

The End of Shmita

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I. Torah Sources for Shmita

<p>Exodus 23:9-11</p> <p>(9) You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt. (10) Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; (11) but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow. Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave let the wild beasts eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.</p>	<p>שמות כ"ג:ט'-י"א</p> <p>(ט) וְגַר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת־נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: (י) וְיִשָּׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע אֶת־אֲרָצְךָ וְאַסַּפְתָּ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָהּ: (יא) וְהַשְּׂבִיעַת תִּשְׁמַטְנָה וְנִטְשָׁתָה וְאָכְלוּ אַבְיָנֵי עַמְּךָ וְיִתְּרָם תֹּאכַל חַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה כִּן־תַּעֲשֶׂה לְכַרְמְךָ לְזִיתְךָ:</p>
<p>Leviticus 25:1-7</p> <p>(1) ה' spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai: (2) Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a sabbath of 3) ה'. (4) Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. (5) But in the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest, a sabbath of ה': you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. (6) You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your untrimmed vines; it shall be a year of complete rest for the land. (7) But you may eat whatever the land during its sabbath will produce—you, your male and female slaves, the hired and bound laborers who live with you, (8) and your cattle and the beasts in your land may eat all its yield.</p>	<p>ויקרא כ"ה:א'-ז'</p> <p>(א) וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר: (ב) דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תֵבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וְשָׁבַתָה הָאָרֶץ שְׁבַת לַה': (ג) יִשָּׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע שָׂדֶךְ וְיִשָּׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְמַר כַּרְמְךָ וְאַסַּפְתָּ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָהּ: (ד) וּבַשְּׁנָה הַשְּׂבִיעִת שְׁבַת שְׁבַת שְׁבַתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאָרֶץ שְׁבַת לַה' שָׂדֶךְ לֹא תִזְרַע וְכַרְמְךָ לֹא תִזְמַר: (ה) אֶת סְפִיחַ קְצִירְךָ לֹא תִקְצֹר וְאֶת־עֵנְבֵי נְזִירְךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר שְׁנַת שְׁבַתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאָרֶץ: (ו) וְהָיְתָה שְׁבַת הָאָרֶץ לָכֶם לְאֲכֹלָהּ לָךְ וּלְעֶבְדְּךָ וּלְאִמְתְּךָ וּלְשִׁכְרֶךָ וּלְתוֹשֻׁבְךָ הַגֵּרִים עִמָּךְ: (ז) וּלְבִהֶמְתְּךָ וּלְחַיֵּיהֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּאֲרָצְךָ תִהְיֶה כָּל־תְּבוּאָתָהּ לְאֲכֹל: {ס}</p>

Deuteronomy 15:1-11

(1) Every seventh year you shall practice remission of debts. (2) This shall be the nature of the remission: all creditors shall remit the due that they claim from their fellow [Israelites]; they shall not dun their fellow [Israelites] or kin, for the remission proclaimed is of 3) ה'. (3) You may dun the foreigner; but you must remit whatever is due you from your kin. (4) There shall be no needy among you—since your God ה' will bless you in the land that your God ה' is giving you as a hereditary portion— (5) if only you heed your God ה' and take care to keep all this Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day. (6) For your God ה' will bless you as promised: you will extend loans to many nations, but require none yourself; you will dominate many nations, but they will not dominate you. (7) If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kin in any of your settlements in the land that your God ה' is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kin. (8) Rather, you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient to meet the need. (9) Beware lest you harbor the base thought, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching,” so that you are mean and give nothing to your needy kin—who will cry out to ה' against you, and you will incur guilt. (10) Give readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return your God ה' will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. (11) For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kin in your land.

דברים ט"ו:א'-י"א

(א) מִקֵּץ שִׁבְע־שָׁנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה שְׁמִטָּה: (ב) וְזֶה דְבַר הַשְּׁמִטָּה שְׁמוּט כָּל־בַּעַל מִשֵּׂה יָדוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשֶׁה בְּרַעְיוֹ לֹא־יִגֹּשׁ אֶת־רַעְיוֹ וְאֶת־אֲחָיו כִּי־קָרָא שְׁמִטָּה לֵה': (ג) אֶת־הַנִּכְרִי תִגֹּשׁ וְאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֶת־אֲחִיךָ תִשְׁמַט יָדְךָ: (ד) אֶפְסֹ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה־בְּךָ אֲבִיּוֹן כִּי־בָרַךְ יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נִתְּן־לְךָ נַחְלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: (ה) רַק אִם־שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָע בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם: (ו) כִּי־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּרַכְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר דָּבַר־לְךָ וְהִעֲבַטְתָּ גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְאֶתְּהָ לֹא תַעֲבֹט וּמִשְׁלַתְּ בְּגוֹיִם רַבִּים וּבְךָ לֹא יִמְשְׁלוּ: {ס} (ז) כִּי־יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֲבִיּוֹן מֵאֲחַד אֲחֵיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁעָרֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נִתְּן לְךָ לֹא תֵאֲמַץ אֶת־לִבְּךָ וְלֹא תִקְפֹץ אֶת־יָדְךָ מֵאֲחִיךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן: (ח) כִּי־פָתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לוֹ וְהִעֲבַט תַּעֲבִיטְנוּ דִי מִחֲסָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִחְסַר לוֹ: (ט) הַשְּׁמֵר לְךָ פִּן־יִהְיֶה דְבַר עִם־לִבְּךָ בְּלִיַּעַל לֵאמֹר קָרְבָה שְׁנַת־הַשְּׁבַע שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה וְרַעַה עֵינֶךָ בְּאֲחִיךָ הָאֲבִיּוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֶל־ה' וְהָיָה בְּךָ חֲטָא: (י) נָתַן תִּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא־יִרַע לְבָבְךָ בְּתִתְּךָ לוֹ כִּי בְּגִלְלָהּ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂה וּבְכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ: (יא) כִּי לֹא־יִחַדֵּל אֲבִיּוֹן מִקְרֹב הָאֶרֶץ עַל־כֵּן אֲנִי מִצְוֶה לֵאמֹר פָּתַח תִּפְתָּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לְאֲחִיךָ לְעֵנֶיךָ וְלֹא־יִבְיֹנָה בְּאֶרֶץ: {ס}

