

עץ חיים

ETZ HAYIM

TORAH AND COMMENTARY

THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY
THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM



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must, to be acceptable, be without blemish; there must be no defect in it. ²²Anything blind, or injured, or maimed, or with a wen, boil-scar, or scurvy—such you shall not offer to the LORD; you shall not put any of them on the altar as gifts to the LORD. ²³You may, however, present as a freewill offering an ox or a sheep with a limb extended or contracted; but it will not be accepted for a vow. ²⁴You shall not offer to the LORD anything [with its testes] bruised or crushed or torn or cut. You shall have no such practices in your own land, ²⁵nor shall you accept such [animals] from a foreigner for offering as food for your God, for they are mutilated, they have a defect; they shall not be accepted in your favor.

²⁶The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall stay seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be acceptable as a gift to the LORD. ²⁸However, no animal from the herd or from the flock shall be slaughtered on the same day with its young.

²⁹When you sacrifice a thanksgiving offering to the LORD, sacrifice it so that it may be acceptable in your favor. ³⁰It shall be eaten on the same day; you shall not leave any of it until morning: I am the LORD.

³¹You shall faithfully observe My command-

22. There is a marked similarity between the physical defects that render a priest unfit to officiate and those that render an animal unfit for sacrifice.

23. freewill offering Because this offering is a gift to the sanctuary and is not intended for sacrifice, it need not be perfect.

תָּמִים יִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן כָּל־מוֹם לֹא יִהְיֶה־בּוֹ :
²² עֹרֹתָ אֹו שָׁבוֹר אֹו־חֲרוּץ אֹו־יִבְלֹת אֹו
 גָּרֵב אֹו יִלְפֹת לֹא־תִקְרִיבוּ אֵלָהּ לַיהוָה
 וְאִשָּׁה לֹא־תִתְּנֶנּוּ מֵהֶם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
 לַיהוָה : ²³ וְשׂוֹר וְשָׂה שְׂרוּעַ וְקָלוּט נִדְבָה
 תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ וּלְנֹדֵר לֹא יִרְצָה : ²⁴ וּמַעֲוֹף
 וְכַתּוּת וְנִתְּנוֹק וְכָרוֹת לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ לַיהוָה
 וּבְאַרְצְכֶם לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ : ²⁵ וּמִיַּד בֶּן־נֶכֶר לֹא
 תִקְרִיבוּ אֶת־לֶחֶם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל־אֵלָהּ
 כִּי מִשְׁחַתֶּם בָּהֶם מוֹם בָּם לֹא יִרְצוּ
 לָכֶם : פ

²⁶ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר : ²⁷ שׂוֹר
 אֹו־כֶּשֶׁב אֹו־עֹו כִּי יוֹלֵד וְהָיָה שְׁבַע־עַת
 יָמִים תַּחַת אִמּוֹ וּמִיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי וְהִלְאָה
 יִרְצָה לְקַרְבָּן אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה : ²⁸ וְשׂוֹר אֹו־
 שָׂה אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־בְּנוֹ לֹא תִשְׁחֲטוּ בַיּוֹם
 אַחָד :

²⁹ וְכִי־תִזְבְּחוּ זִבְח־תּוֹדָה לַיהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם
 תִּזְבְּחוּ : ³⁰ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יֵאָכַל לֹא־תוֹתִירוּ
 מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה :

³¹ וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם מִצְוֹתַי וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם אֲנִי

28. The law forbids such sacrifice even after eight days.

29–30. These verses present a separate law for the thanksgiving offering, which is here treated as distinct from the *sh'lamim*.

27–28. Maimonides writes, "There is no distinction between the suffering of a human being and that of a beast in this respect, since feelings of maternal affection belong not to the intellectual faculty but to the emotional faculty, which is common to humans and animals alike." Recent research seems to indicate that animals do indeed

have such feelings. Other scholars claim that the primary concern of the law is not with the animal's feelings but with the cultivation of kindness and compassion in the heart of the human being. "It is not because God pities the animal but in order that the people of Israel should not practice cruel habits" (B'khor Shor).

ments: I am the LORD. ³²You shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people—I the LORD who sanctify you, ³³I who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God, I the LORD.

יהוה: ³²ולא תחללו את-שם קדשי ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל אני יהוה מקדשכם: ³³המוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים להיות לכם לאלהים אני יהוה: פ

23 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: These are My fixed times, the fixed times of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions.

³On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a sabbath of complete

כג רביעי וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: ²דבר אל-בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם מועדי יהוה אשר-תקראו אתם מקראי קדש אלה הם מועדי: ³ששת ימים תעשה מלאכה וביום השביעי שבת שבתון מקרא-קדש כל-

THE CALENDAR OF SACRED TIME (23:1–44)

Chapter 23 presents a calendar of the annual festivals celebrated in biblical times.

SHABBAT (vv. 1–3)

2. Speak to the Israelite people These sacred occasions are to be observed by all the people, not only by the priesthood.

which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions Although the dates of the festivals and the regu-

larity of *Shabbat* were set by God, the Israelites also must proclaim them as sacred.

