

כזור אתיוום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל-מלאכתך,
יום השביעי שבת לה'

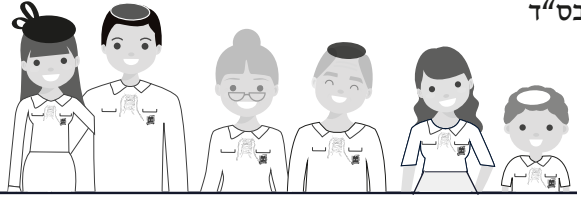
SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

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בס"ד



SHEMITA'S TRIPLE FOCUS MADELEINE FERRIS SHEVET MORASHA

"Hashem said to Moshe on Mount Sinai, speak to Bnei Yisrael

and say to them: When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a Shabbat of Hashem" (*Vayikra* 25:1). *Parashat Behar* opens with this seemingly uncomplicated *pasuk*, whereby the laws of *Shemita* are brought down to *Am Yisrael* by Moshe. However, it raises an important question: why does this *pasuk* stress that these laws were given at *Har Sinai*? In the wider context of the Torah, *Am Yisrael* have been stood at the foot of *Har Sinai* since *parashat Yitro*, and we would have assumed that this episode occurred in the same place without being told as such. We believe that the Torah is the word of God, meaning that no word or phrase is superfluous. Therefore, we must examine why the Torah was suddenly compelled to state, once again, that its commandments were given at *Har Sinai*. Rashi answers that *Shemita*, as a commandment in itself, reflects the fact that all laws of the Torah were given on *Har Sinai*. However, it remains unclear why *Shemita* is the best lens through which to convey this message.

Rav Zevin answers that the *mitzva* of *Shemita* is unique, as it incorporates the three aspects of life that *mitzvot* seek to refine; 1. *Bein Adam LaMakom* (between a person and God), 2. *Bein Adam LaChaveiro* (between people), 3. *Bein Adam LeAtzmo* (between a person and themselves). **Firstly**, *Shemita* creates a relationship between a person and Hashem through preserving a '*Shabbat Lashem*'. *Vayikra* 25:2 commands that "the land shall observe a *Shabbat* of Hashem"; leaving the land to rest represents an appreciation of all that Hashem has given us. Through stepping back from the land that we toil over for six years at a time, we are able

to recognise its significance in our lives, and our dependence on Hashem. **Secondly**, *Shemita* improves interpersonal relationships through encouraging a sense of communal responsibility amongst *Am Yisrael*. Many of the *Shemita* laws relate to our dealings with lenders, household servants, and importantly, the poor, who benefit from the *Shemita* year by taking from the ownerless produce left to rest. **Thirdly**, the *Shemita* cycle encourages people to take responsibility for personal livelihood. During the prior six-year period, one must sow and prune their fields, in preparation for the seventh year of rest (*Vayikra* 25:1). Whilst we must recognise Hashem's hand in providing all that we have, one must put in effort in order to ensure that they have sufficient produce for sustenance over the seventh year.

Since *Shemita* encompasses these three elements of *mitzvot*, it is appropriate for it to be the paradigm through which we understand that all *mitzvot* were given on *Har Sinai*. The *mitzvot* of *Vayikra* are often construed as less relevant to modern Jews, who may not live in *Eretz Yisrael*, and unfortunately do not currently have a *Beit Hamikdash*. These two circumstances mean that *mitzvot* like *Shemita* are overlooked by many and perceived as unrelatable. However, Rav Zevin's answer speaks to the uniqueness of *Shemita* and its importance in reminding us to balance three integral elements of being an observant Jew.

In daily life, it is difficult to strike the balance between observing all three realms of *mitzvot*, and it is rare that we find a *mitzva* in which we are able to encompass all three. At times, it is easy to forget that cultivating good interpersonal relationships and looking after oneself are integral to Judaism and serving Hashem well. This *parasha* generally, and *Shemita* specifically, serve as a reminder of how as Jews, we must try to balance all three areas, to the best of our abilities, in order to serve Hashem *besimcha*.

MADELEINE IS IN SHEVET MORASHA AND WAS A MADRICHAN ON ISRAEL MACHANE GROUP 2

London	In 20:27 Out 21:40	Leeds	In 20:44 Out 22:08	Birmingham	In 20:39 Out 21:59
Manchester	In 20:28 Out 21:46	Nottingham	In 20:38 Out 22:00	Liverpool	In 20:48 Out 22:10
Thaxted	In 20:28 Out 21:47	Brighton	In 20:26 Out 21:42	Bristol	In 20:38 Out 21:55
Cambridge	In 20:30 Out 21:49	Oxford	In 20:34 Out 21:52	Jerusalem	In 18:51 Out 20:08

SHLICHA'S CORNER: IMOTEINU - WOMEN IN TANAKH II

RACHAV - HOW DID SHE MERIT TO MARRY YEHOSHUA AND COUNT EIGHT PROPHETS AMONG HER DESCENDANTS?



