

*Shiur L'Yom Revi'i*¹

[Wednesday's Study]

READINGS: **Torah B'har:** Leviticus 25:23 – 26:2
 Haftarah: Jeremiah 32:16-27
 B'rit Chadasha: Acts 4:32-34

The land is Mine, and you are just strangers and sojourners
[Leviticus 25:23(b)]

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

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

V'ha-aretz lo timacher l'tzmitut - And the land is not to be sold in perpetuity ... *ki-li ha-aretz* – for the land is Mine. *Ki-gerim v'toshavim atem imadi* – you are just strangers and sojourners with Me. Leviticus 25:23.

The narrow land bridge between the Mediterranean and the Jordan Rift Valley has been the setting for some of the most dramatic events of Biblical history. It is also the focal point of Biblical prophecy. The Creator of the Universe has a very, very special plan for this little piece of geography. If you haven't already done so, now is the appointed time to get *on board with* and *caught up in* that plan.

The Holy One wants our hearts to burn for *Eretz Yisrael* with unquenchable zeal. He wants us to value its capital city above our chief joy. He wants us to know that *As the land of Israel goes, so goes the world; and as the city of Jerusalem fares, the economies of the nations rise and fall, prosper and collapse*. What happens in Vegas may stay in Vegas – but what happens in Israel spreads to – and impacts - all four corners, and all peoples, 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

The Holy One's Plan is not complicated. He intends to *cleanse the land of its cesspools of tumah* [i.e. ecosystem-endangering negative energy; uncleanness, impurity]. Then He intends to *kadash it* – i.e. set it apart from other geographical areas of earth, sanctify it, consecrate it, and dedicate it to serve as the earth's and humankind's source for the *ecosystem-nurturing and synergizing positive energy* we call *holiness*. After that, He plans to 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-***

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Kodesh [the Holy Mountain]. **Zechariah 8:3**. He then 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 reason. They will say amongst themselves: ***Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Holy One – 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 the Holy One from Jerusalem.*** Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2.

The Holy One intends for this land to be cleared, plowed, planted, cultivated, stewarded, guarded, and harvested by men, women, and children with whom He is in covenant – *i.e.* humble, thankful, honest, peaceable, gentle, yet fiercely loyal people who have caught His Vision, and have therefore agreed to behave like His sons and daughters, following His Instructions, while living on the Land. 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 throughout *B'har* the Holy One has 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.

Lo Timacher l'Tzmitut - Torah's Rule Against Perpetuities

The first time Avraham set foot in the land of Israel, the Holy One spoke to him, declaring: ***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: ***Lo timacher l'tzmitut – i.e. 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 nothing is ever about condemnation;
it is, instead, always and only about redemption.*

*In the Kingdom nothing is ever about who is to blame,
or what punishment those to blame deserve;
it is instead 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 will be a 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*². The verb root of this word, *ga'al*³, is the Hebrew verb that is usually translated into English as "*redeem*"⁴. 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."*
[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

² Geulah is *gimel, lamed, alef, hey*. Strong's Hebrew word #1353, it is pronounced *gheh-ool-law'*.

³ Ga'al is , *gimel, alef, lamed*. Strong's Hebrew word # 1350, it is pronounced *gaw-awl'*.

⁴ 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].

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*”.

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. It, its fields, vineyards, orchards, and houses are the Holy One's and His alone. He and He alone decides who will possess and steward that land for Him. And since no one – even Avraham's descendants – can own our King's Land, neither can anyone – even us – sell or bargain it away. Well ... with one exception. Drawing a line of distinction between *lands and houses in open areas* and *lots and houses in 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 sells 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 shall he 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 will not go out in the yovel.*

*But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them
will be reckoned with the fields of the country:
they may be redeemed, and they will go out in the yovel.*

[Leviticus 25:29-31]

Matthew Henry, in his commentary, offers an explanation why the Holy One made this one 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.⁵

⁵ Matthew Henry Commentary on Leviticus 25.

