



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 12-16-23 MIKETZ

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 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 8 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 12-16-23 MIKETZ

*Miketz – at the end of
Genesis 41:1-44:17
1 Kings 3:15-4:1
Matthew 27:15-46*

Wisdom – Understanding – Knowledge

Genesis 41:29-36

Behold! —Seven years are coming—a great abundance throughout all the land of Egypt. Then seven years of famine will arise after them and all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten; the famine will ravage the land. And the abundance will be unknown in the land in the face of the subsequent famine—for it will be terribly severe. As for the repetition of the dream to Pharaoh—two times—it is because the matter stands ready before God, and God is hastening to accomplish it. Now let Pharaoh seek out a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed and let him appoint overseers on the land, and he shall prepare the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. And let them gather all the food of those approaching good years; let them amass fine grain under Pharaoh's authority for food in the cities and

safeguard it. The food will be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine, which will befall the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish in the famine.

Genesis 41:38

Pharaoh said to his servants, “Could we find another like him—a man in whom is the spirit of God?” 39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there can be no one so discerning and wise as you.”

H995 !yBi {bene} ᳵ a primitive root; TWOT - 239; v ᳵ AV - understand 62, understanding 32, consider 22, prudent 8, perceive 7, regard 6, discern 3, instruct 3, misc. 27; 170 ᳵ 1) to discern, understand, consider, to perceive, discern **to understand, know** (with the mind), to observe, mark, give heed to, distinguish, consider, to have discernment, **insight**, understanding, (Niphal) to be discerning, intelligent, discreet, have understanding, (Hiphil) to understand, to cause to understand, give understanding, teach, (Hithpolel) to show oneself discerning or attentive, consider diligently, to teach, instruct, (TWOT) prudent, regard

H2450 ~k'x' {khaw-kawm'} ᳵ from 02449; TWOT - 647b; adj ᳵ AV - wise 109, wise man 13, cunning 6, cunning men 4, subtil 1, unwise 2, wiser 2; 137 ᳵ 1) wise, wise (man), skilful (in technical work), wise (in administration), shrewd, crafty, cunning, wily, subtle, learned, shrewd (class of men), prudent, **wise (ethically and religiously)**

1 Kings 3:26-27

The woman whose son was the live one spoke to the king—because her compassion was aroused for her son—and she said, “Please, my lord, give her the living newborn, and do not put it to death!” The king spoke up and said, “Give her [the first one] the living newborn and do not put it to death; she is his mother!” All Israel heard the judgement that the king rendered, and they were in awe of the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was within him, to do justice.

Wisdom-understanding-knowledge seems to be the order in which God proceeds. Solomon indicated the primacy of wisdom when he said in Proverbs 4:7, “Wisdom is supreme; therefore, get wisdom.”

James 1:5

Now if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all generously and without reproach; and it will be given to him.

G5429 **fro,nimoj** phronimos {fron'-ee-mos} ꝥ from 5424; TDNT - 9:220,1277; adj ꝥ AV - wise 14; 14 ꝥ 1) intelligent, wise 2) prudent, i.e. mindful of one's interests ꝥ For Synonyms see entry 5872

G4073 **pe,tra** petra {pet'-ra} ꝥ from the same as 4074; TDNT - 6:95,834; n f ꝥ AV - rock 16; 16 ꝥ 1) a rock, cliff or ledge 1a) a projecting rock, crag, rocky ground 1b) a rock, a large stone 1c) metaph. a man like a rock, by reason of his firmness and strength of soul

Western society is taught to follow the process of knowledge-understanding-wisdom. Students are told to “gather as much knowledge as possible; from this accumulated knowledge you will gain understanding, and then you can declare yourself wise!”

The downfall of this method is that science must constantly change its conclusions when new and different knowledge becomes available. Science then takes this knowledge and formulates a theory.

Consider this: a professor at a university who, while teaching evolution and forbidding any student to mention God, creation or the Bible, mockingly said, “Of the 20,000,000 animals on earth, 2,000,000 have been named. Try to get 2,000,000 animals in the ark!” A student in the class said, “Aren’t you the same professor who told us yesterday that 95% of all animals live in the oceans? They hardly needed the ark!”

We need to follow God’s method. Wisdom-understanding and knowledge.

Matthew 7:24

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them **will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.**

And I will close with this:

1 Corinthians 1:24

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, this same Messiah is God's power and God's wisdom!

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 Miketz: Summary

Genesis-Bereisheet 41:1-44:17

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and is appointed to implement Egypt's anti-famine plan, which brings him into contact with his brothers again.

