

NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Behar

(http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm)

Parsha Outline

- The Sabbatical year
- The selling and redemption of land in Yisrael
- Laws of lending money
- Laws of slaves

Parsha Summaries

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/382844/jewish/Behar-Roundup.htm

Behar Roundup

In this week's Parshah, **Behar**, we learn about some very important mitzvot that apply in the land of Israel.

First is *shemittah*. The same way the seventh day of the week is Shabbat, every seventh year is a Shabbat for the land when the land gets to "rest." This means that for six years, farmers may work on the land, **sowing** seeds so things should grow, **pruning** to help the plants grow better, and **harvesting** the fruit and vegetables so they can sell it and make money. But in the seventh year, the year of *shemittah*, the land must be allowed to rest, and there can be no planting or harvesting. Instead, anything that grows becomes free for anybody who wants to just pick and enjoy.

After seven cycles of *shemittah*, the fiftieth year ($7 \times 7 = 49$, it's the year following the 49th, so it's the 50th), is called *yovel* or the **jubilee**. It is also a year of rest for the land, but in addition to that, all servants go free, and all property returns to its original owner. That means that whenever somebody buys a plot of land he knows he will only keep it until the year of *yovel* when the land will go back to the original owner.

Then the Torah tells us that we shouldn't worry that we won't have enough to eat during *shemittah* and the following year because we can't plant and harvest. Because G-d promises that the year before *shemittah*--the sixth year--will produce enough food for three whole years--the sixth year, the year of *shemittah*, and the following year, when things won't grow because there was no planting during *shemittah*.

We also learn in this Parshah that it's forbidden to charge a Jew **interest**. That means that when we lend someone money, we can't take a little extra back as a thank you for doing them the favor and lending them the money. Rather, all loans must be free--the person only has to pay back exactly what you lent them.

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/512392/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm

Behar Aliya Summary

General Overview: This week's reading, *Behar*, speaks about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years, laws regulating commerce and the redemption of slaves.

First Aliyah: G-d commands Moses regarding the *Sh'mitah* (Sabbatical) and Jubilee years. Every seventh year is a Sabbatical year, when it is forbidden to work the land (in the Land of Israel). After seven sets of seven years a Jubilee year is proclaimed by a blast of the *shofar* (ram's horn) on that year's Yom Kippur. During Jubilee years all the laws of the Sabbatical year apply, and, in addition to the Sabbatical laws, all slaves are set free and all lands revert to their original owners.

Second Aliyah: We are commanded to conduct business ethically. Since, as aforementioned, all land reverts to their original owners during the Jubilee year, the amount of years remaining until the next Jubilee year must be taken into account whenever a real-estate sale is conducted, and the price set accordingly. The end of this section enjoins us not to verbally harass or intentionally mislead our fellows.

Third Aliyah: This section addresses an obvious concern: "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not sow our gather our grain?!" G-d reassures us that He will bless the sixth year's harvest, and it will produce enough to provide for three years -- until the crop of the eighth year is ready to eat! The Torah then gives the rationale for the prohibition against selling land for perpetuity (instead, land can only be "leased" until the Jubilee year) -- "Because the Land belongs to Me; you are strangers and residents with Me."

Fourth Aliyah: A person who sells real-estate has the option of "redeeming" the land from the purchaser -- provided that two years have passed from the date of purchase. The total price for which the land was sold is divided by the amount of years from the time of purchase until the next Jubilee year (when the land would anyhow return to the owner) in order to determine the price per year, and the original owner refunds the buyer however much money he had paid for the remaining years. A relative of the seller may also redeem the land on behalf of his family member.

Fifth Aliyah: All the laws mentioned above apply to fields and homes in un-walled cities. Homes in walled cities, on the other hand, may be redeemed for their full value for up to one year after the sale. If not redeemed within the year, they become the permanent property of the buyer, and they are not released by the Jubilee. Another exception to these rules is the property allotted to the Levites. The homes and fields in the forty-eight Levite cities are always redeemable -- from the moment of purchase until the Jubilee year, when in any event they revert to their owners. We are then commanded to assist our brethren by coming to their aid before they become financially ruined and dependent on the help of others. We are also forbidden to charge interest on a loan to a fellow Jew.

Sixth Aliyah: We are commanded to treat Jewish slaves respectfully, never subjecting them to demeaning labor.

Seventh Aliyah: The Torah prescribes the redemption process for a Jew sold into slavery to a non-Jewish master. The same formula described above (Fourth Aliyah) is employed. Either the slave himself or one of his relatives refunds the master the amount of money that corresponds to the years remaining until the Jubilee -- when the slave will go free even if he had not been "redeemed." The section concludes with a brief mention of the prohibition against idolatry, and the requirement that we observe the Shabbat and revere the Holy Sanctuary.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/3502>

The Torah prohibits normal farming of the Land of Israel every seven years. This "Shabbat" for the land is called "shemita". After every seventh shemita, the fiftieth year, yovel (jubilee) is announced with the sound of the shofar on Yom Kippur. This was also a year for the land to lie fallow. G-d promises to provide a bumper crop prior to the shemita and yovel years. During yovel, all land is returned to its original division from

the time of Joshua, and all Jewish indentured servants are freed, even if they have not completed their six years of work. A Jewish indentured servant may not be given any demeaning, unnecessary or excessively difficult work, and may not be sold in the public market. The price of his labor must be calculated according to the amount of time remaining until he will automatically become free. The price of land is similarly calculated. Should anyone sell his ancestral land, he has the right to redeem it after two years. If a house in a walled city is sold, the right of redemption is limited to the first year after the sale. The Levites' cities belong to them forever. The Jewish People are forbidden to take advantage of one another by lending or borrowing with interest. Family members should redeem any relative who was sold as an indentured servant as a result of impoverishment.

Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/573755/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm

Lyrics:

Chorus:

Hashem's world, Hashem's land
Shobbos does proclaim
Hashem's world, Hashem's land
Shmitah does the same

What do we eat in the seventh year?
For six years the Jews prepared
With food they were supplied
In Hashem they relied

Chorus:

The fiftieth year was Yoveil
Bringing hope for Yisroel
That a better day will come
With freedom for everyone

Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=1917

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/925>

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=1668

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=4151

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=4034

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=2979

http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=7076

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

K-2

Questions

1. Which year is shemitah?
2. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemitah?
3. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemitah, and then shemitah comes before the loan is paid back?
4. When does a yovel year come?
5. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50th year)?
6. What does keeping the laws of shemitah demonstrate?
7. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
8. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
9. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved to a goy?
10. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?

Answers

1. Every seventh year.
2. NO
3. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
4. Every fiftieth year.
5. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur
6.
 - a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us
 - b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
7. NO
8. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
9. Redeem him
10. Exile

Questions

1. Which year is shemitah?
2. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemitah?
3. May he lock his field up so that he is the only one that is able to eat the fruit?
4. Can the farmer take any food for himself?
5. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemitah, and then shemitah comes before the loan is paid back?
6. When does a yovel year come?
7. If someone who lived in Eretz Yisrael during the time of the Beit hamikdash sold his field, could he ever get it back for free?
8. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50th year)?
9. What does keeping the laws of shemitah demonstrate?
10. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
11. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
12. From whom may you buy avadim?
13. For how long do these avadim work?
14. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved to a goy?
15. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?

Answers

1. Every seventh year.
2. NO
3. NO
4. YES. He may take as much as anyone else can.
5. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
6. Every fiftieth year.
7. YES! He got it back for free when Yovel came.
8. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur
9.
 - a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us
 - b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
10. NO
11. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
12. Non-Jews
13. Forever
14. Redeem him
15. Exile

5-6

Questions

1. Which year is shemitah?
2. Is a farmer living in Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemitah?
3. May he lock his field up so that he is the only one that is able to eat the fruit?
4. Can the farmer take any food for himself?
5. Is a farmer living outside of Eretz Yisrael allowed to plow, plant, harvest, or do any work in his field during shemitah?
6. What happens if someone lends someone money before shemitah, and then shemitah comes before the loan is paid back?
7. When does a yovel year come?
8. If someone who lived in Eretz Yisrael during the time of the Beit hamikdash sold his field, could he ever get it back for free?
9. How could you figure out how much to sell the field for?
10. Is a Jew allowed to collect interest when he lends money to another Jew?
11. How do we let everyone know when it is the Yovel year (50th year)?
12. What does keeping the laws of shemitah demonstrate?
13. Was one allowed to work his field during yovel?
14. What berachah does Hashem promise one who keeps shemittah and Yovel?
15. From whom may you buy avadim?
16. For how long do these avadim work?
17. What should one do if his relative is sold as an eved to a goy?
18. What is the punishment for neglecting the laws of shemita?
19. What is the definition of a "ger toshav"?
20. Where is it permitted to prostrate oneself on a stone floor?

