



ONE TORAH FOR ALL

One Torah shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.
Exodus 12:49

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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יום הכּפּוּרִים

The Day of Atonements

Understanding what YHWH Desires from His People

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 23:27

“On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonements; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to YHWH.”

It is in the greatest of fear and trepidation that I undertake writing this study. As you read this study you will understand why. Please, pray and listen and read in His Spirit! I have NO desire to mislead anyone, least of all my family or me. However, I have come to the place where I am convinced beyond all doubt that something is greatly amiss in this festival as it is traditionally observed in the present day. May YHWH open the eyes of all of us that we may have eyes to see and ears to hear His Voice!

The first thing of which we need to adjust our understanding, is the very name of this day as it is commonly called the “Day of Atonement” or “Yom Kippur” – יום כּפּוּר . Please note that this is not what the text of Scripture actually reads. Perhaps it is simply a case of human laziness that it was shortened to יום כּפּוּר – “Yom Kippur” or the “Day of Atonement.” Now we are not in any way placing responsibility upon any one person or group, including the Jewish people, for this happening; for we know that there are some in Judaism who still refer to it as “Yom haKippurim.” We simply do not know why this has happened, but the fact remains that it has and we need to correct it.

Whatever the reason was for this happening, it simply places a false idea in the head of those who use this title to refer to this day. In Scripture this particular day is always referred to as יום הכּפּוּרִים – “Yom haKippurim” – “the Day of Atonements.” It is important to note that it is not only a single atonement that is being effected upon that day, but rather it is many atonements: one for you, and one for me, and one for each and every member of the people of YHWH our Elohim! This is both individual atonement as well as corporate atonement for the entire nation

of Israel. We need to submit to the Scriptural record and call this name by its proper Scriptural name, יום הכּפּוּרִים – “Yom haKippurim” (the Day of Atonements).

We also need to keep in mind that one is not securing his own atonement upon this day, but rather that it is YHWH our Elohim who is bestowing His atonement upon us. It is not by the actions of an individual. It is not by the actions of the high priest. It is not by the actions of the nation of Israel. It is none of these things which effects atonement for Israel individually or corporately. Rather it is YHWH who grants this and as we will see later in the study, it is important to understand this.

Let us remind ourselves that this particular day, Yom haKippurim, is one of seven high days in the Scriptural calendar known as “mo’edim” or “feast days” or “festivals.” To help us understand this let us look at the word “mo’ed” to see what it actually means.

The Hebrew word which is commonly translated into English as “feast” or “festival” is the Hebrew word מוֹעֵד – “mo’ed.” This word means “an appointed time or fixed day, a festival or feast day.” This word comes from the root word יָעַד – “ya’ad” which means “to appoint or to fix; to set time; to betroth.” The Hebrew word “mo’ed” is thus a combination of the word יָעַד and מִן with the ך (nun sofit) being dropped in the compounding of these two words. The use of the word מִן in this instance is in the sense of expressing cause as in “because of.” Thus we find that because YHWH has set these appointments יָעַד they are known as מוֹעֵדִים – “mo’edim,” because He has betrothed Yisrael to Himself. Those who will keep His appointed times are declaring and agreeing with this betrothal when they meet with Him on His appointed times in the manner He has prescribed.

It is when we see the meanings associated with the root word יָעַד that we begin to get a true understanding of this word מוֹעֵד . Surely to be betrothed and to be wedded is a joyous occasion for those so engaged in such an activity! When we keep His mo’edim according to what pleases YHWH we are agreeing with and accepting this betrothal to our Beloved.

Matithyah (Matthew) 9:14-15

14 Then came to him the disciples of Yochanan, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples fast not?”

15 And Yeshua said to them, “Can the attendants of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

It seems logical and right that this question came upon a day in which fasting was widely practiced. The text does not tell us upon which fast day this happened or near which one. But it was noticed that those who followed Yeshua did not fast upon that day. There is really no condemnation by those asking this question, but curiosity as to why they were not fasting with everyone else. This seems to indicate that whatever day it was, it was not deemed as absolutely mandatory that all fast upon this particular day. It could even have been a question born from the practice of weekly fasting in which many fasted on certain days of the week.

