

Shiur L'Yom Chamishi¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Emor:*** Leviticus 23:23-44
 Haftarah: Ezekiel 44:24-27
 B'rit Chadasha: I Peter 2:9

In the seventh moon cycle

[Leviticus 23:24]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 65:5-8;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #6, *B'racha*[Blessing]

Bachodesh ha-shvi'i b'echad l'chodesh – in the seventh moon cycle, on the first day of the moon cycle ... ***yihyeh lachem Shabaton*** – it is to be a Sabbath for you ... ***zikron tru'ah*** – a commemoration of receiving breath ... ***mikra kodesh*** – a prophetic rehearsal of holiness. **Leviticus 23:24.**

Our Divine Bridegroom has a grand plan - both for humanity as a species and for Creation as an ecosystem. In furtherance of that plan He has choreographed some very special – indeed, truly stunning and course-of-world history- changing - events for earth and its inhabitants. He does not want His People to be unprepared for the paradigm shifts that are coming. Like Shaul of Tarsus, He does not want us to be *ignorant brethren*². He has therefore designed a series of ten *mo'edim* – i.e. scheduled appointments with mankind – and has strategically infused these *mo'edim* with the transformative energy of His Holiness. Functioning much like successive acts in a great play, these *mo'edim* keep us alert to, inspired about, and flowing in harmony with the themes of the special events through which He plans to bring redemption to mankind and restoration to Creation. Each year as we participate in these *mo'edim* the Holy One *empowers us for* and *commissions us in* a new, higher phase of Kingdom influence.

Essential Tools for Navigating Through Both Redemptive History and the Great Prophetic Season Called the 'Latter Days'

Each of the Holy One's *mo'edim* represents a navigational triangulation point on our annual journey from seedtime through harvest. As we stop what we are doing and meet with Him at each such Divinely arranged way station in time, the Holy One recalibrates us to His timing, to His agenda, and to His priorities for the next stretch of road we are ordained to face along our pilgrim's pathway. At each

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² See Romans 11:25: ***For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.***

mo'ed He calls us to appear before Him. In the course of each such encounter He measures our progress on the journey. Based on that evaluation He then proceeds to nurture what needs to be nurtured, to strengthen what needs to be strengthened, and to purge what needs to be purged. He enhances our vision and perspective. He elevates our priorities to more closely match His. He teaches us how to correct our course and pace as needed to get back/stay in step with Him. And He refreshes and revitalizes us for the next phase of our walk down Torah's ancient paths.

Hence the commemoration of the *mo'edim* of our Bridegroom-King requires much more attention from us than merely planning potluck dinner parties or scheduling gatherings at which to listen to inspiring sermons presented by guest speakers. Each *mo'ed* constitutes a separate but connected Act in the Great Drama of *Divine Redemption*. Each is designed by the Holy One to teach a particular aspect of His Grand Redemptive Plan. It is through participation in the *mo'edim* that we can most efficiently co-labor with our Bridegroom-King in retelling each week (through the Shabbat) and each year (through the annual feasts and fast), the greatest story mankind will ever be told.

Yeshua – His Original Followers/Disciples – and their Relationship to the Moedim

But “*what about Yeshua?*” some of you may be asking. Didn't his followers – albeit without a stitch of Biblical authority - establish a new “*religious calendar*”. Aren't programmed Sunday meetings, the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Ascension, and days like Christmas, Palm Sunday, Fat Tuesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter – along with Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, this-and-that famous person's Birthday, Labor Day, Ghost-and-Goblins Day, Veterans' Day, Pumpkin Pie Day, and a bunch of other similarly unBiblical commemorations, of course – now the feasts our faith-communities are supposed to observe and teach our children to observe? Many institutionalized forms of Christianity promote the blatant lie that the *mo'edim* were just a bunch of “feasts of Israel”, pertaining only to Jews – even though the Holy One specifically declares them to be HIS [not any particular ethnicity's] appointed times.

So ... what do we think of our Bridegroom-King deep down in our hearts. Do we believe Yeshua was really the Messiah *promised in Torah and the TaNaKh*, or do we think of Him instead as a visionary rebel who *came to found a new religion* - sort of like Confucius, Buddha, or Mohammed, but better somehow. If he was the latter ... well, if that is the case I have some stunning news for you. Here it is - to believe in him, or follow after him, if that is who he is, would be to declare the

God who wrote the Torah, designed the calendar, and made with us at Sinai a *b'rit olam* [covenant which will last *forever*], a liar - a fickle deity who changes His mind, breaks His covenants, and whose word, therefore, cannot be trusted.

Either the Holy One's Word is true, eternal, and unchanging – or it is *not the Holy One's Word at all* and *has no place in the Bible or in our lives*. Institutionalized Christianity cannot have it both ways. I strongly believe, however, that anyone who looks at Scripture in context will determine that Yeshua is indeed the Messiah promised in Torah, and that He and His *talmidim* not only *participated in* but intended to *perpetuate* the observance of the *Mo'edim* of Leviticus 23. I also believe that the fullness of the purpose of the Holy One in entrusting to us His *mo'edim* will only be fully fulfilled in connection with Yeshua's promised return. I thus believe that it is both a privilege and a part of who we are as new Creations in Messiah for us today to fully and wholeheartedly participate in the *mo'edim*, with an eye back to the past, ahead to the future, and through a glass darkly into eternity. In fact today, for those who have encountered Yeshua and now follow Him, the *Mo'edim* may have even more special meaning than they do for the non-believing section of the Jewish population. *Why* you ask? Well, look at the historical record!

