

MIKRA'EY KODESH

"Holy Convocations"

Author: Torah Teacher Ariel ben-Lyman HaNaviy

(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

***Updated: October 13, 2006**

"ADONAI said to Moshe, "Tell the people of Isra'el: 'The designated times of ADONAI which you are to proclaim as holy convocations are my designated times.'"

(Leviticus 23:1)

""Work is to be done on six days; but the seventh day is a Shabbat of complete rest, a holy convocation; you are not to do any kind of work; it is a Shabbat for ADONAI, even in your homes.

(Leviticus 23:3)

שַׁבָּת

Sabbath

Sabbath and Work

*This first section on Sabbath and Work may be read in its entirety at <http://www.jewfaq.org/shabbat.htm>

When the Torah speaks of "work" it frequently uses the Hebrew word "melachah". In reality the word "melachah" is a technical word related to "working".

Most Americans see the word "work" and think of it in the English sense of the word: physical labor and effort, or employment. Under this definition, turning on a light would be permitted, because it does not require effort, but a rabbi would not be permitted to lead Shabbat services, because leading services is his employment. Jewish law prohibits the former and permits the latter. Many Americans therefore conclude that Jewish law doesn't make any sense.

The problem lies not in Jewish law, but in the definition that Americans are using. The Torah does not prohibit "work" in the 20th century English sense of the word. The Torah prohibits "melachah" (Mem-Lamed-Alef-Kaf-Heh), which is usually translated as "work," but does not mean precisely the same thing as the English word. Before you can begin to understand the Shabbat restrictions, you must understand the word "melachah."

Melachah generally refers to the kind of work that is creative, or that exercises control or dominion over your environment. The word may be related to "melekh" (king: Mem-Lamed-Kaf). The quintessential example of melachah is the work of creating the

universe, which God ceased from on the seventh day. Note that God's work did not require a great physical effort: he spoke, and it was done.

The word melachah is rarely used in scripture outside of the context of Shabbat and holiday restrictions. The only other repeated use of the word is in the discussion of the building of the sanctuary and its vessels in the wilderness. Exodus Ch. 31, 35-38. Notably, the Shabbat restrictions are reiterated during this discussion (Ex. 31:13), thus we can infer that the work of creating the sanctuary had to be stopped for Shabbat. From this, the rabbis concluded that the work prohibited on Shabbat is the same as the work of creating the sanctuary. They found 39 categories of forbidden acts, all of which are types of work that were needed to build the sanctuary:

- 1.Sowing**
 - 2.Plowing**
 - 3.Reaping**
 - 4.Binding sheaves**
 - 5.Threshing**
 - 6.Winnowing**
 - 7.Selecting**
 - 8.Grinding**
 - 9.Sifting**
 - 10.Kneading**
 - 11.Baking**
 - 12.Shearing wool**
 - 13.Washing wool**
 - 14.Beating wool**
 - 15.Dyeing wool**
 - 16.Spinning**
 - 17.Weaving**
 - 18.Making two loops 19.Weaving two threads 20.Separating two threads 21.Tying**
 - 22.Untying**
 - 23.Sewing two stitches 24.Tearing**
 - 25.Trapping**
 - 26.Slaughtering**
 - 27.Flaying**
 - 28.Salting meat**
 - 29.Curing hide**
 - 30.Scraping hide**
 - 31.Cutting hide up**
 - 32.Writing two letters 33.Erasing two letters 34.Building**
 - 35.Tearing a building down 36.Extinguishing a fire 37.Kindling a fire**
 - 38.Hitting with a hammer 39.Taking an object from the private domain to the public, or transporting an object in the public domain.**
- (Mishna Shabbat, 7:2)

According to Rabbinical Judaism all of these tasks are prohibited, as well as any task that operates by the same principle or has the same purpose. In addition, the rabbis have prohibited coming into contact with any implement that could be used for one of the above purposes (for example, you may not touch a hammer or a pencil), travel, buying and selling, and other weekday tasks that would interfere with the spirit of Shabbat. The use of electricity is prohibited because it serves the same function as fire or some of the other prohibitions, or because it is technically considered to be "fire."

