Rabbi Shelomo Serilio (ca. 1485-1555) and the Talmud of Jerusalem

Rabbi Shelomo Serilio (□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□□□) was born in Spain, before the expulsion of 1492. From Spain, rabbi Serilio came to Constantinopla (today Istanbul), where he studied with rabbi Binyamin HaLevi, the author of *zeqan aharon*, and later on with the famous Rabbi Ya'aqob ibn Habib, the author of *'en yaaqob* (see here). After a few years, rabbi Serilio moved to Salonica, in those days one of the most important cities in the Jewish world.

Around 1530 many Jews, and especially those who left Spain and Portugal, came to Erets Israel, fulfilling the dream of their ancestors. Among other famous rabbis who came from Salonica to Israel we can mention Rabbi Yosef caro, the author of the *Shulhan 'arukh*, Rabbi Shelomo Alqabets, Rabbi Moshe MiTerani, (the Mabi"t), etc. A new Jewish settlement was established in Tsefat (Safed) under the leadership of Rabbi Ya'aqob Berab (see this). Rabbi Serilio did not have any official rabbinical position in Safed, although we know of his involvement in a few debates that took place there. For example, Rabbi Serilio wanted to be lenient in the subject of "basar halaq", by authorizing the nefiha (=inflating the animals lungs, despite it having fibers *sirkhot*, to declare it kosher if no perforations are found) in order to make meat more accessible, cheaper, to the Jews of Safed. In this, he was following the customs of the Jews of Salonica. Rabbi Ya'aqob Berab, however, rejected this leniency.

Rabbi Shelomo Serilio is famous for his commentary on the Talmud of Jerusalem. He was the first rabbi to write a commentary on one entire Talmudic Order (Seder Zera'im) of the Jerusalem Talmud. As we know, there are two sets of Talmud:

one written in Babylon (from 200 to 500 of the Common Era) and the other one written in Eres Israel (ca. 370 of the CE). One of the main differences between the Babylonian Talmud and the Talmud of Jerusalem is that the later deals extensively with the Mitsvot related to agriculture, also known as commandments which applied to the land of Israel (□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□), while the Babylonian Talmud has no Gemara for these tractates. One of the practical commandments Jews had to observe was the Mitsva of shebi'it, the Biblical Mitsva that requires letting the land rest every seven years. Now, that the Jews were back in Israel, those Mitsvot wer again practical. And although Maimonides refer to them, the details of the practical applications of this Mitsva, required a renewed halakhic revision. One illustration: In those days, the Jews had no direct involvement in working the land. All the agriculture work was done by gentiles, who owned those lands. Still, the question was if those fruits which were grown in the land of Israel, in the year of Shemita by non Jews, were subject to the laws of Shebi'it. Rabbi Serilio explained that they are. They would need Be'ur (=discarding those fruits, when that specific fruit cannot be found anymore in the fields) and that these fruits are exempt from terumot and ma'aserot.

Today, that BH we are again in Erets Israel, the commentaries and the halakhic rulings of rabbi Serilio on Shebi'it are an essential tool for reference and probably, one of the most authoritative Halakhic precedents for contemporary issues.

Rabbi Serilio moved to Yerushalayim around 1546. In Jerusalem he completed his commentary on Zera'im. He was among the most notorious rabbis of the city. He died in ca. 1555.

You can download here the booklet *Minhague Shebi'it* which contains the summary of Hilkhot Shemita in 5 pages, by Rabbi Serilio. This booklet was printed in Jerusalem, 1937, one year before the year of Shemita in Erets Israel.