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**...and honor the Seventh Day**

The Sabbath Series  
**Celebrating Shabbat**

by haRold Smith  
a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

*"You shall **keep** the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any **work** on it, that soul shall be cut off from among the people."*

Exodus 31:14

*"For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, **that it may be well with you**'."*

*Jeremiah 7:22-23*

Recently, a reader wrote to ask, "How do you do it? Is there a template to use? How does a Christian keep the Sabbath and the feasts? I feel somewhat useless in trying to keep anything, not that I don't try but it seems within just a few days I am back to my old self. I am writing this to you to ask you how you do it?"

My answer was - out of love. My Father rescued me from a life of depravity and shame - more than once and He didn't have to. He did it because He first loved me. I am so grateful for what He has done in my life that I simply want to give myself to Him in whatever way He desires - every day. Keeping His Words are a joy to me because it allows me into the inner sanctum of His Being. I have found the secret place of a relationship with **the Present Presence** (*click on highlighted words to view content*) under His Wing and with it the peace I was seeking for many, many years - even while as a Christian, I only thought I had found it. The truth is, like many embracing that religion, even though I tried hard to do and be what the leaders told me I should be and tried to convince myself it had to be working - the reality is, it just didn't work. Not really. After attending AA, I found that what inroads were made in my life was due more to self-will under the guise of religion than anything else. So, I began to question everything, asking the Father to reveal Himself to me (chronicled in **Arrows of Famine**). - *and He did!!*. Just like He said He would. Joy is found not only in God's gracious offer of deliverance but also in His Words that contain His Promise of **freedom** - because *both* reveal His Nature. The Hebrew perspective of joy is both the experience and the witness.

As stated in a previous article, **the Elevation**, the challenge in finding Truth lies in hearing the Voice of YaHoVeH and being obedient to what He tells us today while using scripture as the standard to *measure* what we hear in Spirit as being Truth - or not. Not by dismissing **His Words** as irrelevant as the religion of Christianity advances. The religion of Judaism adopts rabbinic interpretation to supply us with thirty-nine prohibited actions they consider to be what is "work" in the verse from Exodus above. But, as **Yeshua explained** to the religious leaders of His day, traditional interpretation does not supersede what the words themselves actually say. In the article, **the Sabbath**, Yeshua's answer to the Pharisees accusing his disciples in the corn field of breaking the Sabbath, explains that there is no restriction about eating on Shabbat (Hebrew for the Sabbath) - only work. In fact, the *only* requisite assigned to Shabbat in scripture has to do with work - *everything else* that has been attached to this Day is the ritualization of someone's tradition. The rabbinical precepts of the religion Judaism, for instance, have expanded what "work" means to include many activities that are *not listed* in scripture. Rabbinic thought develops no difference between common ideas of work and the Hebrew idea of **melakah** (translated as "work") found in **Exodus 20:8-11**.

Work is commonly thought of as expended effort. In the rabbinical interpretation of scripture, therefore, it is considered "work" to get out of bed, to shower, to mow the lawn or to enter data in a computer. But *melakah* is not exactly about effort. The only definition given to this Hebrew word is that of a commercial nature. It is about the

application of *skilled craftsmanship* and the resulting *commercial benefits*. The word is used to cover specific projects and routine work concerning one's business because these tasks are creative and on the seventh day, YaHoVeH rested from His creativity. It also describes the result of the application of skills (i.e., the work of **Bezalel** in the construction of the Tabernacle). If we are to properly interpret scripture, we have to first ask ourselves - just what is the Sabbath for? **Yeshua addressed that same question** to the Pharisees of His day. The Sabbath is primarily a day of worship, a day of rest set apart (which is the definition of what it means to be *holy*) to become absorbed in relationship with YaHoVeH. For YaHoVeH's people there is no more important a day than *Shabbat* because it is *the link* that identifies them with the Father. But, never was it intended to be a day of strict rules and regulations (**Luke 14:5**).

In **Exodus 31:14**. Included in the definition of this Hebrew word *shamar*, translated as the English "keep", is "to celebrate". To keep something is to celebrate it. How, then, do we "celebrate" *Shabbat*? We often think of a celebration as a party when, from a Hebrew perspective, it actually means "to observe, *to honor by guarding*". Another Hebrew word translated "celebrate" found in **Isaiah 38:18** is *halal* - which means "to praise". We guard His Words by observing them, by elevating them in praise. Christianity has incorporated contemporary culture into its religion by promoting "praise music" as worship - without realizing their action (in most cases) actually idolizes the music and the musicians instead of the Creator. Should we give praise to YaHoVeH? Absolutely - but, words mean things and Yeshua upheld the scriptural definition of "worship" as what *activity* we give ourselves to - what we "*serve*" (**Matthew 4:10b** quoting **Deuteronomy 11:16**).

