



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 11-18-23 TOLDOT

Ministry News

IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE ON THE LIST TO PRAY FOR YOU CAN SEND THEM TO US AT TOLMM@ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG OR BY TEXT MESSAGE TO 575 644-7706 AND I WILL SEND THEM BY EMAIL ONLY.

Remember that you can support the work of Tree of Life Messianic Ministries with a donation made via PayPal or by check to PO Box 467, Organ, NM 88052. Your donation helps our continued outreach to inmates and the time it takes to put this Newsletter together.

Donate



Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is a 501 C-3 non-profit. To donate go to etz-chayim.org and click on the PayPal or Venmo Link.

Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and helping form groups in the prisons. TOLMM also seeks to help Home Groups and offers a covering for Home Groups and the combined experience of leadership

from Rabbi Philip Hammond and Rabbi Mordecai Silver. Group leaders can receive recognition as Elders under TOLMM, which will help in an advisory role. Your support is needed for the Prison Ministry due to continuing rising costs. We now have an Affiliate in Australia.

HOME GROUPS, CONGREGATIONS AND PEOPLE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP..

Shawn Warren lives in Arizona. If you know of someone who is looking for a group in that area, please let me know and I will send the information to Shawn. Elder Shawn Warren is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM and helps with one-on-one correspondence with inmates in our Prison Ministry Outreach. He also encourages people to contact us about affiliating with TOLMM through Home Groups and our help to group leaders.

Gabriel Martinez has a home group in El Paso. If interested let me know and I will send him the information. Gabriel is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM as is his Home Group, Ohr Ha'Brit Messianic Torah Assembly.

There is a new Home Group in Las Cruces. For more information email tolmm@etz-chayim.org.

Michael and Gayle Michelucci are forming a new Home Group in Idaho.

Rabbi Phillip Hammond has a Zoom Bible Study and a Erev Shabbat and Shabbat Service on Zoom Friday evening and Saturday morning at 11:00am. Rabbi Hammond is in Australia and the time difference would be 5:00pm Friday Mountain Time. Rabbi Hammond is looking into starting a men's group focused in the United States. You can contact Rabbi Hammond at Philip@etz-chayim.org. Rabbi Hammond is now affiliated with Rabbi Mordecai Silver and his ministry, Tree of Life Messianic Ministries. Check out Rabbi Hammond at <https://www.etz-chayim.org/australia-affiliate/>.

We thank you for your support. Blessings in Messiah Yeshua, Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph. D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D. and our team

General News

TO SEARCH FOR MY BOOKS ON AMAZON ENTER “**BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER**”. MINE ARE AVAILABLE IN PRINT FORMAT ONLY. I HAVE TWO NEW BOOKS ON AMAZON: RAV SHA’UL AND REFLECTIONS ON TORAH. TO SEE MORDECAI’S BOOKS, GO TO: [HTTPS://WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG/SHOP-OUR-STORE/PRINT-AND-KINDLE-BOOKS/](https://www.etz-chayim.org/shop-our-store/print-and-kindle-books/)

RABBI MORDECAI HAS A NEW BOOK AVAILABLE. IT IS A SPANISH TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH IS VALID: THE COVENANT OF ISRAEL. IT’S AVAILABLE ON AMAZON.

FOR RABBI HAMMOND’S BOOK, **HIS PERFECT GRACE**, GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

CHECK OUT RABBI MORDECAI SILVER’S 3 YEARS OF VIDEO TEACHINGS ON THE TORAH PORTIONS AND FESTIVALS ON YOUTUBE.

WE HAVE 7 PRISON AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

MESSIANIC TEACHING ON THE WEEKLY TORAH, HAFTARAH, AND APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE PORTIONS...



Rabbi Mordecai Silver tolmm@etz-chayim.org

MESSAGE FOR 11-18-23 TOLDOT

Tol'Dot - generations

Gen. 25:19-28:9

Rom. 9:6-11

I have a story to tell. The name of the story is:

The Sound of Work

Joha was looking for work, and there was a man who had a job for someone to split wood with an ax. A heavy-duty job. But Joha really did not have his heart set on doing such manual, heavy labor. Just then a *casalino* (a peasant) comes along who wants the job. The problem is that the *casalino* is mute. So, the foreman motions to him what they need him to do.

That gives Joha an idea. He tells the boss, "The two of us will make a pair. Because he's mute, I will help him out." So, the *casalino* takes the ax and begins to chop. And with every blow, Joha goes, "Uhh!" He grunts. And the mute man swings the ax and Joha grunts, "Uhh." And he swings the ax and he: "Uhh!" So, all day long the *casalino* is chopping wood and Joha is grunting, "Uhh!"

At the end of the day, the boss arrives with the money to pay for splitting the wood. He gives the money to the casolino. Joha says, "Wait a second, this is a two-man job. He does the swinging and I do the 'Uhh!' " The boss man is not at all sure about this line of reasoning.

