

Shiur L'Yom Revi'i¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah B'har:*** **Leviticus 25:18-34**
 Haftarah: **Jeremiah 32:16-22**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Luke 4:20-21**

The land is Mine.
[Leviticus 25:23]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 67:6-7;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 7th Petition: *Kabatz* [Ingathering]

Va'asitem et-chukotai v'et mishpatai tishmeiru – And you (plural) are to cause my *chukot* to take shape in real time, and cherish and therefore safeguard My directives about what should and should not be done ... ***va'asitem otam*** – and you are to put them into practice ... ***vishavtem al-ha-aretz lavetach*** - and dwell in the land as trustees. **Leviticus 25:18.**

The instructions our Divine Bridegroom is downloading in parsha *B'har* have to do with what the original audience at Sinai would have considered *a day yet to come* and *a place far away*. The focus of this discourse is what we are to do once we establish a presence in the land of the Patriarchs – which, of course, is still several hundred miles to our East. The Bridegroom-King intends for us to occupy that critical land bridge between Europe, Asia, and Africa as His agents, and turn that strategic piece of real estate on the Mediterranean into a beachhead from which He can launch a campaign of kedusha and goodwill that will offer a sweet wind of healing and restoration to every hill and valley, desert and river, island and timber ridge of earth.

Ah, but if we can't secure the beachhead coordinates and get a command, control, and communications center up and functioning according to the Bridegroom-King's mandate ... well, what chance do we have of effectively exporting *tikvah* [hope], *simchah* [joy], *chokmah* [practical wisdom for good living], and *shalom* [peace, wholeness] to the world?

Is It Real – or Just an Ancient Patriarchal Dream?

When the aliyah of Torah we read today was revealed by the Holy One to His Servant Moshe our ancestors were still encamped at Sinai. The only pieces of real estate we had ever seen outside of Goshen consisted of the slime pits and construction sites of Egypt's Nile Valley, the bitter-water spring at *Marah*, the battleground at Refidim, the barren sand hills of the desert, and the jagged rock

¹ All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as '*the Rabbi's son*'. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2022, William G. Bullock, Sr.

outcropping of Sinai in the shadow of which they were presently encamped. We had never once looked upon the stark beauty of Hebron, Beersheva, and the Dead Sea. We had never experienced the serenity of the lush fields and pastures of the Galil. We had never basked in the tropical beauty of the springs of *Ein Gedi*. We had never stared in wonder at the mountains that surround Jerusalem. We had never dipped our foot in the waters of the Jordan River. We had never skipped a stone on the Sea of Kinneret. We had never gazed at the Mediterranean from the heights of Mount Carmel, nor sat and broken bread in the shade of the Oaks of Mamre. We had never walked the steep incline of the Jericho Road, nor whispered a prayer in silent awe in the shadow of the place where Avraham Avinu once laid the flint knife to the throat of his beloved Yitzchak. And not a single human being we had ever met done any of these things either.

When our ancestors first received the words we read today the land of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov was at best a *faraway dream*, a *wishful thought*, a *blessed hope*. Our ancestors had a *very limited frame of reference*. But then again ... *so do we, Beloved*. I dare say we have no more concept of a *true holy land* - a land flowing with milk and honey and full of *people living Torah lifestyles* - than did they. Our *minds are too finite*. Our *dreams are too small*. Our *frame of reference is too limited*. And so the Holy One has throughout parsha *B'har* been broadening the horizon – of us as well as our ancestors – with prophetic words.

Developing Passion for – and Commitment to – the Land of the Patriarchs

To what kind of land does the Holy One intend to take us? To us, at this point, it is still just a far-away dream. Having been enslaved by the Egyptians for generations, none of us had ever laid eyes on – much less placed sandaled foot upon - the place the Holy One was talking about. To us *Eretz Yisrael* was just that mystical land our elders loved to talk about late at night around Egyptian campfires. A ‘land of milk and honey’ was so far from anything we had ever experienced that for all we knew it might not be real at all – just a figment of our elders’ imagination. But if it is real, and if we make it there someday, what will it be like? Will it be *like Egypt*? Will it be like any of the oases that we passed on the way to Sinai – Sukkot, Etam, Pi Ha-Chirot, Elim or Refidim? Our minds wondered these things. But in our hearts we just believed. We sensed intuitively that the land to which the One Who Redeemed us from Egyptian bondage was taking us had to be a *very, very special* place.

Forward to the East, to Tziyon, an Eye Looks . . .²

² This is a line taken from Israel's national anthem, *HA-TIKVAH* [The Hope]. This song was written by Naftali Herz Imber (1856-1909), who moved to the land of Promise in 1882. *Ha-tikvah* gives voice to the hope of the Hebrews in exile that they will someday, as part of the great regathering the Holy One promised in the TaNaKh, be able to return in great multitudes to the land of their forefathers.

The land the Holy One is talking about all this week is the land where Melki-Tzedeq walked, and where he blessed Avram with his presence, his wisdom, and with bread and wine. This is the land in which Avraham pitched his tent, received Divine Visitors, dug wells, shepherded his flocks and herds, and negotiated covenants with the Hittites and the people of Gerar. This is the land where Yitzchak took Rivkah as his wife, prayed in twin sons and raised them, and planted wheat in the middle of a famine and reaped a supernatural harvest. This is the land where Ya'akov received both the birthright and the blessing of his father and saw the great staircase that angels use to travel from Heaven to earth and back again. This is the land where each of the patriarchs and matriarchs lie entombed, waiting for the resurrection. This is the land of our past – and our future.

