

10-20-16 Message to Beit Adonai Yisroel – Shemini Atzeret (“assembly of the eighth”)  
Torah Portion for Shabbes Chol HaMoed Succot; Ex 33:12 – 34:26  
Haftarah: Ezek 38:18 – 39:16  
Suggested Acheron K’tuvim: John 7:37-38

## **The Great Day of the Feast**

**Central question of this message: Are you looking forward to even greater joy?**

Today we are in the midst of the festival of Succot. The intermediate days between the first and last day of this festival are called Chol HaMoed – “all [the days of] the season.”

So, today is called Shabbat Chol HaMoed Succot, and has its own special Torah reading.

Although this is the Shabbat, we don’t read the last portion of Devarim (Deuteronomy) today, but wait until Simchat Torah (rejoicing regarding the Torah) which this year begins Monday night at dusk.

Tonight begins the final day of the festival of Succot, known as Hoshana Rabbah, which means “salvation in the highest [manner]”. And then

Sunday night begins Shemini Atzeret, which some congregations combine with Simchat Torah.

Hoshana Rabbah has a number of special observances, many of which reflect similar events that occurred during this season in the time that the Temple still stood.

We read in Talmud (Succah 4:5) that the priests would carry palm or willow branches in their hands, and would make a procession around the altar every day during Succot, and then seven on the seventh day.

It has been said that the seven circuits relate to the seven circuits made around Jericho, and in the same manner the wall that separates us from G-d's love is torn down by our persistent repentance and celebration of His love.

Another tradition associates the seven circuits with the seven Hebrew words in the verse found at Psalm 26:6, translated as "I shall wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Thine altar, O Lord"

יְהוָה:	מִזְבֵּחַךְ	אֶת־	וְאֶסְבְּבָה	כַּפֵּי	בְּנִקְיוֹן	אֶרְתֵּץ	6
O Lord:	thine altar,		so will I compass	mine hands	in innocency:	I will wash	
<u>3068</u>	<u>4196</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>5437</u>	<u>3709</u>	<u>5356</u>	<u>7364</u>	

Many read or chant some special prayers during the circuits, symbolizing Elijah the Prophet crying out for the soon coming of the Messiah. Compare that with the life of John “the baptizer” who Yeshua compared directly with Eliyahu (Elijah) the Prophet.

Some shuls read the entire book of Psalms on this night, then stay up all night and read the book of Devarim (Deuteronomy) in a single sitting, and study it as a single body of work.

So, you see that the last few days of this festival of Succot can be full of special meanings and celebrations all their own.

But today I wish to focus on the eighth day, Shemini Atzeret. We are commanded to give special regard to this day.

Lev 23:33-36

*33 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the Lord. 35 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. 36 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord. **On the eighth day you shall have a holy***

*convocation and present an offering by fire to the Lord; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work.*

But before I focus on that special day, I wish to stand back and look at the spiritual terrain which surrounds this day, for it is marvelous indeed.

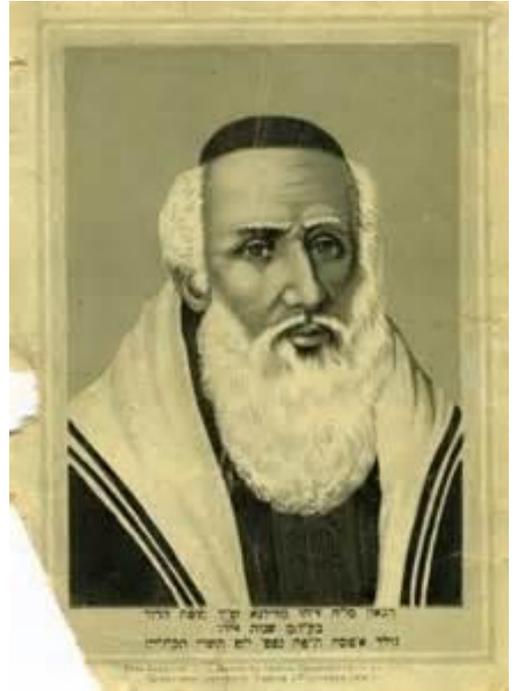
As a prelude to this special day, many sacrifices were given in the Temple. These special sacrifices were offered during the seven days of Succot, in addition to the daily sacrifices.

On the first day, thirteen oxen were offered. The second day twelve, the third day eleven, and the reduction of one per day continued in that fashion until on the seventh day only seven were offered.

The total number of oxen offered came to seventy. These seventy oxen represent the atonement sacrifices for each of the seventy nations who descended from the sons of Noah.

In this way Israel became the one nation to intercede for all others during this time. This was a precursor and predictor to the single sacrificial act that Yeshua would carry out as the ultimate sacrifice not only for Israel, but for all nations... for those who would accept His sacrifice for them.

One of the greatest intellectual giants of our people, Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna (1720-1797), also called the Gaon (genius) of Vilna, saw an interesting pattern in the description of the sacrifices in the Torah.



He noticed that on days 1, 2, and 4, the offerings of oxen is upon days that the sin offering is described as a “kid of goats”. On days 3, 5, 6, and 7 the sin offering is described as merely a “kid”. In both of these groupings, the oxen offered number 35.

