

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah B'har:** Leviticus 25:11-17
 Haftarah: Jeremiah 32:13-15
 B'rit Chadasha: Luke 4:17-19

It is the Yovel; it is to be holy to you.

[Leviticus 25:12(a)]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 67:3-5;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition # 4, *Ga'al* [the Petition for Redemption]

***Yovel hi shnat ha-chamishim shanah tihyeh lachem** – The fiftieth year is to be a Yovel for you all ... **lo tizra'u** – you are not to sow seed ... **v'lo tiktzeiru** – and you are not to harvest Leviticus 25:11a.*

We are in the throes of the final revelation download of Sefer Vayikra – i.e. the Holy One's Great 'Strategic Beachhead' Discourse. The Creator of the Universe has strategically designed the subject matter of this Discourse – which awakens us to our responsibilities to steward and maintain the *kedusha* of the land of Israel – in such a way as to prepare us for an imminent season of major transition. Ready or not, Beloved, our lives – as well as our geographical coordinates - are about to be drastically altered. When the Cloud moves, our feet engage, and the climate starts to change ... well, let's just say that we - and the world – will find out if the revelation we have been receiving for the past few months has really changed us or not.

In preparation for the transition, the Holy One is speaking to us with intense passion about the bridal chamber that He has prepared for us. This is, of course, the beautiful *land of Israel*. Most of the people who gathered at the door of the Mish'kan to receive this download had never been there, but no matter. The soul of every son of the Covenant knows Israel's topography like the back of our hand. We have heard stories of it since our birth. We have heard of the altars Avraham built beside the date palm groves of Moreh and Mamre. We have marveled at what it would be like to visit the Cave of the Patriarchs near Hebron. We have trembled with our ancestor Avraham at the mention of the hill called Moriyah – and have wept with him at the thought of what he saw happen to Sodom, Gomorrah, and the family of Lot. We have laughed with our ancestor Yitzchak at the thought of Rivkah falling off her camel when she saw him in the field near *Be'er Lahoi Roi* – and we have grimaced at the remembrance of the persecution the budding young

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covenant family endured at the hands of the Ph'lishtim of Gerar. We have shared the awe our ancestor Ya'akov knew at Beit-El, the place of the great *sullam* that connects Heaven and earth – and we have empathized with the agony he felt over the stench his sons made of his name at what used to be the city of Shechem. We know our beloved Matriarch Rachel is buried just outside the village called *Beit-Lechem*. Though we cannot tell you why we know it, we are sure that the box of bones we are carrying – the last earthly evidence of the world-changing life of our ancestor Yosef - are crying out to be interred near the place from which he got carried into captivity. The aliyot for yesterday and today – though delivered far away from *Eretz Yisrael* – are calculated to both focus our attention on, and ignite our passion for, that land unlike any other land – the land that we have always heard, and firmly believe, *flows with milk and honey*. Yes, all eyes are turning toward *Eretz Yisrael* – just from our ancestor's stories we KNOW IT, and LOVE IT WELL. All our roads eventually lead there.

Deep Sigh!

The Holy One has just informed us that when we get to that land our arrival will be to the land what the weekly Seventh Day Sabbath is to our souls – holy delight and joyous rest! The Holy Land will soon see us coming, and its hills and valleys, coasts and caverns, will all collectively breathe a deep sigh of sweet relief. Just by returning to its borders, you see, we will give the land a 'Shabbat' – because our arrival will signal the final stage in ridding the land of the abominations committed in that land and desecrations inflicted on that land by the Kena'ani². Creation groans in eager expectation - for the likes of US!