Answers

1. Every seventh year.
2. NO
3. NO
4. YES. He may take as much as anyone else can.
5. YES
6. The borrower doesn't have to pay back the loan.
7. Every fiftieth year.
8. YES! He got it back for free when Yovel came.
9. The closer it was to the Yovel year, the less the field cost. The further it was from the Yovel year, the more the field cost.
10. NO
11. The shofar is blown on Yom Kippur
12.
 - a. A great belief in Hashem, that He will provide for us
 - b. It shows that the true master of the land is Hashem, not us.
13. NO
14. The produce of the sixth year will last three years.
15. Non-Jews

16. Forever
17. Redeem him
18. Exile
19. A non-Jew who lives in Eretz Yisrael and accepts upon himself not to worship idols.
20. In the Mikdash

Parsha Stories

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/674024/jewish/Living-with-the-Parsha.htm

Living with the Parsha: Looking Ahead

By [Mendy Loewenthal](#)

The fan hummed, creating a soft atmosphere in the class room. Spring had settled in, summer was approaching, and the warm sunlight streaming in through the large windows.

"Speak to the children of Israel and you shall say to them," Mr. Benson was reading the Torah portion to the class. "When you come to the land that I am giving you, the land shall rest a Sabbath for G-d. You should sow your field for six years..."

Ben had heard of "*Shemithah*," the Sabbath for the land. He knew that this year is a *Shemithah* year, observed by many farmers in the Land of Israel.

"Mr. Benson," Adam raised his hand to ask a question. "When the Jewish people first entered the land of Israel with Joshua, did they first have a year of rest, or did they first work the fields for six years and then have the year of rest?"

Ben laughed to himself. How could you think they would rest first? But Mr. Benson didn't laugh. "Good question," he said. "What would you say, Adam?"

"I don't know."

"*That's why I asked the question—because I don't know,*" Adam thought to himself. But he didn't say anything.

Mr. Benson just stood there with a smile and then, as if reading Adam's mind, said, "look closely at the verses in the Torah, Adam, and pay attention to the order that the commandments are written."

"Okay," Adam said as he looked at the text in front of him. "Let's see... 'Speak to the children of Israel... the land shall rest... sow your fields for six years...'"

"Ahh, I know," he almost yelled! "First they rested and then they worked for six years!"

"Good," Mr. Benson said encouragingly. "Explain why you say that."

"Well," the words tumbled out of Adam's mouth, "first the Torah speaks about resting and then it speaks about working."

"Excellent," Mr. Benson said. "Now the Sages tell us in fact they first worked for six years and then they rested. So now we have a question. What is the question?"

"Why does the Torah speak about the resting first?" Adam answered.

The rest of the class sat listening with their full attention.

Ben raised his hand. "Could that be," he said hesitantly, "because the *Shemita* year, the year of rest, is the most important year and that's why the Torah speaks about it first?"

"Very good," Mr. Benson said. "The Torah is teaching us that the real point of all the six years of work is that one year at the end which will be filled with the study of Torah and spiritual activities making it a year which is a Sabbath to G-d. That's why it mentions *Shemita* right at the beginning".

"Like knowing from the beginning that at the end of the week will be Shabbat," said Adam. "Cool!"

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-Behar.pdf?docid=3510&ie=1&showobject=1>

LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

SHMITTA

Yaakov, may I water our garden

during the Shmitta year?”

“Yes Rachel. We live here in Eretz Yisrael and we are observing the Shmitta. Therefore, you may water it enough to keep the grass alive.”

“How do I know how much water it needs to stay alive?”

“Experiment and see. If you see it drying out too much, then water it.”

“That may not be so easy.”

“Do your best, Rachel dear, and Hashem will help.”

Rachel did her best, but most of the grass withered and died. The garden, which had been lush and green, was now mostly dirt.

“Now that the Shmitta is over, what shall we do about the garden, Yaakov?”

“I phoned a gardener, and he wants a lot of money to plant new grass.”

“Oy, I feel so badly that I let it all die.”

“Don’t feel badly, Rachel. You observed Shmitta. That is more important than the grass. Let us wait until after the winter to phone the gardener. We don’t use the garden much during the winter, anyway.”