3. On six days work may be done This statement emphasizes three norms of conduct basic to the observance of *Shabbat*: (a) the prohibition of *m'lakhab* (work), (b) the sanctity of *Shabbat*, and (c) the requirement that *Shabbat* be observed in all Israelite settlements.

sabbath of complete rest Hebrew: *shabbat*

32. in the midst of the Israelite people The public performance of a *mitzvah* not only benefits the one who does it but has an effect on those who see it, even as a violation of the Torah in public is more damaging than similar behavior done privately (Hoffman). This led the Sages to view the sanctifying of God's name (*Kiddush ha-Shem*) as essentially a public act. Thus, for example, a *minyan* is required for recitation of the mourner's *Kaddish* and for other prayers proclaiming God's holiness. The faith of the congregation is strengthened when a newly bereaved man or woman, who might have reason to feel angry with God, stands up in its midst to praise God. The Talmud states that there is no greater achievement for a Jew than acting in a way that causes others to praise and respect the God of Israel and the Torah's ways; and there is no graver sin for a Jew than

acting in a way that causes people to think less of Israel's God and Israel's laws (BT Yoma 86a). The term *Kiddush ha-Shem*, sanctifying God's name in public, is often linked to, but not limited to, acts of martyrdom.

CHAPTER 23

2. The festivals of the Jewish year are listed first in Exod. 34. The list is repeated here to set out the special role and responsibilities of the *kohanim*, again in Num. 28–29 to present the special offerings brought on each festive occasion, and once more in Deut. 16 to emphasize the obligation of pilgrimage to the central shrine. The Israelites find the presence of God in the sanctuary, which represents the permanent holiness of sacred space, and on the festivals, which represent the recurring holiness of sacred time.

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

23:3. do no work The Hebrew word *m'lakhab* (work) signifies any creative endeavor. One should refrain not only from paid labor but also from many actions that today may be considered leisure activities, such as gardening, cooking, sewing, arts and crafts, building, and writing.

rest, a sacred occasion. You shall do no work; it shall be a sabbath of the LORD throughout your settlements.

⁴These are the set times of the LORD, the sacred occasions, which you shall celebrate each at its appointed time: ⁵In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to the LORD, ⁶and on the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days. ⁷On the first day you shall celebrate a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. ⁸Seven days you shall make gifts to the LORD. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.

⁹The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁰Speak to the Israelite people and say to them:

shabbaton; literally, "the most restful cessation" from assigned tasks. The word *shabbat* means "to desist, cease, be idle."

sabbath of the LORD A day that belongs to God.

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (vv. 4–8)

4. Each festival is to occur at the same time every year.

5. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month This is the dating system that was in use during much of the biblical period. The unit of time was the lunar month (*hodesh*), not the week; and the months of the year were designated by ordinal numbers: the first month, the second month, and so forth. The counting of months began in the spring.

twilight The period of time between sunset

מְלֹאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ שַׁבַּת הוּא לַיהוָה
בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם: פ

⁴אֵלֶּה מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-
תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם בְּמוֹעֲדָם: ⁵בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן
בְּאַרְבַּעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים פְּסַח
לַיהוָה: ⁶וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה
תִּגַּד הַמִּצּוֹת לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים מִצּוֹת
תֹּאכְלוּ: ⁷בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ
יְהִי לָכֶם כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:
⁸וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֶשֶׁה לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת
עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: פ

⁹וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ¹⁰דַּבֵּר
אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם

and nightfall, approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes in duration.

passover offering Here the term "*pesah*" refers to the sacrifice, not to the festival (see Exod. 12:6).

7. On the first and seventh (or last) days of the festival, work is forbidden. The community celebrates together. During the intervening days, necessary normal work may be done, but the celebration continues.

NEW GRAIN CROP (vv. 9–14)

New grain is to be regarded as belonging to God and may not be eaten until certain offerings are taken from it and presented before God. Those offerings remove the sanctity from the crop, thereby releasing the remainder for ordinary human use.

7. you shall not work at your occupations
The Jewish festivals challenge us: Do we define ourselves primarily by our work? Or do we de-

fine ourselves primarily by our total humanity, our ability to celebrate, to sanctify time, to share special moments with our families?

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

23:6. seven days Traditionally, *Pesah* is observed for eight days in the Diaspora. See Comment to Exod. 12:16.

23:7. not work at your occupations Most categories of *m'lakhah* (activities prohibited on *Shabbat* and *Yom Kippur*) are also prohibited on the three pilgrimage festivals and *Rosh ha-Shanah*; the permitted activities are those necessary for the preparation of food (*okhel nefesh*), such as cooking, carrying, and the transfer of fire (M Betz. 5:2).

When you enter the land that I am giving to you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹He shall elevate the sheaf before the LORD for acceptance in your behalf; the priest shall elevate it on the day after the sabbath. ¹²On the day that you elevate the sheaf, you shall offer as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb of the first year without blemish. ¹³The grain offering with it shall be two-tenths of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in, a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD; and the libation with it shall be of wine, a quarter of a *hin*. ¹⁴Until that very day, until you have brought the offering of your God, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears; it is a law for all time throughout the ages in all your settlements.

¹⁵And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: ¹⁶you must count until the day after the seventh week—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD. ¹⁷You shall bring from your settlements two

פִּי־תְבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְכֶם וְקִצְרְתֶם אֶת־קְצִירָהּ וְהִבֵּאתֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר רֵאשִׁית קְצִירְכֶם אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן: ¹¹ וְהִנִּיף אֶת־הָעֹמֶר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת יִנִּיפּוּ הַכֹּהֵן: ¹² וְעִשִּׂיתֶם בַּיּוֹם הַנִּיפְכֶם אֶת־הָעֹמֶר כֶּבֶשׂ תָּמִים בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה לַיהוָה: ¹³ וּמִנְחָתוֹ שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים סֵלֹת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ וּנְסֻכָה וְנִסְכּוֹ יַיִן רְבִיעֵת הַדֵּהוּן: ¹⁴ וְלֶחֶם וְקִלְי וְכֶרְמֶל לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַד־עֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַד הִבֵּיאֲכֶם אֶת־קֶרְבַּן אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חֶקֶת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכָל מִשְׁבְּתֵיכֶם: ס

¹⁵ וּסְפַרְתֶּם לְכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הִבֵּיאֲכֶם אֶת־עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעַ שְׁבָתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תַּהְיִינָה: ¹⁶ עַד מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׁבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַיהוָה: ¹⁷ מִמוֹשְׁבֹתֵיכֶם תָּבִיאוּ* | לֶחֶם תְּנוּפָה

v. 17. א' דגושה

10. sheaf Hebrew: *omer*, a bundle of stalks bound together after reaping. Here, the reference is to barley, the first grain to ripen in the spring. **to the priest** The particular priest who officiates at the rite in the sanctuary.

