

Parashat Behar- The Year of Liberty

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Torah: Vayiqra [Leviticus]
25:1-26:2
[Vayiqra] 23:1-34]

The image shows a man with a beard, wearing a white shawl over a brown tunic, standing at a wooden podium. He is holding an open scroll in his left hand and gesturing with his right hand. The background is a stone wall with a lamp on the left and a window on the right.

Torah: Vayiqra [Leviticus] 25:1- 26:2 **Haftarah:** YirmeYahu [Jeremiah] 32:6-15
Netzarim Ketuvim: Rabbi Silus [Luke] 4:16-21

Introduction: Our reading “**behar**” meaning in the mountain indicates to us that these instructions were given Mosheh while he was on Mt. Sinai.

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Mosheh on Mount Sinai



The image is a painting of Mosheh, an elderly man with a long white beard and a red turban. He is wearing a brown tunic and a yellow shawl. He is holding a wooden staff in his right hand and a scroll in his left hand. The background shows a vast, hazy landscape with mountains and a cloudy sky.

We have also found with the Shabbat & the Feasts that 7 was very prominent & now it extends to the **Shemitta** meaning release often referred to as the **Sabbatical Year** & the **Yovel** or the **Jubilee** being the 50th year. In our last two Torah portions we have seen how Holiness can be infused into our lives through space & time so now we are shown how to impart it into the inheritance that YHWH the Elohim had promised Yisrael. Therefore we also need to see this as prescribing **Holiness** into all of creation by seeing how YHWH instituted a yearly cycle of sevens into the Holy land & see how that might be a blessing to us as well who have received divine promises through Yeshua.

Summary of the Torah Portion:

1. The Shemitta [**the sabbatical**] years & the Yovel [**the Jubilee**] years are instructed upon entry of the promised land.
2. Ethical business practices are commanded & a pricing structure is revealed for land leading up to the Jubilee year.
3. YHWH now reveals that the land is his with Yisrael being as tenants and that if they abide with his instructions on the Shemitta [**the Sabbatical**] year & the Yovel [**the Jubilee**] year He will prosper their land with productivity in the other years.
4. Further details are given how to redeem lands prior to the Jubilee year & by whom.
5. The laws concerning homes in cities are now introduced plus laws about helping one who is financially ruined & a prohibition of charging interest to a Yisraelite.
6. Finally, the costs of redeeming a Yisraelite slave is detailed with a reminder concerning shabbat & the honouring of the Mishkan [**the Tabernacle**] given.

Extending Holiness to the Land:



In our last 2 Torah portions we have seen how Holiness can be seen through our lives by our interaction with the humans in the world but now we receive another concept of Holiness and how we can appropriate it, relating to land. What we come to see is that now we need to extend our relationship to the land and its environment as well.

The Earth is Elohim's:

Our 1st thought therefore from our reading is that this land belongs to YHWH & that Yisrael are its tenants since we read in:



Vayiqra [Leviticus] 25:55 For the children of Yisrael are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Mitsrayim **[Egypt]: I am YHWH your Elohim.**

From this we come to understand firstly that the land is His and given to the families & tribes as their responsibility so we may think that's where it ends but this is further extended in this verse to us in:



Shemoth [Exodus] 19:5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; **for all the earth is Mine.**

This tells us that we too have a responsibility to preserve, protect & honour the World we have been given to demonstrate that Holiness extends to the environment & the Creation Elohim made.

Faith Through Nature:



In this our reading we come to see another aspect of faith on the journey to Holiness. This is found through the Laws of **Shemitta [the Sabbatical year]** & **Yovel [the Jubilee]**. First, we find YHWH giving a rest to the land just as man rested on the 7th day, so too the land now rests from its activity because even the land needs rest to replenish itself. On these **Sabbatical years** the growth of the land is as being ownerless that any person or animal may eat of it freely.

One may think that not planting or reaping every **7th year** and again on the **Jubilee** could cause great shortages for people, but YHWH again makes a promise that He will guarantee prosperity on the other years especially the 6th year that His people will not lack. The rest to the land would however greatly benefit it & the faith of the people would therefore greatly empower the nation in trusting Elohim.

However, we read in:



YirmeYahu [Jeremiah] 25:8-9 “Therefore thus said YHWH of hosts, ‘Because you did not obey My words, **9** see, I am sending and taking all the tribes of the north,’ declares YHWH, and Neḅuḳaḍretsar the sovereign of Baḅel, My servant and shall bring them against this land and against its inhabitants,