One of the interesting things about this exchange is the response of Yeshua in which He states that as long as He is present with His disciples they will not fast. This indicates that for the tenure of His public ministry of three to three and one half years (some only see one year of public ministry) his disciples did not fast. This passage is a strong indication that they at least during this time did not fast upon Yom haKippurim. How could they have fasted and this statement by Yeshua still have been true? We know that He did not lie.

Can we see then how this concept of an appointed time, a mo'ed, is dealing with a betrothal of Yisrael to YHWH her Elohim? Is it not reasonable, right, and just, then, to apply this understanding to each and every one of His appointed times? We find no distinction made in Scripture between one mo'ed and another as each one is an appointed time from YHWH.

It is at this very point that my own personal struggle began with this particular day, the Day of Atonements. The question that formed in my mind was along this very line. If this is one of the seven high feast days, how is fasting on this day having a mo'ed? How does fasting coincide with this day? Is fasting on this day a proper understanding? Or, has this idea of fasting been added to this day by man and its true meaning covered up by the traditions of man?

We hope to answer these questions and more in this study. Surprisingly enough YHWH actually answers these questions rather clearly in Scripture, if we will just turn to Him for the answers.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 23:32

"It shall be to you a Shabbat Shabbaton, and you shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, shall you keep your Shabbat."

The word which is underlined in the above passage is the word that we need to investigate in order to discover exactly what this word means from the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word is אָנָה – "anah" which means "to humble" and "to answer or respond." In the above passage it is in the piel stem. I have looked in more than four different respected Hebrew sources for the meaning of this word. Not one of them even mentions or hints or alludes to fasting as a meaning of this word. The root of this word אָנָה – "anah" means "answer" and "to make dependent upon." This is surely the beginning of wisdom for us in understanding this word: to be dependent upon YHWH rather than being dependent upon ourselves. In the passage above it is used in the piel stem, which simply means "to be humble."

Only in the hiphel stem does this word "anah" mean "to afflict." So, the translators wrongly used the word "afflict" in this passage for the word "anah." Only in two places in Scripture is the word "anah" used in the hiphel stem meaning "to afflict". There are several other Hebrew words which actually mean "afflict." But those words are not used to describe what we are to do on this day, the day of Yom haKippurim. The most common way that this word is used is "to answer," with the second most common way meaning "to humble oneself." Now in the western mind one does not immediately see the strong correlation between these two meanings: "to answer" and "to humble oneself." However, they are very closely related and

one cannot actually do one without the other. For when one gives an answer to another he is humbling himself to the other. Furthermore, to humble oneself is to give an answer. Strong's wrongly separated the meaning of this word into two separate words when in fact it is one and the same word.

Kepha Aleph (1st Peter) 3:15

But sanctify in your hearts Mashiach as Master; being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear.

The only way that one can do that which is being set forth in the above passage, that is, to be able to give an answer in the proper way, is to fully humble himself.

So, in all those places in which this word is used in the piel stem meaning to humble oneself is there anything in Scripture that would help us understand this word? Is there anything to show that this word is not dealing with fasting, per se? The majority of the time that this word is used it is in the meaning of one who answers another. The majority of other places it is used in the sense of humbling. Here is one such place.

Shemot (Exodus) 10:3

Moshe and Aharon went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says YHWH, Elohim of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me.'"

It cannot be imagined in any way that YHWH was asking Pharaoh to fast before Him! Or even for that matter to afflict himself before YHWH. What YHWH was asking Pharaoh to do was to worship Him and serve Him and submit to His authority as the Creator of all. But, as we know, he did not.

Here is another passage where this word is used.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:22

"You shall not afflict any widow or orphan."

Once again we see that there can be no idea of fasting in this word. It just will not fit! Once again we see that the use of the word "afflict" is not the correct choice, but rather it should read "humble" or perhaps in an English understanding, humiliate.

B'midbar (Numbers) 30:13

Every vow, and every binding oath to humble the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.

Please notice that in this case that which is humbling (anah) to the soul is a vow. Now it could be a vow to fast, but not necessarily. The context is any vow which humbles the soul of his wife, a husband may annul.