11. The purpose of such rites was to “show” the offering to God, so that it might be accepted.

12–13. The burnt offering (*olah*) was often accompanied by a grain offering (*minḥah*) and a

libation (*nesekh*), as prescribed here. The measure of grain required here is twice the usual amount, to emphasize the importance of grain in this celebration.

14. Until God receives a share of the new grain crop, none of it may be used by humans.

SHAVU·OT FESTIVAL (vv. 15–22)

17. No leaven could be brought up on the

11. the day after the sabbath This starts the counting of the *Omer* (see *Halakhah l'Ma'aseh*, below). The Sages held that “the sabbath” here refers to the *Pesaḥ* festival. Explaining that interpretation, Arama writes, “If the *Omer* were tied to *Shabbat*, symbol of the creation of the world, then the wheat harvest would be seen purely as a natural phenome-

non. Connecting it to the Exodus teaches us to see it, like the Exodus, as an instance of God’s benevolence.” It is through God’s favor, not through our clever manipulation of nature, that the earth yields food for us to eat; that is why we cannot properly enjoy it until we have thanked God for it.

HALAKHAH L'MA'ASEH

23:15. you shall count From the second night of *Pesaḥ* until *Shavuot*, we count the 49 days of the *Omer*. Jewish communities hold varying segments of this time period, known as the *S'firah* (literally, “counting”), as a time of semimourning, during which weddings and festive occasions do not take place.

loaves of bread as an elevation offering; each shall be made of two-tenths of a measure of choice flour, baked after leavening, as first fruits to the LORD.¹⁸ With the bread you shall present, as burnt offerings to the LORD, seven yearling lambs without blemish, one bull of the herd, and two rams, with their grain offerings and libations, a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD.¹⁹ You shall also offer one he-goat as a purification offering and two yearling lambs as a sacrifice of well-being.²⁰ The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs—together with the bread of first fruits as an elevation offering before the LORD; they shall be holy to the LORD, for the priest.²¹ On that same day you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you; you shall not work at your occupations. This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages.

²²And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the LORD am your God.

²³The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁴Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh

שָׁתַיִם שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִים סֵלֹת תַּהֲיִינָה חֶמֶץ
תֹּאפִינָה בְּכוּרִים לַיהוָה: ¹⁸ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם
עַל-הַלֶּחֶם שִׁבְעַת כְּבָשִׂים תְּמִימִם בְּנֵי
שָׁנָה וּפָר בֶּן-בָּקָר אֶחָד וְאֵילָם שְׁנַיִם יִהְיוּ
עֲלֶיהָ לַיהוָה וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם אִשָּׁה
רִיחַ-נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: ¹⁹ וְעֲשִׂיתֶם שְׁעִיר-
עֲזִים אֶחָד לְחֻטָּאת וּשְׁנֵי כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי
שָׁנָה לְזִבַח שְׁלָמִים: ²⁰ וְהִנִּיף הַכֹּהֵן |
אֹתָם עַל לֶחֶם הַבְּכוּרִים תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה עַל-שְׁנֵי כְּבָשִׂים קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיוּ לַיהוָה
לַכֹּהֵן: ²¹ וּקְרֹאתֶם בְּעֶצֶם | הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת
עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם בְּכָל-
מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם לְדוֹרֵיכֶם:

²² וּבִקְצֹרְכֶם אֶת-קְצִיר אֲרֻצְכֶם לֹא-
תִכְלֶה פֶּאת שְׂדֶךְ בִּקְצֹרְךָ וּלְקַט קְצִירְךָ
לֹא תִלְקֹט לְעַנִּי וּלְגֵר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ס

²³ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ²⁴ דַּבֵּר
אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי

altar. Here, because no part of the offering presented before God ascends the altar, it could be made of “leavened dough” (*hametz*).

18–20. The offerings prescribed in these verses are typical of those included in public rites, in which several different sacrifices are offered together to constitute a more elaborate celebration. The animals, both small and large, are to be offered as burnt offerings and are accompanied by the grain offerings and libations.

20. The priest shall elevate these—the two lambs That is, the two yearling lambs.

they shall be holy to the LORD, for the priest In the first instance, these offerings are the Lord’s,

who, in turn, commands that they be allotted to the priests.

FIRST DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH (vv. 23–25)

This section ordains the celebration of three major sacred occasions occurring during the seventh month: (a) the first day of the seventh month (which in the later tradition became the Jewish New Year), (b) the Day of Atonement, and (c) the *Sukkot* festival.

24. Here, the day is presented as one of rest and sacred assembly. It is conceived of not as a new year but as an occasion before the Day of

22. Why are the gleanings of the harvest mentioned here, interrupting the list of festivals? Perhaps because they were gathered at the *Shavu-ot* harvest season, as we read in the Book of Ruth, or because, as the *Sifra* suggests,

when one shares one’s bounty with the poor, it is as if it were offered on God’s altar.

24. The Torah never refers to the first day of the seventh month as *Rosh ha-Shanah*. That term first appears in Ezek. 40:1. In the Torah,

month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts. ²⁵You shall not work at your occupations; and you shall bring a gift to the LORD.