Thus, it seemed to him reasonable that our sages reasoned that thirty-five of the oxen were sacrificed for the sake of the thirty-five nations under the domination of Ishmael, and for the sake of the other thirty-five under the domination of Essav.

There is, in our liturgy on this special day, a change that occurs. For the first time we are able to add a special phrase to the prayers, and that phrase continues until Pesach.

This special liturgy features some amazing things, and I will point out only a few of them.

**MUSAF AMIDAH FOR SHABBAT**

When I call upon the Lord, give glory to our God.  
Open my mouth, O Lord, and my lips will proclaim Your praise.

Praised are You, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, great, mighty, awesome, exalted God who bestows lovingkindness, Creator of all. You remember the pious deeds of our ancestors and will send a redeemer to their children's children because of Your loving nature.

*On Shabbat before Yom Kippur:*

Remember us that we may live, O King who delights in life.  
Inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, living God.

You are the King who helps and saves and shields. Praised are You, Lord, Shield of Abraham.

Your might, O Lord, is boundless. You give life to the dead; great is Your saving power.

*From Sh'mini Atzeret until Pesah:*

You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.

Your lovingkindness sustains the living, Your great mercies give life to the dead. You support the falling, heal the ailing, free the fettered. You keep Your faith with those who sleep in dust. Whose power can compare with Yours? You are the Master of life and death and deliverance.

*On Shabbat before Yom Kippur:*

Whose mercy can compare with Yours, merciful Father?  
In mercy You remember Your creatures with life.

Faithful are You in giving life to the dead. Praised are You, Lord, Master of life and death.

*The silent recitation of the Amidah continues with "Holy are You . . ." on page 435*

**MUSAF AMIDAH FOR SHABBAT**

כי שם יהוה אקרא, הבו גדל לאלהינו.  
אדני, שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב, האל הגדול הגבור והנורא, אל עליון, גומל חסדים טובים וקונה הכל, וזוכר חסדי אבות ומביא גואל לבני בניהם למצן שמו באהבה.

*On Shabbat before Yom Kippur:*

זכרנו לחיים, מלך חפץ בחיים.  
וכתבנו בספר החיים למענה אלהים חיים.

מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן. ברוך אתה יהוה מגן אברהם.  
אתה גבור לעולם אדני, מחיה מתים אתה רב להושיע.

*From Sh'mini Atzeret to Pesah:*

משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם.

מכלכל חיים בחסד, מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים, סומך נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים ומתיר אסורים, ומקים אמונתו לישגיו צפר. מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה לך, מלך ממיית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה.

*On Shabbat before Yom Kippur:*

מי כמוך אב הרחמים, זוכר יצוריו לחיים ברחמים.

ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים. ברוך אתה יהוה מחיה המתים.

*The silent recitation of the Amidah continues with אהא קרוש on page 434*

We pray that the L-rd will remember us so that we might be inscribed in the book of life (have eternal life). Compare this with Rev 20:12-27.

Then we recognize that the L-rd is the one who helps saves (same root as the term “messiah”), and shields us – just as with Abraham. Compare this with Heb 11:39-40, where we will all receive ultimate perfection together.

Then we recognize that G-d has unlimited power, which can even give life to the dead – so He is not the G-d of the dead, but of the living. Compare this with Mat 22:32.

And then we have a part of the liturgy which is only said from Shemini Atzeret until Pesach. It is commonly translated into English as “You cause the wind to blow and the rain to descend.”

And that is a perfectly legitimate translation. But as you know, Hebrew has some hidden nuances which can provide even deeper meanings, if we will only look closer.

The Hebrew reads, “*Mashiv ha ruach u'morid hagoshem.*”

From Sh'mini Atzeret to Pesach:

מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם.

As a younger man, I read this special liturgy during my prayers. As I did so, I couldn't help but notice some things that today I wish to share with you.

My attention was first drawn to the word “ruach”, which you immediately recognize as “wind” – but can also mean “spirit”, as in *Ruach haKodesh* (Holy Spirit). That made me look even closer.

Then I looked at what the *ruach* is described as doing. The word *mashiv* caught my eye.

It shares the root with the modern word for communal dwelling places in Israel, called a *moshav*.

The root of *mashiv* is common with the Hebrew words for “return”, or “sit”, and “dwell”.

So, I began to read that statement as “Let the Holy Spirit come and dwell with us”.

A closer look at *morid* showed me that it shared the same root as the word *yord*, which means “to come down”. You might recognize it as part of the name of the river Yordan (Jordan), which means to “flow downward”.

Then I looked closer at the Hebrew word *hageshem*, which is normally translated as “lots of rain”. That word carries with it the additional concepts of “realization”, “fulfillment”, and “deity”

This part of the phrase then can signify, “let the full realization of Your deity flood down upon us.”

So, putting it all together, when I read this special prayer, its deeper level bubbles to the surface and this prayer becomes to me:

“Let the Holy Spirit come and dwell with us, and may the full realization of Your deity flood down upon us.”

To me, that captures a little more fully the essence of this special day.