So, the boss takes them to a judge, and the judge says, "Tell me what happened." So, the mute man stands there, and Joha says, "Este aqui no puede hablar (this man doesn't speak). He was swinging the ax, and I was going, 'Uhh!' With every blow he swung, and I went 'Uhh!' "

So, the judge says, "Bring me the sack of money. Bring it over here now, in front of me." And the judge pours the coins from the sack into a bowl, slowly. And Joha reaches for the money. The judge says, "No, no, no, you don't touch the money. You already got paid.

Joha says, "What do you mean?"

The judge says, "For the sound of work, you hear the sound of money. But money you do not get."

What is the moral of this story? And what does it have to do with this week's Parashah-reading from the Torah? Well, we'll get to that in a little while.

Genesis-Bereisheet 28:3-5

3: And may El Shaddai (God Almighty) bless you, make you fruitful and make you numerous, and may you be a congregation of peoples. 4: May He grant you the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may possess the land of your sojourns which God gave to Abraham. 5: So, Isaac sent away Jacob...

****When God is the maker of the covenant He sticks to His part. If He stays faithful to His end of the agreement, then we are expected to do the same. If we don't how can we expect Him to carry out His end? But guess what? He keeps His part of the agreement even when we don't. And the covenant with Abraham was kept by Abraham and then by his son Isaac and then by Jacob. The interesting thing is that part of the consummation process of the covenant is that Abraham's*

name was changed from Abram, indicating a difference. With Jacob he became Israel. But with Isaac he remained the same. To me I see a focal point in Isaac. That focal point was the Akeidah-the Binding of Isaac. We spend a lot of time focusing on Abraham and his faithfulness in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac. But what about the faithfulness of Isaac? He could have easily overpowered his father, who was very old at this point in his life, but Isaac allowed his father to bind him and was willing to let him sacrifice him. Was this just trust in his father or did Isaac also have faith in God? Isaac is the pipeline through which the promises of God travelled from his father Abraham and to his son Jacob. I believe that Isaac had a faith in God that was all powerful. He was anchored in that faith.

Now listen to what Rav Shaul-the Apostle Paul has to say:

Romans 9:6-11

6: But the present condition of Israel does not mean that the Word of God has failed. For not everyone from Israel is truly part of Israel; 7: Indeed, not all the descendants are seed of Avraham; rather, "What is to be called your 'seed' will be in Yitzchak." 8. In other words, it is not the physical children who are children of God, but the children the promise refers to who are considered seed. 9: For this is what the promise said: "At the time set, I will come; and Sarah will have a son." 10: And even more to the point is the case of Rivkah; for both her children were conceived in a single act with Yitzchak, our father; 11: And before they were born, before they had done anything at all, either good or bad (so that God's plan might remain a matter of his sovereign choice, not dependent on what they did, but on God, who does the calling) ...

Isaac was the child of promise. Through him the promises of God would be carried on, passed on down to one of his sons who God had called before his birth.

Isaac blessed Jacob of his own free will and specifically gave him the Abrahamic promises, which meant that the destiny of Israel would be carried only by his son.

Jacob's nation would be a congregation of people in the sense that all who accept Y'shua as Messiah, whether Jew or non-Jew, would be united as part of the same body.

So, what is the moral of the story of Joha? Are you a child of the promises given to Abraham the Gentile and Abraham the Hebrew? Or are you just there making the noise, going through the motions but in reality, you are just doing nothing. Are you a part of God's congregation or are you like Joha, who wanted something for nothing?

We include a Traditional Torah Commentary and my Messianic Commentary. The reason for this is so you can see a Messianic Perspective and a Traditional Jewish one. Remember to use discernment in approaching Traditional Jewish teachings as they do not recognize Yeshua as the Messiah. There are various ideas in traditional Jewish circles about the Messiah and even that there is no Messiah, the thinking in Reform Judaism. So, please be careful to balance the teachings.

We do not agree with the Jewish position on Yeshua, but Believers need to know the Jewish thinking on Yeshua and not buy into this thinking and forsake faith in our Messiah. For those who say they would never do this, we must beg to differ, because we have seen it over our lives as Jewish Believer's in Yeshua. We have been Believer's in Messiah Yeshua for decades. We have seen a lot and had many discussions with our fellow Jews and non-Jews who ultimately turned away from Yeshua because they steeped themselves in Jewish teachings. One does not come out of either traditional Judaism or Christianity and come into the Messianic walk, and then going back, or into, traditional Judaism. *There are many good things in Judaism but denying Yeshua as Messiah is not one of them.* Berachot (Blessings), Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

A TRADITIONAL JEWISH PARASHAH AND HAFTARAH COMMENTARY



Parashat Toldot:

Summary Genesis/Bereisheet 25:19-28:9

Rebecca and Isaac want a child. They pray to God. Rebecca soon feels violent movement within her womb. She asks God why she feels fighting within her, and God answers, "Two nations are in your womb and two states. They will be divided from one another, starting from within you. One state shall become mightier than the other and the mighty one shall serve the lesser."