²⁶The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁷Mark, the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: you shall practice self-denial, and you shall bring a gift to the LORD; ²⁸you shall do no work throughout that day. For it is a Day of Atonement, on which expiation is made on your behalf before the LORD your God. ²⁹Indeed, any person who does not practice self-denial throughout that day shall be cut off from his kin; ³⁰and whoever does any work throughout that day, I will cause that person to perish from among his people. ³¹Do no work whatever; it is a law for all time, throughout the ages in all your settlements. ³²It shall be a sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self-denial; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe this your sabbath.

Atonement. The Hebrew term *zikhron t'ru-ah* means, literally, “commemoration by blasting” the *shofar*.

DAY OF ATONEMENT (vv. 26–32)

See Comments to 16:29–34.

בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרֵא-קֹדֶשׁ: ²⁵כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה: ס

²⁶וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ²⁷אָךְ בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים הוּא מִקְרֵא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה: ²⁸וְכָל-מְלֹאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי יוֹם כִּפּוּרִים הוּא לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ²⁹כִּי כָל-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תַעֲזֶה בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְנִכְרְתָה מֵעַמִּיהָ: ³⁰וְכָל-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלֹאכָה בַעֲצֵם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְהָאֲבֹדְתִי אֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִקְרַב עַמִּיהָ: ³¹כָּל-מְלֹאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בְּכֹל מְשַׁבְּתֵיכֶם: ³²שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן הוּא לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בַּתְּשׁוּעָה לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּעָרֵב מֵעָרֵב עַד-עָרֵב

שׁוֹי תִשְׁבְּתוּ שַׁבְּתֵיכֶם: פ

27. you shall practice self-denial That is, you shall fast.

32. from evening to evening, you shall observe this This verse has been interpreted as setting the norm for every festival in the Jewish religious calendar, namely, that the celebration

it is called “a day of remembrance” or “a day of sounding the *shofar*.” Readers may be surprised to learn that *Rosh ha-Shanah* begins the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar rather than the first. It commemorates the creation of the world, which traditionally is believed to have happened in the fall, the beginning of the new agricultural cycle. But the people Israel date their calendar from the Exodus, which

happened in the spring (cf. Exod. 12:2, designating the month of the Exodus as the first month of Israel’s calendar).

32. on the ninth day... at evening The *Yom Kippur* fast does not start until the evening (after sunset, at night) after the ninth day. “Eating and drinking responsibly on the day before and the day after *Yom Kippur* are as much of a *mitzvah* as fasting on *Yom Kippur*” (BT Yoma 81b).

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23:24. commemorated with loud blasts This is the source for the ruling that the *shofar* is not sounded on *Rosh ha-Shanah* when it coincides with *Shabbat*, which is itself a commemoration (BT RH 29b). On such a *Shabbat*, we “remember the blasting” in our prayers. It is also the source for the practice during the *Musaf* service on *Rosh ha-Shanah* of reciting 10 biblical verses about each of the themes of God’s kingship, God’s remembrance, and the *shofar* (BT RH 32a).

³³The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ³⁴Say to the Israelite people:

On the fifteenth day of this seventh month there shall be the Feast of Booths to the LORD, [to last] seven days. ³⁵The first day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations; ³⁶seven days you shall bring gifts to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall observe a sacred occasion and bring a gift to the LORD; it is a solemn gathering: you shall not work at your occupations.

³⁷Those are the set times of the LORD that you shall celebrate as sacred occasions, bringing gifts to the LORD—burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices, and libations, on each day what is proper to it—³⁸apart from the sabbaths of the LORD, and apart from your gifts and from all your votive offerings and from all your freewill offerings that you give to the LORD.

³⁹Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the LORD [to last] seven days: a complete rest on

שש³³ וידבר יהוה אל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ³⁴דַּבֵּר אל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לַיהוָה: ³⁵בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ³⁶שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תִּקְרִיבוּ אֹשֶׁה לַיהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֹשֶׁה לַיהוָה עֲצַרְתָּ הוּא כָּל־מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ:

³⁷אֵלֶּה מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ לְהַקְרִיב אֹשֶׁה לַיהוָה עֲלֵה וּמִנְחָה זָבַח וְנִסְכִּים דְּבַר־יוֹם בַּיּוֹמוֹ: ³⁸מִלֶּבֶד שַׁבְּתוֹת יְהוָה וּמִלֶּבֶד מִתְּנוּתֵיכֶם וּמִלֶּבֶד כָּל־נְדָרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לַיהוָה:

³⁹אָךְ בַּחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶסְפְּכֶם אֶת־תְּבוּאת הָאָרֶץ תַּחֲגוּ אֶת־חַג־יְהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּיּוֹם

commences on the evening (actually the night, after sunset) that precedes the day of the festival. Scheduling the Day of Atonement only a few days before the major pilgrimage festival of the year ensured that the sanctuary and the people would be restored to a state of fitness in time for the celebration of the autumn *Sukkot* observance.

SUKKOT FESTIVAL (vv. 33–44)

34. the Feast of Booths The Hebrew word *suk-*

kab, “booth,” derives from the verb סכך, “to cover over,” as with branches. It designates a small, usually temporary, structure that is covered on top and only partially enclosed on its sides.

36. solemn gathering This term derives from the Hebrew verb עצר, “to detain, restrain, confine,” and may refer to the fact that the people are kept together for an additional day.

35. first day Why is it called the “first day” when it is actually the fifteenth of the month? After the slate has been wiped clean on *Yom Kippur*, we begin our relationship with God anew on *Sukkot* (Lev. R. 30:7).

