

Shemitta & the Biblical Meaning of 7 - Class #14

for Torah in Motion - by Menachem Leibtag

The impact of the shemitta year on the other six years

INTRO-

This week, in our final class on this series, we return to the laws of shemitta within their context in Sefer Devarim, to understand their impact on the six years when we do work our fields.

I. Review from our earlier classes -

The Biblical concept of "kedusha" / 'holy' or 'separated'

How the item 'separated' affects the group it was separated from
i.e. How affect of shabbat on rest of the week,
s/b similar to affect o shemitta on other six years

First mention - Shmot 23:8-14, showing connection!

ח.... ח וְשָׁחַד, לֹא תִקַּח : כִּי הַשָּׁחַד יְעוֹרֵר
פְּקוּחִים, וַיִּסְלַף דְּבַרֵי צְדִיקִים. 8 And thou shalt take no gift; for a gift
blindeth them that have sight, and
perverteth the words of the righteous.

ט וְגֵר, לֹא תִלְחָץ; וְאַתָּם, יִדְעֶתֶם אֶת-
נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר--כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם, בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם. 9 And a stranger shalt thou not oppress;
for ye know the heart of a stranger,
seeing ye were strangers in the land of
Egypt.

י וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים, תִּזְרַע אֶת-אֶרְצְךָ;
וְאָסַפְתָּ, אֶת-תְּבוּאָתָהּ. 10 And six years thou shalt sow
thy land, and gather in the
increase thereof;

יא וְהַשְּׁבִיעַת תִּשְׁמַטְנָה
וְנִטְשָׁתָהּ, וְאָכְלוּ אֲבִינֵי עֲמֻדָּךְ,
וַיִּתְרָם, תֹּאכַל חֵיט הַשָּׂדֶה; כִּן-תַּעֲשֶׂה
לְכַרְמְךָ, לְיִזְיָתְךָ. 11 but the seventh year thou shalt let it
rest and lie fallow, that the poor of thy
people may eat; and what they leave the
beast of the field shall eat. In like
manner thou shalt deal with thy
vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.

יב שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מַעֲשֶׂיךָ, וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבֹּת--לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ, שׁוֹרְךָ
וַחֲמֹרְךָ, וַיִּנְפֹּשׂ בֶּן-אֲמָתְךָ, וְהַגֵּר. 12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, but
on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that
thine ox and thine ass may have rest,
and the son of thy handmaid, and the
stranger, may be refreshed.

יג וּבְכָל אֲשֶׁר-אָמַרְתִּי אֵלֶיכֶם, תִּשְׁמְרוּ; וְשֵׁם
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ, לֹא יִשְׁמַע עַל-
פִּיךָ. 13 And in all things that I have said unto you
take ye heed; and make no mention of the name
of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy
mouth.

יד שְׁלֹשׁ רְגָלִים, תַּחַג לִי בַשָּׁנָה.... 14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast
unto Me in the year.

II. Shemitta in Sefer Devarima and its context

Chapter 14: Intro

א בְּנִים אַתֶּם, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם : לֹא תִתְגַּדְדוּ, וְלֹא-תַשְׂימוּ קַרְחָה בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם--לְמֵת.
1 Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

ב כִּי עַם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ; וּבָדָךְ בָּחַר יְהוָה, לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סֻגְלָה, מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה.
2 For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be His own treasure out of all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. {S}

ג לֹא תֹאכַל, כָּל-תוֹעֵבָה...
3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.

[Devarim 14:22-29]

כב עֲשֹׂר תְעַשֵּׂר, אֶת כָּל-תְּבוּאֹת זֵרְעֶךָ, הַיֹּצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה, שָׁנָה שָׁנָה...
22 Thou shalt surely tithel all the increase of thy seed, that which is brought forth in the field year by year.

כח מְקַצֵּה שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים, תּוֹצִיא אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂר תְּבוּאֹתֶיךָ, בַּשָּׁנָה, הַהוּא; וְהִנַּחְתָּ, בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ....
28 At the end of every three years, even in the same year, thou shalt bring forth all the tithel of thine increase, and shall lay it up within thy gates.

דְּבָרִים 15 Deuteronomy Chapter 15

א מְקַץ שִׁבְע־שָׁנִים, תַּעֲשֶׂה שְׁמִטָּה:
1 At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.

[ספורנו](#)

כשומר האל ית' "והשביעית תשמטנה"
היתה הכוונה שתעשה שמטת כספים
שנאמר "שמוט כל בעל משה ידו"

ב וְזֶה, דְּבַר הַשְּׁמִטָּה--שְׁמוֹט כָּל-בַּעַל מַשֶּׁה יָדוּ, אֲשֶׁר יִשֶּׂה בְרֵעֵהוּ: לֹא-יִגַּשׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת-אָחִיו, כִּי-קָרָא שְׁמִטָּה לַיהוָה.
2 And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbour; he shall not exact it of his neighbour and his brother; because the LORD'S release hath been proclaimed.

