

ALSHICH

INSIGHTS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

ספר ויקרא

פרשת בהר-בחקותי

SERIES 1: ISSUE 30

SAVING ONE'S REWARD FOR THE WORLD TO COME

Chapter 25

5) You should not harvest your crops that grew on their own, nor gather your grapes that were kept away. There shall be a year of Shabbason for the land.

(ה) אֶת סִפֵּיחַ קִצְיֶרְךָ לֹא תִקְצֹר וְאֶת־עֲנָבֵי נִזְיֶרְךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר שְׁנַת שְׁבִתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאַרְצְךָ.

6) The Shabbos of the land shall be for you to eat — for you and your servant and your maidservant and for your hired worker and your resident who lives with you.

(ו) וְהִיְתָה שְׁבִית הָאָרֶץ לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָה לָךְ וּלְעַבְדְּךָ וּלְאִמָּתְךָ וּלְשִׁכְיֶרְךָ וּלְתוֹשְׁבֵי הָעָרִים עִמָּךְ.

7) And all its produce shall [also] be for your animals and for the wild beasts in your land to eat.

(ז) וְלִבְהֶמְתְּךָ וּלְחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר בָּאֲרָצְךָ תִּהְיֶה כָּל־תְּבוּאָתָהּ לֶאֱכֹל.

Consider the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of the phrase (verse 5), "gather your grapes **that were kept away**"?
2. The phrase (in verse 6) "The Shabbos of the land shall be for you to eat," requires explanation.
3. Why does the Torah first call Eretz Yisrael "the" land in verses 5 and 6, and then change it to "your" land in verse 7?

In our commentary on *Mishlei*, we interpreted the verse (*Mishlei* 8:21), *There is [sufficient] to grant an inheritance to those who love Me and I shall fill their storehouses*, as referring to *tzaddikim* like R' Chanina ben Dosa who suffer poverty in this world. When a person sees such righteous individuals so poverty-stricken, he will be troubled by their situation and say to himself, "Why is it that they have so little to eat? Is it because if God gives them the reward for these mitzvos in this world, their eternal reward will be decreased in the World to Come?"

To answer this question, Hashem says, "There is [sufficient] to grant an inheritance to those who love Me," meaning: "I have more than enough to grant them an eternal reward in the World to Come. The reason they suffer here and do not eat the fruits of their mitzvos in this world is because *I shall* (i.e., want to) *fill their storehouses*. I will put the fruits together with the principal in such a way that the reward that would normally be enjoyed in this world will form part of the eternal reward in the World to Come. In this way, their storehouse of eternal reward will be completely full. But if I were to allow them to eat the fruits in this world, the result would be that although they would still have the principal as an eternal reward, their storehouses will not be full." The message of this verse

from *Mishlei* not only explains why *tzaddikim* experience poverty in this world but also serves to teach us the important lesson that we should look with scorn at earthly benefits because they are meaningless.

Still, a righteous person may seek to be granted the fruits of such mitzvos in this world. To such a person our passage says (verse 5) that he should not *gather ... grapes that were kept away*. Since grapes grow and are eaten each year, they may be understood as an allusion to the reward for one's mitzvos that may be entirely "consumed" in this world. The vineyard, however, which always remains intact, represents the principal part of one's reward that remains reserved for him in *Olam Haba*. The verse is thus telling us: "Do not harvest the reward that is *kept away* and separated from the principal part and can be consumed each year. Leave that part of your reward together with the principal to be part of your eternal reward in the World to Come."

[This answers Question 1.]

Another hidden message in our passage is addressed to the person who has earned reward for mitzvos that others were inspired to do through his example. To this person Hashem says, "*You should not harvest your crops that grew on their own.*" That is: "Do not take your reward (crops) for mitzvos that were performed 'on their own,' i.e., because you caused a seed to be planted in someone's mind (through your good example)." Even though a person deserves reward for this, the Torah advises him not to harvest that "crop" and eat it in this world, but to leave it for *Olam Haba*.

The merit of the *tzaddik* who conducts himself in this way is so great that it is not only he himself who will get to consume this spiritual reward in the World to Come. Rather, as verse 6 says, "*the Shabbos of the land shall be for you to eat — for you* (i.e., for your soul) *and your servant* (i.e., for your body, which was your servant in the performance of the mitzvos and will enjoy *Olam Haze* again after *techiyas hameisim*) *and your maidservant* (i.e., your wife who helped you by maintaining the house) *and for your hired worker* (i.e., a temporary employee) *and your resident who lives with you* (someone more permanently connected, like a disciple)." All will be able to eat from the fruits of your spiritual reward (i.e., the "*Shabbos of the land*") together with you in *Olam Haba*. **[This answers Question 2.]**

Verse 7 then talks about "*your land*." This is because "*the*" *land* refers to the spiritual land of reward Above, but "*your*" *land* refers to the physical earth below. For a person might ask: "If the righteous should avoid enjoying all the physical pleasures, why did Hashem create them in the first place?" The verse therefore says, *And all its produce shall be for your animals and for the wild beasts in your land to eat*. The *animals* are the nations of the world, who are in *your* (physical) *land* below. For them, *all* the world's *produce shall be... to eat* — i.e., they shall enjoy the bounties of the world, since their portion is in this world and not the World to Come. **[This answers Question 3.]**

This sedra sheet is an excerpt from the newly-released translation of the Alshich on Sefer Vayikra in memory of **Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu zt"l**. For further sponsorship opportunities and to participate in this groundbreaking project please call David Rose on +44 7833 938 734.