

בְּהָר

B'har

(in mount)

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:1-26:2

The Shemittah

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:1-7

1 And YHWH spoke to Moshe in Mount Sinai, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Shabbat to YHWH.

3 Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruits thereof;

4 but in the seventh year shall be a Shabbat of solemn rest for the land, a Shabbat to YHWH; you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.

5 That which grows of itself of your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather; it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.

6 And the Shabbat of the land shall be for food for you; for you, and for your servant and for your maid, and for your hired servant and for your stranger, who sojourns with you.

7 And for your cattle, and for the beasts that are in your land, shall all the increase thereof be for food.'"

YHWH created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. He has commanded us to rest on the seventh day as He rested on the seventh day. This commandment is an eternal ordinance.

As the seventh day holds special significance, likewise, so does the seventh year. We are to work the ground for six years and then on the seventh year we are to let the land rest in honor of YHWH.

Please note the specific prohibitions that YHWH states pertaining to the Land Shabbat.

1. We are not to sow the Land
2. We are not to prune our vineyards
3. That which grows of itself we are not to reap
4. The grapes we are not to gather

However, YHWH does tell us that which grows of itself we may eat; it is food for us, for our servants, for the stranger that lives among us, and for our cattle.

So here is the question: if we cannot gather our grapes, nor reap our crops during the shemittah, how can these things be food for us? Let us take a closer look.

<p>5 That which grows of itself of your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather: it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.</p>	<p>אֶת סְפִיחַ קְצִירְךָ לֹא תִקְצֹר וְאֶת עֲנָבֵי נְזִירְךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר שְׁנַת שְׁבִתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאַרְץ :</p>
--	---

There are two words that we are particularly interested in to help us understand just exactly what it is that YHWH is commanding us not to do. The first word is תִּקְצֹר (tiq-tzor – reap). The idea here is of harvesting in great quantity or en masse. The second word is תִּבְצֹר (tiv-tzor – gather), literally, to cut off. It is the same idea here, of gathering in great quantities or en masse. The idea of harvesting is of gathering en masse and then preserving what has been harvested for a later time, or selling it for a profit. This is important to understand, as there is also a prohibition against buying and selling on the weekly Shabbat. Likewise, there seems to be a similar prohibition against gathering (harvesting) for the purpose of profit. It is a land Shabbat.

However, YHWH specifically states that what grows of itself is food for us. Please consider this passage.

Matithyah [Matthew] 12:1-2

1 At that season Yeshua went on the Shabbat day through the grain fields; and His disciples were hungry and began to pluck ears and to eat.

2 But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said to him, “Behold, Your disciples do that which it is not lawful to do on the Shabbat.”

And just what were Yeshua’s disciples doing that was not lawful, at least according to the Pharisees? They were plucking ears of grain. In their eyes this was akin to harvesting. However, there is a vast difference between harvesting grain and just picking enough to satisfy one’s hunger. Clearly one would be breaking the Shabbat and the other would not be breaking the Shabbat.

Basically, it is that difference that applies to the year of the shemittah. YHWH commands us that we are not to harvest en masse for preservation and future use, or to sell, but we can pick enough for a meal, enough for that day. Please note the words "it shall be food for you." This seems to imply that we are to pick only what we need.

These are the Torah commandments concerning living in the Land and allowing the Land to rest every seventh year. We are to sow and harvest the Land for only six years and then the Land is to rest for the seventh year. Now please consider this passage.

Matithyah [Matthew] 9:37-38

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

38 You pray therefore the Master of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest."

Since about 1996, the Hebrew Roots movement has exploded. YHWH has caused the internet to be a major tool in the development and growth of this movement, for it makes easy access to a lot of information quickly. A major difficulty is determining what is truly according to His Word, and what is twisted and putting forth a personal agenda.

The harvest to build His kingdom is indeed plenteous. However, there really are very few workers. Why?

Matithyah [Matthew] 16:24-26

24 Then Yeshua said to His disciples, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

25 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.

26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

It seems that there are truly very few who are willing to give up their lives and live for Him!

Behold, He has given us new life when we repent of our sins! But the question before us is this: "What are we doing with that new life that He has given us?" Are we using it to build His Kingdom and do His will? Or, are we only just sitting back and enjoying His grace and not really doing anything tangible with the life He has given us?

It is a question that we must all answer; in fact, we do answer with our daily actions. The wise will seek to answer it now and make the appropriate adjustments where necessary, in order to be in line with Yeshua's words. The unwise will not answer the question now, but just ignore it; and then they will have to answer this question on Judgment Day. But then it will be too late to do anything about it.

