

What Our Community Really Says

Behar On the Mount (The Year of Jubilee)

Torah: Lev. 25:1-26:2

GO WITH THE FLOW (JUBAL - FLOWING)

(1) 25:4: "But the seventh year shall be a Sabbath, a time of rest for the earth - a Sabbath in honour of YHVH: you shall not sow in your fields and you shall not trim your vines." (Deut. 31:10. . . every seventh year, at the time of the Sabbatical year, at the Feast of Tabernacles . . . you shall read this Law before all Israel . . so they will learn to fear and to observe all the words of this Law.")

(2) 25:6,7 that which the earth produces during the Sabbath shall serve as food for you, your servant, your maid servant, your hired man, the stranger who dwells with you, your cattle and to the animals who are in the country. All of its produce shall serve as food."

(3) 25:10 "and you shall sanctify the fiftieth year and publish liberty in the land for all its inhabitants; it shall be for you the jubilee, each of you shall return to his property, each of you shall return to his family."

(4) 25:21: "I will grant you my blessing the sixth year, and it shall produce enough for six years."

Two special years for the community: The Shemitah (7th year) and the Jubilee (50th year). Our strength as a community flows from two sources: His Word, which we were to study during Sukkot, and then go home and discuss (memorize, explain) till the next Sukkot; and Our freedom, as individuals and as a community. We belong to Him, as does the land, our wealth and our poverty. Once a generation, after seven sessions in His Word, we were ready to leave our temporary status and return to our permanent status - a generational flowing, from Adam through Moshe, David, Elijah, to Mashiach through the nations, to His everlasting Kingdom.

If we ever lose our grasp on His Word, or on our spiritual identity (freedom and ownership), we would slow the flow to a trickle and need His intervention to blast us loose from our false security (naked and wrinkled we came, and naked and wrinkled we go).

Are you going with the flow, with G-d's Jubal, G-d's blast. Are you His property? Is everything you own His? Are you letting His cycles rule your life? (daily, weekly, seven times yearly, every seventh year, and at the end of your life?). Or do you have your own agenda?

The Haftarah portion talks about how G-d intervened to give the land its shemitah rest, all seventy of them. Why did He not require the ten jubilee years also? There is a final Day of Freedom coming.

Haftarah: Jer. 32:6-27

(5) 17: "Ah Adonai YHVH, behold you made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm (Is. 53:1 – Mashiach) nothing is too hard for you." His is the Creator

(6) 19: you are great in counsel and mighty in deed (Is. 9:6) you have your eyes on all the children of men, to render to each according to the fruit of their ways." He is the Judge

Jubilee is still happening - His flowing is ongoing and will bring all generations of Israel and all generations of mankind, to judgment and Freedom, when the flow is finished. How is it flowing in your life?

Brit Chadashah: Luke 4:16-21 (L & F); 2 Cor. 6:14-18 (L)

(7) 21: "Then He began to say to them: today this word of the Scripture, which you have just heard, is fulfilled."

The passage He read from, comes from Isaiah 61: 1,2 which proceeds the Haftarah passage for Nitsavim (Deut. 29), which ends the regular Torah cycle, just before the High Holy Days - when both the Shemitah and the Jubal were to begin. He read the Word (Shemitah) and spoke of the freedom He came to bring (Jubal).

We are a generational community, set free to study His word and to let His truth flow through our generations, unto all nations, until He returns.

At B'nai Chayim, how is our flowing? How is our studying? He will send enough blessing to provide for us, whenever we take time out from our lives to study and to return to the flow, to our true, permanent identity and destiny.

Two sources of blessing: the Word (His truth) and the Flow (His activity in people's lives to bring them to His truth - which I shall speak more about next week).

Now you are ready for my sermon (after we do the Torah blessings).

Sermon: What Our Community Really Says:

Gal. 5:13-15: "Brethren, you have been called to liberty (Jubal); only do make this liberty a pretext to live according to the flesh, but in love, make yourself servants of one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one saying, which is: you shall love your neighbour as yourself, but if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed one by another."

Three concepts go with the flow, social dysfunction, redemptive teamwork,

Go With The Flow

It is our mandate in every generation to seek the L-rd and to proclaim the L-rd, to the best of our ability, so that our culture (language, people, nation, family) has access to G-d's Jubal (flowing: John 7:38 he who believes in Me, rivers of living water shall flow from his being), G-d's fountain (Matt 5:13, 16, His salt and light) in us.

We are not called to be perfect (free of all flaws), only flowing (Acts 1:8; I John 1:9).

