

דברי מנחם

Diarei Menachem

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"And Hashem spoke to Moshe at Har Sinai" from where the laws of Sh'mita went forth. Rashi comments that just as Sh'mita was given at Sinai, so were all the laws spoken at Sinai... Rashi's comment, of course, begs the question as to why of all the Mitzvot was Sh'mita singled out as the "Mother of all Mitzvot".

R. Shlomo Aviner suggests that Sh'mita, of all the Mitzvot, symbolizes the holy relationship between the people, the Torah, and the Land. It is quintessential in character. For only in Eretz Yisrael can the Torah's Mitzvot be actualized to their fullest. Only in Eretz Yisrael can we fulfill our religious destiny as a people. Only in this land we can we play out G-d's plan in this world, which began thousands of years ago with the revolutionary, Avraham Avinu.

Avraham was told, go to the land, "where I will make you into a great nation." Avraham thus represents that metamorphosis from individuality to peoplehood. And of the people of Israel it is written, "Who is like you, Israel, one nation in the Land?" (cf. Zohar Vayikra, 93b) Yes, with all the awesome significance of Har Sinai, Hashem yet told the people: "You have dwelt long enough by this mount; turn and make your way."

And what is that way if not to that place where, "You will bring them and implant them on the Mount of your heritage [Moriah]" (Sh'mot 15:17). How wonderful thus to internalize that we who live in that Land today have the privilege not only of keeping Shabbat in time, but also Shabbat in place. We can literally imbibe that heritage and perform that Mitzva that touches the very roots of our existence. We can embrace the Land and, as it lies unburdened, fashion our collective mission to bring about a public Kiddush Hashem, the ripples of which extend throughout the nations of this world.