Which group are you placing yourself in? Your current actions define the answer to this question.

The Jubilee

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:8-12

8 “And you shall number seven Shabbats of years to you, seven times seven years; and there shall be to you the days of seven Shabbats of years, even forty-nine years.

9 Then shall you send abroad the loud ram’s horn on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the Day of Atonement shall you send abroad the ram’s horn throughout all your land.

10 And when you have sanctified the year, the fiftieth year, and proclaimed liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee to you; and you shall return every man to his possession, and you shall return every man to his family.

11 A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you; you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather (the grapes) in it of the undressed vines.

12 For it is a jubilee; it shall be set-apart to you; you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.”

The Jubilee year is determined by counting seven Shemittah (land Sabbath) years; and then the very next Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the shofar (ram’s horn) is sounded, and it is the end of a fifty year count and the beginning of the Jubilee year. This count is very similar to the count of the Omer.

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 23:15-16

15 “And you shall count to yourself from the morrow after the Shabbat, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Shabbatot shall there be complete;

16 even to the morrow after the seventh Shabbat shall ye number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meal-offering to YHWH.”

Please note three separate similarities between the Omer count and the Jubilee count.

1. There is the count of seven Sabbaths
 - a. Seven weekly Sabbaths for the Omer count
 - b. Seven yearly Sabbaths (Shemittah) for the Jubilee count
2. There is the count of 50
 - a. The count of 50 days for the Omer count
 - b. The count of 50 years for the Jubilee count
3. At the end of each count there are two Sabbaths back to back
 - a. At the end of the Omer count there is the weekly Shabbat followed by Shavuot
 - b. At the end of the Jubilee count there is a Shemittah year (49th year) followed by the Jubilee year (50th year), both of which are Sabbath years

We will see this further confirmed in just a few more verses when we get to verse 22.

There are those who teach that there are only 49 years in a Jubilee count. However, that does not really fit the pattern that YHWH has laid out in the festival cycle. YHWH not only has us counting a 50 day count, but He also has us doing a 50 year count.

Part of the difficulty seems to be in rectifying two Shemittah years back to back. Let us deal with this next paragraph, and then we will come back to this and show that YHWH has promised to make provisions for this very thing.

Honesty in Dealing with One's Neighbor

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:13-17

13 "In this year of jubilee you shall return every man to his possession.

14 And if you sell anything to your neighbor, or buy of your neighbor's hand, you shall not wrong one another.

15 According to the number of years after the jubilee you shall buy of your neighbor, (and) according to the number of years of the crops he shall sell to you.

16 According to the multitude of the years you shall increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of the years you shall diminish the price of it; for the number of the crops does he sell to you.

17 And you shall not wrong one another; but you shall fear your Elohim; for I am YHWH your Elohim."

Please note that YHWH gives the commandments for how one sells and buys. Please note that it is actually the crops that are bought and sold rather than His Land being bought and sold.

So, for however many year's worth of crops that one sells to another, he cannot wrong his neighbor (neither the buyer nor seller), but each one must deal honestly with each other in this matter. And the reason for dealing honestly with one's neighbor, is that YHWH is our Elohim!

The Condition for Dwelling in Safety

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:18-22

18 "Wherefore you shall do My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances and do them; and you shall dwell in the land in safety.

19 And the land shall yield its fruit, and you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.

20 And if you shall say, 'What shall we eat the seventh year? Behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase?'

21 Then I will command My blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for the three years.

22 And you shall sow the eighth year, and eat of the fruits, the old store; until the ninth year, until its fruits come in, you shall eat the old store."

This paragraph begins by YHWH telling us, that if we want to dwell securely in His Land, then we have to do it by obeying His statutes and ordinances. It logically follows, that if we do not obey His statutes and ordinances, then we cannot, and should not, expect to dwell safely in His Land, because in other places He tells us that He will kick us out of His Land for not obeying Him.

Please study the following table. Each column represents a year of a regular 7 year cycle.

1-5	6	7	1	2	3
<u>Grow</u> Regular harvest each of these years	<u>Grow</u> 3 years worth of produce	<u>Rest</u> 1 st year of produce eaten	<u>Grow</u> 2 nd year of produce eaten	<u>Grow</u> Begin eating harvest from year one	<u>Grow</u>

So here is the question that these verses present us with: “Why do we need three years’ worth of produce from the sixth year, when two years would be sufficient?”

The only answer that seems to make any sense at all, is that when there are two Land Sabbaths in a row, it would of necessity require there to be three years of produce on that particular sixth year.