Every Kingdom must have a homeland. This is the homeland of our King, where He maintains His eternal Capital. Our identities, our mission, and our destinies are inextricably tied to this land. It is not an allegorical allusion representing an ethereal Heavenly home somewhere beyond the sky; it is real dirt, real rocks, and real hills, valleys, and farms. It is Heaven on earth, a treasure that can be found in a field by any real person *looking forward to the East, to Tziyon*. So let us consider some things the Holy One tells us about this very special land.

A Land That Flows With Milk and Honey? But ... What Does That Even Mean?

When the Holy One apprehended Moshe at the burning bush and commissioned him to lead the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov out of Egyptian bondage, He said to Moshe He was going to bring them in ***'to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and hone'***³. Exodus 3:8. What does that mean, you ask? Let's explore that a little, shall we?

The word translated as 'honey' in this phrase is generally understood to be a reference to *fruit nectar*, specifically the nectar of dates, pomegranates and figs - not honey produced by bees. Fruit trees grow in many different terrains, but their produce overflow with nectar only when the land is especially fertile, i.e. when the trees are particularly well nourished. Similarly, ewes, nannies, and cows can survive in many habitats, but their udders only overflow with milk when they dwell in peace in particularly fertile pastures.

Thus, a "land flowing with milk and honey" is indicative in the first instance of an extremely fertile land where people live in peace. But is there not a deep spiritual meaning as well? Does not the word 'milk' refer to the *mitzvot* of Torah and the word 'honey' to the *mish'patim* of Torah? The Psalmist declared ***The mishpatim of***

³ In Hebrew, *zavat halav u'dvash*.

the Holy One are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Psalm 19:9-10. And Kefa exhorted the dispersed sons of the covenant: *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.* I Peter 2:2. Hence the land of Israel is not only a land blessed with fertile soil – it is a land blessed with *the nurturing and atmosphere-shifting Words of the Creator of the Universe*, lived out in practical ways in real time by humble men, women and children who love and trust in the One Who appeared at Sinai to speak eternal life instructions for man.

Could it be that the reason the physical soil of Israel is so fertile is connected to the fact that the Words of the Holy One are honored – and allowed to have their intended healing, redemptive, restorative effect - there? Could it be that the physical land is so productive there because there men, women and children speak the words of Torah as they sit in their homes and as they walk along the way, when they lie down and when they rise up? Is it possible that the udders are full and the fruit trees are dripping with nectar because the words of the Torah are written on the doorposts of people's houses and on their gates?

It is said that when the Holy One spoke at Sinai the desert burst into bloom. Perhaps that is just a poetic phrase – or perhaps every time the words of the Holy One are repeated or followed in real time something happens like happened in Genesis 1:11, where we are told that when the Holy One spoke the grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit burst forth from the earth in *sh'ma* response to the Words of His Mouth.

It should come as no surprise to us that the first thing the Holy One tells us about *Eretz Yisrael* in today's aliyah is an emphatic declaration of the essential connection between the lifestyle of the Torah and the enjoyment of the fruitfulness of the Land.

*You are to apply creative energy to My Chukot
and treasure and guard My Mishpatim,
and give substantive shape and form to them;
and then you will dwell in the land in confidence [Hebrew betoch].
Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill,
and you will dwell there in confidence [Hebrew betoch].*
[Leviticus 25:18-19]

The Holy One has promised that *Eretz Yisrael* will be supernaturally fruitful and productive for us. But there is a 'condition precedent'. The promise of supernatural productivity applies only as, when, and to the extent we *speak, publish, walk out*, and live by the instructions for life He has spelled out for us in the Torah. If, as, when and to the extent we *sh'mar* the wise instructions of our King, He promises, both the quality and the quantity of the Land's produce will excel beyond our wildest dreams. It will be beyond logic or reason. If, when, as, and to the extent we

follow His instructions concerning the *sh'mittah* [i.e. the 7th year Sabbath of the Land], He has promised that the sixth year of every *sh'mittah* cycle will be an incredibly fruitful year – providing a harvest of the seven species [wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates] that will feed us abundantly for three years – the sixth, seventh, eighth, and part of the ninth years of each *sh'mittah* cycle.