The issue of the use of an automobile on Shabbat, so often argued by non-observant Jews, is not really an issue at all for observant Jews. The automobile is powered by an internal combustion engine, which operates by burning gasoline and oil, a clear violation of the Torah prohibition against kindling a fire. In addition, the movement of the car would constitute transporting an object in the public domain, another violation of a Torah prohibition, and in all likelihood the car would be used to travel a distance greater than that permitted by rabbinical prohibitions. For all these reasons, and many more, the use of an automobile on Shabbat is clearly not permitted.¹

As with almost all of the commandments, all of these Shabbat restrictions can be violated if necessary to save a life. Also keep in mind that not all Jews observe Shabbat the same ways as every other Jew and that includes Torah Teacher Ariel.

Sabbath in the B'rit Chadashah

But what of the "New Testament view" of Sabbath work?

Sabbath observance can seem like a tricky subject... especially when viewing it through the lens of someone else. I personally believe that Torah-observance (to include Sabbath) is best understood and applied from the individual perspective, especially when the Ruach HaKodesh has firmly revealed a certain aspect of it to you. In other words: how YOU keep Torah is going to necessarily differ somewhat than the way I keep Torah, understand?

Allow me to elaborate (drawing from some of my Torah portion resources):

The Torah is a personal instruction book, meant to be actualized by each individual in the community, and lived out by the community as a whole and in unison.

Along with the fact that it is a memorial of Creation, the Sabbath day is also an identification of HaShem's authority. Only he could set a day apart as holy (read B'resheet 2:1-3). Only he could sanctify a day as an eternal memorial of his uniqueness. No other created being has this authority. This includes man. This includes religious institutions. When we attempt to override this authority, we undermine the very character, identification, and nature of our All-mighty God. Once we find ourselves playing God, it is then that we are in serious trouble. While it is true that we have been

¹ <http://www.jewfaq.org/shabbat.htm>

given the authority to make lasting decisions governing everyday communal matters (read Mattityahu 18:15-20 to understand an often-misunderstood application of heavenly authority), we have not been given the authority to switch God's Sabbath Day, nor to abrogate it.

Author and translator David H. Stern has this to say about the Sabbath Day, in his Jewish New Testament Commentary to a well-known passage in the book of Hebrews:

'A Shabbat-keeping, Greek sabbatismos, used only here in the New Testament. In the Septuagint, the related Greek word "sabbatizein" was coined to translate the Hebrew verb shabbat when it means, "to observe Shabbat." The usual translation, "There remains a Sabbath rest," minimizes the observance aspect and makes the role of God's people entirely passive.

Christians often assume that the New Testament does not require God's people to observe Shabbat and go on to claim that Sunday has replaced Saturday as the Church's day of worship (see 1C 16:2N). But this passage, and in particular v.9, shows that Shabbat-observance is expected of believers.

From Co 2:16-17, which says that Shabbat was a shadow of things that were to come, but the substance comes from the Messiah, we learn that the essence of Shabbat-observance for believers is not following the detailed rules which halakhah sets forth concerning what may or may not be done on the seventh day of the week. Rather, as v.10 explains, the Shabbat-keeping expected of God's people consists in resting from one's own works, as God did from his; it consists in trusting and being faithful to God (vv.2-3). Although the specific "works" from which the readers of this letter were to rest were animal sacrifices (see 6:4-6N), by implication all self-struggle, in which one relies on one's own efforts instead of trusting God, is to be avoided; and in this the author is making the same point as Sha'ul does at Ro 3:19-4:25.' (JNTC, commentary to Messianic Jews (Hebrews) 4:9-10, p. 673)

As already listed above, in the Talmud, the great compendium of Jewish thought, since this mitzvah is juxtaposed with the building of the Tabernacle, the rabbis supposed that HaShem was hinting at defining "work" as the tasks necessary to build the Mishkan. Therefore, they deduced that at least 39 different tasks were prohibited on the Sabbath day (corresponding to the 39 tasks that it took to build the Mishkan, that is, the portable Tabernacle). I believe that for the most part, since the Torah is rather silent when it comes to defining all modes of work, that our sages had the right intentions. However, the overall outlook of Sabbath prohibitions with their various halakhic rulings—as interpreted by non-Messianic Judaism, amounts to legalism. Sadly, today many Jewish people have even added more tasks to the original 39 tasks, so that to "properly keep the Sabbath" is an enormous burden on the average Torah-observant prospect!