Before Am Yisrael enters the promised land, Yehoshua sends two spies to Yericho. They arrive at the house of Rachav, who according to the simple (*peshat*)

reading was a prostitute. Not the best job for a righteous person.

So how did Rachav end up joining *Am Yisrael*, marrying our leader of that time, and being mentioned as having many *zechuyot* (merits)?

When the spies were in Yericho, the king's army heard that they were at Rachav. Before the authorities reached her house, Rachav sent the two spies upstairs to hide, and sent the officials away. Then, she described to the Jewish spies how frightened all the inhabitants of Canaan are from Am Yisrael, and that she knows that the land has been given to the Jews.

ידעתי כי נתן ה' לכם את הארץ, וכי נפלה אימתכם עלינו, וכי נמוגו כל יושבי הארץ מפניכם... (יהושע ב, ט-יא)

"I know that the LORD has given the country to you, because dread of you has fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land are quaking before you" (*Yehoshua* 2:9-11)

Rachav asked the spies to spare her and her family when fighting against Yericho, just as she had saved their lives. They devised a unique way to mark out her house so that it would stay untouched during the war. After Yericho was destroyed, Rachav joined *Am Yisrael*, as the *pasuk* says:

ותשב בקרב ישראל עד היום הזה (יהושע ג, כה)

"And she dwelt among the Israelites, until this very day" (*Yehoshua* 6:25).

Chazal teach us (*Tana Debei Eliyahu Zuta*) that Rachav not only joined *Am Yisrael*, but did *teshuvah* and became a *tzaddeiket* (righteous woman)! Moreover, we are told that her offspring included seven kings and eight prophets, *Chulda* being one of them. They even learn from her name "Rachav" (meaning "wide") as hinting to us that she is filled with many *mitzvot* and merits.

"CHAZAL TEACH US THAT RACHAV NOT ONLY JOINED AM YISRAEL, BUT DID TESHUVA AND BECAME A TZADDEIKET! WHERE DID THIS COME FROM?"

Where did this come from?

Rabbeinu Yerucham explains that it all is based on her desire to do *chesed* with *Am Yisrael*. The fact she was willing to put herself in danger to save some Jews and thereby help the rest of *Am Yisrael* is what set off

the *teshuvah* she did at the end. This was ultimately the reason for all the special things we are taught about her, and the many teachings of *chazal* that portray her in a righteous light.

From Rachav we can learn the importance of helping even one fellow Jew, but even more than that- being of help to the entire nation! We too can find our way to be of help to *Am Yisrael*, each one with their unique way.

RABBANIT AVIYA GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET SHVUT AND IS THE RABBANIT SHLICHA OF BNEI AKIVA. TO CONTACT THE RABBANIT, EMAIL RABBANIT@BAUK.ORG.

TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

RIF | NAHALA 10TH IYYAR



From Rabina Alkalaja street, we retrace our steps to Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport [BEG] and fly with AirSerbia to Istanbul Havalimani [IST]. Now we change for our connecting flight with AirArabia to Fès-Saïss Airport [FEZ] (with which we're all still familiar from three issues ago) for the Rabbi who gave his name to the city- uh, for the city who gave its name to the Rabbi of the first halakhic code.

Rabbi Yitzchak al-Fasi (better known as the Rif) played a pivotal role in Jewish, and especially halakhic, history. Born in 1013 in Qal'at Hammad – the exact location of which is contested, but somewhere in north Africa – he soon moved to Kairouan, Tunisia, a hub of Torah study and home of the renowned Kairouan yeshiva. He studied under Nissim ben Jacob (sometimes known as Nissim Gaon) and Chanan'el ben Chushiel (better known as Rabbeinu Chanan'el), before moving to Fez a decade or so later. Rif stayed in Fez for most of his life, and possibly thereby earning the appellation 'al-Fasi', i.e. 'of Fez'. However, when he was 75, he issued an unfavourable halakhic ruling to a man of high standing and was denounced to the Moroccan authorities, forcing him to flee to Lucena, a city almost entirely Jewish in population, in Andalusia. There he became head of the yeshiva of Lucena, and taught such illustrious figures as Yehuda Halevi (of *Kuzari* fame) and Rabbi Yosef ibn Megas (more on him later). Rif died in 1103 at the age of 90, and both Moshe ibn Ezra and Yehuda Halevi wrote laments for him.