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

The Special Cities of Holiness-Modeling Assigned to the Levi'im

A special provision is also made by the Holy One for the descendants of Levi. Unlike the tribes descended from Levi's brothers, the tribe of Levi had no tribal allotment of the land. The Levi'im were instead specifically assigned by the Holy One to live in cities [48 in number] dispersed throughout Israel. **Numbers 35:1-6**. They could not own any significant amount of productive agricultural land – only a small allotment surrounding their cities for the raising of livestock and the storage of goods. The Levi'im were not permitted to be farmers – at least not like the rest of us. Gardeners maybe – but not farmers. They were to focus their attention on modeling the holiness protocols at the highest, most committed levels. Hence a special provision was appropriate for them.

***Nevertheless, in Levitical cities,
Levites may redeem the houses in the cities of their possession at any time.
If one of the Levites redeem, then the house that was sold,
and the city of his possession shall go out in the jubilee;
for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the children of Yisra'el.
But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession.***

[Leviticus 25:32-34]

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 in mind as you read today's reading from the apostolic writings, in which a Levi named *Yosi Bar-Nabba* [we 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 Yisrael⁶, how much do you think he got for what he – a Levi - could sell?

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 estate – something we are just passing through'. He does not worry about who is to blame for a

⁶ 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**.

situation. 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.

Our Bridegroom-King sees seeds of redemption where we see only the track-marks of sin and the scars of suffering. He sees a fruitful field waiting to burst into bloom where we see a dry, dusty desert. He sees the narrow pathway to life, health and peace where we see only the broad way leading to destruction. With Him failure is never an option. 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*”. 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.

When A Son of Israel Serves a Foreigner

The Bridegroom-King is teaching us a very important lesson - that every challenging situation or seeming setback we – or anyone else – will ever face in life is pregnant with possibility. Understanding this, and appropriating into our worldview and approach to every situation, is an essential aspect of the Holy One's Ultimate Divine Bridal Makeover protocol. Hence in today's aliyah He presents us with a hypothetical situation that would make most of us sick to our stomach.

***Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich,
and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself
to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family ...***

[Leviticus 25:47]

Wow. What kind of a horrendous mess would a son or daughter of the covenant have to have gotten himself or herself into in order to see no better way out than to sell himself or herself into slavery/service to someone who knows not YHVH or His ways? How many bridges would such a son or daughter of the Covenant have had to have burned to turn to a stranger for help as opposed to a kinsman? How desperate – or depraved - would a son or daughter of the Covenant have to even consider giving up his or her inheritance for a morsel of bread from a person who neither knows nor follows our Bridegroom-King's ways? Such questions pop into our minds. But the Holy One does not even consider them. His reaction does not depend upon how the son or daughter of the Covenant got into the mess. It doesn't matter who was to blame. No matter how bad the situation looks, and no matter how much of the blame for the situation may reside on the one in the predicament, the Holy One's first thought is about redemption. Hence He completes the sentence left hanging above with ***after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him, or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself.*** Leviticus 25:48-49.

As the eyes of the Holy One see it, every person who is touched by the soul-poison of *tumah* can – and is expected to – be made *tahor*. He provides the way for the redemption. In the thinking of the Holy One, every *metzora* [KJV ‘leper’] can – and is expected to – be made whole. He provides the way for the redemption. And with the Holy One, every person who goes into bondage or enters the realm of human trafficking can – and is expected to – be redeemed. He provides the way of the redemption – and even pays the price. Do you see what I mean about our Bridegroom-King having ‘redeemer’s eyes’? We see failure and disaster – He sees redemption. We sit in the seat of the scornful and speculate about sin and blame – He sees recovery and restoration. All that matters to our King is that **... after he is sold he may be redeemed again.** What a King! What a Covenant-Partner! What a God! Such a God it is indeed an honor – and a joy - to serve.

Our Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover is never complete – and the eternal truths of the *Kedusha Discourse* – are all geared to teach us how to see and approach the world the way our Bridegroom-King does – with ‘redeemer’s eyes’. Whatever else we have learned about wholeness and holiness, for us to function as His servants in a meaningful way, we still have to learn to see and approach difficult situations – even seeming catastrophes – with eyes that search for, with mouths that speak forth, and with members that work toward, *redemption*.

We are not here to point out what is wrong; we are here to bring redemption and resolution. We are not here to moan, groan, and complain about how unfair life is; we are here to set the captives free and lead them to the King’s pathway to life, health, and peace. We are not here to assign blame or condemn those responsible for the world’s messes; we are here to clean them up. We are not here to throw stones at sinners; we are here to awaken and embrace prodigals.