The Sabbath is but one command that is to be internalized using the faith of Messiah Yeshua. When we pervert the Sabbath (or any other command for that matter) into

legalism, we do damage both to the covenant of God and to our own relationship as well.

Lets apply practical, common sense: Suppose you live in a house which is warmed by a fireplace or wood-stove furnace. Should you keep the fire lit on the Sabbath day to keep warm? Especially during the winter months? If the fire we are talking about is the ONLY source of heat for your house during the cold months, and it can be deduced that HaShem does not want you to freeze, then by all means light it. Even the rabbis agree that sanctification of human life is one of the most important of all mitzvot. Left with the choice to prioritize your Torah-observance, lighting a fire to keep your house warm falls into the category of "minor rule-breaking". Doesn't that make sense?

Consider that when the Torah teachers of Yeshua's day interpreted Shabbat-keeping, their interpretation necessarily conflicted with the interpretation and application of that of his own and his talmidim (disciples). Why? Because everyone has his or her own unique set of circumstances by which to "balance" Torah -observance against, while at the same time attempting to maintain communal unity. What may appear to be a violation of Torah on the surface, may in fact turn out to be an individual's prioritizing of those specific mitzvot which apply to his life at the time--the ones which HaShem has revealed to him... the ones which HaShem holds him accountable for.

Should Messianic Believers Attend Sunday Service?

I don't believe that it is wrong to attend services on Sunday, provided that you don't replace Sabbath for this first day worship. Sabbath has never been abrogated, as the Catholic Church would like us to believe. Sabbath "observance" and Sabbath "recognition" go hand-in-hand; therefore, I tend to refer to them interchangeably.

The Hebrew word "shomer" means "keeper of" or to be "observant"; the Hebrew word "mitzvot" is the plural form of the word "mitzvah" meaning "command"; thus, "shomer mitzvot" means "keeper of the commands", or more properly "Torah observant".

In Judaism, keeping the Torah is central to performing the will of HaShem. Indeed, as properly understood from HaShem's point of view, the whole of Torah was given to bring its followers to the "goal" of acquiring the kind of faith in HaShem that leads to placing one's trusting faithfulness in the One and only Son of HaShem, Yeshua HaMashiach. To this end, the Torah has prophesied about him since as early as the book of Genesis (3:15), and continues to speak of him until its conclusion in Revelation (22:20). In this capacity, the Torah acts like its etymological counterpart ("yarah") in that it "teaches" its adherents how to properly identify with HaShem by helping them to "reach the mark". To be sure, the Hebrew word used to identify "sin" literally means, "to miss the mark".

Obedience to the Torah has long since been an oft-misunderstood subject, both in the Jewish community and the Christian one. It is my understanding that the errors can be corrected once a person resolves the issues surrounding legalism, begins to understand

the intended nature and function of the Torah in the first place, and then faithfully applies it to their own lives. Because the Messiah has already come, the Torah is now a document meant to be lived out in the life of a faithful follower of Yeshua, through the power of the Ruach HaKodesh, to the glory of HaShem the Father. It should not be presumed that it could be obeyed mechanically, automatically, legalistically, without having faith, without having trust in HaShem, without having love for HaShem or man, and without being empowered by the Ruach HaKodesh. To state it succinctly, Torah observance is a matter of the heart, always has been, and always will be.

When the Sabbath is first mentioned in the Ten Words (Ten Commandments) it is for the sake of remembering the Creative work that HaShem performed during those first six days. However, in Exodus chapter 31 we find out that HaShem wants 'Am Yisra'el (the People of Isra'el) to recognize that the Sabbath is also a "sign". In Hebrew, this word is "ot" (say "oat"). Of what is the Sabbath a sign? Of the formerly expressed truth—that HaShem is indeed the Creator of the Universe, and that the entire cosmos sprang forth from the creative power of his spoken word!

One other point: whether or not seventh day Sabbath-keeping is for all believers (Jew and Gentile alike) remains to be universally accepted. However, the Torah makes it clear that when the Messiah returns to set up his Millennial Kingdom from Yerushalayim here on earth, that all of his followers will be enjoined to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, as it is eternally taught in his Torah (read Yesha'yahu 66:22-24).