Notice this next passage, for in it are several things of great importance pertaining to our present discussion. It will show that there is no idea at all of fasting in this word ענה .

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:3

“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH.”

Notice that in this passage we learn that to be humbled (anah – ענה) is different and separate from being hungry, which one normally is when fasting. Notice also that part of the humbling process that Israel went through was that they were made to eat manna and this eating of manna humbled (ענה) them. In this case, the act of being humbled was and is associated with eating, not fasting.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:16

“In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.”

Once again we see the idea that to be ענה is associated with eating manna. To associate ענה with fasting is to ignore the Scriptural record! This is particularly so of the record found in Torah.

Now here is what I find to be of great importance: there is a Hebrew word which does mean “fast.” It is the Hebrew word צום – “tzom” which is commonly translated as “fast.” One of the interesting things about this word is that it is not found in the Torah. Its first occurrence in the Tanak is not found until the book of 2nd Sh’muel when David fasted.

There are only two places in Scripture in which the word “anah” is associated with fasting. Here are both of them.

Ezra 8:21

Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our Elohim, to seek of Him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

Tehillim (Psalm) 35:13

***But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;
I humbled my soul with fasting;
And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.***

As we can see, fasting was the means used to humble (anah) one’s nephesh in these two instances. But fasting is not “anah,” just the means used to gain “anah.”

Now here is a question to ponder deeply which I have done for several years. Since there is a separate and different Hebrew word that actually means “to fast” (צום), then if YHWH actually wanted us to fast upon that day, would he not have used such a word? The evidence in Scripture seems to indicate that he would have been, and always was, very clear as to what he desired from us. He did not desire for us to simply stop eating food for one day, particularly when He commanded us NOT to ענה the widow and the orphan.

Shemot (Exodus) 22:22

“You shall not humble any widow or orphan.”

And if we are not to humble or ענה the widow and the orphan, then we can see the implication of this in this next passage.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 23:29

“If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people.”

Surely YHWH does not want for us to cut off from His people on a yearly basis all the widows and orphans. This would actually go against the very idea of NOT afflicting or humbling them! We cannot have it both ways. And YHWH certainly did not contradict Himself in this matter! Surely you can see that the idea of forcing a fast upon the widows and orphans will actually afflict them, something that YHWH commanded us not to do!

In man’s idea of fasting upon the day of Yom HaKippurim they make exceptions for those who are not able to fast upon this day. But please note that YHWH gives no such exemptions. YHWH our Elohim expects every single person to anah himself upon this day and if he does not, then he will be cut off! This means in part that every single person is able to do this. This means that regardless of a person’s physical condition he is able to anah himself before YHWH upon this day. There are no exceptions in YHWH’s eyes.

So, if we are not commanded to fast on יום הכּפּוּרִים then what are we to do? What does it mean to humble oneself? To answer that question let us go to the words of YHWH Himself as recorded by the prophet Yeshayah.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 58:1-3

1 “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their transgression, and to the house of Ya’aqov their sins.

2 Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways; as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their Elohim, they ask of Me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to Elohim.

3 ‘Therefore have we fasted,’ say they, ‘and You do not see? Therefore have we afflicted our soul, and You take no knowledge?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you find your own pleasure, and exact all your labors.”

We need to pay particular attention to what is being said in this chapter, which we will go through entirely. YHWH sets the stage by telling us that there were and are those who say they are seeking to do His ordinances. However, YHWH begins chastising them because they have set up their own day of fasting in which they delight. However, as we will see, YHWH does not delight in nor take any pleasure in this day of fasting which man has set up. In nearly every manmade religion there is some form of asceticism in which man is required in some way to severely treat his body as a means to atone for his actions and to gain approval with His Creator. It is a false idea and YHWH will have no part of it. Simply put, it is a salvation by works. This whole idea of fasting for atonement is not scripturally sound as it reeks of the idea of salvation by works.

Now we are not saying that it is wrong to fast. Fasting when done properly and in the right heart condition is a very good discipline to practice. More should practice fasting regularly. But it should never be done to gain the approval of YHWH. It should never be done as a means to “twist” the arm of YHWH into doing what one wants. Fasting is simply a means in which to bring into full subjection one’s appetites and to submit himself to His will fully and completely.

