

Kumi Ori

Arise (Kumi), shine (Ori), for your light has come! The glory of Adonai has risen on you. ² For behold, darkness covers the earth, and deep darkness the peoples. But Adonai will arise upon you, and His glory will appear over you. ³ Nations will come to your light, kings to the brilliance of your rising...The people walking in darkness will see a great light. Upon those dwelling in the land of the shadow of death, light will shine (Yeshua in Matt. 4:16, John the Baptist in Luke 1:79). ² You will multiply the nation. You will increase the joy. They will rejoice before You like the joy in the harvest, as they revel when they divide spoil (Isa. 60:1-3, 9:1-2)

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Chag HaMatzot*, modernly called the Passover Festival) we have a disguised appointed time (*moed*) in which a sheaf (*omer*) of the first fruits (*reishit*) of the barley harvest was offered to the Lord, the chaff with the grain. After a 49 day-count (seven weeks) there will be another first fruits offering except of the wheat harvest. We can refer to the *moed* as the “*First of the First Fruits Offering*:”

Bikkurim and Shavuot

⁹ Adonai spoke to Moses saying: ¹⁰ “Speak to Bnei-Yisrael and tell them: When you have come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you are to bring the omer of the firstfruits of your harvest to the kohen. ¹¹ He is to wave the omer before Adonai, to be accepted for you. On the morrow after the Shabbat, the kohen is to wave it. ¹² On the day when you wave the omer you are to offer a male lamb without blemish, one year old, as a burnt offering to Adonai. ¹³ The grain offering with it should be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil—an offering made by fire to Adonai for a soothing aroma. Its drink offering with it should be a quarter of a gallon of wine. ¹⁴ You are not to eat bread, roasted grain, or fresh grain until this same day—until you have brought the offering of your God. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. ¹⁵ “Then you are to count from the morrow after the Shabbat, from the day that you brought the omer of the wave offering, seven complete Shabbatot. ¹⁶ Until the morrow after the seventh Shabbat you are to count fifty days, and then present a new grain offering to Adonai. ¹⁷ You are to bring out of your houses two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour. They are to be baked with hametz as firstfruits to Adonai. ¹⁸ You are to present, along with the bread, seven one-year-old lambs without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They will become a burnt offering to Adonai, with their meal offering, and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to Adonai. ¹⁹ Also you are to offer one male goat for a sin offering and a pair of year-old male lambs for a sacrifice of fellowship offerings. ²⁰ The kohen is to wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before Adonai, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to Adonai for the kohen. ²¹ You are to make a proclamation on the same day that there is to be a holy convocation, and you should do no regular work. This is a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. (Lev. 23:9-21)

The Messianic significance of the celebration of the *First of the First Fruits* is difficult to ascertain because of the uncertainty of the time issue, yet it is evident that the *First of the First Fruits* was meant to coincide with the resurrection of *Yeshua*. There is a special feature about this particular offering that distinguishes it from the ‘*Second of the First Fruits*’ offering made on Shavuot. The text in Leviticus 23:11 tells us that since the whole sheaf is waved before the Lord the whole grain (chaff and grain) were both offered before the Lord, “*to be accepted*”. This Torah picture provides the healthy element of knowing ourselves as *accepted* in Messiah. We are new creations in Messiah with a veil of flesh. The *grain* is the *new creation*; the *chaff* is the veil of flesh. As we are involved in our sanctification process, especially dealing with sin in our lives, our immediate need is to be reminded of God’s unconditional acceptance of us, just the way God accepted the offering of the whole sheaf. The celebrating of the *moed* in this way will enable us to be free to deal honestly with our *chaff*. The way in which we deal with our sin will bring great glory to God. We now have a wonderful time to discuss God’s unconditional love for us, being a new creation, and how we need sanctification. The Scripture assures us that “*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Messiah Yeshua*” (Romans 8:1). Keeping this truth in mind, our participation in our own process of sanctification will always result in vibrant corporate worship. What joy, as well as emotional and spiritual health, there is in the knowledge that we are accepted in our personal process of dealing with our *chaff*. We are a new creation in Messiah and our *chaff* is circumcised from us (Colossians 2:11-13).

As I meditate yearly on our Messiah being first fruits of the Resurrection I step into the realization that I am very much like Peter in the sense that even though I am His disciple (for almost 41 years), I too have turned my back on Him instead of acknowledging Him before people, and especially in difficult circumstances. You remember that during *Yeshua*'s Passover Peter exclaimed aloud that he would not betray the Lord: "*Master, I am ready to go with You even to prison and to death... And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.*"⁶¹ *And the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before the rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.'*"⁶² *And Peter went out and wept bitterly.*" (Luke 22:33, 60b-63) Even in the midst of such desperation and despair, there is still an opportunity to appropriate the victory:

♪ *The people who walked in darkness, Have seen a great light, They who dwelt in the shadow of death, to them has that light shined. Arise and shine, for your light has come. Arise and shine, the glory of the Lord, has risen upon you. Arise and shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord, has risen upon you. Out of the gloom and the darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see. In the place of His glory and grace, the people shall all be set free. Then shall your light, break forth as the morning, Your brightness as the noon day* ♪ (Kol Simcha 1992).

You see because He resurrected, I am forgiven! Most all the disciples abandoned Him, yet He went after them, He forgave them, He shared His revelation, He shared His vision, He shared His Spirit, He shared His victory, He brought them up when all hope was lost. *Yeshua* comes to His defeated friends and raises them up from the depth of despair, from a form of death itself. And since our Lord is not a respecter of persons, what He did for His disciples, He will do for you. He still beckons us with the words: "*Receive the Spirit of God and if you forgive someone's sin, their sins are forgiven...*" What an opportunity we have today in view of the Resurrection of *Yeshua*. Many of you, like the disciples, have been caught up by your sin and are found wanting. But *Yeshua* beckons. Yes, because He is risen, we are forgiven!

Paul said: "...⁵ *For if we have become joined together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also will be joined together in His resurrection—*⁶ *knowing our old man was crucified with Him so that the sinful body might be done away with, so we no longer serve sin...*"¹⁴ *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*" (Ro. 6:9b, 14). Therefore, we have victory in *Messiah Yeshua*, but only if we apply His blood to the lintels of our hearts and appropriate His resurrection. Because He lives, because He is risen, because He is the Son of God, then we have the opportunity to enter into the Holy of Holies and secure His atonement. Do not delay.

Our God is a Pesach God, who asked for and expects *reishit/bikkurim* from us. Christianity puts great emphasis in the resurrection because it is "*proof*" of God's power in Messiah and the apostle Paul tells us that the same power is available to us today. Whereas Christianity has made the Resurrection greater than the *Pesach*, it is also a shame that some Messianic Jews have generally put the resurrection in a back burner. But the stove has multiple front burners and *Pesach* includes all three: the day of *Pesach* (the 14th of Aviv), *Chag HaMatzot* (the 15th to the 21st of Aviv) and *Yom Reishit* (on the morning after the weekly Sabbath during the week of *Chag HaMatzot*). *Therefore let us keep the Feast (in its entirety) with the Matzah of sincerity and truth!*'