When Rebecca gives birth, she has two boys. The first baby comes out red-cheeked and hairy and they name him Esau. The second is a smooth-skinned baby whom they name Jacob.

When the lads grow up, Esau understands hunting and farming. Jacob is a single-minded man, living in tents. Isaac favors Esau while Rebecca favors Jacob. One day Esau comes from the field feeling hungry and faint and sees Jacob with a pot of stew. "Jacob," Esau asks, "May I have a bit of your stew please. I am faint with hunger."

"Sure, if you sell me your birthright," answers Jacob.

Esau stares at his brother. "If I am going to die from hunger, what good is my birthright to me?" Esau then sells his birthright to Jacob.

Esau eats and drinks and leaves. Thus did Esau despise his birthright.

After many years Isaac becomes old and blind. He calls Esau, "My son. Go hunt some venison for me and prepare the tasty dish that I love. Bring it to me and I will eat it and then my soul will bless you before I die."

Rebecca overhears this conversation between Esau and Isaac and tells Jacob what she had heard. "Now, son," Rebecca says to Jacob, "go to the flock and fetch me two good young goats so that I may make a tasty dish for your father. Then you will bring it to your father so that he shall eat and bless you before his death."

"But Mother," Jacob replies. "Esau, my brother is a hairy man, and I am smooth. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I will seem in his eyes an impostor and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing."

"Upon me be your curse, my son;" says Rebecca. "Now obey me and go get the goats so I can make a stew."

Jacob does as his mother told him to do. His mother then prepares the dish that his father loves. Before Jacob delivers the meal to his father, his mother puts hairy goat skins upon his hands and neck and dresses him in Esau's clothing.

Jacob then goes to see his father. "Father," he says.

“Here I am!” Isaac replies. “Who are you, my son?”

“It is I, Esau, your first-born,” says Jacob. “I have done as you told me, please come eat of my venison so that your soul may bless me.”

“How is it that you have found the venison so quickly?”

“Because God, your God, caused it to happen before me,” answers Jacob.

“Please come closer so that I may feel you and see whether you are really my son Esau or not.”

So, Jacob goes up to his father. Isaac feels Jacob’s skin and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob but the hands are the hands of Esau. Is it indeed you, my son, Esau?”

“I am,” says Jacob.

Satisfied that the man is Esau, Isaac eats the stew and drinks the wine. Afterwards, Isaac says to Jacob, “Come closer and kiss me my son.” When Jacob comes forward, Isaac smells his son’s clothes one more time to make sure it is Esau. He then gives his blessing.

“The smell of my son Esau is like the smell of a field which God has blessed. So may God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fat places of the soil and an abundance of corn and wine. Peoples will serve you and nations will bow down to you. You will be a man to your brothers, so that the sons of your mother may bow down to you. Then he who curses you will be cursed, and he who blesses you will be blessed.”

When Isaac finishes blessing the child, he thinks is Esau, Jacob leaves his father. Later Esau returns from his hunt and brings a venison stew to his father. “Father, come eat of my venison, that your soul may bless me.”

“Who are you?” Isaac asked.

“I am your son, your first-born, Esau.”

Immediately great terror seizes Isaac. “Who, then, is the one who already brought me hunted venison and I blessed?”

When Esau hears the words of his father, he cries out with an exceedingly loud and bitter cry, and says, “Bless me, also, O my father!”

“Your brother Jacob has come with deceit to me,” said Isaac. “He has taken away your blessing.”

“Jacob, he has already gone behind my back twice,” says Esau. “He took away my birthright and now he has taken away my blessing as well! Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”

Isaac replies, “Esau, I have made Jacob a master to you and all your brothers. I have sustained him with corn and new wine.”

Esau cries, “Is this the only blessing you have? Bless me too my father!”

Isaac creates a blessing for Esau, “Esau, the fat places of the earth will be your dwelling place. You will live upon your sword, and you will serve your brother. Only when you humble yourself will you loosen his yoke from your neck.”

Esau hates Jacob because of this blessing. Esau says in his heart, “Let the days of mourning for my father draw near and then I will kill my brother, Jacob.”

When Rebecca finds out Esau’s plan to kill Jacob, she says to Jacob, “Go to my brother, Laban, in Haran. Stay with him until your brother’s wrath has subsided. Then I will send for you, for why should I lose both of you in one day?”

Rebecca approaches Isaac to tell him that she doesn’t want Jacob to take a wife from the local women. She tells Isaac that it would be best for Jacob to go to her brother Laban’s and find a wife from among the women there.