That winter was a year of great blessings of rain in Eretz Yisrael. Yaakov and Rachel watched in elation as their garden began to sprout with beautiful green grass. By the end of the winter, all of the grass had grown back.

“When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a Shabbos rest for Hashem” (Vayikra 25:2).

“Yaakov, look at our beautiful garden.”

“A gift from Hashem.”

Kinderlach . . .

The Torah promises that those who observe Shmitta will never lose. The same is true about honoring Shabbos, Yom Tov, lending to poor people and giving tzedaka. Keeping the Torah is the best investment. You never lose.

HE’S TAKING CARE OF US

Chaim, you’re not going to believe this.”

“Believe what, Avi?”

“Believe what my teacher taught us today about the Shmitta (Sabbatical) year.”

“Is that the year where the farmer is forbidden to work the land?”

“Correct, Chaim. Once every seven years the land is allowed to rest.”

“What’s so unbelievable about that? Crop rotation is supposed to be a good thing.”

“My teacher quoted Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt”l, the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva.”

“What did he say?”

“Those who observed the Shmitta year were like heavenly angels. Their strength

was unfathomable. How can it be that a person can achieve such great things from the mitzvah of Shmitta?"

"Let's think about this a minute, Avi. Let us try to imagine ourselves back in the days of the Beis HaMikdash."

And so, Chaim begins to tell a story.

"Abba, thank you so much for taking such good care of us. Boruch Hashem, we have a nice farm, and every day you go out and work the fields. You plow, plant, and tend to the crops. When they are fully grown, you pick them and bring them to Imma to cook into the delicious meals that we eat. We are so fortunate that we have such a farm and that it is able to provide food for our family."

"Kinderlach, do you know what next year is?"

"What, Abba?"

"The Shmitta (sabbatical) year. Next year I take a big vacation – no plowing, planting, cultivating or working the land. We will see what will grow by itself. Even those crops will not be ours. They are hefker (ownerless) and free for anyone to take."

"But Abba, what will we have to eat next year? If you do not work the land, and anyone can take what grows by itself, we will have hardly any food."

"Kinderlach, the Torah asks the exact same question in Vayikra, chapter 25, verse 20. The answer is that Hashem will provide for us. This year He will give us enough food to last until after the Shmitta year."

Kinderlach . . .

That is the way it was. There are no records of any famine ever occurring amongst the Jewish people in Biblical times as a result of keeping the Shmitta year. In the times of the Beis HaMikdash, farming was the main occupation of the Jewish people. Without the crops of the farm, there would be literally no food to eat. Observing the Shmitta was therefore a very big test of one's trust in Hashem. That is why Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz says that those who observe Shmitta were compared to heavenly angels who have no desire to go against Hashem's will. That is the strength of their trust in Him.

THE HOLY LAND

Hashem spoke to Moshe on Har Sinai saying, "...the land shall rest for Hashem" (Vayikra 25:1-2). Rashi asks the famous question, "How is Shmitta (the Sabbatical year) related to Har Sinai?" The Keli Yakar has a novel answer to this

question. Shmitta and Har Sinai are similar in many ways. Moshe Rabbeinu went up to Har Sinai after counting seven weeks (49 days) from Yetzias Mitzraim. So too, Shmitta is once every seven years, and Yovel is after seven Shmittas (49 years). Har Sinai became holy, and it was forbidden to plow and plant there. Similarly, these melachos are forbidden during the Shmitta and Yovel years, due to the holiness of the Land of Israel. The Shofar sounded during the Yovel year just as it sounded during the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai. At that time, Hashem taught Moshe Rabbeinu about the Shmitta and Yovel years. They were imbued with holiness just as Har Sinai was. The air of the Land of Israel imparts wisdom, just as Har Sinai did. There is no Torah like the Torah learned in the Land of Israel. So too, there is no Torah like the Torah learned at Har Sinai.

We are in the midst of the Shmitta year, and we are approaching Shavuos, the time of the giving of the Torah. We know how holy Har Sinai was. There we were shown that Hashem is G-d and there is no One besides Him (Devarim 4:35). All of the heavens opened for us. The Keli Yakar is telling us that the Land of Israel has the same holiness. Let us all try to appreciate that holiness.

Kinderlach . . .

Many Jews are very fortunate to live in the Land of Israel. Let us all try to appreciate its holiness. We can learn the halachos of Shmitta. We can learn the halachos of other mitzvos that can only be performed in the Land of Israel, such as trumah and maaser. We can strengthen the observance of these mitzvos. And we can prepare ourselves for the giving of the Torah this Shavuos.