<p>Chizkuni, Deuteronomy 15:1:1</p> <p>מקץ שבע שנים, “at the conclusion of seven years;” the rules governing the sh’mittah year do not commence until the end of the seventh year. The reason why this paragraph is appended here is that in 14,29, we have read that we have to care for the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the stranger, and this is what basically the sh’mittah legislation is also about.</p>	<p>חזקוני, דברים ט"ו:א:א'</p> <p>מקץ שבע שנים מסוף אין דין השמטה נוהגת אלא בשנה אחרונה של שבע שנים. נסמכה פרשה זו כאן לפי שאמר למעלה מעשר עני ניתן ליתום ולא למנה בא ולמד על השמטה כך.</p>
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II. Releasing Debts and Prozbul

<p>Mishnah Sheviit 10:3-4</p> <p>(3) [A loan secured by] a prozbul is not cancelled. This was one of the things enacted by Hillel the elder; for when he observed people refraining from lending to one another, and thus transgressing what is written in the Torah, “Beware, lest you harbor the base thought, [‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching,’ so that you are mean to your needy kinsman and give him nothing.” Hillel enacted the prozbul.</p> <p>(4) This is the formula of the prozbul: “I turn over to you, so-and-so, judges of such and such a place, that any debt that I may have outstanding, I shall collect it whenever I desire.” And the judges sign below, or the witnesses.</p>	<p>משנה שביעית י"ג:ד'</p> <p>(ג) פְּרוֹזְבוּל, אִינוּ מְשַׁמְט. זֶה אֶחָד מִן הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁהִתְקִין הַלֵּל הַזֶּקֶן, כְּשָׂרָאָה שֶׁנִּמְנְעוּ הָעָם מִלְהִלוּת זֶה אֶת זֶה וְעוֹבְרִין עַל מֵה שֶׁכְּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה (דְּבָרִים טו) הַשְּׁמֶר לך פֶּן יְהִי דְבַר עִם לְבַבְךָ בְּלִיעַל וְגו', הִתְקִין הַלֵּל לְפְרוֹזְבוּל:</p> <p>(ד) זֶהוּ גוּפוֹ שֶׁל פְּרוֹזְבוּל. מוֹסֵר אֲנִי לְכֶם אִישׁ פְּלוֹנִי וּפְלוֹנֵי הַדְּיָנִים שֶׁבְּמָקוֹם פְּלוֹנִי, שֶׁכָּל חוֹב שֵׁישׁ לִי, שֶׁאֶגְבְּנוּ כָּל זְמַן שֶׁאֶרְצֶה. וְהַדְּיָנִים חוֹתְמִין לְמַטָּה, אוּ הַעֲדִים:</p>
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<p>Mishneh Torah, Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee 9:4</p> <p>The Sabbatical year does not nullify debts until its conclusion. [This is derived as follows: Deuteronomy 15:1-2] states: "At the end of seven years, you shall effect a remission. This is the matter of the remission." And [Deuteronomy 31:10] states: "At the end of seven</p>	<p>משנה תורה, הלכות שמיטה ויובל ט"ד:</p> <p>אִין שְׁבִיעִית מְשַׁמְטת כֶּסְפִים אֶלָּא בְּסוּפָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דְּבָרִים טו א) "מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעֵי שָׁנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה" שֶׁמָּטָה וְזֶה דְּבַר הַשְּׁמִטָּה וְשֵׁם הוּא אוֹמֵר (דְּבָרִים לא י) "מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעֵי שָׁנִים בְּמַעַד שָׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה בְּחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת". מֵה שֵׁם אַחַר שִׁבְעֵי אִף הַשְּׁמִטָּה כֶּסְפִים אַחַר שִׁבְעֵי. לְפִיכָךְ הִלְוֶה אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ בְּשִׁבְעִית</p>
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<p>years, at the time of the Sabbatical year, during the holiday of Sukkot." Just as in that instance, [the event takes place] after the seven [years], so too, the nullification of the debts takes place after the seven [years].</p> <p>Therefore if one lent money to a colleague in the Sabbatical year itself, he may demand payment of his debt for the entire year. When the sun sets on the night of Rosh HaShanah of the eighth year, the debt is nullified.</p>	<p>עצמה גובה חובו כל השנה. וכשתשקע חמה בלילי ראש השנה של מוצאי שביעית אבד החוב:</p>
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<p>Shulchan Arukh, Choshen Mishpat 67:1</p> <p>The release of debts only applies by Torah law in a time when the Jubilee year applies [i.e. when there is a Temple], and according to the sages the release of debts applies in the current day in all places.</p>	<p>שולחן ערוך, חושן משפט ס"ז:א'</p> <p>אין שמיטת כספים נוהגת מן התורה אלא בזמן שהיובל נוהג ומדברי סופרים שתהא שמיטת כספים נוהגת בזמן הזה בכל מקום:</p>
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<p>Shulchan Arukh, Choshen Mishpat 67:30</p> <p>The Seventh Year causes the release of debts only at its end. Therefore one who lends to their peer during the Seventh Year may collect that debt throughout the year with the court's enforcement, and when the sun sets before Rosh Hashana at the end of the Seventh Year, the debt is nullified.</p>	<p>שולחן ערוך, חושן משפט ס"ז:ל'</p> <p>(ל) אין שביעית משמטת כספים אלא בסופו לפיכך הלזה את חברו בשביעית עצמה גובה חובו כל השנה בב"ד וכשתשקע חמה בליל ר"ה של מוצאי שביעית אבד החוב:</p>
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III. Hakhel

