

SIMCHAT TORAH

By Hannah Neshet

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The three fall feasts (mo'adim) of the Lord, Yom Tru'ah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot, are followed by a celebration called Simchat Torah, which means 'Rejoicing in the Torah'. What is Torah? This Hebrew word, Torah, is often translated in most English Bibles as 'Law'; however this is a rather poor translation. The word, torah, comes from the roots yarah, which means to shoot, aim, or point to, and morah, meaning teacher. Therefore, the Torah is God's instructions to His people. These instructions teach us how to live on this earth and point us to eternal life through Yeshua.

The Torah, in its strictest sense, includes the five books of Moses: Genesis (B'reisheet), Exodus (Shmot), Leviticus (Vaykira), Numbers (Bamidbar), and Deuteronomy (D'varim). However, Yeshua and Paul both quoted from other books of the Bible, including the Psalms and the Prophets, and called them Torah (law).

"Yeshua answered them, "Is it not written in your LAW (Torah) , 'I said, 'You are gods'"? (John 10:34) The quote referred to is found in Psalm 82:6.

"In the LAW (Torah) it is written: "With men of other tongue and other lips I will speak to this people..." (1Cor. 14:21) This quote Paul refers to as law is from the book of the Prophet Isaiah 28:11.

Another word for Torah often used by Jewish people is the Tanakh תנ"ך. The Tanakh is a Hebrew name for all the books of the Old Testament. This word is actually an acronym: **T-N-K {Hebrew letters tav, nun, kaf}** - an abbreviation for: **T**orah, **N**eviim (prophets) and **K**tuvim (Writings – Psalms, proverbs, etc).

Observant Orthodox Jews consider another whole compilation of writings as 'Torah'. These are called the 'oral law' and include the Talmud, Mishnah, and Gemorrah, comprised of rabbinical interpretations of scriptures. Many consider the oral law of equal weight and authority as the written Torah and spend the majority of their time and study in these books, sometimes to the exclusion of the written word itself.

However, most followers of Yeshua do not accept the Talmud as 'law' and rely upon the written scriptures that comprise both the Tanakh and the Brit Hadashah (New Testament).

So why do we have a special day just to rejoice in the Torah of God? It is because the Word of God is a tree of life for us; and if we would just take hold of it, we would see that all its paths are pleasantness and will lead us to peace (shalom). The Torah contains all the wisdom and instruction we need to live healthy, happy, successful, prosperous lives.

⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸ Study this Book of Instruction (Torah) continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. {Joshua 1:7-8 (New Living Translation)}

God initially chose to reveal His Torah to the nation of Israel; and He gave them the mission to spread its light and teachings to every nation of the earth. While Yeshua fulfilled and did away with the old sacrificial system, He makes it clear that He never came to abolish the Torah, or God's moral guidelines for mankind to live in righteousness.

Yeshua's Teaching about the Law

¹⁷ “Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. (Matthew 5:17-19 N.L.T)

Simchat Torah is such a joyful celebration in which all the ornately decorated scrolls are taken out of the 'ark' in which they are kept and preserved so carefully all year long. Jewish people all around the world parade around and around the synagogues, holding their precious Torah, accompanied by jubilant singing and dancing. Young and old, male and female, may all partake of the honor of dancing, singing, and rejoicing with the Torah on this special day. The barrier (machitzah) that separates the men from the women is, for this one day, removed, and all may rejoice as One People. I foresee, by the Spirit of the living God, a day when there will truly be no Jew or Greek, no male or female, no one too young or too old, but that the machitzah (dividing wall) of hostility, which has already been destroyed by the ultimate sacrifice of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah) will be removed forever; and we will all rejoice in the Torah as One (Echad) in His hand. Halleluyah! This is a photo of my youngest, son, Avi-ad, holding a Torah scroll on Simchat Torah in Ramat Razel, Israel, 10/10



Oh, how I love Your Torah; It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies...Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:97-98, 105 NKJ)

About the Author:

Hannah Neshet grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith. www.voiceforisrael.net

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Prayer Points:

1. That Yehovah Tz'vaot (God of heavenly armies) will come to the aid and defense of the Jewish people who have been left in the diaspora and those presently in Israel from all anti-Semites and forces of destruction.
2. That every evil plan and scheme of the enemy against God's people will be frustrated, brought to nothing, annulled, made of no effect, returned upon their own heads. Ps 83
3. That the Jewish people will not only be saved physically but also spiritually for eternity.
4. That God, in His mercy, will raise up the true Esther Church and open her eyes to the revelation of His heart for Israel and the Jewish people. She will stand with Israel like Ruth with Naomi, an 'unto death' commitment borne out of love.

