

The Missing Moed

Discovering The Appointed Times of Prayer

Objective of Teaching: To Show the Validity of Set Times of Prayer & encourage Torah pursuant people to begin praying at the appointed times.

The Moedim of Prayer

Moedim - Appointed Times (Brief review of Leviticus 23)

Most of us are familiar with moedim — the Appointed Times of Hashem. We have begun to keep the feasts throughout the yearly cycle per the biblical prescription. In a *moed*, we meet G-d at a **specific time, at a specific place, for a specific purpose**. Can't we spend time with Hashem whenever we desire, rather than on just these specific appointments? Sure. We can spend time with someone at any point in time. However, an appointment is at a **specific** time, at a **specific** place and for a **specific** purpose. Our appointed meetings with Hashem should reflect this as well. We typically define Hashem's moedim as the following:

- Shabbat
- Pesach
- Chag HaMatzot
- Shavuot
- Rosh Hashannah/Yom Teruah
- Yom Kippur
- Sukkot

However, we are missing another very important appointment in which Hashem desires to meet with us in a very unique way. Let's explore Numbers 28:1-8 in order to reveal this missing *moed*.

*The LORD spoke to Moses: "Command the Israelites: 'With regard to my offering, be sure to offer my food for my offering made by fire, as a pleasing aroma to me **at its appointed time**.' You will say to them, 'This is the offering made by fire which you must offer to the LORD: two unblemished lambs one year old each day for a continual burnt offering. The first lamb you must offer in the **morning**, and the second lamb you must offer in the **late afternoon**, with one-tenth of an ephah of finely ground flour as a grain offering mixed with one quarter of a hin of pressed olive oil. It is a continual burnt offering that was instituted on Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.*

"And its drink offering must be one quarter of a hin for each lamb. You must pour out the strong drink as a drink offering to the LORD in the holy place. And the second lamb you must offer in the **late afternoon**; just as you offered the grain offering and drink offering in the morning, you must offer it as an offering made by fire, as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

verse 2:

צו את־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אֶת־קֹרְבָנֵי לַחֲמֵי לְאִשֵּׁי רִיחַ נִיחֻחַי
תִּשְׁמְרוּ לְהַקְרִיב לִי בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ:

verse 4:

אֶת־הַכֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בַבֶּקֶר וְאֵת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים:

We find that our missing moed is actually two:

- **Morning** (*boker* - literally “morning”) = **Shacharit** (which also means “morning”)
- **Late afternoon** (*bein ha’arba’im* - literally “between the evenings”) = **Minchah** (“gift”)

From this we see the commandment to bring before Hashem two offerings every day. But how can we do this today, outside of the Land, in a non-Temple period?

During the Babylonian exile, this was also a problem and began to be resolved by equating prayer to sacrifice (since they could not fulfill it literally in Babylon), specifically if it were offered at the time in which the sacrifices were to have been made, derived from a passage in Hosea (14:2/3), which says:

*Take with you words, and turn to THE LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: **so will we render the calves of our lips.** (KJV)*

*Return to the LORD and repent! Say to him: "Completely forgive our iniquity; accept our penitential prayer, **that we may offer the praise of our lips as sacrificial bulls.** (NET)*

The author of Hebrews makes this connection as well by saying:

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—**the fruit of lips** that confess his name. (Hebrews 13:15)*

Although there were specifically two appointments for these offerings per day, it developed into a 3-per-day tradition.

Thrice-daily prayer seems to have been an old Israelite tradition among the pious. Reference to it is found in Psalms (55:18) and in the book of Daniel (6:11). This practice is said to have been inspired by the three Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. According to aggadic interpretation of the verses (Berakhot 26b), the Torah tells of

Abraham praying in the morning (Gen. 19:27), of Isaac praying towards dusk (Gen. 24:63), and of Jacob praying at night (Gen. 28:10).¹

These times and their connection to prayer are testified to as far back as the Babylonian exile.

Daniel prayed 3 times daily:

*Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. **Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.***

11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

13 Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." (Daniel 6:11-13)

There are also connections within the Apostolic Writings of this tradition continuing. Peter & John go up to the Temple to pray at the time of minchah.

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon (literally "the ninth hour"). (Acts 3:1)

Cornelius praying at the "ninth hour."

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and **prayed to God regularly.** One day at **about three in the afternoon** (literally "the ninth hour") he had a vision. (Acts 10:1-3)*

We continually find Yeshua praying at all times of the day, notably, however, "early in the morning." **If nothing else, we are to act as his disciples in modeling his example of being a people of prayer.**

The point of this moed—just as all of the moedim—is to meet & connect with G-d. While we, as the Torah Movement, have re-discovered Hashem's appointed times in relationship to the annual calendar, we still have not fully discovered His daily appointed times of prayer. As a whole we are a prayerless people.

You've heard the expression that when you point at someone, you have three other fingers pointing back. **With this in mind, we, in the Torah Movement, often criticize others for rejecting Hashem's divine appointments at the various times of the year, but yet we continue to reject His divine appointments each and every day.**

¹ Domin, R. Hayim Halevy, *To Pray As A Jew*, p. 10.

Prayer is a Divine Appointment. How many of us have not been able to get up early in the morning in order to pray because we were "too tired" or "stayed up too late the night before" or "just don't have time today"? How many of us have missed an early morning business appointment or an appointment with a friend because we were "too tired" or "stayed up too late the night before" or "just don't have time today"? Where are our priorities?

Some simple & practical reasons why we should be praying are:

- Turning Aside—We practice turning aside from our own ways
- Authority—We recognize His Kingship & Sovereignty
- Discipline—We discipline our flesh according to His ways.
- Obligation—We were created to praise the Almighty. Prayer should be 95% praise, 5% petition.
- Transformation—Through prayer we are transformed by renewing our minds.
- Community—Through common prayer we join our hearts and our voices with others, including those who have gone before us: the prophets, The Master, the disciples, etc.
- Prayer makes a difference—It may be the only difference you make in another person's life, especially those who will not hear the message of Torah from you.

How to Begin

Hillel said, "Do not say 'When I free myself of my concerns, I will study,' for perhaps you will never free yourself." —Pirkei Avot 2:4.

We have all found this principle to be true in our studies, and have grown frustrated with those who will not take the time to study. Now we must turn our attentions to the area of prayer. We cannot afford to use the excuse of lack of time. We are all allotted the same twenty-four hours in a day as anyone else, and must choose to use this time to our advantage.

Each moment is like a dollar in our hands—we choose how to spend each and every one. We can spend it wisely or foolishly. We can invest each of our moments, or spend them selfishly.