

Chadash Ashar, Month Ten

Judgement and the Fast of Nataq

“For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of Alahym: and if it first begins with us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Good News of Alahym (the good news of the kingdom).” Alaph Kepha (First Peter)

On man’s calendar this is the first month of the year 2024. Things are not looking good right now for the entire world - wars, sickness, community violence, perversion and economic perils to name a few. The nations are ripe for judgement. The judgement will first begin with the nation of Yasharal. Those walking with Yahuah in covenant relationship will be assessed and judged first. Those in the Family of Yahuah who are righteous will be delivered and qualify to judge the unrighteous nations. In order for us to be prepared *we must examine ourselves* and prepare our hearts to seek Yahuah in this tenth month. For it is through the fast of the tenth month that we make atonement for our sins and find ‘covering’ from the judgement of Yahuah. The concept of atonement will be thoroughly addressed in a future article.

The Fast of Nataq

YashaYahu 58

In YashaYahu chapter 58, YashaYahu, the prophet, is declaring to Yasharal their transgressions and sins. The nation gives the appearance that they are seeking Yahuah and desire to walk in His ways. It is also states that the people are fasting but they accuse the Most High of not taking notice of their fasting. Chapter 58 opens with a clear picture of the nations’ sins.

“Cry aloud, do not spare. Lift up your voice like the shophar. Declare to My people their transgression, and the house of Ya’aqob their sins. “Yet they seek Me day by day, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and did not forsake the right-ruling of their Alahym. They ask of Me rulings of righteousness, they delight in drawing near to Alahym. They say, ‘Why have we fasted, and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our beings, and You took no note?’ “Look, in the day of your fasting you find pleasure, and drive on all your labourers. “Look, you fast for strife and contention, and to strike with the fist of wrongness. You do not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high” (verses:1-4).

What is occurring is that in the time of their fast they were doing their pleasures and having their servants working. Another element to the times of fasting that YashaYahu is speaking of in this chapter is that the fasts correlate with times of rest given to the nation. Employers having their employees work on the day of rest was a great sin in Yasharal.

Strife and contentions existed among the people, and they would strike with the fist of wrongness – using physical punishment when it wasn't warranted. The prophet tells them, “***You do not fast as you do this day to make your voice heard on high.***” The reason their voices would not be heard on high was because of their sins against each other, their sins against Yahuah, and they did their own pleasures on Yahuah's Sabbath.

What does Yahuah, through His prophet, say to the people?

“Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his being? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to Yahuah?”

*“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loosen the tight cords of wrongness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to exempt the oppressed, and to **break off every yoke?**”*

“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, and cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?” (verses 5-7)

Verse five gives the impression, with all the question marks, that Yahuah is not calling for them to afflict their beings and go down in sackcloth and ashes like the Pharisees in the Second Writings, but that is not what is being said. The **Aramaic Translation** makes it plain that Yahuah is not asking a question, but making a statement.

This is the fast that I have chosen: *that a man will humble himself and he will bend his neck like a bow, and he lays down sackcloth and ashes for himself. You shall call a fast for this and the day of the pleasure of Yahuah Alahym.*

This is the fasting that I have chosen: *you will release the bonds of evil and you shall cut off the burdens of deceit, and you shall release the oppressed to liberty, and you shall cut off all burdens.*

And you shall break your bread with the hungry, *and the stranger you will bring to your house. When you shall see one naked, you also shall cover him, and you shall not turn away from a son of your body.*

We will now focus on verse six.

“This is the fasting that I have chosen: you will release the bonds of evil and you shall cut off the burdens of deceit, and you shall release the oppressed to liberty, and you shall cut off all burdens (break off every yoke).”

The Shamitic word for *break* is **nataq**.

Break - נָתַק nâthaq, naw-thak'; a primitive root; to tear off: **break** (off), burst, draw (away), lift up, **pluck** (away, **off**), pull (out), **root out**

This fast that the Most High is calling His people to is a fast that is intended to destroy sin and to destroy every yoke. This is huge! A fast that our Creator calls us (His set-apart nation, His royal servants) to is a fast that will root out sin and break its yokes as well as break off every yoke of social oppression and injustice. Do we see why we are called to fast in this manner during the tenth month? The tenth month, Ashar, is a time of judgement. We are being assessed and judged during this month, and we want to make atone for our sins that we are counted worthy to escape judgement that is coming.

Again, we are to break off and root out the sin in our own lives and break sin's evil bondages and strongholds in our lives, and we are to break off the yokes of oppression and injustices that are holding our brothers and sisters captive. The Turah commands us to love Yahuah our Alahym and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Nataq is a Vision of the Heart

“Show me favour, O Alahym, According to Your loving-commitment; According to the greatness of Your compassion, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me completely from my guilt, And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. Against You, You alone, have I sinned, And done evil in Your eyes; That You might be proven right in Your words; Be clear when You judge... See, You have desired truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You make me know wisdom. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I am clean; Wash me, and I am whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness, Let the bones You have crushed rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my crookednesses. Create in me a clean heart, O Elohim, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Set-apart Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your deliverance, And uphold me, Noble Spirit! Let me teach transgressors Your ways, So that sinners turn back to You.” (Tahalym 51:1-13)

The Vision is Righteousness

*“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap according to loving-commitment, **break up your tillable ground, it is time to seek Yahuah**, till He comes and rain. righteousness on you.” (Hosea) 10:12*

Can We Find Nataq in History?

