. Thus, for 30 days before *Shemitah*, Yidden are already increasing in Torah.

(Adapted from
Sichas Chai Elul 5739)