ג אֶת-הַנִּכְרִי, תִּגָּשׁ; וְאֲשֶׁר יְהִי לְךָ אֶת-אָחִיךָ, תִּשְׁמַט יָדְךָ.
3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it; but whatsoever of thine is with thy brother thy hand shall release.

ד אַפְסֵ, כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה-בְּךָ אֲבִיוֹן: כִּי-
4 Howbeit there shall be no needy among you--for the LORD will surely bless thee in

בְּרַךְ יְבָרְכֶךָ, יְהוָה, בְּאֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן-לְךָ נַחֲלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ.

the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it--

ה רַק אַם- שְׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמָע, בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לְשָׁמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוֹה
הַזֹּאת, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם.

5 if only thou diligently hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all this commandment which I command thee this day.

ו כִּי-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּרַכְךָ, כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר-לְךָ;
וְהֶעֱבַטְתָּ גוֹיִם רַבִּים, וְאֶתָּה לֹא תִעָבֵט,
וּמִשְׁלַתָּ בְּגוֹיִם רַבִּים, וּבָךָ לֹא יִמְשְׁלוּ.

6 For the LORD thy God will bless thee, as He promised thee; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over thee. {S}

ז כִּי-יְהִיֶּה בְּךָ אֶבְיוֹן מֵאַחַד אַחֶיךָ,
בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ, בְּאֶרְצְךָ, אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ-- לֹא תִאֲמָץ אֶת-
לְבָבְךָ, וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת-יָדְךָ,
מֵאַחֶיךָ, הָאֶבְיוֹן.

7 If there be among you a needy man, one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy needy brother;

ח כִּי-פָתַח תִּפְתַּח אֶת-יָדְךָ,
לוּ; וְהֶעֱבַט, תִּעָבִיטְנוּ, דֵּי מַחְסָרוֹ,
אֲשֶׁר יַחְסֹר לוֹ.

8 but thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth.

ט הִשָּׁמַר לְךָ פֶּן-יְהִיֶּה דְבַר עִם-לְבָבְךָ בְּלִיעַל
לֵאמֹר, קָרְבָה שְׁנַת-הַשְּׁבַע שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה, וְרָעָה
עֵינֶיךָ בְּאַחֶיךָ הָאֶבְיוֹן, וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ; וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ
אֶל-יְהוָה, וְהָיָה בְּךָ חַטָּא.

9 Beware that there be not a base thought in thy heart, saying: 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand'; and thine eye be evil against thy needy brother, and thou give him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin in thee.

י נָתַתָּן תִּתֵּן לוֹ, וְלֹא-יִרַע לְבָבְךָ בְּתִתְּךָ
לוֹ: כִּי בְּגַלְל הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה, יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-מַעֲשֶׂיךָ, וּבְכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ.

10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the LORD thy God will bless thee in all thy work, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto.

יא כִּי לֹא-יִחַדֵּל אֶבְיוֹן, מִקְרַב
הָאֶרֶץ; עַל-כֵּן אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ, לֵאמֹר,
פָּתַח תִּפְתַּח אֶת-יָדְךָ לְאַחֶיךָ
לְעֵנֶיךָ וּלְאֶבְיֹנְךָ, בְּאֶרְצְךָ. {ס}

11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying: 'Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy poor and needy brother, in thy land.' {S}

See Tehillim 145 & 146

יד סוֹמֵךְ יְהוָה, לְכָל-הַנִּפְלִים ; 14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down.
וְזוֹקֵף, לְכָל-הַכַּפּוּפִים.

טו עֵינַי-כֹּל, אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ ; וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן-לֵהֶם 15 The eyes of all wait for Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season.
אֶת-אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ.

טז פּוֹתַח אֶת-יָדְךָ ; וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ 16 Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest every living thing with favour.
לְכָל-חַי רִצּוֹן.

יז צַדִּיק יְהוָה, בְּכָל-דְּרָכָיו ; וְחַסִּיד, 17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and gracious in all His works.
בְּכָל-מַעֲשָׂיו.

יח קְרוֹב יְהוָה, לְכָל-קֹרְאָיו-- לְכֹל 18 The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.
אֲשֶׁר יִקְרְאוּהוּ בְאֱמֶת.

יט רִצּוֹן-יִרְאוּ יַעֲשֶׂה ; וְאֶת-שׁוֹעֲתָם 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them.
יִשְׁמַע, וְיִוֹשִׁיעֵם.

146

ה אֲשֶׁר־י--שָׁאֵל יַעֲקֹב בְּעֶזְרוֹ : שְׁבְרוּ, 5 Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,
עַל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו.

ו עֲשֶׂה, שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ-- אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת- 6 Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; {N} who keepeth truth for ever;
כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם ;
הַשֶּׁמֶר אֱמֶת לְעוֹלָם.