36. solemn gathering The word *atzeret* is usually understood as “concluding event” or “solemn gathering.” But Hirsch here understands it as derived from a root meaning “to gather, to store up.” Even as farmers gather up

the harvest in the autumn to last through the winter months, even as animals store food for the winter, the Israelites are urged to store up the feelings of gratitude and dependence that mark the holiday season—to last them through the months that will follow, months without festival days. (In the biblical period, *Hanukkah* did not exist. It celebrates events that took place after the time of the Torah.)

the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. ⁴⁰On the first day you shall take the product of *hadar* trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. ⁴¹You shall observe it as a festival of the LORD for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages. ⁴²You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the LORD your God.

⁴⁴So Moses declared to the Israelites the set times of the LORD.

הָרֵאשׁוֹן שְׁבֻתוֹן וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי שְׁבֻתוֹן :
 40 וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרֵאשׁוֹן פְּרֵי עֵץ
 הַדָּר כַּפַּת תְּמָרִים וְעֵנָף עֵץ-עֵבֶת וְעַרְבֵי-
 נָחַל וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
 שִׁבְעַת יָמִים : 41 וְחֻגְתֶּם אֹתוֹ חֹג לַיהוָה
 שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם
 בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי תַחֲגוּ אֹתוֹ : 42 בַּסֹּפֶת
 תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל-הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 יֵשְׁבוּ בַסֹּפֶת : 43 לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם
 כִּי בַסֹּפֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם :

44 וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מִעַדֵי יְהוָה אֶל-בְּנֵי

יִשְׂרָאֵל : פ

40. hadar trees Literally, “beautiful trees.” They symbolize the abundance of water and oases and the beauty of the land of Israel. In horticulture, there are no particular trees designated as *hadar*. Traditionally, the “product of *hadar* trees” has been taken to be the citron (*etrog*).

you shall rejoice Rejoicing is explicitly commanded in this chapter only for the celebration

of *Sukkot*. The pressing of the grapes had been completed, and there was no labor to be done until the beginning of the next agricultural cycle. The people had leisure time as well as ample food and wine with which to rejoice.

43. I made the Israelite people live in booths According to Exod. 12:37, *Sukkot* (literally, Booths) is the name of the first stop on the Exodus route from Egypt.

40. The Midrash offers many interpretations of the symbolic meaning of the four species of *Sukkot*. The *lulav* (palm branch) represents the spine—erect but not rigid; the myrtle, the eyes; the willow, the lips; and the *etrog*, the heart. They summon us to use all of our limbs and organs to rejoice before the Lord. Yet another *midrash* compares the *etrog*, which tastes and smells good, to people who possess learning and also do good deeds;

the *lulav*, which has taste but no fragrance, to people who have learning but do not do good; the myrtle, which has fragrance but no taste, to people who do good but lack learning; and the willow, with neither taste nor fragrance, to people who lack both learning and good deeds but who are still to be counted as members of the community in order for the community to be complete (Lev. R. 30:10–12).

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23:40. the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook This is the source for the commandment to take the citron fruit (*etrog*) with the branches of willow (*aravah*) and myrtle (*hadas*) bound to a palm branch (*lulav*) to fulfill the *mitzvah* of waving the *lulav* during *Sukkot*.

23:42. live in booths seven days One can fulfill this commandment by either sleeping in the *sukkah* (booth) or eating one's meals there during the seven-day holiday. One is exempt from eating or dwelling in the *sukkah* if the weather or other factors cause undue hardship (BT Suk. 25b–26a,29a).

23:44. So Moses declared On festivals, this verse is recited aloud before the *Amidah* during the *Ma-ariv* service, and before the blessing over wine for the *Kiddush* preceding lunch.

you shall observe a sacred occasion when you shall practice self-denial. You shall do no work. ⁸You shall present to the LORD a burnt offering of pleasing odor: one bull of the herd, one ram, seven yearling lambs; see that they are without blemish. ⁹The grain offering with them—of choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for a bull, two-tenths for the one ram, ¹⁰one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. ¹¹And there shall be one goat for a purification offering, in addition to the purification offering of expiation and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, each with its libation.

¹²On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.—Seven days you shall observe a festival of the LORD.—¹³You shall present a burnt offering, a gift of pleasing odor to the LORD: Thirteen bulls of the herd, two rams, fourteen yearling lambs; they shall be without blemish. ¹⁴The grain offerings with them—of choice flour with oil mixed in—shall be: three-tenths of a measure for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs. ¹⁶And there shall be one goat for a purification offering—in addition to the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and libation.

קָדֵשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כָּל-מְלֹאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: ⁸וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֶיהָ לִיהוָה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ פָּר בֶּן-בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי-שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: ⁹וּמִנְחֹתָם סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְפָר שְׁנַי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד: ¹⁰עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׂים: ¹¹שְׁעִיר-עֲזִים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלֶּבֶד חֲטָאת הַכִּפָּרִים וְעֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֵיהֶם: ^פ
¹²וּבַחֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מְלֹאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְחֻגְתֶּם חֹג לִיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: ¹³וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֶיהָ אִשָּׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לִיהוָה פָּרִים בְּנֵי-בָקָר שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר אֵילִם שְׁנַיִם כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי-שָׁנָה אַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ: ¹⁴וּמִנְחֹתָם סֹלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְפָר הָאֶחָד לְשֹׁלֶשָׁה עָשָׂר פָּרִים שְׁנַי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד לְשְׁנַי אֵילִם: ¹⁵וְעֶשְׂרוֹן* עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד לְאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר כִּבְשִׂים: ¹⁶וְשְׁעִיר-עֲזִים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלֶּבֶד עֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד מִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכָּה: ^ס

v. 15. נקוד על ו' בתראה

and performed exclusively by the high priest (Lev. 16).