How will this occur? What will be the catalyst to bring about this special season of unheard-of supernatural abundance? The Holy One says it will happen because the land will respond to *the blessings* [Hebrew *birchat*] He will release upon the Covenant People in response to their inquiring of Him ‘what will we eat?’ As Torah records this promise:

*And if you say, “What will we eat in the seventh year,
since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?”
Then I will command My blessings on you in the sixth year,
and it will bring forth produce enough for three years.
And you will sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year;
until its produce comes in, you will eat of the old [i.e. sixth year’s] harvest.
[Leviticus 25:20-21]*

Familiarizing Ourselves With – and Learning How to Function In – the Holy One’s Strategic Plan for the Ultimate Beachhead

How familiar are you with the small strip of *terra firma* that lies sandwiched between the Southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan Rift Valley? This strategic little parcel of real estate constitutes the primary land bridge that connects the continents of Asia and Africa. It is unlike any other piece of geography on earth. It has been chosen as the stage for the most significant events of both history and prophecy. The Creator of the Universe calls it *Eretz Yisrael* – and He has a very, very special plan for it. And if you haven’t already done so, now is the appointed time for us, His Covenant People, to get *on board with and caught up in* that plan. The Holy One wants our hearts to burn for that little piece of *terra firma* with unquenchable zeal. He wants us to value its capital city, sprawled around the hilltop where Melki-Tzedek served Avraham bread and wine, above our chief joy. He wants us to know at least this about the times and seasons: *As the land of Israel goes, so goes the world. And as the city of Jerusalem fares – well, the nations fall in line accordingly.* What happens in Vegas may stay in Vegas – but what happens in Israel spreads to the corners of the earth.

The Creator’s Plan to Focus the Attention of the World on Eretz Yisrael - and the People He Causes to Dwell There

What is the Holy One’s Plan for *Eretz Yisrael*? It is certainly radical – but it is not really all that complicated. First, He intends to *cleanse the land of its cesspools of tumah* [i.e. uncleanness, impurity]. Then He intends to *kadash* – sanctify and consecrate

– *it*, setting it apart *as holy* and *for holiness*. His plan of sanctification starts with Him *blessing it* with His Holy Words. Then He plans to do for it what He recently did for the *Mish'kan* – completely fill it with His Holy Presence. He therefore says through the prophet Zechariah: ***I will return to Tziyon, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will then be called Ir Ha-Emet*** [the City of Truth], ***Har-Adonai Tzeva'ot*** [the Mountain of the Holy One of hosts], ***Har Ha-Kodesh*** [the Holy Mountain]. **Zechariah 8:3**. Next He plans to populate *Eretz Yisrael* with a Holy People who are committed to His Protocols for becoming *holy as He is holy*. This people will lovingly tend and humbly serve both Him and His very special land by establishing and maintaining throughout that land the Divinely ordained degree of separation between the *tamei* and the *tahor* and between the *holy* and the *profane*. Finally, His plan is to draw all nations to this place. Some will come hoping to conquer it for themselves, and drive His tenants into the Sea. But their plans will not prevail. And ultimately, many, many more people from the nations will come for a very different reasons. They will say amongst themselves: ***“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Adonai – to the house of the God of Ya'akov. He will teach us His Ways, and we will walk in His Paths. For out of Tziyon will go forth the Torah, and the Word of Adonai from Jerusalem”***. Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2.

The Holy One intends for this very special parcel of land populated by men, women, and children with whom He is in covenant - who have agreed to *follow His Torah*, to *behave like His sons*, and to *take care of His Land*. And, in the time appointed, His Kingdom will come, and His Will will be done, there. Then, using this little strip of *kadash*-ed land as a beachhead, the Creator of the Universe intends to launch a great *Kingdom-of-Heaven-Coming*, *Will-of-the-Creator-Being-Done* invasion of all nations on planet earth. He intends to establish *Eretz Yisrael* as the earthly headquarters for both His angelic and earthly hosts. The hills of this land will then serve Heaven's chief command center, its communications center, and its base of operations this side of the sea of glass. So you see, Dear One, the *Kedusha Discourse* and the *Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover* Protocols that we have been studying were not just about you and me and our individual relationship with the Bridegroom-King after all. They were, are, and will always be ultimately about Heaven's Grand Redemptive Plan of Redemption for mankind and Restoration of Edenic Promise for Creation. And at the very center of it is ... you guessed it: the land He promised to entrust to Avraham and his seed forever.

Wow! Are We Ready For This Level of Responsibility?

Of course, when the aliyah of Torah we will discuss today was revealed by the Holy One to Moshe, none of our ancestors had never even seen the land. They had been born and raised in Egypt. The farthest point Eastward they had ventured was Sinai. Having grown up far to the West, *Eretz Yisrael* was to them merely a mystical land

of late night stories they had heard their elder statesmen tell around campfires. A land of milk and honey was so far from anything they had ever experienced that *it might as well have been Jupiter*. When the Holy One introduced His instructions on how His Covenant People are to interact with the land, the only pieces of real estate we had ever seen consisted of the huts, slime pits, and construction sites of Egypt's Nile Valley, the bitter-water spring at *Marah*, the battleground at Refidim, the barren sand hills of the desert, and the jagged rock outcropping of Sinai. We had never looked upon the stark beauty of Hebron. We had never drunk from the well at Beersheva. We had never floated in the Dead Sea. We had never basked in the tropical beauty of *Ein Gedi's* springs and waterfalls. We had never dipped our foot in the waters of the Jordan River. We had never gazed at the Mediterranean from the heights of Mount Carmel, nor sat and broken bread in the shade of the Date Palm trees of Mamre. We had never experienced the serenity of the lush fields of the Galil. We had never cast a net into or skipped a stone on Kinneret. We had never stared in wonder at the mountains that surround Jerusalem. We had never walked the steep incline of the Jericho Road, nor whispered a prayer in silent awe in the shadow of the place where Avraham Avinu once laid the flint knife to the throat of his beloved Yitzchak. The land of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov was to us a *faraway dream, a wishful thought, a blessed hope*.

