

שְׁמִטָּה

(Jewish law) Shmita, the seventh year in a seven-year cycle during which land in Israel must lie fallow and debts are canceled

שְׁמִטָּה

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Shmita

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The **sabbath year** (*shmita* Hebrew: שמיטה, literally "release") also called the **sabbatical year** or *sheviit* (Hebrew: שביעית, literally "seventh") is the seventh year of the seven-year agricultural cycle mandated by the Torah for the Land of Israel,^[1] and still observed in contemporary Judaism.

During *shmita*, the land is left to lie fallow and all agricultural activity, including plowing, planting, pruning and harvesting, is forbidden by *halakha* (Jewish law). Other cultivation techniques (such as watering, fertilizing, weeding, spraying, trimming and mowing) may be performed as a preventative measure only, not to improve the growth of trees or other plants. Additionally, any fruits which grow of their own accord are deemed *hefker* (ownerless) and may be picked by anyone. A variety of laws also apply to the sale, consumption and disposal of *shmita* produce. All debts, except those of foreigners, were to be remitted.^[2]

Chapter 25 of the Book of Leviticus promises bountiful harvests to those who observe the *shmita*, and describes its observance as a test of religious faith. There is little notice of the observance of this year in Biblical history and it appears to have been much neglected.^[3]

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Ancient Israel

Ancient Near East fallow years

It is still discussed among scholars of the Ancient Near East whether or not there is clear evidence for a seven-year cycle in Ugaritic texts.^[4] It is also debated how the biblical seventh fallow year would fit in with, for example Assyrian practice of a four-year cycle and crop rotation, and whether the one year in seven was an

extra fallow year. Jehuda Felix suggests^[5] that the land may have been farmed only 3 years in seven.^[6] Borowski (1987) takes the fallow year as one year in seven.^[7]

Biblical references

A sabbath (shmita) year is mentioned several times in the Bible by name or by its pattern of six years of activity and one of rest:

- Book of Exodus: "You may plant your land for six years and gather its crops. But during the seventh year, you must leave it alone and withdraw from it. The needy among you will then be able to eat just as you do, and whatever is left over can be eaten by wild animals. This also applies to your vineyard and your olive grove." (Exodus 23:10–11^[8])
- Book of Leviticus: "God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, telling him to speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you come to the land that I am giving you, the land must be given a rest period, a sabbath to God. For six years you may plant your fields, prune your vineyards, and harvest your crops, but the seventh year is a sabbath of sabbaths for the land. It is God's sabbath during which you may not plant your fields, nor prune your vineyards. Do not harvest crops that grow on their own and do not gather the grapes on your unpruned vines, since it is a year of rest for the land. [What grows while] the land is resting may be eaten by you, by your male and female slaves, and by the employees and resident hands who live with you. All the crops shall be eaten by the domestic and wild animals that are in your land." (Leviticus 25:1–7)^[9]
 "And if ye shall say: 'What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we may not sow, nor gather in our increase'; then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth produce for the three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the produce, the old store; until the ninth year, until her produce come in, ye shall eat the old store." (Leviticus 25:20–22)^[9]
- Book of Deuteronomy: "At the end of every seven years, you shall celebrate the remission year. The idea of the remission year is that every creditor shall remit any debt owed by his neighbor and brother when God's remission year comes around. You may collect from the alien, but if you have any claim against your brother for a debt, you must relinquish it. ..." (Deuteronomy 15:1–6)^[10]
 "Moses then gave them the following commandment: 'At the end of each seven years, at a fixed time on the festival of Sukkoth, after the year of release, when all Israel comes to present themselves before God your Lord, in the place that He will choose, you must read this Torah before all Israel, so that they will be able to hear it. 'You must gather together the people, the men, women, children and proselytes from your settlements, and let them hear it. They will thus learn to be in awe of God your Lord, carefully keeping all the words of this Torah. Their children, who do not know, will listen and learn to be in awe of God your Lord, as long as you live in the land which you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.'" (Deuteronomy 31:10–13)^[11]
- Book of Jeremiah: Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying: "At the end of seven years ye shall let go every man his brother that is a Hebrew, that hath been sold unto thee, and hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee"; but your fathers hearkened not unto Me, neither inclined their ear." (Jeremiah 34:13–14)^[12]
- Book of Nehemiah: "and if the peoples of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy of them on the sabbath, or on a holy day; and that we would forego the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt." (Nehemiah 10:31)^[13]
- Books of Chronicles: "... And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia; to fulfil the word of the

Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had been paid her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. (2 Chronicles 36:20–21)^[14]

- Books of Kings: (Isaiah speaking) "... And this is the sign for you: This year you eat what grows of itself, and the next year what springs from that, and in the third year, sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. And the survivors of the House of Judah that have escaped shall regenerate its stock below and produce boughs above." (2 Kings 19:20–30).

Isaiah is apparently informing King Hezekiah that if he will agree to observe the Sabbath year that coming fall (701 BCE) and the Jubilee year in the year after (700 BCE)—although he calls neither year by either name in the original language—and then wait to resume planting and harvesting until the year after that (699 BCE), then God will act against Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 19:32–37). There is no other occasion in the Hebrew calendar when two years of scheduled non-planting occur back-to-back. Hezekiah apparently agrees, as the siege is diverted. Since the date of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and siege against Jerusalem is known to archaeologists as the spring and summer of 701 BCE, this is evidence that the dates the Rabbinate considers to be the Sabbath years and Jubilee years are incorrect: the last Jubilee would have been 2001 (because there was no year "0" between 1 BCE and 1 CE, and the most recent Sabbath year therefore began on Rosh Hashanah in September 2014).

This interpretation, namely that the 2 Kings passage (and its parallel in Isaiah 37:30) refers to a sabbath (*shmita*) year followed by a jubilee (*yovel*) year, runs into a difficulty when the original language of these two passages is examined. The text says that in the first year the people were to eat "what grows of itself," which is expressed by one word in the Hebrew, *saphiah* (ספיה). In Leviticus 25:5, the reaping of the *saphiah* is forbidden for a Sabbath year, thus making the interpretation given just above difficult to maintain.

There is an alternative explanation without this difficulty that is at least as old as Adam Clarke's 1837 commentary.^[15] The Assyrian siege had lasted until after planting time in the fall of 701 BCE, and although the Assyrians left immediately after the prophecy was given (2 Kings 19:35), they had consumed the harvest of that year before they left, leaving only the *saphiah* to be gleaned from the fields. In the next year, the people were to eat "what springs from that", Hebrew *sahish* (סחיש). Since this word occurs only here and in the parallel passage in Isaiah 37:30, where it is spelled שחיש, there is some uncertainty about its exact meaning. If it is the same as the *shabbat ha-arets* (שבת הארץ) that was permitted to be eaten in a Sabbath year in Leviticus 25:6, then there is a ready explanation why there was no harvest: the second year, i.e. the year starting in the fall of 700 BCE, was a Sabbath year, after which normal sowing and reaping resumed in the third year, as stated in the text.

Another interpretation obviates all of the speculation about the Sabbath year entirely, translating the verse as: "And this shall be the sign for you, this year you shall eat what grows by itself, and the next year, what grows from the tree stumps, and in the third year, sow and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruit."^[16] According to the Judaica Press commentary, it was Sennacherib's invasion that prevented the people of Judah from sowing in the first year and Isaiah was promising that enough plants would grow to feed the population for the rest of the first year and the second year. Therefore, Isaiah was truly providing a sign to Hezekiah that God would save the city of Jerusalem, as explicitly stated, and not an injunction concerning the Sabbath (*shmita*) or jubilee (*yovel*) years, which are not mentioned at all in the passage.