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Lend to Your Brother

Knock, knock. The man opens the front door. Standing before him is his brother, Meir.

“Meir! I haven’t seen you in a long time!

How are you?”

“Not so good, Chezi.”

“Oy vey! What is the matter?”

“I’m having problems with parnassa (livelihood).”

“Really? What happened?”

“I had a good job, but I was laid off. I managed to find another job. It was going well; however, yesterday I received a note from my boss.”

“Oh no.”

“Yes. I lost this job too. I could look for another one. At my age the possibilities are slim.”

“You are not an old man, Meir. You are a dedicated hard worker.”

“I realize that, Chezi. However, the job market is tough. I would like to start my own business.”

“What would you do?”

“I have always been good with my hands. I would like to get into home repairs. I know that a good, reliable repairman is hard to find.”

“I agree, Meir.”

“I went to the bank for a loan to help me start the business. I need to buy tools, and I need help covering the family expenses until my income increases. The bank charges 10% interest for small business loans. They also require a lot of paperwork, collateral, and guarantors. I just cannot manage all of that.”
understand, Meir.”

“After the bank, I went to a money lender. He wanted an even higher interest rate. If I do not quickly succeed in my business, I will have to borrow more money to pay off this loan. The interest will just keep building up and up and I will be working just to pay interest. It is a vicious cycle. I don’t want to get involved.”
“I agree, Meir.”

“That is why I am coming to you, Chezi. Perhaps you can lend me the money. B’ezrat Hashem you will help me stay afloat until I can stand on my own two feet.”

Chezi smiles warmly and gives his brother a big hug.

“I will lend you the money, Meir. We grew up together. We played together. We helped each other in school. We have shared the good times and hard times together our whole lives. We are from the same flesh and blood! Of course, I will help you. I am your brother!”

The Torah states, “If your brother becomes poor...you shall strengthen him...Do not take interest from him...let your brother live with you.” (Vayikra 25:35-37). The Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 66) explains that lending to a poor person ingrains within us the middos (good character traits) of chessed (kindness) and rachamim (compassion). Why not charge ribbis (interest) on the loan? Because ribbis will ultimately make the borrower even poorer. He will lose his possessions paying off the ribbis (Mitzvah 68). The verse refers to the downtrodden Jew who needs a loan as “your brother” (Vayikra 25:35, Devarim 23:20). Would a person ever refuse to do a kind act for his brother? His own flesh and blood? Finally, the Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 573) points out that Hashem loves us. One reason is that we serve Him by keeping His Torah and mitzvos. He loves us, therefore, we should love each other, and be kind to each other by lending money without interest.

Kinderlach . . .

Did you get a nice gift of money for your birthday? Did you make a little money working during the vacation? What will you do with it? Do you want to put it to good use? Lend it to a gemach - an organization that lends money to Jews - interest free. You may say to yourself, “I can get interest when I deposit in the bank. Here I get no interest.” True, but just think about your brother who needs help. He may have lost his job, he may have medical expenses, or his home may need major repairs. He needs you. Who else can he turn to but you, his own

brother? Hashem promises great rewards for those who help their brothers. Kinderlach, lend your money to a gemach, and earn much more than interest: prosperity in this world, and schar (reward) in the World to Come.

Leiv Tahor

Excuse me; can you please direct me to Rechov Leiv Tahor?"

The man opened his eyes. He had been enjoying a nice afternoon nap in the beautiful public park when this stranger came along.

"What? Which street do you want?"

"Leiv Tahor."

"He has some nerve," the man thought.

"He woke me up to ask me directions.

Didn't he see that I was sleeping? I will fix him good. I will give him directions to a street so far away that he will be lost for hours." He stands up to point the man in the wrong direction.

"Let's see - Leiv Tahor."

He repeats the words to himself. "Leiv Tahor". "Leiv Tahor". Leiv tahor means pure heart. Am I really doing this with a pure heart? I am taking revenge. I am giving someone bad advice. That is onaas devarim (wronging him with words). Perhaps he did not realize that I was sleeping.

Even if he did, perhaps there was no one else around to ask. He may be under pressure to make an appointment. Why should I take revenge? He did not do anything wrong. I am going to give him the answer with a pure heart.

"Rechov Leiv Tahor. I am going that way myself. Follow me."