Look at the Historical Record:

The Most Significant Things Yeshua Did

Were Done According to the Holy One's Leviticus 23 Calendar!

The reason the *Mo'edim* often have even more special meaning to those who believe in Yeshua as Messiah than they do for the non-believing among the Jewish population is *because* it was in the context of Yeshua's participation in and celebration of the *Mo'edim* in the First Century of the Common Era that most of Yeshua's miracles were performed and that the vast majority, if not all, of Yeshua's recorded teachings were given. Here is the impressive historical record in this regard:

- Yeshua proclaimed and demonstrated that the *Shabbat* [Sabbath] is the realm on earth in which He is truly Lord.
- He submitted to death on the *mo'ed* of *Pesach* [Passover].
- He rose from the dead on the appointed day of *HaBikkurim* [Firstfruits].
- He appeared numerous times to His *talmidim* during the period of *Sefirat HaOmer* (Counting the Omer), to check on the progress of His 'wheat' [the field into which He has sowed 'the seed of Torah'];
- He released the Ruach HaQodesh to indwell those who accepted His Way of walking out the Torah through dependence upon Him on *Shavuot* [Pentecost].

In short, the most significant aspects of Yeshua's Ministry were related to the

Mo'edim. Moreover He will - if the prophecies about Him in the apostolic writings are correct - almost certainly return on a *Yom Teruah* [the appointed time of the sounding of the *shofar* – the day known in Hebraic thought as the day and hour no man knows]. At the close of this age He will almost certainly sit down to judge the nations of the world on a *Yom Kippur* [the day of atonement/judgment]. He will almost certainly assemble His elect from the four corners of the earth on a *Sukkot*. And He will almost certainly commence His millennial reign on a *Sh'mini Atzeret*.

This perfect interaction between Yeshua and the *mo'edim* was not – is not – by some strange coincidence. As aforesaid, one of the Hebrew words Torah uses to describe the *mo'edim* is *miqraot*, which means in this context “[prophetic] *rehearsals*”. The Holy One instructs us [Leviticus 23:4] to “recite” and “proclaim” His message to mankind through rehearsing, each seventh day (with regard to the Shabbat), and each year in its season the dramatic events - of the past *and of the future* - that the *mo'edim/miqraot* commemorate.

Yeshua did not by any means come to *destroy* the *mo'edim/miqraot* or do away with them. If it were so not only would He have told us, but His *talmidim* would not have continued to participate in them - *as they did faithfully up until the Romanization of Messiah's people resulted in a rebellion against all things Yeshua stood for*. It was not Yeshua – nor was it Shaul of Tarsus - who brought about the sanctification of *the day of the sun god* instead of the *Shabbat*, who initiated the commemoration of ‘Lent’ and ‘Fat Tuesday’ and ‘Palm Sunday’ and ‘Maundy Thursday’ and ‘Good Friday’ and ‘Easter’ in the place of *Pesach*, *Chag-ha-Matzah* and *Yom HaBikkurim*, or who called for a focus on the pagan holiday of *Saturnalia* (December 25), instead of the Fall festivals of *Yom Teruah* [The Feast of Trumpets], *Yom Kippur* [the Day of Atonement], *Sukkot* [Tabernacles], and *Sh'mini Atzeret* [the Eighth Day]. Yeshua came instead - and will come again - to perform the lead role in each act of the Divine passion play about which we read in today's aliyah. Because He said “*Lo, I am with you always*” He makes our enjoyment of the Shabbat – and indeed our participation in all of the *Moedim* - more meaningful than ever.³

The Holy One's Schedule For Redemption in the Latter Days

It is our appointed time for reconnecting with the calendar - and studying the *mo'edim* - of our Bridegroom-King. We have studied the weekly Sabbath and the *mo'edim* of the first month. Now it is time to turn our attention to the Holy One's

³ Praising the Holy One for and rejoicing in the beauty of Torah's instructions concerning the *mo'edim* does not constitute “judging” anyone else “with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration, or a Sabbath day.” **Colossians 2:16**. Whether, and how, other people celebrate religious holidays is *their business*, and I cannot, nor do I presume to, judge their motivations, their hearts, or their devotion to God by virtue of whether they light a tree as opposed to a menorah, etc., etc., etc.

Schedule for the Latter Days on the Holy One's prophetic calendar. What we make of these special occasions will depend in large part on what we think of and how we choose to relate to our Bridegroom-King - and how we will feel about and respond to what is going on in the world as His return approaches.

In today's aliyah the Holy One reveals His Latter-Day schedule of redemptive events. Contained in the aliyah are the bulk of the Holy One's instructions regarding what participation He wants from us in regard to the Divine Appointments/Prophetic Rehearsals of the infamous period we call the 'Latter Days'. As Shaul of Tarsus said many times, *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren*

Our primary focus in this commentary will be upon [a] what historical events each of these *mo'edim/miqraot* commemorate, and on [b] to what prophetic, future events of the Holy One's timetable each one points. A secondary focus will be on the fact that each Fall, or *second harvest season*, Divine Appointment is a 'mirror image' of one of the spring, or *first harvest season*, Divine Appointments. If you will receive it, this will help you understand the two appearances of Messiah – one related to the spring, or *first harvest season*⁴, the other related to the fall, or *final harvest season*.

Keep in mind that our Bridegroom-King has instructed us that on the second day of Unleavened Bread we are to bring an *omer* [approximately 3 pounds] of barley from the very first grain harvest of the year to the *kohen* as a firstfruits offering. until the Omer presentation is made, we are not to eat even a morsel of the present year's grain. That day begins a special season for us – a season that is commonly called *Sefirat Ha-Omer* - i.e. *counting the omer*.