Rabbinical interpretations

The rabbis of the Talmud and later times interpreted the Shmita laws in various ways to ease the burden they created for farmers and the agricultural industry. The *Heter Mechirah* (leniency of sale), developed for the Shmita year of 1888–1889, permitted Jewish farmers to sell their land to non-Jews so that they could continue

to work the land as usual during Shmita. This temporary solution to the impoverishment of the Jewish settlement in those days was later adopted by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel as a permanent edict, generating ongoing controversy between Zionist and Haredi leaders to this day.^[17] There is a major debate among halakhic authorities as to what is the nature of the obligation of the Sabbatical year nowadays. Some say it is still biblically binding, as it has always been. Others hold that it is rabbinically binding, since the Shmita only biblically applies when the Jubilee year is in effect, but the Sages of the Talmud legislated the observance of the Shmita anyway as a reminder of the biblical statute. And yet others hold that the Shmita has become purely voluntary. An analysis by respected posek and former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef in his responsa *Yabi'a Omer* (Vol. 10), accorded with the middle option, that the Biblical obligation holds only when a majority of the Jewish people is living in the Biblical Land of Israel and hence the Shmita nowadays is a rabbinic obligation in nature. This approach potentially admits for some leniencies which would not be possible if the Shemitah were biblical in origin, including the aforementioned sale of the land of Israel. Haredi authorities, on the other hand, generally follow the view of the Chazon Ish, that the Shmita continues to be a Biblical obligation.

The Sma, who holds that Shmita nowadays is only a Rabbinic obligation, holds that the Biblical promise of bounty for those who observe the Shmita (Leviticus 25:20–22^[18]) only applies when the Biblical obligation is in effect, and hence that the Biblical promise of bounty is not in effect today. However, the Chazon Ish, who holds that the Biblical obligation of Shmita observance remains in effect today, holds that the Biblical promise of bounty follows it and Divine bounty is promised to Jews living in the Land of Israel today, just as it was promised in ancient times. However, he holds that Jews should generally not demand miracles from Heaven and hence that one should not rely on this promise for one's sustenance, but should instead make appropriate arrangements and rely on permissible leniencies.^[19]

Haredi Jews tell stories of groups of Israeli Jews who kept the Shmita and experienced remarkable agricultural events which they describe as representative of miracles in fulfillment of the Biblical promise of bounty. One famous story is told about the then-two-year-old village of Komemiyut during the 1952 Shmita. The village was one of the few who refrained from working the land that year. At the end of the Shmita, farmers searching for seed to plant found only wormy, inferior seed that had been rotting for years in an abandoned shed. Rabbi Binyamin Mendelson advised them to sow this seed anyway, saying "The Almighty who causes wheat to sprout from good seed will bless your inferior seed as well," even though it was three months after neighboring villages had planted their fields. They did. That year the fall rains came late, the day after the Komemiyut seed was sown. As a result, the neighboring villages had a meager harvest, while the village of Komemiyut, who sowed from the old store, had a bumper crop.^[19]

Observance in the Land of Israel

According to the laws of shmita, land owned by Jews in the Land of Israel is left unfarmed. The law does not apply to land in the Diaspora. In Biblical times any naturally growing produce was left to be taken by poor people, passing strangers, and beasts of the field. While naturally growing produce such as grapes growing on existing vines can be harvested, it cannot be sold or used for commercial purposes; it must be given away or consumed. Personal debts are considered forgiven at sunset on 29 Elul. Since this aspect of shmita is not dependent on the land, it applies to Jews both in Israel and elsewhere.^[20]

As produce grown on land in Israel owned by Jewish farmers cannot be sold or consumed, fruits and vegetables sold in a shmita year may be derived from five sources:

- Produce grown during the sixth year, to which the laws of the seventh year do not apply.
- Produce grown on land owned by non-Jewish (typically, Arab) farmers in Israel.

- Produce grown on land outside the halakhic boundaries of Israel (*chutz la'aretz*).
- Produce (mainly fruits) distributed through the *otzar beit din*.
- Produce grown in greenhouses.

Halakhic authorities prohibit removing produce with Sabbatical sanctity (*shevi'it* produce) from the Land of Israel or purchasing such produce outside the land of Israel. Some authorities hold that tourists should be careful not to carry any such produce on an airplane leaving Israel even for consumption mid-air.

There is a requirement that *shevi'it* produce be consumed for personal use and cannot be sold or put in trash. For this reason, there are various special rules regarding the religious use of products that are normally made from agricultural produce. Some authorities hold that Hannukah candles cannot be made from *shevi'it* oils because the light of Channukah candles is not supposed to be used for personal use, while Shabbat candles can be because their light can be used for personal use. For similar reasons, some authorities hold that if the Havdalah ceremony is performed using wine made from *shevi'it* grapes, the cup should be drunk completely and the candle should not be dipped into the wine to extinguish the flame as is normally done.

