



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 2-24-24 TETZAVEH

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 2-24-24 TETZAVEH-YOU SHALL COMMAND

Shemoth 27:20-30:10

Ezekiel 43:10-27

Matthew - Mattiyahu 5:1-16

Exodus-Shemoth 28:30: And into the breastplate of right-ruling you shall put the Urim and the Tummim, and they shall be on the heart of Aharon when he goes in before Adonai. And Aharon shall bear the right-ruling of the children of Yisrael on his heart before Adonai, continually.

0224 {oo-reem'}

⌘ plural of 0217; n m

⌘ AV - Urim 7; 7

⌘ Urim = "lights" 1) stones kept in a pouch on the high-priest's breastplate, used in determining God's decision in certain questions and issues

08550 Tummiym {toom-meem'}

⌘ pl. of 08537; n pr m

⌘ AV - Thummim 5; 5

⌘ Thummim = "perfection" 1) stones provided for the means of achieving a sacred lot 1a) used with the Urim, the will of God was revealed

Urim begins with the Hebrew letter Aleph and Tummim the Hebrew letter Tav. The first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Revelation 1:8: I am the A and the Z, Beginning and End, says Adonai who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Exodus-Shemoth 3:14: And Elohim said to Mosheh, I am that which I am.

Exodus 28:36: And you shall make a plate of clean gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: APARTNESS TO ADONAI.

Exodus 30:10: And Aharon shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement--once a year he makes atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most set-apart to Adonai.

This verse refers to the Holy Day of Yom Kippur. Interestingly the sacrifice of blood to redeem the people from their sins, made once a year on this holy day, is to be done on the altar for burning incense, not on the altar where the everyday sacrifices are done.

Exodus 29:38: And this is what you prepare on the altar: two lambs, a year old, daily, continually. 39: Prepare the one lamb in the morning, and the other lamb you prepare between the evenings, 41: And prepare the other lamb between the evenings. And with it prepare the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet fragrance, an offering made by fire to Adonai--42: a continual burnt offering for your generations at the door of the Tent of Meeting before Adonai, where I shall meet with you to speak with you.

45: And I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Yisrael and shall be their Elohim.

Ezekiel 43:12 This is the teaching of the House: Upon the mountaintop, all the boundary of it, all around, is most set-apart. See, this is the teaching of the House.

At this point the tabernacle of the Lord is not set-apart from the people no longer in the midst of them.

43:27: And when these days are completed it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests make your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar, and I shall accept you, declares the Master Adonai.

Rededication of the Temple in order for the Lord to be able to take the people back from the sin that they were in.

Matthew 5:13: You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt becomes tasteless, how shall it be seasoned? For it is no longer of any use but to be thrown out and to be trodden down by men.

Refers back to Ezekiel 43:24: And you shall bring them before Adonai, and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them up as a burnt offering to Adonai.

Matthew 5:14: You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city to be hidden on a mountain.

Refers back to Ezekiel 43:12

Matthew 5:15: Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it shines to all those in the house.

Once again back to Ezekiel 43:12

Matthew 5:16: Let your light so shine before men, so that they see your good works and praise your Father who is in the heavens.

⌘ 1) light 1a) the light 1a1) emitted by a lamp 1a2) a heavenly light such as surrounds angels when they appear on earth 1b) anything emitting light 1b1) a star 1b2) fire because it is light and sheds light 1b3) a lamp or torch 1c) light, i.e. brightness 1c1) of a lamp 2) metaph. 2a) God is light because light has the extremely delicate, subtle, pure, brilliant quality 2b) of truth and its knowledge, together with the spiritual purity associated with it 2c) that which is exposed to

the view of all, openly, publicly 2d) reason, mind 2d1) the power of understanding
esp. moral and spiritual truth
✠ For Synonyms see entry 5817

That light that the people see is the light of the fires of the altars of sacrifice to God. Not the sacrifices of animals, drink, oil or grain. No more lambs being continually offered night and day before the Lord. No more once a year coming into the presence of God and making atonement. But the fire of the light of God. The light of Y'shua. We are like the mountain-tops where the people look on us and see that something special that sets us apart. We are a set-apart people, Messianic Jew and Christian together being the salt, the flavor and preservative. We have been salted and preserved by God through Y'shua. He is the sweet incense before the Lord.

And in Matthew 5:16 it tells us to be that light of Y'shua to those around us that do not know Him. And it tells us to show them the good works of the Lord. Works combined with the light of Y'shua. Works without it are dead. They may do good for a moment, but they will fade away like the sacrificial fires of olden days. But the fire of Messiah will burn on forever.

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 Tetzaveh: Summary

Exodus 27:20-30:10

God describes to Moses the clothing and anointing process of the priests.

“And Moses,” God commands, “you shall command the sons of Israel to use pure olive oil for kindling the light of the lamps. Aaron shall set up this light to burn continuously in the sanctuary. It will serve as a light for God for all generations.

“Have Aaron and his sons serve Me as priests. Make for them sacred garments using fine linen, gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarns. Make for them a breast-piece, an ephod, a robe, a tunic of checkered work and a sash. These garments must always be worn when officiating in My sanctuary.

“For Aaron’s ephod, take two lazuli stones and engrave in gold on them the names of the tribes of Israel. Thus, Aaron shall carry their names before God as a remembrance.”

“In the sanctuary, says God, “Aaron shall wear a pure gold Breastplate of Judgment, with engraved stones representing the tribes of Israel. Aaron’s robe for officiating will be pure turquoise wool with bells of gold all around. In this way, the sound of the bells can be heard when the High Priest comes into the Lord’s sanctuary and when he goes out, so that he may not die.

“For Aaron’s forehead, you shall make a head-plate of pure gold inscribed with: ‘Holy to The Lord.’ Thus, Aaron shall bring forgiveness for sins in which a sacred offering is offered.”

“Make tunics, sashes, and turbans of fine embroidered linen for the sons of Aaron to give them dignity and glory. Anoint them and invest them with the full authority to serve Me as priests. They shall only wear linen when serving Me officially.

Sanctifying the Priests

“Here is how to sanctify Aaron and his sons as priests,” God continues. “First prepare a young bull and two rams without blemish, and some matzah bread and matzah cakes kneaded with oil. Have Aaron and his sons bathe, then dress in their holy garments. Place the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head.

“Then Aaron and his sons will bring the bull and the basket with the matzah bread to the front of the Tent of Appointed Meeting. They shall hold the bull as it is slaughtered before God. Take some of the bull’s blood and with your finger, place blood on the elevated corners of the altar and its base. Parts of the bull will burn at the altar while other parts shall burn in a fire outside the camp. This is an offering that clears sin.

“Slaughter a ram and place the ram’s blood on the garments of Aaron and his sons. Have them take parts of the ram and some of the matzah and wave them. This shall be a wave offering before God.

“The offerings on the altar which rise up in smoke shall be an expression of compliance to God. They are fire offerings to God.

“Another ram shall be now be cooked in this holy place. Aaron and his sons shall eat this ram. No stranger may eat of it.

“Seven days shall you perform atonement upon the altar and sanctify it. Henceforth the altar shall be a holy of holies. Whatever touches the altar will remain holy.”

God continues to Moses, “At the Tent of Appointed Meetings, I will set times for Myself to meet with the sons of Israel. I will sanctify Aaron and his sons as My priests. I will dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel, and I will be their God. They will experience that I, God, am their God, who brought them out from the land of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) in order to dwell in their midst.

“Make an altar with incense which Aaron shall make go up in smoke each morning. It shall be a continual incense before God. Once a year, Aaron shall make atonement for sins upon this altar. This annual atonement is holy of holies to God.”

Parashat Tetzaveh: Discussion Questions

1) A light is to be on continually in the sanctuary. How is this “eternal light” a symbol before the Lord for all generations? How do you feel when you see “the eternal light” in synagogue?

2) God tells Moses what the Priests must wear in the Sanctuary. What difference does it make to you what your rabbi wears? Does it make a difference to you what you wear in synagogue?

3) Aaron's head-plate of pure gold has the inscription "Holy to the Lord." Where on your body would you place a sign with the inscription "Holy to the Lord?"

4) Why do you think animals are sacrificed to God? What is the meaning of the blood being placed around the altar and on Aaron's clothing? How do you feel when you see blood?

Haftarah for Tetzaveh

Ezekiel 43:10-27

The altar in the Temple.

Ezekiel, prophesying from exile, shares vivid apocalyptic visions. One of these is a vision of the future Third Temple, and part of this vision is the Haftarah selection for Parashat Tetzaveh.

At the opening of the Haftarah, God instructs Ezekiel to share with the people of Israel all the details of this future Temple: its layout, exits, entrances, floor plan, and all the relevant laws pertaining to its construction.

Though this is meant to be a comforting prophesy, God indicates that these details should make the people of Israel feel ashamed of their sins. Pairing rebuke with words of comfort is a common motif in the book of Ezekiel. In this context, the rebuke seems intended to motivate positive action—repentance and preparation for the Third Temple's construction.

The Altar in the Third Temple

The rest of the haftarah focuses on the altar, which Ezekiel describes in detail, from the trench at its feet, to its upper ledge with four horns projecting upwards, to its east-facing ramp.

When this altar is erected, God tells Ezekiel, a complex purifying process will be initiated. On the first day, priests will prepare a bull as a sin offering. On the following day, they will prepare a goat as a sin offering, as well as a bull and a ram. Every day for seven days they will present this combination of goat as sin offering, together with a bull and ram, and this process will consecrate the altar.

After these rites are performed, God promises: "I will extend My favor to you" (43:27).

Connection to Parashat Tetzaveh

Parashat Tetzaveh details the clothing to be worn by the priests who officiate in the *Mishkan*—the temporary Temple for the Israelites in the desert. The previous parashah, *Terumah*, was about the construction of the Mishkan itself, and its various pieces: Holy Ark, table, candelabra, and copper altar.

Interestingly, one piece of the Mishkan—the golden altar—is described in Parashat Tetzaveh after all the priestly clothing, and not together with all the other Mishkan accessories in Parashat Terumah, where it would seem to belong. Commentators offer a variety of reasons for this strange placement of the golden altar’s details. The selection of a haftarah portion that focuses on the altar in the Temple seems to pick up on this peculiarity of Parashat Tetzaveh.



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

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

Way Above My Pay Grade

Way above my pay grade - 2

- **Exodus 6:2-8.**
- The Word of YHWH is truly living. You read it, and it can transport you on an amazing journey. This is what happened as I was reading this Parashah.
- ² God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “**I am YAHWEH.** To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I appeared as *El Shaddai*. But I did not make my name **Yahweh** known to them. Exodus 6:2-3 [NJB]
- We see here a different relationship being built between Moshe and the ³ mentioned. I wonder if Moshe allowed his mind to wander back to the burning bush moment?
- ¹ Moses was looking after the flock of his father -in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led it to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² The angel of **Yahweh** appeared to him in a flame blazing from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing, but the bush was not being burnt up. ³ Moses said, 'I must go across and see this strange sight, and why the bush is not being burnt up.' ⁴ When **Yahweh** saw him going across to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am,' he answered. ⁵ 'Come no nearer,' he said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ⁶ I am the God of your ancestors,' he said, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. 'At this Moses covered his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Exodus 3:1-6

Way above my pay grade - 2

- We witness on this occasion Yahweh introducing Himself as the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' 'I am the God of your ancestors,' he said, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' Back to our text.
- ² God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am YAHWEH. To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I appeared as *El Shaddai*. But I did not make my name *Yahweh* known to them. Exodus 6:2-3 [NJB]
- The term El Shaddai is an interesting term – usually thought of as God Almighty.
- El- The Omnipotent: One with unlimited authority.
- Shaddai – One who is able to supply all your needs¹st used:
- ¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old Yahweh appeared to him and said, 'I am El Shaddai. Live in my presence, be perfect,² and I shall grant a covenant between myself and you, and make you very numerous.' Genesis 17:1

Way above my pay grade - 2

- We witness Yahweh stating He will supply all requirements for the statements made – After all He is the El with all authority.
- Now what about this statement – *I am Yahweh!!!*
- I am persuaded it comes on the back of the meeting with Mosheh back in Exodus 3. He was told:
- ⁷Yahweh then said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying for help on account of their taskmasters. Yes, I am well aware of their suffering. And I have come down to rescue them from the clutches of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that country, to a country rich and broad, to a country flowing with milk and honey to the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.' Exodus 3:7-8
- Mosheh had a task to lead all Israel up and out of Egypt a task so similar to the task of our Saviour: Yeshua – HaMashiach. So our Father said to Mosheh – I Yahweh. So where יהוה first used in the bible?

Way above my pay grade - 2

- ¹Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array.²On the seventh day God had completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. ³God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested after all his work of creating. ⁴Such was the story of heaven and earth as they were created. At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven ⁵there was as yet no wild bush on the earth nor had any wild plant yet sprung up, for Yahweh God had not sent rain on the earth, nor was there any man to till the soil. ⁶Instead, water flowed out of the ground and watered all the surface of the soil. ⁷Yahweh God shaped man from the soil of the ground and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being. Genesis 2:1-7
- Story/Towldah תולדה Family, race, descent – The root word is Yalad יָלַד To give birth, bring forth a child from the womb into the world, to bear, deliver a child.
- So we have the Yahweh, coming on the back of a family story of bearing creation into a world...
- Now back to our friend Mosheh – God reveals Himself to Mosheh as Yahweh, usually explained as Eternal, @ Genesis 21:33. The One who doesn't change. The Is – Was - and Is to Come.

Way above my pay grade - 2

- None the less it is the connection between the first use of Yahweh and the statement given to Mosheh that I find intriguing. Its all about family– those created by Yahweh that He cares for.
- Young Adam was to care for a created world– failed - in fact it was the reason sin entered into our present world:
- ¹² So then, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, in the same way death spread to all men because all sinned¹³. For up until the Torah, sin was in the world; but sin does not count as sin when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in a manner similar to the violation of Adam, who is a pattern of the One to come. ¹⁵ But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if many died because of the transgression of one man, how much more did the grace of God overflow to many through the gift of one Man– Yeshua the Messiah. Romans 5:12-15
- Mosheh had a job to do– rescue the people of Israel from Egypt, after Yahweh heard their groanings [call for help].

Way above my pay grade - 2

- ⁵Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, enslaved by the Egyptians, and have remembered my covenant. Exodus 6:5
- Yahweh had to state to Mosheh "I am Yahweh", because He went on to tell Mosheh:
- ⁶So say to the Israelites, I am Yahweh. I shall free you from the forced labour of the Egyptians; I shall rescue you from their slavery and I shall redeem you with outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgement. I shall take you as my people and I shall be your God. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God, who have freed you from the forced labour of the Egyptians. ⁸Then I shall lead you into the country which I swore I would give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and shall give it to you as your heritage, Yahweh." ' Exodus 6:6-8.
- The I AM is the one who leads people out of Egypt, through His chosen servants but those chosen servants must know Who He actually is.
- As someone well wrote— You can say: my God, but you cannot say my Yahweh, because Yahweh is my God.

Way above my pay grade - 2

- Looking at Yahweh we find other words or titles attached to His name:
- **Yahweh-Shammah**: Yahweh is there—Ezekiel 48:35
- **Yahweh-Ra'ah**: Yahweh my Shepherd— Psalm 23:1
- **Yahweh-Rapha**: Yahweh the healer— Exodus 15:26
- **Yahweh-Nissi**: Yahweh my banner— Exodus 17:15
- **Yahweh-Shalom**: Yahweh my peace— Judges 6:24
- **Yahweh-Yireh**: Yahweh sees, provides, directs— Genesis 22:14
- **Yahweh-tzidqenu**: Yahweh our righteousness, saving justice— Jeremiah 23:6
- **Yahweh-tzabaoth**: Yahweh of hosts [mobilize, add to assembled body] Psalm 46:7
- **Yahweh-Elyon**: Yahweh most high— Psalm 97:9
- **Yahweh-M'qaddeshkem**: Yahweh who sanctifies— Leviticus 20:8, 21:8
- All of these titles point towards THE SHEPHERD. They are attributes a shepherd must have.

Way above my pay grade – 2.

- We mentioned one of the most read Psalms- Psalm 23. This beautiful Psalm has many of these attributes of Yahweh sown through it.
- Verse 1 – **Yahweh Ra'ah** [Shepherd] & **Yahweh Yireh**. [Supplies all our needs]
- Verse 2 – **Yahweh Shalom** [Still, quiet, peace, fulfilled]
- Verse 3 – **Yahweh Rapha**[Healer] & **Yahweh Tzidqenu**. [Our righteousness, saving justice]
- Verse 4 – **Yahweh Sham**[Always there]
- Verse 5 – **Yahweh Nissi** [Banner] & **Yahweh M'qaddishkem** [Sanctifies].
- Mosheh was to lead the people up and out of Egypt He had to know that **El Shaddi** was **Yahweh** – The Eternal One, Creator, Covenant Elohim. The **Is** Was - and **Is** to come:

Way above my pay grade - 2

- **I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.** Revelation 1:8
- **Lord/Kurios** – Supreme, wielding authority, owner, master @ Ephesians 6:9.
- **Almighty/Pantokrator** – Power over everything and all. This word only occurs 10 times in the New Testament. Once in 2 Corinthians 6:18. 9 times in Revelation. 1:8 - 4:8 - 11:17 - 15:3 - 16:7 - 16:14 - 19:6 - 19:15 - 21:22.
- Fascinating that the word ALMIGHTY is used 9 times in Revelation – In Hebrew the meaning of nine/Tesha **יט** = Divine completeness, finality in judgement: Let us also view 2 Corinthians 6:18.
- Remember Yeshua died at the 9th hour ...
- When you consider the task Moshe was given – leading Israel out of Egyptian bondage – he had to know who the Elohim of Israel **Is**, **Was** and **Is** to come.

Way above my pay grade - 2

- For us it is no different – we have to know who our Elohim is. Understand His characteristics. Understand He is the Alpha and Omega:
- ... No God was formed before Me, nor will be after Me. I, I am Yahweh, and there is no other Saviour but Me... I am God, yes from eternity I AM ... Isaiah 43:10-13.
- Understand that without Yahweh leading us, instructing us, forgiving us, providing for us, healing us, shepherding us, herding us together, waving His flag, loving us – showing continual grace and mercy WE have no hope.
- Let us be like Mosheh: ⁴When Yahweh saw him going across to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am,' he answered.
- Like many we begin the journey by wandering over to the burning bush, something attracts us – Then we answer here I am. Then if we continue the journey we get to KNOW THE I AM. We understand that our Elohim is in fact Yahweh – The Eternal Who has power over everything and all. The Alpha and the Omega.
- There is no God like our God Yahweh ...

Jewish Practices



Mitzvah: A Commandment

There are 613, not just 10, commandments, or mitzvot.

One often hears someone Jewish saying, “It’s a mitzvah!” usually referring to a charitable, beneficial act performed by another person. However, the Hebrew word mitzvah does not mean “a good deed” in that sense.

Mitzvah literally means “commandment.” In fact, Jewish tradition understands exactly 613 *mitzvot* (plural of mitzvah) to be derived from the Hebrew Bible. The 613 are listed in Maimonides’ Sefer Hamitzvot (Book of the Commandments), divided into “positive” (things one is required to do) and “negative” (things one may not do) commandments. **To read them in Hebrew, [click here](#). To read them in English, [click here](#).**

It is not simply a “good deed,” for example, to refrain from murdering or stealing. And similarly, the mitzvot that deal with feeding the poor, acting kindly to the stranger, or observing the Sabbath are much more significant in the Jewish tradition than mere divine suggestions on how to be good. Mitzvot are commandments, traditionally understood to come from God and to be intended for the Jewish people to observe.

Those of us who live in the Western world are often uncomfortable with the idea of being “commanded” to do something, because it seems to deprive us of the right to choose how we behave. In fact, the Torah itself says that when God gave the commandments, God declared:

Behold, I have set before you the blessing [of observing the commandments] and the curse [the potential punishment for failing to observe the mitzvot] — therefore, choose life!

It seems that even God recognized that the Jews had a choice in the matter — and was clearly hinting at the right choice.

But why should the biblical Israelites have bothered to accept and observe the mitzvot? After God rescued the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, God expected that the Israelites would in turn observe the mitzvot in eternal, loving gratitude for this redemption. Yet, gratitude only goes so far, especially when it comes to observing such commandments as keeping kosher (dietary laws) or Shabbat (resting and not working on the Sabbath day). For the past 3,000 or so years, every generation of Jews, rabbis, and scholars, has analyzed and argued about exactly why the Jewish people should continue to observe the mitzvot.

And it is not just 613 mitzvot that we are talking about! Even after the historical era of the Hebrew Bible, generations of rabbis continued to update, adapt, and generate new, more modern commandments — all understood to be derived from the original 613 in the Torah. Today, Jews no longer practice animal sacrifices or give agricultural gifts to a hereditary class of priests, yet there are modern mitzvot (often the subject of ideological controversy) that deal with questions relating to organ donation, the *kashrut* (fitness for eating) of organic fruits and vegetables, and interfaith relations. Mitzvot deal with every aspect of how one should go about leading a Jewish life.

Why Observe the Mitzvot?

The Torah generally explains that the Jewish people should observe the mitzvot simply because God commanded us to do so, or because of the potential negative consequences that would result from non-compliance. Other thinkers have endeavored to prove that the mitzvot are all completely rational, logical actions which any moral and ethical people would welcome. Still others claim that the commandments actually improve us as human beings, refining us as upright and just people, or that doing God's commandments actually has a cosmic effect upon the spiritual fabric of all creation. And some thinkers even reject the importance of asking this question entirely, arguing that the only legitimate reason for the performance of mitzvot is in order to obey God's commandments and fulfill our part in the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

Some people observe the mitzvot because it helps them to identify and feel a part of the larger Jewish community, others because they believe themselves to be commanded to do so, and still others simply because it is pleasurable, a joy, to celebrate the Jewish holidays and home rituals. But whatever reason motivates someone to observe the commandments is, in Jewish tradition, less important than the actual performing of the mitzvot themselves: One might say that the "deed" is more important than the "creed." That is, how we behave in this world, towards our fellow human beings and the world we live in, is ultimately of more importance than what we may believe. In the final analysis, the mitzvot are a uniquely Jewish approach to living a holy life in this world.



Early Jewish Conceptions of God

Early Jewish literature was not concerned with proving God's existence or categorically defining God's nature.

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In the Hebrew Bible, God plays many roles and has many personalities. God is a judge, lawgiver, liberator, creator, father, king, and shepherd. Oftentimes, God's attributes seem contradictory. God is said to be, "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love" (Exodus 34:6), but God is also a vengeful warrior. Unlike the conception of God as perfect, all-knowing, and all-powerful developed by the medieval philosophers, the God of the Bible is conflicted. As Jack Miles puts it in *God: A Biography*: "After each of His major actions, He discovers that He has not done quite what He thought He was doing or has done something He never intended to do."

The God of the Bible has real personality. God is depicted in non-philosophical, human terms. God experiences anger and patience, jealousy, and love. God is even described using physical imagery. God delivered the Israelite slaves from the Egyptians with, "a mighty hand and an outstretched arm" (Deuteronomy 26:8). In addition, the God of the Bible is accessible to humankind. God speaks through prophets and performs miracles for all to see. God's dialogue with humankind is not a one-way relationship. God listens to the complaints of humans, even when they concern God Himself. Abraham, disturbed that God wants to destroy Sodom, challenges God to reconsider, "Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty?...Shall not the Judge of the earth deal justly?" (Genesis 18:23,25)

Two attributes of the biblical God—God's creative capacity and God's oneness—stand out in both their centrality and their novelty. The Bible begins with the creation story, in which God orders

a chaotic, cosmic mess into an orderly world in six days. The Bible does not discuss where God came from. This makes it unique in ancient Near Eastern literature, whose stories about the world's creation begin with the birth of the gods. God's role as a creator is especially significant because it is in the context of creation that humans are described as being "in the image of God." Monotheism is, arguably, the fundamental teaching and contribution of the Hebrew Bible. "Hear O Israel, the Lord is your God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4), for Jews perhaps the best-known verse in the Torah, is recited in the *Shema* prayer, a central element of Jewish liturgy.

God as portrayed in rabbinic literature (the Talmud and midrash) is very similar to the God of the Bible. The Rabbis do not try to define God, and they continue to describe God in multiple, human terms. However, some differences do emerge. In rabbinic literature, God is a bit more removed from humankind. God no longer communicates with humans through prophets and is no longer considered an active religious legislator (the rabbinic sages occupy this role). In a famous talmudic dispute, a group of rabbis rule in favor of a majority opinion that directly contradicts a heavenly voice. The passage concludes that, "the Torah is not in heaven." God, it seems, is not the final arbiter of religious law.

The conception of God in the *heikhalot* literature (a genre of mystical literature contemporaneous with the classical texts of rabbinic literature) is also worth noting. The mystics who wrote and studied *heikhalot* literature tried to achieve visions of the divine throne similar to the one described in the first chapter of the biblical book of Ezekiel. The representation of the physicality of God is striking in this form of mysticism. In the *Shiur Komah*, the most radically anthropomorphic mystical text, God's physical proportions are described in detail. For example, God is said to have a neck 130.8 million miles in length and fingers each 150.3 million miles long.

Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE-50 CE), a contemporary of the early *tannaim* (the authors of early midrashic works and of the Mishnah) was the first Jewish philosopher. He deviated from the norms of early Jewish discourse about God, integrating Greek thought with Jewish tradition and explaining God in an abstract philosophical way, quite similar to the methods eventually employed by the medieval Jewish philosophers.

Hebrew - עֵבֶרִי

Word (s) of the Week

Miracle / נֵס

Pronounced: NESS

Jews place a menorah near a window in order to publicize the *nes*, the "miracle," of Hanukkah.



A Taste of Jewish Humor

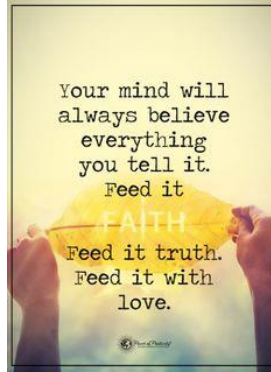
A Good Question

An elderly Jew in Berlin finds himself surrounded by a group of raucous Nazis, who knock him to the ground and ask him derisively, "Jew, who is responsible for the war?"

The old Jew is no fool. "The Jews," he replies. "And the bicycle riders."

"Why the bicycle riders?" ask the Nazis.

"Why the Jews?" counters the old man.



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



This No-Bake Chocolate Tahini Pie Is a Breeze to Make

This easy dessert can also be made vegan!

- No-bake pies are perfect for these hot summer days when we crave a sweet treat but are loath to turn on the oven. Whether you pick up a pre-made Oreo crust to make things even easier or make your own, the sweet Oreo base is the perfect home for a light, nutty tahini mousse filling. I like to take things one step further with a smooth chocolate ganache topping and a sprinkle of toasted sesame seeds for garnish.
- To assemble this pie, all you need to do is process Oreos until they're a fine crumb, blend them with melted butter and press into a pie pan. After the crust has time to set in the fridge, you'll whip up a light and airy tahini mousse made with Cool Whip and

cream cheese. (You can also make your own whipped cream if you prefer. You'll need three cups of whipped cream.) While the pie is cooling in the fridge, make a simple ganache by adding simmering heavy cream to chocolate chips, and smooth it over the top before letting the pie chill one more time, this time for at least an hour, before serving.

- To make this totally vegan, use a non-dairy whipped topping and non-dairy cream cheese substitute in the filling, and non-dairy butter substitute in the crust and ganache.

This pie is perfect for all seasons, but especially convenient in the summer when you don't want to turn the oven on.

- **Total Time:** 1 hour 40 minutes

Yield: Serves 6-8

Ingredients

- 24 Oreos (about 2 cups Oreo crumbs)
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted

For the filling:

- 1 cup tahini
- 1 8-oz package cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 8-oz package whipped topping (Cool Whip is perfect for this)

For the topping:

- 1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup heavy cream (can also use coconut cream)
- 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds (optional)

Instructions

1. In a food processor, process the Oreos until they are fine crumbs. Combine with the melted butter and stir with a fork. Press crumbs in

an even layer into a pie pan and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. (You may also bake the crust if you prefer. To do so, preheat the oven to 350°F, prepare the crust the same way and bake for 10 minutes. Allow to cool completely before filling.)

2. Combine tahini, cream cheese, and powdered sugar in a stand mixer or in a bowl with a handheld mixer. Mix until smooth. Fold in whipped topping until the mixture is smooth and homogenous.
3. Pour the filling into the cooled pie crust, and chill while you prepare the ganache topping.
4. Place chocolate chips in a bowl. In a heavy-bottomed sauce pot, heat ½ cup heavy cream until simmering. Pour heavy cream over chocolate chips and allow to sit for 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth, and then carefully pour over the tahini filling, smoothing the top.
5. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds around the edges, if using, and chill for at least 1 hour before serving.

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