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| Nitzavim/Vayelech | You Are Standing/And He Went |
| Torah:            | Deut. 29:10-30:20; 31:1-30   |
| Haftarah:         | Is. 60:1-22                  |
| Brit Chadashah:   | John 15:1-11                 |

One of the joyful tensions we face as a movement is to maintain a balance between our commitment to the **traditions** of Judaism (maintaining Jewish space) and our constant need to make sure that our celebrations are both **meaningful** and **relevant** to each new generation of Messianic Jewish and Gentile believers. With this in mind, our celebration of the High Holy Days and of Sukkoth needs to draw on the rich heritage of music, prayers and ceremonies which has grown up since the days when our people first stood around the Holy Mountain and **made a generational commitment to always remain a covenant community** (Deut. 29:14,15).

However, the needs of every generation of Jews have always required **new** and **creative** ways to express our ongoing covenant relationship with G-d. Judaism has borrowed freely from the cultures which our faith has encountered since our wandering first began after the days of the first temple. While the Bible enjoins us to never imitate any of the religious paganism of any of our neighbours, Judaism continues to freely adapt many of their **musical** and **liturgical** forms. This is the tension between **contextualizing** and **syncretizing**.

**Contextualizing** *seeks for new and meaningful ways to express the unchanging truths and teachings of our faith in the ever changing world in which we live, generation by generation.* It seeks to make vital choices so that we maintain enough contact with our world to shine and to be salt in ways which will influence our world and even contribute to some of the healing which our faith brings with it in every generation (tikkun olam – healing the world). Learning to make **informed faith choices in new situations** is one of the greatest challenges facing each new generation of believers.

**Syncretism** *allows the core of central truths and values of a spiritual community to be eroded until its beliefs and practices become indistinguishable from the unbelieving paganism which surrounds it.* It becomes influenced by the **goals** and **priorities** of a society which it is called to influence, rather than to be influenced by. **Spiritual assimilation is never the same as cultural contextualization.** We need to know who we are and where we are going and what it is we want to do in every generation and in every context in which every generation of the House of Jacob finds itself. **We always need to know why it is we do what we do**, so that our unchanging faith remains **relevant** and **meaningful**, in whatever cultural context we find ourselves sojourning through.

With all of this in mind, I have designed a series of High Holy Days liturgical observances which combine traditional elements from historical Judaism, but which have also been modified to express our faith in Yeshua of Nazareth, David's Greater Son and the true King of Israel. The service outlines and prayers which are meant to be used **flexibly** as **guides to worship**, and which need to be adapted to the changing cultural and social context in which our community finds itself.

I have tried to retain both the meaning and the "flavour" of the original observances, so that we can still join hands with previous generations of believers and remember all the mighty acts of our L-rd and King – as we face the future with the conviction that the power of His coming Kingdom will equip us with all that we need to remain a covenant people, both in the **unchanging truths** which we believe and in the **spiritual values** which we put into practice, day by day, and year by year.

May the Holy One of Israel guide your observance of the Fall Feasts so that the awesome power of Rosh Hashanah allows you to identify and remove any personal spiritual deviations from the truths and values which our faith calls us to cherish. May your observance of Yom Kippur bring you once again to that awesome moment when the grace of our Blessed Saviour declares that you are forgiven, redeemed (washed), so that His healing hand can show you how to grow and flourish in the midst of the spiritual darkness which surrounds us.

May your celebration of Sukkoth and Simchat Torah remind you that we are only strangers and pilgrims in this world, journeying, year by year and generation by generation, to our Eternal Home in Glory – and that the guide book, The Torah v'Tanach v' Brit Chadashah (the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings and the New Covenant) needs to be the centre around which our lives revolve, both as individuals and as a community, now and until the Kingdom comes.

The basis of the liturgy is two festivals, a fast, a new beginning, two long prayers, five ceremonies, two documents, two chapters, two books and a parade.

The Festivals are Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) and Tabernacles (Sukkoth)

The Fast is Yom Kippur.

The new beginning is Simchat Torah.

The long prayers: Avinu Malkeinu and Al Hayt.

The ceremonies: Shofar blowing, Kol Nidre, Hatarat Nedarim, Tashlikh and the Lulav

The Documents: Hatarat Nedarim and Tashlikh, one to keep and one to throw away.

The Chapters: Genesis 22 (Akedah) and Leviticus 16 (Avodah)

The Books: Jonah and Ecclesiastes.

The parade is Hakafot.

Which makes 18 (Chai or life) and so that we do not forget that we are but a chapter in a generational story, we observe Yizkor twice and remember our beloved departed.

So take a schedule and purchase a Makzor and prepare to get some spiritual exercise as we do some serious spiritual house cleaning.