Joseph correctly interprets the dream of Pharaoh's jailed chief butler and baker. The butler returns to his job but does not keep his promise to tell the Pharaoh about Joseph.

Two years later, the Pharaoh had a dream. He stood by the river deep in thought. Out of the river there came seven fat cows. Then seven thin cows came out of the river and ate up the fat ones.

The Pharaoh then has a second dream. There were seven healthy ears of corn on one stalk followed by seven thin ears of corn. The thin ears swallowed up the seven healthy and full ears.

In the morning, the Pharaoh's spirit was troubled and he called all the wise men in the land, but none could interpret his dreams. Then the butler spoke to the Pharaoh about Joseph and Joseph was immediately sent for.

The Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hear you can interpret dreams."

Joseph replied, "It is not me! May God provide an answer that will give the Pharaoh peace."

The Pharaoh then told him of his dreams.

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

"Pharaoh's dream is only one dream about what God is going to do," explained Joseph. "God has announced to Pharaoh that the seven fat cows are seven good years and the seven fat ears of corn are seven good years. But the seven thin cows and the seven thin ears of corn predict there will be seven years of famine. God is telling you, Pharaoh, what God is about to do.

The fact that the dream was repeated twice is because God is hastening to bring this about. So let the Pharaoh seek out a wise and judicious man and set him to oversee the land of Egypt during these years. Let there be a tax of one-fifth each year during the seven years of plenty. Let him hold back the food of these good years and, under Pharaoh's hand, store up grain for food. In this way there will be food enough during the famine."

This was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. Pharaoh said to Joseph. "Since God has let you know all this, there is no one as judicious and wise as you. You shall be the overseer and only my word from the throne will be greater than yours."

Pharaoh took off his ring and placed it on Joseph's hand and proclaimed that Egyptians bow down to Joseph. He changed Joseph's name to *Tzaphenath Paneah* and gave him the daughter of a priest for a wife. Joseph was 30 years old.

Joseph's Interpretations Come to Life

Joseph went throughout Egypt during the lands of plenty, storing grain in the cities. Two sons were born during this time to Joseph and his wife Asenath. Joseph named his first-born Menashe, "For God has made all my trouble and all my father's house into creditors for me." The second son he named Ephraim, "For God has caused me to blossom in the land of my affliction."

The seven years of plenty came to an end and famine entered the land. When the people began to complain to Pharaoh about the famine, Joseph opened the storehouses and began to sell the grain. All over Egypt, hungry people came to Joseph to buy food.

Jacob sent all of his sons but Benjamin to buy food in Egypt. Jacob was afraid that an accident might befall his youngest son.

The Brothers are Accused of Spying

When Joseph saw that his brothers had come to buy grain, he made himself a stranger and they did not recognize him. Joseph remembered his childhood dream of his brothers bowing down to him. Joseph said to them, "You are spies."

"No," Joseph's brother replied. "We are 12 brothers of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is with our father and the other is gone."

"I have said you are spies. Therefore you shall be tested. Therefore one of you stay here and the rest of you go fetch your younger brother."

They said to each other, "Distress has come upon us because of what we did to our brother, Joseph."

Reuben said, "Did I not tell you not to sin against that child? But you would not listen. Behold, his blood is therefore now avenged."

Now Joseph was listening, but the brothers did not know he understood their language. Joseph turned away from them and wept.

Joseph came back in the room and took Simeon and bound him before their eyes. Then he filled the rest of the brother's vessels with grain and put their money back into their sacks along with provisions for the journey.

Along their travels, a brother noticed the provisions and the money. They were frightened. "What is this that God has done to us?"

When the brothers reached their father's home, they told him of their visit. They told him that he they must bring Benjamin to Egypt in order to prove they are not spies and to be able to bring back Simeon.

"Joseph is gone," retorts Jacob, "and Simeon, and now you want to take Benjamin? Are you to make me childless?"

Then Reuben said, "You can kill my two sons if I do not bring him home to you. Put him into my hands and I will bring him back to you."

But Jacob refused to let Benjamin go. The famine was severe in the land, and Jacob needed his sons to go get grain from Egypt. They would not go without Benjamin. Finally, Jacob agreed to let Benjamin go. He had his sons bring gifts for the Egyptian overseer and insisted that they return the money from their packs.

When Joseph saw his brothers coming with Benjamin, he had his servants prepare a feast. The brothers were scared but immediately told Joseph about finding the money and sought to return it.

