



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 3-23-24 VAYIKRA**

### ***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.

Elder 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).

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

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

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

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

WE HAVE 7 PRISON AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

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



Rabbi Mordecai Silver [tolmm@etz-chayim.org](mailto:tolmm@etz-chayim.org)

## **MESSAGE FOR 3-23-24 VAYIKRA - And He Called**

**Leviticus 1:1-6:7**

**Isaiah 43:21-44:23**

**Hebrews 10:1-18**

### **Leviticus-Vayikra 1:2**

**"Adam ki yakriv mikem - If any person of you will offer a korban (offering; sacrifice)."**

The common translation of the word Korban is usually sacrifice. This translation does not capture the essence of the Hebrew word, which should be offering. The root of Korban is Karav, meaning 'coming near', because an offering is the means to bring us closer to Elohim.

### **Leviticus 2:11-13**

*Any meal offering that you offer to the Elohim shall not be prepared leavened, for you shall not cause to go up in smoke from any leavening or fruit-honey as a fire offering to the Elohim. You shall offer them as a first fruit offering to the Elohim, but they may not go up upon the altar for a satisfying aroma. You shall salt your every meal offering with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of your Elohim's*

*covenant from upon your meal offering -- on your every offering shall you offer salt.*

#### **Isaiah 44:3-6**

*Just as I pour out water upon the thirsty [land] and flowing water upon the dry ground, so shall I pour out My spirit upon your offspring and My blessing upon your progeny, And they will flourish among the grass like willows by streams of water. This one will say: 'I am the Elohim's,' and the other one will call [himself] by the name of Jacob; this one will sign his allegiance to the Elohim and adopt the name of Israel. Thus said the Elohim, King of Israel, and its Redeemer, the Elohim, Master of Legions: I am the first and I am the last, and aside from Me there is no Elohim.*

#### **Revelation 1:8**

*I am the A and the Z says Adonai, Elohim of heaven's armies, the One who is, who was and who is coming.*

#### **Revelation 1:17-18**

*When I saw him, I fell down at His feet like a dead man. He placed His right hand upon me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last, The Living One. I was dead but look! --I am alive forever and ever!"*

#### **Hebrews 10:1-18**

*For the Torah has in it a shadow of the good things to come, but not the actual manifestation of the originals. Therefore, it can never, by means of the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, bring to the goal those who approach the Holy Place to offer them. Otherwise, wouldn't the offering of those sacrifices have ceased? For if the people performing the service had been cleansed once and for all, they would no longer have sins on their conscience. No, it is quite the contrary--in these sacrifices is a reminder of sins, year after year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Therefore, on coming into the world, he says, "It has not been your will to have an animal sacrifice and a meal offering; rather, you have prepared for me a body. No, you have not been pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said, 'Look! In the scroll of the book, it is written about me. I have come to do your will.'" In saying first, "You neither willed nor were pleased with animal sacrifices, meal offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings," things which are offered in*

*accordance with the Torah. And then, "Look, I have come to do your will;" he takes away the first system in order to set up the second. It is in connection with this will that we have been separated for Elohim and made holy, once and for all, through the offering of Y'shua the Messiah's body. Now every cohen stands every day doing his service, offering over and over the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this one, after he had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, sat down at the right hand of Elohim, From then on to wait until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering, he has brought to the goal for all time those who are being set apart for Elohim and made holy. And the Ruach HaKodesh too bears witness to us; for after saying, "'This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days,' says Adonai: 'I will put my Torah on their hearts, and write it on their minds,'" He then adds, "'And their sins and their wickednesses I will remember no more.'" Now where there is forgiveness for these, an offering for sins is no longer needed.*

Let me share with you these thoughts written by the rabbis of old:

The letter aleph in the first word of Leviticus-Vayikra is written smaller than the normal size of all letters in the Torah. This small aleph indicates the extraordinary humility of Moses, of whom the Torah says, "The man Moses was very humble, more so than any other person on the face of the earth." Though Moses was blessed with superior qualities and was the greatest prophet of Israel ever, he regarded himself inferior to everyone. He viewed his superior qualities as a special endowment or gift from Elohim, and not as some special achievement on his part. In his mind, therefore, he was convinced that if someone else had been blessed with the same abilities, the other would have achieved more than he did himself. By virtue of this humility, Moses merited the highest levels of achievement, that he was chosen to redeem Israel from Egypt, he received the Torah for Israel, and so forth. This concept of humility and setting aside of self is at the very root of the concept of sacrifices, the central theme of our parshah.