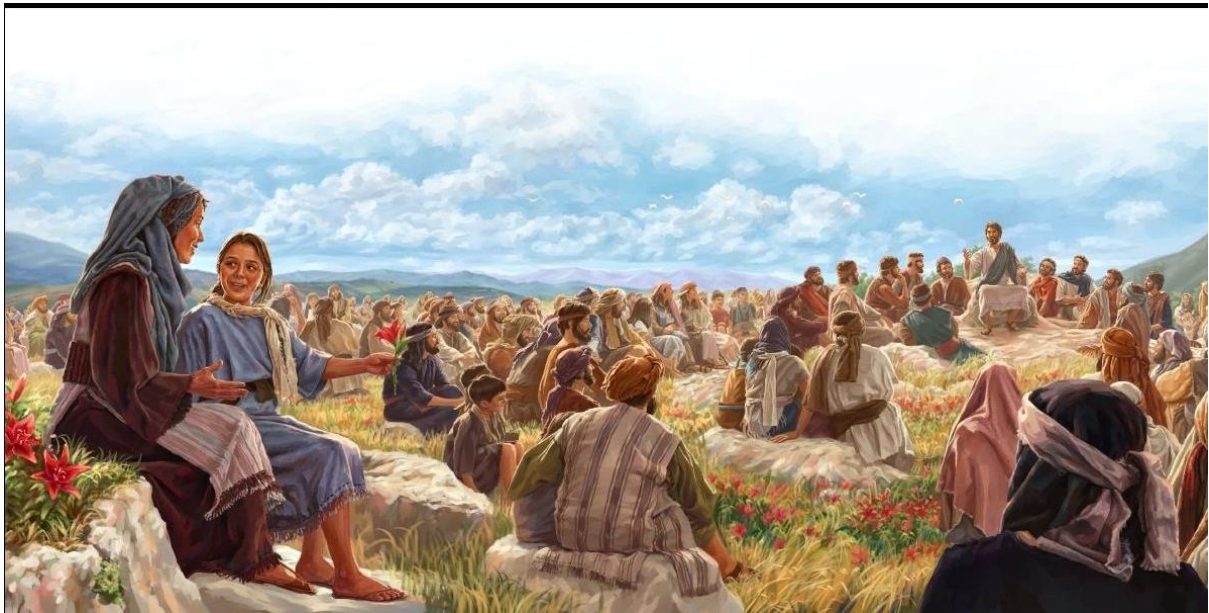
This fulfills the words of YHWH regarding these lands Sabbaths which we read about & the judgements that are proclaimed if Yisrael fails to hear in:

Leviticus 26:32-35 I will bring to desolation... **33** I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. **34** Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, and you are in your enemy’s land... **35** ...for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.



So important is trusting in YHWH that these consequences resulted in the days of **YirmeYahu** [Jeremiah].

Having faith in Elohim to provide is a common thread in the **Brit Chadashah [the New Testament]** as well for we read this in:



MatithYahu [Matthew] 6:31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ **32** For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Just as we are commanded to rest every Shabbat and believe for the provision of YHWH, the land & its agrarian society were now to rest during the Sabbatical years & the Jubilee year in faith. May we too learn to live with this dimension of faith in our current world.

The Economy of the Jubilee:

When we observe the economy of Yisrael after they enter Kanaan under Joshua & the Land is distributed among the tribes what do we see.



The people of Yisrael all began on an equal footing and after that initial distribution, the regular capitalism of an agrarian economy could take hold – that's all perfectly allowed. But YHWH was very aware of the dangers of such an economy, and how those who end up without land through bankruptcy end up

perpetually stuck in a cycle of poverty, with a lack of economic opportunities, and no access to capital.

So, Elohim put a safety check in the system.



The economy would run as a free market for 49 years, punctuated by some relief in the shemithah **[Sabbatical]** years giving freedom for those who fell on hard time & sold

themselves into slavery to pay off debts, but in the 50th year, the year of **Jubilee** everyone returns to their ancestral land, to their families. Elohim hits the "reset" button.



All acquired land is returned. Social classes are re-aligned. Anyone who has had to sell him or herself goes free and gets to return to his rightful property. Everyone gets a fresh start. The 50-year reset is like one generation so now a generation can begin again with no-one able to continue to become super rich at the expense of others. This promoted equality again among the people who could then begin again with a pure socialistic principle. It truly reminds me of what we read in the early assemblies when we read in:

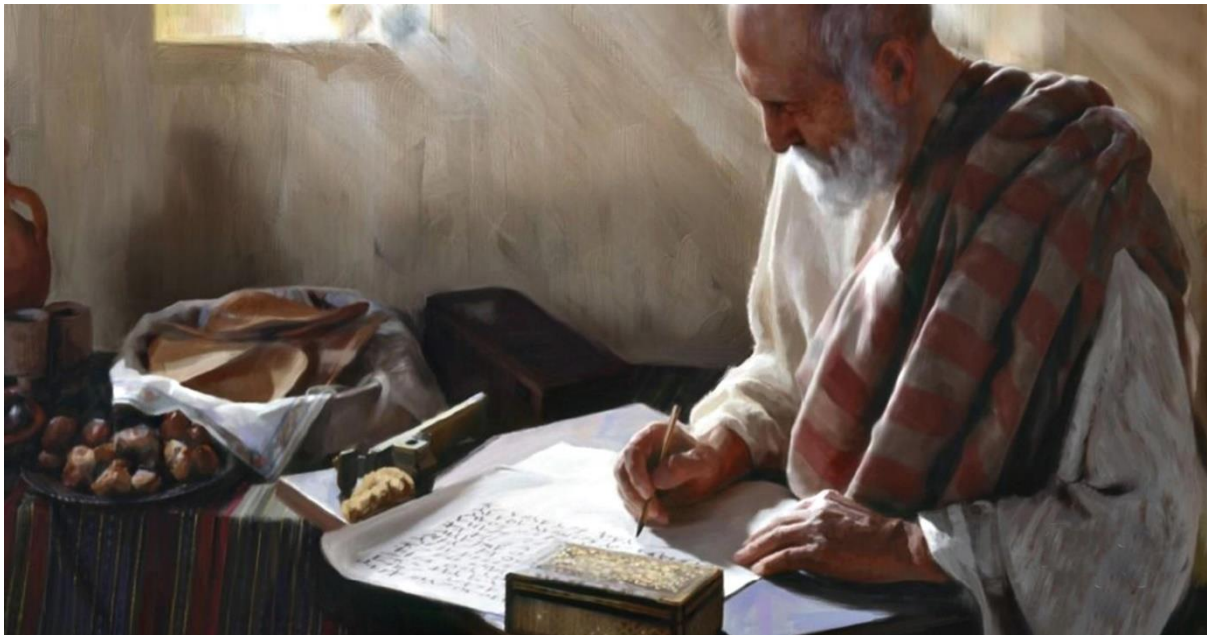


Ma'asey Ha Shilichiyim [Acts] 2:44 Now all who believed were together and had all things in common, **45** and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

The Concluding Spiritual Meaning of the Land Shabbatohs [Sabbaths]:

The Ultimate significance of our Sabbaths for the Land is to remind us that we must fix our eyes on who owns the land for the whole earth is Yahweh's. Therefore, it is only the Messiah who can perfectly redeem the Earth and its people, and the cycle of Jubilee is our remembrance to our failure with its 50-year reset each Jubilee.

This concept of liberty is so beautifully expressed by the words of Shaul [Paul] where we read in:



Romiyim [Romans] 8:20- 22 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; **21** because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious **liberty** of the children of Elohim. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now.

May we continue always looking forward to the glorious appearing of our great redeemer who will restore all things to their intended perfect purpose and end. **Amein!**

Haftarah: YirmeYahu [Jeremiah] 32:6-15

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Haftarah:
YirmeYahu
[Jeremiah]
32:6- 15

The Promise of the return from Captivity:

Our reading speaks of the Babylonian siege of Yerushalayim from 588 to 586 B.C. resulting in the destruction of **Yerushalayim [Jerusalem]** with the inhabitants been taken away as captives. According to the law of Jubilee a man facing hardship could sell property and the right to redeem it until the Jubilee year belonged to the closest blood relative. If a stranger had taken it due to an unpaid debt, the relative could redeem it as a family possession.

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YirmeYahu [Jeremiah]
Redeems land



The act of redeeming the land by Jeremiah followed the law of the Jubilee & was a sign from **YHWH** that after the 70 years of captivity the land would again return to their original owners. By keeping it in an **earthen pottery jar** it would witness to a future day where one's claim of possession could be verified since some men from the village of **Anathoth** did return from Babylon according to **Ezra 2:23**. What then is our Guarantee to our future redemption, is it not our faith and the presence of the **Ruach Ha Kodesh [the Holy Spirit]** since this truth is stated in:



2 Corinthians 4:7 For we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the excellence of the power shall be of Elohim and not of us. Amen!

Netzarim Ketuvim: Rabbi Silus [Luke] 4:16- 21



The Mystery of the Year of Jubilee:

The most wonderful revelation that we come to see is the timing of the year of Jubilee which is described in:

Leviticus 25:9 'You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the Day of Atonement you shall cause a ram's horn to pass through all your land.

We find that this year of liberty & the return to the ancestral land began at **Yom Kippur [the day of Atonement]** when a certain scripture would be read & only then which brings us to this great revelation in which **Yeshua** is beginning his ministry with words that describe the acceptable year of YHWH. There are many who suggest this was in fact the year of Jubilee or even more profound, that it represented the coming of the Messiah who would bring liberty to all who were slaves of sin. These words of Scripture then truly point to His coming, so He declares in:

Luke 4:21 "Today that scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Since Yeshua makes it clear that the year of Jubilee looks to the redemption of Mankind, we can rest assure that His 2nd coming looks to the total redemption & liberty of all of creation to the praise & honour of Ab [Father] Yahweh.

Conclusion:

May we never cease to look forward to the second coming of our Master who will restore the Creation to its perfect liberty under His wonderful rule. **Amen!**