

We have had an exciting, busy time celebrating and observing the High Holy Days and Sukkoth as we entered 5778. I have been involved in the Messianic movement since 5755 and it has been both a roller coaster ride learning curve and an extremely gratifying drawing closer to our Saviour and Messiah in a Messianic Jewish context.

There truly ain't no life like it!

I was not raised Jewish, I was not even raised Christian. I entered University as sort of a Buddhist who was becoming interested in Hari Krishna (the full soul loathes a honey comb, but to the hungry soul, every bitter thing tastes sweet). I found the L-rd on Erev Pesach, 1972 and began my journey of faith, first as an evangelical, then as a Pentecostal. I had a special hunger for things Jewish and a deep abiding love for Israel.

My homing beacon was activated and kept beeping louder with each passing year.

When I was asked to lead my first Messianic congregation and discovered that my mother was the daughter of an assimilated Jew, a lot of things began to make sense and it was like coming home spiritually. I faced the usual spiritual and theological adjustments reconciling my New Testament faith with my newly discovered Messianic Judaism.

There some pretty crazy people out there, brethren!

There was never really any true conflict between faith in the Messiah and Judaism. It was more just liberating my Jewishness and discovering both my roots and how to walk with my Messiah through the minefield of possibilities that is Messianic Judaism and discovering how to relate to the Good, the Bad and the Ugly! This is still ongoing and there have been some blowups along the way, but even the tough times were worth it (Rom. 8:18)

As we face 5778, we want to learn what it really means to have our lives be authentically **Torah centered** and weed out (prune) anything and everything which rises up against the knowledge of our blessed Messiah and His kingdom which is only truly found in His Word. Many sincere well meaning brethren, both in the churches and among our own Messianic Jewish brethren have not fully integrated what the Bible teaches into what they reach and believe.

We do not either want to follow suit or engage in endless arguments with them (2 Tim. 2:24-26). We want to make sure that we are authentically **Torah centered** and **Torah balanced** (2 Tim. 2:15, Acts 17:11, I Corin 4:6) as we make straight paths for our feet (Hebrews 12:13) and keep our own noses clean (1 Tim. 5:22)

Next, are we really **Sabbath powered** – are we really resting in the L-rd or are we fretting, fighting and fleeing? Are we really becoming a redemptive community, knit together in the bonds of love, cherishing our children, our old folks, our young families and the newcomers in our midst? What is the real power energizing our lives?

Are our lives energized and are we taking care of ourselves, both in the busy times and in the quite times?

Lastly, are we really **festival driven**? I know we all lead busy lives, but each of the festivals

serves a specific purpose to teach us and enrich us and especially to heal and empower us as we walk through another year on our way home to our Father's home in glory.

We are not called to be spiritually anaemic or deficient in any way, either personally or corporately. Traditional synagogues are full to overflowing during the fall feasts as people try and make up for a year of neglect in the hope that G-d will bless them and grant them a good year. Plea bargaining is not effective with G-d. Repentance and obedience is the only real way to make up for lost time.

In our shul, we want to make sure that we do not neglect our spirituality at any time of the year and that we look at the festivals as special times to gather and to rejoice as we consider various redemptive aspects of all that our Messiah accomplished for us through His life death and resurrection. I am tired, but renewed after three weeks of intense spiritual activity.

The Fall Feasts are also a time for us to join hands with all previous generations of the House of Jacob and remember both His promises to us and the calling He has addressed to us as keepers of the blue prints (the covenants) for His purposes for all the nations and generations of mankind,

The festival season is over for one more year and as we joyfully face the challenges which 5778 will undoubtedly bring our way as we continue our pilgrimage to our Father's home in glory, may we be truly:

(1) **Torah Centred**,

(2) **Sabbath Powered**, and

(3) **Festival Driven**.

Don't worry, Passover is just around the corner!

Shabbat Shalom.