That chart would look something like this:

1-5	6 (48)	7 (49)	50	1	2
<u>Grow</u> Regular harvest each of these years	<u>Grow</u> 3 years worth of produce	<u>Rest</u> 1 st year of produce eaten	<u>Rest</u> 2 nd year of produce eaten	<u>Grow</u> 3 rd year of produce eaten	<u>Grow</u> Begin eating harvest from year one

This would be the seventh seven year cycle.

Basically, YHWH states that He will provide enough for the seventh Land Sabbath followed by the Jubilee year. So if He will supply enough for two Land Sabbaths in a row, then surely this very strongly tells us that on the regular Land Sabbaths He will supply enough for that year of not growing any food.

According to the pattern that YHWH sets forth in the Omer count, at the end of a 50 count (seven Sabbaths), there is to be added an extra Shabbat. In the Omer count YHWH places Shavuot (a Shabbat)

next to a weekly Shabbat. In the Jubilee count He places the Jubilee (a Land Sabbath) next to a Shemittah (yearly Land Sabbath).

Is it not His Land to do with as He sees fit?

The Land Belongs to YHWH

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:23-28

23 “And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me.

24 And in all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land.

25 If your brother be waxed poor, and sell some of his possession, then shall his kinsman that is next to him come, and shall redeem that which his brother has sold.

26 And if a man have no one to redeem it, and he be waxed rich and find sufficient to redeem it;

27 then let him reckon the years of the sale thereof, and restore the balance to the man to whom he sold it; and he shall return to his possession.

28 But if he be not able to get it back for himself, then that which he has sold shall remain in the hand of him that has bought it until the year of jubilee; and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return to his possession.”

Please note that to properly understand this whole chapter, one must understand verse 23, for it is the foundation of all the other commandments in this chapter.

YHWH is the Creator! As the Creator, He is the owner of everything, including the Land in the Middle East known as Israel. It is known as Israel because that is who YHWH has assigned this Land to in perpetuity, because He promised it to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’aqov and to their children forever.

But there is a condition set by YHWH for those who would live in this Land – one must obey all of His commandments.

Houses in Walled Cities

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:29-34

29 “And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a 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.

30 And if it be not 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 that bought it, throughout his generations; it shall not go out in the jubilee.

31 But the houses of the villages which have no wall round about them shall be reckoned with the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubilee.

32 Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time.

33 And 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 Israel.

34 But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it is their perpetual possession.”

YHWH treats houses in walled cities differently than farm land, as the right of redemption applies to a house in a walled city for one full year only. After that a previous owner may not redeem the house. Furthermore, it does not go back to the original owner in the year of Jubilee.

Also, the houses of Levites in the cities of the Levites are treated differently than other property, as they can be redeemed at any time. However, the land (crops or use of the land) around the Levite’s cities are not even to be sold at all.

Don’t Kick Your Brother When He is Down

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:35-38

35 “And if your brother be waxed poor, and his hand fail with you; then you shall uphold him; as a stranger and a sojourner shall he live with you.

36 Take you no interest from him or increase, but fear your Elohim; that your brother may live with you.

37 You shall not give him your money upon interest, nor give him your food for increase.

38 I am YHWH your Elohim, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your Elohim.”

When we have a fellow Israelite that is down, then YHWH commands us to be very careful how we are treating that neighbor. Basically, YHWH is watching! We all need to remember that at all times and act accordingly!

Mark 12:31

“The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The Torah of Slavery

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:39-46

39 *“And if your brother be waxed poor with you, and sell himself to you; you shall not make him to serve as a bond-servant.*

40 *As a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with you; he shall serve with you to the year of jubilee;*

41 *then shall he go out from you, he and his children with him, and shall return to his own family, and to the possession of his forefathers shall he return.*

42 *For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen.*

43 *You shall not rule over him with rigor, but shall fear your Elohim.*

44 *And as for your bondmen, and your bondmaids, whom you shall have; of the nations that are round about you, of them shall you buy bondmen and bondmaids.*

45 *Moreover of the children of the strangers that sojourn among you, of them shall you buy, and of their families that are with you, which they have begotten in your land; and they shall be your possession.*

46 *And you shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall you take your bondmen for ever; but over your brethren the children of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with rigor.”*

Obviously, it is best not to have slaves or to be a slave to anyone except to YHWH. However, YHWH understanding that man is what he is, sets forth who we can have as a slave and who we cannot have as a slave.