The Silver Goblet

Joseph dismissed their fear. "Peace be with you! God and the God of your fathers has placed a hidden treasure in your pack. Your money for the grain has already come to me." Then, Joseph released Simeon.

Later, the brothers came to the feast and presented their gifts. Joseph asked of their father, but when he saw his brother Benjamin, he said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." Feeling overcome with emotion, Joseph went into another room to weep. He returned later and ordered the feast to begin.

Afterwards, Joseph made sure the packs of his brothers' bags were full. Again, their money was returned, but this time a silver goblet was put in Benjamin's bag. That morning after Joseph's brothers had traveled a short distance, Joseph sent his servant to them. He said, "Why have you repaid good with evil? Who took the special silver goblet of my master?"

The brothers were shocked, saying they did no such thing. "If such a thing was done, with whomever you find this goblet, he shall die. And the rest of us shall be your slaves."

"No," the servant responded. "Whomever has the goblet shall be my servant and the rest of you shall go free." The overseer found the goblet in Benjamin's pack. The brothers tore their clothing as if in mourning.

They returned to Joseph pleading to be able to stay as slaves with their youngest brother. But Joseph said, "It would be a profanation to do that. Only the man who had the goblet shall remain my slave. The rest of you must go home to your father."

Parashat Miketz Discussion Questions

1. Why does Joseph accuse his brothers of being spies?
2. The brothers feel they are being punished by God for selling Joseph into slavery, but their hardship is really Joseph's doing. Do you ever feel that God is punishing you, only to find that it is really a person doing the punishing?
3. Why does Joseph weep when he hears his brother speaking of him and when he sees Benjamin? How would you feel about your brothers if you were Joseph?

Haftarah for Miketz 1 Kings 3:15-4:1

Wisdom and how to wield it.

There are many parallels between Joseph, the hero of Parashat Miketz, and Solomon, the subject of its Haftarah. Both serve in important governmental positions, Joseph as viceroy to Egypt's Pharaoh, and Solomon as king of Israel. And both receive immense power — and immense wisdom — through dreams.

The Haftarah opens with the words “It was all a dream!” This line refers to the scene which immediately precedes it, in which God offers to grant any wish that Solomon asks for.

Solomon's Wisdom

Without hesitation, Solomon replies that he wants to be wise, and God accedes to his request. When Solomon wakes, he immediately prepares an offering and sacrifices it.

A short time later, two prostitutes come before Solomon with a perplexing case. Both had recently given birth, and one of the women had mistakenly smothered her child while sleeping, killing it. The other woman accused her of stealing her own baby and replacing it with the dead child; the first woman accused the second of doing the same.

Each presents her story to Solomon, who contemplates the case and then instructs his attendants to bring him a sword. When they do, he orders them to cut the living child in half and present one piece to each mother. One woman cries out to the king, telling him not to kill the child; “Give her [the other woman] the living child; whatever you do, don't kill him!” (1 Kings 3:26).

The other woman is indifferent: “No, it will be neither yours nor mine; cut it in two” (1 Kings 3:26).

Solomon, of course, sees through the lie at once. “On no account kill the child,” he instructs his attendants, “Give him to the first woman—she is the real mother” (1 Kings 3:27).

The haftarah concludes with the nation of Israel reverentially hearing the news of King Solomon's decision: “they saw that he had within him divine wisdom to do justice” (1 Kings

3:28). This cemented his standing among the tribes, and, the story concludes, “Solomon was now king over all Israel” (1 Kings 4:1).



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

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

Decisions...

A graphic with a dark background and bubbles. At the top, the word "DECISIONS..." is written in red. Below it, a bullet point reads: "WHICH TOKEN WILL YOU CHOOSE? THIS IS THE QUESTION WE ARE ADDRESSING TODAY...". In the center, a 3D white figure holds a sign that says "YOU DECIDE" in blue. At the bottom, another bullet point reads: "AS THE WATERS OF LIFE BECOME MORE MUDDIED – DECISIONS BECOME HARDER TO MAKE ...".

DECISIONS...

- WHICH TOKEN WILL YOU CHOOSE? THIS IS THE QUESTION WE ARE ADDRESSING TODAY...

• AS THE WATERS OF LIFE BECOME MORE MUDDIED – DECISIONS BECOME HARDER TO MAKE ...