7. you shall practice self-denial Literally, “you shall afflict yourselves,” chiefly by fasting.

You shall do no work Literally, “you shall not do any work.” The same phrase is used for *Shabbat* (Lev. 23:3). It indicates a more severe

prohibition of work on these days than on the other festivals.

THE 15th TO THE 21st OF THE SEVENTH MONTH (vv. 12–34)

This sacred occasion is called “the Feast of Booths” (*Hag ha-Sukkot*) in Lev. 23:34 and Deut.

CHAPTER 29

13. Offerings for the week of *Sukkot* are staggering in number, a total of 98 lambs and 70 bullocks. (*Pesah* week requires only 16 bulls; no other holiday requires more than 2.) The Talmud teaches that the 70 bulls represent thanks-

giving offerings on behalf of the 70 nations of the world (BT Suk. 55b). In case some nations forget to be grateful to God, Israel brings a bull-ock offering (the most extravagant of the sacrifices) on their behalf on *Sukkot*, the festival of thanksgiving. One of Israel’s tasks in the world is to remind other nations to be grateful to God.

הַפְּטָרָה לְסוּכּוֹת (יוֹם רֵאשׁוֹן)

HAFTARAH FOR SUKKOT, FIRST DAY

ZECHARIAH 14:1–21

This reading is one of the latest examples of biblical prophecy. Dating from sometime after 518 B.C.E. (see Zech. 8:9), it originally concluded the visions and oracles anthologized as the prophecies of Zechariah. This *haftarah* is marked by a strong tone of impending doom and purification. A repeated emphasis on “that day” of divine judgment conveys a tone of expectation and inevitability. The city of Jerusalem stands at the center of these prophecies, having a pivotal place in the wars to come and in the universal pilgrimage proclaimed for all nations. When the battles conclude, the Lord will be acknowledged king, and all peoples will be invited to celebrate the festival of *Sukkot* in Jerusalem.

This *haftarah* begins with the siege of Jerusalem by “all the nations,” and it ends with their survivors being invited to Jerusalem for a sacred convocation and worship at the feast of *Sukkot*. Looting and plunder (14:1–2) give way to a forecast of the security of Jerusalem and its religious centrality for all (14:11,20–21). Marking this transition is a shift from the wars of the Lord and His army of “holy beings” (*k’doshim*; v. 5) to the peace of Jerusalem, in which even the most common objects and utensils will be “holy (*kadosh*) to the LORD” (v. 21). Significantly, little is said here of the Israelites themselves, or of their worship, whereas much is made of the nations who will bow before the Lord in Jerusalem “year by year.” The elevation of the Lord as “king over all the earth” is clearly of major concern to the prophet, as is the centrality of “the House of the LORD” for all nations. “In that day there shall be one LORD with one name” (v. 9).

The immediacy of the forecast is registered by repetitions of the word “day.” There will be a “day . . . coming” (v. 1) says the prophet, a “day” of plunder and salvation (vv. 4,13), a “day” of continuous light and fresh waters (vv. 6–8), a “day”

of divine kingship and the sanctification of everything in Jerusalem (vv. 9,20–21). These days combine in the course of the prophecy to produce one extensive day, when the darkness of doom will pass and a transcendent radiance will illumine the earth.

Beyond the terrifying clamor of battles and death, Zechariah envisages a time of unearthly splendor, a day when “there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight, but there shall be a continuous day” (vv. 6–7). Creation is therewith reversed and transformed. God’s first light will shine again and evermore, without setting or dawning. In this era, heavenly splendor will illumine all things. It is the time of God’s universal kingship (v. 9).

Along with the elemental quality of light, Zechariah’s prophecy focuses on the life-saving nature of water. It comes to first expression through a prediction that in the day that is coming “fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem” to the eastern and western seas, throughout the summer and winter seasons (v. 8). This image harks back to Ezekiel’s vision of a stream of water issuing from below the platform of the new Temple and flowing outward to heal the natural world (Ezek. 47:1–12). It recalls the primordial streams of Eden (Gen. 2:10–14) and dramatizes the Temple as a veritable paradise at the center of the world. Zechariah’s prophecy of Jerusalem is nourished by this mythic figure.

However, as an image of earthly bounty, the blessing of streams and flowing water derives from regions, like Mesopotamia, nourished by underground fountains and mountain torrents. Ancient Israel, where the waters above the heavens were the decisive source of sustenance, was not such a place. The prophet Zechariah, therefore, speaks to all when he promises God’s heavenly bounty of rain to all those who will worship the Lord

in Jerusalem on the Feast of Booths (Zech. 14:16–19). This is the favor the Lord extends to those who acknowledge Him. It is the gift of life from the Lord of life. The survivors of death-dealing battles can appreciate its value (v. 16).

RELATION OF THE *HAFTARAH*
TO THE CALENDAR

This *haftarah* shows an old connection between the festival of *Sukkot* and rituals for rain. “Any of the earth’s communities that does not make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bow low to the

King LORD of Hosts shall receive no rain” (v. 17). This pronouncement excludes only Egypt (a land that does not depend on rainfall), which is promised an appropriate scourge (Ibn Ezra, Radak). Rain rituals associated with water libations and with the four species gathered on *Sukkot* (Lev. 23:40) are mentioned separately in early Rabbinic sources (see Tosef. Suk. 3:18; BT Taan. 2b, respectively). Some of these rites may go back to early biblical times, but only during the era of the Second Temple do they seem to have been integrated into a multilevel service of celebration and supplication.

14 Lo, a day of the LORD is coming when your spoil shall be divided in your very midst!²For I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem for war: The city shall be captured, the houses plundered, and the women violated; and a part of the city shall go into exile. But the rest of the population shall not be uprooted from the city.