Our ancestors had a very limited frame of reference. But then again ... *so do we*. I dare say we have no more concept of a *true holy land* - a land flowing with milk and honey and full of *people living Torah lifestyles* - than did they. Our *minds are too finite*. Our *dreams are too small*. Our *frame of reference is too limited*. And so the Holy One has throughout parsha *B'har* been broadening the horizon – of us as well as our ancestors – with prophetic words. Let us consider some things the Holy One tells us about that very special land.

As Was Promised to Avraham

The first time Avraham – who was then still known as Avram – set foot in the land of Israel, the Voice of the Holy One spoke to him and declared: ***To your seed I will entrust this land.*** Genesis 12:7. The exact same promise was thereafter repeated over and over again – twice more to Avraham [Genesis 13:17:8 and 15:18 ff], then to multiple generations of his progeny [See e.g. Genesis 26:3 (Yitzchak), Genesis 28:13 (Ya'akov), and Exodus 6:8 (enslaved B'nei Yisrael)]. As one generation yielded to another the land of Israel gradually became programmed into our spiritual DNA. The dust of that land is inextricably – and eternally - intertwined with our souls. For the Holy One has said regarding that land: ***The land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine: for you are strangers, and you live as foreigners with Me.*** Leviticus 25:23.

Our flesh and carnal mind may want nothing whatever to do with the land of milk and honey – but that is just too bad; it is *an integral part of who we are and why we are here*. We cannot claim any blessings from the Holy One without simultaneously accepting the *relationship with and responsibility of stewardship with regard to the land*. The Holy One told Avraham to *walk the length and breadth of the land then known as Kena'an* – and made a covenantal promise that *He would entrust all the land upon which he walked to him and to his zera [seed] forever*. **Genesis 13:14-17**. The specific area promised was: ***from the wadi of Egypt to the great river, Euphrates – the land of the Kenites, Kennizites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Emori*** [Amorites], ***Kena'ani*** [Canaanites], ***Girgashites, and Yevusi*** [Jebusites].” **Genesis 15:18-21**. Many generations later when the Holy One brought the descendants of Avraham out of Egypt He constituted those He redeemed, and their descendants, forever, as *perpetual stewards of His land*. The relationship between the descendants of Avraham and the Land of Israel was established by the very Word of the Holy One – hence that relationship *changes not*. It is perpetual. It is inevitable. It is non-forfeitable. It is not a whim, a dalliance, or part of some ill-fated Divine One-Millennia stand. The ‘gifts’ [i.e. stewardship entrustments] and callings of the Holy One are permanent and will never be revoked. While the right and responsibility of stewardship can be *temporarily placed on hold* by us, the Covenantal responsibility to tend the land of our Stronger Covenant Partner ultimate defaults back to us. It runs in our bloodline, and can never be delegated away, abandoned, forsaken, or forgotten. As critical to our sense of personhood as the sound of his mother’s heartbeat is to a baby in the womb is the sound of the Ruach of the Father brooding over *Eretz Yisrael’s* fields, orchards, and vineyards. We need the land; and it needs us. And that is exactly the way the Holy One intended it.

It all happens in *repeating but ever-intensifying cycles* – like a woman’s birth pangs. At every moment, the land of promise is either in a process of *being redeemed* or a process of *groaning in eager expectation*. Sometimes – indeed, some centuries - it does not seem to be happening. But it is. It always is. As long as the sun rises in the east, it will keep happening, over and over again – *once more, with feeling!* *Eretz Yisrael*, like the human *nefesh* when awakened by the sound of a *shofar*, is always *yearning and crying out for redemption*.

Redemption and Restoration – There is No ‘Other Hand’

In today’s aliyah the Holy One teaches us to think about – and see every absolutely every person or situation we will ever encounter in this world through His lens of – *redemption*. This is His mandatory *Prerequisite Course for His People*. I call it ‘*Divinely Inspired Worldview 101*’. The syllabus summary of the course is simple:

In the Kingdom, our mission is never about condemnation;

our mission is instead always and only about redemption.

*In the Kingdom our mission is never to focus on who is to blame,
or upon what punishment those who we think are to blame deserve;
our mission is always, and only, about resolution and restoration.*

*In the Kingdom nothing is ever about how bad the world,
or any individual, corporation, institution, government, or organization is;
it is always, and only, about how the Holy One works all things together for good
for those who love Him, who are called ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.*

Redemption; restoration – a worldview positively obsessed with these, and a lifestyle motivated by these, are the essential prerequisites to effective participation in the Great Plan of our King. This is what we are to bring to Eretz Yisrael – and every other place in the world. For any of us to desire anything else but redemption and restoration in regard to any person or situation you encounter or hear about is merely the result of listening to the slanderous misinformation, misdirection campaign of the Serpent.

As we have discussed previously, however, *redemption* is, alas, a word that is *spoken a lot*, but *understood very little*. Let's read what the Holy One our God has to say on the subject:

Uv'chol eretz achuzatchem ge'ulah titnu l'aretz
and for all your hereditary lands. there shall be time of redemption.
[Leviticus 25:24]

Just as the Holy One's plan and protocol is for every unclean person to be restored to cleanness, metzora to be made whole, it is also His plan and protocol for every square centimeter of land in Eretz Yisrael that ever gets mishandled or alienated to be redeemed to its Covenant Purpose.