Isaac agrees. He calls Jacob and blesses him and commands him not to take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. “Arise and go to your mother’s brother and take a wife from among his daughters. God, the all-sufficing, will bless you and make you fruitful. You will multiply into a great nation. God will give you the blessing of Abraham so that you and your children may inherit the land which God promised my father Abraham.” Thus, Jacob is sent away to his mother’s brother, Laban’s house.

Esau soon hears of his father’s order that Jacob not marry a Canaanite. Knowing that the daughters of Canaan are displeasing to his father, Esau goes to the family of Ishmael, Abraham’s other son, and takes one of Ishmael’s daughters for a wife.

Parashat Toldot Discussion Questions

1) What is a birthright? Why do you think Jacob asked Esau to trade his birthright for food? Why do you think Esau agreed? What is your birthright?

2) How do you feel about Rebecca, a mother, asking her son, Jacob, to lie to his father? Do you ever lie? Is it ever right to lie? How do you feel about yourself when you lie?

3) Esau hates his father and his brother for taking away his blessings. Is it okay to hate? Do you hate anyone? Why?

Haftarah for Toldot Malachi 1:1-2:7

God's expectations for the Israelites and the priests.

Malakhi lived in the 5th century BCE and was the last of all of the prophets. Because Malakhi means “my messenger,” it is probably not a personal name, but rather a vague title for a man who was known only as a messenger from God. His short book of prophecy is full of frustration and disappointment with the people and their lackluster Temple service.

The opening of Haftarat Toldot contains a direct allusion to the Torah portion: “I have shown you love, said the Lord. But you ask, ‘How have You shown us love?’ After all—declares the Lord—Esau is Jacob’s brother; yet I have accepted Jacob and rejected Esau.”

Though Esau was the firstborn, and thus had the birthright to his father’s inheritance, it was Jacob who received the more prestigious blessing, and who went on to be the patriarch of the family. Malakhi is likely mentioning Jacob and Esau because Esau was also known as Edom ([Gen 25:30](#)), the progenitor of the Edomites. During Malakhi’s life, the Edomites looted Jerusalem and killed many of those who fled. The people of Israel might reasonably have questioned whether Jacob and the people of Israel really were being accepted and Esau and the Edomites rejected, but Malakhi assures the Jews that God is still on their side.

A Different Kind of Prophecy

Much of the haftarah is written in a back-and-forth style as an argument between God and the people of Israel. This is unique to the book of Malakhi. In many ways it points away from the traditional prophesy and toward the question-and-answer style of Talmudic discussion that will become popular in the legal texts that star in the next era of Jewish history.

Yet Malakhi maintains the classic message of the prophets: that the people have been doing wrong and need to repent. In 1:7 he says, “You offer defiled food on My altar. But you ask, ‘How have we defiled You?’ By saying the table of the Lord can be treated with scorn.” He is scolding the people for their lax treatment of sacrifices and their subsequent surprise when the sacrifices do not elicit positive responses from God.

This theme of dissatisfaction with the sacrifices being offered in the Temple is repeated throughout the first chapter of the book of Malakhi. The people have been offering animals that are blemished, stolen, lame, and sick, and God will not accept them. God chastises the people, reminding them that “My name is honored among the nations, and everywhere incense and pure oblation are offered to My name” (1:11).

In addition to the problems with the goods sacrificed, Malakhi takes issue with the priests, who have been neglecting their duties. The haftarah closes with a charge to the priests, reminding them that they are examples for the rest of the Israelites, and that they need to serve with loyalty. They, like Malakhi, are messengers of God.



From the Desk of Rabbi Philip Hammond. Ph.D.

Rabbi Hammond can be contacted at – Philip@etz-chayim.org

FALLING AWAY

Falling Away...

- Something is ready to collapse, die or change if it has little support or if support begins to erode...



- Take the supporting structure away, and collapse is guaranteed.

Falling Away...

- Pondering on these things led me to the following:
- Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Messiah, and by our gathering together unto him,
- ² That ye be not quickly shaken in mind, or lament, neither through spirit, nor through word, nor through letter as from us, as that the day of Messiah is at hand.
- ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
- ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
- ⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
- ⁶ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time..
-

Falling Away...

- For the mystery of iniquity doth already work only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
- ⁸ And then shall that Wicked [Rejector of torah] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
- ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
- ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
- ¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie:
- ¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness 2 Thessalonians 2:112

Falling Away...

- How many times have I read these passages. There is so much more to these passages, that I never saw as a Pentecostal Minister..
- So let us take a brief journey through these passages:
- Verse 1: A call to attention **Beseech/erotah** = a request by someone on equal terms or footing. A call to fellow believers... gathering together unto Messiah. In one accord...
- Verse 2 needs a little explaining, as it is very current for us today. Firstly it tells us that believers can become, shaken, disturbed and in fact in danger of toppling off their faith perch.
- This can be done by teachers writing letters of unbiblical doctrine. In this case something had stirred up the community to the point of lament in believing that the Day of the Lord had already come... it appears these thoughts had come via letter, claimed to be written by Paul and Co.