The *otzar beit din* system is structured in such a way that *biur* remains the responsibility of members of individual households and hence warehoused produce does not have to be moved to a public place or reclaimed at the *biur* time. Households only have to perform *biur* on produce they receive before the *biur* time, not on produce they receive after it.^[19]

Because the Orthodox rules of Kashrut have strictures requiring certain products, such as wine, to be produced by Jews, the leniency of selling one's land to non-Jews is unavailable for these products, since these strictures would render the wine non-Kosher. Accordingly, wine made from grapes grown in the land of Israel during the Shmita year is subject to the full strictures of Shmita. New vines cannot be planted. Although grapes from existing vines can be harvested, they and their products cannot be sold.

While obligatory to the Orthodox as a matter of religious observance, observance of the rules of Shmita is voluntary so far as the civil government is concerned in the contemporary State of Israel. Civil courts do not enforce the rules. A debt would be transferred to a religious court for a document of *prosbul* only if both parties voluntarily agreed to do so. Many non-religious Israeli Jews do not observe these rules, although some non-religious farmers participate in the symbolic sale of land to non-Jews to permit their produce to be considered kosher and sellable to Orthodox Jews who permit the leniency. Despite this, during Shmita, crop yields in Israel fall short of requirements so importation is employed from abroad.^[21]

Talmudic references

According to the Talmud, observance of the Sabbatical year is of high accord, and one who does not do so may not be allowed to be a witness in an Orthodox rabbinical court. Nonetheless, Rabbinic Judaism has developed Halakhic (religious-law) devices to be able to maintain a modern agricultural and commercial system while giving heed to the Biblical injunctions. Such devices represent examples of flexibility within the Halakhic system

Hillel the Elder, in the first century BCE, used the rule that remittance of debts applies only to debts between Jews, to develop a device known as *Prosbul* in which the debt is transferred to a Beit Din (religious court). When owed to the court rather than to an individual, the debt survives the Sabbatical year. This device, formulated early in the era of Rabbinic Judaism when the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing, became a prototype of how Judaism was later to adapt to the destruction of the Second Temple and maintain a system based on Biblical law under very different conditions.

The rabbis of the Jerusalem Talmud created rules to impose order on the harvesting process including a rule limiting harvesters working on others' land to taking only enough to feed themselves and their families. They also devised a system, called *otzar beit din*, under which a rabbinical court supervised a communal harvesting process by hiring workers who harvested the fields, stored it in communal storage facilities, and distributed it to the community.^[19]

There exists a major difference of opinion between two Acharonim, the Beit Yosef and the Mabit, as to whether produce grown on land in Israel which is owned by non-Jews also has sanctity. According to the Beit Yosef, such produce has no sanctity and may be used and/or discarded in the same way as any produce grown outside of Israel. According to the Mabit, the fact that this produce was grown in Israel, even by non-Jews, gives it sanctity, and it must be treated in the special ways detailed above.

The Chazon Ish, a noted Haredi halakhic authority who issued key rulings on Jewish agricultural law (*mitzvos tlu'os ba'aretz*) in the 1930s and 1940s, ruled like the Mabit, holding that produce grown on land in Israel owned by non-Jews has sanctity. The Chazon Ish's ruling was adopted first by the religious families of Bnei Brak and is popularly called *Minhag Chazon Ish* (the custom of the Chazon Ish).

The rabbis of Jerusalem, on the other hand, embraced the opinion of the Beit Yosef that produce farmed on land owned by non-Jews has no sanctity. This opinion is now called *Minhag Yerushalayim* (the custom of Jerusalem), and was adopted by many Haredi families, by British Mandate Palestine, and by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.^[19]

These respective opinions are reflected in the way the various kashrut-certifying organizations publicize their Shmita and non-Shmita produce. The Edah HaChareidis, which follows *Minhag Yerushalayim*, buys produce from non-Jewish farms in Israel and sells it as "non-Shmita produce." The Shearit Yisrael certifying organization, which subscribes to *Minhag Chazon Ish*, also buys from non-Jewish farmers in Israel, but labels the produce as such so that customers who keep *Minhag Chazon Ish* will treat these fruits and vegetables with appropriate sanctity.