The Holy One wants us to always remember and identify with Yosef – and He wants us to be always looking for and expecting a ‘suddenly’ moment such as the one that accompanied Pharaoh’s dream. Our Bridegroom-king wants us to remember and identify not with the elder son but with the prodigal – and He wants us to always see the father running toward him, calling for a ring, robe, and sandals for his son’s feet. The Kinsman-Redeemer of all kinsman-redeemers wants us to remember and identify with Onesimus – and He wants us to always hear the words of Shaul of Tarsus ringing out around us, saying **“if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I ... will repay!** The One Who has called us to serve Him wants us to serve Him by filling whatever sphere of influence He assigns us with sweet songs of deliverance. Our reasonable service to the Holy One is to act as *visioners for* and *agents of* redemption in

regard to every challenging situation that we - or any of our kinsmen, friends, or even enemies - may face. No tongue wagging or finger pointing is allowed. No complaint, criticism, or pontificating will produce anything of value. Those kinds of things are the work of the adversary, not the expected contribution of the servants of the King.

The Holy One explains how even the horrible situation the Holy One has described for us in Leviticus 28:47 can be rectified by those of His servants who have developed ‘redeemer’s eyes’:

*The price of his release shall be according to the number of years,
from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Yovel;
it is to be according to the time of a hired servant for him.
‘If there are still many years remaining, according to them
he is to repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought.
And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Yovel,
he is to reckon with him, and according to his years
he is to repay him the price of his redemption.
He is to be with him as a yearly hired servant,
and he is not to rule with rigor over him in your sight.
And if he is not redeemed in these years,
then he will be released in the Year of Yovel— he and his children with him.*

[Leviticus 25:49-54]

Do you recognize the story of Yosef, slave of Potifar, in this hypothetical? Do you recognize the situation of *the prodigal son*? Do you recognize the story of *Onesimus*, slave of Philemon? Are you sensing the Holy One’s passion – and catching His vision – to always provide a path of redemption and deliverance? Are you understanding why wringing one’s hands, wagging one’s tongue, worrying, complaining, and assigning blame have no place in the Holy One’s Kingdom? Are you learning to look for the narrow path to overcoming in every broad pathway that leads in the direction of destruction? Are you developing ‘redeemer’s eyes’?

***No Matter What House or Country We May Live In,
or Who Thinks They Control Us, Whose Servants Are We Really?***

The Holy One is not content to share our services with anyone else for long. We are His special treasure people, His kingdom of priests, and His holy nation. If He allows us to serve anyone else, He allows it only temporarily – and only to equip us with another glorious testimony of redemption and deliverance. He may allow us to experience poverty – or even bondage – for a season. He may do so in order to test us – and He may do so in order to test others in our community and/or in the nations. He wants us to learn to see every difficult situation as a potential redemption story. He wants us to look for lessons we can learn, patience-skills we can hone, and empathy we can develop. He wants us to learn to stay thankful and joyful, ever on the

lookout for and expecting to find opportunities to honor His Name. He therefore wants us to learn to resist the temptation of our flesh to complain, to accuse, and to place blame. He wants to train us to incorporate neither failure, nor poverty, nor estrangement, nor bondage into our self-image. He wants our eyes to ever sparkle with redemption light. He wants us to always look for the shaft of light that points the way out of every cavern, the miracle that delivers us from every dungeon, and the crimson cord that shows us the way out of every predicament. He wants us to remember and identify with Yosef – and keep ever in mind the ‘suddenly’ moment when Pharaoh had a dream. He wants us to remember and identify with the prodigal – and the vision of the father running toward him, calling for someone to bring a ring, robe, and sandals for his feet. And, remembering these things, He wants our hearts to always be filled with and our mouths to always be releasing sweet songs of deliverance over every challenging situation that we - or any of our kinsmen, friends, or even enemies - may face.

What Does our Service of – and Ultimate Allegiance to – the Holy One Mean?