What kind of '*redemption*' is this? The Hebrew word that is translated as '*redemption*' in our English Bibles is *ge'ulah*⁴. The verb root of this word, *ga'al*⁵, is the Hebrew verb that is usually translated into English as "*redeem*"⁶. It is first used in Torah in Genesis 48:16. There an aged Ya'akov is blessing Yosef's sons Efrayim and Menashe and adopting them as his own. At that time Ya'akov said:

*The God before whom my fathers Avraham and Yitzchak did walk,
the God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
the angel who has **redeemed** [ga'al] me from all evil, bless the lads,
and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Avraham and Yitzchak.*

⁴ Geulah is *gimel, lamed, alef, hey*. Strong's Hebrew word #1353, it is pronounced *gheh-ool-law'*.

⁵ Ga'al is *, gimel, alef, lamed*. Strong's Hebrew word # 1350, it is pronounced *gaw-awl'*.

⁶ This word can also, in context, mean to *avenge*, to *vindicate*, to *rescue*, and to *defend*. It refers to providing whatever one's brother needs [in the Holy One's eyes, not his own or yours].

[Genesis 48:15-16]

The Holy One our God is a Redeemer. It is a part of *His nature*. Redeeming is what He does. And since we who are Redeemed of the Holy One are to imitate the Holy One and become like the Holy One, we are also to *ga'al* [redeem] - as the Holy One redeems. This means that we as the Holy One's people are both *Divinely empowered with the ability and Divinely charged with the responsibility* to redeem others from poverty, calamity, captivity, and oppression [like Avraham redeemed Lot and his family from the four kings who sacked S'dom]. We are to do this like we do everything else we do – *pursuant to the Holy One's specific instructions, in the Holy One's specific timing and manner*. We are not called to be revolutionaries or ideologues. We are not called to act as *independent agents* of redemption, according to our own sense of timing and our own concepts of justice. We are only *diplomats* of Heaven, and as such our task is to carefully *sh'ma* the Voice of the Holy One. We are to redeem the way Torah tells us to redeem – or not at all. And as Yeshua of Natzret put it, we are to do nothing of ourselves, but only “*what we see our Father doing*”. So ... what is our Father doing?

The Great Redeemer – and the Great Plan of Redemption

The Holy One has a Grand Plan of *Geulah* - i.e. *redemption* – that He plans to place in operation and have us model to the world. There is, with the Holy One, no situation or challenge in the world that is not pregnant with the hope of redemption. He is a *Ga'al* – i.e. a redeemer. He *thinks like* a redeemer. He *looks at every human being and every situation* through the eyes of a redeemer. He *never surrenders to worry, to blame, or to despair*. He *sees challenging life situations as a springboard, not a trapdoor*. He sees them as only a *temporary state* – something we are just passing through'. He *does not worry His Head over who is to blame for a situation – or what horrible punishment their actions deserve*. His focus is solely on how the situation can be dealt with wisely and effectively, its challenges overcome, and the whole scenario turned into a testimony of redemption – and the Grand Plan of Redemption and Restoration can go forward instead of backward.

Our Bridegroom-King therefore chooses to see seeds of redemption where we see only the track-marks of sin and the scars of suffering. Where we see a dry, dusty desert, He chooses to see a fruitful field waiting to burst into bloom. Where we see only the broad way leading to destruction, He chooses to focus on the narrow pathway to life, health and peace. With Him giving up is never a reasonable alternative. With Him the over-riding reality of His frame of reference is that “*nothing is impossible*”. With Him failure is never an option. And He is training us to think the same way. He is not just training us to be *passionate lovers of God and humble servants of men*; He is also training us to be *faithful ambassadors of geulah*. He is training us to process every problem or situation we face through

three truth lenses. Truth Lens #1 is: ***‘With God all things are possible.’*** Matthew 19:26. Truth Lens #2 is: ***‘God works all things together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.’*** Romans 8:28. Truth Lens #3 is: ***‘No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.’*** I Corinthians 10:13.

Along with giving us these three corrective lens - which I call *the ‘Kingdom trifocals’* - the Holy One has equipped us with every weapon we will need to bring deliverance, healing, restoration and resolution to the thorniest problems that vex the human race. Way up at top of the list of thorny problems human face is the perennial problem of poverty. Viewed through the Kingdom trifocals, poverty is only a temporary, and imminently fixable, estate. He is a shepherd – and He knows how to feed sheep. He will not long allow those who are His to lack. He is a renowned master at providing daily bread. And He wants to train us as kinsman-redeemers – mortal men who have been walking with Him long enough, and intimately enough, that we have developed eyes that see things the way He does. All it takes is someone who is committed – and who will commit their time and the resources He places in their hands – to co-labor with Him in His great plan for making *tikkun*.