**Thus, it is written, "Adam ki yakriv mikem - If any person of you will offer a korban (offering; sacrifice)." (Vayikra 1:2)**

The word mikem (of you) qualifies adam (person), thus should follow right after it. Why is it placed later, after "ki yakriv - will offer"? It is said that this order signifies the meaning of sacrifices, of serving Elohim: The term korban (sacrifice) is derived from the word karov (to approach, to come near).

Our verse thus informs us: If any person desires to draw close to Godliness, then you must make an offering **mikem** - of yourself. A true sacrifice is not the offering of something external to the person, but of the person himself. It means setting aside of self.

On the one hand, everyone must be aware of his unique talents and abilities. We must know that we are genetically endowed with special qualities. Thus, when it comes to matters of Torah and mitzvot, we should not think "who am I and what am I to be involved with matters of holiness and spirituality?"

On the contrary, in that moment we must realize that we are fully qualified to deal with the most sublime tasks, and that, indeed, is our function and mission in life.

On the other hand, one must never forget that our special qualities and talents to achieve the highest levels are no more than a Divine gift and endowment.

Like Moses we must think that if another had been granted his abilities, the other one might be yet greater and achieve more. This consciousness will thus set aside any possibility of arrogance and presumptuousness and preserve a proper sense of humility.

By virtue of this setting aside of self-one can offer sacrifices in the true spirit, ... with love, in accordance with His Will.

#### **Isaiah 44:21-23**

***Remember these things, Jacob and Israel, for you are My servant: I fashioned you to be My servant; Israel, do not forget Me! I will have wiped away your willful sins like a thick mist and your transgressions like a cloud; return to me, for I will have redeemed you! Sing glad song, O heavens, for the Elohim has done [wonders]; shout for joy, O foundations of the earth; break out with glad song, O mountains, O forest and all its trees; for the Elohim has redeemed Jacob, and He will glorify Himself through Israel.***

***I see in this last verse a coming together of all True Believers. We are one in the Elohim!***

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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 Vayikra: Summary**

#### **Leviticus 1:1-5:26**

*God commands Moses regarding various types of offerings: under what circumstances they should be offered and what they should consist of.*



Moses has conducted a ceremony to anoint the Tent of Appointed Meeting and the Priests who will officiate in it. A cloud now covers the Tent of Appointed Meeting, and the Presence of the Lord fills the Tabernacle.

God calls to Moses, “Explain to the sons of Israel the ways of bringing offerings to God. There will be offerings of animals and grains and fruit. Animals for sacrifice shall be male and without blemish. These animals shall be killed and washed and burned so each shall smoke on the altar in the Tent of Appointed Meeting. This will be for an ascent offering, an offering made by fire in expression of compliance to God and to make atonement before God.

“For the grain, make the offering with fine wheat flour and oil and incense. Put it straight on the altar. Anything leavened shall be made into a fire offering. You shall season every offering of grain with salt.

“For the offerings of cattle and small livestock, all the fat belongs to God. It shall be an everlasting statute for your descendants in all your dwelling places not to eat any fat, nor any blood.

### Inadvertent Sins

“If a person inadvertently sins, then sin offerings are to be made. If the entire council of Israel sins inadvertently and something is hidden from the community, guilt will be incurred. If the sin becomes known in the community, then the community shall bring an offering for sin. A bull is to be brought by the elders of the community and made into an offering to clear the community of sin.