Sefirat Ha-Omer [Keeping Track of the Omer]

Each year, beginning immediately after the Sabbath that follows *Passover*, the Holy One instructs us to spend seven weeks taking note of the levels of growth in the wheat fields around us. These days of growing wheat are called '*the days of the Omer*'. In the spiritual realm, this is a very special season when the Divine Seed of Messiah in us, awakened to new life at *Passover*, is to be *perceptibly maturing before the eyes of the world*.

⁴ The first harvest season is when standing grains, such as barley [at *Pesach*] and wheat [at *Shavuot*], ripen and must be harvested. The *second harvest season* is when fruits such as olives, figs, dates, pomegranates, citrus fruits, nuts, and grapes all complete their production, and the land prepares to enter the dormant state of Winter. These seasons in the natural world parallel and correspond to seasons of harvest in the spiritual world.

During the season of growing wheat in the natural realm and maturing seeds of holiness in the spiritual realm we are told to ‘count’ [Hebrew *safar*, meaning to scratch, inscribe, or mark off (as they occur)] two intervals of time simultaneously. First we are told to count/mark off the passage of *seven sabbaths*. **Leviticus 23:15**. Then we are told to count/strike off the passage of *fifty days*. **Leviticus 23:16**. What is with all the *safar*-ing? What is special about these seven sabbaths? What is unique about these fifty days?

Counting the *omer* is not just about the numbers. In fact it’s not really about the numbers at all. It’s about the process of developing. It’s about step-by-step maturity. It’s about becoming. It is about sprouting new life and putting down roots. It is about growing stalks and setting blossoms. This is a season of intense potential and productivity. The strategic goal of the season is not to follow a set of ‘counting rules’, but to stay focused on the maturation process the Holy One is doing. Each year during this season therefore we let the Bridegroom-King take us by the hand and lead us to a secret place – a vantage point from which we can see clearly what is happening in the wheat field of our life. This is a great time to meditate upon the Master’s parables about *the sower and the seed* about *the wheat and the tares* [both of which are found in Matthew 13], about *the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies* [see John 12], about the *phases of the harvest season into which the Holy One is bringing us* [see Mark 4:26-29], and about *the debt of wheat* [see the Master’s teaching in Luke 16].

As we inspect this year’s growth and seek to learn from the Master how to maximize the return, we stop and listen at each sunrise and sunset for forty-nine days in for all the wise counsel the Holy One has released into the atmosphere for us.

SHAVUOT [The Feast of Sabbaths/Weeks]

The Holy One instructs that the fiftieth day – the day wheat is ready to harvest – is to always be for us a very special day. Whatever celebrations the world around us may indulge when the harvest comes in, this day is to be for us a special day of holiness, thanksgiving, re-commitment to covenant, and re-affirming of betrothal vows. It is a day to cease our labors, enter our Bridegroom-King’s Courts, draw near to His Throne, and engage in covenant-reaffirming actions. The Holy One tells us:

You are to bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an efah.

They are to be of fine flour; they are to be baked with leaven.

They are the firstfruits to the Holy One.

[Leviticus 23:17]

The redemptive issue we address at *Shavuot* is *whose people we are*, and as a result, *what will be the priorities of our lives*. In the natural, at this time of the

year most men are working hard, seeing the season of harvest as only a fleeting economic opportunity. They are ‘making hay while the sun shines’. Others are throwing wild parties, indulging in the lusts of their flesh because it is summer and they worship the summer sun. The Covenant People of the Holy One are called to another approach altogether. We are called to see the fruition of the harvest not as a fleeting economic opportunity, nor as an excuse for indulging the basest desires and appetites of our flesh, but as a reminder – and renewal - of our Covenant with the Most High.

What are the two ‘wave loafs’ [in Hebrew *lechem tenufah*]? They are both real loaves of fresh wheat bread prepared with ‘new leaven’ and representations of the two tablets of the Testimony from Mount Sinai. This is our day of recommitting to be the Bride-People the Holy One sees us as being, by reaffirming the *na’aseh v’nish’ma* [i.e. ‘*we will asah and we will sh’ma!*’] declaration our forefathers made at Sinai after hearing the Ten Words the Holy One spoke in the hearing of every man, woman, and child. The Words of the Holy One are the ‘new leaven’ of our lives, and the Words of New Identity and Prophetic Empowerment contained on the two stone tablets are our ultimate wave offering.

The Shavuot Script – Six Specifically-Enumerated Mitzvot

The Holy One scripts the festival for us with six specific mitzvot/protocols:

1. **Determining and Setting Aside the Date.**

The prophetic play – which will look a little like rehearsing the day of our own death - is to begin at sundown on the 50th day after the ‘morrow of the Sabbath’ after 15 Nisan/Aviv (some say the 50th day after the regular seventh-day Sabbath immediately following 15 Nisan/Aviv);

2. **The Presentation of the Firstfruits of the New Wheat Crop.**

We are to make, bring forth, and wave before the Holy One as a firstfruits approach two loaves of leavened bread – the first made from the new wheat crop;

3. **The Pleasing, Fragrance Aroma Created by Special Korbanot**

We are to approach the Holy One’s Presence at the brazen altar with seven lambs, one bull, and two rams, as well as a *minchah* [presentation of grain] and a presentation of new wine.

4. **Sabbath/Work Stoppage**

No matter what day of the secular calendar week the day falls on, we are to treat it as a Sabbath. All regular work - in Hebrew *meleket avodah* - is to cease.