The Holy One is now ready to take the revelation download concerning our relationship with this special bridal chamber one gigantic step further. He is now going to introduce us to something even more radical than the *sh'mittah*. English speakers have come to call the subject of today's revelation 'the year of *Jubilee*'. It turns out the Land will not only breathe a deep sigh of relief upon the arrival of the Covenant Partners of its Creator - it will respond to our presence as *ha-yabashah* [i.e. the dry land, or *eretz*] responded to the Voice of the Bridegroom-King on the third

² The abominations of the Kena'ani [Canaanites] are well catalogued in Leviticus 18. They include several forms of obsessive/compulsive sexual behavior that lead to perverting the institutions of family and marriage and culminate in lifestyles including the indulgence of homosexual lust and liaison, child endangerment/sacrifice, and bestiality. After these perversions are catalogued, the Holy One said concerning them: *by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. You are therefore to carefully guard My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.* Leviticus 18:24(b)-28.

day of Creation. It will begin to sprout with grain. It will begin to produce the herb that yields seed according to its kind. And it will exponentially multiply the fruitfulness of the trees that yield fruit, whose seed is them, according to their kind. **Genesis 1:11.** From field to field, from orchard to orchard, from vineyard to vineyard, and from garden to garden, the soil of the Promised Land will awaken as from sleep, and will begin to bring forth crop after crop for us in amazing abundance. Even the Negev and ‘Judean’ deserts will burst into bloom!

The National Anthem of Israel is *Ha Tikvah* – i.e. the Hope. Translated into English it goes something like this:

*As long as deep within the heart the Jewish soul is warm,
and from the sunrise an eye to Tziyon looks,
our hope is not yet lost –
the hope of 2,000 years – to be a free people in our own land,
in the land of Tziyon and Jerusalem -
to be a free people in our own land,
in the land of Tziyon and Jerusalem-
to be a free people in our own land,
in the land of Tziyon and Jerusalem.*

Ah, but know this, Dear One. It is not merely that *Eretz Yisrael* – *Eretz Tziyon* v’*Yerushalayim* - the land of Tziyon and Jerusalem – is the object of our hope that drives us on; it is the fact that we, the covenant people of the Creator, are the object of ITS HOPE as well.

The Continuous Counting of the Weeks of Years

But the Holy One is not finished. Next, in an instruction similar in concept to the instruction to ‘count the omer’ for 7 sabbaths between *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, He instructs us to ‘count’ seven *shemittot* [7th year Sabbaths of the land].

V’safarta lecha sheva shabtot shanim sheva shanim sheva
You are to count seven sabbatical years, that is, seven times seven years.

pe'amim vehayu lecha yemei sheva shab'tot
The period of the seven sabbatical cycles

ha-shanim tesha v'arba'im shanah
shall thus be 49 years.
[Leviticus 25:8]

Thus the Holy One instructs us to be in the process of *counting* all our lives – not just for 7 weeks during the spring. Numbers are very important to the Holy One. No, I don’t mean numbers of people, or houses, or cars, or bank accounts etc. I mean numbers of *days the Holy One has given us the opportunity to fulfill our*

Divine Purpose on earth; numbers of *Sabbaths* – those days specially infused with blessing and holiness that the Holy One has given us to practice life in the World to Come; and numbers of *Yom Kippurs*³ – those special days we receive into our souls and spirits the forgiveness and redemption of the Holy One.

Counting such days, you see, in the spiritual world in which the Holy One has called us to dwell, means *ascending*. Come Beloved - let us go *up* - to the *mountain*, and the *banqueting table*, and the very special *bridal chamber*, that has been prepared for us by the Holy One our God!

‘Jubilee’ – Returning to A Realistic and Practical Biblical Paradigm

Jubilee – just the mention of it causes my heart to leap within my chest, my eyes to moisten, my pulse to quicken, and my palms to get sweaty. Ah, but not for the reasons you may think. Torah has some surprises for us about what the very special year that comes at the conclusion of seven sevens is all about. “Jubilee” is not anywhere near as simple as slaves going free and debts being forgiven. The main focus of the Holy One’s *Jubilee* is not on our needs or wants as individuals. It is instead primarily concerned with and designed for the benefit of the LAND of Israel – and the perpetuation of His Great Plan of Redemption. He knows we will stray from His Plan for our own purposes. So every 50 years He hits the ‘reset button, and we start all over again where our ancestors started.