“If a prince commits a sin, then he has incurred guilt. He shall take a buck from the goat species and sacrifice its blood upon the altar of ascent offering, then burn its fat in a fire offering for peace. This is an offering to clear him of sin.

“If any person from among the people sins by doing something God commands shall not be done, then guilt will be incurred. A she-goat, without blemish will be taken for this sin offering. Then the priest will make the fat go up in smoke as an expression of compliance to God. The priest will effect atonement for him for his sin and he will be forgiven.

“A person incurs guilt when he is a witness but does not testify. A person incurs guilt when he touches an unclean animal or unclean human. Even when the touching goes unnoticed, guilt is incurred when the sin is discovered. A person incurs guilt when he swears in an oath to deny or to grant something but does neither.

“If a person incurs guilt, he shall acknowledge to himself that he has sinned and he shall bring to God an offering for his guilt. The offerings of small livestock, a female sheep or goat, shall clear him of his sin. If the person’s means are not sufficient enough for sheep, then two turtle-doves or two young pigeons can be offered to God. One is an offering to clear sin and one is an ascent offering.

“If the person’s means are not even sufficient for these animals or birds, then an *ephah* (measurement) of fine flower is to be the offering to clear sin. He shall put no oil upon it, nor incense. He shall take it to a priest, who will take a handful, a memorial portion, and smoke it on the altar as a fire offering to God. The priest will effect atonement for his sins and he will be forgiven. And it shall belong to the priest like the homage offering.

## Breach of Trust

“If a person commits a breach of trust and thoughtlessly trespasses against any of the holy things of God, he shall bring an expression of his guilt to God. One ram, without blemish, shall be given. This ram shall be of value equal to the money offering given in the Sanctuary. And he shall make restitution, and shall add to it one-fifth and give it to the priest. The priest shall then effect atonement for him.

“A person who sins for acting negligently incurs guilt. He shall bring a ram to the priest to effect atonement for him for his act of negligence and he will be forgiven. It is a guilt offering. He is surely guilty before God.

“A person sins and commits a breach of trust against God by making a denial to his neighbor with regard to something entrusted to him or a loan or an object taken by robbery. A person also sins when he withholds something from his neighbor or if he has found a lost article and denies it or has sworn to a lie. If the person knows of the sin and breach of trust against God, then guilt is incurred.

“The person shall restore what was stolen or withheld, or what was entrusted to him for safekeeping, or the lost article which he has found, or anything else about which he lied. The person shall pay for it in capital, equivalent to its value, and shall add one-fifth of the value of it to atone. On the day the person acknowledges his guilt, the person shall pay for it to the one to whom it is rightfully due. But as for his guilt offering, he shall bring it to God. He shall bring an unblemished ram as a guilt offering and give it to the priest who shall effect atonement for him before God.

“Then the person will be forgiven regarding any one of the things done to incur guilt.”

## Parashat Vayikra Discussion Questions

**1) Why is God so specific in what kind of offerings can be given to God for different purposes? What difference does it make what kind of offering or how it is made, as long as it is an offering?**

**2) What is guilt? What do you do with your guilt? Why do we need to seek forgiveness for our sins and for the guilt incurred?**

**3) How can an offering to God on an altar in the holy Sanctuary clear one of sin or guilt? Why does a Priest need to “effect the atonement?” Do we still need a Priest to “effect the atonement?” Why or why not?**

**4) Is it necessary to seek forgiveness from God and from another human? Can you do one and not the other? Why or why not?**

**5) Describe how it feels to be forgiven by God. Describe how it feels to be forgiven by another human. How is the feeling of forgiveness the same or different?**

## Haftarah for Vayikra

### 1 Samuel 15:2-34

*Idols are not the answer.*

In Parashat Vayikra we read about forms of public sacrifice that one can use to sustain or renew a relationship with God. Both ideas are explored in the Haftarah , taken from the Book of Isaiah, as well.