³Then the LORD will come forth and make war on those nations as He is wont to make war on a day of battle. ⁴On that day, He will set His feet on the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall split across from east to west, and one part of the Mount shall shift to the north and the other to the south, a huge gorge. ⁵And the Valley in the Hills shall be stopped up, for the Valley of the Hills shall reach only to Azal; it shall be stopped up as it was stopped up as a result of the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah.—And the LORD my God, with all the holy beings, will come to you.

Zechariah 14:4. He will set His feet God appears as a warrior in battle. The stark anthropomorphism recalls Amos 9:1, in which the prophet envisages the “LORD standing by [or: on] the altar” prophesying doom.

5. This translation vocalizes the verb נסתם^[ח] as [v’]nistam, as in Targum, Septuagint, and an old Hebrew manuscript. (Like most manuscripts

יד
הִנֵּה יוֹם־בָּא לַיהוָה וְחָלַק שְׁלָלָךְ
בְּקִרְבְּךָ: ²וְאַסְפֹּתִי אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם | אֶל־
יְרוּשָׁלַם לְמַלְחָמָה וְנִלְכְּדָה הָעִיר וְנִשְׁסָף
הַבָּתִּים וְהַנְּשִׂים תִּשְׁגַּלְנָה תִּשְׁכַּבְּנָה וַיִּצָּא
חֲצִי הָעִיר בַּגּוּלָה וַיִּתֶּר הָעָם לֹא יִפְרֹת
מִן־הָעִיר:

³וַיִּצָּא יְהוָה וְנִלְחָם בַּגּוֹיִם הַהֵם כִּיּוֹם
הַלְחָמוֹ כִּיּוֹם קָרֵב: ⁴וְעָמְדוּ רַגְלָיו בֵּיּוֹם־
הַהוּא עַל־הַר הַזֵּה הַזֵּה אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי
יְרוּשָׁלַם מִקְדָּם וְנִבְקַע הַר הַזֵּה וַיִּתְּסַח מִחֲצִי
מִזְרָחָה וַיִּמָּדָה גֵּיא גְדוֹלָה מֵאֹד וּמִשׁ חֲצִי
הַהָר צְפוֹנָה וְחֲצִי־נֹגְבָה: ⁵וְנִסְתָּם * גֵּיא־
הָרִי כִּי־יִגְיַע גֵּי־הָרִים אֶל־אֶצֶל וְנִסְתָּם *
כַּאֲשֶׁר נִסְתָּם * מִפְּנֵי הָרַעַשׁ בְּיַמֵּי עֲזִיָּה
מִלְךְ־יְהוּדָה וּבֵא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָל־קְדוֹשִׁים
עִמָּךְ:

v. 5. בנוסח אחר “ונסתם” פעמיים כלומר שנוי תנועות

v. 5. בנוסח אחר “נסתם” כלומר שנוי תנועות

and printed editions, the Hebrew text above reads [v’]nistem, that is, “You [pl.] shall flee [to] the Valley in the Hills, for the Valley of the Hills shall reach up to Azal. You shall flee as you fled because of the earthquake.” [Transl.]

the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah Mentioned also in Amos 1:1, but otherwise it is unknown.

⁶In that day, there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight, ⁷but there shall be a continuous day—only the LORD knows when—of neither day nor night, and there shall be light at eventide.

⁸In that day, fresh water shall flow from Jerusalem, part of it to the Eastern Sea and part to the Western Sea, throughout the summer and winter.

⁹And the LORD shall be king over all the earth; in that day there shall be one LORD with one name.

¹⁰Then the whole country shall become like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. The latter, however, shall perch high up where it is, and shall be inhabited from the Gate of Benjamin to the site of the Old Gate, down to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. ¹¹Never again shall destruction be decreed, and Jerusalem shall dwell secure.

¹²As for those peoples that warred against Jerusalem, the LORD will smite them with this plague: Their flesh shall rot away while they stand on their feet; their eyes shall rot away in their sockets; and their tongues shall rot away in their mouths.

¹³In that day, a great panic from the LORD shall fall upon them, and everyone shall snatch at the hand of another, and everyone shall raise his hand against everyone else's hand. ¹⁴Judah

8. Eastern Sea . . . Western Sea The Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, respectively (see Joel 2:20).

9. one LORD with one name Prophesying universal monotheism, when God's name will be proclaimed by all (cf. Rashi). It is cited at the end of the *Aleinu* prayer and thus serves as a liturgical climax to virtually every Jewish service. Note the literal resonance between the phrase "one LORD" and the conclusion to the *Sh'ma* proclamation (Deut. 6:4), which avers that "the LORD is one" or "the LORD alone [is our God]."

Following a talmudic tradition, Ibn Ezra interpreted Zechariah literally: In the end of days

6 וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֹא־יְהִיֶּה אֹר יְקָרוֹת יִקְפְּאוּ וְקָפְאוּן׃ 7 וְהָיָה יוֹם־אֶחָד הוּא יִנְדַע לַיהוָה לֹא־יוֹם וְלֹא־לַיְלָה וְהָיָה לַעֲת־עָרֵב יְהִיֶּה־אֹר׃

8 וְהָיָה ׀ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִצְאוּ מִיַּם־חַיִּים מִירוּשָׁלַם חֲצִיִם אֶל־הַיָּם הַקְּדָמוֹנִי וְחֲצִיִם אֶל־הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרוֹן בְּקִיץ וּבְחֶרֶף יְהִיֶּה׃

9 וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיֶּה יְהוָה אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד׃