There are two aspects to flowing: one theological, and one spiritual. Theologically, we are to access His truth, His story and organize our lives according to the teachings of His Word (Matt. 28:19, 20). It is not a do it yourself, free for all, where we each do what we feel is right. It is a pilgrimage, where each of us and all of us, organize our lives around Him (like the camp of Israel) and then proceed to conquer, to establish, to integrate His Word and His promises into the circumstances of our particular lives - as individuals and as a community. Like the cycles of the L-rd - daily, weekly, yearly and so forth).

Theologically, we have the blueprint, and it will never vary or be altered. We need to hook up to G-d's eternal purposes, that began with Adam and that will end when our Messiah returns. There are only two ways of doing this, which brings me to the second aspect of flowing, spirituality. First we need the plan (the theology), then we need to apply it in our lives (the spirituality).

By faith (theology) and by obedience (spirituality), we are part of the flow, as His truth and our version of it, are passed on to the next generation, so that they can hold fast to the Word (like shemitah, the seventh year), and develop their own obedience in the altered situation of their lives (like Jubal - giving everything over to Him, from who we are, what we do to what we have). How goes the flow with you? With B'nai Chayim?

Social Dysfunction

Sometimes we are going to blow it and bite and devour. Sometimes we are going to bring out the worst in each other and sometimes what we bring with us into the faith (cultural and personal baggage) will try and plug the flow. As a community and as individuals, we need to look at His Word, and design strategies together that will not indulge the flesh, but that will fulfill the commandments, so that we do not bite and devour, but learn to flow in love and service.

Our world needs to see us loving and serving, not biting and devouring - social dysfunction is behaviour which tears a society, a family, a community apart, instead of healing it and allowing it to grow and flourish.

We live in a culture that is changing and which is unraveling. Broken homes, substance abuse, depression, cheating, right next some pretty amazing advances in technology and in the arts.

It is our job to fix the brokenness we come into the community with, and allow our expression of obedience to speak to both the brokenness and to the priorities, to the flow of popular culture. People need to see our healing and our victory (I Cor. 10:13, Heb. 12:13) and people need to see our discovery and application of divine truth - right alongside the spirituality (popular culture) which each new generation re-invents.

We need to be a functional community which loves and serves. Sure, we will have our fights and our challenges, but we will work them through, so that brokenness is healed, and not made worse. So that brokenness and the flesh do not infiltrate us as people and as a community. So that our healing and our spirituality infiltrates and speaks to the wonder of our theology, so that people will want to join the flow of G-d, as it washes through us, generation by generation until the return of Messiah.

Last point: Redemptive teamwork

We are not a bunch of losers, making excuses for our laziness and blaming our failures on the disasters that keep knocking us down. We are a redemptive team, which pulls together for healing and for empowering, so that we can each contribute our best resources, so the flow of G-d can make us all we need to be, in this our episode of G-d's plan for the ages.

We must discover faith and develop obedience. We must have the Word (shemitah, organize our time to study and to know our theology) and we must have the flow (how it applies, heals, touches our lives, as individuals and as a community).

This is not an easy task. It is the only task. He set us free to learn to be free, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, and in the choices and consequences we wander through on our genetic, generational pilgrimage home.

We need each other, and we will all take turns being in need. We need to challenge each other, encourage each other, correct each other, and all the while maintaining the bond of love in the unity of the Spirit. A big task. And sometimes we will fail.

So we should just give up and cry in our little corner, after we have buried our treasure, and while we wait for our lives to end (eating, earning money, pursuing a career, outside the flow), so G-d can rescue us from the impossible pain and confusion we are stuck in. Nonsense. we are called to face the pain and the confusion, and to rebuild as many times as we need, at every stage of our lives, using our treasure for the kingdom - even if we suffer loss and defeat along the way.

The team started with Adam, and has suffered many defeats, and won many victories, but the game (the flow) goes on and we have to find our place, play our position, and pass on the game to the next group of players, for this is the whole duty of man.

B'nai Chayim is a team with a lot of baggage, but it is about the flow, which is capable of dealing with the baggage, if we let it flow through us. Major decisions, choices and consequences, need to be brought to the flow (which is powered by the Word), so that we heal, grow and pass on the process to the next generation.

This is what our community should really say. We believe (biblical theology - G-d's plan for the ages) and we obey (spirituality, where we apply His truth to every are of our lives), and we pass along this double process, so that it never stops in us. It will never stop in the world, and Rav Sh'aul warns us about letting it stop in us. Next week, the process, the flow in the world. Lets pray.