Isaiah delivered his prophecy to Judeans who had been exiled from the Land of Israel, and were living in Babylon. After 538 BCE, Cyrus the Mede allowed the exiles to return to their homeland, but many remained in Babylon. Several chapters from the Book of Isaiah are focused on trying to convince these people to trust God's power and go back to Zion.

In Isaiah's prophecy God speaks to the people in Babylon, alternately rebuking them for abandoning their worship and reminding them that if they repent, they will be forgiven. The people are chastised for never bringing God any sacrifices, neither sin offerings, nor burnt offerings nor meal offerings.

Then, God goes on to compare God's own supremacy to the impotence of idols. In an extended diatribe focused specifically on wooden idols, God wonders how the Judeans can use the same wood they use to make fire, bake bread, and roast meat to carve idols. He is shocked at the ignorance of people who might make an idol from the same substance they would also happily burn. Idols are fraud God says, and only God, the creator of all flesh, can redeem the people, and wipe away their transgressions (44:20).

The haftarah closes with an impassioned plea for the people to return to God, both literally to the land of Israel, and figuratively, in their hearts and actions. When the people return there will be much rejoicing. "Shout for joy, O mountains, O forests with all your trees! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, Has glorified Himself through Israel" (44:23).



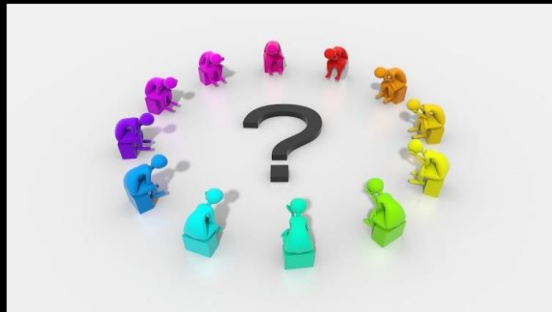
## ***From the Desk of Rabbi Philip Hammond. Ph.D.***

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

### **Way Above My Pay Grade**

#### **Well above my pay grade..**

- What a time we live in – Crime at all levels, evil, iniquity, lies, propaganda, control, uncertainty, confusion, murder, thieving, selfishness, hate, drugs, darkness, abuse, the list goes on.



- We have many questions regarding the future – do we even have a future?

## Well above my pay grade...

- The world is so different to the one I experienced as a child, teenager & beyond...
- Looking back - change really took a leap when language was redefined... Sick was no longer sick it was now sic and meant marvelous. Gay was no longer an emotion, but a life style. What was once good was now fast becoming labelled as evil.
- I find myself not being able to keep up to the pace now being set. I am finding it more difficult to process the information HWY. What took me years to learn, now takes people weeks, or months. So much information at peoples finger tips. Want an answer push a button.
- Sadly most of this change is ungodly, and far from the model our Father has for His people. Fortunately YHVH doesn't change, and His ways will stand, and His children will be blessed and rescued from this fallen world.
- It was pondering these thoughts, emotions and experiences that I found myself reading Zechariah:

## Way above my pay grade...

- <sup>18</sup>Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* four horns. <sup>19</sup>And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these?" So he answered me, "These *are* the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."<sup>20</sup>Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. <sup>21</sup>And I said, "What are these coming to do?" So he said, "These *are* the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up *their* horn against the land of Judah to scatter it." Zechariah 1:18-21 or 2:1-4
- Horns – used to gore, kill and maim. Some Jewish commentary attributes the four horns to Babylonia, Persia, Media and Greece. Others to Babylonia only. Some even suggest that the scattering is talking about a future war of Gog and Magog, whose army will consist of the above 4 nations.
- None the less it is the craftsman that holds my interest. The question is asked – what have they come to do?

