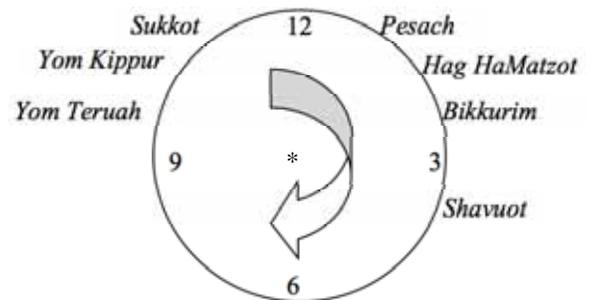


Rikudei Mo'adim – The Dance of the Festivals

Like many others in *Kol Simcha*, I am a certified Israeli Folk Dance (IFD) instructor. I have been teaching IFD since 1998. KS is actually a worldwide and recognized IFD center, listed in various websites as a place to learn and practice Israeli Folk Dance weekly. When I meditate on THE chapter (Lev. 23) that details *Adonai's Appointed Festivals* (*mo'adim* in Hebrew), IFD dance elements spring out of the pages of the *Torah*. The Hebrew word translated 'appointed festivals' is the Hebrew word *moed* (*mem-vav-ayin-dalet*) whose literal meaning is 'appointed times.' It can be likened to *Adonai* telling Israel to get out their personal and national planning calendars (their *iCal App*) and insert certain appointments where He is to meet with His people. He already has them in His eternal calendar and He, therefore, instructed Israel to set-aside these times for Him accordingly. On those days *Adonai* already has plans to meet with His people in very special ways.

The *mo'adim of Adonai* are a cycle – a circle. Every year they come and they go. One leads to the other, and each is built upon the previous. Each prepares us for the next encounter. If we were to look at the *mo'adim* from a *bird's eye view*, we would see a circle – a dance circle. Some of the dancing is spirited, some is slow and graceful, some are happy and some are solemn. Some are individual and some are couples. But regardless of the dance we see purpose, rhythm, design, precision, synchrony and meaning. We can observe that the more the people 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 Lord's people dance the cycle of the holidays (The Dance of the Festivals). Right in the center of the circle is the Lord of the Dance, The Lord *Yeshua*! 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 is expressive 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 the Lord of the Dance.

In a circle dance, anyone can join in wherever and whenever they want. Eventually, the circle will come back to whatever dance repetition he happened to miss in his absence. What about you? Are you dancing with the Lord? If not, come and join the circle, the dance of the festivals! You can come in at any point. It does not matter where you are coming from or what you had previously been doing. Just come and join the circle dance of the *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. It is *Yeshua* Himself, the Lord of the Dance, who is bidding you to join the circle.

The revelation of God's appointments for His people is among the most basic and persuasive truths in Scripture that have captured the minds and interest of the non-Messianic world. These festivals are being celebrated throughout Christianity as the Holy Spirit reveals them to those desiring His Truth. Along with *Shabbat* and the *Mitzvot*, the High Holidays are being understood and apprehended by serious Believers. The *mo'adim* are much, much easier to grasp and implement than the *Shabbat and Mitzvot* because of their very inherent worship nature and because they have an undeniable connection with the Messiah while He was with us. The *mo'adim* could be studied at many different levels, the most literal being to examine them for what they reveal about Israel's post Exodus history. We can also look at them for what they can teach us about our own personal salvation history and cycle of redemption and sanctification. More so they reveal volumes about *Yeshua*. In the *NT*, He is specifically and unmistakably connected to the *mo'adim*. With the precedent set by these inspired *NT* writers, it is safe for them to embrace the *mo'adim* and learn about the Ancient of Days.

The first and obvious truth is that these High Holidays belong to *Adonai* and not to Israel. They are not the

Jewish High Holidays they are Adonai's High Holidays: "Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and tell them: 'These are the appointed moadim of Adonai, which you are to proclaim to be holy convocations—My moadim'" (Lev. 23:2). They are Adonai's appointments which we are to proclaim as holy convocations and they are *My (Adonai's) moadim*.

