

Shaleeakh

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Yom Teruah “Day of Acclamation” Vayikra (Lev) 23:23-25 – Bamidbar (Num) 29:1-6 1 Tishrei 5767 – Sep. 23, 2006

By Rabbi Yaakov benYosef – ABOUT-Torah.org

To observe the beginning of a new month, the Yisraelites would celebrate the new moon. However, although the new moon was set aside to mark the beginning of a new month most new moons were not considered Holy. The Torah only sanctifies one new moon as Holy. This Holy new moon occurs on the first day of the seventh month as Vayikra 23:23-25 states “**the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.**” Unlike the other Holy Days, the new moon that begins the seventh month has very few commandments concerning how to celebrate the day. However, from the commandment to observe the new moon of the seventh month, we can discern that the new moon of the seventh month is not a pilgrimage feast like Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot. It is also not a time of affliction like Yom Kippur. The Torah only lists three commandments specifically associated with the new moon of the seventh month. The three commandments are refraining from work, the blowing of a trumpet for remembrance, and convening a Holy assembly.

Refraining from work on the first day of the seventh month sets this day apart from the rest of the workweek. However, unlike *Yom Kippur* and the seventh day *Shabbat* the new moon of the seventh month is not considered a day of complete rest. We can see this when we compare the commandment concerning work on the first day of the seventh month to the commandment concerning work on the weekly *Shabbat*. *Shemot* 31:15 states **“Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.”** We can also see this difference, when we compare the commandment concerning work on the first day of the seventh month to the commandment concerning work on *Yom Kippur*. *Vayikra* 23:31-32 states **“Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.”** On *Yom Kippur* and on the weekly *Shabbat* all manner of work is forbidden. However, on the new moon of the seventh month, the commandment concerning work is qualified by the word servile. *Bamidbar* 29:1 states **“And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.”** When the word translated as servile is dissected, we can see that it refers to the work of service. In other words, the only work that is forbidden on the new moon of the seventh month is the type of work that pertains to a regular job. Therefore, similar to the way *Shemot* 12:16 states that work concerning food preparation during the Passover is acceptable; food preparation on the new moon of the seventh month is also acceptable.

The second of the three commandments, concerning this Holy Day is the most misunderstood. *Bamidbar* 29:1 states **“in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.”** Because the scriptures concerning the new moon of the seventh month are translated to say it is a day for the blowing of trumpets the new moon of the seventh month became, known as the feast of trumpets. There are two problems that arise by naming this day the feast of trumpets. The first problem is that this day is not a commanded feast. Therefore, if it is a local tradition to have a feast, it is acceptable, and if it is a local, tradition to fast it is acceptable. The second problem arises from the use of the word trumpets. In the passages concerning the new moon of the seventh month, the word translated as trumpets is not *Shofar* or any other word that is normally translated as trumpet.

The word used for the passages concerning the new moon of the seventh month is *Teruah*. *Teruah* is most commonly translated as shout. Therefore, the use of a trumpet to make noise is not specifically commanded. The Torah places the emphasis of this day on the noise instead of the device. In other words, this day is a day of great noise. Therefore, the biblical name for the new moon of the seventh month is *Yom Teruah*. Literally translated *Yom Teruah* breaks down into *Yom* meaning Day and *Teruah* meaning noise. Therefore, the most appropriate English title for the new moon of the seventh month is the Day of Acclamation.

Like the other Holy Days, the commandment to convene a Holy assembly is also given for the new moon of the seventh month. This commandment is given so that HaShem's people can come together as like-minded individuals and worship Him as one body. This is a prelude to the prophecy in *Yesha'yahu* 66:22-23, which states, **“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.”** Coming together and worshiping HaShem in one accord on *Yom Teruah* gives us the opportunity to experience His presence as a family of individuals committed to the goal of serving HaShem.

Yom Teruah is unique among the Holy Days. *Yom Teruah's* uniqueness comes from the few number of commandments given concerning the observance of the Holy Day. However, HaShem does give us three commandments specifically concerning the observance of *Yom Teruah*. The first commandment HaShem gives concerning *Yom Teruah* is that we are required to set the day apart from the workweek. This is seen in HaShem's commandment to abstain from servile work on *Yom Teruah*. The second commandment HaShem gives concerning *Yom Teruah* is that we are to observe a memorial of remembrance through some type of acclamation. This may be accomplished through shouting, shofar blasts, praise, and any other way that loudly acclaim HaShem's mercy, forgiveness, and Holiness. The third commandment HaShem gives concerning *Yom Teruah* is that his people shall to come together in one accord, and worship Him as like-minded individuals. As we celebrate, this *Yom Teruah* let us remember to observe these three commandments and refrain from servile work, come together as one body and loudly proclaim HaShem through repentance and preparation for His future return.

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