Shevi'it

In halakha (Jewish law), produce of the seventh year that is subject to the laws of Shmita is called *sheviit*, (*sheviis* in Ashkenazic Hebrew). *Shevi'it* produce has sanctity requiring special rules for its use:

- It can only be consumed or used (in its ordinary use) for personal enjoyment
- It cannot be bought, sold, or thrown out.
- It must be used in its "best" manner so as to ensure fullest enjoyment (For example, fruits that are normally eaten whole cannot be juiced).
- It can only be stored so long as naturally-growing plants of the given species can be eaten by animals in the fields. Once a particular species is no longer available in the field, one must rid ones house of it through a process known as *biur*.^[19]

By Biblical law, Jews who own land are required to make their land available during the Shmita to anyone who wishes to come in and harvest. If the land is fenced etc., gates must be left open to enable entrance. These rules apply to all outdoor agriculture, including private gardens and even outdoor potted plants. Plants inside a building are exempt. However, the Rabbis of the Mishna and Jerusalem Talmud imposed rabbinic ordinances on harvesters to ensure an orderly and equitable process and to prevent a few individuals from taking everything. Harvesters on others' land are permitted to take only enough to feed themselves and their families.^[19]

Heter mechira

In the late 19th century, in the early days of Zionism, Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor came up with a halakhic means of allowing agriculture to continue during the Shmita year. After ruling in favor of *Minhag Yerushalayim*, that the biblical prohibition consists of not cultivating the land owned by Jews ("your land", Exodus 23:10), Rabbi Spektor devised a mechanism by which the land could be sold to a non-Jew for the duration of that year under a trust agreement. Under this plan, the land would belong to the non-Jew temporarily, and revert to Jewish ownership when the year was over. When the land was sold under such an arrangement, Jews could continue to farm it. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of British Mandate Palestine, adopted this principle, which became known as the *heter mechira* (lit. "sale permit").

The *heter mechira* was accepted by Modern Orthodox Judaism and is one of the classic examples of the Modern Orthodox approach toward adapting classical Jewish law to the modern world. However, this approach has not been universally accepted in the Orthodox community and has met with opposition, particularly from Haredi *poskim* (authorities of Jewish law).

In contemporary religious circles these rabbinic leniencies have received wide but not universal acceptance. In Israel, the Chief Rabbinate obtains permission from all farmers who wish to have their land sold. The land is then legally sold to a non-Jew for a large sum of money. The payment is made by a cheque post-dated to after the end of the Sabbatical year. When the cheque is returned or not honoured at the end of the year the land reverts to its original owners. Thus, the fields can be farmed with certain restrictions.

Although the Orthodox Union's Kashrut Division accepts *Minhag Yerushalayim* and hence regards the produce of land owned by non-Jews as ordinary produce, it does not currently rely on the *heter mechira* because of doubts about whether the trust arrangement involved effects a valid transfer of ownership.^[19]

Some Haredi farmers do not avail themselves of this leniency and seek other pursuits during the Shmita year.^[17]

Storehouse of the rabbinical court

An *otzar* (storehouse) *beit din* is an ancient storehouse, mentioned in the Tosefta (*Sheviit* 8, 1). Under an *otzar beit din*, a community rabbinical court supervises harvesting by hiring workers to harvest, store, and distribute food to the community. Members of the community pay the *beit din*, but this payment represents only a contribution for services, and not a purchase or sale of the food.

The Talmudic device was revived in modern times as an alternative to the *heter mechira* for observant Jews wishing to utilize an approach which regards the produce of the Land of Israel as sacred and which undertakes to respect the special rules associated with its sanctity.^[19]

Because under this approach land cannot be sown but existing plants can be tended and harvested, the approach is applied to orchards, vineyards, and other perennial crops. Under the approach, a *beit din*, or rabbinical court supervising the process, hires farmers as its agents to tend and harvest the crops, and appoints the usual distributors and shopkeepers as its agents to distribute them. Individual consumers appoint the court and its designees as their agents and pay monies to court-appointed designees as agents of the court. Thus, under this approach, a legal arrangement is created whereby the crops themselves are never bought or sold, but rather people are merely paid for their labor and expenses in providing certain services. In modern Israel, the *badatz* is notable for adapting and supervising such arrangements.