The Torah prohibits wronging a person with words as the verse states, "You shall not wrong your fellow (Jew) with words, and you shall fear your G-d" (Vayikra 25:17). Rashi asks the following question: If someone gives bad advice, who will know if he really intended to wrong the person? Perhaps he just made an honest mistake. Therefore, the verse states, "You shall fear your G-d." He knows your thoughts. He knows the intentions of your heart. He cannot be fooled.

Kinderlach . . .

Onaas devarim is a sin of the mouth and the heart. The mouth should never utter words that hurt one of our fellow Jews. However, even if these words are spoken there is another partner in the crime - the heart. Did the speaker really intend to hurt the person? Only two individuals know the answer to that - Hashem and the speaker. The Almighty cannot be fooled. He knows everything. Do not try to fool

yourselves either, kinderlach. Do not try to convince yourselves that you are right, when you know in your heart that you are wrong. Keep your hearts pure. Serve Hashem with a leiv tahor.

Parasha Questions:

- May we eat from the fruits of the Shmitta year? (25:6 and Rashi)
- Which slaves go free in the Yovel year? (25:10 and Rashi)
- How big will the crop be in the sixth year? (25:21)
- What is the source of the sequence of events that leads a person to sell himself as a slave to a non-Jew? (Rashi 26:1)
- What is the danger of being a servant in a non-Jewish home? (Rashi 26:1)

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<http://www.aish.com/torahPortion/pArchive.asp?eventType=32&eventName=Behar>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Treat_Everyone_With_Respect.asp

Behar (Leviticus 25:1-26:2)

Treat Everyone With Respect

From this week's Torah Portion

When it comes to treating people with kindness and respect, there are no exceptions to the rule. In this week's Torah portion we learn that even a rich, important landowner must treat his lowliest servant with care and respect (Lev. 25:39-43). The Torah way is never to look down on or mistreat *anyone*.

Story

In our story, some kids find out something new about who deserves respect.

ROYAL TREATMENT

The sidewalks were full of kids holding their collars tight and their umbrellas tighter as they trudged, slogged and scrambled their way to school beneath the spring downpour.

In the midst of all the soggy chaos, gliding gracefully along was Heather, otherwise known as the 'class Queen.'

The girl certainly deserved the title, too. Not only was she the coolest, most put-together, and good-looking kid in the class by far, but she was also a straight 'A' student.

Vicky and Jan, who counted themselves lucky enough to be Heather's best friends (or at least they wanted to be) strutted on either side of her like a pair of bookends, proud of the privilege of walking close to her.

They were wearing the same top-designer raincoat as Heather was (after all, they'd run out and bought them right after she did) and tried to carry their high-end umbrellas with the same casual flair as her, though for some reason it didn't look quite the same.

As the threesome turned the corner, they encountered a strange sight. A kid was wildly swinging her inside-out, collapsed umbrella in the wind, obviously trying - without success - to straighten it out. Her hair was a wet, flying mop and her book bag had somehow opened up and was fast spilling its contents into the puddle at her feet.

It took only a moment to realize who this unfortunate creature was - none other than Lizzy, better known to her classmates as Frizzy Lizzy, the class loser.

Vicky and Jan saw this as a perfect chance to have a little 'fun' and at the same time impress Heather at how cool and clever they were.

"Lizzy dear, I believe the rain is falling *down*, not *up*" Vicky snickered as they strode past, "I think you'd be a lot drier if you kept your umbrella *over* your head."

"Yes, that is of course, unless you are trying to give your hair a perm treatment - but then again it's certainly *frizzy* enough as it is, isn't it?" Jan added with a sharp laugh.

As they walked on and left Lizzy to her troubles, the two girls were anxious to see how much Heather must have enjoyed their clever putdowns of their lowly classmate.

"She's some loser, isn't she Heather?" Jan chuckled, turning toward her - but the girl wasn't there. "Hey Vicky, where's Heather?" she asked, stopping in her tracks.

"Maybe we didn't notice and she rushed ahead of us," Vicky responded tensely. But the pair quickly realized that wasn't so as they heard the familiar smiling voice of the class Queen behind them...

"There you go, Liz, that's everything. All the stuff is back in your bag."

Jan and Vicky couldn't believe their eyes. Heather was standing at Lizzy's side, zippering her bag for her. But their amazement only grew as the girl went on...

