

# Parsha Ponders

Behar / Bechukosai | May 6, 2021 | 25 Iyar 5781

## Revering Shabbos<sup>1</sup>

את-שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני יקוק

You shall safeguard my Sabbaths and revere my Sanctuary; I am Hashem<sup>2</sup>

The *gemarra* derives<sup>3</sup> a law from the juxtaposition of the *mitzvah* to safeguard Shabbos<sup>4</sup> and the *mitzvah* to revere the Holy Temple<sup>5</sup>. They teach that just like the safeguarding of Shabbos, it's not that you're to revere Shabbos itself, but rather the One who commanded it, so too with revering the Temple, it's not the Temple that you are to revere, but rather the One who commanded it. We see it's a given that there's no idea to revere Shabbos, and the innovation is that the same holds true for the Temple itself. How do we know that there's no idea to revere Shabbos? Rashi tells us<sup>6</sup> because we don't find it written anywhere that we are to revere it. Sounds simple.

It should then surprise us that Rabbi Eliezer MiMitz (12<sup>th</sup> century France) in his work on the 613 *mitzvos* known as *Sefer Yereim* counts<sup>7</sup> a *mitzvah* to revere Shabbos. He writes that just like Hashem commanded us to revere and honor the Holy Temple, so too he commanded us to revere and honor Shabbos<sup>8</sup>. It sounds like the reverse of the *gemarra* we started with. The *gemarra* learned from Shabbos to the Temple, whereas the *Sefer Yereim* is learning from the Temple to Shabbos<sup>9</sup>. What does it mean to revere Shabbos? He writes that a person should contemplate and tremble at the amazing responsibility it is to observe Shabbos properly. This emotional connection to Shabbos should be the impetus for a person to fully learn all the laws of Shabbos and implement them correctly.

Even though Rashi said it doesn't say anywhere to revere Shabbos, and indeed the *Sefer Yereim* is the only authority to count it as a *mitzvah*<sup>10</sup>, there are numerous sources which could support this concept. The first word in the Torah<sup>11</sup> is בראשית, often translated as, "In the beginning"<sup>12</sup>. There are many things that are alluded to in this

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<sup>1</sup> Based on various sources which I found and collected

<sup>2</sup> Leviticus 26:2

<sup>3</sup> Yevamos 6a-b

<sup>4</sup> Sefer HaMitzvos Lo Sa'aseh § 320; Sefer HaChinuch § 32

<sup>5</sup> Sefer HaMitzvos Aseh § 21; Sefer HaChinuch § 254

<sup>6</sup> Yevamos 6b s.v. לא משבת. See also Ra'avad to Toras Kohanim parshas Kedoshim 7:6

<sup>7</sup> Sefer Yereim 7:410 (98 in the old editions)

<sup>8</sup> It's well known that there's a *mitzvah* to honor Shabbos. Most understand it's *midivrei kabbalah*, not on a biblical level, as it only appears in Isaiah 58:13. Therefore, many don't count it in the 613 *mitzvos*. However, the Bahag counts the *mitzvah* to light Shabbos Candles (Halachos Gedolos Aseh § 138 (Warsaw ed.)), which some say is in order to honor Shabbos (Rashi to Shabbos 25b s.v. חובה; cf. Tosafos ad. loc. s.v. הדלקת who say it's because of שבת עונג), since he has no problem counting even purely Rabbinic *mitzvos*. In contrast, the Ramban to Leviticus 23:2, based on Toras Kohanim Emor § 12, understands honoring Shabbos is a biblical *mitzvah*, included in מקרא קודש (*ibid* v. 3). See Mishnah Berurah to Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 242:1 § 1 and Sha'ar HaTziyun § 1

<sup>9</sup> See Gilyonei HaShas to Yevamos *loc. cit.* who suggests how the Sefer Yereim read this into the *gemarra* (although I don't fully understand his intent), and Toafos Re'eim ad. loc. § 1 who brings that the Semak § 6 had a different version of the *gemarra* than we have, and suggests the Sefer Yereim had the same version. Rav Yerucham Fischel Perla, in his commentary on the Sefer HaMitzvos LaRasag Aseh § 13 s.v. והנה ראיתי להרא"ם, writes that although the Sefer Yereim seems correct that due to the juxtaposition we should learn from revering the Temple to revering Shabbos, the *gemarra* we have seems to assume that there is no reverence for Shabbos. He suggests its because the verse went out of its way to separate the two *mitzvos*, mentioning reverence only with the Temple and not with Shabbos. It should have written את שבתתי ומקדשי תשמרו ותיראו (since there's also a concept of honoring the Temple; see beginning of Tamid). Therefore, we shouldn't derive one from the other

<sup>10</sup> This *mitzvah* is surprisingly absent from the Bahag, considering the Sefer Yereim based his listing on that work. It must be that he had a different version of the Bahag than what we have (Toafos Re'eim and Rav Perla loc. cit.)

