

To Proclaim Liberty

"¹⁸The Ruach Adonai is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, ¹⁹and to proclaim the year of Adonai's favor... ²¹Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18-19, 21).

When *Yeshua* proclaimed *release (freedom or liberty) to the captives* the reaction was: *"²²All were speaking well of Him and marveling at the gracious words coming out of His mouth. And they were saying, 'Isn't this the son of Joseph?'" (Luke 4:22) How very nice and wonderful (like in the Torah song) but does it move us to change anything even when He is proclaiming the year of jubilee is at hand (today, in vv. 21)? We are all prone to repeat the same mistake the people of His hometown Nazareth by minimizing the magnitude (in passively reacting) of *Yeshua's* gift to us: *"¹⁶And He came to Natzeret, where He had been raised. As was His custom, He went into the synagogue on Shabbat, and He got up to read (make an Aliyah to the Scroll). ¹⁷When the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him, He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written..."* On this *Shabbat*, as is also our custom, when our freedom is proclaimed, are we also going to say: *Yeshua gave us freedom, isn't that nice...**

Joel Chernoff's song says: *" when the Lord sets the captives free, it is the year of jubilee (the Yovel ." The liberty in the *Yovel* year is *absolute liberty* unhindered from any obligations or restraints. On the *Yovel* even servants were not allowed to remain on with their master no matter how well they were treated. Why? He gives us the answer: *"⁵⁵For Bnei-Yisrael are My servants—My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am Adonai your God."* (Lev. 25:55). So, in the *Yovel* year, *Adonai* is painting the picture of the kind of freedom we have in Him. He is giving us a reminder of the importance of remembering *who we are* – none other than His very own children. We are not slaves to anyone or anything else, we are His personal servants. In the *Yovel* year the *voluntary servant*, who shuns freedom and responsibility, who acquires a master, is compelled to go free and serve the One whom it is legitimate to serve. He is relieved of the human bondage, that he might submit to the yoke of heaven alone unhindered to serve *Adonai!**

There are several Hebrew words translated *freedom*. *Scripture* says that when the *shofar* is blown announcing the *Yovel* Year, we are to: *"... proclaim liberty (דָּרוֹר, d'ror) throughout the land to all its inhabitants..." (Lev. 25:10). D'ror* is the word chosen to talk about the freedom discussed in the *Yovel* Year. *D'ror* is a very rare word. It is only used one other time in all of *Torah*. But the other usage, found in *Exodus* 30:23, can shed significant light on why the Holy One chose this word to speak of the freedom in the *Yovel* Year. In the passage *Adonai* instructed Moses to make the anointing oil to anoint the High Priest. Among the elements in this oil was free-flowing *d'ror myrrh*, (מֵרְדִּיחַן, merdichan). In another place in the *Tanakh*, *d'ror* carries the connotation of free-flowing, unhindered, or free-running. An Erev *Shabbat* song which is common in observant Jewish homes on Friday evenings is *D'ror Yikra* (a *piyyut* or Jewish religious song or hymn of the kind known as *zemer* which means *Proclaim Liberty*), a traditional song for *Shabbat* meals.

The word *d'ror* can be contrasted with its synonym *hofesh* (חֹפֶשׁ). *Hofesh* is used in *Exodus* 21:1 in reference to the *Shemittah* year where slaves also went free. But there is a difference between the *Shemittah* year freedom and the *Yovel* year freedom. This difference is indicated not only by the different Hebrew words used in each case (*Exodus* 21 and *Leviticus* 25) but also by what actually happened to the released slaves. During the *Shemittah* year, the *hofesh* was only a qualified release since the slave, if he wanted, was permitted to stay on longer. It is interesting that in Modern Hebrew we often speak of a limited vacation from work or school as a *hofesh*. We know that after the *hofesh* we will be back at it again. But the emancipation in the *Yovel* year was absolute. All slaves were to be set free so *d'ror* is used.

Since the *Yovel* year is not a *hofesh*, but a *d'ror*, we are in a state where we are running free without hindrances to be who we were made to be in *Messiah*. We are redeemed servants of the Redeemer Himself!
Shabbat Shalom!