DECISIONS

- 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. JOSHUA 24:15
- THIS PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE IS VERY RELEVANT NO MATTER WHAT CHOICES ARE PRESENTED TO YOU...
- AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVEN TO DIVIDE THE DAY FROM THE NIGHT; AND LET THEM BE FOR SIGNS, AND FOR SEASONS, AND FOR DAYS, AND YEARS: GENESIS 1:14
- AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, IF THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE THEE, NEITHER HEARKEN TO THE VOICE OF THE FIRST SIGN, THAT THEY WILL BELIEVE THE VOICE OF THE LATTER SIGN. ⁹ AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, IF THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE ALSO THESE TWO SIGNS, NEITHER HEARKEN UNTO THY VOICE, THAT THOU SHALT TAKE OF THE WATER OF THE RIVER, AND POUR IT UPON THE DRYLAND: AND THE WATER WHICH THOU TAKEST OUT OF THE RIVER SHALL BECOME BLOOD UPON THE DRYLAND EXODUS 4:8-9
- SIGN/OTH תִּיָּוָה = EVIDENCE, MARK, ENSIGN, FLAG, TOKEN...
- AND I WILL PUT A DIVISION BETWEEN MY PEOPLE AND THY PEOPLE TOMORROW SHALL THIS SIGN BE. EXODUS 8:23
- DIVISION/P'DUTH תִּיָּוָה = REDEMPTION, REDEEM, DELIVERANCE, PRESERVE.. @ ISAIAH 50:2...

DECISIONS...

- SO FAR, WE HAVE SEEN THAT A SIGN FROM YHVH HAS SIGNIFICANT MEANING/S FOR HIS PEOPLE..
- WE SEE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DIVISION, [DELIVERANCE, REDEMPTION AND PRESERVATION] AND THE WORD SIGN. SO LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK BETWEEN THESE TWO CONNECTIONS, AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR US TODAY AND BEYOND.



- A WELL KNOWN SIGN..

DECISIONS...

- THE SIGNS WE SHOULD BE SEEKING ARE THOSE THAT TELL US WE ARE INDEED CHILDREN OF BIBLICAL ISRAEL, SAFE IN THE HAND OF OUR FATHER.
- SO LET'S TAKE THIS ONE STEP FURTHER. IN TRYING TO MAKE A POINT - IMAGINE OUR CREATOR IS LOOKING DOWN UPON US SEARCHING FOR SIGNS, THAT TELL HIM WE ARE HIS PECULIAR PEOPLE...
- WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE HE WOULD BE LOOKING FOR? I SUGGEST A FEW STAND OUTS...
- THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. ⁴ THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANY THING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH: ⁵ THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM: FOR IYHVH THY GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME: ⁶ AND SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. ⁷ THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF YHVH THY GOD IN VAIN; FOR YHVH WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTY THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN. ⁸ REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. ⁹ SIX DAYS SHALT THOU LABOUR, AND DO ALL THY WORK: ¹⁰ BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH OF YHVH THY GOD: IN IT THOU SHALT NOT DO ANY WORK, THOU, NOR THY SON, NOR THY DAUGHTER THY MAN SERVANT, NOR THY MAID SERVANT, NOR THY CATTLE, NOR THY STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES: ¹¹ FOR IN SIX DAYS YHVH MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY: WHEREFORE YHVH BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY, AND HALLOWED IT...

DECISIONS

- ¹² HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER: THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH YHVH THY GOD GIVETH THEE.
- ¹³ THOU SHALT NOT KILL.
- ¹⁴ THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.
- ¹⁵ THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.
- ¹⁶ THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOUR.
- ¹⁷ THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE, THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE, NOR HIS MAN SERVANT, NOR HIS MAID SERVANT, NOR HIS OX, NOR HIS ASS, NOR ANY THING THAT IS THY NEIGHBOUR'S. EXODUS 20:1-17
- QUESTION – IF THESE WERE SIGNS TO DETERMINE YOUR FAITHFULNESS, HOW ARE YOU GOING?
- THE 10 WORDS OR COMMANDMENTS ARE THE VERY FOUNDATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO LIVE BY. YET WE FIND PEOPLE WANTING TO MOVE BEYOND THESE FOUNDATIONS AND BEGIN LOOKING FOR SIGNS TO SCRATCH ITCHING EARS...
- FOR THE SEASON WILL COME WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; BUT AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS SHALL THEY HEAR TO THEMSELVES TEACHERS, WHO TICKLE THEIR EARS; AND THEY SHALL TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH, AND SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FICTION. 2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4