Our Bridegroom-King actually believes that all it takes to accomplish redemption in any given situation is one man, woman, or child walking in Covenant with Him who will look past the obstacle to the solution. All any situation requires is one human being to transcend the blaming, complaining, handwringing, tongue-wagging realm and begin to see things – and agrees to do things – the King’s way. All He requires is one man or woman or child who is committed – and who will commit their time and the resources He places in their hands – to co-labor with Him in His great plan for making *tikkun*. For this reason, you simply cannot pose a problem to or throw a situation at the Holy One for which He doesn’t have a brilliant plan and a workable strategy of redemption. Case in point – a son of the Covenant becomes the slave or servant of a foreigner. Think back to the story of Yosef in the hold of the Midyani’s slave wagons, in the slave market of Egypt, in the house of Potifar’s wife, and in Pharaoh’s dungeon. The world hits the people of the Covenant with its best shot over and over again. But the Covenant stands firm through the darkest night – and in time, with the slightest modicum of cooperation from some anonymous cupbearer, the sad story of betrayal and calamity is transformed into a stunning masterpiece of redemption.

The Land Of Israel Cannot Be Sold or Bargained Away

Land in Israel is not like real estate in America or anywhere else. In America anyone can buy and sell houses and land and never think about them again. That is because American law considers the land *own-able*. But, according to Torah no man can own the land of Israel. That land is *eretz ha-kodesh* – i.e. land forever separated and set apart to the Holy One and therefore filled to the brim with *kedusha* energy and fruit-producing empowerment by, the Holy One. Its grains of sand, its fertile loam, and even its clods of clay are His. He alone reserves the right to decide who will be responsible for tending and keeping every field, every orchard, every vineyard, every garden, and every house, and household in that land.

The Holy One entrusts the land we know as Israel into the care of His redeemed people, but He imposes some very unique conditions on our occupancy of the land. He has ordained that the tenancy of each parcel of the land will be an eternal heritage, flowing forever in the bloodline of the Redeemed people who stand before Him at Sinai. *No one but a descendant of these people who stand before Him at Sinai can ever rightfully possess any parcel of land in Eretz Yisrael.*⁷ The parcels of land the Holy One apportioned to the people who stood before Him at Sinai are non-transferable. They are inalienable. They are neither “for sale” nor subject to barter. Every square centimeter of each such parcel is owned by the Holy One, and He alone has the right to decide who will occupy it, and enjoy its fruit. And since no one – even Avraham’s descendants – can own our King’s Land, neither can anyone – even us – sell or bargain it away. No matter what transactions the descendants of the people who stood before the Holy One at Sinai (or their politicians) may attempt to make in the years to come (including, of course, “land for peace”, as well as garden-variety individual land sale transactions) the land will remain ours and our descendants’ to possess as the Holy One’s designated stewards. In Torah the Holy One provided two safeguards against such a thing. Let us now examine those two safeguards.

The First Torah Safeguard for the Land

First of all, no matter what transaction is entered into, the Holy One grants a right of “redemption” to the kinsmen of the one who contracted to sell the land (hence the term “*kinsmen-redeemers*”).

Ki-yamuch achicha umachar me'achuzato

If your brother becomes impoverished and sells some of his hereditary land

uva go'alo ha-karov elav v'ga'al et mimkar achiv

a close relative can come and redeem what his kinsman has sold.

⁷ There is one exception to this instruction. If a descendant of the people who stood before the Holy One at Sinai sells a house within the ancient walls of a city which was a “walled city” [like Jerusalem, or Jericho] at the time of the settlement of the land, and does not redeem the house and its lot or parcel within one year of the sale, the right to possess the house and lot passes to the purchaser forever. This is why trading land in the city of Jerusalem to the “Palestinians” for peace should be out of the question.

V'ish ki lo yihyeh-lo go'el

[The same is true] if a man does not have anyone to redeem it,

v'hisigah yado umatza kedai ge'ulato

but gains enough wealth to be able to redeem it himself.

[Leviticus 25:25-26]

The situation being addressed involves two conditions:

1. A son or daughter of the redeemed community who inherits a portion of the Land '*becomes impoverished*'.
2. The impoverished son of the Covenant 'sells' to another person his right under the Covenant to the use and profits of all or part of the land he has inherited.

There are two possibilities of redemption. The first is if a 'close relative' of the impoverished person has funds with which to redeem the rights in the Land that his kinsman bargained away. The second is if the impoverished person himself subsequently prospers, and acquires enough money to buy back the rights he sold away.

The Second Torah Safeguard for the Land

Secondly, even if no "kinsman-redeemer" steps forth, or the impoverished person does not subsequently experience a financial recovery, Torah mandates that in the fiftieth year the stewardship of almost every parcel of land⁸, with all its rights and responsibilities, automatically reverts back to the one who contracted to sell it, or his descendants - whether they want it or not. The Holy One says:

V'im lo-matz'ah yado dey ha-shiv lo

If he does not have the means to retrieve [the land],

v'hayah mimkaro b'yad ha-koneh oto ad sh'nat ha-yovel

then that which he has sold shall remain with the buyer until the yovel.

V'yatza b'yovel v'shav l'achuzato

It is released in the yovel, and the seller is to return for/to his heritage.