10 יִטוֹב כָּל־הָאָרֶץ בְּעֶרְבָה מְגֻבַע לְרִמּוֹן נֹגֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם וְרֵאמָה וְיִשְׁבָּה תַּחְתֶּיהָ לְמִשְׁעַר בְּנֵימִן עַד־מְקוֹם שַׁעַר הָרֵאשׁוֹן עַד־שַׁעַר הַפְּנִים וּמִגְדַל חֲנַנְאֵל עַד יְקָבִי הַמֶּלֶךְ׃ 11 וְיִשְׁבוּ בָּהּ וְחָרִם לֹא יְהִיֶּה־עוֹד וְיִשְׁבָּה יְרוּשָׁלַם לְבֶטֶח׃

12 וְזָאת ׀ תְּהִיֶּה הַמִּגְפָּה אֲשֶׁר יִגַּף יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר צָבְאוּ עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם הַמֶּלֶךְ ׀ בְּשָׂרוֹ וְהוּא עֹמֵד עַל־רִגְלָיו וְעֵינָיו תִּמְקְנָה בְּחִרְיָתָן וְלִשׁוֹנוֹ תִּמְקַ בְּפִיהֶם׃

13 וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא תְּהִיֶּה מְהוּמַת־יְהוָה רַבָּה בָּהֶם וְהַחֲזִיקוּ אִישׁ יָד רֵעֵהוּ וְעַלְתָּה יָדוֹ עַל־יַד רֵעֵהוּ׃ 14 וְגַם־יְהוּדָה תִּלְחָם

there will no longer be two forms of the divine name but one alone (see BT Pes. 50a). The two forms are *YHVH*, written but not vocalized, and *Adonai*, vocalized but not written as pronounced. Jewish mystical tradition considered the unification of these two forms of God's name a holy mystery. Hasidic masters developed penetrating homilies on the relations between the names, seeing in their difference the mystery of divine transcendence and divine immanence, or indwelling on earth.

10. become like the Arabah All the earth will be depressed, like the Arabah, and Jerusalem will dominate all, like a high mountain (Rashi).

shall join the fighting in Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations round about—vast quantities of gold, silver, and clothing—shall be gathered in.

¹⁵The same plague shall strike the horses, the mules, the camels, and the asses; the plague shall affect all the animals in those camps.

¹⁶All who survive of all those nations that came up against Jerusalem shall make a pilgrimage year by year to bow low to the King LORD of Hosts and to observe the Feast of Booths. ¹⁷Any of the earth's communities that does not make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bow low to the King LORD of Hosts shall receive no rain. ¹⁸However, if the community of Egypt does not make this pilgrimage, it shall not be visited by the same affliction with which the LORD will strike the other nations that do not come up to observe the Feast of Booths. ¹⁹Such shall be the punishment of Egypt and of all other nations that do not come up to observe the Feast of Booths.

²⁰In that day, even the bells on the horses shall be inscribed "Holy to the LORD." The metal pots in the House of the LORD shall be like the basins before the altar; ²¹indeed, every metal pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy to the LORD of Hosts. And all those who sacrifice shall come and take of these to boil [their sacrificial meat] in; in that day there shall be no more traders in the House of the LORD of Hosts.

בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְאֶסְפָּה חֵיל כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם סְבִיב
זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וּבְגָדִים לָרֹב מְאֹד :

¹⁵ וְכֵן תִּהְיֶה מִגִּפַּת הַסּוּס הַפָּרָד הַגָּמֶל
וְהַחֲמֹר וְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה
בַּמַּחֲנֹת הַהֵמָּה כַּמִּגִּפָּה הַזֹּאת :

¹⁶ וְהָיָה כָּל־הַנוֹתֵר מִכָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הַבָּאִים
עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְעָלוּ מִדֵּי שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה
לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וּלְחַג
אֶת־חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת : ¹⁷ וְהָיָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲלֶה
מֵאֶת מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָרֶץ אֶל־יְרוּשָׁלַם
לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְלֹא
עֲלֵיהֶם יִהְיֶה הַגֶּשֶׁם : ¹⁸ וְאִם־מִשְׁפַּחַת
מִצְרַיִם לֹא־תַעֲלֶה וְלֹא בָאָה וְלֹא עֲלֵיהֶם
תִּהְיֶה הַמִּגִּפָּה אֲשֶׁר יִגַּף יְהוָה אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם
אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַעֲלוּ לְחַג אֶת־חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת :
¹⁹ זֹאת תִּהְיֶה חֲטָאת מִצְרַיִם וְחֲטָאת
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַעֲלוּ לְחַג אֶת־חַג
הַסֻּכּוֹת :

²⁰ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה עַל־מִצְלוֹת הַסּוּס
קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה וְהָיָה הַסִּירוֹת בְּבֵית יְהוָה
כַּמִּזְרְקִים לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ : ²¹ וְהָיָה כָּל־סִיר
בִּירוּשָׁלַם וּבִיהוּדָה קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת
וּבָאוּ כָּל־הַזְּבָחִים וּלְקַחוּ מֵהֶם וּבִשְׁלוּ
בָהֶם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כֹנַעֲנִי עוֹד בְּבֵית־יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא :

from Geba to Rimmon That is, from the northern border of the kingdom of Judah (1 Kings 15:22) to the southern border (Josh. 15:32).

14. in Jerusalem Or: "on behalf of Jerusalem."

19. the punishment Hebrew: *hattat*, which normally indicates sin but is often used (as here) to indicate its consequences.

20. Holy to the LORD This inscription was also on the gold plate attached to the high priest's headdress (Exod. 28:36, 39:30). The phrase connotes consecration: It indicates Israel's special status, and that the spoils of war can be dedicated to the Lord (Josh. 6:19).