So if you are looking forward to the Jubilee year so that you can shout “*King’s X*” at just the right moment to avoid the direst consequences of your personal mistakes or failures, this is probably not the news you want to hear. But here is the truth: The Jubilee is *not primarily for us* – it is primarily for *Eretz Yisrael!* The Jubilee is *an integral part of the sanctification of Eretz Yisrael unto the Holy One*.

Before most people can understand how such a stunning statement could possibly be true however we need to come to grips with the Hebrew concept upon which the *Jubilee* is based – the spiritual mystery known as *Geulah*. Let’s explore that mystery for a few moments.

³ All the counting periods focus on Sabbaths. The counting of the years for *Shemittah* is actually a counting of ‘Great Sabbaths’ – i.e. *Yom Kippurs*. *Yom Kippur* is called the ‘Great Sabbath’ because on it we not only refrain from *melachah* [ordinary work], and rest, as we do on every Sabbath but we also fast, and because on it we receive again through the special mediation of our Great High Priest the blessing of forgiveness and redemption. Hence, when the shofar is sounded to announce the beginning of the **Yovel** [Jubilee] year, on what day is it blown? Not on 1 Nisan/Aviv; not on *Yom T’ruah/Rosh HaShanah*; tin the Yovel, the shofar is instead blown on *Yom Kippur*.

Geulah [Redemption]: It Is Just What a Covenant Partner Does!

Earlier in this shiur we said that through the Holy One's teachings regarding *Shemittah* [the 7th year Sabbath] and the *Yovel* [the 'Jubilee'] the Divine Bridegroom planned to greatly expand our knowledge of two essential aspects of covenant relationship with Him which we will need to cling to in all subsequent phases of the relationship. The first such covenant concept to which He wanted to introduce us was *bitachon*, usually translated into English as 'trust' or 'faith'. The second covenant concept essential to the deepening of our relationship with the Holy One to be addressed in the transitional parsha we know as *B'har* is *ge'ulah* – usually translated into English as 'redemption'. As discussed previously, however, the English word 'redemption' has in our generation become something of a religious *buzzword*, thrown around frequently – although usually without any real substantive understanding. This is true in both Jewish and Christian circles. It is therefore necessary for us to become Bereans again, and try to find the truth behind all the 'hype'.

Ge'ulah can indeed mean redemption – but *Ge'ulah* type redemption may not mean what you think. *Ge'ulah* redemption is not something that occurs because of 'goodwill', or through the practicing of *random acts of kindness* toward strangers, or according to some mystical formula or timetable understood only by the Holy One. *Ge'ulah* is, purely and simply, all about *taking care of family*. The *ge'ulah* style of redemption arises from *fierce inter-family loyalty* and *intense commitment to family honor*. *Ge'ulah*-redemption is the expenditure of one's personal assets, welfare, glory, and, if necessary, one's life in order to meet the legitimate needs -- whatever they may be -- of less-fortunate or less-powerful members of one's family and/or to protect, preserve and/or restore one's family honor. *Ge'ulah* redemption arises out of the covenant-based reality that *one's personal success and honor can be no greater than the success and honor of one's family as an entity as gauged by the situation and circumstances of the family's least successful and least honorable member*. So, if a nephew or uncle or cousin or brother is found to be in a state of legitimate need, be it financial, physical, or spiritual, the true head of the family is called upon to do *ge'ulah*.

Whatever the need of the recipient may be, the true head of the family is to provide – without cost, without complaint, and without hope of a return of whatever is expended. It is part of the true head of the family's service to the Holy One. Because of *bitachon* the person making the expenditure can rest assured not only that the things he sacrifices for his family were given to him by the Holy One for just such a purpose, but also that, despite the expenditure, his legitimate needs will always be met as well.

Because today's world by and large lacks an appreciation for either the covenant-faithfulness of the Holy One or the value and unity of *family* in the Holy One's eyes, most people today really have no understanding of the concept of *ge'ulah*. Hence the Holy One introduces us to the concept through His teaching on the *Yovel* – the year of 'Jubilee'. Let us therefore examine in detail what the Holy One has to say to us at this time of impending transition concerning the *Yovel* – the ultimate picture of the *ge'ulah*-redemption which the Messiah – as the true spiritual head of His family - will purchase for all persons born or adopted/engrafted into the extended earthly family into which He was born.

