

War and Morality (2014) <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=4590>

#### Five battlefields

(1) Jericho	Joshua 6	Walls collapse
(2) Ayalon	Joshua 9-10	Sun and Moon halt?
(3) Kishon	Judges 4-5	Flash flood in the wadi
(4) Elah	Samuel I 17	A stone fells Goliath
(5) Mount of Olives	Zechariah 14	Earthquake and flood

#### Why learn about battlefields?

1. Bruce Prideaux, *Echoes of War: Battlefield Tourism*, in *Battlefield Tourism* pg. 18

Battlefields are poignant reminders of humanity's inability to live at peace with neighbours and a statement of the selfishness of individuals and nations who seek to take what is not theirs through aggression. Moreover, they are also a testimony to those who make a stand against tyranny and injustice, sometimes at the expense of their own lives. Battlefields are also reminders of the past and for some are the places where national pride was born or national disgrace was suffered... Battlefields also exhibit a number of dimensions including the battlefield itself, measurement of the outcomes on the victor and the vanquished, the impact on participants and the consequences on their family and friends.

2. Talmud, Nedarim 55a

A person who renders himself like a wilderness, open to all [i.e. humble], is given Torah as a gift.

3. Mishnah, Shabbat 1:1

If the pauper stands outside and the homeowner inside, and the pauper extends his hand inward and places in the hand of the homeowner, or takes from it and removes it, then the pauper is liable and the homeowner is exempt.

#### Jericho: The story

4. For more on this story – a four-part series

<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/817122/>

<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/817591/>

<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/818004/>

<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/818711/>

5. Seven universal laws

Murder; Adultery and incest; Idolatry; Blasphemy; Theft; Flesh taken from a live creature; Establish courts

6. Deuteronomy 9:5

Not due to your righteousness and the straightness of your heart do you come to take their land, but due to the wickedness of these nations does your Gd take them from before you, and to uphold that which Gd swore to your ancestors – to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

7. Jerusalem Talmud, Sheviit 6:1

Joshua sent three messages into Israel, before the Jews entered the land: Whoever wants to leave, may do so. Whoever wants to make peace, may do so. Whoever wants to make war, may do so.

8. Deuteronomy 20:10

When you draw near to a city, to fight against her, you shall call to her for peace.

## 9. Talmud, Zevachim 116b

There was not a single officer or leader who had not been with Rachav. Rachav was ten years old when the Jews left Egypt, and she was involved in *znut* for the entire forty years during which the Jews travelled through the wilderness.

## 10. Joshua 6:1-5 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

Now Jericho was shut up tight because of the Israelites; no one could leave or enter. The Lord said to Joshua, "See, I will deliver Jericho and her king [and her] warriors into your hands. Let all your troops march around the city and complete one circuit of the city. Do this six days, with seven priests carrying seven ram's horns preceding the Ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the horns. And when a long blast is sounded on the horn—as soon as you hear that sound of the horn—all the people shall give a mighty shout. Thereupon the city wall will collapse, and the people shall advance, every man straight ahead."

## 11. Don Isaac Abarbanel, Commentary to Joshua 6:5

Because just as the miraculous act performed by Gd in Creation was done in six days, halting on the seventh day, so, too (to demonstrate to the nations and leaders that the conquest of Jericho was a Divine act, meaning marvelous and miraculous, like initial Creation), He commanded that they make seven circuits in seven days, with seven kohanim and seven shofarot, to hint that this deed would be of the same type as that first Divine deed.

This was also the purpose and reason for the mitzvah of Shabbat and of the sabbatical year, regarding which the Torah also says "a Shabbat for Gd", hinting at Shabbat of Creation.

And like the seventh day is one of rest and halting and [so] those who engage in it will inherit land on which to continue in the Divine path, so He instructed them to have the whole nation blow on the seventh day, and the city would be conquered, and the Jews would have light, joy, celebration and honour.

And per the tradition of our Sages, Israel began its circuits on the first day of the week, and the city was taken on Shabbat, and thus it said "on the seventh day", the seventh of the week and the seventh of the circuits, as I have said.

And He instructed them to blow the shofar, like the deed of the jubilee year and sabbatical year, for all of them to participate in the hint to Creation by the Divine Will.

## 12. Joshua 6:6-14 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant, and let seven priests carrying seven ram's horns precede the Ark of the Lord." And he instructed the people, "Go forward, march around the city, with the vanguard marching in front of the Ark of the Lord."

