



## Blessings for obedience

### *Parashat b'har* (32) – On the mountain

**Torah:** *Wayyiqra* 25:1 to 26:2

**Haftarah:** *Yirmeyahu* 32:6-27

**Apostolic Scriptures:** *Luqas* 4:16-21

Some years this *sidrah* is studied separately, but this year we have a double blessing, doing two *parashot*, two weekly portions, one after the other. This way YAH pours out His blessing upon every *Torah*-believer who is obedient to His word.

During the past week we continued to visit *Sinai* and heard YAH expand the rules for *Shabbat* to *Mosheh*. Just as we set apart every seventh day, the land was also to be set apart:

*Wayyiqra* 25<sup>2</sup> “Speak to the children of *Yisra’el*, and say to them, ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall observe a Sabbath to יהוה’.

We see this expression in Scripture as שְׁמִטָּה (*sh'mi-Tah*), which translates as “year of release” or “year of exemption” (cf. *Debarim* 15:1-2; 31:9-10). The land is therefore released or exempted from producing any crops. Note that this is specifically speaking of the promised land and that only the land in which crops are planted is part of this rule. Of course, we get those opportunists who are not farmers, but will insist on a year of paid leave! However, this was not granted to everyone, because doctors, police, teachers, merchants and the like still had to work. Only the farming of crops was stopped for the year, while livestock farmers continued their operations.

So here we see that years are counted as days and after the sixth year no sowing or harvesting is done. This follows the same principle that YAH applied during Creation:

*Bereshith* 2<sup>2</sup> “And in the seventh day *Elohim* completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. <sup>3</sup> And *Elohim* blessed the seventh day and set it apart, because on it He rested from all His work which *Elohim* in creating had made. [emphasis added for further explanation]

The word in the above quote translated as ‘completed’ is יָכַל (*ya-Chal*), an inflection of the word כָּלָה (*ka-Lah* [H3615]), which means to bring something to completion. This word is related to כַּלָּה (*ka-Lah* [H3618]), which translates as ‘bride’ or ‘daughter-in-law’. The word in the above quotation translated as ‘rested’ is שָׁבַת (*sha-Bat*), which means “to cease work” or “to rest from work”. Both of these words teach us about repair or restoration, as the observance of *Shabbat* restores the bride’s mind, repairs spiritual exhaustion,

and brings it back into alignment with fellowship with YAH. Interruptions or breaks for *Shabbat* are something we often notice in Scripture. When we enter into this rest, we can think of it as trust. Trust is having fellowship with YAH in the assured expectation that He will provide for all our needs, that He will completely fulfill the promise of the covenant with us. After all, this is the purpose of our salvation:

*Pilipiyim* 4 <sup>6</sup>Do not worry at all, but in every *matter*, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to *Elohim*. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of *Elohim*, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and minds through Messiah **יהושע**.

This is exactly how the people of old were to work in the land. Without sowing or harvesting the seventh year, they would have enough to meet their needs, even if they could only start planting again the year after. However, Scripture seems to contradict itself here, because we learn in v. 5 “you may not reap,” yet in v. 6 we see “...the produce of the land shall be for you food.” What is happening here?

Again, it is important to know the culture of that time, as well as the working methods that were in force. When the fields were harvested, it would be to place them in trade. The products that are then sold provide an income to the farmer. During the seventh year, there would be no harvest and consequently the farmer would not receive any income. Please read the short report in addendum A on blessings for someone who obeys the *sh'mitah*. We understand from many mss. that the sixth year yielded double the harvest, just as the *man* gathered in the wilderness on the sixth day was doubled. However, everyone must eat and this is where equalisation took place. The fields were literally opened up for each person to go and pick what they would need for that day; this was not considered harvesting. Please compare the case where *Yeshua* and his *talmidim* walked through a grain field, picked ears of grain and began to eat on a *Shabbat* (cf. *Marqos* 2:23; *Luqas* 6:1):

*Mattithyahu* 12 <sup>1</sup>At that time **יהושע** went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And His taught ones were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain, to eat.

Another custom at that time, actually a command from YAH (cf. *Wayyiqra* 19:9), is that fields were not fully harvested and what would fall was not necessarily picked up (cf. *Ruth* 2:7). It would be left for the poor, because YAH delights in all being cared for. Now the rule is established that every seventh year is not only a time of restoration for the land, but also a release for slaves and from debt. Although we do not learn this here, it will become clear later (cf. *Deh'arim* 15:1-18), a study we will dwell on in a little over two months, in YAH's will.