Yovel: The 'Year of Jubilee'

The word our English Bibles translate as "Jubilee" is the Hebrew word *yovel*⁴. It is a noun derived from the verb root *yaval*⁵, meaning to *flow out /gush forth* [as water from a spring]; to *issue forth*; or "be moved/carried" from place to place. The noun *yovel* is often identified with 'coming forth', or in a causal sense, 'bringing forth'. Imagine a leaf falling into a moving stream. It is *caught up by the current* and *carried downstream quite against its will* toward a *destination it does not choose*. The condition/situation of the leaf is the Hebrew word picture behind the Hebrew word *yovel*.

What Kind of Freedom Is This?

The noun *yovel* is often translated in English literature as "freedom". But consider the leaf floating in the stream. What kind of freedom is this? It is certainly not freedom to do whatever one wants to do. It is not 'self-governance'. It is not freedom of action. It is freedom from corrupt influences. It is freedom from conflicting loyalties. It is freedom from uncleanness, from self-obsession, from pseudo-intellectual mind control, and from fleshly-appetite manipulations.

One is reminded of the words of the first line of the chorus of the song "*Me and Bobby McGee*", written by Kris Kristofferson, and made popular by Janis Joplin in the late 60s: "*Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose.*" Of course, in the Holy One's lexicon *freedom* means does not mean 'nothing left to lose' from a Kingdom standpoint; it means nothing left to lose – or worry about losing – from a worldly, fleshly standpoint. It means *release from all restrictions and limitations that prevent or hinder us from doing His Will, and fulfilling our Divine Purpose in this world*. We are only free, you see, when nothing stands in the way of our desire to love the Holy One with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength. We are only free when we are able to see ourselves and our neighbors through His eyes of passionate love and expectation of greatness. We are only free

⁴ *Yovel* is yod, vav, veit, lamed, It is Strong's Hebrew word #3104, pronounced yo-vel'.

⁵ *Yaval* is yod, veit, lamed. It is Strong's Hebrew word # 2986.

when we embrace wholeheartedly, and actually start to walk in, the instructions for living that our Divine Bridegroom has set out for us in the Torah.

We are free when we can work six days, and then truly rest, stay in our homes, receive the blessing, and bask in the holiness, of the Sabbath. We are free when we can experience the fullness of *shemittah* in Eretz Yisrael on the plot of holy land that the Holy One allotted to our ancestor [by blood or by adoption/engrafting] for our family. We are free when we can *honor our father and mother wholeheartedly*. We are free when we can put aside prejudices, offenses, selfish ambition, lust, and greed, and love our neighbor as ourselves. We are free when we have personal knowledge of and experience walking in, and therefore can *teach our children the truth of Torah*, and feel perfectly natural speaking of it when we lie down and when we rise up, when we sit in our homes, and when we walk by the way. We are free when we joyfully give to the poor out of the abundance with which we are blessed, and when we humbly care for the widows among us, show compassion to the fatherless ones in our midst, and make the foreigner feel welcome.

In the Holy One's lexicon, you see, you see, we are free when all we *sh'ma* [hear, listen to, and respond to] is the Voice of the Holy One. We are free when we simply can – and do - consciously choose not *sh'ma* the voice of any other besides Him, however persuasive or spiritual sounding other voices may be.

***The Essence of Yovel is - Going Home,
and Recalibrating to 'True Tone'***

Here is a truth not widely reported, Dear Reader. To make *yovel* one must not only leave his or her place of bondage – one must also go home. One must, like the leaf in the metaphoric picture we talked about previously, let go of the branch/limb on which he has been growing, and surrender both to the Holy One's wind and to the flowing stream that will, whether he wills it or not, carry him home – *i.e. to his ancestral inheritance in Israel*. One must *reconnect with his roots* – and *recapture his identity, purpose, and destiny*.