The Holy One then summarizes our ‘servant’ responsibilities to Him as follows:

Ki-li b'nei-Yisra'el avadim

[All these instructions are given] in order that the Israelites can be My servants

avadai hem asher-hotzeti otam me'eret Mitzrayim

They are servants to Me because I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Ani Adonai Eloheichem

I am the Holy One your God.

The Holy One is about to make it clear why He has stepped off His Throne in Heaven, out of time, into our world to redeem us. It was not so that we could have ‘freedom’ the way the world thinks of it. It was not in order that we could achieve some abstract idea of ‘self-actualization’. He redeemed us so that we could serve Him - and play a critical supporting role in His Divine Plan for the redemption of mankind and the restoration of Creation to an Edenic state.

We are not merely servants, of course. We are sons and daughters. We are intimate friends. We are His special treasure people. We are the apple of His eye. We are the sheep of His pasture. We are a lily among thorns. We are priests. We are royal ambassadors. We are His earthly shadow. We are His beloved Bride. But if we do not learn that what we are, first and foremost, is servants of our King, He knows we will wind up serving someone or something else. He knows that serving Him in meaningful ways, out of a heart of love and gratitude for what He has done for us, is an essential part of holding on to the redemption He has wrought for and in us, much less empowering us to participate in the great redemption He intends

to accomplish through us. Think back to the story of Yosef. The Holy One saw redemption even when Yosef was chained up in the hold of the Midyani's slave wagons. He saw redemption even while Yosef was being stared at, probed, and bid upon by potential buyers in the slave market of Egypt. He saw redemption even when Yosef was being ogled and propositioned by Potifar's wife. He saw redemption even when Yosef was thrown in a dungeon upon false accusations. The Holy One likewise ALWAYS sees redemption as the logical and ultimate outcome of every mess we will ever get ourselves into in this world. Over and over again The world just keeps hitting the people of the Covenant with its best shot. But redemption is always what seems to come forth. Through every test, through every trial, and through every dark night of the souls, the Covenant stands firm. And time after time, with the slightest modicum of cooperation from some anonymous cupbearer, every sad story of betrayal and calamity involving the covenant people of the Holy One winds up being transformed into a stunning masterpiece of redemption.

Because we serve the Bridegroom-King, and He does not serve us, He from time to time allows us to experience difficulty – even oppression - for a season. He may do so in order to reveal to us what uncleanness is still in our hearts and what self-obsession is still in our minds – or He may allow it in order to train us to be overcomers. In some cases He may allow us to experience trials or face difficult situations in order to test others – whether in our family, in our community, or in the nations. The point is that part of our essential training is to learn – through personal, practical, hands-on experience - to start to see every difficult situation as the next chapter of His ongoing and glorious redemption story. In every situation we face He wants us to learn to scan the presenting circumstances in search of lessons that we can learn from the experience – whether they be lessons of character, lessons of patience, or lessons of empathy. He wants us to learn to *stay thankful*, to *keep rejoicing*, and to *hold onto our shalom* no matter what happens. He wants to train us to be ever on the lookout for - and fully confident of finding in every situation – opportunities to honor His Name. He knows that if we are to function effectively as His agents of redemption we have to learn the hard way how to resist and overcome the temptation of our fallen flesh to over-react to challenges, offenses, the sins and sin consequences of others, and difficult situations of every stripe. He wants to teach us why whining, complaining, succumbing to fear, assigning blame, and/or adopting either a victim or a sole-survivor mentality are incompatible with serving Him –because they are totally counterproductive to His plan of redemption. He wants to train us to incorporate neither failure, nor poverty, nor estrangement, nor self-preservation, nor bondage into our self-image – or make any place for them in our life story. He wants our eyes to ever sparkle with redemption light – the way His do. He wants to train us

to always look for the shaft of light that points the way out of every cavern, the miracle that delivers us from every dungeon, and the crimson cord that shows us the way out of every predicament.

The Essential Elements of Our Reasonable Service

Here is how the Holy One describes the most essential aspects of the scope of service He has called us to render to Him:

Ki-li b'nei-Yisra'el avadim

[All these instructions are given] in order that the Israelites can be My servants

avadai hem asher-hotzeti otam me'erezt Mitzrayim

They are servants to Me because I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Ani Adonai Eloheichem

I am the Holy One your God.

