

This week's פרשיות, בהר and בחקתי, contain a significant number of מצוות, we'll pick one, and it's an interesting concept. I once heard a talk from a קירוב fellow as to how to prove that Hashem exists and that the תורה is true, and he used these פסוקים (25:19-21):

וַנְתַּנֶּה הָאָרֶץ פְּרִיָּה וְאֶכְלֶתֶם לְשִׁבְעָה וַיִּשְׂבַּתֶּם לְבָטָח עָלֶיהָ: וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מָה נֹאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת הֵן לֹא נִזְרַע וְלֹא נֶאֱסַף אֶת תְּבוּאָתֵינוּ: וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת בְּרַכְתִּי לָכֶם בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁשִׁית וְעָשִׂית אֶת תְּבוּאָהּ לְשָׁלֹשׁ הַשָּׁנִים

Hashem promises that the produce of the sixth year will be enough to last for three years: for the sixth year itself, for the seventh year (שנת השמיטה), and also for the eighth year until the new harvest comes in. The קירוב speaker pointed out: if a human being had written this and not Hashem, how could he possibly have the הוצפה, the audacity, to make such a promise? He wouldn't be able to back it up. And how long would it take to prove he was lying? Just six years. That's all it would take to see that it doesn't work. And yet, we've been keeping שמיטה for thousands of years, and we've seen it work. So, this פסוק becomes an indirect but compelling proof of the authenticity of the תורה and that הקדוש ברוך הוא is the creator and מנהיג העולם and wrote the תורה.

Rabbi Oelbaum asked an interesting question. It says in the pasuk וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מָה נֹאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת הֵן לֹא נִזְרַע - What happens if we don't have the complete אמונה which we should, and we're going to say, "Hashem, what are we going to eat?" Then Hashem will give us a tremendous reward; וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת - We're going to have a three-year bounty on that sixth year. The question Rabbi Oelbaum posed was: what if we don't ask? Let's say we have פשוטה. We say, "Hashem, if you promise that if we keep שמיטה we're not going to starve, we'll take your word for it. We'll have trust and אמונה בהשם and בטחון that everything will come out okay." What will happen then? There's such a tremendous ברכה if we ask the question, how about if we don't ask the question?

Rabbi Oelbaum said that if we don't ask, the reward is even greater. Instead of getting a huge crop that you have to gather and store and worry about rodents and spoilage for three years, Hashem will give us food with a special קימעה ומתברך במעיו. ברכה: אכל קימעה ומתברך במעיו. You'll eat a little, and it will expand in your stomach - super food. You won't need much, and you'll be full and satisfied. There are two big advantages to this. A) You won't have to go on a diet. And B) you won't have to go through the tremendous effort of gathering and storing food for three years. That's a huge burden - though it's a ברכה, it's also a lot of work. But if you simply trust Hashem with פשוטה and keep שמיטה without asking questions, you'll get an even greater, more efficient ברכה. So this serves as a powerful proof - A) that הקדוש ברוך הוא is the creator of the world and the author of the תורה, and B) of Hashem's boundless חסד. We need to have absolute פשוטה and אמונה, and we have to believe that whatever Hashem promises will happen. And no matter what we face, we must always remember that everything is לטובה גם זו.