Rif played an essential role in the transmission of the Geonic tradition to the communities of Andalusia, causing the eventual eclipse of the Babylonian Gaonate by the Golden Age of Spain in Andalusia. As mentioned, Rif's two main teachers were Nissim ben Jacob and Rabbeinu Chanan'el, both of whom were taught by Chushiel, Rabbeinu Chanan'el's father. He himself had been a student of the Geonim in Babylonia, and thus carried the teachings of Sura and Pumbedita to Kairouan. This meant that Rif continued the direct line of the *mesora* (or *talqin* in Arabic) that came from the Geonim, and passed it on to his students in Lucena. One of those students, ibn Megas, was the teacher of a certain Maimon – father of Moshe ben Maimon, or Rambam. Thus Rambam had access to the direct line of teachings from the Geonim, and ultimately the Amoraim before them. Why is this important? Because great mystical secrets were taught by word of mouth **halakha**.

The Rif's greatest work was a project that took decades to complete. Termed *Sefer HaHalakhot*, it was a restatement of the halakhic conclusions of the Talmud still relevant in the diaspora. As anyone who has studied a page of Talmud will know, every *halakha*, every idea is subjected to rigorous analysis and evaluation by the other rabbis of the Gemara, as well as many discussions being interspersed with copious aggadic (non-legal) material, often in the form of legendary stories with complex motifs and themes. The Rif's greatness lay in his ability to extract the halakhic conclusions from this intricate web of information, or in Aramaic terms **לאסוקי שמועתתא אליבא דהלכתא**, and present it in a clear fashion. Doing so is no mean feat; it requires a fastidious approach to the text and incredible sensitivity to the terminology and legal processes of the Talmud. The knowledge of how to do this, accompanied by the explained meaning of the Talmud's terms, was passed down through the Geonic *mesora/talqin*, to the Rif, and ultimately to



Rambam. Hence, in the introduction to his *Kitab al-Siraj* (better known as *Commentary on the Mishna*), Rambam writes that the Rif supplanted **all** halakhic literature that came before him due to his excellent method and style, and that Rambam will disagree with him in fewer than ten places. By the time he wrote *Mishne Torah*, Rambam writes that this number increased to approximately 30, give or take. Take a moment to consider that – in the **entirety** of the halakhic corpus, only 30 instances of *machaloket* between Rambam and Rif! This attests to the importance and integrity of the Talmudic *mesora*.

The Rif's influence was felt for centuries afterwards, such that he formed one of the three pillars of Rav Yosef Karo's *Shulchan Arukh* (the other two being Rambam and Rosh). Even one of the most prolific Tosafists, Rabbi Yitzchak (the Ri), said about the Rif's work that it could not have been written by anyone without the assistance of 'divine inspiration'. Well, 'divine inspiration' or *talqin*...

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Birmingham SBM** continues this **Monday 15th May!** Join us at the usual location.

- **Manchester SBM** continues this **Monday 15th May** at the **Manchester Bayit!**

- If you have **exams coming up**, join other chavereim studying at **Revision B'bayit**, with helpful bogrim on-hand to assist! Plus some Torah and refreshments.

- **Lishmah** for bogrot and sixth-form women continues this **Tuesday 16th May**. Join this **dynamic mekom Torah** for women!

- Bnei Akiva have a unique programme on **Mizrachi's Weekend of Inspiration!** See poster below.

- Join **Bnei Akiva, Mizrahi** and **Borehamwood and Estree United Synagogue** for an uplifting **Yom Yerushalayim Tefilla Chagigit** on Thursday **18th May**.

- **Tikkun Leil** will be happening at Bnei Akiva! Keep your eyes peeled for the full details coming soon.

- **Summer Machane** applications are open! Visit **bauk.org/camps** to sign up.

- **Tafkidim** for **Summer Machane** are open! Visit **bauk.org/tafkid** to sign up.

- To give any **comments** or **suggestions** to Bnei Akiva, please visit **bauk.org/feedback**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BEN AT CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG

Yom Yerushalayim with Bnei Akiva, Borehamwood Shul & Mizrahi

With addresses from

יום ירושלים!

Thursday 18 May 2023/28 Iyar 5783
Mincha 7,30pm
at Borehamwood Shul, Croxdale Road
followed by Tefillah Chagigit
for Yom Yerushalayim
With Mizrahi's Six Days of Miracles

Rav Avichai Goodman
Bnei Akiva

Rabbi Andrew Shaw
Mizrachi

BES BNEI AKIVA MIZRACHI Borehamwood & Estree Synagogue

BNEI AKIVA

REVISION B'BAYIT

Come to the bayit to revise for your exams with expert help from bogrim and short shiurim.

Starting 9th May

BNEI AKIVA

Shabbat Afternoon:
Rav Alex Israel
17:30
@ Goodmans

Sunday Lunch:
Rav Joel
12:50
@ Kinloss

Followed by:
Rabbi Anthony Manning
@ Kinloss

MIZRACHI
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