On a side note, please note that in verse three, to fast and to be humbled are two different things; it is not the same thing as so many teach. YHWH has some very strong words to say in this chapter on this matter as He makes a sharp distinction between what He considers a fast and what man considers a fast.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 58:4-5

4 “Behold, you fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; you fast not this day so as to make your voice to be heard on high.

5 Is this the fast that I have chosen? The day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a reed, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to YHWH?”

YHWH is quite displeased with the way they conduct their set-apart day of fasting. He chides them; yea, He even mocks them for how they have made their rulings on how to afflict (ענה) themselves by going without food. YHWH asks the question at the beginning of verse five as to whether what they do is the fast that He has chosen. His answer is that He has not chosen such a fast!

I have received so much “strife and contention” from those who fast upon this day because of this study. Sadly, it is all centered in the idea of salvation by works and they do not even see this. The problem here is that they are so focused upon a firmly grounded tradition of man, that they cannot see what YHWH is actually saying in this matter because many of them are so focused upon the words of men.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 58:6-7

6 “Is not this the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

7 Is it not to give your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out into your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?"

The true fast of YHWH is not about going a day without eating food! The true fast of YHWH according to His own words is to help those in need. In fact, YHWH commands us in this passage to bring them into our home and to feed them and to give them shelter. Brothers and sisters in Mashiach Yeshua, this is the true meaning of יום הכּפּוּרִים – Yom haKippurim, the Day of Atonements. Now we are not suggesting that this is the only day of the year that we should do this. However, we are reminded upon this day that YHWH has concern for all His people and desires for all His people to humble (anah) themselves before Him on that day.

Let us understand that we are commanded not to do any work on this day. But let us examine that aspect a little more closely.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 23:28

"And you shall do no manner of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before YHWH your Elohim."

Now this verse, as well as others (verses 30, 31), states that we are to do no work upon this day. The Hebrew word is מלאכה – m'lakah – "work, specifically work done as a means of employment, that is, for pay." This type of word is to be distinguished from that which is commanded on the other high days, for it says that we are to do no מלאכת עבודה – "m'leket avodah," which means "the work of service"; or as some translations put it "servile work" or "laborious work"; the idea of any work of one man serving another man, whether that be for pay or not for pay.

Thus, on the high day of Yom haKippurim it is expected by YHWH for us to serve one another. When we serve one another we humble ourselves before one another as well as before YHWH our Elohim.

Let us take special note of what Yeshua taught us concerning this matter!

Matithyah (Matthew) 25:34-40

34 "Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

35 for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in;

36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

37 Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, 'Adonenu, when did we see You hungry, and feed You? Or, thirsty, and gave you drink?

38 And when did we see you a stranger, and took you in? Or, naked, and clothed You?

39 And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and came to You?'

40 And the King shall answer and say to them, ‘Amein I say to you, “Inasmuch as you did it to one of these My brethren, even the least, you did it to Me.” ’ ’ ”

These words of Yeshua are strikingly similar to those found in Yeshayah 58. We should pay special heed to these verses as we take in the whole counsel of Scripture. Now notice what Yeshua says about those who do not do this.

Matithyah (Matthew) 25:41-46

41 “Then shall He say also to them on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels;

42 for I was hungry, and you did not give Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink;

43 I was a stranger, and you did not take Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’

44 Then shall they also answer, saying, ‘Adonenu, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

45 Then shall He answer them, saying, ‘Amein I say to you, “Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least, you did not do it to Me.” ’ ’ ”

46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life.”

Please notice that those who do not do these things are not rewarded, but rather they are punished. This certainly gives new and pointed meaning to this passage that we had looked at earlier; i.e., for us to humble ourselves in this manner by helping those who need help.

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 23:29

“If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people.”

Yeshua actually gives us a very clear window as to why these are being cut off from among His people. Could it be that they did not keep יום הכִּפּוּרִים – Yom haKippurim in the way that was pleasing to YHWH? I submit to you that is exactly what is transpiring in this passage and more!

The human condition is such that we have a tendency to order ourselves into levels of status. We also have a very strong tendency only to socialize within that status level, not going up or down. But let us prayerfully consider what it is that YHWH is actually asking us to do on the Day of Atonements.