DECISIONS

- IF WE ARE LED AWAY THROUGH STORIES OF FICTION, FALSE CLAIMS, AND UNBIBLICAL DOCTRINE– WE WILL NOT BEAR WITNESS TO THE SIGNS OUR FATHER IS LOOKING FOR...
- I FIND YESHUA'S DISCUSSION WITH SOME CHARACTERS INTRIGUING:
- **A WICKED AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION SEEKETH AFTER A SIGN, AND THERE SHALL NO SIGN BE GIVEN UNTO IT, BUT THE SIGN OF THE PROPHET JONAS. AND HE LEFT THEM, AND DEPARTED.** MATTHEW 16:4
- **WICKED/PONEROS** = EVIL, HURTFUL, MALICIOUS, MISCHIEVOUS...
- **SIGN/SEMION** = TOKEN, MARK, EVIDENCE... THE GREEK EQUIVALENT TO OTH
- SO WE SEE THERE ARE WICKED SIGNS THAT ARE NOT PLEASING TO YESHUA - YHVH...
- WICKED & ADULTERESS ARE TEAMED UP HERE– MEANING A PEOPLE WHO SEEK SIGNS OUTSIDE OF THOSE GIVEN BY YHVH, AND YESHUA – SIGNS THAT TICKLE ITCHING EARS. YOU WOULD THINK THE SIGN OF JONAH – MESSIAH RESURRECTED WOULD HAVE BEEN A REASONABLE SIGN – BUT THEY WANTED SIGNS ACCORDING TO THEIR ADULTERESS WAYS...
- WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, THAT WE DON'T NOT ONLY ASK FOR SUCH WICKED SIGNS, BUT THAT WE DON'T FOLLOW SIGNS SOME CLAIM TO BE FROM YHVH, BUT ARE NOT.
- **BUT IN VAIN THEY DO WORSHIP ME, TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.** MATTHEW 15:9

DECISIONS...

- IS IT POSSIBLE THAT MANY CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ARE SEEKING SIGNS THAT ARE NOT OF THE FATHER? THERE IS A SIGN BETWEEN YHVH AND HIS PEOPLE – WHAT COULD THAT POSSIBLY BE?...
- **MOREOVER ALSO I GAVE THEM MY SABBATHS, TO BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THEM, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THAT I AM YHVH THAT SANCTIFY THEM.** EZEKIEL 20:12
- SO WOULD OUR FATHER BE LOOKING TO SEE IF WE KEEP HIS INSTRUCTIONS – ESPECIALLY HIS SABBATHS...
- WOULD IT BE PROBABLE THAT ONE OF THE SIGNS OUR FATHER WOULD BE LOOKING FOR FROM US, ACTUALLY BE US LOOKING FOR SIGNS FROM HIM? HOW ARE WE DOING WITH THAT?...
- IT IS SO EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THE WRONG SIGNS:
- **AND SEDUCETH THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH BY THE MEANS OF THOSE SIGNS WHICH HE HAD POWER TO DO IN THE SIGHT OF THE BEAST; SAYING TO THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH, THAT THEY SHOULD MAKE AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST, WHICH HAD THE WOUND BY A SWORD, AND DID LIVE.** REVELATION 13:14
- **FOR THEY ARE THE SPIRITS OF DEVILS, WORKING SIGNS, WHICH GO FORTH UNTO THE KINGS OF THE EARTH AND OF THE WHOLE WORLD, TO GATHER THEM TO THE BATTLE OF THAT GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY.** REVELATION 16:14

DECISIONS...

- AND THE BEAST WAS TAKEN, AND WITH HIM THE FALSE PROPHET THAT WROUGHT SIGNS BEFORE HIM, WITH WHICH HE DECEIVED THEM THAT HAD RECEIVED THE MARK OF THE BEAST AND THEM THAT WORSHIPPED HIS IMAGE. THESE BOTH WERE CAST ALIVE INTO A LAKE OF FIRE BURNING WITH BRIMSTONE. REVELATION 19:20
- I BELIEVE IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO BE WEARING THE SIGNS OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IN THIS DAY AND AGE ... NOT SO MUCH FOR HIM TO RECOGNIZE US, BUT FOR US TO DRAW CLOSER TO HIM, AND HAVE THE CONFIDENCE WE ARE HIS PECULIAR PEOPLE ..
- NOW THEREFORE, IF YE WILL OBEY MY VOICE INDEED, AND KEEP MY COVENANT, THEN YE SHALL BE A PECULIAR TREASURE UNTO ME ABOVE ALL PEOPLE: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: EXODUS 19:5
- FOR THOU ART AN HOLY PEOPLE UNTO THE LORD THY GOD, AND THE LORD HATH CHOSEN THEE TO BE A PECULIAR PEOPLE UNTO HIMSELF, ABOVE ALL THE NATIONS THAT ARE UPON THE EARTH. DEUTERONOMY 14:2
- WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. TITUS 2:14
- SUGGEST GOOD WORKS ARE A SIGN OUR FATHER IS LOOKING FOR – A SIGN BOTH CHRISTIANITY AND JUDISM WEAR PRETTY WELL... BARUCH HASHEM. SO THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS CONTINUES- WHICH TOKEN/SIGN WILL YOU CHOOSE TO DISPLAY?? BECAUSE REMEMBER IN YOUR CHOICE...
- THERE IS NO GOD LIKE THE GOD OF ISRAEL, AND NO NATION LIKE ISRAEL....

