

**Rabbi Shaul Even Danan - His Leadership and Ruling-Making Ability
In Enacting Rabbinic Bylaws: The Solution towards the Problems of Modernity
in Morocco**

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This article describes the situation of Jews in Morocco and their status as a result of the inroads made by French culture which began in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and the spreading of French patronage over Morocco from 1912 through 1956. During this time the Jews of Morocco were exposed to Western culture and the younger generation was swept up by it and moved away from their traditional Jewish lifestyles. This phenomenon raised in its wake several problems specifically in the issue of matrimonial law for which a satisfying solution could not be found within the framework of local tradition and existing Halacha.

Furthermore, Morocco is a large country, the distances from region to region are great and travel between them was rare. Over the course of many generations each of those regions developed its own traditions and Halachic rulings. The French authorities developed the country both economically and through improved transportation. It laid down a railway, and paved roads all throughout Morocco which made emigration from area to area much easier. When Jews from different areas began to interact, differences in Halachic rulings became very prominent, and the need arose to unify into only one Torah and one Tradition.

In order to solve the two main problems which were mentioned, there was a need for a person who could deliver spiritual guidance with leadership and rulemaking capabilities. That person was Rabbi Saul Even Danan, the Chief Rabbi of Morocco and the President of the Supreme Bet Din for Appeals from 1948 through 1967. The rabbi initiated the establishment of "The Rabbinical Council" which was comprised of the presidents of local *Battei Din* (pl. rabbinic courts) and select rabbinic judges. The council's decisions were accepted and enforced as "*takanot*" - as rabbinic bylaws which were accepted by all the *Battei Din* in Morocco.

The "Rabbinical Council" came together for a total of six sessions, during which dozens of topics were discussed. At these meetings many *takanot* were enacted and novel Halachic rulings were passed. The aforementioned served both for the unification of rabbinic rulings and traditions, such as rulings regarding the kashrut of meat and the Halachot of inheritance, as well as the solution to problems in the rules of matrimony, those problems which modernity had "placed at the doors" of the Bet Din. For the success of the deliberations and the fruits they bore, one must give due honor to Rabbi Danan's capable rulings and wise leadership, as well as the respect he bestowed upon his rabbinic colleagues and for the feelings of camaraderie he gave them.