The *manner* by which we observe His Words is indicative of our praise, our worship. **Psalms 46:10** tells us it is in *knowing* Him that He becomes exalted in the earth and that we come to know Him by being still. Quiet, reflective meditation on His Words is what brings us into **the Present Presence** that He might speak to us of His Nature which is the Source of Life. Giving ourselves to loud exuberance is not conducive to creating a quiet environment from which to be able to hear His **still, small voice**. The words of scripture themselves do not contain **the Life**, but rather, validate whether what we **hear in Spirit** is genuinely of the Spirit of YaHoVeH - or not. This is why we need the full counsel of *all* of His Words because to hear something in spirit that is not validated in His Words is to make an idol of our **own determination**. We forget that YaHoVeH actually **wants us** to hear His Voice *more* than we want to hear Him. But the only way that happens is to seek Him with all of our *might* - with all of our being.

Besides YaHoVeH's command to rest and worship on the Sabbath, there are several other statutes that regulate this day - but as stated earlier, *eating* is not one of them. One activity prohibited on the Sabbath is cooking - associated with the *preparation* of food, "...*this is what YaHoVeH commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to YaHoVeH. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning'*" (**Exodus 16:23**). The process of preparing manna was quite involved in the *Tanakh* (OT). "*And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium. And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil'*" (**Numbers 11:7-8**). To avoid the work-intensive process of preparing the manna, YaHoVeH commanded that the Israelites prepare twice the amount of manna on the sixth day. By doing so they were free to worship YaHoVeH on the seventh. Even though we don't prepare manna and also enjoy modern, work-saving conveniences, this statute should be an observation about preparing all *cooked* meals prior to the Sabbath. Foods can be reheated if necessary, but cooking or baking must be avoided since it takes our focus off of what the Sabbath is intended for. The prohibition on food preparation is somewhat more relaxed for the annual Sabbaths that occur at the beginning and end of Feasts (**Exodus 12:16**) except the Day of Atonement which calls for a fast. This is the difference between *melakah* (work) and *abodah melakah* (customary or servile work - **Leviticus 23:7**).

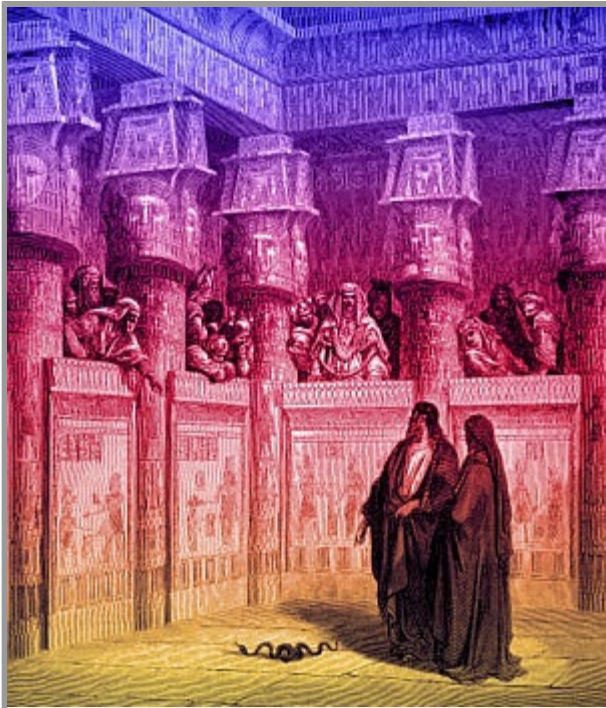
A second prohibition seemingly mentioned in YaHoVeH's Torah is the kindling of a fire. "...*Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of rest to YaHoVeH: whosoever does work therein shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day'*" (**Exodus 35:2-3**). The word "seemingly" is used because, while the precise interpretation of this verse is debated



***the King of Glory - the Source of Life***

among Bible scholars, simply looking at this passage in the context of the words surrounding it within that entire chapter points to the kindling of fire for work-related purposes. This understanding fits with the context of the 35th chapter and the smelting of the metals for the building of the tabernacle. Unique only to this passage, nowhere else in scripture is fire connected to Sabbath observance (with the noted exception of Atonement with fasting) and, thus, has not a second witness (**Matthew 18:16** quoting **Deuteronomy 19:15**).

A third Sabbath prohibition is to abstain from buying and selling on the weekly and annual Sabbaths - this is the commercial nature of *melakah*. "When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day..." (**Nehemiah 10:31**, see also **13:15-21**). When the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were released from Babylonian captivity by the Persians, the Israelites continued life as if they were still in Babylon. Consequently, under Nehemiah, the Israelites were instructed not to buy or sell on the Sabbath. Nehemiah, through YaHoVeH's inspiration, understood that the Sabbath was not a day of commerce but a day of worship and fellowship. This same concept applies to our day and age. The Sabbath for YaHoVeH's people today continues to be a day of worship, fellowship, and escape from the world into His Presence. A person cannot observe the Sabbath and still participate in the world and its activities because the world has no regard for this day and will continue to pollute it. A question that consistently arises after making this statement is, "But my job requires that I work on Saturdays! What do I do about that?" The answer Yeshua gives to this question is found in **Luke 16:13**. The Father knows what I **have need of**. If I am endeavoring to serve Him with my whole being, He will make **a way for me** where there seems to be no way. Whether it be in the softening of the heart of my employer or even another way of provision - YaHoVeH remains faithful to those who are faithful to His Words.