The first *moed* listed in Lev. 23 is *Shabbat*: ³"Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You are to do no work—it is a Shabbat to Adonai in all your dwellings." In Jewish thought the first *moed* listed is also the most important (the Law of First and Last 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 Genesis 2:3. We are told that when God completed all the work which He intended to do in the creation: ³"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He ceased from all His work that God created for the purpose of preparing." Thus, the pattern for rest and completion for the 7th day was set from the very beginning of creation. The *Torah* enjoins Israel to do as God did and abstain from all of their creative work on Shabbat. There are an abundance of passages (at least fourteen different ones) that teach about *Shabbat*. Further, there is at least one *Shabbat* included in each *mo'adim* in Lev. 23. Finally, by establishing a *Shabbat* year (*sh'e mitah*) and a *Shabbat* year (*yovel*) after seven sets of seven years we see something futuristic about celebrating the 7th day rest.

Shabbat is a no work, no cooking and no fires day. The TNK does not list labors that are prohibited, but mentions field labor (Ex. 34:21; Num.15: 32-36), treading a winepress, loading animals and doing business (Neh. 13), load-bearing (Isa. 58:13; Jer. 17:22; Amos 8:5), and kindling fires (Ex. 35:2-3) are forbidden work. Instead we are commanded to rest on the seventh day of the week: ¹²"You are to do your work for six days, but on the seventh day you will rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and also the son of your handmaid and the outsider may be refreshed" (Ex. 23:12) and ²¹"For six days you will work, but on the seventh day you will rest. During plowing time and harvest you must rest." (Ex. 34:21). We are forbidden to work on Shabbat: ¹⁰"but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God. In it you shall not do any work—not you, nor your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, nor the outsider that is within your gates" (Ex. 20:10) and ¹⁴"but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God. In it you are not to do any work—not you or your son or your daughter, or your slave or your maid, or your ox, your donkey or any of your livestock or the outsider within your gates, so that your slave and your maid may rest as you do" (Deut. 5:14). One who publicly violates *Shabbat* is likened to an idolater since *Shabbat* is an eternal sign (the Hebrew word *Ot*) between Adonai and Israel forever: "... 'Surely you must keep My Shabbatot, for it is a sign (*Ot*) between Me and you throughout your generations, so you may know that I am Adonai who sanctifies you. ¹⁴Therefore you are to keep (guard) the Shabbat, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it will die, for whoever does any work during Shabbat, that soul will be cut off from the midst of his people. ¹⁵Work is to be done for six days, but on the seventh day is a Shabbat of complete rest, holy to Adonai. Whoever does any work on the Shabbat will surely be put to death. ¹⁶So Bnei-Yisrael is to keep the Shabbat, to observe the Shabbat throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷It is a sign (*Ot*) between Me and Bnei-Yisrael forever, for in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested'" (Ex. 31:12-17). Even our animals are to rest on the *Shabbat*: "You and your son and your daughter and your slave and your maidservant and your animal." In particular our animals must not carry loads on the *Shabbat*: "In order that your ox and ass may rest" Prohibitions regarding cooking/heating food on *Shabbat* are based on the *Torah* bans of not cooking and not kindling fires on *Shabbat*.

The Hebrew word for *Shabbat* is *shin-bet-tav* whose root is *shub* (*shin-vav-bet*) which means, *return*. When we put the *tav* in front of the root we get the familiar *t'shuv* (*t'shuvah*), *repent* (to *turn around* and *return*). When the Lord gave us *Shabbat*, He wanted us implicitly to *return to Him*. In Exodus we are told to remember (*zachor*) *Shabbat* but in Deut. we guard/keep (*shomer*) *Shabbat*. These are identical Hebrew constructions except for the verb. It is Israel's wedding ring and it identifies us with Him since He also kept *Shabbat*.

The Festival	The Season	The Biblical Source
<i>Pesach</i> [The Spring Festival]	Start of Spring	Start of the Barley Harvest Deut. 16:9
<i>Shavuot</i> [The Festival of Reaping/Harvest]	End of Spring/Start of Summer	First fruits of Wheat Ex. 34:22
<i>Sukkot</i> [The Festival of Ingathering]	End of Summer/start of Fall	After gathering the produce... Deut. 16:13