[Leviticus 25:28]

Do you get it yet? By virtue of our covenant with the Holy One, the land of Israel is, now a permanent *part of our spiritual identity*. We may not know it, or want to acknowledge it, but our right to occupy the land and reap its produce, and to sanctify the Holy One's Name through writing the Torah on our doors and gates *is the greatest asset we will ever possess* in this world. And behold - a Redeemer comes! Lift up your heads, for *your redemption draws nigh!*

⁸ Except, as aforesaid, for houses in walled cities – like Jerusalem's 'Old City'.

The Exception: Dwelling Houses Within Walled Cities

Torah does make one exception from the second safeguard. Drawing a line of distinction between *lands and houses in open areas* and *lots and houses walled villages and lands*, the Holy One decrees that houses within the protection of the walls of major commercial centers – i.e. in ‘walled cities’ - were not subject to reversion at the time of the *Yovel*. The seller of such properties – or his kinsmen – had only one year to redeem a house or land in a walled city. After that one-year redemption period expired, the sale became final. Hence Torah tells us:

*If a man sell a bayit moshav [dwelling-house] within an ir chomah [walled city],
then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold;
for a full year he will have the right of redemption.*

*If it isn't redeemed within the space of a full year,
then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity
to him who bought it, throughout his generations:
it shall not go out in the Yovel.*

[Leviticus 25:29-30]

Matthew Henry, in his commentary, explains why the Holy One made this exception:

This provision was made to encourage strangers and proselytes to come and settle among them. Though they could not purchase land in Canaan to them and their heirs, yet they might purchase houses in walled cities, which would be most convenient for those who were supposed to live by trade.⁹

Are you a gentile foreigner who seeks to identify with Israel? Look for some land in an ancient walled city, Dear Reader! You can acquire rights there equal to the rights of a native-born Israelite.

The Redemption of Houses of Dwelling in Un-walled Cities

With regard to houses in cities that did not have walls in the days of the conquest, the Holy One announced a different protocol:

*The houses of villages that have no wall around them will be counted
as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they will be released in the Yovel.*

Just like agricultural lands, houses in the un-walled cities of Israel are redeemable at any time. And even if they are not redeemed, they revert to the family of their original owner in the year of Yovel.

The Special Holiness Protocols Applicable to the Cities of the Levi'im

⁹Matthew Henry's Commentary on Leviticus 25 is available on-line. The link is http://www.blueletterbible.org/tmp_dir/c/1052916546-6433.html

The Holy One also takes this opportunity to introduce to us a special provision He has built into the Covenant for the benefits of the descendants of Levi. Unlike the other tribes, the descendants of Levi were to have no tribal allotment of their own. The members of the tribe of Levi were instead to be dispersed throughout the Land, living the tribal allotments assigned to the other tribes, in 48 special ‘Levitical’ cities. **Numbers 35:1-6.** The primary vocation of the Levi’im was not as full-time farmers, husbandmen, or vintners or orchard-growers; it was instead service of their brethren. They were all to *minister in the Mish’kan* according to their assigned courses. They were all to *serve the kohanim*. They were therefore not allotted, and could not own, any significant amount of productive agricultural land. They could, however, possess and use a small plot of land just outside the Levitical cities to raise small herds of livestock and produce and store food. If they became impoverished and sold their rights to live in and occupy their home in the Levitical city, they would have the right to redeem those houses. The small agriculture plots outside the cities, however, were not alienable under any circumstances. As the Holy One put it:

*... the Levi’im may redeem the houses of the cities of their stewardship at any time.
If one of the Levi’im redeem, then the house that was sold,
and the city of his stewardship, will go out in the Yovel;*

*But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual stewardship.
[Leviticus 25:32-34]*

Hence, any parcel of ground a Levi ‘sold’ was subject to redemption forever, as well as subject to reversion in the Yovel. This applied whether the parcel of realty was located in a walled city or not. Keep this last Torah truth in mind as you read today’s reading from the apostolic writings, in which a Levi named *Yosi Bar-Nabba* [most Westerners know him as Barnabus] ‘sells’ a field and gives the money to the apostles of Yeshua. Assuming the parcel of land in question was in Eretz Yisrael¹⁰, how much do you think he got for whatever rights in that land he – a Levi - could sell?

Understanding the Sales of Land Referenced in Acts 4

In the reading from the apostolic writings that I have selected to correspond to the *B’har* download, Lukas [Luke] describes the immediate aftermath of the miraculous *Shavuot* in the year of Yeshua’s resurrection. The *Ruach HaQodesh* had just been poured out on all those who had come to Y’rushalayim for the final Divine Appointment on the Holy One’s Spring calendar. Prior to returning to their homes, Lukas tells us, those who had made pilgrimage to Y’rushalayim for *Shavuot* that year:

*... were of one heart and soul.
Not one of them claimed that anything of the things that he possessed was his own,*

¹⁰ It may not have been, because Bar-Nabba is noted to have been ‘a man of Cyprus’ – *i.e.* a Levi from the Diaspora, *not* a native-born Israeli. **Acts 4:36.**

but they had all things common.
With great power, the apostles gave their testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Yeshua.
Great grace was on them all.

In this context, for a temporary period in the immediate aftermath of the *Shavuot* experience, the pilgrims lingered, extending their planned stay in Y'rushalayim. Since they had not come prepared for this long a stay, financial accommodations had to be made. This was handled as follows:

For neither was there among them any who lacked,
for as many as were owners of lands or houses 'sold' them,
and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet,
and distribution was made to each according as anyone had need.