**...Moses and the sorcerers**

These requisites are given by YaHoVeH and serve to protect, to guard the purity and separateness of the Sabbath. Besides abstaining from work, the Sabbath is also a day of sober and unadulterated thought. The Sabbath is a time to be spent focused on YaHoVeH and not a time to discuss the commonplace. This is a day set apart to study and learn YaHoVeH's Word. If YaHoVeH commands that a person refrain from commerce, pleasures, and work on the Sabbath, it follows that conversations involving these things should also be avoided. Our actions, thoughts, and talk on the Sabbath should in some fashion reflect YaHoVeH and honor Him - which brings us to "prayer". Just as how praise and worship have become confused with religious, cultural idolatry - similarly are most Christians confused about "prayer". How often have you heard the mantra, "prayer changes things" and, that with enough prayer, you will get what you want? While **Matthew 11:12** is often quoted as justification for these actions, the prevalent "faith" teaching rampant in Christianity today has its adherents engaging in sorcery unawares. *Gesenius's Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* defines the Hebrew word **kasap** (translated "sorcerers" in **Exodus 7:11**) as those "practice sorcery" - those offering "prayers or worship,

using enchantment (primarily in songs or mutterings)". Sorcery is the exercise of our will over others and things to bring about results that are satisfactory to our desire. Calling that activity "prayer" to YaHoVeH, even if it may seem to be "good", is a **perversion** of YaHoVeH's Words. That there is real power in the spiritual realm is not the issue - the **sorcerers of Pharaoh's court** were able to reproduce the same miracles YaHoVeH gave to Moses. The issue is how we **use** that power - for our **personal benefit** or for the furtherance of the **Purposes of YaHoVeH**. The Nature of YaHoVeH contained in His Words are given as instruction to keep us out of **darkness** (see what it means to be a **Gatekeeper**). So, then, let us contrast this understanding with the Hebraic perspective on prayer:

**"They encircle me with words of hate, and attack me without cause. In return for my love they accuse me, but I am prayer. Psalm 109:3-4**

Reviewing this verse in a variety of English Bibles will show that they all add words (and thoughts) that are not found in the **actual text**. This is done to accommodate our religious conceptions of prayer as the way to get God to "move on our behalf". But David is saying something else here - he says **he IS prayer**. How can that be? Most think of prayer as an activity that we do or do not engage in. Such an activity is considered as independent of who

we are. We do not think of ourselves as prayer. The translators of this verse have adopted the view that prayer is one thing and I am another thing and that there can be some nonessential connection between these two things. But that is not the Hebraic view. For David, unless he is prayer, **evil will prevail** in his circumstances. So, how do we become prayer? To put aside my truncated understanding and become something I am not requires a paradigm shift in my approach to Spirit. It requires me to experience the personality of YaHoVeH in a conversation that does not know the difference between subject and object. It requires me to wait upon Him - which is the **most excellent form of worship** we can offer. It requires me to **know Him** for Who He says He Is - not who I want Him to be (**John 17:3**). There are three rungs to this ladder of holding fast to YaHoVeH in worship. The third best is to talk about prayer; the second best is to pray; but the best is to be prayer. This is what it means to love Him with all of my being.

The peace of belonging I have today comes from keeping the Words of the Source of Life - and there is no question about its reality. Others may question it, but I don't. My manner of life has become my prayer offered to YaHoVeH as a **fragrant sacrifice**. **1John 5:3** tells us that keeping His Words are not burdensome to do - I have found that to be true. There is no template except the one found in **Exodus 20:1-17**. It is difficult for Christians to find this place unless they abandon that religion - not the words of the Son, but the religious precepts built up around Him. Why? Because Christianity denies the validity of YaHoVeH's Words even though the One they profess to follow clearly states that He did not come to abolish them in **Matthew 5:17-21**. From the verse in Exodus at the beginning of this article, those who refuse to keep *Shabbat* are cut off from being included in His Family. Anything separated from the Source of Life is death. Neither Yeshua nor His disciples ever attempted to establish a "new" religion. You will not find that in any of their words - that concept was not introduced until some 200 years after the Resurrection by men who had a clear alternative agenda and after all the original disciples were out of the picture. **Revelation 19:10b** tells us that prophecy, the spoken oracles of YaHoVeH, **IS** the testimony of the Life found in Yeshua. His Life and His Words are the benchmark by which everything is measured - including other scripture by other authors. And He said His Words were not His, but those of His Father, YaHoVeH (**John 14:23-24**). Christians love to quote **Psalms 37:4** out of the Hebraic perspective the words were written in because their desire is focused on themselves without realizing the Hebrew word translated as "delight", **'anag** is the same word used in Isaiah 58 below describing how we delight in YaHoVeH. This is how we honor Him. This is how we worship Him.

*"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My Holy Day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YaHoVeH, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words (talking idly) - **THEN you shall take delight in YaHoVeH**, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of YaHoVeH has spoken." Isaiah 58:13-14*

***the Sabbath Series***

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Please feel free to email me at [harold@hethathasaneer.com](mailto:harold@hethathasaneer.com). While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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