In the *yovel* the Holy One's people are far from “free” – we are instead caught up in movement we did not *choose*, did not *initiate*, and absolutely cannot *control*. We are brought forth, from wherever we have been living and whatever we have been doing, to serve the Holy One and tend – and bring to life and health again - the land He gave our ancestors.

When the Holy One says “move” we must “move”. We are a Bride, sworn and covenanted to go ‘*whithersoever thou goest*’⁶. The movement called for by the Holy One, however, is for the good of not only Israel but also of *all mankind*. What we acquire in life is not ours but the Holy One’s. We are only temporary stewards of the things we acquire in life. Ah, but *what He gives us is ours forever and cannot be sold or bartered away*. His inheritance is eternal. Just always remember that it is all about His kingdom and His Will and His Purposes – not ours!

Can You Hear the Shout of Jubilee?

With regard to the “year of Jubilee” [i.e. *Yovel*] there is great misunderstanding among contemporary Christians about the significance and meaning of this year. Most merely think and preach about a “year of forgiveness of debts” and “slaves going free.” Just as “land management” is only a small part of *shemittah*, however, so “forgiveness of debts” and “slaves going free” constitute only a small part of the story of *Yovel*. Focusing on forgiveness of debts and slaves going free leads to popular, but *very, very shallow, teaching*.

Moreover, as is the case with all shallow teaching, this focus on forgiveness of debts and slaves going free is potentially both *dangerous* and *deceptive*. Emphasis on *personal debt forgiveness* and *personal servant release* can cause one to miss the primary positive *mitzvah* of Yovel – to “*return*” to one’s *heritage* and to one’s *family*. Let this week therefore be a new beginning point in your understanding of the “Jubilee year”. Here is the *heart* and *essence* of *Yovel* – its positive *mitzvot*:

*Make the fiftieth year holy,
and proclaim d’ror*⁷ [usually translated as liberty] *throughout the land
to all the inhabitants of it; it is to be a yovel to you;
and you are to return every man to his inheritance/legacy,
and you are to return every man to his family.*

[Leviticus 25:10]

In this year of yovel you are to return every man to his inheritance/legacy.

[Leviticus 25:13]

⁶ *Yovel* is therefore not at all analogous to the emancipation of the imported slaves in the time of the American Civil War. The slaves of America were set ‘free’ in a non-Hebraic sense. The slaves freed after the war between the states could, theoretically at least, go wherever they wanted to go, and do whatever they wanted to do. But they did not experience *yovel*. They simply changed legal status. Their freedom consisted only of a chance for a ‘new and better life’ *in the same land to which they had been brought as slaves*. They did not, at least in any significant numbers, *go home*.

⁷ *D’ror* is a Hebrew word spelled *dalet, resh vav, resh*. This is Strong’s Hebrew word #1865, pronounced *deh-ror*. It means ‘flowing’ or ‘overflowing’, and connotes spilling out. The first usage is in Exodus 30:23, where it is used to describe *myrrh* [flowing myrrh]. The more appropriate translation of *d’ror* would probably be something like ‘pouring out’. Much as the land ‘vomited’ out the Kena’ani because of the abominations they committed, at the Yovel, the land would ‘pour out’ the displaced Israelites from where they had settled, and they would flow back to where they belonged.

The Hebrew word translated ‘return’ several times in this passage is *shuv*⁸. This verb, from which the verb *t’shuvah* is derived, means to *stop what you are doing, turn around, leave where you are, and go back where you came from*. See for example the first Biblical usage of the word *shuv* - in Genesis 3:16 - where the Holy One tells Adam that he will have to eat bread by the ‘sweat of his brow’ until he *shuv’s* to the ground from which he was taken. See also *Genesis 8:3* – the waters of the heavens returned [*shuv*] to their place after the flood.

Yovel is not just time to “go free” from whatever mess you have gotten yourself into. It is not just a time to have your debts wiped out so you can do what you want to. If that is all you see you miss the whole point. In the *yovel* of our Divine Bridegroom what *you* want to do and where *you* want to go does not matter in the least. The *Yovel* is an appointed time for you to do *one thing* and one thing alone - *GO HOME*. It is an appointed time for you to walk the ancient paths that lead back to your ancestral inheritance. It is time for you to go back from whence you came.

