

"AL HAPEREK"

A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

Yehoshua Perakim 5-6

At last the People of Israel take their first steps as a nation on its own land. Circumcision, the celebration of Passover, and the encounter with the angel serve as a preamble to the miraculous conquest of the first city in the land of Israel. We will explore the connections between circumcision, Passover, and inheriting the Land, while at the same time seeking to understand the broader significance of Yericho's conquest.

General Overview < "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים"

Perek 5

- ❶ This perek describes four topics: (5:1, 5:2-8; 5:9-12, 13-15). In your opinion, how are these topics related? To understand the connection between inheriting the Land and circumcision, see Breishit 17:1-14. To understand the connection between circumcision and Passover, see Shmot 12:48.
- ❷ The story of Yehoshua and the angel of Hashem calls to mind the story of Moshe and the burning bush (Shmot 3:1-5, quoted below). What does this comparison contribute to our understanding of the transition from Moshe to Yehoshua as leader of the Jewish people?

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the farthest end of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said: 'I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.' And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said: 'Moses, Moses.' And he said: 'Here am I.' And He said: 'Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."



Perek 6

- 1 What are the three stages of the conquest of Yericho, and what characterizes each stage?
- 2 The shofar, an instrument whose use was central to the conquest of Yericho, has a number of roles in Tanach. See the sources listed below and consider how the various functions of the shofar affect our understanding of the story:

"Then shalt thou make proclamation with the blast of the horn on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make proclamation with the horn throughout all your land." (Vayikra.25:9)

"God is gone up amidst shouting, the Lord amidst the sound of the horn." (Tebillim 47:6)

"With trumpets and sound of the horn shout ye before the King, the Lord." (Tebillim 98:6)

"And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel; and blow ye with the horn, and say: Long live king Solomon." (1 Malachim 1:34)

Shoftim 6:34-7:25 (see the entire story).

- 3 Who initiated the dedication of the city? What among the spoils was dedicated to G-d?
- 4 In pasuk 26, Yehoshua swears that the city will remain destroyed forever. Look at 1 Malachim 16: 29-34 and see who rebuilt the city and what became of him. Think about the deeper connection between the sins of Achav ben Omri and the rebuilding of Yericho.

In-depth Study < "מִפְנֵי שׂוֹם שְׂכָל"

- 1 In perekim 5 and 6, the miraculous and the natural are interwoven. How is the transition from miraculous to natural leadership reflected in the various events of the chapters?
- 2 In the Tanach, cherem (חרם) (alternately "devoted thing" or "forbidden spoils") appears in two contexts. Look at Vayikra 27:28 and Devarim 13:16. How do the different roles cherem plays there affect our understanding of the cherem in our perek?

Appendix < "וַיְבִינוּ בַּמִּקְרָא"

"And seven priests shall bear seven rams' horns before the ark; and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the horns." (Yehoshua 6:4)

"... Therefore you find everywhere that in the number seven there is both secular and holy: the seven days of the week are six secular and the seventh is holy; also in months, the seventh is holy, the month of Tishrei; and in years there are the years of work, and the seventh year of shmittah (fallow) is a holy year. And all this is because the [first] six numbers are secular and they represent the six borders of that which is material and secular, and the seventh represents the Holy Presence, which is the seventh and in the center, and this is a known thing. And the seventh joins to the six in every place, also in the days of the week and also in years; ...And the concept is clear beyond a doubt, that when there are seven, there also exists here a link between the sacred and the material [secular]. (Derech Chaim l'Maharal, on Massechet Avot chap. 5)