5. The Miqra Kodesh/opening Ceremony.

We are to make a *miqra kodesh* – i.e. make a public acknowledgement/proclamation of the *kedusha*-infusion related to this particular feast day];

6. The Special Dedication of the Corners and Gleanings of the Field

We are to dedicate the corners of the field (exact size/amount unstated), as well as everything that is dropped or not harvested in the first pass, to the poor and the foreigner.

Yom Teruah [The Feast of Trumpets]

Three and a half months after Shavuot, on the new moon of the seventh month, the Holy One calls us to observe another Divine Appointment. Most of the world has come to call this mo'ed “*Rosh HaShanah*” – i.e. the ‘head of the year’. But that is not its Biblical name. The Biblical name of this mo'ed is *Yom Teruah* – the day of blowing, or the day of shofar blasts. The Divine Appointment and prophetic rehearsal [the ‘head of the year’], is the day Messiah referred to as “*the day and the hour no man knows*”⁵. Concerning this Divine Appointment the Holy One says:

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, shall be a Shabbaton to you, a zikaron Teruah [remembrance of blowing], *a holy miq'ra.*

Do no regular work; instead, draw near the fire of the Holy One.

[Leviticus 23:23-25]

As stated above the Biblical name of this mo'ed/miqra is *Yom Teruah* – the day of blowing. This comes from verse 24, where the Holy One instructs us to make this day a *zikaron Teruah* [a remembrance of *Teruah* - breathing or blowing]. This is the day when the *shofar* – or ram's horn - is blown in the homes and synagogues.

The Historical Event Commemorated by Yom Teruah

The mo'ed *Yom T'eruah* [the day of breathing] appears to relate historically to what happened in Genesis 3:8. After Adam and Chava had partaken of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they realized their nakedness. At this point, our English Bibles tell us:

And they heard the voice of the Holy One Adonai walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Holy One amongst the trees of the garden.

The phrase translated “*in the cool of the day*” in this passage is, in the original Hebrew, *l'ruah yom* [the day for breathing/blowing]. What is a ‘day for breathing’ or for ‘blowing’? The Hebrew is, I believe, trying to tell us that the Holy One had

⁵ See for instance Yeshua's reference to this being the time of “the Coming of B'nei Adam [the Son of man]”, **Matthew 24:36-37**. One reason it is said that ‘No man knows the day or the hour of *Yom Teruah*’ is because this is the only mo'ed that takes place on a *new moon*, which must be observed to be confirmed.

appointed times with Adam and Chava *to breathe His breath of life afresh upon them*. As He had breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath [Hebrew, *ruach*] of life on the day of His creation, so He scheduled times to renew that breath of life – to perform 'artificial respiration' as it were. This is, I believe, what the breathless maiden of the Song of Songs was referring to when she said, at the very beginning of her betrothal to her Beloved: *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.* Song 1:2.

The Voice of the Holy One is the Great Shofar

The “*voice of the Holy One Adonai*” referred to at the beginning of Genesis 3:8 – i.e. the Voice from which Adam and Chava ran and hid - is commemorated on *Yom Teruah* by the blowing of the *shofar* – the ram's horn. If you recall the statement that a Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world, you know from whence the original shofar came. Legend says it was the horn of the ram supernaturally provided to Avraham on Mount Moriyah to be presented as a *korban olah* in place of Yitzchak.

Why does the Voice of the Bridegroom-King sound? To call His Bride People unto Himself. This call is not for the purpose of having a religious service. This call is not an excuse to throw a party, engage in a ceremony, have a potluck dinner, or put on a show. This is personal. This is intimate. This is real. Our Creator wants to have an encounter with every single human being who will respond to His call. He wants to meet with and infuse His life force into all who will lock gaze, join hands, and embrace His *Glorious Persona* and His *Majestic Kingdom Vision*.

Yom Teruah is the *Great Day of Reconnection and Synergizing* in preparation for the next stage of the *Grand Redemptive Plan*. The blowing of the shofar announces His coronation as King – and our individual and collective response to the shofar evidences the renewal of our pledge to serve Him faithfully in His Kingdom as loyal, fully committed and totally-surrendered co-regents acting on His behalf.

Yom Teruah's 'Mirror Image'

Yom Teruah constitutes the “mirror image” of the spring *mo'ed* of *Shavuot*, when we commemorate the *Matan Torah* [the giving of the Torah] at *Mount Sinai*. Remember that on that day we heard the great *shofar* of the Holy One. Then we ascended the mountain to meet with Him. And finally all of us – even the ‘mixed multitude’ which came forth from Egypt in our company - heard the Voice of the Holy One speak over us the *Aseret HaDibrot*. At first all we could proclaim is “*we will asah*” – i.e. we will do, make, build. Exodus 24:3. At a later date, after the intercession of Moshe, we finally agreed “*we will asah AND WE WILL*

SH'MA". Exodus 19:7.

The primary *mitzvah* of *Yom Teruah* is thus to *sh'ma* [listen intently to, and respond appropriately to, with *teshuvah*] the blowing of the shofar. This reverses the sin of the Garden, where Adam and Chava did not *sh'ma* the Voice of the Holy One when He came to breathe life into them afresh. They instead ran and hid. This also reverses the nation's sin at Sinai, when we refused to *sh'ma* the Voice of the Holy One, insisting an intermediary interpret His words for us, and ultimately substituting an image formed in the shape of a golden calf form for His formless, boundless, limitless Majesty.