[Leviticus 26:1]

The verse that follows contains some very significant ‘bullet points’ that define what our ‘reasonable service’ to the Bridegroom-King is supposed to consist of – and what behaviors are not only inconsistent with our Covenant calling but totally counterproductive to the Grand Redemptive Plan. Let’s try to unwrap each of these Divine instructions a little bit.

Covenant/Redemptive Plan Counterproductive Practice #1:

Making Elilim Ufesel – “false gods”

The first *bullet point* the Holy One makes to us has to do with something some of our English Bibles translate as ‘false gods’, or ‘idols’. The exact message of the Holy One - in transliterated and translated Hebrew at least – is:

Lo-ta'asu lachem elilim ufesel

Do not craft for yourselves false gods.

[Leviticus 26:1(a)]

One mark of our relationship with the Holy One is to be that no matter what our neighbors do – or what anyone we know may do – we will not make, reverence, bow down to, serve, or worship a ‘false god’. That would not only be inconsistent with our Covenant with the Holy One; it would be totally counterproductive in regard to His Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind and the Restoration of Creation to Edenic Potential. False gods we are to ***lo ta'asu***, the Holy One says. Let’s talk about that, shall we?

Lo ta'asu

The parables of the Master were replete with references to this kind of service. Hence the parables frequently concluded with the affirmation ***Well done, good and faithful servant*** or the declaration ***Out of your own mouth I will judge you,***

you wicked servant. What is the difference between a ‘good and faithful servant’ and a ‘wicked servant’ in the eyes of the Holy One? Good and faithful servanthood involves what we do with our creative energy and talents. It is all about what we do – or do not do – with the time and resources He assigns with us. If we act like Him, following His ways, in relation to those things, we become like the ‘good and faithful servant’. If we use our creative energy for other endeavors, or interact with the people and resources within our assigned sphere of influence in ways that are not like Him at all, however, we become like the ‘wicked servant’.

What are we supposed to do with the creative energy He has given us? The Holy One has previously told us plainly what it is He wants us to spend our creative energy and talent *asah-ing* – i.e. *shaping, fashioning, building, making, and giving form and visible expression to*. What He wants us to build are *the mitzvot of Torah*. He wants each of us to apply our own unique gift of creativity and energy in such a way as to *make His Words come to life for all mankind to see*. Whatever else we may do in this life, this is always to be job one. It is our first priority. Why? It is not in order to earn righteousness. It is because the reason for our calling is to be His ambassadors and emissaries on earth. As Yeshua said: ***You are the salt of the earth. If the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?*** We have been given the breath of life, the faculties of speech, creative energy, and a sphere of influence in order to prepare a way for the Kingdom of Heaven to come to earth in real, tangible, visible ways that the people and nations of the world can see and understand. We are called to play an essential role in our Bridegroom-King’s Grand Redemptive Plan. Failure is not an option. Every moment of our allotted time on earth is a stage. We are each assigned a chapter of the great redemption story of our King to release on the earth in that moment. We are to live the story, then we are to tell it. We are to experience it, rejoice in it, and then share it. Over and over, situation and circumstance by situation and circumstance, we are to serve as His supporting actors in all the scenes of the great drama of life.

How do we learn to do this? It is all in the Script – i.e. the Torah. Each of us is to take the script of Torah, and blend it with and incorporate it into the raw materials of our lives. That includes *our family situation and relationships, the material goods with which He has blessed us, all the circumstances and obstacles we experience, all interactions and relationships that make up our life, and the ‘times’ in which we live*. We are to inject the script of Torah into and infuse it with the raw materials of our lives in such a way make our King’s great Dream of Redemption and Blessing for Mankind visible, real, and relevant to all people that He sees fit to bring within our sphere of influence. But, if we are to spend our

allotted time and energy *asah*-ing what He has told us to *asah*, *we must not waste a single second of precious time or a single ohm of precious energy* building a counterfeit. The ‘wicked’ servant’s problem is that he gets distracted by and caught up with counterfeits. What counterfeits are we talking about? The first counterfeit building project that might distract us from our mission is ‘false gods’ or ‘idols’. As Yeshua said: ***A man cannot serve two masters.***

