



Shabbat Shalom from Torah MiTzion

by Torah MiTzion of St. Louis—torahmitzion.org/stLouis



Parshat Behar Bechukotai Rav Yisrael Shachor, former Rosh Kollel, Chicago

“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land belongs to Me”

This verse is related to the requirement that purchased fields are returned to the original owner during the *yovel* (jubilee) year. But what is the Torah’s message in this verse?

According to the Baal Halachot Gedolot (Bahag), this verse is not counted among the 613 *mitzvot*. Rather than containing a prohibition against a specific action, this verse establishes that we can only sell our fields in *Eretz Yisrael* until *yovel*. In addition, the reason is provided: “for the land belongs to Me”. *Eretz Yisrael* belongs to *HKB”H*, and we are mere residents who live in the Land. Therefore, a person can not sell that which does not belong to him.

However, other *Rishonim* do count this verse as one of the Torah’s negative commandments. Rashi (based on the *Torat Kohanim*) explains that this prohibition applies to the buyer but not at the point of sale. Rather, the prohibition refers to someone who does not return the land during *yovel*. This person has transgressed because, *de facto*, he is perpetuating the sale and making it permanent.

In contrast, the Rambam (Hilchot Shemitah ViYovel 1) writes that the prohibition applies to both the buyer and the seller. If, during the sale, they both agree that the purchase will be forever, then they have both transgressed. Similarly, when it comes to *ribbit* (interest), the prohibition still applies even if both sides – the borrower and the lender – agree. The reasoning is clear: “for the land belongs to Me”. For by specifying that the land is to be sold forever, the parties are, in effect, implying that they believe that the land belongs to them and that they can sell it permanently. Thus, they both transgress this prohibition. The Rambam stresses that if they specifically agreed, their agreement is not binding. His source is the famous *halachah*: “Whatever the Torah says should not be done – if he did it, it is to no avail.”

Interestingly enough, the Ramban – in his commentary on the Rambam’s *Sefer HaMitzvot* (Prohibitions 227) – follows the Yerushalmi’s approach that this verse refers to selling to a non-Jew. According to the Ramban, this verse can not be discussing a sale to a Jew, because it is impossible to sell to a Jew forever. However, a sale to a non-Jew can be permanent, because a non-Jew is not obligated in *mitzvot* and hence does not have to return the land during *yovel*. Therefore, this verse warns us to ensure that the land is not sold to a non-Jew permanently.

Similarly, the Ramban continues, our *parsha* teaches us not to sell ourselves as slaves to non-Jews. Therefore, we must redeem an *eved ivri* (a Jewish slave) from a non-Jew’s hand during *yovel*. The logic is identical: “For *Bnei Yisrael* are slaves to Me.”

The Ramban concludes with the observation:

“And He does not desire others to settle in [the Land] – only us. It will stay in our hands and will be returned to us.”

Other commentaries point out that the prohibition of selling the land of *Eretz Yisrael* to a non-Jew is derived (BT Avoda Zara 20) from another verse: “*vilotechonem*” (literally, “do not be gracious to them”). However, space considerations prevent a further discussion of this question.

The Netziv, in the *HaEmek Davar*, has an astonishingly different interpretation for our verse. He feels that the verse is discussing *shemitah* (the sabbatical year) rather than *yovel*. In other words, the subject is not returning land during *yovel*, but the verse is providing an answer to a question asked a few verses earlier: “What will we eat during the seventh year?”

One might think that the land could be sold to a non-Jew for one year only, because a non-Jew is not obligated in *mitzvot*. After all, an ox or a donkey may be sold to a non-Jew just for the duration of Shabbat. Unlike the other commentaries, the Netziv interprets the word “*tz’mitut*” as “a final and absolute sale” – rather than “permanently”. Hence, the Torah tells us: “for the land belongs to Me”. The land is not yours, and you do not own it. Therefore, you may not sell it for the duration of the seventh year, because the Creator wants the land to lay fallow. The *mitzvah* of *shemitah* is not a *chovat gavra* (i.e. it does not apply to the person himself) like Shabbat

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Parent/Child learning five min after start of kiddush downstairs in YI.