Insights into Judaism



Women in the Bible

In the Bible, women are sometimes portrayed as men's equals and other times as men's subordinates — or property.

The Hebrew Bible is a composite document containing a variety of types of literature, reflecting the attitudes and concerns of numerous authors writing in very different times and places.

An Early Example of Divergent Views

An example of such significant diversity as it applies to women is evident in the two creation stories placed at the beginning of Genesis. While the first account of the origin of human beings ([Genesis 1:1-2:3](#)) recounts that both male and female were created simultaneously, in the divine image, and equally charged to multiply and to dominate the earth and their fellow creatures, the second narrative ([Genesis 2](#):4ff.) preserves a tradition of male priority. Here, woman is a subsequent and secondary creation, formed from man's body to fulfill male needs for companionship and progeny.

Such divergent understandings of female status and capacities, and the contradictions they engender, appear throughout the biblical literature.

Controlling Women's Sexuality

Recent scholars have utilized a number of strategies to contextualize the diverse portrayals of women in biblical texts.

Studying women's status in biblical law, Tikva Frymer-Kensky writes that biblical legislation, like ancient Near Eastern social policy in general, assumes a woman's subordination to the dominant male in her life, whether father or husband. This man controls her sexuality, including the right to challenge with impunity both her virginity and her marital faithfulness ([Deuteronomy 11:28-29](#); [Numbers 5:11-31](#)).

Indeed, legislative concerns about women's sexual activity primarily have to do with relations between men. A man is executed for having intercourse with another's wife ([Leviticus 20:10](#)), because he has committed a crime of theft against a man; but a man who seduces or rapes a virgin pays a brideprice to her father and marries her ([Deuteronomy 22:28](#)). This is not a crime in the same sense at all, not because of a dissimilarity in what the man did but because of the difference in who "owned" the right to the women's sexuality.

Property Rights and Purity

Not surprisingly, in a patriarchal culture in which women function primarily as daughters, wives, and mothers of particular men, women have virtually no property rights. Unmarried women inherit from their fathers only if they have no brothers; and, in such cases, they must subsequently marry within their father's clan to prevent the dispersal of tribal property among outsiders ([Numbers 36:2-12](#)). [This was the case with the daughters of Zelophehad, who successfully petitioned Moses and God for their father's inheritance.]

Widows do not inherit from their husbands at all but are dependent on their sons or the generosity of other heirs. According to the practice of levirate marriage, childless widows are the legal responsibility of their husband's oldest brother ([Deuteronomy 25:5-10](#)).

Susan Niditch notes that the most noticeable laws of fencing off and boundary making vis-à-vis women are the priestly laws pertaining to purity. According to these regulations menstruating and postpartum women are unclean and sexually unavailable to their husbands for prescribed periods of times ([Leviticus 12, 15](#)), during which they also have the potential to render ritually impure people and objects around them. [...]

Changes in Society Affected Attitudes Toward Women

Carol Meyers has applied insights gleaned from sociology, anthropology, and archaeology to reconstruct models of Israelite social life and the ordinary women's place within it in various periods of biblical history.

She argues that when agricultural work and childbearing, two spheres in which women played an active role, were central to biblical society, social and religious life in ancient Israel was relatively egalitarian. When the political state and the monarchy emerged, and religious life was institutionalized in the Temple cult and priestly bureaucracy (beginning in the tenth century B.C.E.), however, women were increasingly excluded from the public arena and lost access to communal authority.

The negative images of wealthy and leisured urban women in Proverbs and some of the prophetic books may reflect this new reality, in which women's traditional roles have been transformed and devalued. [...]