## Way above my paygrade...

- Again I am going to mention Jewish commentary on this: The four craftsman are four horn cutters. Yet consider this comment made by Rabbi Chana ben Bizna in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chassida:
- **“They are Mashiach ben David, Mashiach ben Yosef, Elijah, and the righteous priest”.**
- The KJV translates craftsmen/charash as carpenters...
- The carpenters are to **charad קָרַד** [move quickly, create fear, tremble, shudder, terror] the horns.
- The purpose of the carpenters is to bring down the strong holds of ungodly horns, who oppress Israel.
- As we consider history, present, and future: I encourage you to consider the following -

## Way above my pay grade..

- I gave a quote regarding the thoughts of Rabbi Chana benBizna, yet other commentators say the 4 craftsmen are kingdoms because each Kingdom brought down the other:
- **Horn**                                  **Craftsman/Carpenter**
- **Babylon**                                      **Medo-Persia**
- **Medo-Persia**   **Greece**
- **Greece**   **Rome**
- **Rome**                                      **Messiah**
- YHVH always has a carpenter on hand – those who trouble Israel will be cut down, and Israel will be built into the nation we are ordained to be.

## Way above my pay grade...

- <sup>6</sup> “Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the LORD; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the LORD. <sup>7</sup> “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.” <sup>8</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts: “He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. <sup>9</sup> For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. <sup>10</sup> “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD. <sup>11</sup> “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!” Zechariah 2:6-13 or 2:10-17
- So lets have a closer look at this according to our times...

## Way above my pay grade..

- <sup>6</sup> “Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the LORD; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the LORD. <sup>7</sup> “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.”
- Get out of Babylon: Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8 & 51:6 and of course:
- <sup>18</sup> After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” <sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. <sup>5</sup> For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.  
Revelations 18:1-5

## Way above my pay grade...

- The message is one of separation from the horn of ROME – a picture of this world as it stands...
- <sup>10</sup>“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD. <sup>11</sup>“Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. Zechariah 2:10-11.
- Good news: Our Saviour is coming again. His 1<sup>st</sup> coming often viewed as Messiah ben Yosef or suffering servant meant many nations joined YHVH. He truly dwelt in the midst of His people – Patterns: This will again take place:
- <sup>14</sup> “Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you may also be. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going.” John 14:1-4

## Way above my pay grade..

- Question is: How many are like Thomas? Standing confused, even though Messiah is right before them. **Matthew 15:16**
- How do we know the way – well most of Rome, and those attached to Mystery Babylon will push a button for the answer – Google is now the saviour...
- None the less a time is coming when:
- <sup>13</sup> Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!” Zechariah 2:13 or 2:17
- The Lion of Judah will arise and come forth. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess:
- <sup>9</sup> For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of *Yeshua* every knee should bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue profess that *Yeshua* the Messiah is Lord—to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11



## Way above my pay grade...

- Rome and Mystery Babylon are ruling the roast at present. People are confused, and running to and fro, looking for answers and information.
- What is happening is way above my pay grade— I now know what it is like to be a Dinosaur. The system of Rome has such a grip on our everyday lives. It destroys the model YHVH has for His people.
- Keep in mind the Master's answer to Thomas: **I am the way, the truth, and the life. NO ONE comes to the Father except through Me.**
- Things may be above my pay grade— even your pay grade, but nothing is above our Father.
- Because there is no God...

# ***Jewish Practices***



## **What Is the Meaning of Chai?**

***The Hebrew word for life is a popular symbol and toast — and is linked to the number 18.***

*Chai* (חי) is the Hebrew word for life. The word, consisting of two Hebrew letters —chet (ח) and yud (י)— is a Jewish symbol, frequently appearing on pendants and other jewelry.

Unlike the Indian tea chai, which is pronounced with the “ch” sound of “chocolate,” the Hebrew chai is pronounced with the same “kh” sound as in challah. Both words rhyme with “high,” however.

Chai also refers to the number 18. That’s because each Hebrew letter has a numerical equivalent, and the sum of *chet* (numerical value of 8) and *yud* (numerical value of 10) is 18. As a result of its connection to the word for life, the number 18 is considered a special number in Jewish tradition. For this reason, Jews frequently make gifts or charitable contributions in multiples of \$18.

In Hebrew, chai is often referred to in the plural form, *chaim* (חיים), hence the boy’s name Chaim and the toast *l’chaim* (לחיים), which, as anyone who has seen *Fiddler on the Roof* knows, means “to life.”



## Do Jews Believe In Angels?

***These supernatural beings appear widely throughout Jewish texts.***

Angels are supernatural beings that appear widely throughout Jewish literature.

The Hebrew word for angel, *mal'ach*, means messenger, and the angels in early biblical sources deliver specific information or carry out some particular function. In the Torah, an angel prevents Abraham from slaughtering his son Isaac, appears to Moses in the burning bush and gives direction to the Israelites during the desert sojourn following the liberation from Egypt. In later biblical texts, angels are associated with visions and prophecies and are given proper names.

Later rabbinic and kabbalistic sources expand on the concept of angels even further, describing a broad universe of named angels with particular roles in the spiritual realm.

### Angels in the Bible

Angels appear throughout the Bible. In their earliest appearances, they function as bearers of information. In Genesis, an angel appears to Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, and informs her that she will bear a son whose descendants will be numerous. A similar encounter happens later with Sarah herself, when three visitors bring the news that she will give birth the following year. When Abraham sets out later to sacrifice that child, his son Isaac, it is an "angel of God" that cries out to him and instructs him not to harm the boy.

Among the most famous stories of angels in the Bible is the encounter between the patriarch Jacob and an angel with whom he wrestles all night. In the morning, when Jacob asks his adversary to identify himself, the angel admonishes him not to ask. Afterwards, Jacob names the place P'niel — literally "face of God." In explaining this choice, the Torah makes plain that the wrestling adversary was an emissary of God: "I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved."

In the books of the prophets, angels continue to carry out their function as messengers, but they are also associated with visions and prophecies. One particularly detailed account is recorded in the first chapter of Ezekiel. The prophet encounters four creatures (*chayot* in Hebrew) that resemble human beings, but each has four faces (human, lion, ox and eagle), four wings and their legs are fused into a

single leg. A parallel vision is recorded in the 10th chapter, only there the angels are described as cherubs.

Not all the angelic figures in the Bible are identified as such. The three visitors who came to Abraham and Sarah are described in the text as *anashim*, or men, though rabbinic sources indicate they were angels. Likewise, the angel that appeared to Jacob is described merely as *ish*, or man. When biblical angels are asked to identify themselves, they refuse. In the Book of Judges, Manoah, the father of Samson, asks the name of an angel who had prophesied a child for his barren wife. The angel declines, saying his name is unknowable. The Book of Daniel is the first time in the Bible where named angels appear: Gabriel and Michael.

### Angels in Early Rabbinic Literature

Rabbinic literature expounds significantly on the nature of angels and their roles in biblical stories. The Midrash identifies Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael as the four chief angels who surround the divine throne, each of whom has particular attributes. The Talmud identifies Michael, Gabriel and Raphael as the three angels who visited Abraham to deliver the news that his wife will bear a son. Though the Bible records that the men ate a meal that Abraham had prepared for them, the rabbis stipulate that the trio only appeared to eat — since, being angels, they are not physical beings, but merely resemble them.

The Midrash includes many fanciful portrayals of angels. According to one source, Michael is made entirely of snow and Gabriel entirely of fire, but despite their proximity they don't harm one another — a symbol of God's power to make peace in his lofty heights. Multiple midrashic sources identify Michael as the heavenly defender of Israel at odds with the demon Sama'el. And another Midrash describes a debate among the angels over whether human beings should be created. In this debate, the angel of love is in favor of creating humans, because of the human capacity for expressing love, but the angel of truth disagrees, fearing that humans will be prone to falsehoods. In support of creating humans, God shows the angels examples of righteous people from the Bible, but the angel of earth rebels and denies the angel Gabriel the dust he needs for the creation of people, fearing that humans would wreak devastation on the earth. The angel of Torah argues against human creation too, contending that people should not be created because they will suffer.