The Orthodox Union notes that "to some, the modern-day *otzar* might seem to be nothing more than a legal

sleight of hand. All the regular players are still in place, and distribution rolls along as usual. However, in reality, it is identical only in appearance as prices are controlled, and may correspond only to expenses, with no profit allowed. In addition, the *otzar beit din* does not own the produce. Since it is simply a mechanism for open distribution, any individual is still entitled to collect produce from a field or orchard on his own. Furthermore, all agents of the *beit din* are appointed only if they commit to distributing the produce in accordance with the restrictions that result from its sanctity."^[19]

Biur

Under the rules of the Shmita, produce with Sabbatical sanctity (*shevi'it*) can only be stored as long as plants of the same species (e.g. plants sprouting by themselves) are available to animals in the fields. Once a species is no longer available in the land, halakha requires that it be removed, made ownerless, and made available to anyone who wishes to take it through a procedure called *biur*.

The Orthodox Union describes the contemporary application of the rules of *biur* as follows:

On the appointed day, one must remove all the relevant produce, and all products containing such produce, from his home and take it to a public area such as a sidewalk. Once there, the individual declares the produce in front of three people who do not live with him. He then waits to give the witnesses a chance to claim the produce. Once they have taken what they want, he is permitted to reclaim whatever remains. It is permissible to choose three people whom one knows will not claim the produce for themselves, even though they are legally entitled to.^[19]

Thus, while the obligation of making one's produce available to the public and permitted to all takers can be performed in such a way as to minimize the risk that this availability will actually be utilized, this risk cannot be entirely eliminated. The community at large, including members of the poor, must be afforded some opportunity to take the produce.

Biur only applies to produce that has *shevi'it* sanctity. For this reason, it does not apply to produce grown under the *heter mechirah* for those who accept it. (Under the reasoning of the *heter mechirah* the shmita does not apply to land owned by non-Jews, so its produce does not have *shevi'it* sanctity.)^[19]

Since the establishment of the state

The first Shmita year in the modern State of Israel was 1951 (5712 in the Hebrew calendar). Subsequent Shmita years have been 1958–59 (5719), 1965–66 (5726), 1972–73 (5733), 1979–80 (5740), 1986–87 (5747), 1993–94 (5754), 2000–01 (5761), and 2007–08 (5768). The last Shmita year began on Rosh Hashanah in September 2014, corresponding to the Hebrew calendar year 5775. The 50th year of the land, which is also a Shabbat of the land, is called "Yovel" in Hebrew, which is the origin of the Latin term "Jubilee", also meaning 50th. According to the Torah observance of Jubilee only applies when the Jewish people live in the land of Israel according to their tribes. Thus, with the exile of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Menashe (about 600 BCE) Jubilee has not been applicable.^[22] In 2000, Sefardic Chief Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron withdrew religious certification of the validity of permits for the sale of land to non-Jews during the Shmita year following protests against his endorsement of the leniency by members of the Haredi community.

Hydroponics

Authorities who prohibit farming in Israel generally permit hydroponics farming in greenhouses structured so

that the plants are not connected to the soil. As a result, hydroponics use has been increasing in Haredi farming communities.^[23]

Shmita 2007–2008

During the 2007–2008 Shmita, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel attempted to avoid taking a potentially divisive position on the dispute between Haredi and Modern Orthodox views about the correctness of the *heter mechirah* leniency by ruling that local rabbis could make their own decisions about whether or not to accept this device as valid. The Israel Supreme Court, however, ordered the Chief Rabbinate to rescind its ruling and to devise a single national ruling. The Israel Supreme Court opined that divergent local rulings would be harmful to farmers and trade and could implicate competition. The issue of secular courts ordering the rabbinate to rule in particular ways on religious matters aroused a debate within the Knesset.^{[24][25][26]} Israeli wineries often address this issue by making separate batches of Shmita wine, labeled as such, and giving away bottles of Shmita wine as a free bonus to purchasers of non-Shmita wine.