<p>Deuteronomy 31:10-13</p> <p>(10) And Moses instructed them as follows: Every seventh year, the year set for remission, at the Feast of Booths, (11) when all Israel comes to appear before your God ה' in the place that [God] will choose, you shall read this</p>	<p>דברים ל"א:י"ג</p> <p>(י) ויצו משה אותם לאמר מקץ שבע שנים במעד שנת השמטה בחג הסכות: (יא) בבוא כל ישראל לראות את פני ה' אלקיך במקום אשר יבחר תקרא את התורה הזאת נגד כל ישראל</p>
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Teaching aloud in the presence of all Israel. (12) Gather the people—men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to revere your God ה' and to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching. (13) Their children, too, who have not had the experience, shall hear and learn to revere your God ה' as long as they live in the land that you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.

בְּאֲזִינֵיהֶם: (יב) הִקְהֵל אֶת־הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׂים וְהַטָּף וְגֵרָךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֵיךָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלִמְעַן יִלְמְדוּ וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְשָׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: (יג) וּבְנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלִמְדוּ לִירְאֵה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם חַיִּים עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן שְׁמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: {פ}

Mishnah Sotah 7:8

(8) The portion read by the king: How so? At the conclusion of the first day of the festival (Sukkot) in the eighth [year], at the end of the seventh year, they made a wooden platform in the Temple court, and he sits upon it, as it is said, “At the end of seven years, in the set time” etc (Deuteronomy 31:10). The sexton takes a Torah scroll and passes it to the head of the synagogue, the head of the synagogue passes it to the deputy, who passes it to the high priest, and the high priest passes it to the king and the king stands and receives it, but reads it while sitting. King Agrippa stood and received it and read standing, and the sages praised him. When he reached, “You shall not place a foreigner over you” (ibid 17:15) his eyes ran with tears. They said to him, “Fear not, Agrippas, you are our brother, you are our brother, you are our brother!” He reads from the beginning of “These are the words” (ibid 1:1) until the Shema (ibid 6:4-9), and the Shema, and “It will come to pass if you hear” (ibid 11:13-21), and “You shall surely tithe” (ibid 14:22-29), and “When you have finished tithing” (ibid 26:12-15) and the portion of the king (ibid 17:14-20) and the blessings and curses (ibid 28), until he finishes all the section. The blessings

משנה סוטה ז'ח:

(ח) פרשת המלך כיצד, מוצאי יום טוב הראשון של חג, בשמיני במוצאי שביעית, עושין לו בימה של עץ בעזרה, והוא יושב עליה, שנאמר (דברים לא) מקץ שבע שנים במעד וגו'. חזן הכנסת נוטל ספר תורה ונותנה לראש הכנסת, וראש הכנסת נותנה לסגן, והסגן נותנה לכהן גדול, וכהן גדול נותנה למלך, והמלך עומד ומקבל וקורא יושב. אגרפס המלך עמד וקבל וקרא עומד, ושבחוהו חכמים. וכשהגיע (שם יז) ללא תוכל לתת עליך איש נכרי, זלגו עיניו דמעות. אמרו לו, אל תתירא אגרפס, אחינו אתה, אחינו אתה, אחינו אתה, וקורא מתחלת (דברים א) אלה הדברים עד שמע, ושמע (שם ו), והיה אם שמע (שם יא), עשר תעשר (שם יד), כי תכלה לעשר (שם כו), ופרשת המלך (שם יז), וברכות וקללות (שם כח), עד שגומר כל הפרשה. ברכות שכהן גדול מברך אותן, המלך מברך אותן, אלא שנותן של רגלים תחת מחילת העון.

that the high priest blesses, the king recites, except that he substitutes one for the festivals instead of one for the pardon of sin.