The Yom Teruah Script – Five Specifically-Enumerated Mitzvot

The Holy One scripts the festival for us with five specific mitzvot/protocols:

1. Determining and Setting Aside the Date.

The prophetic play – which will look a little like rehearsing the day of our own death - is to begin at sundown on the 1st day of the 7th month of the Biblical calendar - the month often called 'Tishrei';

2. The Sabbath/Work Stoppage

No matter what day of the secular calendar week the 1st of Tishrei falls on, we are to treat it as a Sabbath. All regular work - in Hebrew *meleket avodah* - is to cease.

3. The Miqra Kodesh/opening Ceremony.

On the first day [15 Tishrei], we are to make a *miqra kodesh* – i.e. make a public acknowledgement/proclamation of the *kedusha*-infusion related to this particular feast];

4. The Memorial [Hebrew *Zikaron*] **of sound/blowing/breath** [Hebrew *Teruah*]

We are each to focus all our mind's energies on, and tune our ear to, the sound of the Holy One's Breath/Shofar.

5. Approaching/Drawing Near the Holy One 'Ishah L'Adonai'.

The traditional interpretation is 'present an offering by fire'; literally, the phrase would mean 'approach/draw near as a wife unto the Holy One'.

Yom Teruah's Prophetic Implications

Obviously the day of the blowing of the shofar - Biblically tied as it is to breathing of life afresh – serves as the prophetic announcement of the pouring out of the Holy One's Breath upon His People in connection with the resurrection of the

dead. Ezekiel 37 [esp. the vision of dry bones] and Shaul's discussion of the resurrection of the dead "at the last trump (shofar)"⁶ as well as many other passages all point us to the conclusion that a future *Yom Teruah* will be the great and coming resurrection day, the appointed time when the Holy One will again come to breathe life on that which has died through the sin of Adam and Chava.

Yom Teruah is thus both a *commemoration* of the Garden of Eden's "time of breathing/blowing" and a *prophetic declaration* of the renewal of such a time in the future. *Yom Teruah* therefore has definite Messianic implications. Study it – and meditate on those implications - and be encouraged. Participate at the appointed time - and breathe the life-giving breath of the Holy One into your soul. The Holy One intends for it to be an essential part of your empowerment for the next phase of your Kingdom mission.

The Ultimate Day of the Holy One: Yom Kippur

[The Day of Atonement]

Our aliyah's discussion of the *mo'ed/miqra* called *Yom Kippur*, which we observe on the 10th of Tishri each year, proceeds as follows:

*... on the tenth day of this seventh month is Yom Kippur:
it is to be a miq'ra kodesh to you, and you are to afflict yourselves;
and you are to draw near to the fire of the Holy One.
Do no manner of work in that same day;
for it is Yom Kippur [a day of filling in the gaps and holes with a sealant covering],
to make atonement for you before the Holy One your God.
For whoever it is who will not deny himself in that same day
shall be cut off from his people.
Whoever it is who does any manner of work in that same day,
that person I will destroy from among his people.
You are to do no manner of work:
it is a statute forever, throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.
It is to be a Shabbat of solemn rest for you, and you are to deny yourselves.
In the ninth day of the month at evening,
from evening to evening, you are to keep your Shabbat⁷."*
[Leviticus 23:27-32]

The Redemptive Message and Dramatic Theme of Yom Kippur

The *mo'ed* of *Yom Kippur* is but a continuation of the special season of coronation and Kingdom Administration that began at *Yom Teruah*. Nine days after the *Yom Teruah* concludes another Divine convocation is held on earth as it is in Heaven.

² See I Corinthians 15:51-52, and I Thessalonians 4:16-17.

⁷ In this verse what is in view is not the 7th day Shabbat but a special Sabbath [literally, a *stopping, sitting, or resting*] that may fall on any day of the week that happens to be the 10th day after the new moon of Tishri. This 'special' Sabbath differs from the 7th day Shabbat in that on it we are not only to refrain from regular work, but we are also to 'deny ourselves' – *i.e.* to *fast*.

As on *Yom Teruah* every knee bowed before and every tongue confessed loyalty to the Bridegroom-King as the shofar sounded, so on *Yom Kippur* the King hears final pleas and announces who will be assigned what role - or what *fate* -in the upcoming year of His Administration. As no human or nation is worthy of any role in so worthy an Administration, He will supply from His own righteousness whatever is needed to qualify those who humbly acknowledge their inadequacy and joyfully receive and embrace His gracious offer of His own attributes of holiness.

Looking Back Through Time at the Tenth Day of the Seventh Month

We discussed *Yom Kippur* in some detail in Monday's Shiur from Parsha *Acharei Mot*. As we learned at that time it is said by the sages that on the tenth day of the month of Tishri, the following events all occurred:

[1] Adam and Chava repented of their sin of hiding from the Voice of the Holy One, and from running away from His call to impart a fresh Breath of Life to them. In connection with this making of *teshuvah*, they were reconciled with the Holy One, and received from Him a covering of skins from the Holy One;

[2] On Mount Moriyah the Holy One provided a ram in substitute for the life of Yitzchak; and

[3] Moshe returned from the mount with the second tablets of stone inscribed by the Holy One with the Torah [or at least the *Aseret HaDibrot* (Ten Commandments)] and made atonement for the sin of the golden calf.

The 10th day of the Seventh month is thus – and has been from the Beginning - a very special day – a day [Hebrew “*yom*”] of *atonement* [Hebrew “*kippur*”, derived from the verb root “*kafar*”]. On this day the Holy One's forgiveness of sin, and desire to interact with His people and reaffirm His covenant with them, has always been made manifest, and on this day the Holy One's people have always entered into a new, different, and significantly improved, level of relationship with Him – through His graciousness and covenant-faithfulness.

Spotlighting the Essential Element of Teshuvah

The key to 10th day of the Seventh month has always been the making *teshuvah* – literally, a *returning* to the Holy One and to His Voice/Torah - and submission of all one's life to the Holy One, “passing under His rod” of inspection and corrective, restorative judgment.

Teshuvah involves, but is much more than, ‘confession of sin’, expressing regret, and ‘asking for forgiveness’. ***T'shuvah*** involves identifying the point of departure from the Holy One's will, *going back* to that place of departure, where we transgressed His Torah, *facing the critical choice* or temptation again, *overcoming*

it through the Holy One's empowerment and according to His direction, and *starting over* on the path of righteousness and fulfillment the Holy One has set out for us.

Yom Kippur's 'Mirror Image'

Yom Kippur is the “mirror image” of the spring *mo'ed* of *Ha-Bikkurim* – the day of firstfruits, when the firstfruits of grain were presented for inspection at the Temple. As in the Spring we recognize that if the first fruit of the wheat crop (i.e. the early fruit of the ‘good field’ of our lives) is holy, the harvest will receive the attribution of the contagion of holiness, so in the Fall of the year we are called upon to recognize that if the first fruit of *teshuvah* is holy, the full harvest of *t'shuvah* in the latter days will be infected with holiness as well.

The Yom Kippur Script - Seven Specifically-Enumerated Mitzvot

The Holy One scripts the festival for us with seven specific mitzvot/protocols:

1. Determining and Setting Aside the Date.

The prophetic play – which will look a little like rehearsing the day of our own death - is to begin at sundown on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Biblical calendar [the month often called ‘Tishrei’];

2. The Miqra Kodesh/opening Ceremony.

On the first day [15 Tishrei], we are to make a *miqra kodesh* – i.e. make a public acknowledgement/proclamation of the *kedusha*-infusion related to this particular feast];

3. Exercise Complete Self-Denial

We are each to afflict [Hebrew *anah* – to till, turn over, like garden soil] our nefesh – i.e. our natural body, our mind, our will, and our emotions.

4. The Highest Level Sabbath/Work Stoppage [Shabbat Shabbaton]

No matter what day of the secular calendar week the 15th of Tishrei falls on, we are to treat it as a Sabbath. All work, of any kind – in Hebrew *meleket* – is to cease.

5. Approaching/Drawing Near the Holy One 'Ishah L'Adonai'.

The traditional interpretation is ‘present an offering by fire’; literally, the phrase would mean ‘approach/draw near as a wife unto the Holy One’.

6. Day of Atonement [Hebrew, Kippurim]

We are to consider the day one of closing the books of Heaven on our lives a. up to that point and b. from that point forward); as we do our small part as directed, we trust the Holy One to do the heavy lifting and fulfill the

greater promise of Leviticus 16.

7. This is Essential Covenant Participation for People of the Covenant.

Anyone who does not both a. *afflict his/her nefesh*, and b. stop all work of any kind on this day is *karat* – to be considered and treated as not having part or lot in the Covenant.

Yom Kippur's Prophetic Implications

Prophetically this *mo'ed/miqra* rehearses the day when, as Shaul wrote, “all Israel will be saved”⁸ – the day when, as Zechariah prophesied:

*I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem
A spirit of covenant faithfulness and prayer.*

*They will look upon Me, the One they have pierced,
And they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child,
And grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first-born son.”*

* * *

*“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants
of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from their sin and restore them from their tamei status.”*

[Zechariah 12:10, 13:1]

May the Divine Bridegroom hasten the day!

May Your Kingdom Come: Chag Sukkot

[The Festival of Tabernacles]

Our aliyah's instructions concerning the celebration of this *mo'ed/miqra* make it clear that this 7-day period, which mirrors the 7-day *mo'ed/miqra* of Matzah in the Spring, is to be the SEASON OF OUR JOY [*zeman simchateinu*]. We are to gather in our final harvest and rejoice before the Holy One. Here are the specific instructions of our Creator concerning this “feast”:

*. . . on the fifteenth day of the seventh moon cycle,
when you have gathered in the fruits of the land,
sh'mar the feast of the Holy One seven days: the first day is a Shabbaton [Sabbath] . . .*

*On the first day, take for yourselves the fruit of goodly trees,
As well as branches of palm trees, boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook;
and rejoice before the Holy One your God seven days.*

*Sh'mar these seven days each year as a feast to the Holy One:
it is a statute forever, throughout your generations;
you are to sh'mar it in the seventh moon cycle.*

*You are to sit in temporary, hastily thrown together arbors for seven days.
All who are native-born in Yisra'el are to sit in temporary, hastily thrown-together arbors.
that your generations may know that I made the children of Yisra'el
to sit in temporary, hastily thrown-together arbors, when I brought them*

⁸ Romans 11:26-27, quoting Isaiah 45:17, Jeremiah 31:34, and Isaiah 59:20, 21, and 27-29.

out of the land of Mitzrayim. I am the Holy One your God."
[Leviticus 23:39-43]

Sukkot is a commemoration of both the placement of man in the Garden of Eden, and the overshadowing Presence of the Holy One as the Redeemed Community left Egypt. Its focus on harvesting various species recalls the purpose of man in the Garden.

The Chag Sukkot Script - Eight Specifically Enumerated Mitzvot

The Holy One scripts the festival for us with eight specific mitzvot/protocols:

1. Determining and Setting Aside the Date.

The festivities/prophetic play is to begin at sundown on the 15th day of the 7th month of the Biblical calendar [the month often called ‘Tishrei’; the festivities are to continue unabated for seven days;

2. The First Day Miqra Kodesh/opening Ceremony.

On the first day [15 Tishrei], we are to make a *miqra kodesh* – i.e. make a public acknowledgement/proclamation of the *kedusha*-infusion related to this particular feast];

3. The First Day Sabbath/Work Stoppage

No matter what day of the secular calendar week the 15th of Tishrei falls on, we are to treat it as a Sabbath. All regular work – in Hebrew *meleket avodah* – is to cease.

4. The Seven Days are for Approaching/Drawing Near the Holy One ‘Ishah L’Adonai’.

The traditional interpretation is ‘present an offering by fire’; literally, the phrase would mean ‘approach/draw near as a wife unto the Holy One’.

5. The Taking of the Four Species.

The Holy One tells us that beginning on the first day [15 Tishrei], and continuing for seven days, we are to take in hand four living forms of vegetation: a. *p’ri etz-hadar* – i.e. fruit of a beautiful tree (traditionally, an etrog), b. *kafat tamarim* – i.e. palm branches; c. *anaf abot* – i.e. boughs of a large/thick tree (traditionally, a myrtle branch), and d. *etz-aravot nachal* – i.e. a willow of the river/brook;

6. Rejoicing/celebrating before the Face/Presence of the Holy One.

We are to *samach* for seven days – but not just ‘party’. We are to involve/celebrate with the Holy One. To *samach* is to embrace gladness, and to put on and maintain a cheerful countenance. We are to ‘eat, drink, and be merry’, laugh, make music, dance, play games, etc. - but we are to

do so not for selfish purposes or fleshly pleasure, but in ways that honor and enhance our relationship with, and open doors of service to, the Holy One.

7. Sitting [Hebrew verb *yashav*] **Outside in Temporary Shelters.**

On all seven days of the feast we are get outdoors and sit in temporary, hastily built arbor-like shelters;

8. Programmed Remembrance of How our Ancestors Lived After being Delivered from Egypt.

As we sit in the temporary shelters, we are to reminisce/remember what life was like for our ancestors when the Holy One brought us out of Egypt.

Sukkot's Prophetic Implications

The 7-day celebration of ingathering called *Sukkot* prophetically rehearses the restoration of the *Radiant Cloud of the Manifests Presence* of the Holy One to mankind that will occur in *Olam HaBa* – the World to Come. The prophets say that when Messiah reigns in Jerusalem, all nations will come to worship the Holy One during this 7-day celebration.

A Taste of the World To Come: Sh'mini Atzeret

[The Eighth Day]

The special *mo'ed/miqra* of *Sh'mini Atzeret* is less publicized - and certainly less observed/celebrated - than the other specified Divine Appointments of the Holy One's Fall Calendar. For reasons that I will point out however, this is likely to dramatically change. Here is what the Holy One says of this special occasion:

... and on the eighth day [after the 15th day of the 7th month] ***is to be a solemn rest.***
[Leviticus 23:39(b)]

As we have discussed previously, in Hebraic thought the “eighth” of anything is always a code word for a “*new beginning*”. This stems from the fact that it was after the seventh day [the *Shabbat*] that the Holy One placed His special creation, in the *Gan Eden* [garden of Eden], and blessed him with the ability and potential to multiply *pru u'rvu* – be fruitful and multiply, take dominion over the rest of the Holy One's creation, and eat of it. This was a “new beginning”, setting man above the animals and other living creatures of earth. It reflected an exalted status for man – with vastly expanded potential for fulfilling the Holy One's Divine purposes, and partnering with the Holy One in creation. Remember that on the 7th day the Holy One rested from His Work of Creating. He began, on the 8th day, a new thing – *co-creation* with man.

In addition it was on the seventh day after the exodus from Egypt that the Holy One miraculously destroyed Pharaoh's army in the Sea of Reeds. The eighth day after the exodus thus was another “new beginning” for the Holy One's Redeemed

Community. No longer were they subject to oppression by the evil one - their enemy was cast far away from them.

Sh'mini Atzeret therefore is certainly a day to commemorate and to celebrate these historical events. But let us look deeper, Beloved.

Sh'mini Atzeret's 'Mirror Image'

Sh'mini Atzeret is the “mirror image” of the *Pesach* celebration of 14 Nisan – the night of deliverance from the Angel of Death. This most dramatic of all deliverances, in the beginning of our nation’s history [the first harvest season], is to have a *counterpart* in the end of days [the second, final harvest season]. Wow! What could ‘top’ the deliverance of 14 Nisan? That, Beloved, leads us to the ‘prophetic implications’ of *Sh'mini Atzeret*.

The Sh'mini Atzeret Script – Four Specifically-Enumerated Mitzvot

There are only four official mitzvot of the 8th day. The first is to participate in a *miqra kodesh* – i.e. a public proclamation of the day’s *kedusha* -infusion.

The second mitzvah of this special day is to approach the Holy One with (or as) *ishah l'Adonai*. This is historically re-interpreted to mean ‘offering by fire’; but the literal meaning of the phrase *ishah l'Adonai* is ‘as a wife unto the Holy One’.

The third mitzvah of *Sh'mini Atzeret* is found in the Hebrew phrase *atzeret hu* – i.e. it is to be a closing/shutting up/bookend. It appears to mean that there is to be something like a ‘closing ceremony’ held, something like a *Havdalah*. No specifics are given as to how this mitzvah is to be implemented. It is not stated whether this is to be done in homes/sukkot, at the *Mish'kan*/Temple, in community, or as families. The Holy One will leave that to us to work out – well, until He leads us into the ultimate fulfillment, that is.

