

FREEDOM, JUBILEE AND YOU

by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

"And you will count seven Shmitah [Sabbatical] cycles -- seven years, seven times -- forty-nine years . . . and you will sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom in the land for all of its inhabitants. [25:8-10] "

The Yovel [Jubilee] year heralded the freeing of all slaves. The standard six year term of slavery would be prematurely terminated with the advent of Yovel. Even those who had voluntarily committed themselves to continued slavery upon the conclusion of their six year term were slaves no longer once Yovel arrived.

Over the course of time, many family fields would be sold. Yovel would automatically return the land to the original owners.

We see that Yovel was certainly a proclamation of freedom for many but why is it described as a proclamation of freedom for all of its inhabitants?

Our lines get blurred when it comes to ownership. That's mine. I've earned it. I've got to earn more. Life gets so busy; we find that we never have a free moment. Time is money.

According to Rav Moshe Shternbuch, Yovel grants a person a clear perspective. I'm the master over no one and no thing. Hashem appoints me for a stint and then it passes on to someone else. I got a great deal on that field, now it goes back to its owner. This servant really had my home running smoothly, he now returns to his home. The soul had become subservient to the physical needs being over-filled -- it is now freed.

On the fiftieth year, freedom is proclaimed in the land for all of its inhabitants. Each and every individual prioritizes. There's a sense of freedom.

The famed Rav Aryeh Levin lived in the Old City of Yerushalayim in a one room home. When asked by a journalist how he could possibly be comfortable living in such a way, he responded with his view of his accommodations. "The room is higher than I am; I do not have to bend down to move about. I never run to a third room to get something that I need. Everything is at hand right here in this room. I live like a king!"

The proverbial half-filled glass. Yovel revealing that freedom and shaping our attitude to recognize and appreciate that reality. The ex-owners gain a freedom. Perhaps, a freedom even more profound than that of the ex-slaves.

Good Shabbos,

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