"But I think your umbrella's pretty totaled. Hey, you know what? I have an idea - there's plenty of room under mine. Let's share!"

As the unlikely pair - the class Queen and the now broadly-smiling class loser - began walking hand in hand, Vicky and Jan looked at each other with one thought on both their minds. While they had been trying to think of ways to put the poor kid down - Heather had been finding ways to treat her with respect and care!

As they reunited, Vicky and Jan took their original place at Heather's (and Lizzy's) side. But this time they hung back a little, because they knew they had a long way to go - and a lot to learn about how to treat people - before they could ever really consider themselves *close* to the 'Queen.'

Discussion Questions

Ages 3-5

Q. How did Vicky and Jan feel when they first saw Lizzy struggling with her umbrella?

A. They felt that since she wasn't a popular kid it was okay to make fun of her.

Q. How did they feel after seeing how Heather treated Lizzy?

A. They felt sorry how they acted and knew that had to treat everyone - even her - nicely.

Ages 6-9

Q. What life-lesson do you think Vicky and Jan learned that day?

A. They had felt that it was all right to make fun of and put down unpopular, 'loser' type people. But when they saw how Heather, the most popular kid in the

class, treated her, they realized that we should treat everyone - even people who seem lowly - with kindness and respect.

Q. Why do you think Heather - the class queen - was able to be kind to Lizzy, whereas her friends weren't?

A. A person who is genuinely great - like Heather - feels confident and good enough about herself that she doesn't need to put others down to put herself up. The other two girls, who didn't really have Heather's good qualities but merely wanted to pretend act as if they did, felt a need to boost their own self-image by knocking someone else. The sign of a great person is a kind and respectful person.

Ages 10 and Up

Q. What attitude do you think could help a person treat others - especially those who seem to be 'less' than he is - with respect?

A. There are two aspects to reality. The first and more superficial is the reality we see - in which some of us are smarter, richer, better-looking, etc. than others. However, there is a coexistent deeper, spiritual reality in which each human being, each creature is equally valued and valuable as a creation of God. By focusing on this deeper reality, we will find it easier to relate to everyone and everything with deep respect.

Q. Our sages teach that 'one who acquires a servant - acquires a master.' How do you understand this statement?

A. They are teaching us that one shouldn't erroneously think that he has the right to mistreat someone under him (such as his servant). In fact, if a servant's master has only one pillow he must give it to his servant rather than himself! The Torah way is to treat all - regardless of their social station - with unconditional respect.

Parsha Games

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

K-2

Shabbat is the day that we rest, so that we are ready for the next week. The parashah tells us that just like people rest on Shabbat, the Earth needs to rest from growing things, so that it can keep its goodness and continue to grow more delicious fruit and vegetables

Middah/ Jewish Value

- **Looking after our Earth**

Activity

Talk about all things environmental.

Looking after the land - what does that mean? Not leaving litter, caring for the countryside.

Recycling - using things again, not wasting.

Compost helps to use up vegetable waste and grow healthy plants.

Sing this song about litter, using 'picking up' and 'throwing in the bin' actions.

Tune: Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Throw our rubbish in the bin, in the bin,

Making sure that it goes in, it goes in,

Or the paper, food and all the dirty waste

Will make the Earth a messy place, messy place!

3-4

The mitzvah of Shmittah, allowing the land to 'rest' in the seventh year, is described in detail in this parashah

Middah/ Jewish Value

- **Caring for the Environment**

Activity

The mitzvah of Shmittah is one of our mitzvot that can be done only in Eretz Yisrael - Israel. Hashem gave us the Earth and we must look after it. If the land does not have a rest it would eventually produce poor crops and the people would starve. This activity is called 'Environmental Consequences'.

We look after the Environment in many different ways. Use the phrases below to start the discussion. Use the following format:

Part One

If we don't give the land a rest...

Part Two

...it will lose its goodness...

Part Three

...crops will then fail and people will starve.

Examples:

1. If you pour chemicals from a factory into a river...

2. If you leave plastic bags lying around in the countryside...
3. If a tanker leaks oil into the sea...
4. If people had dirty smoke coming out of car exhausts...

Think of more examples to discuss.

5-6

We learn from the parashah to help others simply because the torah tells us to, and not for a reward

Middah/ Jewish Value

- **Helping those that are needy**

Activity

Have a discussion of what 'needy' could encompass. Each child has to think of an example of need and how they personally could help in the situation.