Mishneh Torah, Festival Offering 3:3

(3) When would they read? On the day following the first day of the holiday of Sukkot which is the first day of *Chol HaMoed* of the eighth year. The king would read so the people would hear. The reading was held in the Women's Courtyard. He would read while seated. If he read while standing, it is praiseworthy.

From which passages in the Torah should he read? He starts from the beginning of the *chumash*: "These are the words..." until the end of the passage *Shema*. He then skips to the passage *Vehayah Im Shamo*, and then skips to the passage *asair te'asair*. He then reads from that passage in order until the end of the blessing and curses, i.e., until the phrase: "besides the covenant He established with them in Choreb" where he concludes.

משנה תורה, הלכות חגיגה ג'ג'

(ג) אֵימְתִי הָיָה קוֹרֵין. בְּמוֹצָאֵי יוֹם טוֹב הָרִאשׁוֹן שֶׁל חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת שֶׁהוּא תַחֲלֵת יְמֵי חֲלוֹ שֶׁל מוֹעֵד שֶׁל שָׁנָה שְׁמִינִית. וְהַמֶּלֶךְ הוּא שֶׁיִּקְרָא בְּאֲזֵנֵיהֶם. וּבְעֶזְרַת הַנָּשִׁים הָיָה קוֹרֵין. וְקוֹרָא כְּשֶׁהוּא יוֹשֵׁב וְאִם קָרָא מִעֶמֶד הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח. מֵהֵיכָן הוּא קוֹרָא מִתַּחֲלֵת חֲמִשָּׁה אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים עַד סוֹף פְּרֻשֶׁת שְׁמַע וּמְדַלֵּג לְ(דְבָרִים יֵא יג) "וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמוֹעַ" וְגו' וּמְדַלֵּג לְעֵשֶׂר תַּעֲשֶׂר וְקוֹרָא מִ(דְבָרִים יד כב) "עֵשֶׂר תַּעֲשֶׂר" עַל הַסֹּדֵר עַד סוֹף בְּרֻכּוֹת וְקִלְלוֹת עַד (דְבָרִים כח ט) "מִלְבַּד הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אִתָּם בְּחָרֵב" וּפּוֹסֵק:

Vayikra Rabbah 24:5

Rabbi Hiyya taught: This portion [i.e. Leviticus 19] was recited at *hakhel*, since most of the important principles of the Torah can be found in it. Rabbi Levi said: Because the ten commandments are included within it. "I am the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:2), and it is written here: "I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:2). "You shall not have [other gods]" (Ex. 20:3), and it is written here: "You shall not make molten gods for yourselves" (Lev. 19:4). "You shall not take [God's name in vain]" (Ex. 20:7), and it is written here: "Do not swear by my name" (Lev. 19:12). "Remember the sabbath day"

ויקרא רבה כ"ד:ה'

תַּנִּי רַבִּי חֵיָא פְּרָשָׁה זוֹ נֶאמְרָה בְּהַקְהֵל, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁרַב גּוֹפֵי תוֹרָה תְּלוּיִן בָּהּ, רַבִּי לֵוִי אָמַר מִפְּנֵי שֶׁעֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת כְּלוּלִין בְּתוֹכָהּ, (שְׁמוֹת כ, ב): אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, וּכְתִיב הֵכָא (ויקרא יט, ב): אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיכֶם. (שְׁמוֹת כ, ג): לֹא יִהְיֶה לָּךְ, וּכְתִיב הֵכָא (ויקרא יט, ד): וְאֱלֹקֵי מִסַּכָּה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּ לָכֶם. (שְׁמוֹת כ, ז): לֹא תִשָּׂא, וּכְתִיב הֵכָא (ויקרא יט, יב): וְלֹא תִשָּׁבְעוּ בְשִׁמִּי. (שְׁמוֹת כ, ח): זְכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, וּכְתִיב הֵכָא (ויקרא יט, ג): אֶת שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ. (שְׁמוֹת כ, יב): כִּבַּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמְךָ, וּכְתִיב הֵכָא (ויקרא יט, ג): אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו

<p>(Ex. 20:8), and it is written here: "Guard my sabbaths" (Lev. 19:3). "Honor your father and your mother" (Ex. 20:12), and it is written here: "You shall each revere your mother and father" (Lev. 19:3). "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13), and it is written here: "Do not stand by the blood of your neighbor" (Lev. 19:16). "Do not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:13), and it is written here: "The adulterer and adulteress shall be put to death" (Lev. 20:10). "You shall not steal" (Ex. 20:13), and it is written here: "Do not steal" (Lev. 19:11). "Do not bear false witness" (Ex. 20:13), and it is written here: "Do not go as a talebearer" (Lev. 19:16). "Do not covet" (Ex. 20:13), and it is written here: "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18).</p>	<p>תִּירְאוּ. (שמות כ, יג): לֹא תִרְצַח, וְכִתִּיב הָכָא (וּיקרא יט, טז): לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל דַּם רֵעֶךָ. (שמות כ, יג): לֹא תִנְאַף, וְכִתִּיב הָכָא (וּיקרא כ, י): מוֹת יוֹמֵת הַנָּאֵף וְהַנָּאֶפֶת. (שמות כ, יג): לֹא תִגְנוֹב, וְכִתִּיב הָכָא (וּיקרא יט, יא): לֹא תִגְנוֹבוּ. (שמות כ, יג): לֹא תַעֲנֶה, וְכִתִּיב הָכָא (וּיקרא יט, טז): לֹא תִלְוֶה רֵכִיל. (שמות כ, יג): לֹא תִחְמַד, וְכִתִּיב הָכָא (וּיקרא יט, יח): וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ.</p>
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IV. The After-Effects of Shmita

<p>Leviticus 25:19-24</p> <p>(19) the land shall yield its fruit and you shall eat your fill, and you shall live upon it in security. (20) And should you ask, "What are we to eat in the seventh year, if we may neither sow nor gather in our crops?" (21) I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year, so that it shall yield a crop sufficient for three years. (22) When you sow in the eighth year, you will still be eating old grain of that crop; you will be eating the old until the ninth year, until its crops come in. (23) But the land must not be sold beyond reclaim, for the land is Mine; you are but strangers resident with Me. (24) Throughout the land that you hold, you must provide for the redemption of the land.</p>	<p>וּיקרא כ"ה:י"ט-כ"ד</p> <p>(יט) וְנָתַנָּה הָאָרֶץ פְּרִיָּהּ וְאָכַלְתֶּם לְשָׂבַע וּישְׁבַתֶּם לְבֶטַח עָלֶיהָ: (כ) וְכִי תִאמְרוּ: מִה־נֹּאכַל בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִת הֵן לֹא נִזְרַע וְלֹא נִאֶסְף אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָנוּ: (כא) וְצִוִּיתִי אֶת־בְּרַכְתִּי לָכֶם בַּשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁשִׁית וְעָשִׂית אֶת־תְּבוּאָהּ לְשָׁלֹשׁ הַשָּׁנִים: (כב) וּזְרַעְתֶּם אֶת הַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁמִינִית וְאָכַלְתֶּם מִן־תְּבוּאָהּ יָשֵׁן עַד הַשָּׁנָה הַתְּשִׁיעִת עַד־בּוֹא תְּבוּאָתָהּ תֹאכְלוּ יָשֵׁן: (כג) וְהָאָרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַר לְצַמְתֹּת כִּי־לִי הָאָרֶץ כִּי־גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים אַתֶּם עִמָּדִי: (כד) וּבְכָל אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזַּתְכֶם גְּאֻלָּה תִתְּנוּ לְאֶרֶץ: {ס}</p>
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<p>Or HaChaim on Leviticus 25:21:1</p>	<p>אור החיים על ויקרא כ"ה:כ"א:א</p>
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<p>וצויתי את ברכתי וגו'. ברכה זו אינה בצומח שכבר הבטיח ונתנה הארץ פריה שהוא גבול שגבל ה' בכחה, אלא שמבטיח ברכת התבואה ככד קמח הצרפית (מלכים א' י"ז) וכשמן אשת עובדיה (מ"ב ד'), והוא שדקדק לומר ועשת את התבואה פירוש הברכה שיצו ה' תעשה ריבוי בתבואה כדי שתספיק לג' שנים הגם שהארץ תוציא צמחה כמדי שנה בשנה, צא ולמד מקב חטים שבעליה (תענית כ"ד.), ועיין מה שפירשתי בפסוק וכי יש לי כל (בראשית ל"ג י"א):</p>	<p>וצויתי את ברכתי וגו'. ברכה זו אינה בצומח שכבר הבטיח ונתנה הארץ פריה שהוא גבול שגבל ה' בכחה, אלא שמבטיח ברכת התבואה ככד קמח הצרפית (מלכים א' י"ז) וכשמן אשת עובדיה (מ"ב ד'), והוא שדקדק לומר ועשת את התבואה פירוש הברכה שיצו ה' תעשה ריבוי בתבואה כדי שתספיק לג' שנים הגם שהארץ תוציא צמחה כמדי שנה בשנה, צא ולמד מקב חטים שבעליה (תענית כ"ד.), ועיין מה שפירשתי בפסוק וכי יש לי כל (בראשית ל"ג י"א):</p>
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<p>Sifra, Behar, Chapter 4 6</p> <p>6) (Vayikra 25:21) ("I shall command My blessing for you in the sixth year, and it shall produce its crop for three years.") (so that you will have a surplus to store away). This tells me (that there will be a surplus) only in the sixth year. Whence do I derive (the same for) the fifth, the fourth, the third, and the second? (that they will provide a surplus for the succeeding year?) From (the superfluous) "the (sixth) year" "and it shall produce its crop for three years": for the sixth, (i.e., for the time from Pesach [when the harvest begins]), for the seventh (shevi'ith), and for the end of the seventh year (until the new harvest on Pesach, on the eighth year). Variantly: "for three years": for the seventh, and Yovel, and the end of Yovel.</p>	<p>ספרא, בהר, פרק ד ו'</p> <p>[ו] "וצויתי את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית" -- אין לי אלא בששית. בחמישית וברביעית, בשלישית ובשנית, משנה לחברתה מנין? תלמוד לומר "בשנה הששית". "ועשת את התבואה לשלש השנים" -- לששית ולשביעית ולמוצאי שביעית. דבר אחר: "לשלש השנים" -- לשביעית, וליובל, ולמוצאי יובל.</p>
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<p>Pirkei Avot 5:8-9</p> <p>(8) Seven kinds of punishment come to the world for seven categories of transgression: ...Pestilence comes to the world for sins punishable by death</p>	<p>משנה אבות ה':ח-ט'</p> <p>(ח) שבעה מיני פְּרָעָנוּת בְּאֵין לְעוֹלָם עַל שִׁבְעָה גוֹפֵי עֲבֵרָה... דָּבָר בָּא לְעוֹלָם עַל מִיתוֹת הָאֲמוּרוֹת בְּתוֹרָה שְׁלֹא נִמְסְרוּ</p>
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according to the Torah, but which have not been referred to the court, and for neglect of the law regarding the fruits of the sabbatical year. The sword comes to the world for the delay of judgment, and for the perversion of judgment, and because of those who teach the Torah not in accordance with the accepted law. (9) Wild beasts come to the world for swearing in vain, and for the profanation of the Name. Exile comes to the world for idolatry, for sexual sins and for bloodshed, and for [transgressing the commandment of] the [year of the] release of the land.