Shiur at Young Israel
Orot Harav Avraham
Yitzchak Hacohen Kook
Led by Boaz Shachak

Every Monday at 8:00 – 9:00 PM (Monday’s Beit Midrash)

Bnei Akiva 6:45 pm

Yom Yerushalayim
 community program for adults
Motzei Shabbat, May 19th
 at **The Sundry’s home**
842 Duke Dr
9³⁰ pm BBQ Dinner
 followed by
10:15 pm Program
Price: \$10

OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Sundays:
8:45 am:
TMK Tanach for Teens -
Rabbi Assi Gastfraind

Mondays & Wednesdays :
12:45 pm:
TMK Women’s Beith Midrash-
Yael Shachak

At the home of
Faye Newman, 7916 Stanford

Bnei Akiva Times:

~~May 5, 2012 - 6:30 pm~~
~~May 12, 2012 - 6:40 pm~~
May 19, 2012 - 6:45 pm
May 26, 2012 - 6:50 pm
June 2, 2012 - 7:00 pm

Shabbat Times		
	St Louis	Jerusalem
In	7:51	6:51
Out	8:52	8:44

Dvar Torah

By Rav Shlomo Sobol, former Rosh Kollel, Detroit

“ I will cause wild beasts to withdraw from the land”.

In the beginning of Parashat Bechukotai, as the Torah describes the ideal of Am Yisrael residing in Eretz Yisrael, it says, “ I will cause wild beasts to withdraw from the land”. (Vayikra 26:6)

Our sages, Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon disagree on the proper explanation of these words. Rabbi Yehudah explains, “they will be withdrawn from the world means that vicious animals will no longer exist.” Rabbi Shimon explains, “there ability to cause harm will be withdrawn”, i.e. vicious animals will exist but they will not harm man.

The great commentator, Ramban expands on the difference of opinion between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon. “According to Rabbi Yehudah who said that He will remove them from the world [entirely, the verse] is [to be understood] in its plain sense – the evil beasts will not come into their Land. For since their will be plentitude and abundance of blessing, and the cities will be full of people, [wild] beasts will not come into inhabited places. And according to Rabbi Shimon who says that He will cause them to cease from causing harm . . . this is the correct interpretation for when Israel observes the commandments, the Land of Israel will be like the world was at its beginning, before the sin of the first man, when no beast or creeping thing would kill a man . . . for dangerous beasts only prey [on human beings] on account of the sin of man . . . and now that the Land of Israel is in a state of perfection, the ways [of the beasts] will be withdrawn and they will return to the primal state from the time of their creation.”

It seems that the disagreement between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi

Shimon is relevant not only to the wild beasts, but is a fundamental divergence of opinion on the issue of the existence of evil in the world. Will Tikkun Olam bring about, as Rabbi Yehudah teaches, the total eradication of evil from the world or will the evil be elevated to a state of goodness, as Rabbi Shimon teaches?

Possibly, we can say as is often the cases in disagreement between our sages, “these and those are words of the living God” and both of these opinion are based on the notion that Redemption will come in two stages. During the first stage we must battle evil and try to eradicate it and in the second stage, evil will transform into a more idyllic state in which goodness will be seen in it.

We must remember that we cannot reach the second stage without the battles of the first stage. Only after we combat evil can we reach the stage when we attempt to discover the goodness hidden within it.

In our generation, this idea is most poignant. On the one hand, Am Yisrael finds itself in a daily struggle with our enemies who attempt to kill us and remove us from Eretz Yisrael. We have no choice but to fight. On the other hand, we aspire to true peace and a time in peaceful relations with our neighbors. We must remember though, that in order to reach true peace, we must first combat evil. We must not let our dreams of peace for the future impact our ability to fight in the present. The vision of a world living in peace demands that we battle our enemies without compromise.

Yehi Ratzon – May we live to see the fulfillment of the promise to withdraw the wild beasts from the land.

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but involves the land “resting”.

