

YHVH Dances Over Us

יגיל עליך (Yagil Alaich) or *will dance for joy over you*

♪ Adonai Elohaich, b'kirbech gibor yoshia, yasis alaich, b'simcha, yagil alaich, b'rina. ♪

♪ For the Lord, your God in the midst of you, mighty is His Name. Rejoicing over you, with songs of gladness, *singing joyfully*, He will save us ♪ (Roni Bat Zion v. 4, based on Zephaniah 3:17)

In Messianic Jewish Music History *Israel Rejoice* is a theme that is central to Messianic Jewish worship. Paul Wilbur (led by Don Moen of Integrity Music), a pioneer in this genre, was the lead artist when Integrity released the landmark 1996 live album *Shalom Jerusalem*, which included the classic song: *Roni, Roni, Bat Zion (Rejoice, Rejoice, Daughter of Zion)*. This album is noted for revolutionizing Messianic Jewish music and is integral to worship in many Messianic Congregations today. I have an early 1990s version of *Roni, Roni*, recorded at Seattle's Congregation Emmaus, founded by Rabbi Murray Silberling, the Messianic Jewish Dancing Rabbi, a pioneering Messianic Dance community. *Roni, Roni* is among the first few Messianic dances ever developed and choreographed by someone named *Rose* whom I met at the Messiah Conference in 1994 and who led dance sessions with Rabbi Murray in the hallway between the gym and the Messianic Marketplace

The concept that *The Almighty* dances over us is primarily derived from *Zephaniah 3:17*, where Bible texts describe *The Almighty* as rejoicing with joy and *singing* over His people. While many translations use the word *singing*, the underlying Hebrew verb is *gil* (גיל). It means to spin around or leap under the influence of strong emotion, leading many theologians and writers to interpret this as *YHVH* dancing with joy. The TLV is the only translation that correctly interprets the verse as dancing: “*17Adonai your God is in your midst— a mighty Savior! He will delight over you with joy. He will quiet you with His love. He will dance for joy over you with singing [or making a joyful shout]. (Zephaniah. 3:17, TLV)*” vs “*The Lord your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will rejoice over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. (Zephaniah 3:17, NASB).*” The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon definition of *gil* is: dancing in a circle or rejoicing in a spinning motion. This imagery portrays *The Almighty* as a victorious warrior who delights in His creation, countering perceptions of a stern or distant deity. While King David danced before *Adonai* in *2 Samuel 6:14*, direct references to *YHVH* dancing are rare. *Zephaniah 3:17* is the central text used to support this view, often paralleled with *Isaiah 62:5*, which compares *Adonai's* joy to a bridegroom's joy. The majority of contemporary devotional sources embrace the idea that *The Almighty* dances with shouts of joy over Israel (with those He loves)!

This revelation became personal when I considered that many years ago (early 90s) a prophetess prophesied over me and The Lord called me *Moshe*. My father's familiar name in Spanish was Gil, in Hebrew *Gimel, Yud, Lamed*, e.g., גיל. So I have used it in my Hebrew name as *Moshe Ben Gil*, which means *Moshe son of dancing* (like *Elohim* dances). To quote John Hamill, leader of LampLighter Ministries: *You just can't make this stuff up!*

The *Mo'adim of Adonai* are a cycle – a circle. Every year they come and they go. One leads to the other, and each is built upon the previous. Each prepares us for the next encounter. If we were to look at the *mo'adim* from a *bird's eye view*, we would see a circle – a dance circle. Some of the dancing is spirited, some is slow and graceful, some are happy and some are solemn. Some are individual and some are couples. But regardless of the dance we see purpose, rhythm, design, precision, synchrony and meaning. We can observe that the more the people dance, the better they become at dancing – they grow in their understanding of the dances.

There is also something else we can see when the His people dance the cycle of the holidays (*The Dance of the Festivals*). Right in the center of the circle is the *Lord of the Dance, The Lord Yeshua!* They are dancing