It is a time to rediscover your IDENTITY, reconnect with your MISSION, and recommit to your DESTINY. It is the time to return to *the Holy One’s plan for your life* [abandoning your own] – as did the prodigal son. It is a time to *leave behind friends and peers and ministries one has acquired on one’s own*— like the leaf in our metaphor turned loose of the branch on which it was growing. It is a time to *surrender all one’s interests and goals in life, and one’s “ministries”, to the Holy One*, and to *accept in place of those people and things the heritage He has decreed for you, and to your seed forever*. It is time to *reconcile with one’s family, and embrace one’s heritage*, making *tikkun* [repair] of/for any family sins, so as to purge and purify the inheritance one will pass on to the next generation. And it is our Divine Bridegroom’s desire for us to do this Beloved, not for our own sake – but *for the sake of the Land and the Redemptive Plan of the Holy One*. The land promised by the Holy One to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya’akov, you see, groans in eager expectation for you to return and give it *Shabbat rest*.

Back to ‘Ground Zero’

When the shofar blows to announce the imminence of the *Yovel* everyone who has acquired property or acquired possessions through material striving is to pick up stakes and go back to “ground zero”. All their assets as well as all their debts are instantly are wiped out, as it were, leaving them only whatever family heritage/inheritance the Holy One has ordained for them and their children forever. Like wood, hay, and stubble, absolutely everything that is not in accordance with the Redemptive Plain of the Holy One for the sons and daughters of His Covenant with Avraham is burned away. Stripped of everything you have acquired or aspired

⁸ Shuv is *shin, vav, beit*. Strong’s Hebrew word #7725, it is pronounced *shuve*.

to acquire, it suddenly becomes just you, the Divine Bridegroom, and whatever you received as an inheritance/ heritage from your father, and his father, and his father, back to Sinai.

The Holy One's call, at *Yovel*, is not "go free" – it is "Go home! It is not 'do what you want to do'. It is "Reacquaint yourself with your family, and get back to the inheritance I gave you, forsaking what you have sought out and built as a kingdom/comfort zone for yourself". There is no *ge'ulah* that does not involve a return to the land of Israel. All other loyalties, all other acquisitions, and all other aspirations, are destined to blow away in the latter days just as chaff is driven away by the wind.

So *sanctify time*, Dear Reader. Sanctify the Holy One's Holy Name. Sanctify the Holy One's Torah, and the Messiah Who embodies It. But do not forget in all the above to *sanctify Eretz Yisrael as well*. Sanctify *the heritage* the Holy One set aside to you, your ancestors, and your descendants at *Har Sineh*. Sanctify yourself to the hope that the land has in your appearing, even as you have hope in Messiah's coming.

Questions For Today's Study

1. The primary subject of today's aliyah is the Year of Jubilee [*Yovel*].

[A] From what year was *Yovel* to be counted?

[B] What had to happen before there could be *Yovel*? Why?

[C] The Israelites, as far as we are told, have never yet celebrated a *Yovel*. When they do [in the millennium?], how many years in a row will they go without sowing fields or pruning vines?

[D] List the things the People of the Holy One were instructed to do in a *Yovel* year. Start with the *negative* instructions [things the Holy One for our own good and for the sake of His Testimony in the Earth not to do]. Then list the *positive* instructions [things the Holy One says that for our own good and for the sake of His Testimony in the Earth we ARE to do].

[E] What if someone were comfortable where they were, and liked the way things were before the shofar sounded in the fiftieth year? What effect would the *Yovel* have on their life?

[F] How many times is *yovel* likely to occur in one's life?

[G] How was the beginning of *Yovel* to be announced?

[H] On what *mo'ed /miqra*⁹ is the announcement of *Yovel* to be made?

[I] What is the *theme* of that *moed/miqra*?

⁹ As discussed in Wednesday's shiur from parsha *Emor*, *mo'ed* means "appointed time", or scheduled "time of meeting together for intimate communication", and *miqra* means a prophetic rehearsal, a time of reading from a prescribed script, and performing scripted actions, for dramatic reasons.