We learn very important characteristics of YAH in these passages. Two specific words stand out: **בְּטָחוֹן** (*bi-ta-Chon*), which translates as faith or trust (cf. *Melakim B'et* 18:19; *Qoheleth* 9:4; *Yeshayahu* 36:4), as well as **אֱמוּנָה** (*e-mu-Nah*), which is also translated as trust or faith. However, when we look at these words more closely, there is a big difference between the two. According to BDB<sup>1</sup>, *bitachon* translates as faith/confidence, self-confidence/assurance or expectation/hope. The word *`emunah* translates as determination, conviction, faithfulness or steadfastness.

Although these words are sometimes used interchangeably in our conversations and studies, we would like to note the following. Any person who understands what the Way of Truth is about living in *bitachon* toward YAH, that is, the trust that He will provide and care:

*Mizmor* 118 <sup>8</sup>It is better to take refuge in **יהוה** Than to trust in man. <sup>9</sup>It is better to take refuge in **יהוה** Than to trust in princes.

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1 Brown-Driver-Briggs dictionary

However, we have *`emunah* in knowing that YAH exists, that He is truly the Creator-Elohim and is in control of everything that happens on earth. With the *`emunah* that YAH exists, we apply *bitachon* to know that He provides for our daily needs. It is this type of trust, *bitachon*, that enables us to survive the seventh and eighth years, perhaps even partially during the 9<sup>th</sup> year, after the *sh'mitah* is over:

*Yirmeyahu 17* <sup>7</sup>“Blessed is the man who trusts in יהוה, and whose trust is יהוה.

Our full trust in YAH does not necessarily mean that things will always work out the way we want them to, only that whatever happens is for the best for us. Nothing in the life of a *Torah*-believer happens by chance and sometimes what we experience may even be sadness or disappointment. We do know that *bitachon* changes our lives completely; it puts us on another level where we don't have to worry about anything. If we were to examine news reports, there are frequent reports of miracles when people would follow these rules of *sh'mitah*. One good example is a banana crop that was spared, despite other farmers suffering damage during a period of severe frost:

<https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/general/13933/a-shmitah-miracle.html>

In our previous studies, concerning the *`omer*, we have already learned to count to 50, at least to 49, and here *bitachon* is severely put to the test. Where we count seven *Shabbatot* (plural of *Shabbat*) after *Pēsah* to arrive at another festival, we are now instructed to count seven *sh'mitot* (plural of *sh'mitah*), *Shabbat* years, which gives us a total of 49 years. The following year, therefore the 50<sup>th</sup> year, on the tenth of the month, the day known as *Yom Kippur*, the *shofar* or silver trumpet is blown (cf. *Bemidbar* 10:2-10) to announce a יוֹבֵל (*yo-Vel*), a jubilee year. The same rule applies as for the *sh'mitah* – nothing is sown or harvested. It is noteworthy that the *shofar* is used here, just as YAH used it when He came down to *Sinai* to take the nation as His bride, make a covenant with them, and bless them (cf. *Shemoth* 19: 16, 16, 19; 20:18).

Keep in mind that the previous year was a *sh'mitah*, so nothing was sown or harvested either. This event occurs every 50 years where there is no sowing or harvesting for two consecutive years. If that doesn't test one's *bitachon*, nothing will! Should there have been any doubt that YAH is in control of everything, it is now tested to the limit. The word *yovel* is derived from יָבַל (*ya-Bal*), which translates as “to yield”, “to bring forth”. We see YAH's promise:

*Wayyiqra* 25 <sup>21</sup>“Therefore I have commanded My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth the crop for three years. <sup>22</sup>“And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat of the old crop until the ninth year. Eat of the old until its crop comes in.

To put the proverbial cherry on the cake, in this year not only the land is restored, but also the ownership. The *yovel*, jubilee, did for the land what *Yom Kippur* did for the people. During this year, the disruption of YAH's original plan for the land, which was also the result of the fall, was restored. The land could now be restored to the condition it was originally intended to be in and this is confirmed by the fact that the priests announced this on *Yom Kippur*.

Another purpose for this command is to ensure the total destruction of debtors<sup>2</sup>. It mediated the evils of slavery, poverty, and exhausting labour and reminded the people of *Yisra'el* of their time in *Mitsrayim*. The key to the Jubilee is the word ‘liberation’ (v. 25:10) which we experience on three levels:

- 🥂 to the slave;
- 🥂 to property;
- 🥂 to the ground.

