

Parashat Re'eh

פרשה ראה

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of God

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Debt Release

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17

הפטרה: Isaiah 54:11-55:5

הברית: John 7:37-52, 1 John 4:1-6

החדשה

The Scriptures say in this week's reading that the children of Yisrael were to grant a release from debts every seven years in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:1* 'At the end of every seven years you shall grant a remission of debts. 15:2 This is the manner of remission: every creditor shall release what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because the Lord's remission has been proclaimed. (NASB) According to a plain reading of the Scriptures, money was supposed to be loaned with the understanding that every seven years, debts would be canceled. This provided a means for preventing long term debt, that money could never be borrowed or owed for more than six years. Debt was a very important matter to God because it is written in 15:2 that "The Lord's remission has been proclaimed." The importance was that though some people may go through a period of hard times, they would have the opportunity to rebuild their lives financially on a periodic basis and not remain as slaves all of their lives. As Yisrael obeyed this command there would never be a permanent underclass of people. This economic system was meant to prevent the formation of a class of people who were chronically poor (15:4). It is interesting to note though, that in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:11*, God says 'For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.' Where previously God said in 15:4 'However, there will be no poor among you, since the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess. Do you think that God is contradicting himself in this statement? I don't believe so. God established a system where no one needed to be chronically poor but because of disobedience and poor management of finances some would exist and so there would always be the poor in Yisrael. In this portion of scriptures we are told that God does not guarantee prosperity for everyone. He only guaranteed the opportunity for prosperity and to try to keep out of debt.

The taking care of the poor is an act of righteousness (*tzedakah*) the Hebrew word for "justice" or "righteous behavior." This behavior is outlined in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-8* and *Vayikra / Leviticus 9:9-10*. We are supposed to treat those who are poor and without food with dignity and to ensure that their basic needs are met.

דברים 15:7-15

7 כִּי־יְהִי־בְךָ אֶבְיוֹן מֵאֶחָד אֶחָיֶךָ בְּאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ ׀
 בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ לֹא תִאֲמָץ אֶת־
 8 לְבָבְךָ וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת־יָדְךָ מֵאֶחָיֶךָ הָאֶבְיוֹן׃ כִּי־פָתַח
 תִּפְתַּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לוֹ וְהֵעֵבֵט תִּעֲבִיטֵנּוּ דֵי מַחְסְרוֹ אֲשֶׁר
 9 יִחְסַר לוֹ׃ הִשְׁמַר לְךָ פְּנֵי־יְהוָה דְּבַר עַם־לְבָבְךָ כְּלִיעַל
 לֵאמֹר קָרְבָה שְׁנַת־הַשְּׁבַע שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָה וְרָעָה עֵינֶיךָ
 בְּאֶחָיֶךָ הָאֶבְיוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְהָיָה
 10 בְךָ חֲטָא׃ נָתַן תִּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא־יָרַע לְבָבְךָ בְּתַתֵּךָ לוֹ כִּי
 בְּגִלְגַּל הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ
 11 וּבְכָל מַשְׁלַח יָדְךָ׃ כִּי לֹא־יִחְדַּל אֶבְיוֹן מִקֶּרֶב הָאָרֶץ
 עַל־פִּי אֲנֹכִי מֵצֹדֶךָ לֵאמֹר פָּתַח תִּפְתַּח אֶת־יָדְךָ לְאֶחָיֶךָ
 12 לְעֲנִיךָ וְלֹא־יִנְיָה בְּאֶרֶץ־ךָ׃ כִּי־יִזְכָּר
 לְךָ אֶחָיֶךָ הָעֵבְרִי אוֹ הָעֵבְרִיָּה וְעַבְדְּךָ שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים וּבַשְּׁנָה
 13 הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּשְׁלַחֵנּוּ חֲפָשִׁי מֵעִמָּךְ׃ וְכִי־תִשְׁלַחֵנּוּ חֲפָשִׁי
 14 מֵעִמָּךְ לֹא תִשְׁלַחֵנּוּ רִיקִים׃ הֵעֲנִיק תִּעֲנִיק לוֹ מִצֵּאֲנֶדֶךָ
 וּמִנְרִנֶה וּמִיִּקְבֹּב אֲשֶׁר בִּרְכֹב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִתֵּן־לוֹ׃
 15 וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּפְדֶּךָ יְהוָה
 16 אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־פִּי אֲנֹכִי מֵצֹדֶךָ אֶת־הַדְּבַר הַזֶּה הַיּוֹם׃ וְהָיָה

Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-8

15:7 'If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; 15:8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. (NASB)

Vayikra / Leviticus 19:9-10

19:9 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 19:10 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God. (NASB)

According to the Scriptures, a man could only sell himself or herself for 7 years. Because Yisrael had been slaves in Egypt and the Lord had redeemed them, the slave owner is to release the person who has enslaved themselves at the end of the 7th year and to liberally supply the person upon leaving (15:12-15). This shows the heart of the Almighty God toward the disadvantaged. Similarly,

Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-15

15:7 'If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; 15:8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. 15:9 'Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the Lord against you, and it will be a sin in you. 15:10 'You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. 15:11 'For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.' 15:12 'If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free. 15:13 'When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. 15:14 'You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. 15:15 'You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. (NASB)

the tithe was carefully discharged to the poor in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 26:12*.
The reason is that sustaining the disadvantaged person within Yisrael is an
essential part of the overall maintenance of the community.

In the Scriptures we read of people who live by faith and trust in God.
The distinguishing factor of these scriptures for this week is that God has devised
a mitzvah (command) that makes a distinction between those whose hearts is
governed by faith and those who are not. As we see in the Korban sacrificial
system, the one who had genuine faith, though he or she had disobeyed, would
seek repentance and would follow the provision of the Torah in seeking
forgiveness from God as well as from one's fellow man. If you noticed
something here in this week's reading, forgiveness was a large part of the
Shemittah year, the year of remission, the year at the end of which debts owed to
individuals are "forgiven" known in Hebrew as "shemittat kesafim". Today we
believe that by faith in the shed blood of Yeshua we are saved and forgiven of sin
but do we forget to take care of the needy? Have you taken the time to visit the
sick and lonely of heart recently? Have you given to the less fortunate (the poor)
lately? Do we really love our neighbors? If we honestly ask these questions of
ourselves, this is one way to seek out the intentions of our heart as children of the
Most High God. In the Torah, curses did not come upon the one who sins and
repents, but upon the one who sins and refuses to repent. This is the definition of
"the rebellious one" who shows himself not to be a true covenant member. Thus,
the Torah acts as a measuring rod that shows what is written upon a person's
heart. Yeshua said "*By their fruits you will know them*" in *Matthew 7:20* to
illustrate that (i) obedience to God is the natural fruit of a circumcised heart and
(ii) rebellion is a natural fruit of a hardened heart.

It is in this way that Yeshua has redeemed us from the curse of the Torah;
we have been released from our debt before God. Our being born from above by
faith in Yeshua, the Spirit of God has written His Word upon our hearts as it is
written in *Jeremiah 31:31 'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I
will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
31:32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them
by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke,
although I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord. 31:33 'But this is the
covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the
Lord, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will
be their God, and they shall be My people. (NASB)*. By faith in Yeshua, we are
made new from within (a new creation) by His Ruach (Spirit) dwelling within us.
The Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) is thus working to conform us unto the image
of His Son. If you have trusted in Yeshua for the forgiveness of your sins, God
has begun this transformation process. What God has begun in your life, He will
finish. Thus, we receive blessings from God because we have been given both the
ability and the desire to obey Him. Additionally, we come to understand
repentance through the process of forgiving others, like in this week's reading to
forgive the debts of others at the end of every seven years. Moreover, we should
also work to keep from being burdened down by financial debt. The Lord has
shown us, in the Scriptures, the way of repentance, so that when we do sin, we
confess our sins and know that He is faithful to forgive us of our sins, and cleanse
us of all unrighteousness. (*1 John 1:9*) Do you see how this week's reading on
the forgiving of debt is applied to us by God forgiving our sins? The commands

we read this week not only show us of God's grace and mercy but also give us a reason to take care of the less fortunate (poor) in our land, because God desires that we do so.

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James 1:26-27

1:26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB)

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever