

Parashat Emor – The Moadi Dance of Adonai

(The Appointed Times (Feasts) of יהוה – The Prophetic Clock of יהוה)

Messiah — the L-rd of the Dance

I danced in the morning when the world was begun, and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun. I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth, at Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance then wherever you may be, I am the Lord of the Dance said He. And I'll lead you all wherever you may be, I will lead you all in the dance said He.

I danced for the Scribe and the Pharisee, but they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me. I danced for the fishermen, for James and John, they came with Me and the dance went on.

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame. The holy people, they said it was a shame. They whipped and stripped and they hung me high and they left me there on a cross to die. Dance...

I danced on a Wednesday when sky turned black. It's hard to dance with the devil on your back. They buried my body and they thought I'd gone, but I am the Dance and I still go on. Dance then...

They cut me down and I leapt up high, I am the life that will never, never die. I'll live in you if you'll live in me. I am the Lord of the Dance said He. Dance then...

The mo'adim are a cycle. Every year they come and they go. One leads to the other, is built upon the previous one, and prepares us for the next. If we were to look at the mo'adim from a *bird's eye view* it would look like a circle of dancing. Some of the dancing is happy, some is more somber. But no matter what, the people are dancing—there is purpose, rhythm, design, and meaning. We would see that the more the participants dance, the better they become at dancing. They grow in their understanding of the *dances*.

There is also something else we can see when the people dance the cycle of the mo'adim. Right in the center of the circle is the Lord of the Dance—Yeshua the Messiah! They are dancing around Him—and He is dancing with them!

Everyone is having so much fun. When the dances become slower, more reflective, everyone begins to weep. When they are brighter and happier, they all begin to laugh. The One in the center also feels with them. Moreover, whatever they do not understand about the *dance* they look to Him and He teaches them. When He is not teaching them, He is merely delighting in them because of their dancing, because of their delight in Him.

Since it is a circle, anyone can join the dance any wherever and whenever he wants. Eventually, the circle will come back to whatever dances he happened to miss in his absence. What about you? Are you dancing with us? If not, come and join the circle, the cycle of mo'adim! You can come in at any point. It does not matter where you are coming from or what you had just been doing. Just come! Join the circle of mo'adim and see how much you will learn. See how much you will enjoy looking at the Person in the middle of the circle. For, it is He Himself who is bidding you to join the dance!

Messianic Mo'adim

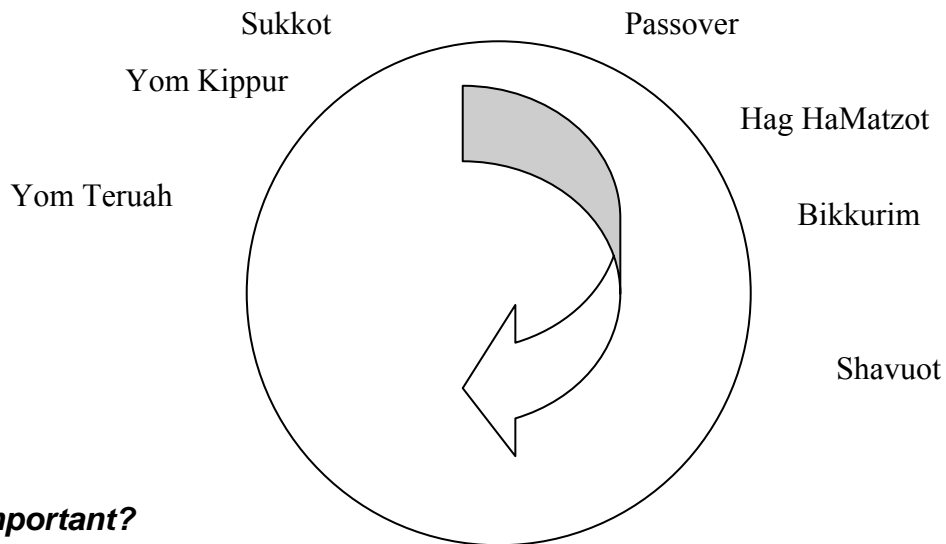
Parashat Emor is filled to the brim with teachings about the person and work of the Messiah. The main feature of this *Parashah* is the revelation of *Adonai's* calendar for His people. *Adonai* instructed Israel to set aside certain days and years that would serve as special times of worship, celebration, and rest. In *Leviticus 23:2* *Adonai* said to Moshe: “*Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: ‘יהוה’s appointed festivals that you are to designate as holy convocations... these are My appointed festivals.’*”

The Hebrew word translated *appointed festivals* is from the word מועד (*moed*). This word literally means *appointed times*. It is as if יהוה is telling Israel to get out their personal and national planning calendars and

write in certain appointments for יהוה. He already has them in His calendar and He, therefore, instructed Israel to give time to Him accordingly. On those days יהוה desires to meet with His people in very special ways.

The *mo'adim* (appointed festivals), can be studied on many different levels. The most literal level is to examine them for what they reveal about Israel's history during the period of the Exodus. Beyond that, however, we can also look at the *mo'adim* for what they can teach us about our own personal salvation history and our own personal cycle of redemption and sanctification. And, the *mo'adim* can also reveal volumes about יהוה in history and salvation—the *Messiah*. According to the *B'rit Chadasha*, *Yeshua* is specifically connected to the *mo'adim*. Thus, with the precedent set by the inspired writers of Scripture, it is safe to look at all of the *mo'adim* and see what they can teach us about the Ancient of Days.

The Prophetic Clock of Adonai



Why is it so Important?

The first of the *mo'adim* listed in chapter 23 of Leviticus is *Shabbat*. The first listed is also the most important, according to the Law of First Mention. It is a day of cessation from all regular work. The pattern for this day was set by the Holy One when He created everything in *Bereshit* 1:31-2:3. We are told that when יהוה completed all the work which He intended to do in the creation: “יהוה blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He abstained from all His work which יהוה created to make.”

Thus, the pattern for rest and completion on the seventh day was set from the very beginning of creation. The *Torah* enjoins Israel to do as יהוה did and abstain from all of their creative work. The *Torah* also stresses the importance of *Shabbat* in other ways. First, there are an abundance of passages—at least fourteen different ones—that teach about the *Shabbat*. Second, there is at least one *Shabbat* included in each of *mo'adim* of Lev. 23. Third, by establishing a *Shabbat* year and a *Shabbat* year after seven-sevens of years, we can understand that there must be something very awe-inspiring about our celebration/acknowledgment of this seventh-day rest.

The Good News

There is a vital connection to the importance that God puts on the *Shabbat* and the revelation of *Messiah* in it. To see this clearly we will examine Hebrews chapter four. In this amazing chapter, the writer makes a link between the establishment of a seventh day *Shabbat* by יהוה in *Bereshit* and entering into the eternal spiritual rest we have through faith in the *Messiah*. The link is the concept of *rest*!

In *Bereshit*, יהוה did not stop all activities. He, of course continued to sustain the universe which He had just finished creating. But His rest consisted of a cessation of all of His creative work. The creation was finished and accomplished. There was simply nothing else necessary to do other than sustaining the work which He had just completed. So, יהוה rested—not because He was physically tired—but simply because He was finished.

Hebrews chapter four tells us that belief in *Yeshua* is exactly the same way. The six days of labor in one's life are the time before one trusts in *Yeshua*. It is a time where he seeks to earn יְהוָה's approval. It is a time when he strives to do, to perform, to labor and struggle in order to attempt to make himself right with his Creator.

In contrast, when a person trusts in the *Messiah* for his salvation, he *enters into a rest* according to Hebrews 4:3. This is the same kind of rest that יְהוָה entered into when He finished the creation as is stated in Hebrews 4:4. Why is believing in *Messiah* likened to entering a *Shabbat* rest? Hebrews gives us the key in verse 4:10: “*For the one who has entered His rest has Himself also rested from His works, as יְהוָה did from His.*”

What then, enables a person to be accepted by יְהוָה as righteous? It is not our efforts. It is simply resting in what *Messiah* did for us! *Messiah* did all the work for us. He paid the penalty for our sin. He accomplished the atonement. He secured our justification. He completely changed us from sinners to saints. He redeemed us from slavery. He reconciled us to יְהוָה. He forgave us. He saved us! Even the very faith necessary for all of this to be true for us was a gift given to us from our loving *Abba*, (Ephesians 2:8-9). What more was necessary in order to make us new creations? NOTHING! Except to merely, by faith, enter into the wonderful eternal *Shabbat* that יְהוָה has waiting for all who believe in *Messiah*.

In essence, therefore, if we understand the message of *Shabbat*, especially as it is explained in Hebrews chapter four, we see that the message of *Shabbat* is the Good News! That is why the *Torah* deems *Shabbat* as being so important. If we do not understand the *Shabbat*, then we are deficient in our understanding of salvation. Hence, once a week יְהוָה provides us with a visible practical way to remember our rest in *Messiah*—by setting aside the seventh day as He did. Moreover, each of the other *mo'adim* have at least one *Shabbat* associated with them. This is as if יְהוָה were saying that whatever else these special times and seasons may teach, it all begins by entering into יְהוָה's eternal rest through faith in the finished work of *Messiah*.

A Taste of the Future

Hebrews chapter four also teaches us at least one more important concept about the *Shabbat*. It tells us that the present *Shabbat* is just a small taste of the future eternal *Shabbat* we will enjoy because *Messiah* saved us by His grace. This idea is hinted at in Heb. 4:9: “*There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of יְהוָה.*” The writer of Hebrews had already discussed the necessity of entering into יְהוָה's spiritual rest for our daily lives. In verse 4:9, therefore, he seems to hint of the future.

This orientation toward the future corresponds to, or even may be caused by, the anticipation of the final redemption which the *Sabbath* epitomizes. Both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in rabbinical literature the *Sabbath* is viewed also as a type of the world to come.

When we observe *Shabbat* in a physical way every week we not only act out the rest we presently have from being in *Messiah*, but we also experience a little taste of what it will be like in the world to come when we will forever experience the perfect blessings of the rest *Messiah* gave to us through His redemption.

Return to Shabbat

The Hebrew word for *Shabbat* is שָׁבַת whose root is שׁוּב which means “return.” When we put the ת in front of the verb we get the familiar T’shuvah, repent and turn around and return. Thus, in and of itself, יְהוָה when He gave us *Shabbat*, He wants us to implicitly “return to Him.” Notice that in Exodus 20 we are to “*zachor*” or remember and in Deuteronomy we are to “*shomer*” guard over *Shabbat*. The construction of the Hebrew is identical, except for the verb. Thus, we are to remember and guard *Shabbat*. It is our wedding ring! It identifies us with יְהוָה, He also rested on *Shabbat*, not Sunday! There is so much more we could say about *Shabbat*, but I’ll leave it for another occasion. *Shabbat Shalom!*