On a side note, there is a false teaching circulating these days that goes by several names including Hebrew Israelism, or Black Israel or some other such name. Basically, this teaching is based upon the premise that back people are the only true Israelites because they are the only people to be enslaved down through the ages. Therefore, they believe, that since their ancestors were enslaved, that makes them Israelites. Two things should be said here to show the fallacy of this teaching. First, in this Torah portion we see that it was not only the Hebrews being enslaved, but it was also the Hebrews who were the masters of the slaves. Second, we know from the Torah that what makes one an Israelite is their obeying His Torah commandments, not the color of one’s skin. Israel as always been a mixed multitude! Anything that teaches something other than this is simply another form of replacement theology and should be avoided.

Basically, when a person is going through a trial and/or a testing from YHWH; i.e., a purifying period, then we need to treat that person with care, love and dignity. Because the truth is, that we just may be next in line for YHWH to test us with the same kind of test. For further information on testing, see *Testing of the Set-apart Ones*.

Please consider these words of Yeshua as He taught on the Torah.

Matithyah [Matthew] 7:12

“Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets.”

This one sentence is a good summation of what YHWH is commanding us to do in this Parasha. We are to treat others, which includes both our fellow neighbor Israelites and those who are strangers, with fairness, kindness and compassion. This is particularly true if this is how we desire to be treated. And who doesn't want to be treated fairly and with kindness and with compassion? I don't know of anyone, do you?

So this is how we are to treat our neighbor!

Now please consider some additional words of Yeshua.

Matithyah [Matthew] 20:26-28

26 “Not so shall it be among you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister;

27 and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant;

28 even as the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

And also these words of Yeshua.

Matithyah [Matthew] 23:11-12

11 “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.”

Basically, Yeshua asks us to replicate His life in us. He wants us to lay down our lives for those around us so that they too can have eternal life.

Are you willing to give up your dreams and aspirations and do only His will in your life? This is exactly what Yeshua is asking us to do, to lay down our lives in service to others.

A Kinsman Redeemer

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 25:47-55

47 “And if a stranger or sojourner with you be waxed rich, and your brother be waxed poor beside him, and sell himself to the stranger (or) sojourner with you, or to the stock of the stranger's family;

48 after that he is sold he may be redeemed; one of his brethren may redeem him;

49 or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is a blood relative to him of his family may redeem him; or if he be waxed rich, he may redeem himself.

50 And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he sold himself to him to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years; according to the time of a hired servant shall he be with him.

51 If there be yet many years, according to them he shall give back the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.

52 And if there remain but few years to the year of jubilee, then he shall reckon with him; according to his years shall he give back the price of his redemption.

53 As a servant hired year by year shall he be with him; he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight.

54 And if he be not redeemed by these, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, he, and his children with him.

55 For to me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; I am YHWH your Elohim.”

The concept of a kinsman redeemer is very important for us to understand. First, let us consider the above model as it is foreshadowed in the book of Ruth.

Ruth 4:5, 13

5 Then said Boaz, “The day you buy the field of the hand of Naomi, you must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.”

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and YHWH gave her conception, and she bore a son.

Please note, that in order to properly be redeemed, the right of redemption is also tied very closely with marriage. In order for Boaz to properly redeem this piece of land as a kinsman redeemer, he also had to marry Ruth and raise up for his dead relative a son who could carry on the possession of this land.

Now let us look afresh and anew at what Yeshua has done for us today.

Titus 2:14

who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.

Yeshua is our kinsman redeemer!

Yeshua did what no other kinsman was able to do, to redeem us in such a way that He could also provide the means to cleanse and purify us so that we could be a fit bride for Himself.

Please note that upon redemption those redeemed will be zealous for good works.

Where Are You?

Ruth 3:4

“And it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall mark the place where he shall lie, and you shall go in, and uncover his feet, and you lay down; and he will tell you what you shall do.”

When we read the story of Ruth, one thing that stands out, is that Ruth is a picture of the Bride of Yeshua. Ruth, the woman who needed to be redeemed, went and lay down at the feet of her redeemer. Then she simply waited for instructions. Then upon hearing his instructions to her she followed those instructions to the very letter.

So, I wonder if we today truly understand that Yeshua is our kinsman redeemer and that what He desires of us is that we come to Him and lie down at His feet? Once we have done that, laid our life down at His feet, do we wait for His instructions? Or, do we run off and do our own thing? And if we run off without hearing His Voice (instructions), how can we expect Him to be able to redeem us?

Have you laid your life down at the feet of Yeshua? Are you waiting for His instructions?

Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And he that hears, let him say, “Come.” And he that is thirsty, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.

ABBA YHWH, we have chosen to lay our lives at Your feet. Please instruct us in Your ways that we might be Your people and live only for You, to build Your Son’s Kingdom with every breath we take and with all the strength that You are pleased to bless us with; in the Name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein!

Shabbat Shalom

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

zerubbabel@townsq.com

www.onetorahforall.org