Could YHWH mean that when we are to humble ourselves we are going to the social levels below us and inviting them into our homes and feeding them and serving them on this day? Would this not humble a person much greater than fasting? To be sure, it would!

Matithyah (Matthew) 22:8-10

8 “Then He says to His servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy.

9 Go therefore to the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage feast.’

10 And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was filled with guests.”

Furthermore, Yeshua commanded us to go out into all the world to bring in those who will come. Yeshua also taught us that He came to serve, not to be served and called us to go and do likewise. Doing this also lines up perfectly with what YHWH says through the prophet Yeshayah which we have looked at above. Let us continue on in Yeshayah to see what else we can learn about the Day of Atonements and what it means to truly humble ourselves before YHWH.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 58:8-11

8 “Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your healing shall spring forth speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of YHWH shall be your rearward.

9 Then shall you call, and YHWH will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away from your midst the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking wickedly;

10 and if you give yourself to the hungry, and satisfy the person of humility; then shall your light rise in darkness, and your obscurity be as the noonday;

11 and YHWH will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in dry places, and make strong your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”

There are several wonderful promises found in these verses. Please note that these promises are conditional provided one gives himself to the hungry and satisfies the person of humble means. This is what YHWH states very clearly is His fast. His fast does not consist of the cessation of eating food for one day and putting upon oneself sackcloth and ashes. Rather, His fast consists of humbling ourselves and moving down a notch or two in our social status to minister to those who truly need ministering to: the hungry, the poor, the naked, and those who are powerless to meet the needs that they have.

Fasting on one day of a year is easy compared to what YHWH is actually commanding us to do. I wonder if there are many who would be willing to humble themselves and obey YHWH rather than man?

Please note with what YHWH now closes this chapter. Notice the use of “your” in these verses as opposed to His ways and His commandments.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 58:12-14

12 “And those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

13 If because of the Shabbat you turn away your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day; and call the Shabbat a delight, and the qodesh of YHWH honorable; and shall honor it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words;

14 then shall you delight yourself in YHWH; and I will make you to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Ya'aqov your father; for the mouth of YHWH has spoken it."

There is also another aspect of humbling ourselves, particularly upon Yom HaKippurim, that we need to prayerfully consider as well. Please consider what happened to the three young Hebrew men before Nebuchadnezzar. The king had made an image of gold and required that all bow down to this image as a means to show that all were in submission to His authority. But they were willing to give up their lives in order to serve only YHWH and refused to bow down to the golden image.

There is a very old practice during the second temple times in which the name of YHWH was spoken and everyone bowed down before YHWH as a means to publicly demonstrate his humbling of himself before YHWH. In a sense, what we see happening with Nebuchadnezzar is what is transpiring upon Yom haKippurim. There is a very good parallel between the two. Even YHWH specifies that those who will not "humble" themselves will be cut off in much the same way that Nebuchadnezzar did. To bow down is to humble oneself in an act of worship and humility. This is what YHWH has commanded us to do: to humble ourselves. One of those ways in which we can fulfill this commandment is to bow before Him on this day as His name is placed upon us.

Now let us consider the words of Yeshua and what He taught us on several occasions with the problem concerning the traditions of man.

Matithyah (Matthew) 15:3

And He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of Elohim because of your tradition?"

Here is the truth of this whole matter. No one can point to any passage in the Torah or in the Tanak which commands us to fast on the Day of Atonements. Since this is true, then it is simply a matter of tradition. Now traditions are not wrong in and of themselves. I for one think that there are many wonderful and beautiful traditions within Judaism. The problem comes when man begins to elevate those traditions and put them on the same level as a Torah commandment. When this happens, then the Torah itself suffers violence and is reduced. What ends up happening in nearly every case is that the tradition supersedes the commandment of YHWH. This is never good! Traditions are simply not binding upon anyone to do them! We are not obligated to keep traditions. We are obligated to keep the commandments of YHWH if we want eternal life.

In The Jewish Book of Why it admits that fasting upon Yom Kippur is a tradition. I wonder why it is that those returning to Torah cannot simply admit this in the same way that the Jewish rabbis admit it?