Falling Away...

- Verse 3 – It all becomes very intriguing. The big statement: “Let no man deceive [**Seduce, beguile**] you by any means.” Kind of mirrors the incident in the Garden of Eden... serpent beguiling Eve.
- **Any means:** By any presentation that has you turn from the truth found in Yeshua and the Word. Especially flattering words that appeal to itching ears...
- Then comes the address of truth: “**That day shalt not come except..**so for that day to come certain things must take place first. That should get our attention!!
- **Falling away/Apostasia**= Departing, rejecting, defection, revolt. Surely we are witnessing this more and more each and every day... In saying that, what **falling away** are we witnessing?
- Suggestion – Departing further and further from YHVH’s instructions/torah. The list of evidence grows each and every day. It started way back in the Garden, and is now picking up speed at a rate hard to keep up.

Falling Away...

- After this, the man of sin will be revealed— this has to happen before the return of HaMoshiach. This same one, powered by , will see himself as God. He will demand allegiance... and God help those who refuse.
- Verses 5 & 6: Paul says— Remember the “discussions” we had before about this. These things must happen— the falling away, will occur. Then it will begin to unfold...
- Verse 7: Another verse of intrigue, and much discussed. Personally, the message seems very clear. It goes back to the falling away rejecting torah, and the void being filled by another set of instructions, embraced by the world.
- The Word of YHVH a restraining force against immoral, evil, bad behaviour is almost extinct. Only a presence of God, can restrain evil, otherwise lawlessness [that which is void of Torah] does it's evil dark work.
- When peoples minds are empty of God's Word, then evil abounds. We witness this everyday everywhere— even in those institutions that claim to follow YHVH.

Falling Away...

- The world is taking away anything that is of biblical relevance and throwing it in the trash bin. It will only have itself to blame. But wait there is a more serious matter before us...
- So-called believers are throwing away the very Word of YHVH. It no longer matters what YHVH says or said— it matters what man says and feels. Dangerous position to take:
- **Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience** Ephesians 5:6
- **And YHVH saith, Because they have forsaken my torah which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;¹⁴ but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:¹⁵ therefore thus saith YHVH of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them *even* this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.¹⁶ I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them** Jeremiah 9:13-16

Falling away...

- The great news amongst all this is YHVH will destroy evil, and the evil ones...
- **10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**
- We must love the truth [YHVH's Word], without it there is no salvation...
- **11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie:**
- Who is sending this STRONG DELUSION? A deluding influence. A deceiving error. Links with verse 3... choice is always before us:
- **Now therefore fear YHVH, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye YHVH. 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve YHVH, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve YHVH** Ioshua 24:14-15

Falling Away...

- **That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.** Again we witness the importance of believing the truth. So the obvious question is: What is this truth spoken of here?
- We know it is the opposite of unrighteousness so therefore it must be righteousness according to our Father's instructions... so let's wrap of some thoughts on these passages.
 1. Our Saviour Yeshua HaMoshiach is coming again.
 2. A falling away of faithfulness will take place before hand.
 3. It appears that which is holding back the tidal wave of wickedness will be removed.
 4. The man of sin will be revealed but eventually destroyed.
 5. YHVH will be sending a delusion on those who are not engaging in repentance.
 6. Those who take pleasure in wickedness will be condemned.

Falling Away...

- The Master said:
- And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.¹³ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last Revelation 22:12-13.
- As we close, let us take a peak at the following in reference to the above work.
- Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?²⁹ Yeshua answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent John 6:28-29
- Who has been sent? None other than Yeshua... the living Word. As that old Hymn goes: Trust, and obey there is no other way...
- There is no God...

Insights into Judaism



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the Making of Modern Hebrew

The Lithuania-born visionary turned an ancient language into a spoken one.

When Eliezer Ben-Yehuda arrived in Palestine in 1881, Hebrew had not been the spoken language of the Jewish people since the time of the Bible. Yet, thanks to Ben-Yehuda, by 1922 enough Jewish pioneers were speaking Hebrew that the British Mandate authorities recognized it as the official language of Jews in Palestine.

Ben-Yehuda conceived of Jewish nationalism as both the return to the historical homeland in the land of Israel, as well as the revival of the Hebrew language. To accomplish the latter, Ben-Yehuda needed to inspire a near impossible feat: transform Hebrew, which for centuries had been used only in study, into a modern spoken language.

A Youthful Yearning

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was born Eliezer Perelman in Luzhky, Lithuania, in 1858. The son of a Chabad Hasid, Ben-Yehuda was given a traditional religious education at a local yeshiva. The *rosh yeshiva*, or head of the school, was secretly a *maskil*, or enlightened thinker. He introduced Ben-Yehuda to secular literature and piqued the boy's interest in non-religious study.