around Him – and He is dancing with them! Everyone is having so much fun. When the dances become slower, more reflective, everyone begins to weep. When they are brighter and happier, they all begin to laugh. The One in the center is expressive with them. Moreover, whatever they do not understand about the *dance* they look to Him and He teaches them. When He is not teaching them, He is merely delighting in them because of their dancing, because of their delight in the *Lord of the Dance*. *Lord of the Dance* was an English folk song written by Sydney Carter, adapted from the nineteenth-century American Shaker tune *Simple Gifts* by Joseph Brackett. Carter wrote the song in 1963 and had it published in 1967. Ronan Haridman adapted Carter’s song for Michael Flatley’s *Lord of the Dance* show in 1996; where the melody is used as a recurring theme throughout the show. I first heard it at St. Augustine Catholic in 1968 when it was used in their Sunday 11AM Mass service. It was a staple in my sister Arlene’s repertoire as a member of the St. Augustine Catholic choir for many, many years. Ever since *Lord of the Dance* first hit the market in the ’60s, it has been popular among church congregations and secular folk musicians alike. It quickly made its way into the Church of England’s hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. And according to a 1996 study (reported in [The Guardian](#)), it is one of the five most popular songs sung in assemblies in British schools.

In an Israeli circle dance, anyone can join in wherever and whenever they want. Eventually, the circle will come back to whatever dance repetition he happened to miss in his absence. What about you? Are you dancing with *Adonai*? If not, come and join the circle, the dance of the festivals! You can come in at any point. It does not matter where you are coming from or what you had previously been doing. Just come and join the *circle dance of the mo'adim* and see how much you will learn. See how much you will enjoy looking at the Person in the middle of the circle. It is *Yeshua Himself*, the *Lord of the Dance*, who is bidding you to join the circle.

The revelation of *Yah’s appointments* for His people is among the most basic and persuasive truths in Scripture. It has captured the minds and interest of the non-Messianic world. The festivals are being celebrated throughout Christianity as the Holy Spirit reveals them to those desiring His Truth. Along with *Shabbat* and the *Mitzvot*, the *High Holidays* are being understood and apprehended by serious Believers. The *mo'adim* are much, much easier to grasp and implement than the *Shabbat and Mitzvot* because of their very inherent worship nature and because they have an undeniable connection with *The Messiah* while He was with us. The *mo'adim* could be studied at many different levels, the most literal being to examine them for what they reveal about Israel's post Exodus history. We can also look at them for what they can teach us about our own personal salvation history and cycle of redemption and sanctification. More so they reveal volumes about *Yeshua*. In the *NT*, He is specifically and unmistakably connected to the *mo'adim*. With the precedent set by these inspired *NT* writers, it is safe for them to embrace the *mo'adim* and learn about the *Ancient of Days*.

The first and obvious truth is that these High Holidays belong to *Adonai* and not to Israel. They are not the Jewish High Holidays they are *Adonai’s High Holidays*: “*Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, and tell them: ‘These are the appointed moadim of Adonai, which you are to proclaim to be holy convocations—My moadim’*” (*Lev. 23:2*). They are *Adonai’s* appointments which we are to proclaim as holy convocations and they are *My (His) moadim*.

The first *moed* listed in *Lev. 23* is *Shabbat*: ³“*Work may be done for six days, but the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You are to do no work—it is a Shabbat to Adonai in all your dwellings.*” In Jewish thought the first *moed* listed is also the most important (*The Law of First and Last Mention*). It is a day of cessation from all regular work. The pattern for this day was set by the Holy One when He created everything in *Genesis 2:3*. We are told that when He completed all the creative work which He intended to do in the beginning:

“³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He ceased from all His work that God created for the purpose of preparing.” Thus, the pattern for rest and completion for the *7th day* was set from the very beginning of creation. The *Torah* enjoins Israel to do as *Yah* did and abstain from all of their creative work on *Shabbat*. There are an abundance of passages (at least fourteen different ones) that teach about *Shabbat*. Further, there is at least one *Shabbat* included in each *mo'adim* in *Lev. 23*. Finally, by establishing a *Shabbat* year (*shemita*) and a *Shabbat* Jubilee (*yovel*) after seven sets of seven years we see something futuristic about celebrating the *7th day*.

The Hebrew word for *Shabbat* is *shin-bet-tav* whose root is *shub* (*shin-vav-bet*) which means, *return*. When we put the *tav* in front of the root we get the familiar *t'shuv* (*t'shuvah*), *repent* (to *turn around* and *return*). When *The Almighty* gave us *Shabbat*, He implicitly wanted us to *return to Him*. In *Exodus* we are told to remember (*zachor*) *Shabbat* but in *Deuteronomy* we are to guard/keep (*shomer*) *Shabbat*. These are identical Hebrew constructions except for the verb. *Shabbat* is Israel's wedding ring in the *VeShamru* prayer (*ot Hi leolam*) and it identifies us with Him since He also kept *Shabbat*. *Shabbat Shalom!*