Matithyah (Matthew) 6:16-18

16 "Moreover when you fast, do not do as the hypocrites and be of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say to you, they have received their reward.

17 But you, when you fastest, anoint your head, and wash your face;

18 that you be not seen of men to fast, but of your Father who is in secret; and your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward you."

Along with the tradition of fasting on Yom Kippur is also the tradition of not bathing. However, Yeshua taught us that one should be clean when we fast. Did not YHWH command the high priest to wash before he entered into the Most Holy Place? To be sure! And if we are entering into communion with YHWH by faith, then should we not be clean? To be sure!

In fact, what actually happens when a tradition is elevated to the level of a commandment from Elohim, is that another Torah commandment is violated, hence our reference above to the Torah suffering violence.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32

"Whatever I command you, that shall you observe to do; you shall not add to it, nor diminish from it."

If one is to add even a jot or a tittle or if one is to take away a jot or a tittle from the Torah, then he is guilty of breaking this commandment and doing violence to the Torah. We must be wary of the teachings of man, present teacher not excluded! We are to prove all things with Scripture. Let us be sure that we do this, and do it always in an honest manner rightly dividing the word of truth under the guidance of His Spirit!

Matithyah (Matthew) 16:6

And Yeshua said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

One ignores this warning from our Master Yeshua to his own harm! Let us be rather skeptical of the teachings of man that are not in harmony with the whole counsel of Scripture. When we feel a tinge of doubt about something, we need to fully investigate it and not ignore it. I am confident that many of you, as I, have experienced doubts concerning Yom haKippurim.

Matithyah (Matthew) 15:8-9

8 "This people honors Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.

9 But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."

Now who do we want to be following? Why, it is Yeshua our Mashiach of course! Can we not see that those who do not love Him are not our friends? This does not necessarily make such a person an enemy. Please consider this passage carefully.

Yochanan Aleph (1st John) 2:23

Whosoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father; he that confesses the Son has the Father also.

Is it a slight thing for a person to seek the counsel of one who does not follow Mashiach? To be sure that it is not a slight matter at all.

Qorintyah Bet (2nd Corinthians) 6:14-15

14 Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion does light have with darkness?

15 And what harmony does Mashiach have with Belial? Or what portion does a believer have with an unbeliever?

There is no true harmony between the talmidim of Mashiach Yeshua and others. Yes, we are called to go out and find the lost sheep of Israel. But, in doing so are we to seek their counsel? No, of course we are not to do this!

So, let us recap with the following verse.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 58:6-7

6 "Is not this the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?

7 Is it not to give your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out into your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh?"

YHWH clearly states that what He wants for us to do are the following:

1. Remove the bonds of wickedness
2. Remove those things that bind others
3. Set the oppressed free
4. Destroy everything that binds another
5. Feed the hungry
6. Bring the poor and those who are outcasts into our home
7. Clothe those who need it

How each one of us does these things is up to us as individuals. Each one of us must seek Him in this matter and then walk in obedience to His will. Obviously, if we can band together in small groups we can accomplish much more in this matter than we could as individuals. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that YHWH wants each one of us personally involved in doing these things. If you cannot do all of them, then pick something that you can do and then do it.

As I stated at the beginning of this teaching, I was writing in the greatest of fear and trepidation. Why? I am fully aware that I cannot afford to get this wrong or to lead others astray. It is quite likely that many will stop receiving these teachings because of this particular study. In fact, I have already been publicly ostracized for this study. But here is what I know: I have done my duty before YHWH and shared with you what He has laid upon my heart. What you do with it is between YHWH and yourself.

Now let me make this as clear as possible. I am not stating that it is a sin to fast upon Yom haKippurim. YHWH may lead some to do this very thing. What each person must do is to do as YHWH leads. Each person must obey His Voice in this matter. But what we cannot do is to attempt in any way to force others to fast upon this day, for it is not commanded by YHWH. We cannot teach that it is mandatory for His people to fast upon this day, for that is adding to His word. It is interpreting the word "anah" to mean something that it never means in Scripture.

There are a couple more passages that we need to examine as questions have arisen concerning them. Here is the first one.