ז עֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט, לַעֲשׂוּקִים-- נֹתֵן לֶחֶם, 7 Who executeth justice for the oppressed; who giveth bread to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners;
לְרַעֲבִים ; יְהוָה, מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

ח יְהוָה, פִּקַּח עִוְרִים-- יְהוָה, זָקֵף 8 The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind; the LORD raiseth up them that are bowed down; the LORD loveth the righteous;
כַּפּוּפִים ; יְהוָה, אֹהֵב צַדִּיקִים.

ט יְהוָה, שָׁמַר אֶת-גְּרָמִים-- יִתּוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה 9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; He upholdeth the fatherless and the widow; but the way of the wicked He maketh crooked.
יְעוּדָד ; וְדַרְךְ רָשָׁעִים יַעֲוֶת.

י יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה, לְעוֹלָם-- אֱלֹהֵיךָ צִיּוֹן, 10 The LORD will reign for ever, thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. {N} Hallelujah.
לְדֹר וָדֹר :
הַלְלוּ-יְהוָה.

III. Review similar laws in Sefer Devarim:

See 10:12-20

יב וְעַתָּה, יִשְׂרָאֵל--מָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, שָׁאֵל מֵעַמּוֹךְ: כִּי אִם-לִירְאֶה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַקֵּת בְּכָל-דַּרְכֶיךָ, וְלָאֱהָבָה אֹתוֹ, וְלָעֲבֹד אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ.

12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul;

יג לְשָׁמֹר אֶת-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה, וְאֶת-חֻקֹּתָיו, אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִי מְצַוְּךָ, הַיּוֹם--לְטוֹב, לָךְ.

13 to keep for thy good the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command thee this day?

יד כִּי, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם--הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים: הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר, וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשָּׂא פָנִים, וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד.

17 For the LORD your God, He is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty, and the awful, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

יח עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט יְתוֹם, וְאִלְמָנָה; וְאֶהָב גֵּר, לָתֵת לוֹ לֶחֶם וְשִׂמְלָה.

18 He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

יט וְאֶהַבְתֶּם, אֶת-הַגֵּר: כִּי-גֵרִים הֵייתֶם, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.

19 Love ye therefore the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

כ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא, אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד; וּבֹו תִדְבֹק, וּבִשְׁמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע.

20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; Him shalt thou serve; and to Him shalt thou cleave, and by His name shalt thou swear.

IV. Review the theme of Hakhel & Succot:

י וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה, אוֹתָם לֵאמֹר: מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים, בְּמֵעַד שָׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה--בְּחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת.

10 And Moses commanded them, saying: 'At the end of every seven years, in the set time of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles,

The educational goal of Succot - Vayikra chapter 23

מב בַּסֻּכּוֹת תִּשְׁבוּ, שִׁבְעַת יָמִים; כָּל-הָאֲזָרָח, בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, יִשְׁבוּ, בַּסֻּכּוֹת.

42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths;

מג לְמַעַן, יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם, כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: אֲנִי, ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

'Knowing' what happened- or why it happened - see Devarim chapter 8

ב וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת-כָּל-הַדֶּרֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִיכְךָ
ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ זֶה אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה--בַּמִּדְבָּר:
לְמַעַן עֲנִתְךָ לְנִסְתֶּךָ, לְדַעַת אֶת-אֲשֶׁר
בְּלִבְּךָ הִתְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתַי--אִם-לֹא

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might afflict thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no.

[Training for the dangers of prosperity]

ז כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, מְבִיאֲךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ
טוֹבָה: אֶרֶץ, נַחְלֵי מַיִם--עֵינֹת
וְתַהֲמוֹת, יִצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָר.

7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills;

ח אֶרֶץ חִטָּה וּשְׂעֵרָה, וְגִפְנוֹ וְתַאֲנָה
וְרִמּוֹן; אֶרֶץ-זֵית שֶׁמֶן, וְדַבָּשׁ....

8 a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey;

י וְאָכַלְתָּ, וּשְׂבַעְתָּ--וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת-ה'
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, עַל-הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-
לְךָ.

10 And thou shalt eat and be satisfied, and bless the LORD thy God for the good land which He hath given thee.

יא הִשָּׁמֵר לְךָ, פֶּן-תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת-ה'
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לְבַלְתִּי שָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו
וְחֻקֹּתָיו, אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם....

11 Beware lest thou forget the LORD thy God, in not keeping His commandments, and His ordinances, and His statutes, which I command thee this day;

יז וְאָמַרְתָּ, בְּלִבְּךָ: כַּחַי וְעַצְם יָדַי, עָשָׂה
לִי אֶת-הַחֵיל הַזֶּה.

17 and thou say in thy heart: 'My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.'

יח וְזָכַרְתָּ, אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ--כִּי הוּא הִנְתָּן
לְךָ כֹּחַ, לַעֲשׂוֹת חֵיל: לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶת-
בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבֹתֶיךָ, כִּי־וְהָיָה.

18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Saying 'thank-you' vs. Acting 'thank-you'