Eventually Ben-Yehuda transferred to a Russian school, but he remained obsessed with modern Hebrew literature, eagerly consuming Hebrew periodicals, especially those concerned with Jewish nationalism. For Ben-Yehuda, nationalism became a way to embrace Hebrew without religion.

Ben-Yehuda found further inspiration in European nationalist movements. In the 19th century, Italy and Greece — both countries with ties to ancient lands and languages — became independent nations. In 1877, the year of Ben-Yehuda's graduation from high school, the Russo-Turkish war began and brought prominence to the Bulgarian national movement that sought independence from the Ottomans. Envisioning the Jews as a nation akin to the Bulgarians, Greeks, and Italians, Ben-Yehuda became determined to help create a nation where the Jews could adopt Hebrew as their national language.

Soon after, Ben-Yehuda learned that Jewish communities were using Hebrew to communicate when other languages wouldn't suffice. (Historians now know that this phenomenon had existed since the Middle Ages in Europe and the Near East.) In Jerusalem, for example, Jews spoke Yiddish, French, or Arabic colloquially.

However, in the rare occurrences when inter-communal affairs required verbal communication, a modified form of medieval Hebrew was the common language. The Hebrew spoken in these contexts was far from what would be required for a national, modern language, but the news nevertheless inspired Ben-Yehuda to move to Palestine.

Arriving in Jerusalem in 1881, Ben-Yehuda immediately put his plan of Hebrew revival into action. He left behind his birth name and with his wife, Deborah Jonas, he created the first Modern Hebrew-speaking household. He also raised the first modern Hebrew-speaking child, Ben-Zion Ben-Yehuda.

In Jerusalem, the secular Ben-Yehuda tried to use Hebrew to attract religious Jews to the nationalist cause. He and his wife wore religious garb — he grew out his beard and *payot*, and his wife wore a wig, trying to pass as observant. But the ultra-Orthodox Jews living in Jerusalem, for whom Hebrew was used only for holy purposes such as studying Torah, saw through Ben-Yehuda's guise. Sensing his secular-nationalist intentions, they rejected him and his language. They went so far as to declare a herem, excommunicating Ben-Yehuda.

This setback did little to deter Ben-Yehuda from concentrating on his project. He continued to speak Hebrew at home and convinced other families — who were part of the growing community of secular Jewish nationalists in Palestine — to do the same.

At home, Ben-Yehuda used his son to test the viability of the Hebrew language project; if a child can be brought up speaking entirely Hebrew, then an entire nation should be able to adopt the language as well. This required extreme measures on the part of Ben-Yehuda, who tried to prevent his son from playing with other children and from hearing other languages spoken — so afraid was the father of failing in his endeavor.

The other elements of Ben-Yehuda's revival project were the use of Hebrew as a language of instruction and study in schools, and the creation of a vocabulary that would make Hebrew a tenable language for national use. Ben-Yehuda gained the support of educators who were enthusiastic Jewish nationalists and identified with his project. Teaching Hebrew in schools was also a practical solution to the problem of immigrants from different countries speaking a variety of languages.

Ben-Yehuda began collecting material for the creation of a Modern Hebrew dictionary when he arrived in Israel, and never ceased expanding the language, frequently spending 18-hour workdays developing new words and writing articles.

Lists of words were published in Hebrew language periodicals, particularly *Hatzevi*, which Ben-Yehuda founded. In 1910 Ben-Yehuda began publication of his dictionary, but the full 17-volume set of the *Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew* wasn't completed until well after his death, in 1922.

A Legacy of Language

Ben-Yehuda's life was exemplary because, despite the small successes and failures of his various projects, his dedication to speaking Hebrew and cultivating the language inspired others to do the same. In his later years, he co-founded and established the ruling principles for the Va'ad Halashon, the Language Council. The Council gave way to the Academy of the Hebrew Language, which adopted Ben-Yehuda's rules and took upon itself his life's work. The Academy, still housed at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, approves new Hebrew words to meet the ever-evolving needs of contemporary Israeli society. The Academy is also in the process of writing the Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda never saw the creation of the State of Israel. He passed away only one month after the British authorities declared Hebrew to be the official language of the Jews of Palestine. Yet his dream of *yisrael be'artzo uvilshono*, the rebirth of the nation of Israel in its own land, speaking its own language, came to fruition. His efforts are counted among the great language revivals of human history.



The Source Of Spirituality

The glorification of God in the Song at the Sea provides us with several models of attaining spirituality.

“Spirituality” has become a centerpiece of our contemporary vernacular. New books intending to help people find more meaning in their lives, to infuse their lives with spirituality, appear regularly. Even medical doctors, psychotherapists, and health care professionals have adopted spirituality as a modality for therapy.