The word sin, according to the Jewish mindset, means to "miss the intended mark". If the intention is to abstain from all forms of labor on the Sabbath Day, then working is "missing the mark". Yeshua, however, clued us into the intentions behind some of the Sabbath Day's activities. His definition is not the legalistic point of view that is held by many of his day, as well as many of our day. Rather, his definition of Sabbath-keeping addressed "intent of the heart", as well as procedure. Today, whatever we do to keep God's Torah—and it is biblically acceptable to lead a Torah-observant lifestyle even as a believer—we should be convinced that there is no longer any condemnation for those in Messiah, if we fail in certain areas (Romans 8:1-2). This includes Sabbath-keeping. Also it must be emphatically stated that we as believers do not attempt to follow the Torah to BECOME saved—we attempt to follow it because WE ARE saved.

Here is Exodus 20:8-11 and a short review given for summarization:

"Remember the day, Shabbat, to set it apart for God. You have six days to labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Shabbat for ADONAI your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work—not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property. For in six days, ADONAI made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. This is why ADONAI blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for himself."

Properly understood, it is impossible to over-emphasize this particular mitzvah. The seventh day rest shares many different functions within the Torah. As such, it carries with it many fundamental truths that are beyond the scope my commentary here.

Here, however, HaShem emphasizes the role of himself as the "Creator of the world", using the Shabbat as the "signature" of his creative genius. Because HaShem ceased his labor on the seventh day, his creation was to also cease from their labors. Spiritually, this speaks to our position as sons and daughters in Messiah. Before we came to be sons and daughters, we "labored" to become acceptable in the sight of ADONAI. But once we placed our trusting faithfulness in Messiah Yeshua's atonement, we "ceased" to labor! We now "rest" in the finished work that he freely accomplished on our behalf.

Don't let the details get the best of you...

Sunday Worship and Idolatry

Those of Jewish persuasion have rightfully questioned Sunday worship. Allow me to elaborate:

Isra'el was destined to be great among the surrounding nations. Theirs was a call to holiness, vividly demonstrated by their unique, God-given calendar. Surely, the many cultures and peoples that they interacted with had calendars of their own, identifying their various holy days and such. Yet Isra'el was to showcase the heavenly reality, through earthly means, that there was only One, True God under heaven worthy to be identified and worshipped as Creator. Isra'el was to teach the surrounding nations—by their own lifestyle—that "God is One" (Deut. 6:4).

During this period of the TaNaKH (Old Testament) God usually worked his truth out by means of object lessons. His children would "do" things which the surrounding nations were not "doing"; similarly, his children would also "abstain" from the things which the surrounding nations were "performing". In this way, the surrounding nations would catch a glimpse of the difference between what God identified as "clean and unclean", "holy and profane", "life and death". This was Isra'el's "special call", and as such, identified her unique "chosen-ness" (read Deut 4:1-20, specifically for this commentary, vv. 19-20).

Sun worship has been rife in the earth since the days of the Tower of Babel. The ancient myths tell of a supernatural being—a messiah, born of a woman, and born of the very rays of the sun itself! This supernal being was killed by his enemies during the Winter Solstice, only to be resurrected on the first day of the Spring Equinox. This interpretation arose out of the belief that the sun was in fact a god, which slept in death during the cold winter months, and arose to new life at the start of spring. Because its worshippers needed the sun's vital, life-giving energy, they revered it as such in various pagan rituals and ceremonies. Sun worship was therefore, in many pagan cultures, mandated for survival itself.

One of the chief ceremonies involved "greeting" the sun as it made its way victoriously back from the underworld of the dead. Its followers would meet their deity as he made his reappearance from the wintry death that held him captive for a season. The day chosen to represent this glorious awakening would become known as the first day of the Spring Equinox. And to ensure that the themes and symbols would forever be established among their adherents, an unforgettable name was granted to this very special day.

Thus, "Sun-day" was born.

Now at this point in my commentary, it should be rather obvious by now that the event that I am describing bears a remarkable resemblance to our modern-day Easter celebration. This should be no surprise, as the origins of Easter can indeed be traced back to this very legend! Christianity in its infancy swelled to overflowing with former pagans, in an effort to establish itself as a viable religion in the 3rd and 4th centuries. It was (mis)understood that Judaism had failed, in that its lack of recognition of the Messiah placed it in a place less-favored—nay rejected—by the Holy One himself! Christianity would take its rightful place among believers as the True expression of Christ-worship.