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2 Robert Gnuse, "Jubilee Legislation in Leviticus: *Yisra'el*'s Vision of Social Reform," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15:2 (April 1985):43.

Just as *Yisra'el* is a servant of *YAH*, the land is a servant of *Yisra'el*. In the same way that the nation of *Yisra'el* had to stop work on *Shabbat* each week to recover, so the land had to rest regularly from its annual work to recover. There is thus a horizontal fulfillment of the vertical covenant relationship; the liberation of *Yisra'el*ites who had lost their freedom and property takes place in the year of Jubilee (25:8-12; 28). What was special about the *yovel* was to remind the people of *Yisra'el* that they were not truly landowners, but merely tenants. The land belongs to *YAH* (23:23), just as all the land during *Yosef's* reign belonged to Pharaoh (*cf. Berēshith* 47:13-26).

Ironically, there is no mention of the *yovel* outside of *Torah*, nor do we read anywhere in history that the people of *Yisra'el* actually observed this command. If it was observed, it is possible that no one felt it necessary to record it, just as the observance of *Shabbat* is not recorded in the Apostolic Writings. because it was a common practice. After the nation was scattered in 722 BC, the *yovel* could not be celebrated in any case, but it was counted during both temple periods. After the destruction of *Yerushalayim* and the beginning of the dispersion caused by Rome, there is no way in which the counting of the years could be resumed.

According to *Maimonides*<sup>3</sup>, a new counting of the *yovel* would begin with the third return of the dispersed. This apparently occurred in the Hebrew year 5642 (1881-1882), which places the first *yovel* in the Hebrew year 5692 (1931-1932). If this is correct, the Hebrew year 5741 (1980-1981) would also be a *yovel*, which then brings us to the future *yovel* in the Hebrew year 5790 (2029-2030). Comparing this with information being circulated about the 2030 agenda, this could possibly become a reality.

According to ancient historical sources, the first year of *Yeshua's* ministry was during a *yovel*, in the Hebrew year 3788 (27-28 AD). We see confirmation of this when he quotes from *Yeshayahu* 61:1-2, as recorded:

*Luqas* 4 <sup>16</sup>And He came to *Natsareth*, where He had been brought up. And according to His practice, He went into the congregation on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup>And the scroll of the prophet *Yeshayahu* was handed to Him. And having unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written: <sup>18</sup>**"The Spirit of יהוה is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring the Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away crushed ones with a release, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the acceptable year of יהוה."** <sup>20</sup>And having rolled up the scroll, He gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the congregation were fixed upon Him. [emphasis original]

This prophecy of *Yeshayahu* speaks specifically of our Messiah coming during a *sh'mitah* and a *yovel*. We have already worked through the evidence that *Yeshua* fulfilled the first four holy festivals and therefore we have the expectation that he will fulfill the last three as well. For the same reason we also expect that he will return again during a *sh'mitah* or a *yovel*. On the contrary, there are many experts who believe that he will come on a *sh'mitah*, get everything ready to restore the twelve tribes and that the millennial kingdom will begin the following *yovel*, the year after. Although we are by no means setting any dates, the possibility therefore seems very good for something to happen during the 2030 agenda.

With frequent riots, union strikes, and political uncertainty, many people are quite concerned about what the future may hold. Some are fleeing the country and looking for greener pastures elsewhere. As we have seen earlier, we should not trust in men and princes, for we already have the promise for every *Torah* believer:

*Wayyiqra* 25 <sup>18</sup>And you shall do My laws and guard My right-rulings, and shall do them. And **you shall dwell in the land in safety**, [emphasis added]

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3 Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (1138–1204), also known as *Rambam*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maimonides>

This rule is not only for the ancient people of *Yisra'el*, but for everyone who trusts in obedience, who practices that *bitachon*. However, it is increasingly important to ensure that our souls are taken care of, because in this way we can go to bed every night in peace of mind. Everyone who puts their trust in *YAH* and loyally follows His rules and regulations will be protected. If something does happen to such a person, it is still in *YAH's* will because He already has a plan in place and knows the end from the beginning (cf. *Yeshayahu* 46:10).

In general, *YAH* does not desire that any person should be poor or beg. Sometimes, however, people make bad decisions or circumstances change that cause a person to fall into a state of financial distress. If someone had to sell personal possessions to stay alive, they should be able to buy them back when they can afford it. However, the Jubilee was established to ensure that such a person would get everything back without any payment. A person who would stand in for the poor is known as a redeemer, even a compensator. One of the best examples in Scripture regarding a redeemer is the complete story of *Ruth*, in which *Bo'az* acts as redeemer. However, he is only a shadow of the heavenly redeemer. Compare also the entire chapter 5 of *Hazon*.