We are rapidly approaching the next *shemita* year. The controversy over the *heter mechirah* (arrangement where the land is sold during *shemita*), which began over a century ago, is well known. While the Netziv was one of the authorities who opposed the *heter mechirah*, he was also one an enthusiastic supporter of *Am Yisrael's* return to its land. However, he expected the Jewish people to come back to *Eretz Yisrael* together with a fervent attachment to all the *mitzvot* in general and to the *mitzvot hat'luyot baAretz* in particular. He noted that the Torah confirms that we were exiled because *shemita* was not observed. Therefore, specifically during the period that *Am Yisrael* has merited to return, we must be especially meticulous in our observance of this *mitzvah*. Not surprisingly, then, the Netziv understood our verse as a proof of his viewpoint.

May we soon merit seeing the fulfillment of the Rambam's words at the end of Yad HaChazakah (Hilchot Melachim 11):

“In the future, the *melech hamashiach* (literally, the anointed king) will arise and restore the kingdom of *Beit David* (the house of David)... And he builds the *Mikdash* and gathers the dispersed of Israel. And all the laws are restored in his day as they were in previous times. They offer *korbanot*

(sacrifices) and observe *shemita* and *yovalot* with all their *mitzvot* as it is written in the Torah.”



**Happy Yom
Yerushalayim!**

FAREWELL PARTY for the GASTFRAINDS Wed. MAY 30 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Co-Sponsored by Bais Abe and TMK

We all knew the day would come eventually when we would need to say goodbye to our wonderful Israeli Torah MiTzion family, **Gilat and Assi Gastfraind and their children Hallel, Amitai, and Ariel**, who will be finishing their 3-year *shlichut* in St. Louis this June and returning home to Israel.

They arrived in St. Louis from Israel in July 2009 to join the Torah MiTzion Kollel (TMK) as *shlichim* (emisaries), and for the past 3 years they have contributed in so many ways, with incredible energy, love, and dedication—from teaching in Jewish community day schools, synagogues, and adult education programs, to running Israel-centered events for the community to hosting guests for delicious Shabbat and holiday meals. They have become a beloved part of our community.



Everyone (adults and kids) is invited to wish them *L'hitraot* at the **Farewell Tribute and BBQ dinner**

Wednesday, May 30, 2012 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at Bais Abraham Congregation

Featuring: **BBQ dinner, activities for kids, and presentation of a Farewell Tribute Book**

Each family/individual is invited to send a free "ad" for inclusion in the Farewell Tribute Book, to be presented to the Gastfrainds at the event. Artwork, letters, photos, kid's drawings, etc. are welcome, but must be flat, scannable, and fit into a 4" x 5" space, and cannot be returned. Please email your ad to gastfraindfarewell@gmail.com or send it to "Farewell Book" at Bais Abraham, 6910 Delmar, St. Louis, MO 63130, with your name, address, and email as soon as possible. Deadline for ads is May 30. They will treasure this book forever!

\$18-\$36 suggested donation to defray cost of dinner & tribute book (more happily accepted to cover expenses for return trip to Israel!).

Please send checks payable to TMK, c/o Chagai Adler, 7741 Gannon, St. Louis, MO 63130.

Please **RSVP** to Alayne at office@baisabe.com or 314-721-3030 by Friday May 25 (before Shavuot).

New shiur at Young Israel

Orot

Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hacoheh Kook

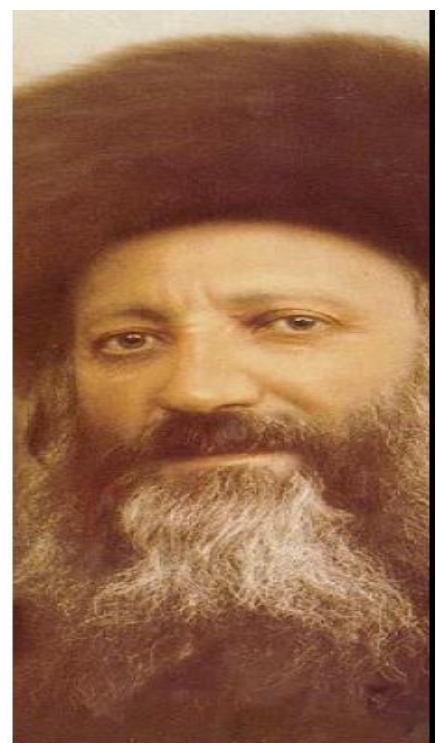
Are you curious to know more about the deeper meaning of Eretz Yisrael? Is there is really something called "Torat Eretz Yisrael"? What is this all about?