At four times pestilence increases: in the fourth year, in the seventh year and at the conclusion of the seventh year, and at the conclusion of the Feast [of Tabernacles] in every year. In the fourth year, on account of the tithe of the poor which is due in the third year. In the seventh year, on account of the tithe of the poor which is due in the sixth year; At the conclusion of the seventh year, on account of the produce of the seventh year; And at the conclusion of the Feast [of Tabernacles] in every year, for robbing the gifts to the poor.

לְבֵית דִּין, וְעַל פְּרוֹת שְׁבִיעִית. חָרַב בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם עַל עֲבוֹי הַדִּין, וְעַל עֲוֹת הַדִּין, וְעַל הַמּוֹרִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא כִהְלָכָה: (ט) חִיָּה רָעָה בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם עַל שְׁבוּעַת שָׁוָא, וְעַל חִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם. גְּלוֹת בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם עַל עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה, וְעַל גְּלוֹי עֲרִיוֹת, וְעַל שְׁפִיכוֹת דַּמִּים, וְעַל הַשְּׁמַטַּת הָאָרֶץ.

בְּאַרְבַּעַה פְּרָקִים הַדָּבָר מְתַרְבֶּה, בְּרַבִּיעִית, וּבְשִׁבְעִית, וּבְמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית, וּבְמוֹצָאֵי הַחֹג שֶׁבְכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה. בְּרַבִּיעִית, מִפְּנֵי מַעֲשֵׂר עֲנִי שְׁבַשְׁלִישִׁית. בְּשִׁבְעִית, מִפְּנֵי מַעֲשֵׂר עֲנִי שְׁבַשְׁשִׁית. וּבְמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית, מִפְּנֵי פְרוֹת שְׁבִיעִית. וּבְמוֹצָאֵי הַחֹג שֶׁבְכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה, מִפְּנֵי גְזֵל מִתְּנוֹת עֲנִיִּים:

Mishneh Torah, Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee 3:1

It is a *halachah* conveyed to Moses at Sinai that it is forbidden to work the land in the last 30 days of the sixth year, just before the Sabbatical year, because one is preparing for the Sabbatical year. This concept - i.e., the prohibition [to work the land] established by tradition - applies in the era of the Temple [alone]. Our Sages [extended that prohibition], decreeing that one should not plow an orchard in the year preceding the Sabbatical year in

משנה תורה, הלכות שמיטה ויובל ג'א'

עֲבוֹדַת הָאָרֶץ בְּשָׁנָה שְׁשִׁית שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם סְמוּךְ לְשִׁבְעִית אֲסוּרָה הֵלָכָה לְמִשְׁה מִסִּינַי. מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא מְתַקְּנָה לְשִׁבְעִית. וְדָבָר זֶה בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיָם הוּא שֶׁנֶּאֱסָר מִפִּי הַשְּׁמוּעָה. וְגִזְרוּ חֲכָמִים שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיוּ חוֹרְשִׁים שָׂדֵה הָאֵילָן עֶרֶב שְׁבִיעִית בְּזִמְנֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ אֲלָא עַד הָעֲצָרַת. וּשְׂדֵה הַלְבָן עַד הַפֶּסַח. וּבְזִמְנֵי שְׁאִין מִקְדָּשׁ מְתַרְיִן בְּעֲבוֹדַת הָאָרֶץ עַד רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה כְּדִין תּוֹרָה:

<p>the era of the Temple after Shavuot, nor a field of grain after Pesach. In the era where the Temple does not stand, we are permitted to perform agricultural work until Rosh HaShanah, as [permitted by] Scriptural Law.</p>	
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<p>Mishneh Torah, Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee 4:7-8</p> <p>(7) When onions of the Sabbatical year enter the eighth year, they are permitted when there is enough time for produce of that size to have grown [in the eighth year]. If not, they are forbidden. Similar concepts apply with regard to other produce. They should not be purchased in the eighth year until produce of that size could have grown in the eighth year. When, in the eighth year, the produce which grows rapidly reaches [the size of the produce which grew in the Sabbatical year], the prohibition is lifted from the produce that remains. It is permitted to purchase garden vegetables in the eighth year immediately.</p> <p>(8) When is a person permitted to purchase wild onions in the eighth year? When the new produce exceeds [the old].</p>	<p>משנה תורה, הלכות שמיטה ויובל</p> <p>ד'ז-ח'</p> <p>(ז) בְּצָלִים שֶׁיָּצְאוּ מִשְּׁבִיעִית לְמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית אִם עָשׂוּ כִּיּוֹצֵא בְּהֵן מִתְרִין וְאִם לֹא אֲסוּרִין. וְכֵן שְׂאֵר הַפְּרוֹת אֵין לִוְקָחִים אוֹתָם בְּמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית אֲלָא מִשְׁיַעֲשׂוּ כִּיּוֹצֵא בְּהֵן מִפְּרוֹת מוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית. עָשָׂה הַבְּכִיר הַתֵּר הָאֶפֶל וּמִתֵּר לִקְחַ יֶרֶק בְּמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית מִיָּד:</p> <p>(ח) מֵאִימְתֵי מוֹתֵר אָדָם לִיקַח לֹוֹף בְּמוֹצָאֵי שְׁבִיעִית מִשְׁיֶרְבָּה הַחֲדָשׁ:</p>
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V. Contemporary Ideas and Practices

An Interfaith Coalition Erased Medical Debts for Over 2,000 People in the Chicago Area, Inspired by an Ancient Jewish Custom

JTA, May 26, 2022

Pastor Chris Harris, who leads two churches on Chicago's South Side, has been a longtime proponent of debt release to help low-income people in dire circumstances. But he didn't know about the specific shmita concept when Rabbi Ari Hart, who leads the Orthodox Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob Synagogue and often collaborates with Harris' congregations on service projects, reached out with an idea.

"I fell in love with it. And I said listen, let's keep this thing rockin'," Harris said, referring

to their service partnership.

The pair started a fundraiser through RIP Medical Debt, an organization that purchases people's medical debt from the debt collection market — through the help of private donation campaigns — and then releases it. Since their founding in 2014, RIP Medical Debt says they have erased over \$6 billion in debt. In 2020, Mackenzie Scott donated \$50 million to the organization.

Through a campaign that began in January and finished this week, members of Hart and Harris' congregations raised over \$10,000, which RIP Medical Debt used to purchase a \$1.9 million debt. That will translate into medical debt relief for 2,327 people in the Chicago area who either: earn less than two times the federal poverty level, have debts that constitute 5% or more of their annual income, or have more debts than assets.

The recipients don't know the relief is coming and will be surprised by the news with letters in the coming days.

"In Jewish living today, we talk a lot about values, we teach about values, and that's great, but I love this because it was real for those 2,000 families," Hart said. "These are very religious biblical concepts that people can get trapped by debt," he added. "It can ruin your life."

Renewal of the *Hakhel* Ceremony in Jerusalem and New York

By Aaron R. Katz

During *Chol Hamoed Sukkot* in 2015, a *Zecher LeHakhel* ceremony took place in the courtyard in front of the *Kotel*. As the corresponding Hebrew year of 5776 immediately followed a *Shmitah* year, the event was a commemoration of the biblically-ordained *Hakhel* ceremony in which the entire nation would assemble during *Sukkot* of every *Motzei Shmitah* year for a public reading by the king of certain parts of Deuteronomy. Present at the event at the *Kotel* were numerous dignitaries, including the Ashkenazi and Sefardi Chief Rabbis, as well as President Reuven Rivlin.