It is totally inconsistent with our service responsibility to the Holy One, our Redeemer, to make, revere, serve, bow down to, or worship ‘false gods’. The Hebrew phrase that our English Bibles translate as *false gods* or *idols* in this passage is *elilim ufsel*. The first word in this phrase, *elilim*, is the masculine plural form of the word *elil*, meaning ‘not god’. The second word in the operative phrase, *ufsel*, is a compound word consisting of the conjunction ‘and’ [the Hebrew letter *vav*, here pronounced with the *oo* sound] a noun form of the verb *pasal*⁷, meaning *to cut, carve, mold, or hew into a shape, form, or image*. Putting these two Hebrew words together, literally, would mean to *not-gods* and *crafted images*. For most of us, the first things that comes to mind when reading the phrase *elilim ufsel* are golden-calf like things - figurines, sculptures, busts, etc. which depict some artist’s image of someone’s mythical ‘god’ - *may the names of and myths concerning all such things be blotted out of human memory, in our lifetime and forever*. Putting this kind of interpretation to the phrase *elilim ufsel* makes us feel good about ourselves, since probably no one reading this shiur has, in recent memory at least, taken carving knife, potting clay, chisel, or artist’s palette in hand and shaped a figure of a mythical ‘god’ into wood, clay, stone, or canvas. But have we congratulated ourselves too soon? Is it not true that *the Word of the Holy One is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.* Hebrews 4:12-13.

Covenant/Redemptive Plan Counter-Productive Practice #2: **Raising Up Matzevot**

The second thing our Divine Bridegroom lovingly warned us not to waste the creative energy and talents He has given us *asah*-ing is any ‘sacred pillar’. In the Hebrew what our English Bibles call a ‘sacred pillar’ is just one Hebrew word: ***matzevah***. The specific wording of the warning from the Holy One is:

umatzevah lo-takimu lachem

Do not raise up for yourselves pillars/edifices/strongholds.

⁷ *Pasal* is *peh*, *samech*, *lamed*. It is Strong’s Hebrew word #6458.

Lo takimu

With regard to a *matzevah* – or ‘pillar’, what we are warned to do is ‘raise up’ such a thing ‘for ourselves’. The Hebrew verb is *qum*, meaning *to raise up; to cause to arise; elevate to a place of visibility, prominence or importance*. Just as we are not to *asah* – *i.e.* fashion as an artisan, build, make, or apply creative energy toward the shaping and forming of – any *false god*, we are also not to *qum* – *i.e.* raise up or elevate to a place of visibility, prominence or importance – any tangible object or structure – natural or man-made - as a ‘pillar’ for ourselves. What is a ‘sacred pillar’ you ask? The first usage of the word *matzevah* in Torah is found in Genesis 28. After Ya’akov [Jacob] awoke from an amazing God-encounter dream at Luz he raised up the stone on which his head had laid, set it up as a pillar, poured oil on it, and made the following vow to the Holy One: “... *this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.*” Genesis 28:18-22. See also Genesis 31:45-52.

Have you ever called a man-made building or structure ‘God’s House’ or ‘the House of God’? Have you ever attached the Name of the Holy One to a ministry or organization established, run, and managed by men? Have you ever suggested that someone paying a ‘tithe’ or making an offering to such an entity was giving to God? Have you found yourself talking more about yourself or some other man, ministry, church, synagogue, organization, religion, or movement more than you talk about the Holy One Himself? Perhaps we should not be so presumptuous. Perhaps we should not be so easily swayed off of Kingdom focus and moved off Kingdom mission. Perhaps we should quit lying to ourselves and the world about tithes and offerings paid to support the operations of men and organizations being the equivalent of gifts to ‘God’. Perhaps we should spend our energies actually raising up the Holy One in the eyes of the world instead of promoting men, organizations, and doctrines. At least it is something to think about.