When *Adam* lent his ears to *Hawwah*, he fell into poverty and lost the land that had been allotted to him – paradise. There was no way he could get it back except through his *גֹּאֵל* (*go-El*), redeemer, his closest blood relative. The closest blood relative to the first man is the second Man, of whom we read:

*Luqas* 23<sup>43</sup> And *יהושע* said to him, “Truly, I say to you today, you shall be with Me in paradise.”

Everyone who follows *YAH's* rules closely, everyone who walks in *Yeshua's* footsteps, is redeemed by him and is an overcomer and such will possess what *Adam* had lost:

*Hazon* 2<sup>7</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I shall give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of *Elohim*.” ’  
[emphasis original]

There are three instances in the *TaNaKh* that refer to the responsibilities of a redeemer:

- 🏆 Someone who sold himself or his property due to financial pressure could be helped, redeemed, by a redeemer (25:25).
- 🏆 Someone who could not afford the ransom price of an unclean firstborn animal could be helped by a redeemer (27:11-13).
- 🏆 When someone killed another person and was suspected of murder, the ransomer could pursue and kill the suspect, but only under certain circumstances (cf. *Bemidbar* 35:10-29).

Property within walled cities was viewed differently from agricultural property. Property in a city that was not bought back within one year could not be returned to the previous owner even during the *yovel*. This house would be considered built for trade, while property in the countryside was considered to be attributed to the inheritance that *YAH* allowed each tribe. It would also serve as a legacy for the descendants of the owner. It is extremely important to study the culture of the ANE in order to better understand these rules. Also keep in mind that the land still belongs to *YAH* and that the owner only rents and takes care of the land by rights.

The Hebrew language has no word or term that translates as “I have”. This stems from this principle that everything belongs to *YAH* – even the salary you receive at the end of the month, or the income you get from clients or other sources. This is why it is important that a *מַעֲשֵׂר* (*ma-`a-Ser*), thanksgiving or tithe, should be the very first part given to *YAH* from any income. In Hebrew the term for “I have” is *יש לי* (*yesh li*), literally “it is to me”, using that expression to say that I have something. Everything we have belongs to



YAH and we are only given the use of it. If I have a bottle of water, I will say in Hebrew “זה בחבוק המים שלי” (*zeh bakbuk hamayim sheli*), which would then translate as “the water is [assigned] to me”. So it is not my bottle of water, but through YAH I have the use of it. We see the word אחזה (*a-chu-Zah*) which indicates possession, but it only has to do with land. It also indicates that the land does not belong to the person, but that ownership is given to someone to cultivate it (*cf. Berēshith 2:5 et al*).

As we saw earlier, no fellow citizen may become a slave to another. If someone becomes poor, for any reason, the person must be put to work. However, he may not perform the work of a slave, but may do work that is to the benefit of the household concerned. In the *yovel* he and his children are to be released to return to his family. Only foreigners, people who are not part of *Yisra’ēl*, may be bought and sold as slaves. They may also be given as a legacy for posterity, as part of a testamentary clause. All of these rules that we learn about here have a direct bearing on repentance.

Last week we learned from *Torah* that one rule applies to the stranger and the child of the land (*cf. Shemoth 12:49; Deḡarim 15:15-16; 29*):

*Wayyiqra 24*<sup>22</sup> ‘You are to have one right-ruling, for the stranger and for the native, for I am יהוה your Elohim.’ ”

However, there are also rules where Scripture seems to contradict itself:

*Wayyiqra 25*<sup>45</sup> and also from the sons of the strangers sojourning among you, from them you buy, and from their clans who are with you, which they shall bring forth in your land, and they shall be your property.<sup>46</sup> And you shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession, they are your slaves for all time. But over your brothers, the children of *Yisra’ēl*, you do not rule with harshness, one over another.

Another rule seems to exacerbate the confusion:

*Deḡarim 14*<sup>21</sup> “Do not eat whatever dies of itself (*cf. Wayyiqra 11:40*). Give it to the stranger who is within your gates, to eat it, or sell it to a foreigner. For you are a set-apart people to יהוה your Elohim. Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

The question arises: when is there one rule for the stranger or visitor and the child of the land? In other words: for which stranger is the rule different than for the child of the land, the native-born *Yisra’elite*?