It is interesting to discover that the practice of a month long fast existed among the seed of Abraham long before Islam came on the scene. It is also exciting to know that the name of the fast is the same Shamitic word used in YashaYahu 58 when the prophet declares to them that the fast that Yahuah calls for will ‘break every yoke’.

*“The word Ramadan is an Islamic name as **prior to Islam it was known as Nataq** (Fath-ul-Bayan). The word (Ramadan) is derived from ramada. They say “ramada al-salimu”, that is the inside of the man fasting became very hot with thirst (Lane). The month is so named because firstly, fasting in this month produces heat and burning due to thirst; secondly, worship in this month burns away the traces of sin in man (Asakir and Mardawaih) and thirdly, the necessary warmth of love for the Creator and His Created beings is generated in the hearts of those who fast.” (from “Ramadan and the Unity of Islamic Ummah”)*

*“...however, the observance of **a month of fasting and abstinence is actually a pre-Islamic practice in Arabia that was adopted, continued and tweaked from 622 AD onwards...** In fact, the mention of fasting in the Quran refers to it as a pre-existing practice. (from “Did You Know, Ramzan Fasting was a Pre-Islamic Practice?”)*

It Was First Called Nataq

The month long fast in which millions join is known world-wide. It is a month highly encouraged and promoted by the Islamic world. It’s amazing to know that **this practice existed long ago among the seed of Abraham**. We know that Abraham is noted as being a friend of Alahym and that he was committed to the teachings of Yahuah.

“The early Hebrews were also nomads. Abraham, the first person termed a “Hebrew” in the Bible, came from the city of Ur, which he fled after some conflicts with the local priesthood and royalty. After a brief sojourn in the vicinity of Haran (one of the main stations on the caravan route) and a trip into Egypt, he settled in the land of Canaan,

which the Lord promised to give to his descendants. Yet Abraham was a stranger in that land, as the Bible often emphasizes. Abraham spent most of his time in the Negev region to the south, around Hebron and Beer-Sheba, [4] where he became quite wealthy. [5] Though Abraham seems to have lived a typical Bedouin life in his tent, nevertheless he appears to not have moved about as nomads typically do. This is perhaps because his wealth permitted him to hire shepherds to take the herds and flocks to their pasturage in various parts of the country, while Abraham was able to maintain a base at the southern end of the caravan route into Egypt...

The Bedouin

The Bedouin of today consider themselves to be descendants of Abraham, mainly through his son Ishmael. They live throughout the area known as Southwest Asia, mostly in Syria, Jordan, Israel, and the Arabian Peninsula. Though they speak Arabic, like their urban brethren, they have always considered themselves to be quite apart...” (from “Bedouin Culture and Bible Customs”).

Ramadan in pre-Islamic Arabia

*“In Studies in Islamic History and Institutions, while tracing the history and development of Ramzan, S.D. Goitein writes about how ‘**pre-Islamic Arabs were familiar with the idea of holy months as well as with fasting**. Certain passages in the Koran and some Muslim oral traditions make it likely that even the practice of fasting during a whole month **was known to the ancient Arabs**” (from “Did You Know, Ramzan Fasting Was a PreIslamic Practice?”).*

During the fast of Nataq, there is a focus on self-improvement – **moving from Good to Better to BEST** - and an elevated concern for those in needs. The purpose of the fast is to call us to a state of repentance and cleansing so that we are accepted by the Creator. Those who fast seek to break off all the undesirables and draw closer to Yahuah. It is a time for purging oneself, destroying all sin in one’s life, and removing those from us that speak lies (vs. 9 of ch. 58). Scripture calls for us to be concerned for the poor, and the nation of Yasharal had laws to protect and care for the less fortunate; however, they failed to fulfil this responsibility. During Nataq, it is the responsibility of the worshipper – one who is submitted to the Creator – to see that those in ‘their communities’ have food, clothing, and shelter.

The Sabeans are a Shamitic People

The Sabeans are a tribal people with ancestral ties primarily in Iraq and its regions. We will also see that in their ancient history they practiced a month long fast. They are a people who trace

their origins to **Sheba, son of Yoqtan, Yoqtan was a seed of Shem, his (Yoqtan) father being Eber**. They consider Abraham the founder of their faith and claim Seth, along with other ancients, as one of their great prophets. The Sabeans adhere to the teachings Yahya Ben Zakariyah (John son of Zachariah, John the Immerser) and he is one of their great prophets. We can see evidence of the Sabeans in the historical text.