Female Rituals, Female Deities

References to girls' puberty rites ([Judges 11:39-40](#)), harvest dances ([Judges 21:20-21](#)), and childbirth rituals ([Leviticus 12:6-8](#)) give fleeting illumination to exclusively female ceremonies that were not of interest to male biblical writers and editors.

A number of scholars additionally have discussed the persistence of goddess worship in ancient Israel and the particular place of the Near Eastern fertility goddess, Asherah.

While Frymer-Kensky argues that biblical monotheism was generally successful in absorbing the central ideas of polytheism and the functions and roles of goddesses, she agrees that remnants of goddess worship remained. Jeremiah's condemnations of worship practices involving "the Queen of Heaven" ([Jeremiah 7:17-18, 44](#):15-25) and frequent archaeological discoveries of ancient Israelite female clay figurines, particularly prominent in the period of the monarchies, indicate that aspects of such worship may have lingered, if only as unconscious affirmations of the power of fertility that was seen as the reward of devotion to the invisible, transcendent God.

Niditch suggests that the female personification of Wisdom in Proverbs also preserves residual elements of female divinity. Although she serves as a divine emissary ([Proverbs 1:29](#)) and not a fully independent deity, Wisdom, God's confidante and delight ([Proverbs 8:30](#)), is portrayed as having been created before the world and its inhabitants ([Proverbs 8](#):22ff.) and functions as an essential intermediary to divine favor ([Proverbs 8:35-37](#)).

As Niditch has written, "This goddess-like figure in Proverbs directs her attention to male adherents, but also offers a source of identification and empowerment for women by suggesting that the female...can be a source of wisdom and life."

Sexuality in the Bible

Although divine manifestations of female and male sexuality were major components of many ancient Near Eastern religious systems, the Bible treats sexuality essentially as a question of social control: "who with whom and in what circumstances."

While a number of biblical narratives demonstrate the strength of sexual attraction and its potentially destructive consequences, only the Song of Songs preserves an idyllic vision of human sexuality beyond normal societal constraints and offers an established vocabulary of female-male erotic love.

More typically, Proverbs warns young men to shun the snares of enticing and seductive women ([Proverbs 5](#); 7; 31:2-3). While acknowledging that sexual attraction and love underlie the powerful biblical metaphor of God and Israel as husband and wife, Frymer-Kensky notes the

absence in the Hebrew Bible of a considered discourse on the dynamics and implications of human sexuality.

She suggests that this vacuum was ultimately filled in Hellenistic/Rabbinic times by the Greek-derived “antiwoman, anticarnal ideas that had such a large impact on the development of Western religion and civilization.”



Because I Said So

How do we grapple with God's call to obedience?

When I was a child, “Because I said so” was a standard response to questions I posed to my parents. As an educator, I came to feel like this was a terrible approach. Wasn’t it our task to help children understand so they could learn to make their own good choices? But as a parent, I’ve learned that sometimes the answer really is “Because I said so.” Sometimes children simply have not lived long enough to understand and don’t have the experience to see the right path.

This week’s Torah portion, Parashat Eikev, offers a lens through which to view the relationship between God and the Israelites as akin to one between parents and children. A central message of this portion is obedience. The very first verse reads: “If you obey these rules and keep them and perform them, then God will keep the covenant and the kindness made with your ancestors.” Again and again, this idea is repeated: Do what God tells you to do, and all will be well.

If we were children, this might be a defensible approach. Perhaps God just knows better than we do. But how do we grapple with this call to obedience as independent adults? Isn’t blind obedience dangerous? Are we not well familiar with the catastrophes that can result?

Moses offers three critical ways to address the challenge of trusting in the divine: remembrance, humility, and connection. This nuanced understanding points to critical engagement as the foundation of obedience.

Let's start with remembrance. Humans tend to have a short memory. We see this powerfully illustrated with the incident of the golden calf. Shortly after God commanded the people not to have other gods and not to make idols, the Israelites did both. So Moses spends a significant chunk of this Torah portion reviewing the miracles and lessons of the past, including the incident of the calf. He begins: "Remember the long way the Lord, your God, led you these 40 years in the desert, in order to afflict you, to test you, to know what is in your heart, whether you would keep God's commandments or not." ([Deuteronomy 8:2](#)). He wants the Israelites to remember the miraculous way they were cared for by God in the past, but also the mistakes that were made along the way.