But let’s turn the clocks in our minds back a few millennia, and let’s visit Jerusalem at the time Yeshua walked its streets. Let’s see what is happening, as was recorded in our ancient writings.

Tractate Succot –

*Whoever did not see the Simchat Beit HaShoeivah [“joy of the house of the drawing” which was at the Pool of Siloam] has*

*never seen joy in his life. After the departure of the first Yom Tov of Sukkot, the Kohanim entered the Courtyard of the Temple and made great preparations. Lanterns of gold were affixed, each one had four huge containers of oil, and four ladders leading up to each container from the Temple Courtyard, upon which a youth of the Kohanim would climb up with a pitcher containing 120 log of oil for each container. They fashioned wicks out of the used linen garments of the Kohanim and lit the lanterns. There wasn't a courtyard in all of Jerusalem that wasn't brightly illuminated from the radiance of the Beit HaShoeivah.*

*“The pious leaders would dance before the ones who carried the water with torches in their hands. They sang praises and the Levites played violins and harps, trumpets and tambourines and many other instruments. The Levites stood on the fifteen steps that lead from the Courtyard of the Israelite to the Women's Courtyard on the Temple Mount, which correspond to the fifteen Songs of Ascent in Psalms [120-134].*

*Two Kohenim stood with great silver trumpets in the Upper Gate between the Israel's Courtyard and the Women's Courtyard and blew the trumpets to the call: Tekiah, Teruah,*

*Tekiah. When they reached the tenth step they would blow Tekiah, Teruah, Tekiah. When they reached the court of the women, they would blow Tekiah, Teruah, Tekiah. They would blow Tekiot and Teruot until they reached the gate which faced east. When they reached the gate which leads out to the east, they turned their faces from east to west and proclaimed, “Our fathers who were in this place [stood] with their backs toward the Temple of the L-rd, and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east, but as for us, our eyes are turned to the L-rd.” R. Judah stated, they used to repeat [the last words] and say, “We are the L-rd’s and our eyes are turned to the L-rd.”*

*And when they reached the water gate they blew the Tekiah, Teruah, Tekiah. The priest ascended the ramp of the altar and turned left. There were two silver beakers there, punctured like two narrow spouts. The beaker on the west was for the water, and the one on the east was for the wine.*

The Talmud continues:

*“The Rabbis taught: Whoever did not see the Simchat Beit HaShoeivah has never seen joy in his life. Whoever did not see*

*Jerusalem in its glory has never seen a beautiful city in his life. Whoever did not see the Holy Temple has never seen a magnificent building in his life. In what way was it magnificent? Abaye said (and some say it in the name of Rav Chisda): This was the building completed by Herod. How was it built? Rava said: In blue and white marble.”*

Now, with that setting of great pomp and circumstance, let's come alongside Yeshua, as He participated in that festival.

It's now the “Last Day” of the Feast, *Shmini Etzeret*. On that day, the crowds would cry out to the L-rd “Hoshia – na – raba!” Save us now, in the highest manner.

Salvation from the death penalty of sin is the highest degree of salvation we can have.

John 7:37-38

*37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast (Shemini Atzeret), Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in*

*Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"*

Can you combine in your mind all the visual images of this celebration, and fold into that these amazing words of Yeshua?

This festival is the second one which is called by our people *zman simchatenu* (season of our rejoicing). Our rejoicing in the season to come will exceed the rejoicing of the former days.

The living water of the Spirit is already flowing from you in a stream of life. And that stream of living water has as its source the L-rd, as Jeremiah prophesied.

Jer 17:12-14

*12 A glorious throne on high from the beginning Is the place of our sanctuary. 13 O Lord, the hope of Israel, All who forsake Thee will be put to shame. Those who turn away on earth will be written down, Because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord. 14 Heal me, O Lord,*

*and I will be healed; Save me and I will be saved, For Thou art my praise.*

As the priests did in the Temple during the days of Yeshua, let us also proclaim:

*“Our fathers who were in this place [stood] with their backs toward the Temple of the L-rd, and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the sun toward the east, **but as for us, our eyes are turned to the L-rd.**” R. Judah stated, they used to repeat [the last words] and say, **“We are the L-rd’s and our eyes are turned to the L-rd.”***

We as believers have reason to rejoice today. But there is an even greater fullness of joy to come, as we find even in our siddur.

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם.  
אַתָּה גְבוּר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי, מַחֲיֵה מֵתִים אַתָּה רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.

From Sh'mini Atzeret to Pesah:

מְשִׁיב הַרְיָח וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם.

You are the King who helps and saves and shields. Praised are You, Lord, Shield of Abraham.

Your might, O Lord, is boundless. You give life to the dead; great is Your saving power.

*From Sh'mini Atzeret until Pesah:*

You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.

One day, those of us who sleep in the dust will rise in the boundless power of our L-rd. Until that day, we can still partake in great joy.

So, as we close this season with some of the greatest rejoicing we will have in this world, let's together pray,

“Let the Holy Spirit come and dwell with us, and may the full realization of Your deity flood down upon us.”

Verses for Shemini Atzeret.

Lev 23:33-36

John 7:37-38

Jer 17:12-14