*“And also to **Shēm, the father of all the children of Ėber**, the brother of Yapheth the elder; children were born. The sons of Shēm: Ėylam, and Asshur; and Arpakshad, and Lud, and Aram. And the sons of Aram: Uts, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. And Arpakshad brought forth Shelah, and Shelah brought forth **Ėber**. And to **Ėber** were born **two sons**, the name of one was Peleġ, for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother’s name was **Yoqtan**. And Yoqtan brought forth Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hatsarmaweth, and Yerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diqlah, and Oġal, and Abima’el, and **Sheba**, and Ophir, and Hawilah, and Yobab. All these were sons of Yoqtan. And their dwelling place was from Mēysa as you go toward Sephar, a mountain of the east. These were the sons of Shēm, according to their clans, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.”* (Barashyth 10:21-31)

Sabeans

“Ibn al-Nadim wrote in his book, “al-Fahrisit”, about various religious sects in the Middle East. **He says in the month in which the [Sabians] fasted for thirty days...** (from “Where Do Islamic Rituals Come From”).

As you can see from the references above, the fast of Nataq pre-existed before Islam. When we consider the three yearly appointed times – spring, summer, and fall given to Yasharal by Yahuah – it would be fitting to have an appointed time in the winter season to draw near to Yahuah, confess our sins and draw near to our brothers and sisters. The fast of Nataq in the tenth month is in the first month of winter and what a way to warm our heart with more of Yahuah as we repent and atone for our sins and see to the needs of others. Could it be that the translators intentionally placed Nataq in the seventh month during the fall season by way of the Day of Atonement (the **10th day** of the month)? One thing is for sure, it would take more than one day to Nataq – break off **every** yoke.

There is another way to look at the Nataq fast. We now know that annually it was a custom our forefathers embraced and benefited from, and the fast of the Sabbath day is also a custom of our forefathers. In the reestablishing of the nation in the days of Mashah, you will see something to this instruction and many people who keep the Sabbath testify to the call to fast on this day. I

encourage you to read and study Exodus chapter 16 and the other portions of Sabbath guidelines throughout Exodus in the Shamitic language. In addition, I encourage you to study historical writings about the people of the book. Most of all, seek Yahuah because those who seek Yahuah with their whole heart will find Him and His ways.

What we can deduce from YashaYahu 58 is that Nataq and the Shabbat are appointed times of fasting for the people of Yahuah. If you were to combine fasting – with a pure heart – every Sabbath day and once a year for 30 days in the 10th month, you will live an overcoming life continually. The benefits will go beyond what you could ever imagine.

Promises of Fulfilling the Fast

“Then your light would break forth like the morning, your healing spring forth speedily. And your righteousness shall go before you, the esteem of Yahuah would be your rear guard.”

“Then, when you call, Yahuah would answer; when you cry, He would say, ‘Here I am.’ “If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and the speaking of unrighteousness, if you extend your being to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted being, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness be as noon.”

“Then Yahuah would guide you continually, and satisfy your being in drought, and strengthen your bones. And you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”

“And those from among you shall build the old waste places. You shall raise up the foundations of many generations. And you would be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.”

“If you do turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My set-apart day, and shall call the Sabbath ‘a delight,’ the set-apart day of Yahuah ‘esteemed,’ and shall esteem it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in Yahuah. And I shall cause you to ride on the heights of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Ya‘aqob your father. For the mouth of Yahuah has spoken!” (YashaYahu) 58:8-1

How Do We Fast During Nataq?

- Abstain from food and water during the hours of the sun. The pregnant, breastfeeding mothers, women in their monthly, children, sick, elderly, and travelers are exempt. Of course, it is the thought that the travelers will resume fasting when they have reached their destination and the sick will fast when they are made well. Those who can't fast can pray and abstain from carnal pleasures – television watching, eating meats and sugars, social media, etc. Remember, if one has a medical condition he or she must govern themselves according to their condition and to what keeps his or her body in a healthy state.
- Prayer increases and our prayers become more fervent. There are nights of prayers where the worshipper seeks Yahuah throughout the night watches. Pray often.
- Confess and forsake all sins.
- Meditate and read the Word.
- Married couples are to abstain from sexual intimacy during Nataq and whenever fasting.
- Fasting is a time to be careful with our words and refrain from unrighteous speech.
- Be a giver. Show concern for others and help meet a need for someone else.

In closing, as we face the coming judgement of this world, we want our voices to be heard on high (YashaYahu 58:4). Let us humble ourselves, pray, seek Yahuah. Danyal is a witness that Yahuah will hear and answer. In the ninth chapter of Danyal, Danyal prayed one of the most beautiful prayers in the scriptures (this is a must read). He set his face to seek Yahuah in prayer and fasting with sackcloth and ashes. While he was yet speaking, Yahuah heard his voice on high.

“At the beginning of your supplications a word went out, and I have come to make it known, for you are greatly appreciated. So consider the word and understand the vision.” Danyal 9:23

Let us seek Yahuah with a pure heart during this 10th month. The Most High will hear and we will receive restoration and healing in our lives.

Restoration for the Nations wishes you a

NATAQ BARAQ