The answer is in the command we receive from YAH: when a stranger or visitor has officially converted and is part of YAH’s covenant, the same rule will apply to him/her as to the child of the land. Only strangers who fully submit to YAH’s rules have the same privileges and obligations as native-born *Yisra’ēl*. *Sha’ul* confirms this answer:

*Galatiyim 5*<sup>3</sup> And I witness again to every man being circumcised that he is a debtor to do the entire *Torah*.

Here *Sha’ul* is not talking about physical circumcision, but circumcision of the heart. He had already testified with fellow believers that physical circumcision was not necessary (*cf. Ma’asei 15:22-29 et al*). On the contrary, from the following verse we learn that physical circumcision cannot declare us innocent, just as keeping the law cannot declare us innocent:

*Galatiyim 5*<sup>4</sup> You who are declared right by *Torah* have severed yourselves from Messiah, you have fallen from favour.

A stranger is therefore under no obligation to follow the rules of *YAH*. This also applies to you and me, anyone who is not physically born from *Yisra'el*. Only the stranger who is called and convinced by *Ruach HaQodesh*, someone who is born from above, is called children of *Abraham* and has a share in the Messiah:

*Galatijim 3* <sup>7</sup>Know, then, that those who are of belief are sons of *Abraham*.

It is extremely important to know that someone who is not physically born from *Yisra'el* does not need to pay a large sum of money to a man-made institution like rabbinic Judaism to be included in *YAH*'s Kingdom! This is exactly what *Yeshua* came to earth for. He came to teach us how to follow *Torah*, to direct our lives according to the footsteps he left for us. We learn from the words of *Kefa*:

*Ma'asei 3* <sup>19</sup>“Repent therefore and turn back, for the blotting out of your sins, in order that times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Master,

When we have reached that point, it will be easy to heed the rules given to us at the end of this *sidrah*:

*Wayyiqra 26* <sup>1</sup>Do not make idols for yourselves, and do not set up a carved image or a pillar for yourselves, and do not place a stone image in your land, to bow down to it. For I am *יהוה* your *Elohim*. <sup>2</sup>Guard My Sabbaths and reverence My set-apart place. I am *יהוה*.

The *Shabbat* and the freedom we experience in *YAH* go hand in hand. *YAH*'s set apart place is the congregation, not only all *Torah* believers corporately, but also us as individual believers. We must keep ourselves pure and set-apart in every way, but we should also ensure that the congregation is not harmed in any way. This includes slander, gossip, division, hatred and unforgiveness. No person can stand in for another, so each person must put their hand in their own bosom and ensure that set-apartness is maintained at every level.

Finally, make sure there are no idols, whether carved stone or anything else, that you bow down to. It may even be a spiritual idol of some kind, but you will still be made unclean by it and not allowed into *YAH*'s Presence. Respect the rules as *YAH* laid them out and *Yeshua* fulfilled them as the living *Torah*:

*Yohanan 1* <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us, and we saw His esteem, esteem as of an only brought-forth of a father, complete in favour and truth.

*Shabbat shalom!*

Hein Zentgraf

[hein@zentgraf.org](mailto:hein@zentgraf.org)

Silver Trumpet Ministry: [www.silvertrumpet.life](http://www.silvertrumpet.life)

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## **Sources:**

We prefer to not use the word 'God', because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by '*Elohim*' or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from The Scriptures 2009, unless indicated differently.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://isr-messianic.org/>

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic *Torah* with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

Artscroll Sotne Edition *Chumash*

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Faithlife Study Bible

Adam Clarke's 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible

*The Word of יהוה is free, therefore this study may be distributed free of charge, provided no changes are made.*



## Addendum A

### The Seventh Year<sup>5</sup>

My name is Dov Weiss, and I was one of a group of about thirty young men who started the *moshav* (agricultural settlement) of Komemiyut, in the south of Israel. It was in 1950, after we had completed our army service. I was still a bachelor then. Among the founders was also the well-known Torah scholar and rabbinical authority, Rabbi Binyamin Mendelson, of blessed memory. He had previously immigrated to Israel from Poland, and had served as the rabbi of Kfar Ata.

At first we lived in tents, in the middle of a barren wilderness. The nearest settlements to us were several kibbutzim associated with the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair movement: Gat, Gilon and Negba. Several of our members supported themselves by working at Kibbutz Gat, the closest to us, doing different types of manual labor. Others worked in our fields, planting wheat, barley, rye, and other grains and legumes. I myself drove a tractor. Our produce, which grew throughout the 15,000 or so *dunams* (nearly 4000 acres) allotted us, we sold to bakeries and factories.