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1:1

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Rashi ad. loc.

word<sup>13</sup>, often discovered through anagrams or acronyms from its letters. One suggested is that בראשית is an anagram for ירא שבת, revering Shabbos<sup>14</sup>. Another source is the *gemarra* discusses<sup>15</sup> those who revere Hashem's name, and Rashi says<sup>16</sup> it's referring to those who observe Shabbos<sup>17</sup>. We see there's an element of reverence with respect to Shabbos. Another source<sup>18</sup> refers to those who had "the reverence of Shabbos" upon them<sup>19 20</sup>.

This unique opinion could offer insight into a confusing custom. The Rema records<sup>21</sup> that there are those that during the Friday night *Kiddush* recite the beginning of it standing, and sit for the rest. There are reasons to stand for the whole thing, or to sit for the whole thing. However, it's hard to figure out why someone would do both. Perhaps the custom started from the opinion of the Sefer Yereim, that there's a concept of reverence for Shabbos. In the Temple there's a prohibition of sitting in the Temple courtyard<sup>22</sup>, and some say it's because of the *mitzvah* to have reverence for the Temple<sup>23</sup>. We could then say that there's also a concept not to sit on Shabbos, due to reverence for the day. However, obviously one cannot be expected to stand the entire Shabbos, especially since there's a *mitzvah* to delight on Shabbos<sup>24</sup>. We could say that a custom developed to stand at the very least during the beginning of *Kiddush* on Shabbos, out of reverence for the day.

Good Shabbos

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<sup>13</sup> I once heard in the name of the Vilna Gaon that **everything** that ever was, is, and will be, is alluded to in the word בראשית. More than that, all that is alluded to in the letter ב of בראשית. Even more than that, everything is alluded to in the **dot** in the letter ב of בראשית. I was unable to track down the source for this. However, see his commentary to Sifra D'Tzniusa Chapter 5, brought by Nefesh HaChaim 4:10, and also Oros HaGra Torah Chapter 1, which says everything that ever was, is, and will be is alluded to in the Torah, and even in its first verse

<sup>14</sup> Tikkunei Zohar Hakdama p. 5b, brought by Gilyonei HaShas *loc. cit.*; Rokeach § 296, brought by Rav Perla *loc. cit.* (he points out that the Rokeach is a student of the Sefer Yereim, so he must have learned it from his teacher); Ba'al HaTurim *ad. loc.*, brought by Toafos Re'eim *loc. cit.* (citing "HaShem Chadash"). However, Rav Perla suggests that this allusion might not be a support to the Sefer Yereim. See Sefer Chassidim § 565 (and Sefer Chassidim HaShalem § 592)

<sup>15</sup> Ta'anis 8b

<sup>16</sup> *Ad. loc.*, brought by Gilyonei HaShas *loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Gilyonei HaShas *loc. cit.* explains that Shabbos is one of Hashem's names (Zohar II parshas Yisro p. 88b; Ba'al HaTurim to Bamidbar 11:16, coming from Bamidbar Rabbah 14:13 and Shir HaShirim Zuta 1:1)

<sup>18</sup> Yerushalmi Demai 4:1, brought by Toafos Re'eim *loc. cit.* (citing "HaShem Chadash")

<sup>19</sup> On a side note, that source was discussing *amei haaretz*, those lacking in Torah knowledge. Rav Herschel Schachter half-jokingly said this *gemarra* is referring to those who rely on computer databases for all of their Jewish knowledge. They're afraid to be asked a question on Shabbos, because they know they won't be able to answer the question without their computer (<https://joshyuter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RHS-on-Women-Wearing-Tefillin1.pdf>)

<sup>20</sup> See Rav Perla *loc. cit.*, who initially suggests a support from Sanhedrin 59a, but then later retracts from it. See also Maseches Sefer Torah 3:10 and Soferim 3:13, Yevamos 93a with Rashi למען תלמד ליראה את ה"א כל הימים and Teshuvos HaRashba 1:127

<sup>21</sup> Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 271:10. See the commentaries there for more on this topic

<sup>22</sup> Yoma 25a, 69b; Sotah 40b, 41b; Kiddushin 78b; Sanhedrin 101b; Tamid 27a

<sup>23</sup> Mishneh Torah Hilchos Beis HaBechirah 7:7; Semag Asin § 164

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah *loc. cit.*, counted as one of the 613 *mitzvos* by the Bahag Aseh § 48