

ISSUE #34

י"ז אייר תשפ"ד
25/05/24



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת בהר

וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְצִמְתוֹת כִּי לִי הָאָרֶץ, כִּי גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים אַתֶּם עַמִּדִי. (ויקרא כה, כג)

The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine; for you are sojourners and residents with me. (Vayikra 25:23)

In this week's *parshah*, we learn about the laws of a *שְׂדֵה אֲחוּזָה*, an ancestral field. This type of field can only be sold according to the number of crops it will yield until Yovel, when it reverts to its original owner. This law is a further expression of the principle that the land belongs to Hashem and cannot be sold in perpetuity.

The *possuk* uses two terms to describe mankind's existence - גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים, *sojourners and residents*, which seem contradictory. Is man's role on earth that of a temporary visitor who doesn't belong, or a permanent resident with a strong connection to this world?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* infers an important life lesson from this *possuk*. Ideally, a person should assume a dual role, acting both as a גֵר and a תוֹשֵׁב. He should relate to the physical world as a stranger, but as a resident with regards to the spiritual world, since the spiritual connection will endure even after death, when the *neshamah* departs from the body.

The Akeidas Yitzchak elaborates on this theme, explaining how a person should consider themselves a stranger when it comes to physical matters, as the primary essence of a person is their *neshamah*. However, when it comes to spirituality, a person should see themselves as a resident due to their closeness to Hashem. With this he explains the *possuk* in Tehillim (39:13): כִּי גֵר אֲנִי עִמָּךְ, תוֹשֵׁב כְּכָל אֲבוֹתַי, *For a sojourner I am with You, a settler like all my forefathers*. Dovid HaMelech, in his humility, considered himself as a stranger to Hashem based on his own deeds. However, he felt a settled and deep connection with Hashem through the merit of his ancestors, just as they had experienced.

The *possuk* in our *parshah* reveals that a settled connection, on the *madreigah* of תוֹשֵׁב, is only possible when a man is עַמִּדִי, *with Me*, Hashem. Only someone who lives with closeness to Hashem and a connection to *ruchniyus* can attain this settled state. Someone who doesn't live in such a manner can never find tranquillity and is unfit to be described as a תוֹשֵׁב. Not only is their spiritual connection lacking, but so is their status concerning the physical world. As Chazal teach מִי שֵׁיֵשׁ לוֹ מֵנָה, *Someone who has a hundred, desires two hundred*. A person can never be content with physical belongings and can never reach a genuinely established status in the physical world. גֵרִים - Humanity must understand that in this world, we are only strangers, and should not allow ourselves to be distracted by our physical aspirations. A completely settled state can only be achieved in *ruchniyus*, through one's connection to Hashem.

With this background, the Akeidah explains the meaning of an עַם הָאָרֶץ, literally "people of the land," which refers to someone who lacks knowledge and observance of Torah and *mitzvos*. Those who

prioritise their physical wants and desires, leading to laxity in adhering to the Torah, are "people of the land," viewing this world as their domain. These individuals mistakenly see the land as their territory, failing to realize the insignificance of the physical world we live in. In contrast, great people understand the triviality of their physical surroundings and see themselves as strangers in this world, focusing on preparing for their "real" home – Olam HaBah.

The internalisation of this concept is crucial for acquiring *bitachon*. If someone, rooted in *gashmiyus*, perceives their "place" as solely in this world, they will find it extremely difficult to elevate themselves through the ideas of *bitachon*. The Chovos HaLevavos (*Sh' Ahavas Hashem* 1) writes that the body's longings are abundant, and there are always endless cravings to fulfil its needs. It relentlessly expresses its desires, and it's impossible to fulfil all its yearnings. The only way for a person to divert their attention from the bottomless appetite for physical pleasures is by intellectually concluding that man's true goal in life is Olam HaBah. This motivation will help a person move past the non-stop physical wants and focus on man's true purpose in this world.

The Kli Yakar explains that this too is the reason for the *mitzvah* of Shemittah, also mentioned in our *parshah*, where we are commanded (25:2) 'וְשַׁבְּתָה הָאֲרֶץ שְׁבַת לַיהוָה, *the land shall observe a Shabbos rest for Hashem*. When a person is deeply involved in tending to his fields and harvesting his crops, he runs the risk of becoming an עַם הָאֲרֶץ - a "land person." He may become too focused on material pursuits, feel that this world is his place and fail to acknowledge Hashem's involvement. For this reason, the farmer is instructed to let the land rest during Shemittah which serves as a reminder that ultimately, it is Hashem who provides for us.

May we be *zoche* to elevate ourselves and gain a תּוֹשֵׁב status by nurturing our relationship and connection to Hashem. By recognising that this world is not our "place", we can focus on *ruchniyus*, cultivating a genuine bond with Hashem and ensuring for ourselves a cherished portion in the World to Come.

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל עה"ת and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@gyalumni.org.