Recalling this history might lead the Israelites to take their success for granted and assume that divine favor is assured. This is why Moses cautions the Israelites to practice humility. "Do not say in your heart, 'Because of my righteousness, the Lord has brought me to possess this land, and because of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord drives them out from before you.'" ([Deuteronomy 9:4](#)) Moses here is speaking to the human tendency to attribute success to our own righteousness and to believe there is some deficit in those who do not succeed as we do. A stance of humility, the recognition that there is something beyond our own power, some cosmic alignment responsible for what we achieve (or fail to), is a preventative to succumbing to the arrogance of success.

Finally, we come to the heart of Moses' teaching, his encouragement of the Israelites to stay close to the source of blessing: "You shall love the Lord, your God, keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments, all the days." ([Deuteronomy 11:1](#)) This may be the most challenging aspect for us today — to act based on an ongoing personal connection with the divine. To help hone this skill, Moses issues a curious command to "circumcise the foreskin of your heart" ([Deuteronomy 10:16](#)). Our tendency to overthink things, the pace of the world, and myriad other factors can lead to a build-up of barriers to spiritual connection. Circumcising our hearts means finding ways to trim back those barriers and lean into a more intentional and connected experience of life, which better allows us to connect with others — and with God.

Early in the Torah, God struggled to get humanity to follow the commandments. Humans have a need to understand before we act. Adam and Eve did not comply with God's instructions in the Garden of Eden, nor did the generation of Noah have interest in walking in God's ways. Even Moses was resistant to God's call. He started his prophetic career in a child-like manner — unsure of his own relationship with the divine, unaware of his own power and asking many, many questions. But having matured as a leader, he now acts more like a parent to the Israelites, skillfully able to guide them in developing a relationship of trust with God in order to faithfully perform the mitzvot.

The three levels of trust-building Moses describes bring the Israelites — and us — from “because I said so” to a greater understanding of why we *should* do so. They provide us the opportunity to slow down the urgency of the present moment and to reach across time and space to recognize that the mitzvot do not exist in a vacuum or for us alone, but as part of a greater system of which we are a part. Through remembrance, humility, and connection, we can transform what appears to be a call for simple obedience to an invitation to be in partnership with the divine in the continuous work of creation.

עֲבָרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

Holiday / חג

Pronounced: CHAG

***Chag sameach*, or "happy holiday," is the greeting shared before or on a Jewish holiday.**

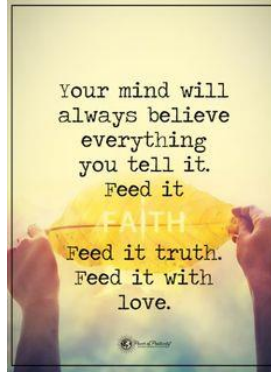


A Taste of Jewish Humor

A Dying Language

A funeral procession was moving slowly down a narrow street on the Lower East Side of New York. Their route took them past the offices of the last Yiddish Newspaper left in the city.

One of the editors saw the funeral procession and called to his colleague, "Hey Mottel, print one less!"



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



Chocolate Nutella Cookies

COOK TIME 12 MINUTES

Easy chocolatey cookies you need to try.

Chocolate spread can be found in almost any Israeli pantry. Cheap, tasty and shelf stable, chocolate spread became popular in the early days of the state of Israel and its popularity has only continued through to today. Kids love to spread it on bread for breakfast, lunch or snack. Nutella was introduced to the

country in more recent years and the nutty chocolate is spreading around the country in everything from cakes to cookies.

Ingredients

Servings

5 Dozen

- 1-1/2 sticks of unsalted butter or vegan butter room temperature
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 cup of chocolate hazelnut spread such as Nutella
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup chopped hazelnuts optional

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 sheet pans with parchment paper.
2. Cream butter with an electric mixer for 3 minutes until light and fluffy. Add the sugars and chocolate hazelnut spread and mix well, scraping down the sides of the bowl to ensure even mixing.

3. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating for 30 seconds between each. Add the vanilla and mix for 10 seconds.
4. Sift together the flour, cocoa, salt, and baking soda (do not skip this step as sifting eliminates clumps of cocoa). Mix into the butter mixture on low speed until fully incorporated, scraping down the bottom and sides at least once to ensure even mixing. Fold in the chocolate chips and hazelnuts and refrigerate the dough for ten minutes.
5. Spoon tablespoon-sized drops of dough onto prepared sheet pans. Bake at 350°F for 10-12 minutes. Allow to cool on the pans for a minute or two before transferring to a wire rack to finish cooling.

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

