

## “PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO ALL”

Judaism has given the world its promises of a better future. When the United Nations sought to embody the hopes of humanity, it turned to Isaiah, and above the U.N. portals are the prophet's immortal words: “They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Is. 2:4).”

When America wished to express the principle of freedom that undergirds our nation, it turned to the Bible as well. On the liberty bell is the verse from Leviticus 25:10: “Proclaim liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof.”

Rabbi Joshua Falk (1680-1756) pointed out that the verse in Leviticus does not say proclaim liberty to all the slaves, or to all the oppressed. Rather one must proclaim liberty to the entire society, each inhabitant. Liberty for the oppressed means liberty for the oppressors as well; so long as there is slavery for any, there is slavery for all. There are no truly free individuals in an unfree society. As we look around the world, we are reminded that history has rendered these powerful verses familiar, but no less relevant.