The current *Hakhel* ceremony traces its roots to R. Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim (1843-1905) (the "*Aderet*" and the father-in-law of R. Avraham Yitzchak Hacohen Kook), who discussed the establishment of a commemoration of *Hakhel* in his book *Zecher LeMikdash in* 1889 (the Hebrew year of 5649, which itself was a *Shmitah* year), a work that was anonymously published but has been conclusively determined to have been written by him. The first modern-day ceremony took place in 1945, following the end of the 5705 *Shmitah* year, under the auspices of Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog. The ceremony began in the Yeshurun Synagogue and concluded at the *Kotel*. In 1952, following the 5712 *Shmitah* year, the *Hakhel* ceremony was held on Mt. Zion (as the *Kotel* was under Jordanian rule at the time) and was attended by both R. Herzog

and Sefardi Chief Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel. A book titled *Zecher LeMitzvat Hakhel*, edited by R. Mordechai Cohen, appeared shortly after the ceremony and contains a lengthy discussion of the *Hakhel* ceremony, as well as pictures and a description of the 1952 event.

Parshiot Nitzavim and Vayelech: Is Hakhel a Mission Impossible?

R. Claude Vecht-Wolf

[A recollection of *hakhel* in fall 1994]: I made my way to the Kotel and was greeted by what appeared to be an ocean of people. Men, women and children as far as the eye could see. The throng of the crowd took up the entire plaza in front of the Wall, all the way back to the security barriers.

Proceedings began with the Kohanim/Priests, dressed in their traditional white robes, blowing the silver trumpets (Chatzotzerot) which had been recreated from the Biblical specifications by the craftsmen at the Temple Institute, an organisation which are currently preparing the artefacts that will be (Please Gd) used when the Moshiach finally arrives.

The Kohanim were lined up along the wall by the gentlemen's entrance to the Kotel, just north of the hand-washing area.

Trumpets having been sounded, we were then treated to speeches by the respective Ashkenazi and Sephardi Chief Rabbis who described the Hakhel ceremony (as per this week's Parsha) and its significance in our collective history.

With the speeches over, we then had the opportunity to move over to one of the numerous shaded tables where Baalei Korah/Torah readers were reciting the said chapters from a myriad of Torah scrolls of different shapes and sizes. I heard the familiar Ashkenazi melody from one, a fascinating and virtually unrecognisable chant from a Yemenite sage (which is probably one of the most authentic versions, along with those emanating from the Iraqi and Persian traditions) as well as many other recitation.

We may not have witnessed a single king doing the job that day, but each Baal Korei was wearing a crown, in my opinion, for they were all magnificent. For all intent and purpose, I was present as the Hakhel Assembly prescribed by Moses, all those years ago.

Announcement of the Dedication of Torah Scrolls for Hakhel by the Western Wall Foundation

The dedication of three Torah scrolls – *Zecher LeHakhel* and *Simchat Beit Hashoeva* – will take place, G-d willing, on Wednesday, 17 Tishrei 5783, 2nd day of Chol Hamoed

Sukkot, from 6:00pm to 8:15pm.

This ceremony takes place every seven years in commemoration of an event that took place in the days of the Temple when men, women, and children would gather at the end of the shmitta year. In commemoration of that awe-inspiring event, three Torah scrolls will be dedicated at the Western Wall Plaza, in the presence of the President of Israel, the Chief Rabbis past and present, the Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites, and other rabbis and dignitaries.

The Jewish Farmer Network's Shmita Project

This year we invited growers in our network to honor the Shmita year by setting aside a piece of land to lie fallow.

Shmita is an ancient yet visionary piece of Jewish agricultural wisdom for the regeneration of soil, community, and soul.

50 Jewish growers designated a total of 22.6 acres to rest during a period of Sabbath for the land. Some growers let their community garden plot go wild, some fallowed 1/7 of their growing space and others designated multiple acres of their large farms to rest.

"It was an ongoing practice of restraint and noticing. It was such a different way of relating to the land. One of nourishment and patience rather than impulse and asserting control."

"It also pushed me to experiment with cover crops in ways I haven't before. and got me talking about shmita with every group that came through."

"It was a big sacrifice on a small farm to give up 7 out of 35 beds of production space, but worth it, I think!"

"I noticed that in the wild section, a number of sfichim as they are called in the texts, or volunteer plants, came up and could have been eaten in the shmita, including a bunch of garlics, a scallion, some marigolds, and a huge mullein plant! Ashreinu, what a blessing! Free abundance, shefa min haadamah!"

Rav Kook, Introduction to "Sabbath of the Land"

The treasure of the nation, the Divine blessing that is implanted in it, the order of the world, the righteous and good life, lived in harmony with justice and honesty, peace and tranquility, grace and courage, permeated by the all-embracing contemplation of the Divine purpose, as it exists in the national soul -- none can be activated in the day-to-day life. The very nature of this life obfuscates the spiritual majesty of the Divine soul (which dwells in the nation) and prevents its bright and shining light from

penetrating the profane reality.

Life can only be perfected through the affording of a breathing space from the bustle of everyday life. The individual shakes himself free from ordinary weekday life at short and regular intervals—every Sabbath... What the Sabbath achieves regarding the individual, the Shmita achieves with regard to the nation as a whole.

A year of solemn rest is essential for both the nation and the land, a year of peace and quiet without oppressor and tyrant...It is a year of equality and rest, in which the soul reaches out towards Divine justice, towards God who sustains the living creatures with loving kindness. There is no private property and no punctilious privilege but the peace of God reigns over all in which there is the breath of life.

Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Michael Fraade