Zecharyah (Zechariah) 8:19

Thus says YHWH Tzava'ot, "The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Yehudah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth and peace."

Every Jewish source I looked at to see what was said about the fast of the seventh month all agreed that this was the fast of Gedaliah. He was a governor set over Judah by Nebuchadnezzar and then was assassinated by a fellow Jew. He was considered a righteous man and this act of assassination is commemorated by a fast. The assassination supposedly took place upon the first day of the seventh month, but because there is a rabbinic ordinance not to fast upon a high day, it is moved to the third day of the seventh month, since Rosh Hashanah is celebrated for two days.

We see in the following passage that this fast, the fast of the seventh month was a new addition to their days of observance.

Zecharyah (Zechariah) 7:5

"Speak to all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, even these seventy years, did you at all fast to Me, even to Me?'"

This fast of the seventh month had only been being observed for about seventy years when YHWH spoke these words through His prophet Zechariah. It is interesting to note that according to Scripture Gedaliah was killed at about the same time as the captivity began; thus, the celebrating it for seventy years as mentioned in the passage above. So, the above two references are not a reference to Yom HaKippurim and fasting being done on that day as some

suppose. But it is a reference to another fast that was only a few days from the tenth of the month.

Ma'aseh (Acts) 27:9

And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Shaul admonished them,

Here is the truth concerning this passage and the reference to “the fast.” We know nothing about this fast being referenced. We do not even know in what month this particular fast took place. To attempt to make a connection between this and Yom HaKippurim is purely conjecture. In addition to this, just because an event is referenced in Scripture does not necessarily mean that this is an automatic endorsement of said event and that we should thus do likewise. There are many events recorded in Scripture whose example we should not follow. In fact, Shaul gives us a whole list of them in 1st Corinthians 10.

One person in attempting to prove that one is required to fast upon Yom haKippurim stated that the use of the word “anah” in relation to this day simply means that one is supposed to “humble” himself in every way possible on that day, including and especially fasting. However, will the way that the word “anah” is used in Scripture support this idea, or is this statement just grasping at straws because there is no commandment to fast upon this day? Let us look at one example to show that this argument carries no weight whatsoever.

B'reshit (Genesis) 34:2

And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her; and he took her, and lay with her, and humbled her.

The word “humbled” in the above passage is the Hebrew word ענה – “anah” in the piel stem, the same stem as in the commandment from YHWH for us to “humble” ourselves on the Day of Atonements. In this case Hamor humbled Dinah by raping her. In essence, Hamor defiled Dinah by doing this. Now I am certain that this person making the statement that we are to “anah” ourselves in every way possible does not mean to suggest that we should all go out and get ourselves raped. How silly is that?! But this is one of the scriptural means in which a person can be “humbled.” We cannot ignore this.

There is a wide variety of means in which a person can be “humbled” (anah) in Scripture. Some of them are good ways and some of them are not so good. But whatever the means used, the meaning of the word “anah” always means “to be humbled.” It never means to fast. While fasting is one of those means as we examined above through which one can be humble, it is by far not the only means.

What these passages teach us more than anything else is that we must prove all things as unrighteous men will take and twist passages of Scripture to their own destruction and attempt to lead others away into this same destruction. We must test and prove all things, especially the words of men. This present writer is no exception!

Will I ever fast upon Yom HaKippurim again? I cannot answer this question. I know this, I will do my very best to hear and obey His Voice in all matters, including this one. But I also know this: my salvation does not rest upon doing a particular fast on the tenth day of the seventh month, but upon Mashiach Yeshua and His Blood.

It is not a commandment to “fast” (tzum) upon Yom HaKippurim. It is a commandment to “humble” (anah) ourselves upon this day. If one does not humble himself upon this day, then YHWH shall cut him off from among His people. Each person is different and how each person at present needs to humble himself will most likely look somewhat different than how others are doing this. But they all will have one thing in common: all will be hearing and obeying His Voice. The truth is this: while not every person is able to fast, every person is able to humble himself regardless of his circumstances financially or medically, regardless of age or gender. Just because YHWH leads one person to humble himself in a different manner than you or I does not make him wrong.

May YHWH open the eyes of each one of us that we may see His truth so that we might walk in its fullness.

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