Covenant/Redemptive Plan Counter-Productive Practice #3: *Establishing an Eben Maskit on our Own Land*

The third thing our Divine Bridegroom lovingly warned us not to waste the creative energy and talents He has given us *natan-ing* [*i.e.* presenting; establishing; putting in place] any *engraved rock or stone* before which one worships. In Hebrew what is prohibited is any *eben maskit*. The specific wording of the warning from the Holy One in this regard is:

v'eben maskit lo titnu b'artzechem
and do not set in place a kneeling stone in your land

L'hish'tachavot aleiha
so that you can prostrate yourselves at it.

ki ani Adonai Eloheichem
For I am the Holy One your God

Lo titnu

Later in Torah the Holy One will tell the generation who are about to cross over the Jordan and possess the land of the Patriarchs that when they arrive in that land they are to do four things '***drive out all the inhabitants of the land ... destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places.*** Numbers 33:52. The first aspect of pagan culture B'nei Yisrael was called upon to destroy was *engraved stones*. So ... what are 'engraved stones'? An engraved stone is *a rock or stone into which is inscribed or on which is written a hieroglyphic or pictographic image or message* - especially one that honors anyone or anything other than the Holy One. The modern-day equivalents would appear to be things like engraved cornerstones or capstones for buildings, memorials and other monuments of stone with words or names carved into them, stone grave markers, and commemorative plaques on buildings. It should be noted, of course, that Torah's instruction is not against the engraving of stones by itself; what the Holy One instructs us not to do is to set in place stones with carving on them for *the purpose of worshipping/venerating anyone or anything [including God] at the location where the engraved stone has been 'set'*. I have seen thousands of such things in my life and travels – throughout America and abroad. Have you?

What is the problem, you say? Why should we not honor our fore-bearers and benefactors and commemorate important events by carving their names and stories in stone and putting them in, on, or next to places of worship? The problem is it is way, way off mission. Instead of expending our energies, resources, and creativity honoring men and commemorating events by carving them in stone what we are supposed to be doing using those same energies, resources and creativity *asah*-ing the Words and Dreams of the Holy One – *i.e.* making them come *to life* in real-time. A million carvings in stone cannot hold a candle to one living, breathing, example of the Kingdom of our Divine Bridegroom doing what we he or she is supposed to be doing right here, right now. Taking energy, resources and creativity that is supposed to be engaged fully in the Kingdom lifestyle of Torah and using them to purchase, engrave, set-up, and call people's attention to chunks of stone is not only distracting, it is flat-out counterproductive.

One More Instruction Before We Leave Parsha B'har

The ultimate test of servanthood for a son or daughter of the Covenant is revealed in the closing instruction of parsha *B'har*. That instruction read as follows:

Et-Shabtotai tish'moru

Treasure, cherish, and carefully guard My Sabbaths

umik'dashi tira'u

and hold My holy place/things in reverent fear.

Ani Adonai

For I am the Holy One.

[Leviticus 25:55 – 26:2]

Tish'moru ... u'tira'u

Think back to the first words the Holy One spoke to us on Mount Sinai – what the world has chosen to call the ‘Ten Commandments’. He said: “***I am the Holy One your God, Who led you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.***” Exodus 20:1. A few moments later He said: ***Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*** Exodus 20:8. That download formed the opening bookend of the great Sinaitic revelation stream. Leviticus 26:2 introduces sort of a ‘closing bookend’ for that revelation stream. With the message that started the stream, so it will end. The consistent message is that He is *our God*. Do we understand what that means? It means He is not a genie-in-a-bottle to grant us wishes. He is *our God*. And we are *His People*. That confers upon us a great honor and some unbelievable levels of privilege; but also introduces certain very real – and very reasonable - responsibilities. And just so we understand, He repeats for emphasis, in no uncertain terms, that He is *really serious* about that Sabbath stuff. He actually thinks it’s more important than just about anything else He has talked about on Sinai. It is His love gift to us. He knows *it does not need us* – but that we desperately need it. He wants us to learn to receive, embrace, treasure, cherish, and carefully watch over to guard His Sabbath. It is, after all, holy. It is, after all, blessed. It is, after all, our down payment on the Messianic Kingdom to come.

The Holy One wants us to know that observing His Sabbaths is one of the most essential elements of our service. It is not that He needs the Sabbaths – it is that WE need them. The Sabbaths of the Holy One’s calendar are the strategic release points for all Kingdom revelation, counsel, encouragement, and direction. Each Sabbath is designed to function like a ‘reset’ button. When that ‘button’ is ‘pushed, the Kingdom software on our hard drive is re-installed. The Kingdom’s anti-virus software begins to run. Our hearts and minds and wills get de-fragged. Wherever we have strayed from course, in attitude, in thought, in emotion, in word, in reaction, or in behavior, the Holy One refreshes our vision and readjusts our course. So of course we are to treasure, cherish, and carefully guard His Sabbaths. That is one of the most essential elements of our ‘reasonable service’ of the One Who redeemed us from bondage to this world and its ways.