When Joshua had instructed the people, the seven priests carrying seven ram's horns advanced before the Lord, blowing their horns; and the Ark of the Lord's Covenant followed them. The vanguard marched in front of the priests who were blowing the horns, and the rear guard marched behind the Ark, with the horns sounding all the time. But Joshua's orders to the rest of the people were, "Do not shout, do not let your voices be heard, and do not let a sound issue from your lips until the moment that I command you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." So he had the Ark of the Lord go around the city and complete one circuit; then they returned to camp and spent the night in camp.

Joshua rose early the next day; and the priests took up the Ark of the Lord, while the seven priests bearing the seven ram's horns marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing the horns as they marched. The vanguard marched in front of them, and the rear guard marched behind the Ark of the Lord, with the horns sounding all the time. And so they marched around the city once on the second day and returned to the camp. They did this six days.

13. Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, Commentary to Joshua 6:10

So that the residents of the city not realize and hurl stones from the wall. Although Gd could have guarded them from this miraculously, it is not the way of Gd to create miracles for naught, where the goal can be accomplished in other ways.

14. Joshua 6:15-20 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

On the seventh day, they rose at daybreak and marched around the city, in the same manner, seven times; that was the only day that they marched around the city seven times. On the seventh round, as the priests blew the horns, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city. The city and everything in it are to be proscribed for the Lord; only Rahab the harlot is to be spared, and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers we sent. But you must beware of that which is proscribed, or else you will be proscribed: if you take anything from that which is proscribed, you will cause the camp of Israel to be proscribed; you will bring calamity upon it. All the silver and gold and objects of copper and iron are consecrated to the Lord; they must go into the treasury of the Lord."

So the people shouted when the horns were sounded. When the people heard the sound of the horns, the people raised a mighty shout and the wall collapsed. The people rushed into the city, every man straight in front of him, and they captured the city.

15. Joshua 6:21-25 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

They exterminated everything in the city with the sword: man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey. But Joshua bade the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the harlot's house and bring out the woman and all that belong to her, as you swore to her." So the young spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father and her mother, her brothers and all that belonged to her—they brought out her whole family and left them outside the camp of Israel.

They burned down the city and everything in it. But the silver and gold and the objects of copper and iron were deposited in the treasury of the House of the Lord. Only Rahab the harlot and her father's family were spared by Joshua, along with all that belonged to her, and she dwelt among the Israelites—as is still the case. For she had hidden the messengers that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

16. Joshua 6:26 (tr. JPS 1985 ed. c/o sefaria.org)

At that time Joshua pronounced this oath: "Cursed of the Lord be the man who shall undertake to fortify this city of Jericho: he shall lay its foundations at the cost of his first-born, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest."

Jericho: The Battlefield – A Walled City

17. Numbers 13:19, 13:28

"And what is the land in which they dwell – is it good or bad? And what are the cities in which they dwell – are they in open camps, or in fortresses?"...

"It is for naught, for the nation who dwells in the land is mighty, and the cities are great fortresses. We also saw the descendants of giants there."

18. Leviticus 25:29-31

And when one sells a house of dwelling in a walled city, its redemption shall be until the end of the year of its sale; for a year shall be its redemption. And if it is not redeemed until a complete year has fully passed, the house in the walled city will stand permanently for the one who purchased it, for his generations; it shall not revert in the jubilee year. And the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be considered as fields of the land; it may be redeemed, and in the jubilee year it will revert.

## Jericho: The Miracle

19. Kings I 16:33-34

And Achav made the *asheirah*, and Achav added acts to anger Hashem, Gd of Israel, beyond those of the previous kings of Israel. In his days, Chiel of Bethel built up Jericho. With his firstborn Abiram he established her foundation, and with his youngest, Seguv, he set up her doors, as per the word of Gd, spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

## Review Questions

- 1> What was the goal of destroying Jericho?
- 2> How many days did the "war" with Jericho take?
- 3> How many priests carried shofar horns?
- 4> How many circuits did the priests make around the city?
- 5> Which of these is not a characteristic of walled cities in the Torah: 1) security, 2) permanence, 3) agriculture?
- 6> Which of these is the message of the miraculous collapse of Jericho's walls? 1) Rebranding Israel, 2) Time to build a casino, 3) Walls are prohibited around Israeli cities