See also

- Historical Sabbatical Years
- Jewish holidays
- Ley farming, an agricultural system where the field is alternately seeded for grain and left fallow.
- Jubilee (biblical)

References

1. This article incorporates text from Easton's Bible Dictionary (1897), a publication now in the public domain. Sabbatical year—every seventh year, during which the land, according to the law of Moses, had to remain uncultivated (Lev. 25:2–7; comp. Ex. 23:10, 11, 12; Lev. 26:34, 35). Whatever grew of itself during that year was not for the owner of the land, but for the poor and the stranger and the beasts of the field.
2. Deut 15:1–11
3. From Easton's Bible Dictionary (1897)
4. Tony W. Cartledge (1992). *Vows in the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near East*. p. 304. -"455. 3. Cf. C. H. Gordon (1982). "The Biblical Sabbath, its Origin and Observance in the Ancient Near East". *Judaism* **31**: 12–16.; C. H. Gordon (1953). "Sabbatical Cycle or Seasonal Pattern? Reflections on a New Book". *Orientalia* **22** (1): 79–81. JSTOR 43079363 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43079363>), who draws mainly upon Ugaritic ...
5. "Jehuda Felix". *Encyclopedia Judaica*. 1972.
6. D. L. Baker (2009). *Tight Fists or Open Hands?: Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law*. p. 224. "Ancient Near East None of the ancient Near Eastern laws legislate for a sabbatical year, nor any other regular fallowing of land, though we know that fallowing was common practice from early times. There are numerous references to ... Feliks (1972: 375) believes the sabbatical was an extra fallow year, so the farmer planted a particular field just three times in seven years. Hopkins (1985: 191–95, 200–202) suggests that the farmer would have planted all his fields in ..."
7. Baker "In his detailed study of agriculture in Iron Age Israel, Borowski (1987: 143–45) makes no reference to the biennial fallow, and is apparently unaware of the research cited above which has advocated this. He assumes that the sabbatical ..."
8. Exodus 23 (<http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=2&CHAPTER=23>), the World ORT website version.
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Jonathan Cahn

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jonathan Cahn is a Messianic Jewish Rabbi and pastor best known for his best selling novel *The Harbinger* in which he compares the United States and the September 11 attacks, to ancient Israel and the destruction of Kingdom of Israel. In particular he sees Isaiah 9:10 as a prophetic warning to the United States. The Harbinger was followed with *The Harbinger Companion: With Study Guide*.^[1]

Contents

- 1 Personal life
- 2 Books and videos
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Jonathan Cahn	
Born	Jonathan David Cahn New York City, New York, U.S.
Occupation	Messianic Rabbi/Pastor Biblical Scholar Author Speaker
Years active	1980's-present

Personal life

Born in New York State, Cahn was raised in a reform Jewish home and attended the synagogue frequently. He became an atheist when he was eight years old but a few years later he began to question atheism. By the time he was 20 years old he had become a Messianic Jew, accepting Jesus as the Messiah after almost being killed in two separate accidents, the first being when he was driving on the road when he narrowly avoided a collision and the second at a railway crossing when he escaped from his car before it was crushed by an oncoming train.^[2] He went to Purchase University and studied history. He ministered to the New York City homeless for many years and became a licensed minister. In 1989, Cahn started "Hope of the World Ministries" (*HOW*), an outreach of the Gospel and compassion projects for the needy and currently is the president of the organization and further publishes *Sapphires Magazine* and ministers on radio, television, and internet.

Books and videos

Books

1. *The Harbinger* (2012)
2. *The Harbinger Companion: With Study Guide* (2013)
3. *The Mystery of the Shemitah* (2014)

Videos

1. The Harbinger (2012)
2. The Isaiah 9:10 Judgment: Is There an Ancient Mystery that Foretells America's Future? (2012)

3. *The Masada Mystery* (2012)
4. *The Sanhedrin Secret* (2012)
5. *The Harbinger Decoded* (2013)
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