

Shabbos Maverchim Chodesh Sivan-Rosh Chodesh will be Wednesday May 12

**“A NEW CHAPTER OF JEWISH HISTORY IS UNFOLDING”**

The very beginning of our parasha speaks about the Mitzvah of Shemita. There is a major machloket in Rishonim if Shemita in our days is Biblical or Rabbinic. The Torah seems to connect the Mitzvah of Shemita with the Mitzvah of Yovel. “You shall count for yourself seven cycles of Shemita years....shall be for you forty-nine years. You shall then sound the Shofar in the seventh month (Tishrei) on the tenth of the month, on the day of Yom Kippurim” (25:8-9)

The Rambam (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon,) is not perfectly clear, but according to Kesef Mishneh (authored by Rabbi Yosef Karo), the Rambam holds that Shemita in our days is D’orayta [Biblical]. To the extreme opposite, the Baal HaMaor (in Gitin , perek HaSholei’ach) who held that Shemita is not even a Derabbanan. He writes that in days of Gemara, when some rabbis did count, then Shemita was Derabbanan, but today it is only a Minhag, but not even a Din Derabbanan. R’ Yossef Engel, a mechutan to the Kotzker Rebbe, wrote to the Rebbe, a letter of over 100 pages long (found in Otzrot Yosef), proving that Kesef Mishneh is wrong in stating that Rambam held that Shemita is today D’orayta, and also that Baal HaMaor is wrong in holding that its not even Derabbanan. Truth is, like most Rishonim, that Shemita Bizman HaZeh [in our days] is a Din Derabbanan.

Regarding Yovel, Why is it indeed NOT D’Orayta? Rambam specifically states that we do not need a Bet HaMikdash for a biblical Yovel. Before Shlomo HaMelech built the Beit HaMikdas they counted Shemita years, so what is holding us back? The answer is that Yovel requires a majority of Jews of the world residing in Eretz Yisrael..(25:10) **“YOU SHOULD SANCTIFY THE FIFTIETH YEAR AND PROCLAIM LIBERTY (L’CHOL YOSH’VEHA) FOR ALL ITS INHABITANTS”**. Gemara Arachin notes, **“LECHOL YOSH’VEHA”** means even Rohv-a majority, so that even a majority would be sufficient and not necessarily “all”.

According to most demographic experts, in less than 10 years over 50% of the Jewish people will indeed be residing here in Israel. The most contributing factor in this statistical prediction is the catastrophic numbers of intermarriages and assimilation abroad which are bringing Diaspora Jewry’s overall numbers down sharply. It is sad and disheartening that Jews in Eretz Yisrael are being denied the opportunity of performing various Mitzvot on the Biblical level because “the Religious Communities” from the U.S. and around the world are not fulfilling their Mitzvah of “Yishuv HaAretz”. How sad it is that it will take negative factors like intermarriages and assimilation to upgrade Eretz Yisrael Jewry to the level of observing Mitzvot on a Biblical level On the other hand, let us imagine what a genuine Kiddush HaShem it would be if more positive factors would bring about the immediate majority of world Jewry residing in Eretz Yisrael, thus, opening a new chapter of Jewish history.

**I pray that with the coming of Yom Yerushalayim, 28 Iyar, May 10, that in the near future we should all have that Zechut of seeing and observing all the Mitzvot of Eretz Yisrael, in Eretz Yisrael.**

**Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Aharon Ziegler –YERUSHALAYIM**

**QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT BE'HAR-Bechukotai**

**1-The Torah commanded us in parashat Emor (23:15) to count seven weeks and then 50 days between Pesach and Shavu'ot. And this counting is a Mitzvah with a Beracha. Yet in our parasha, where it is written [25:8] “VeSafarta Lecha” “You shall count for yourself” seven cycles of Shmita years”.. this counting is not a Mitzva for us to count with a Beracha. Why? What's the difference?**

**2 - In [25:14] the Torah states “Al Tonu” Do not aggrieve or hurt one another., and then again in [25:17] we read- “Velo Tonu” -Not to aggrieve one another. Why is this repeated twice in the Torah?**

**3-At conclusion of seven cycles of Shmita years-on the 50<sup>th</sup> year, we are to blow the Shofar. On what month and day of month does this take place?**

**4- Our parasha frequently mentions the “GER” and the “Toshav” who live in your land . The “Ger” is a convert, so who is this “Toshav” , that we are commanded to treat them respectfully and kindly???**

**5-A Jewish slave goes out of bondage after 6 years. When does a non-Jewish slave go out?**

**6- (25:36) “V'CHAI ACHICHA IMACH”-“AND LET YOUR BROTHER LIVE WITH YOU”. How does R' Akiva interpret this phrase in Gemara Bava Metzia (62a), in a case when two people are in a desert with only one of them has a bottle of water??. If they share that one bottle they both will die because there is enough water for only one of them to survive. What to do??**

**7-In 26:42,GD says, He will remember the Brit He made with the Avot, but what about the Imahot (the mothers)??**

**PIRKEI AVOT- PEREK ALEF“ASEI LECHA RAV, U'KNEI LECHA CHAVER”—THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD FRIEND. “OLD FRIENDS, LIKE OLD WINES, DON'T LOSE THEIR FLAVOR”**