Now, looking back in 20/20 hindsight, we can understand that this paradigmatic shift was not entirely complete, nor would it be permanent. It was, in fact, a shifting of responsibility of sharing the Good News with the surrounding nations, which placed Isra'el in this "less-favored" position. The students should familiarize themselves with Romans chapter eleven. But like Isra'el of old, the young Christian Church would make many significant mistakes, and mixing paganism with truth would become one of her errors which would permeate the very fabric of the Formalized Church like "tzara'at" (leprosy) down to this very day!

The damage was done.

The pagans brought their worship of the Sun into Christianity, and its traces can be observed even today. Easter is rightly recognized as the "holiest" gathering within Christianity. Billions of followers flock to sunrise services all over the world to pay homage to the True Son who was resurrected on this day—and rightfully so! Were it not for the awesome resurrection of our LORD Yeshua from the power of death, we believers—Jew and Gentile, would have no hope in this world!

Moreover, he did defeat death on that day, and we do have reason to celebrate! But do we have a biblical injunction to gather on this particular day? It is my premise that we do not. Our theology seems to be correct, yet our methodology lacks authenticity.

The Sabbath, Yeshua, and the Number Seven

Did you know that in a mystical way Yeshua is the Sabbath personified?

Allow me to paint a Torah picture of Yeshua as the Shabbat by drawing some resources first from my commentary to **Parashat B'har** (Leviticus 25:1-26:2) to paint a midrash of the Yovel (Jubilee). I am indebted to Orthodox Jewish author Greg Killian for the excellent Talmudic resources concerning the Yovel.

The number seven is very significant in biblical circles. Seven signals the act of completion and of perfection. The Talmud, that ancient compendium of Jewish thought, speaks about the cycles of "seven". In Tractate Sanhedrin it is found:

'Rav Kattina said, 'The world will exist for six thousand years, then for one thousand it will be desolate, as it is said, "The LORD alone will be exalted in that day"' (Isaiah 2:11). Abaye said, 'It will be desolate for two thousand, as it is said, "After two days he will revive us; on the third day, he will raise us up, and we will live in his sight"' (Hosea 6:2).

And in another place it is found,

"It has been taught in accordance with Rav Kattina, 'Just as every seventh year is a year of sh'mittah [letting the land lie fallow], so it is with the world: one thousand years out of seven are to be fallow—as proved by the following three texts taken together [in which the key word is "day"]: "The LORD alone will be exalted in that day" (Isaiah 2:11); "A psalm and song for the day of Shabbat" (Psalm 92:1), meaning the day that is entirely Shabbat; and, "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past"' (Psalm 90:4).

And finally,

"The school of Eliyahu teaches: 'The world exists for six thousand years—two thousand of them *tohu* ["void"]; two thousand, Torah; and two thousand, the era of the Messiah. But because of our numerous iniquities many of these years have been lost.'" (Sanhedrin 97a-97b)

Some fascinating insights will emerge hidden in the text if we dig for them. For instance, hidden within the Hebrew text of Leviticus chapter 25, verses 1-7 we find the root letters "SH-B/V-T", which as a noun form the word for "Shabbat" and as a verb form the word for "rest", appearing exactly **seven** times! Imagine that: In **seven** verses a word that focuses on the **seventh** day principle appears **seven times**!

The Chazal (the Rabbis of antiquity) also found a noticeable connection between the Shabbat concept and the Yovel itself. Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitz'chaki) references these connections in his quote from the **Sifra**. But you don't have to be a rabbi to see this connection for yourself. Let us go to the text. Observe these quotes from the **Online Tanakh with Kitvei Talmidei HaMashiach**:

“Six days shall work be done: but on the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation; you shall do no manner of work: it is a Shabbat to ADONAI in all your dwellings (23:3).”

Notice the phrase “Shabbat to ADONAI”. This phrase is repeated twice in our parashah at 25:2, 4:

“Speak to the children of Yisra'el, and tell them, When you come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Shabbat to ADONAI. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the yield of it; but in the seventh year shall be a Shabbat of solemn rest for the land, a Shabbat to ADONAI: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.”