Come and join us in a "Chaburah" learning through the basic book of Harav Kook. We will explore others books of Harav Kook, as well as newer commentaries of his work.

We will be happy to see you there and grow together toward a deeper connection with our holy land

Led by Boaz Shachak

Every Monday at 8:00 – 9:00 PM (Monday's Beit Midrash)



Looking Back: Jerusalem- During the Days of the British Mandate

By Shoshana Zohar

According to the Jewish Tradition, the sound of the shofar-blowing is a sound that bonds man to God. The shofar is heard twice during the course of the year-Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In 1946 or 1947, the time of the British Mandate, I was charged with the task of bringing the shofar to the Kotel plaza close to sundown so we would be able to sound the shofar at the end of the Ne'ila service of Yom Kippur. A meeting place was set up, where I would meet a young religious man and together we would walk to the Kotel, the shofar hidden in my clothes. I sat as close as possible to the men's side and my "partner in crime" sat parallel to me and we had constant eye contact.

From the Kotel, you can hear the bells of the churches chime, and the mussein call the Moslems to prayer five times a day. From the Kotel itself, you can hear the shofar, but only twice a year. These two times bothered the Moslems and so they complained to the British, who in turn forbade us to blow the shofar on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, thus making it necessary to smuggle the shofar in and to make sure it wasn't caught by the British soldiers patrolling the area.

It is important to note that the Kotel plaza doesn't resemble at *all* how it looks today. Back then a lot less of the wall was discovered and the area was more narrow than today. It only took about 100 worshippers to fill the area. On Yom Kippur, there was much more than 100 worship-



The Kotel, before the 'plaza'

pers, and space was very tight.

British soldiers checked each and every worshipper to make sure that no one was carrying a shofar. They would watch them constantly lest they blow the shofar at any time.

And so Ne'ila was coming to an end, and the time to blow the shofar was getting nearer and nearer. The British soldiers came and started to separate the crowd. However, the wor-

shippers only sang louder and longer. Suddenly, I got the sign to pass the shofar to my co-conspirator and he passed it on to it the Tokea. The worshippers made a human protective wall around him and then the sound of the shofar filled the air. A chill passed through me and I felt full of excitement and warmth. I'm sure each and everyone present at the time felt the same. At the time of the Tekia G'dola I added a special, personal prayer- that next year we would be a free People living in our land.

The minute the shofar sounded, the soldiers started to disperse the crowd by hand and with sticks. The crowd was dispersed quite quickly. My co-conspirator took me and led me quickly through the alleyways of the old city until we reached a Jewish house. I ended the fast there and rested up a bit and was then escorted back to my house, outside the city walls.

Courtesy of: story-of-israel.blogspot.com

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For support and sponsoring options, please visit our website.

Celebrate Yom Yerushalayim
 With
Torah MiTzion
Motzei Shabbat, May 19, 2012
 @ the Sundy's home
 842 Duke Dr.
 9:30pm - BBQ Dinner
 10:15pm
Inspiring Yom Yerushalayim
program
Cost: \$10 per person
RSVP by Thursday May 17
Torahmitzion.st.louis@gmail.com

BS"D

Torah Mitzion

is building a community

Do you know where there are other "Torah Mitzion" communities around the world?
 Did you ever meet with their members?
 Did you ever have the opportunity to meet in advance next year's bachurim and begin your Chavrutah with them?

This time we are making it possible through an everlasting experience of building a community combined with a meaningful weekend and an amazing trip in Israel:

Where:

In Jerusalem, "עיר שנושה כל ישראל חברים", Dan Panorama Jerusalem hotel, with Rabbi Aharon Adler Scholar in Residence

When:

Tisha B'av weekend, July 27-August 2, followed by a 4 day trip to the north of Israel August 2-5 (optional, but highly recommended)
 The trip is compatible for families with kids or without.

Prices:

Weekend: Couple in double room: \$815
Trip: Couple in double room: \$710

For special prices for families with kids, and for further information please contact Yossi Tsurel at:
yossi@torahmitzion.org or via Tel. + 972-52-3849114

emmet design@gmail.com

