

This past week, I was speaking with someone planning to move to Ottawa. They had found a potential place to live, but discovered that someone else had offered to pay \$200 more than asking for the same place, and therefore, their offer was not accepted. This past week, I discovered that the average cost of a home in Canada is now more than \$715,000. As a result of this, young people in particular, are feeling like purchasing a home may never be possible. When I was discussing this issue with someone this week, we both acknowledged that this is a large problem, but neither of us had a great solution.

The Torah, on the other hand, takes this issue very seriously. There is an acknowledgement that since the earth is our God's, nothing we purchase is truly ours. We are buying the right to use the land, not the rights to keep the land in perpetuity. That is why, every 50 years, the Jubilee year comes and all land revert back to its original owners. No matter what happened during that 50-year period, at the end of it, the land will be redistributed equitably. Everyone will need to start over and no one's wealth or indebtedness will define their lives moving forward.

While I am not suggesting that everyone needs to relinquish their homes every 50 years as in biblical times, maybe it is time for all of us to assess the challenges that people now face as they attempt to buy homes in Canada. Perhaps, we need to find ways to make home ownership and even the ability to rent more achievable for more people. And when we do that, we'll be embodying the teachings of this week's Torah portion and the Jubilee year.