



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 1-13-24 VAERA**

### ***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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:tolmm@etz-chayim.org)

## **MESSAGE FOR 1-13-24 VAERA**

**VA'ERA - AND I APPEARED**  
**Exodus - Shemoth 6:2-9:35**  
**Ezekiel 28:25-29:21**  
**Romans 9:14-24**

This week we enter into that period of time when Elohim performed the miracles that would ultimately result in the freeing of the future nation of Israel from the slavery that they had been in for 400 years.

These miracles are referred to as the plagues that Elohim brought upon the Egyptians to cause them or more importantly caused the Pharaoh to free the Israelites. But a lot more is taking place here than just the coming freedom of the Israelites or more to the point the Children of Israel, the descendants of Jacob.

There are a couple of points that I want to bring out here. The first we find in Exodus - Shemoth 6:9 and 12.

*And Mosheh spoke thus to the children of Yisrael, but they did not listen to Mosheh, because of shortness of spirit, and from hard slavery.*

***And Mosheh spoke before Adonai, saying, "The children of Yisrael have not listened to me, and why would Pharaoh listen to me..."***

The children of Israel would not listen.... Where have we heard that before? And where will we hear that again? What we see here is the reason for Elohim not allowing this people to enter the promised land. Here we see the word shortness, but the Hebrew word is Kashah, meaning stiff-necked. I am sure that we all have seen the word stiff-necked time and again throughout Scripture. The people cried out to Elohim to free them from their slavery and He heard them and prepared to do what they asked, but when He sent Moses to speak to them about what Elohim was going to do, they refused to listen.

So, what we see here is not only a hardening of Pharaoh's heart against letting the people go, but a hardening of the children of Israel's hearts. Once again, the word used to describe Pharaoh's hardening of his heart is the same one used to describe the Israelite's hardening of their hearts. I like to think that what happened is disobedience on both sides to what Elohim had said He would do. But in Pharaoh's case Elohim chose to cause his heart condition because He had a plan. What was that plan? That Elohim would free the children of Israel through great miracles, and they would see that He is Elohim. But their spiritual condition was not right. They could not receive what He had planned for them. They were blind. They were blind like so many after them and so many today.

**And yet they had a promise. A promise that had been passed down from generation to generation. We read of this promise in Ezekiel 28:25-26:**

***Thus said the Master Adonai, "When I have gathered the house of Yisrael from the peoples among whom they are scattered, I shall be set-apart in them before the eyes of the gentiles. And they shall dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Yaaqob.***

***And they shall dwell safely, and build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell safely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. And they shall know that I am Adonai their Elohim."***

This is a promise of not only having a land of their own but a promise of having the Elohim of all creation as their own. He was going to be a part of them, and they would be a part of Him. And they would stand before all the nations - gentiles as being different. This promise was not only for the Israelites. But this promise is for the gentiles also. I have said it before and I will say it again, that

the promise of Elohim was not only to the Israelites for a land of their own, but it was to them to have an Elohim of their own, and that this promise was passed on to the Gentiles -the Goyim - the other nations. Elohim planned to bring them into the covenant also.

**Rav Shaul - the Apostle Paul speaks of this in Romans 9:14-24:**

***Romans 9:14** What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! <sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." <sup>16</sup> So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE, I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." <sup>18</sup> So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" <sup>20</sup> On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? <sup>21</sup> Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, <sup>24</sup> even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (NAU)*

**Listen to verse 24: Even whom He called, not only us of the Yehudim, but also of the gentiles?**

Did you hear what Shaul said. Not only of the Jew but also of the other nations. Elohim's plan had always been meant for everyone. It was never meant to be given to the Jew only. The land was only a part of the promise. The physical part.

There was also a spiritual part. The spiritual part was Elohim. He would be a part of us and because of that we would be set apart from all others. I believe

this set-apartness is the way that those who look at us will see something different.

This difference would not be in the way we look, dress, or speak. But that there would be a difference inside of us. Elohim was setting the children of Israel apart, because up to then there was no way to see anything different in them. There were some physical differences and some customs, but the one sure difference had not yet come. Elohim among us.

He was now going to set the people apart from all others and He was going to do it with a bang. Miracles. Where else do we see this. When Y'shua had His ministry, He performed miracle upon miracle. But He knew that that was not enough.

He needed to teach them. Y'shua taught as Moses did. To show the people Elohim's ways. But the Israelites of Egyptian slavery turned away, the same as the Israelites of Y'shua's time did. The same as people do today. The Jews of today have turned away in stiff-necked rebellion from the spiritual promise of Elohim.

This is the same as when they turned away from Y'shua because they failed to see the double prophecy in the suffering Messiah and Reigning King. The Jewish people see the physical promise but not the spiritual one.

The gentiles also fail to see both. Those in Christianity that say the Church is Israel fail to see the physical promise as well as the spiritual. They fail to see that Elohim includes everyone, Jew, and Gentile in His promise - His covenant.

The fulfillment of that covenant is found in Revelation when all of us dwell with Him in the land of promise. Then will the covenant given to Abraham be truly fulfilled in every way.

**Before I close, I want to share with you just one more example of the way Elohim works. In Exodus 7:1 Elohim says to Moses: *So, Adonai said to Mosheh, "See, I have made you an Elohim to Pharaoh, and Aharon your brother is your prophet."***

I used to think that Moses was a form of Messiah in that He led the people, brought them the teachings of Elohim much in the same way that Y'shua did. Y'shua came and brought the Word of Elohim, He performed miracles. But Moses was much more than that. Moses was a form of the Father caring for His children. As Moses looked after the children of Israel and had his times of trial

with them, so also did the Father with not only the Israelites, but today with those of us who say we believe.

The Scriptures teach us about Elohim. We learn about His nature as Father, as the Son and as the Holy Spirit. We each have these elements of Elohim in us. We are made in the image of Elohim. Does that mean we look like Him? On the inside. What is on the outside is for the world. When people look at us and say they see something different, it is what we are on the inside.

*Do you want to be known as the Children of Elohim or the people of Israel, stiff-necked? Do you want to be compared to Pharaoh - stiff-necked? Are you like Moses, an image of Elohim? The Scriptures are a story, the story of what we are called to be.*

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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 Vaera: Summary**

### **Exodus-Shemot 6:2-9:35**

***Through Moses and Aaron, God brings plagues on the Egyptians, and Pharaoh repeatedly refuses to allow the Israelites to leave.***

God spoke to Moses, “I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God but I did not make Myself known to them by My other name (which is neither pronounced nor translated). I established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan. I have heard the moaning of the Israelite slaves. I have remembered My covenant. Say, therefore, to the Israelites, ‘I am the Lord. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through miracles. I will take you to be My people and I will be your God. You shall know that I am God who freed you from your labors in Egypt and gave you the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’”

#### **Moses Struggles With God’s Command**

The Lord told Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But Moses retorted, “The Israelites would not listen to me; how then should Pharaoh heed me, a man of impeded speech!”

The Lord replied to Moses, “I place you in the role of god to Pharaoh with your brother Aaron as your prophet. You shall repeat all that I command you and Aaron shall speak to the Pharaoh. But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that I may multiply My signs and marvels in the land of Egypt. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I deliver the Israelites from their midst.”

Moses was 80 years old, and Aaron was 83 when they made their demand on Pharaoh. The Lord told Moses and Aaron, “When Pharaoh says to ‘produce your miracles,’ then cast your rod before Pharaoh and it shall turn into a serpent.”

#### **Moses and Aaron Perform Miracles**

Moses and Aaron did as God commanded. Pharaoh summoned his magicians, and they turned their rods into serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed their rods. Yet Pharaoh's heart stiffened, and he did not heed them, just as the Lord predicted.

God then commanded Moses, "Go to Pharaoh in the morning when he is coming out of the Nile river. Tell him to let the Israelites go to worship Me in the wilderness. Tell him that I will show I am God by striking the river's water with the rod, turning it into blood and killing all the fish. All the waters in Egypt, even in the vessels, shall turn to blood."

Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded and the waters turned into blood and the fish died. But when Pharaoh's magicians did the same with their spells, Pharaoh's heart stiffened, and he refused to let the Israelites go.

Seven days later, God told Moses to say to Pharaoh that "if he refuses to let the people go, I will plague the country and his palace and the people's homes with frogs." And frogs appeared everywhere. But the magicians also brought frogs upon the land.

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron saying, "Plead with the Lord to remove the frogs and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord."

### **Pharaoh's Stubbornness**

"I will do it so that you learn that there is none like the Lord our God," Moses answered. Then Moses pleaded to God and God killed the frogs. The people piled the dead frogs in heaps and the land stank. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he became stubborn and would not let the people go, just as God had predicted.

The Lord told Moses to say to Aaron, "Hold out your rod and strike the dust of the earth and it shall turn to lice throughout the land of Egypt." They did so and vermin came upon man and beasts throughout Egypt. The magicians tried to produce lice with their spells, but they could not. "This is the finger of God," the magicians said to the Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart stiffened, and he would not heed them, just as God had predicted.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go again to Pharaoh and tell him that if he does not let the people go, I will let loose a swarm of insects. These insects shall swarm all over Egypt, but in the land of Goshen, where My people dwell, there shall be none. Thus, shall Pharaoh know that I, the Lord, God, makes a distinction between My people and the Pharaoh's people." And God did so, and throughout Egypt the land was ruined by swarms of insects.

### **Let My People Go**

Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron saying, "Go and sacrifice to God within the land."

"It would not be right for us to do this," Moses replied, "because what God commands us to sacrifice is sacred to the Egyptians. If we do so before their very eyes, they will stone us. So we must go a distance of three days in the wilderness to do these sacrifices."

“If you will remove these insects,” agreed the Pharaoh, “I will let you go do your sacrifices in the wilderness, but do not go very far.”

“And” Moses added, “do not let Pharaoh act deceitfully again and not let the people go.”

Moses asked the Lord to remove all the swarms of insects from the land and God did so. But Pharaoh became stubborn and would not let the people go.

God said to Moses, “Tell the Pharaoh that if he refuses to let My people go, then I will strike Egyptian livestock with a severe pestilence, but the Israelite livestock shall not be struck.” And the Lord did just that. But the Pharaoh still would not let the people go.

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Each of you take handfuls of soot from the kiln and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. It shall become a fine dust over all the land and cause boils on man and beast.” And it was done just like that. The magicians were unable to confront Moses because of their own boils. But God stiffened the heart of Pharaoh, and he would not let the people go, just as God had foretold.

The Lord said to Moses, “Tell Pharaoh that this time I shall send all My plagues upon him and his people in order that Pharaoh may know that there is none like Me in all the world. Tell him that I could have killed him by now, but I have spared him to show My power so that My fame may resound throughout the world. Tell him that this time tomorrow I shall rain down a heavy hail such has never been seen before and to bring the livestock inside shelter.”

### **Pharaoh’s Heart Hardens Once Again**

The courtiers who feared God brought their livestock inside and those who did not fear God left them out in the open. Then thunder and hail and fire streamed down on the ground of Egypt. Anything in the open was struck down, as well as all the grass and trees. Only in the region of Goshen where the Israelites stayed, there was no hail.

Pharaoh then sent for Aaron and Moses and said, “I am guilty this time. The Lord is right, and my people are wrong. Plead with the Lord to end this thunder and hail and I will let you go.”

Moses replied, “As I go out of the city, I shall spread out my hands to the Lord. Then the thunder and hail will cease, and you will know that the earth is the Lord’s. But I know that you and your courtiers do not yet fear the Lord God.” And Moses did as he said but when Pharaoh saw the hail and thunder cease, he reverted to his guilty ways. Pharaoh’s heart stiffened and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had foretold through Moses.

### **Parashat Vaera Discussion Questions**

**1. What does it mean that God will take the Israelites as God’s people? Are not all people God’s people? Why or why not?**

2. What does it mean the God placed Moses in the role of god to Pharaoh? What is the difference between God (upper case G) and a god (lower case g)? How can anyone be “a god” to someone? Is there anyone in your life who is “a god” to you?

3. How is Aaron a prophet? What is a prophet? Is there a difference between Moses as a prophet and Aaron as a prophet? If so, what?

4. The text says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. How does God do this? Is it possible to separate God hardening Pharaoh’s heart from Pharaoh making this decision himself? If so, how?

5. Do you believe God could make such plagues? Can God still make such plagues? Do you think there are plagues today that God makes? If so, what are the plagues God is making today?

## Haftarah for Vaera

Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

### *A prophecy of destruction for Egypt.*

The Nile River figures prominently in the story of the Israelites in Egypt. In Parashat Shemot, Pharaoh decrees that all Hebrew newborn boys be thrown into the river ( [Exodus 1:22](#) ), and Pharaoh’s daughter finds baby Moses floating in a basket on the Nile ( [Exodus 2:6](#) ). In this week’s Torah portion, Vaera, Moses hits the Nile with his staff and it turns to blood ( [Exodus 7:20](#) ). He later hits it again to bring about the plague of frogs ( [Exodus 8:2](#) ).

### **The Nile as God**

Since the Nile was a major source of fertility in otherwise arid Egypt, these assaults on the Nile were particularly painful for the Egyptians. Moreover, some scholars believe that the ancient Egyptians actually worshipped the Nile; seeing it turned to blood or infested with pests would be a real cause for panic.

### **Pharaoh The Sea Monster**

The Haftarah for Vaera is a prophecy about Egypt’s downfall, and it too uses the Nile as a central motif. Ezekiel foretells that God will punish the current Egyptian Pharaoh, whom he describes as “Mighty monster, sprawling in the Nile channels” ( [Ezekiel 29:3](#) ).

Pharaoh is the sea-monster of the Nile, Ezekiel explains, and God will drag him out with sharp hooks. God will fling the sea-monster into the desert, with the fish of the Nile sticking to its

scales. Abandoned, the monster will become food for the beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky (29:4-5).

### **The Sin of Arrogance**

Egypt's sin, Ezekiel explained, is arrogance. By claiming that "The Nile is mine and I made it" (29:9), Pharaoh and the Egyptians deny God. This earns them complete destruction.

Nebuchadnezzar, Ezekiel promises, will bring about the destruction of Babylon: "He shall carry her wealth and take her spoil and seize her booty; and she shall be the recompense of his army" (29:19). Egypt will remain desolate for 40 years.

In closing, Ezekiel states that Egypt's downfall will endow Israel with strength. This event will be recognized as a symbol that the God of Israel is true.



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

Rabbi Hammond can be contacted at – [Philip@etz-chayim.org](mailto:Philip@etz-chayim.org)

### **MATZAH-UNLEAVENED BREAD...**

Matzah - מַצָּה – Unleavened Bread.

- <sup>5</sup> During the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, is ADONAI's Passover.<sup>6</sup> On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Matzot to ADONAI. For seven days you are to eat matzah. <sup>7</sup> On the first day you are to have a holy convocation and you should do no regular work. Instead you are to present an offering made by fire to ADONAI for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation, when you are to do no regular work.



- There is always debate surrounding the feast of unleavened bread. I don't intend to add to those debates today.
- **MATZAH** - מצה It is used 53 times in the KJV ... 33 @ unleavened bread: 14 @ unleavened: 5 @ cakes: 1 @ without leaven.
- As with viewing most words in the bible we begin with the root word and meaning:
- מצץ = Suck out & absorb @ Isaiah 66:11 – Milk...
- Matzah is supposed to be pure, without the added sour dough component. Without leaven.
- **Leaven** –: seh-ore שאר = Ferment, cause agitation [Hirsch] This is the word used in **Exodus 12:15&19**. Both the Master and Paul explain leaven as something causes agitation and infects the body.

- Then Yeshua said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Matthew 16:6
- How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? —but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. ” 12 Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew 16:11-12 [NKJV]
- In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Luke 12:1 [NKJV]
- Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Messiah our passover is sacrificed for us: <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Leaven/ Zume [Greek] = Boil up trouble, causing a corruption or a pollution.

- So when we are told to eat Matzah, and remove the leaven from our houses, it points to removing the pollution, hypocrisy, mixed doctrines:
- You also, as lively stones, are being built up as a spiritual house ~~and~~ holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Yeshua the Messiah. 1Peter 2:5
- For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 1Peter 5:17
- We run around our physical homes throwing out all the physical leaven we can find, yet are very reluctant to view the leaven in our own lives we need to devour the bread of life Yeshua.
- We are told to do these for SEVEN days:

- Seven/Shaba שִׁבְעָ = Hirsch says it means: submit to God, complete.
- Leads us to Genesis and creation: 1<sup>st</sup> day = darkness and light. 7<sup>th</sup> day rest – complete – blessed.
- Within this appointed time of Unleavened Bread we have 1<sup>st</sup> day = Sabbath & 7<sup>th</sup> day = Sabbath. Think 1<sup>st</sup> day eating unleavened [pure, unpolluted bread – Yeshua]. Coming out of darkness into LIGHT. 7<sup>th</sup> day having consumed unleavened bread for 7 days, being complete in Yeshua, and therefore BLESSED.
- But wait there is more:



- <sup>10</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring an omer of the firsts of your harvest unto the priest.<sup>11</sup> And he shall wave the omer before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.<sup>12</sup> And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the omer an he lamb without blemish a yearling son for a burnt offering unto the LORD. <sup>13</sup> And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenths of flour mingled with oil, a firing unto the LORD for a scent of rest: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. <sup>14</sup> And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. Leviticus 23:10-14
- **The feast of 1<sup>st</sup> fruits:** What a wonderful picture of our Saviour Yeshua we have throughout this time: Having just witnessed the death of our Saviour we can now enjoy the First Harvest after we bring the first of it before YHVH

- In verse 12 we again see a wonderful picture of Yeshua – A male lamb in its prime being offered up to the Father.
- We witness the flour, oil and wine being used on this occasion all having to be crushed before the Children of Israel could partake thereof. Again the perfect picture of Yeshua – crushed before we could partake of the Bread of Life.
- <sup>20</sup> But now is Messiah risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.<sup>21</sup> For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Messiah shall all be made alive.<sup>23</sup> But every man in his own order: Messiah the firstfruits [1<sup>st</sup> Omer]; afterward they that are Messiah's at his coming 1 Corinthians 15:20-23
- Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;<sup>4</sup> And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

- The moedim or appointed times of our Father, are so vital in building our relationship with Him, and understanding our favour Yeshua.
- When we gather together to celebrate these wonderful appointed times, it allows the Holy Spirit to guide, and encourage us through the obedience of seeking with a humble and joyful heart.
- <sup>11</sup> But Miryam stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, <sup>12</sup> And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Yeshua had lain. <sup>13</sup> And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid him. <sup>14</sup> And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Yeshua standing, and knew not that it was Yeshua. <sup>15</sup> Yeshua saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

- Yeshua said unto her, Miryam. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. <sup>17</sup> Yeshua said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. <sup>18</sup> Miryam Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the LORD, and that he had spoken these things unto her. John 20:11-18
- We witness the 1<sup>st</sup> harvest pattern here. Yeshua as the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits had not ascended to the Father, as such He was not to be touched, just as the grain couldn't be eaten until offered to YHVH by the priests.
- Yeshua ascended to the Father, and thus we experience
- <sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. <sup>18</sup> Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:17-18

- And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name scribed in their foreheads.  
<sup>2</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:  
<sup>3</sup> And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.<sup>5</sup> And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. Revelation 14:1-5
- **Guile/Dolos** = Bait, trick, deceit. @After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. Mark 14:1

- We should be filled with excitement, and joy unspeakable as we consider this time. We witness the darkness, and look forward to the coming Light. At a given time we leave this present world, to be before our Father as first fruits, without leaven.
- Behold, I tell you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the final trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.  
<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on deathlessness, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is scribed, Death is swallowed up in victory. 1 Corinthians 15:51-54
- As we consider the beauty of this promise I want to finish on this link:

- So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on **deathlessness**, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is scribed, Death is swallowed up in victory.
- I give thee charge in the sight of God, who gives life to all things, and before Messiah Yeshua, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession<sup>14</sup>; That thou guard this commandment unstained, blameless, until the appearing of our Lord Yeshua Messiah: <sup>15</sup> Which in his seasons he shall show who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords<sup>16</sup>; Who only hath **deathlessness**, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.  
1 Timothy 6:13-16
- Why would you want to ignore His appointed times? Through the ~~sa~~oedim, you can truly hold onto the nailed scared hands of Messiah Yeshua...
- There is no God..

# ***Insights into Judaism***



## **Golda Meir**

***Born in Ukraine and raised in America, she became Israel's first and only female prime minister.***

Golda Meir — nee Mabovitch — was born in 1898 in Kiev. In 1903 her father, driven to destitution, left Russia for the United States. Golda, together with her mother and siblings, moved to Pinsk and waited for her father to send for them. Pinsk was one of the centers of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, and Golda grew up amid the threat of pogroms (organized anti-Semitic riots) and in the subversive atmosphere of pre-revolutionary Russia.

### **Early Years**

In 1906, the family moved to the United States and was reunited with Golda's father in Milwaukee. Golda excelled in her studies and, upon graduating high school, trained as an educator and became a teacher. In 1915 she joined the local branch of the socialist Zionist party *Poalei Zion* and in 1921, together with her husband Morris Myerson, immigrated to Palestine.

The couple joined Kibbutz Merhavva in the northern Jezreel valley. Overcoming the grueling conditions on the kibbutz as well as the widespread prejudice that American girls were not tough enough for a life of manual labor, Golda began to fulfill her ambition of being a pioneer. "Not being beautiful," she wrote, "was the true blessing. Not being beautiful forced me to develop my inner resources. The pretty girl has a handicap to overcome."

### **Rise to Power**

Almost immediately, Meir took on positions of responsibility in the Histadrut, the workers' federation responsible for the lion's share of pre-1948 economic development, social services, and political leadership. In 1928 she was appointed as executive secretary of the Women Workers' Council and served as emissary to the Pioneer Women's Organization in the United States from 1932-34. Upon her return to Palestine, Meir was invited to join the executive

committee of the Histadrut and, two years later, was appointed as head of its Political Department. In June 1946, Meir replaced Moshe Shertok (later Sharett) as head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, the quasi-foreign ministry of the state-in-waiting.

In 1947, the British announced their intention to leave Palestine, and turned the question of the country's future over to the United Nations. As the UN General Assembly prepared to vote on the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, Meir was sent on a clandestine mission to negotiate in person with King Abdullah of Transjordan. In a November 1947 meeting with Meir at Naharayim, in the Jordan Valley, the king declared himself an ally of the Zionists and promised to abstain from hostilities against the Jewish state. Yet six months later, rumors reached the Yishuv's leadership that Abdullah had joined the Arab League and was planning to join the coming attack on Israel.

On May 10, 1948, Meir set out again, this time for a meeting in Amman. She traveled disguised as an Arab woman, changing cars several times to preserve the meeting's secrecy. This time the king was less forthcoming. He admitted the Jews were his only allies in the region but said that his hands were tied. He argued against the declaration of statehood and offered the Jews the status of a protected minority in an enlarged Jordanian state. Meir, unsurprisingly, rejected the offer.

On May 14, 1948, David Ben Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel. Meir was one of the signatories to the proclamation. Shortly thereafter she was dispatched to Moscow as Israel's first diplomatic representative to the Soviet Union, where she was welcomed enthusiastically by Soviet Jews.

Returning from Russia in 1949, Meir was elected to the first Knesset. As minister of labor she initiated massive public works programs that provided employment for the hundreds of thousands of new immigrants then flooding the country. From 1956-1965, in her capacity as foreign minister (upon appointment to the role, she Hebraized her name from Myerson to Meir), she defended Israel's attack on Egypt in the Sinai Campaign to the international community and initiated relationships with newly independent black African states, offering Israel's technical expertise and assistance.

Prime Minister Levi Eshkol's death in 1969 left a power vacuum at the top of the ruling Labor Party. Meir — then Labor's secretary general — was floated as a compromise candidate to stave off bitter conflict between prime ministerial contenders Yigal Allon and Moshe Dayan. After much deliberation and with great trepidation, Meir accepted the position, becoming Israel's first and — to date — only female prime minister, and only the third female head of government in the world.

## **A Woman, Not a Feminist**

Golda Meir with future British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Tel Aviv in 1976. Meir's attitude to feminism was perplexing. She said the four years she spent as a Jerusalem housewife after the birth of her children were the most miserable in her life; she felt isolated

and swallowed up by her duty to her family. She wrote articulately about the guilt faced by modern women about their lack of satisfaction with traditional gender roles and their desire to abandon their families in the pursuit of self-fulfillment.

Yet Meir was not a feminist. Rather than fighting for women's rights, she simply assumed equality as a fact. She found the atmosphere of women's organizations constricting, and preferred the challenge of working with men, seeing herself as a leader who happened to be a woman, not a female leader. "Women's liberation is just a lot of foolishness," she said. "It's the men who are discriminated against. They can't bear children. And no one's likely to do anything about that."

## Controversy in Office

Meir's premiership was marked by controversy. In 1971 the Israeli Black Panthers — a radical, sometimes violent, social movement protesting the discrimination of Israelis of North African and Middle Eastern origin — emerged. Meir viewed the Panthers as criminals, denying their legitimacy as a movement, and following a meeting with the Panthers' leaders she characterized them as "not nice boys." Over the next six years, most Sephardim bolted from the Labor party, transferring their support to the right-wing Likud and ultimately bringing Menachem Begin to power in 1977.

Golda Meir took office in the aftermath of the Six Day War and at the height of the War of Attrition that simmered along the Israeli-Egyptian frontier, claiming hundreds of Israeli lives. She torpedoed plans to return territories conquered in 1967 in return for peace with the Arabs and brushed off overtures from Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to create an interim accord between Israel and Egypt.

## The Yom Kippur War

Meir subscribed to the *konseptzia* (conception), the strategic assumption that following the Six Day War's demonstration of Israel's military superiority the Arabs had abandoned any hope of military offensives against the Jewish state. In this political atmosphere, and in light of her belief that Palestinian nationalism was no more than a ruse designed to delegitimize and ultimately destroy Israel, Meir preferred concrete territorial assets over uncertain diplomacy.

The *konseptzia* collapsed on Yom Kippur, Oct. 6, 1973, when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack. The assault was unforeseen by Israeli intelligence, despite clear signs that Egypt and Syria were making military preparations and had made unambiguous declarations of hostile intent. In the hours before the war, faced with the assurances of her intelligence chiefs that no attack was imminent, Meir deliberated whether to order a full-scale mobilization; her failure to do so was a cause of regret for the rest of her life.

During the war — at the height of the enemy onslaught and in the shadow of defeat — Meir resisted pressure from the army and Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan to deploy Israel's secret nuclear arsenal against Egypt. Chaim Herzog, Israel's sixth president, recalled that Meir had no trouble making decisions: "Once the war began, she showed great strength of character and

enormous composure...her inflexibility proved to be an enormous asset in the war. She used common sense to make military decisions, often opposing the choices made by lifelong military men — and her choices were usually correct.”

She negotiated assertively with US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, convincing the US government to airlift crucial military supplies to Israel’s strapped forces.

The war ended with 2,656 Israeli soldiers killed and 7,250 wounded. Despite the ultimate victory over the Arab forces, the war brought about the collapse of Israel’s post-1967 self-confidence and was perceived by many Israelis as an existential breaking point. Although the Agranat Commission of Inquiry pinned the blame for the war on the army and military intelligence, clearing the political echelon of any direct responsibility for the failure, in April 1974 Meir resigned from the premiership and from the Knesset.

After presiding over the separation-of-forces agreements between Israel, Syria, and Egypt — thereby setting a precedent for future territorial compromise — Meir retired to private life and wrote her memoirs.

Golda Meir died on Dec. 8, 1978, having requested no eulogy and that no institutions be named after her. “Many leaders,” noted US President Richard Nixon, “Drive to the top by the force of personal ambition. They seek power because they want power. Not Golda Meir. All her life she simply set out to do a job, whatever that might be, and poured into it every ounce of energy and dedication she could summon.”





## **Why Kabbalah Is Considered Dangerous**

***The potential for misuse and mental trauma led to restrictions on who could study Jewish mysticism.***

For much of Jewish history, the study of Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism, was shrouded in secrecy, its teachings restricted to the most pious and learned scholars. Esoteric knowledge of God and the nature of the cosmos was considered both powerful and dangerous, something not to be entrusted to the masses.

The most ancient and influential source for this belief is the famous story in the Talmud of the four rabbis who entered pardes — literally “orchard,” but commonly understood to mean they ascended to heaven and/or had some mystical encounter with God. Of those four, one died, one went mad and one “cut off the shoots” (meaning perhaps that he was cut off from the Jewish people or lost his faith). Only one, Rabbi Akiva, emerged unscathed. These rabbis were of the elite, and yet despite their evident piety and wisdom, intimate knowledge of God was too much for all but one of them.

This caution about probing the deepest mysteries of creation persisted throughout Jewish history, and even into the modern age. Maimonides seems to have prohibited the study of Jewish mysticism until one had mastered the Torah. And Rabbi Shabbatai Hakohen, a 17th-century talmudist popularly known as the Shach, famously instituted a rule that one should not study Kabbalah until the age of 40 — the age at which, according to the Mishnah, wisdom is attained. Students were also expected to be married men who were already steeped in Torah and Talmud. In short, one was expected to be at a mature and stable place in life, and to be deeply learned in classical Jewish sources, before tackling a subject as complex as Kabbalah.

These injunctions were never widely observed. One of the best-known kabbalists in history, Rabbi Isaac Luria, didn’t even live to 40. Roughly a century after Luria’s death, the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Hasidic movement, borrowed heavily from kabbalistic ideas in

crafting an approach to Jewish practice that aimed to bring an experience of divinity to the masses. (Early opponents of the Hasidim cited precisely this tendency in justifying their condemnation of Hasidic practice.) And in the modern era, many teachers of Kabbalah have argued that the restrictions were products of an earlier age and that the time had come for Jewish mystical insights to be made available to a world in desperate need of spiritual connection. Or alternatively, that while certain kabbalistic experiences might be off limits — employing techniques to affect an out-of-body experience akin to what the four talmudic rabbis experienced, for example — teaching the basics of Jewish metaphysics is not only permissible, but even obligatory.

The precise nature of the danger isn't entirely clear, but among the commonly cited reasons is the potential for misuse. In this view, it's not Kabbalah per se that is dangerous, but the possibility that its ideas, many of them difficult to grasp without the guidance of a qualified teacher, might be misinterpreted or worse — exploited by the nefarious. The chief example of this is Shabbetai Zevi, a 17th-century mystic who claimed, in part based upon a supposed kabbalistic computation, that he was the long-awaited messiah. The fervor for Zevi swept the Jewish world, precipitating a crisis of faith when Zevi's claims were not borne out.

Other sources suggest that particular kabbalistic techniques, or so-called "practical Kabbalah," could be dangerous, even for those of deep experience. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, in his book *Meditation and Kabbalah*, describes several practices that are potentially dangerous, among them the meditative practice of *yichudim* ("unifications"), in which various names of God are manipulated in the mind. "If improperly used," Kaplan wrote, "they can produce effects that are both traumatic and dangerous. Even someone as spiritually advanced as Rabbi Chaim Vital was often overwhelmed by these experiences." Other practices aimed at achieving altered states of consciousness could also produce mental shifts that would be dangerous for those who aren't properly prepared.

**Hebrew - עִבְרִי**

**Word (s) of the Week**

Because / כִּי

Pronounced: KEE

*Ki*, one of many Hebrew words for "because," never appears on its own, but must be followed by a reason.



## ***A Taste of Jewish Humor***

### **A Friendly Bet**

Two lawyers, Jonathan and David, head out for their usual 9 holes of golf. Jonathan offers David a bet. "Let's say we bet \$50."

David agrees and they're off.

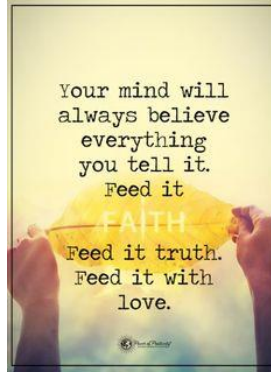
After the 8th hole, David is ahead by one stroke, but cuts his ball into the rough on the 9th. "Help me find my ball. Look over there," he said to Jonathan.

After a few minutes, neither have any luck and a lost ball carries a two-stroke penalty, so David pulls a ball from his pocket and tosses it to the ground. "I've found my ball!" he announces.

Jonathan looks at him. "After all of the years we've been partners and playing together, you'd cheat me out of a lousy 50 dollars?"

"What do you mean, cheat? I found my ball sitting right there!"

**"And you're a liar, too!" Jonathan said. "I'll have you know I've been STANDING on your ball for the last five minutes!"**



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

### **Keeping Kosher**

***An overview of what's involved in observing Jewish dietary laws.***

Observing Jewish dietary laws means living within boundaries. Self-discipline is required, and each person or household has to decide how stringently to apply the rules—or what set of rules to follow. This often means adapting to the standards of the community in which you or your guests live.

*Kashrut* comes in several versions. Talmudic law was interpreted differently among medieval communities, leading to differences between Ashkenazic and Sephardic/Middle Eastern Jews on some of the fine points. Today, ideological, and sociological distinctions are reflected in different standards of *kashrut*. Some keep “biblical *kashrut*,” refraining from eating the meat of non-kosher animals but not separating milk from meat. Others are stringent at home but lenient in other settings.

Maintaining a stringently kosher home generally starts with making one’s kitchen kosher — known as *kashering* it. One can “kasher” many implements used previously for non-kosher food. Kashering an entire kitchen may require many new purchases, but most metal items (pots and pans, silverware, even ovens and stoves) can be made kosher through heat-immersion in boiling water or blowtorching—while glassware may require only careful cleaning. Earthenware and stoneware cannot be kashered, but fine china may require little work to be

usable. Some materials, such as Pyrex and plastics, are considered kasherable by some authorities and not others.

When shopping for packaged food, many people will only buy items marked with a symbol certifying it as kosher (known as a *hekhsher*). Each organization that grants certification has its own symbol, the most common in the U.S. being the Orthodox Union's "O" with a "U" inside. Some people will purchase items whose ingredients appear to be kosher, even without an indication of rabbinic supervision. Also, one must know (or decide) which fresh foods, such as produce, do not require kashrut supervision and which do.

Once one is assured that all foodstuffs at hand are acceptable, kashrut considerations in food preparation revolve around two core issues: avoiding the consumption of blood (even of kosher animals) and keeping meat and milk foods separate.

Today, kosher consumers generally need not be concerned with removing blood from meat. Vendors generally perform the salting and soaking required in order to extract blood from poultry, beef, or lamb. One exception is liver, which kashrut regulations deem impervious to the usual method of blood removal and thus may be eaten only if broiled. Nothing is done to remove blood from fish, whose flesh is not considered meat.

Aside from meat, only eggs are a potential source of blood, since they may be fertilized—an unlikely scenario in the age of factory farming, but this is a severe biblical prohibition. Once opened, raw eggs should be checked for blood spots, and those with spots must be discarded.

The rule that meat and milk foods may not be consumed together led to a requirement that separate sets of utensils be used in cooking and eating. Non-vegetarian kosher kitchens, then, have separate sets of pots and pans, cutlery, and silverware, cutting boards, and storage containers—and, often, dish drains and towels. Many people use color-coding to mark which is which. In many cases, the use of a meat utensil for milk foods, or vice versa, will render it unfit for use. But such errors are often correctable, and the utensil may often be rendered fit for use again.

The prohibition against consuming milk and meat foods together extends to a ban on consuming milk products after having eaten meat foods. Here, too, standards

differ: Some wait only an hour and others as much as six hours, with many people falling somewhere in between those poles. However, after eating dairy products, Jewish law calls only for a negligible wait before consuming meat. Pareve foods are neither meat nor dairy and can be eaten at any meal.

Eating in non-kosher restaurants or homes presents a challenge for kashrut observers. Some less stringently observant people relax their standards in these situations, eating, for instance, vegetarian but not meat meals in non-kosher places. Those maintaining stricter standards may employ disposable dishes and utensils and consume only simple foods such as salads or prepackaged kosher foods eaten cold or heated in doubly insulated containers.

Would-be hosts or guests in such situations should follow the rule that applies to all questions of kashrut: consult a rabbinic authority recognized by the people whose needs you wish to meet.

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