Respecting and Cherishing our Bridegroom-King's Holy Things

Where is your treasure, Beloved? Of what does your treasure – and your delight – consist? Is your treasure found in the realm of the *chol* [*i.e.* common, man-focused, man-centric] – or is it found in the realm of the *kadosh* [*i.e.* holy; God-ordained, God-centric]? Are your delights found in the realm of the *tamei* [*i.e.* that which fragments the human heart and soul, and brings base human appetites and emotions, as well as conflicting loyalties, into play] – or are they found in the realm of the *tahor* [*i.e.* that which brings wholeness and shalom]? Do you even know what our Bridegroom-King's 'holy' things are? The first 'holy thing' referenced in Scripture is the 7th day Shabbat. Elohim blessed that day, and *made it kadosh*. **Genesis 2:3**. The next thing Scripture calls 'holy' is *the firstborn and firstfruits*.

The Holy One Himself is holy, of course. His *Word* is holy. The *land of Israel* is holy. His *mo'edim* are holy. The *courts, furnishings, priests, surrogates of approach of the Mish'kan* are holy. The Covenant People, who *sh'ma* His Voice, *sh'mar* His Covenant, and *asah* His life-instructions, are holy.

As part of our reasonable service, the Holy One expects us whom He has redeemed to know and respect the difference between His holy things and man-made things – especially things that look spiritual on the outside but which are not deemed holy by the Holy One Himself. It is indeed time, Dear Reader. Let's adopt our King's priorities. Let's conform to His Thoughts. Let's start walking in His Ways. This 'every man doing what is right in his own eyes' thing is not working out well at all.

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* [the Jubilee]?

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

2. Today's Haftarah reading memorializes a prayer uttered by *Yirmayahu* [Jeremiah] upon his redemption of his uncle's field at *Anatot*. Yirmayahu prayed:

*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, which you did swear to their fathers to give them,
a land flowing with milk and honey; and they came in and possessed it.
But they didn't sh'ma your voice, neither walked in your Torah;
they have done nothing of all that you instructed them to do:
therefore you have caused all this calamity to come on them.*

[A] For what did Yirmayahu ask in this prayer?

[B] Who does Yirmayahu say, in this prayer, caused "all this calamity" to come upon Jerusalem and its people?

[C] Why, according to Yirmayahu's prayer, did "all this calamity" come upon Jerusalem and its people?

3. In Jeremiah 32:27 the Holy One gives a response to Yirmayahu's prayer.

***Hineh ani Adonai Elohei kol-basar**
Behold, I am the Holy One, God of all flesh.
ha-mimeini yipale kol-davar
Is there anything too difficult for me?*

[A] What response does the Holy One give?

[B] The word our English Bibles translate as "hard" in verse 27 is *pala'*, Strong's Hebrew word #6381 (pronounced *paw-law'*). In Strong's and Gesenius, look up this word, and write it in Hebrew consonants, with appropriate vowel markings. Then [i] read Genesis 18:14 (the first instance of the use of this word in Torah), as well as Micah 7:15, and Zechariah 8:6 (the last instance of the use of this word in the TaNaKh), and [ii] describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing around this word.

4. In today's reading from the apostolic writings we read about the immediate aftermath of the miraculous *Shavuot* in the year of Yeshua's resurrection, when *Ruach HaQodesh* [Holy Spirit] was 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 those who had made pilgrimage to Y'rushalayim for *Shavuot*:

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

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. And 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.*

And 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 race,
having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

[A] From which tribe of Israel was *Yosi Bar-Nabba* descended?

[B] What did Torah have to say about persons from this tribe owning fields?

[C] What did Torah have to say about the effect of a sale of lands by persons from *Yosi Bar-Nabba's* tribe?

[D] What rights in regard to the field in question was *Yosi Bar-Nabba* rightfully able to sell?

*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.*