

PARSHAT BEHAR
LEVITICUS 25:1-26:2
18 IYYAR 5782/19 MAY 2022
33RD DAY OF THE COUNTING OF THE OMER



The Jubilee Year
Painting by Yoram Raanan

FREEDOM AND RETURN

1. Adonai spoke to Moses **on the mountain**...You shall count off seven weeks of years...Then you shall sound the shofar loud....You shall sanctify the fiftieth year. You shall call out **dror** in the land for all who dwell there. It shall be a **yovel** for you, and each of you **shall return** to your holding and each of you shall return to your family. (Leviticus 25:1-10)
2. The painting captures this idyllic time when liberty and freedom will be declared in the land. Blue strokes of paint meet with rich green and yellow hues of the verdant soil, representing *heaven and earth meeting* in a life that will be ideal. The Ramban says that "yovel" means to transport, and that the Jubilee year will transport everyone and everything *back to its source in peace, justice and tranquility*. (Yoram Raanan)
3. How welcome on the mountain,
Are the footsteps of the herald
Announcing happiness,
Heralding good fortune,
Announcing victory,
Telling Zion, "Your God is king!"
(Isaiah 52:7)

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

(*Go Tell It On The Mountain*, African American spiritual)

We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live – a long life; longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Mountain Top” Speech, Memphis, April 3, 1968)

“Mountains are where heaven meets earth.” (Zilpah in The Red Tent by Anita Diamant)

4. דָּרַר - flow abundantly
דָּרוֹר - a flowing
דָּרוֹם - south

5. יָבַל - conduct, bear along, carry away
יָבֵל - watercourse, stream
יָבוּל - produce of soil
יֹבֵל - ram's horn
תְּבִילָה - world

Ibn Ezra - *yovel* means “sending away,” as in sending away of slaves

Nachmanides - *yovel* means “freedom,” as in freeing of the slaves

Ramban – *yovel* means “movement”

Rabenu Bechaya - *yovel* means “rivulet,” as in during Yovel everything flows back to its original source.

6. We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
(T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," Four Quartets)

7. I came upon a child of God
He was walking along the road
And I asked him where are you going
And this he told me
I'm going on down to Yasgur's farm
I'm going to join in a rock 'n' roll band
I'm going to camp out on the land
I'm going to try an' get my soul free

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden.
(Joni Mitchell, "Woodstock")