At that time, there were not yet water pipes reaching our *moshav*. We had to content ourselves with what could be grown in dry, rugged fields. Every few days we would make a trip to Kibbutz Negba, about 20 kilometers distant, to fill large containers with drinking water.

The second year we were there, 5712 on the Jewish calendar (1951–52), was the Shemittah year, which comes every seventh year, in which the Torah commands to desist from all agricultural work. We were among the very few settlements in Israel at the time to observe the laws of the Sabbatical year and refrain from working the land. Instead we concentrated on building, and succeeded that year in completing much of the permanent housing. The *moshav* gradually developed and expanded, and more and more families moved in, as well as a number of young singles. At the end of the year we numbered around eighty people.

As the Sabbatical year drew to its completion, we prepared to renew our farming activities. For this we required seed to sow crops, but for this purpose we could only use wheat from the sixth year, the year that preceded the Shemittah, for the produce of the seventh year is forbidden for this type of use. We went around to all the agricultural settlements in the area, near and far, seeking good quality seed from the previous years' harvest, but no one could fulfill our request.

All we were able to find was some old wormy seed that, for reasons that were never made clear to us, was lying around in a storage shed in Kibbutz Gat. No farmer in his right mind anywhere in the world would consider using such poor quality seed to plant with, not if he expected to see any crops from it. The kibbutzniks at Gat all burst into loud derisive laughter when we revealed that we were actually interested in this infested grain that had been rotting away for a few years in some dark, murky corner.

"If you really want it, you can take all that you like, and for free, with our compliments," they offered in amusement.

We consulted with Rabbi Mendelson. His response was: "Take it. The One who tells wheat to sprout from good seed can also order it to grow from inferior wormy leftover seed as well."

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5 [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2746/jewish/The-Seventh-Year.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2746/jewish/The-Seventh-Year.htm)

In any case, we didn't have an alternative. So we loaded all the old infested seed that the kibbutz had offered us free of charge onto a tractor, and returned to Komemiyut.

The laws of Shemittah forbade us to plow and turn over the soil until after Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the eighth year, so we didn't actually sow the seed until sometime in November. This was two or three months after all the other farmers had already completed their planting.

That year, the rains were late in coming. The farmers from all the *kibbutzim* and *moshavot* gazed upwards longingly for the first rain. They began to feel desperate, but the heavens were unresponsive, remaining breathlessly still and blue.

Finally it rained. When? The day after we completed planting our thousand *dunams* of wheat fields with those wormy seeds, the sky opened up and the rains exploded down to saturate the parched earth.

The following days we were nervous in anticipation, but we turned our attention to strengthening our faith and trust in G-d. Anyway, it didn't take a long time for the hand of the Almighty to be revealed clearly to all. Those wheat fields that were planted during the seventh year, months before the first rain, sprouted only small and weak crops. At the same time, our fields, sown with the old infested seed and long after the appropriate season, were covered with an unusually large and healthy yield of wheat, in comparison to any standard.

The story of "the miracle at Komemiyut" spread quickly. Farmers from all the agricultural settlements in the region came to see with their own eyes what they could not believe when they heard the rumors about it.

When the farmers from Kibbutz Gat arrived, they pulled a surprise on us. After absorbing the sight of the bountiful quantity of wheat flourishing in our fields, they announced they wanted payment for the tractor-load of old rotten wheat they had scornfully given us for free only a short time before.

Even more startling: they said they would file a claim against us at a *beit din*, a rabbinical court, and with Rabbi Mendelson himself, no less! They must have figured that in a secular court, such a claim wouldn't have even the slightest possible chance of gaining them a single penny.

Rabbi Mendelson accepted their case seriously, and in the end judged that we should pay them. He explained that the reason they gave it for free was because they thought it worthless for planting, while in truth it really was excellent for that purpose. We were astonished to hear his ruling, but needless to say, we complied.

The whole story became an extraordinary *kiddush Hashem* (glorification of G-d) in the eyes of Jews across the country. Everyone agreed it was a clear fulfillment of G-d's promise in the Torah (Leviticus 25):

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit. But in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath for G-d...

If you shall say: "What shall we eat in the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our produce!" I will command My blessing upon you...

**Editor's note:**

Today, Komemiyut is world-famous for its high-quality shmurah matzah (lit. “matzah that has been watched”) – round, handmade matzah prepared under exacting supervision from the time the wheat is harvested through the end of the baking to guard against the minutest moisture.