What is Spirituality?

What is the Jewish understanding of this concept, and what are the means to attaining this phenomenal experience?

A brief verse from the *Shirah* (song) in today's parashah provides some insight: "This is my God, and I will glorify Him." These words were uttered by the entire Jewish nation at the crossing of the Red Sea, as the people experienced the highest level of spirituality—an unparalleled closeness to God. The manifestation of Godliness was so clear that every Jew, even the humblest, could literally point a finger and say, "This is my God, and I will glorify Him."

Let us reflect on three definitions of the word *ve'anveihu*—"and I will glorify Him." Rashi interprets this word to mean, "I will build Him a sanctuary," from the root *neveh*—home. It expresses Israel's longing to build a resting place for the *Shechinah*, God's presence.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *zt"l*, once explained that *Shechinah* is related to the word *shachen*, neighbor. This Name of God conveys an overwhelming closeness to God. What an uplifting spiritual feeling we might attain as we enter our synagogues, imagining that we have entered God's Home!

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th-century Germany) interprets the word *ve'anveihu*, "I will make myself a sanctuary." The greatest of all sanctuaries, he writes, is the human being who makes himself holy.

"*Ner Elokim nishmas adam*—The candle of God is the human soul." Judaism teaches that since each of us is endowed with a measure of Divinity—a soul—each has the potential to become a sanctuary. There is a Divine spark lodged within every Jewish heart. When that spark is ignited, the heart overflows with love, warmth, and spiritual energy. What an optimistic view of the potential of Jewish spirituality!

Our Sages also identify the word *ve'anveihu* with the root *naveh*—beauty. "This is my God, and I will adorn Him with beauty." How? By beautifying the *mitzvot* (commandments). I will acquire a beautiful *Sefer Torah*, build a beautiful *succah*, possess a beautiful new *lulav*, adorn myself with beautiful *tallit* and *tefillin*.

Adding an aesthetic dimension to *mitzvot* expresses how deeply we cherish the *mitzvot*. Who is not touched with emotions of spirituality upon entering a traditional home on the Sabbath Eve to see a family around the table, upon which rests a beautiful, glittering candelabra, a shiny *Kiddush* cup, an embroidered challah cover—the entire Sabbath decor! Beauty evokes spirituality!

Moreover, the great Talmudic Sage, Abba Shaul, teaches that the summit of Jewish spirituality goes beyond the realm of the aesthetic and reaches into the orbit of the ethical.

Refining Our Character

The *mitzvah* to refine our character and to develop into caring, loving, sensitive and ethical people is also learned from the word, *ve'anveihu*. By dividing the word in two—*ani vehu*, I and Him—we derive that the highest spiritual achievement is to emulate God's attributes. Just as He is gracious, compassionate, kind and forgiving, so, too, we must be gracious, compassionate, kind and forgiving. We must become Godlike. *Imitatio Dei* is the foundation of Jewish ethics.

The summit of spirituality is reached when, after internalizing these ethical traits, we reflect them in our thoughts, in our speech, and in our actions. While outer beauty is aesthetically appealing, we must develop an inner beauty that issues from the heart. Each of us who follows the Godly way becomes a beautiful Jew—*sheiner yid*.

Is it not remarkable that one Hebrew word from the Torah contains so many diverse and rich nuances? This is the greatness of the Torah—the source of all spirituality!

עֵבְרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

Family / מִשְׁפָּחָה

Pronounced: mish-pah-CHAH

In modern Hebrew, *mishpacha* is pronounced with the accent on the final syllable; in Yiddish, the word is pronounced with the accent on the second syllable.



A Taste of Jewish Humor

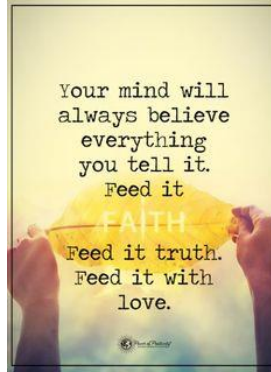
A Difference of Opinion

A congregant asks his rabbi, "Rabbi, you're a man of God. So why is it that you are always talking about business, when I, a businessman, am always talking about spiritual matters?"

"You have discovered one of the principles of human nature," the rabbi replies.

"And what's that Rabbi?"

"People like to discuss things they know nothing about."



This is not your Bubbie's Chicken Soup Recipes shared by Cooks and Bakers



Israeli Halvah Recipe

The most ancient of desserts.

While its ancient origins are disputed –some say India, others Turkey, others say it was definitely Byzantine — there is no doubt that halvah is one of the most common desserts in the world. The flaky, dense, tahini-based candy known to American and Israeli Jews is only one of hundreds of different types of halvah eaten across the globe.