Nowhere else in the entire 5 books of the Torah do we find a festival named specifically as a “Shabbat to ADONAI”. Only the seventh day Shabbat and the Yovel enjoy this title. To be sure, we find both rest days occurring juxtaposed to each other in this passage:

“For six years you shall sow your land, and shall gather in its increase, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the animal of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard and with your olive grove. Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your handmaid, and the alien may be refreshed.” (Exodus 23:10-12)

But the connections don't stop there! Let us keep looking. Turning back to the Creation Account in Genesis chapter one we find that the phrase “[it] **was good**” appears exactly **seven** times in relation to how God described the stages of each day's work (cf. 1:3, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31). The pattern becomes apparent when we notice that this term is selectively applied twice to days **Three** and **Six**. What was created on day three?

Dry land and seas, grass, plants and trees.

And what was created on day six?

Man.

Now what two subjects occupy the attention of both the **Shabbat** rest and the **Yovel**?

Man (inhabitants) and the **Land** (that which grows on it). Observe this feature from these p'sukim (verses) of our current parashah. First the Land:

“But in the seventh year shall be a Shabbat of solemn rest for the land, a Shabbat to ADONAI: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your

vineyard. That which grows of itself of your harvest you shall not reap, and the grapes of your undressed vine you shall not gather: it shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.” (Lev. 25:4, 5)

And now its inhabitants:

“You shall make the fiftieth year holy, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants of it: it shall be a jubilee to you; and you shall return every man to his possession, and you shall return every man to his family.” (Lev. 10)

Isn't God's Torah a wonderful teaching instrument?

Let us continue to see the Messiah in a pattern of “seven”, this time using the ancient menorah. Drawing this time from my commentary to **Parashat B'ha'alotkha**:

The Menorah easily symbolizes the Messiah. How so? Yeshua stated that he is the Light of the World. The Menorah (the root word being "ner", which means "lamp") provided a glorious, eternal light to the priests who ministered within the Holy Place. Previous parash'ot describe the Menorah as having seven lamps. The number seven in the Torah represents perfection. If the Menorah is a symbol of our perfect Messiah, then where in the Torah can we find a correlation to the number seven? Let's take a look at a familiar passage in Yesha'yahu (Isaiah).

In Yesha'yahu 11:1-5, we are given a vivid description of the coming Messiah. All rabbinical sources, as well as Christian scholars agree that this passage is a prophecy concerning the long-awaited Savior. The "Branch of Yishai" is a reference to his bloodline. Yishai (Jesse) was the father of Dah-vid the King. It was a well-known fact that the Messiah was to be born from Dah-vid's loins. The Torah describes him this way:

"The Spirit of ADONAI will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fearing ADONAI—he will be inspired by fearing ADONAI" (11:2).

As can be observed, the Spirit is referred to SEVEN times, and in an orderly fashion: (1) - the Spirit of ADONAI; (2) and (3) – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; (4) and (5) – the Spirit of counsel and power; (6) and (7) – the Spirit of knowledge and fearing ADONAI. This is not an arbitrary use of words coined by the navy (prophet). Yesha'yahu was writing under the direct inspiration of the very Spirit that he was speaking about!

The Torah frequently employs the use of "word pictures". These are phrases and words coined for the explicit purpose of calling the reader's attention to a certain Truth of the understanding of HaShem and his purposes among mankind. When the Torah uses the word "anoint" for example, the "picture" that is painted is one of a horn of oil

(presumably olive) being poured out and down upon an individual. In the case of the High Priest Aharon, the Torah describes the oil as being poured upon his head as an anointing (Sh'mot 29:7). In our haftarah to **B'ha'alotkha** (see Z'kharyah 2:14-4:7) we will again read of this anointing property of oil and the Spirit. I can almost imagine seeing the oil as it runs down Aharon's head, down his face, into his beard, and down his shoulders as Moshe makes sure of the God-given instructions. The oil is a representation of the Spirit of ADONAI! The Torah is explicitly teaching us that the office of Cohen HaGadol (High Priest) cannot function properly without the supernatural anointing from the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit)!

We know again, from the book of Hebrews, that Yeshua is our Great Cohen HaGadol. As such, he would also need to walk in this very anointing in order to fulfill his earthly ministry. What does the Torah say of him in Luke 4:16-18a?

"Now when he went to Natzeret, where he had been brought up, on Shabbat he went into the synagogue as usual. He stood up to read, and he was given the scroll of the prophet Yesha'yahu. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of ADONAI is upon me."