The Talmud records a teaching that two ministering angels — one good and one evil — accompany a person home from synagogue on Shabbat evening. If they find the person's home prepared for Shabbat, the good angel declares: "May it be Your will that it shall be like this for another Shabbat." And the evil angel answers against his will: "Amen." If the home is not prepared, the reverse happens: The evil angel voices a wish for it to be this way for another week and the good angel responds "Amen." Shalom Aleichem, a liturgical song welcoming angels into the home before the Sabbath meal, is inspired by this teaching.

As in the Midrash, angels in the Talmud occasionally argue with God, affording them a degree of independent agency that complicates the notion of angels as mere messengers carrying out divine objectives. The rabbis of the Talmud may have been concerned that angels would become the objects of worship in and of themselves, a concern that some understand to be behind various talmudic texts indicating that righteous people can equal or even surpass the holiness of angels. In Tractate Sanhedrin, the Talmud states that righteous people are greater than the ministering angels.

## Maimonides' Angelic Hierarchy

Maimonides, the 12th-century scholar, devotes a section of his Mishneh Torah to the nature of angels. They are incorporeal beings, he writes, possessing form but no substance. Descriptions of angels as winged or made of fire, Maimonides says, are merely “enigmatical” prophetic visions — that is, inevitably inadequate attempts to describe the formless and the spiritual within the confines of human language.

Maimonides describes a 10-level hierarchy of angels, with different types such as holy creatures (*chayot hakodesh*) flying serpents and chariot bearers. All of these forms are alive and know God intimately, Maimonides writes, but while they all know God more deeply than human beings do, even the highest among them, knowing more than all those below, cannot know the full truth of God.

## Angels in Kabbalah

The Jewish mystical tradition expounds even further on the nature of angels. Kabbalistic sources portray angels as forces of spiritual energy. Rabbi David Cooper, who has written extensively about Kabbalah and Jewish meditation, has described angels as “invisible metaphysical energy bundles” that act like magnets, causing physical changes by means of forces that are invisible to the eye.

In Kabbalah, angels reside in the worlds of *beriah* (creation) and *yetzirah* (formation) — the middle two of Kabbalah’s four worlds, which represent the spiritual stages through which divine energy is conducted down to the material world. In his classic work on Kabbalah, *The Thirteen Petalled Rose*, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz writes that human behavior can create angels. In a counterpart to the way biblical angels bear messages from the divine realm down to humanity, the angels created by human actions carry the energies of humankind upwards into the higher spiritual realms.

Angels are singular and unchanging in their essences, Steinsaltz writes, and can be either good or evil (demons), the latter the product of human beings doing the opposite of a mitzvah — harboring evil thoughts or committing acts of wickedness. Like good angels, evil angels also act in a dual fashion — bringing evil from the spiritual to the material world by inspiring sin or causing suffering and punishment, while also receiving energy from the misdeeds of human beings. “To be sure, were the world to root out all evil completely, then as a matter of course the subversive angels would disappear, since they exist as permanent parasites living on man,” Steinsaltz writes. “But as long as man chooses evil, he supports and nurtures whole worlds and mansions of evil, all of them drawing upon the same human sickness of soul.”

**Hebrew - עֵבְרִי**

**Word (s) of the Week**

Sure / בְּטוּחַ

Pronounced: bah-TOO-akh

To confirm that information is correct, one may ask: *Batuach?*  
meaning "[Are you] sure?"



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

### **A Hard Day at the Office**

Moishe Epstein dragged himself home and barely made it to his chair before he dropped, exhausted. His sympathetic wife Rivkah was right there with a tall cool drink and a comforting word.

"My, you look tired," Rivkah said. "You must have had a hard day today. What happened to make you so exhausted?"

"It was terrible," Moishe said, "We had no computer or internet access the whole day so all of us had to do our own thinking."

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