The fourth mitzvah of the eighth day is that there is to be no regular work/labor [in Hebrew, *meleket avodah*] performed during this 24-hour period at all.

The Prophetic Implications of Sh'mini Atzeret

I do not wish to argue eschatology with you, but it does not take a rocket-scientist to understand that a similar deliverance from the Angel of Death is scheduled for the Holy One’s people in the not-to-distant future. Some believe this is a “rapture”. Others point to Revelation 7, where there is a “sealing” of 144,000 [12,000 from each of the tribes of the sons of Ya'akov [Jacob] except Dan (whose name means *He Is Judge*)], and with them ***a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the Throne, and in front of the Lamb.*** The picture of *Sh'mini Atzeret* is thus the picture of Revelation 20:1-3, where Yochanan [John] says:

*I saw an angel coming down out of heaven,
having the key to the Abyss, and holding in his hand a great chain.*

*He seized the dragon, that ancient Serpent,
Who is the devil, or ha-Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.*

*He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him,
To keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended.*

Imagine what spontaneous songs of praise will burst forth from us on that day, after the pattern of the spontaneous “Song of the Sea” of Exodus 15. As Revelation 15 makes it clear we will on that day sing “*the Song of Moses*” and the “*Song of the Lamb*”.

Rejoice on *Sh'mini Atzeret*! Commemorate the past even as you testify to the world of what will happen in the future.

Questions For Today's Study

1. With regard to each of the Fall *mo'edim*:

[A] How long [i.e. until what event] does the Holy One say they are to be observed?

[B] In what locations does the Holy One say they are to be observed.

[C] Do you feel people who are not natural-born Jews have the right to participate in these Divine Appointments? Why or why not?

[D] Pick one of the four Divine Appointments discussed in today's aliyah, and research it. Then write a one-page essay on the end-time significance of the Divine Appointment you have chosen to study.

2. Today's haftarah reading is from Ezekiel 44:24. Ezekiel is describing the future millennial Temple which he saw in a vision after the First [Solomon's] Temple was destroyed. In this context the Holy One tells the prophet that the Tzaddikim priests [those of the order of Tzadok/Melki-tzedek?] are to perform three functions.

*In a controversy they are to stand to judge;
according to my ordinances they are to judge it:
and they are to keep my **torot** and my mitzvot in all my **mo'edim** [appointed times];
and they are to make my **Shabbatot** [Sabbaths] **holy**.*

[A] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the Hebrew words that our English Bibles translate as “*controversy*” [Strong's Hebrew word #7379, from the irregular verb root *riyb*, Strong's Hebrew word #7378, first used in Genesis 13:7 and Genesis 26:20-22] and “*judge*” [Strong's Hebrew word #8199, from the verb root *shafat*, first used in Genesis 16:5 and 18:25]. Write these Hebrew words in Hebrew consonants with appropriate vowel markings. Then describe the Hebraic hieroglyphic mural the consonants form, and the Hebraic word picture you see developing around these words as used in the Torah text.

[B] By *what standards and authority* are the priests to “judge” disputes and issues involving the *mo’edim* [Leviticus 23 “*appointed times*”] and the Sabbaths during Messiah’s millennial reign?

[C] Go back and read yesterday’s aliyah [Ezekiel 44:23] again, then list and describe all the functions the prophet declares will be performed by priests “after the order of Tzadok” at the time of Messiah’s millennial reign. [Hint: you will need to look up the Hebrew words our English Bibles translate as “*keep*” and “*make*” in your Strong’s and Gesenius and get a good idea what it means to “keep” and to “make” something from a Hebraic perspective.]

3. In I Peter 2:9 *Kefa* restates what Moshe said in Exodus 19:3-6.

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people for the Holy One’s own possession,
that you may show forth the excellencies
of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

[A] In Strong’s, look up the following words and write the Greek words for and the definitions of each:

- [a] “chosen”,
- [b] “generation”,
- [c] “royal”,
- [d] “priesthood”,
- [e] “peculiar”,
- [f] “people”,
- [g] “praises”,
- [h] “darkness”,
- [i] “marvelous” and
- [j] “light”.

[B] For each of these words, write the Hebrew word that *Kefa*, as a Hebrew, was probably thinking. Then using Gesenius describe the Hebraic concept each such word expresses. [Hint – most of these are easily found through focusing your study on Exodus 19:3-6]

[C] Does the meaning of this verse of Scripture appear to differ if looked at from a Greek perspective vs. from a Hebraic perspective? If so, how?

4. How does participation in the *mo’edim* set forth in Leviticus 23 fulfill the calling of the Holy One’s People (those of the original olive tree or those who have been engrafted) as set forth in I Peter 2:9?

*May the Holy One lead His People in worldwide celebration of the Mo’edim,
and may Jew and Gentile of every tribe and tongue soon come together
and rejoice in Him who created the earth*

and who lovingly provided a means for the redemption and sanctification of Man.

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 65:5-8

By awesome deeds of righteousness you answer us, God of our salvation.

You who are the hope of all the ends of the eretz,

Of those who are far away on the sea;

Who by his power forms the mountains,

Having armed yourself with strength;

Who stills the roaring of the seas,

The roaring of their waves and the turmoil of the nations.

They also who dwell in far-away places are afraid at your wonders.

You call the morning's dawn and the evening with songs of joy.