[J] Beginning this day, our English Bibles tell us that we are to “proclaim ‘liberty’ throughout all the *eretz*.” In Strong’s and Gesenius, look up the word our English Bibles translate as “liberty”. [In English transliteration, this word is *d’ror* [Strong’s Hebrew word # 1865]. Write the Hebrew word, in Hebrew letters with vowel markings. Then describe the Hebraic concept underlying this word, and formulate a more Hebraic definition of the word than the English abstract notion of “liberty”.

[K] When Yeshua stood at the *bema* [lectern] in the synagogue of Natzret [Nazareth], read from the scroll of Yeshayahu [Isaiah] the verses we now know as Isaiah 61:1-4, and proclaimed “*today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*” [Luke 4:21], what do you think He meant?

2. In today’s haftarah Yirmayahu is concluding the prophetic redemption of ancestral land near Anatot. The Holy One told him to act as a *ga’al* [redeemer] and purchase a tract of land in that area, prophetically declaring that Israel was not being exiled forever to Babylon, but was merely being disciplined, and would one day return. After signing all the necessary papers for the transaction Yirmayahu tells us:

*I charged Barukh before them, saying,
Thus says the Holy One of Hosts, the God of Yisra'el:
**Take these deeds, this deed of the purchase that is sealed,
and this deed which is open,
and put them in an earthen vessel; that they may continue many days.**
For thus says the Holy One of Hosts, the God of Yisra'el:
Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land.*

Keep in mind that Yirmayahu was a priest, of the tribe of Levi, and that Anatot was one of the Levitical cities located within the territorial allocation of the tribe of Benjamin [Benjamin]. Then read ahead in Torah to Leviticus 25:32-34, wherein the protocols are set forth for the redemption of lands in cities of the Levites. Yirmayahu was a distant relative of the Levi’im of Anatot. But he was the nearest relative who would redeem the land. No one else had prophetic vision.

[A] What did Yirmayahu’s redemption of this land as a prophetic act symbolize?

[B] Yirmayahu speaks of things in the deed that are “open” and other things that are “sealed”. What do you think all this means?

[C] The placement of the deed to the field at Anatot’ in an “earthen vessel” reminds one of [i] the Dead Sea Scrolls, and [ii] Shaul’s statement in II Corinthians 4:7, that “we have this treasure in earthen vessels”. Pick one of these subjects, and write a paragraph describing how Yirmayahu’s actions with regard to the deed to the inheritance prophesy of and explain from the Holy One’s viewpoint the subject you chose.

3. In today's reading from the apostolic writings Yeshua is called upon by synagogue leaders in Natzeret [Nazareth] to read the Haftarah for the Shabbat in question, which was a portion (what we know of as Chapter 61) of the scroll of HaNavi Yeshayahu [the prophet Isaiah].

*The book of the prophet Yeshayahu was handed to him.
He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,
"The Ruach of the Holy One is on me,
Because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind,
To deliver those who are crushed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Holy One."*

[A] Go back and read the entire 61st chapter of Yeshayahu. How would you describe the context and meaning of Yeshayahu's prophetic declaration that 'He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor'?

[B] Who are 'the poor' that the prophet was talking about? What makes them 'poor'?

[C] The term 'good news' is also found in several other places in the TaNaKh – for instance in I Chronicles 16:31, Psalm 40:9, and Isaiah 52:7. Of what specifics do you think the "good news" Yeshayahu and Yeshua spoke of consisted?

[D] What "prisoners" and what "oppressed" do you think Yeshayahu and Yeshua were talking about?

[E] What "year" do you think Yeshayahu and Yeshua were talking about?

*May the people of the Holy One at last hear the shofar of Yovel,
and return to their families and the inheritance the Holy One has ordained for us.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 67:3-5

*Let the peoples praise you, O Holy One. Let all the peoples praise you.
Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
For you will judge the peoples with equity, and govern the nations on eretz.
Selah. Let the peoples praise you, O Holy One
Let all the peoples praise you.*