Halvah (also known as halwa, halva, halava, helva, etc.) is a broad term used to describe desserts made with a base of flour or nut butter, such as sesame tahini, and sometimes including vegetables (such as carrots) or nuts. It is eaten in India, Central and West Asia, North Africa, the Balkans, and of course, in Israel and in Jewish delis throughout the United States. Each culture has its own halvah, united only by name — which derives from the Arabic word for “sweet” — and the fact that each is a sweetened candy or dessert, often an ancient and beloved recipe.

A trip to Israel is not complete without sampling the country’s halvah. Taking a stroll in Jerusalem’s Machane Yehuda market you can’t miss the halvah merchants, their tables piled high with huge slabs of the treat in a multitude of flavors, filled with different nuts and seeds, colored and flavored with various extracts. And because the dessert is pareve — neither meat nor dairy — it has always been the perfect kosher deli dessert. Many American Jews grew up on Joyva Halvah; Joyva brought the ancient treat to the United States in 1907, and more than a century later, production continues.

In addition to the Israeli Tahini Halvah recipe below, you may want to try Indian Carrot-Cardamom Halvah, and Greek Semolina Halvah. Or Halvah Swirl Brownies. The only special tool needed is a candy or instant-read thermometer, for the Israeli halvah. Otherwise, these recipes are very simple to make — any recipe that has survived 3,000 years should be! Each of these recipes can handle many variations. You can substitute different nuts or dried fruit, or add extracts, such as coffee, coconut, and vanilla. They will also keep very well, so they are great for making ahead and keeping on hand for last-minute guests.

It is challenging to achieve the flakiness so famous in Israeli halvah without good experience in candy making. However, even if it comes out smoother and chewier than you are used to, and more like caramel or fudge, this halvah will be incredibly delicious and satisfying.

Ingredients

2 cups honey

1 1/2 cups tahini, well stirred to combine.

Up to 2 cups toasted sliced almonds or other nuts (optional)

Directions

Heat honey on medium heat until your candy or instant-read thermometer reads 240° F or indicates the “soft ball” stage of candy making. To confirm that you are at the “soft ball” stage, drop a bit of the honey into a cup of cold water. It should form a sticky and soft ball that flattens when removed from the water.

Have the tahini ready to heat in a separate small pot, and once the honey is at the appropriate temperature, set the honey aside and heat tahini to 120° F.

Add the warmed tahini to the honey and mix with a wooden spoon to combine. At first it will look separated but after a few minutes, the mixture will come together smoothly.

Add the nuts, if using. Continue to mix until the mixture starts to stiffen, for a good 6-8 minutes. Pour mixture into a well-greased loaf pan, or into a greased cake pan with a removable bottom.

Let cool to room temperature and wrap tightly with plastic wrap. Leave in the refrigerator for up to 36 hours. This will allow the sugar crystals to form, which will give the halvah its distinctive texture.

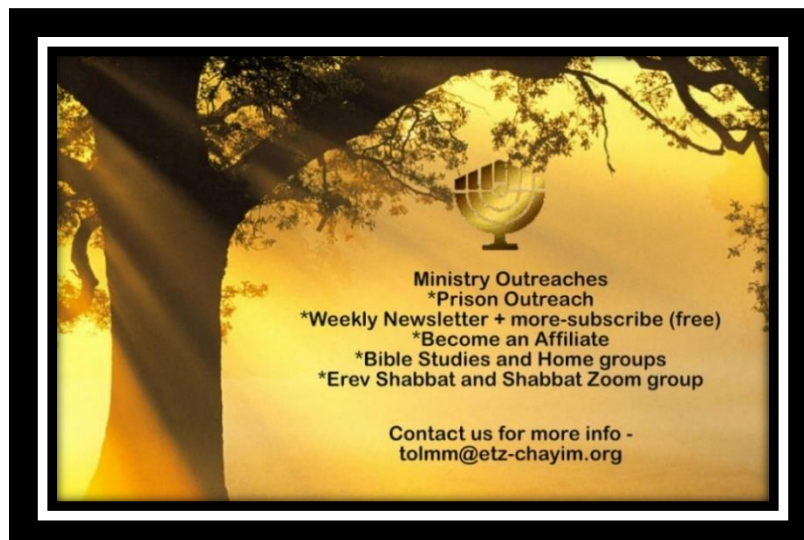
Invert to remove from pan and cut into pieces with a sharp knife.

Will keep for months in the refrigerator, tightly wrapped in plastic—if you don't eat it all first!

Donate



Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is a tax exempt 501 (C) 3 non-profit. To donate go to etz-chayim.org and click on the PayPal or Venmo Link.



*Tree of Life Messianic Ministries
Australia Affiliate*



Shabbat Service
Saturday 11am
[AEST]
Zoom

Bible Study
Wednesday
7:00pm [AEST]

Men's Group
Sun: 7:30pm

*Philip Hammond
Phone: 0416087400 or
61 + 416087400
Philip@etz-chayim.org*