Now this verse goes on to actually quote another passage found much farther into the scroll of Yesha'yahu (61:1-2, 58:6), yet Yeshua starts by announcing that the **"Spirit of ADONAI is upon him"**! What we have here is a double application, which amounts to a "play on words". His listeners would have immediately recognized the Messianic phrase **"The Spirit of ADONAI is upon me"**, especially since in the passage found within the TaNaKH, the phrase from Yesha'yahu 61:1 reads, **"The Spirit of ADONAI Elohim is upon me"**. The title for HaShem "**Elohim**" is not used by Yeshua here in Luke. I believe that he is making reference to the Yesha'yahu 11 passage, and simultaneously tying it into the Yesha'yahu 61 passage. In other words, he wants his listeners to realize that he is the "mashiach" (anointed One) of both passages! But what of the reference to "seven"? Let's look at the last book of the B'rit Chadashah.

In Revelation 5:6, our visionary Yochanan (John) is given a glimpse of the Heavenly Throne. In his vision, he sees a Lamb who appears to have been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes. The Scripture tells us that these "seven" are the sevenfold Spirit of God. Whence do we find the sevenfold Spirit of God in the Bible? In our Yesha'yahu 11 passage of course. The Spirit is described as a total of seven, yet laid out in a pattern of one, with three pairs of two along with it. Does this pattern look familiar? It is the very same pattern that the Menorah was fashioned into! The seven-branched lamp consisted of one central shaft with three pairs of two surrounding it. Focusing on just the top of the structure, the following algebraic equation will demonstrate its pattern:

D--C--B---A---B--C--D

This is representative of the sevenfold Spirit of God! This is the very same description given to Yeshua—who is the Lamb that was slain!

Now we can understand that the Spirit, represented by oil, gave the lamp its light. Yeshua was empowered (anointed) by the "oil of the Spirit". Our current parashah instructs 'Am Isra'el to make sure that the Menorah faced the priest properly. As we shall see, this perfectly describes our Messiah, who's Spirit continually shines (faces) the Father in divine intercession. Moreover, his Face should continually shine upon our face, for the entire world to see.

The Torah also paints a picture of work and rest, slavery and freedom, which spiritually amounts to life and death. How so? In the Renewed Covenant book of Galatians, Rabbi Sha'ul tell us:

"Don't delude yourselves: no one makes a fool of God! A person reaps what he sows. Those who keep sowing in the field of their old nature, in order to meet its demands, will eventually reap ruin; but those who keep sowing in the field of the Spirit will reap from the Spirit everlasting life. So let us not grow weary of doing what is good; for if we don't give up, we will in due time reap the harvest. Therefore, as the opportunity arises, let us do what is good to everyone, and especially to the family of those who are trustingly faithful." (6:7-10)

The better first half of Leviticus chapter 25 uses harvest language, sowing and reaping, working and resting according to faith. To leave the ground unplowed for an entire year requires faith indeed—especially living in an agricultural land such as Isra'el! Today, our faith lies in the fact that we have rested from our labors of self-righteousness. Before our faith in Messiah, we worked year after year to meet our own needs. Our harvest was the product of our own hands. Consequently, it was a harvest of death.

But to place one's trusting faithfulness in the atoning work of the Messiah Yeshua is to rest from one's own labors! To be sure, without the faith of Messiah at work in our lives, we truly do not have a proper concept of Shabbat! To rest (the Sabbath) is to cease working in our own fields, and to begin "resting" in the fields of the Master! When we were in the world, we were "slaves" to sin! But now in Messiah Yeshua, we have experienced our spiritual Yovel! We are no longer slaves to sin! We have been set free by the power of his Sabbath rest!

What does the Torah say?

"What the Messiah has freed us for is freedom! Therefore, stand firm, and don't let yourselves be tied up again to a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)

And again in another place,

"So there remains a Shabbat-keeping for God's people. For the one who has entered God's rest has also rested from his own works, as God did from his.

Therefore, let us do our best to enter that rest; so that no one will fall short because of the same kind of disobedience." (Hebrews 4:9-11)

And finally,

"Keep my Shabbats, and revere my sanctuary; I am ADONAI." (Leviticus 26:20)

Torah Teacher Ariel ben-Lyman HaNaviy yeshua613@hotmail.com