Most 21st Century Western readers read these words and think like 21st Century Westerners. They assume this means that the ones who 'sold' lands and houses parted with them forever, for the sake of the fellowship. But look at the situation not through 21st Century Western eyes but through *Torah* eyes. Under *Torah*, lands and houses in Israel cannot be sold – only the immediate right to possess those lands and houses, subject to right of redemption, and further subject to mandatory re-acquisition in the year of *Yovel*, could be sold. All that the holdover pilgrims did was what we would call 'lease' their houses and lands, until the next *Yovel*. The lease payments are all they 'donated'. They retained both rights of redemption and rights of reversion at *Yovel*.

In this context, consider the interesting incident that the writers tell us occurred next:

Yosi, who by the apostles was surnamed Bar-Nabba
(which is, being interpreted, Son of Exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by residence,
having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Note that Lukas tells us emphatically that *Yosi Bar-Nabba* – the man who 'sold' a field - was *a Levite*. *Bar-Nabba's* status as a Levite – a lineal descendant of Levi - had a profound effect on the transaction. What did *Torah* have to say about persons from the tribe of Levi owning fields? What did *Torah* have to say about the effect of a sale of lands by persons from the tribe of Levi? What kind of rights in regard to the field in question was *Yosi Bar-Nabba* rightfully able to convey? We learned about such things in today's assigned readings from the *Torah*. Without an understanding of what the Holy One said in today's aliyah, we cannot understand what Lukas was talking about when he chronicled the *Bar-Nabba* transaction.

Questions For Today's Study

1. The concept of redemption is a very important aspect of our covenant with the Holy One. We each need to be as *Iyov* [Job], when he declared, in the midst of his calamity ... *as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and In the end, he will stand upon the eretz.* *Iyov* (Job) 19:25.

[A] Define the term “kinsman-redeemer” - who is he, what does he do, and why? Start by looking up the word translated as “redemption” in Strong’s and Gesenius, and write the Hebrew word in Hebrew letters with appropriate vowel indicators, and describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing around that word as you read Gesenius’ comments and review Biblical usages.

[B] Read Ruth 3:1 - 4:12 to see how the kinsman-redemption system works for real people;

[C] Why did the Holy One say the land in Israel was not to be “bought” and “sold”?

[D] What particular type of property was not returned to its original owner at the *yovel* [i.e. the Jubilee]?

[E] Why do you think this particular type of property was excepted from the usual rules of redemption and reversion?

2. The Haftarah records a prayer uttered by *Yirmayahu* [Jeremiah] upon his redemption of his uncle’s field at *Anatot*. Read Yirmayahu’s prayer carefully.

*Ah Holy One God! Behold, you have made the heavens and the eretz
by your great power and by your outstretched arm;
there is nothing too hard for you,
who show lovingkindness to thousands,
and recompense the iniquity of the fathers
into the bosom of their children after them;
the great, the mighty God - the Holy One of Hosts is his name;
great in counsel, and mighty in work;
whose eyes are open on all the ways of the sons of men,
to give everyone according to his ways,
and according to the fruit of his doings:
who performed signs and wonders in the land of Mitzrayim, even to this day,
both in Yisra'el and among [other] men;
and made you a name, as in this day.

And you brought forth your people Yisra'el out of the land of Mitzrayim
with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand,
and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror;
and gave them this land, that you did swear to their fathers to give them,
a land flowing with milk and honey.*

[A] Did Yirmayahu ask for anything in this prayer?

[B] What purpose did this ‘prayer’ serve for Yirmayahu?

3. In today’s reading from the apostolic writings we continue with the story of Yeshua’s appearance at the synagogue in Natzret [Nazareth]. After reading from the scroll of the prophet Yeshayahu [Isaiah], we are told:

*Then He closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.
And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.*

*And He started by saying to them,
“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”
[Luke 4:20-21]*

[A] Why do you think the custom in the first century synagogue was for a person to stand while reading the Torah but sit before making commentary on it?

[B] In Strong's Concordance and Gesenius' Lexicon, look up the Greek verb that our English Bibles translate as 'fulfilled' in this passage. It is Strong's Greek word #4137, *pleroo*. Write a paragraph on what you think Yeshua meant when He said the passage He had just read from Isaiah 61 was 'fulfilled' on the day He visited the synagogue in Natzret.

[C] The Hebrew word that often got translated into Greek as '*pleroo*' is male', *mem, lamed, alef*, Strong's Hebrew word #4390. Read Gesenius' notes on this word. Note that the first Biblical usage of this word is found in Genesis 1:22. Read that verse, and also Genesis 1:28, Genesis 6:11, and Genesis 25:24. Based upon the foregoing, explain how your idea of what Yeshua – whose native tongue was Hebrew – meant when He said this Scripture is 'fulfilled' [i.e. male] in your *sh'ma*-ing is different from what you wrote in response to subpart [B] above.

*May you know Your Redeemer lives Beloved;
And May you stand with Him upon the Eretz upon that day.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 67:6-7

*The eretz has yielded its increase.
The Holy One, even our own God, will bless us.*

*The Holy One will bless us.
All the ends of the eretz shall fear him.*