



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 10-21-23 NOACH**

### ***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 new 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 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 10-21-23 NOACH**

**Noach – Noah (Rest)**

**Genesis 6:9-11:32**

**Isaiah 54:1-55:5**

**Matthew 24:36-51 / 3:7-5:4**

**Genesis 6:13a**

**God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before me...”**

**Genesis 6:17-18**

**“And as for Me – Behold, I am about to bring the Floodwaters upon the earth to destroy *all flesh in which there is a breath of life* from under the heavens; everything that is in the earth shall expire. But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the Ark...”**

**Genesis 6:9b**

**...Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God.**

Breath used here in the Scripture is the Hebrew word ruach and life in the Hebrew is chai. Righteous in the Hebrew is Tzadeek. Righteous in the eyes of God.

**Genesis 6:22**

***Noah did according to everything God commanded him, so he did.***

**Genesis 7:1**

***Then the Lord said to Noah, "Come to the Ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation.***

**Isaiah 54:7-8**

***For but a brief moment have I forsaken you, and with abundant mercy will I gather you in. With a slight wrath have I concealed My countenance from you for a moment, but with eternal kindness shall I show you mercy, said your Redeemer, the Lord.***

The Hebrew word for Redeemer here is **gah-ahl**. It means a kinsman redeemer and to be redeemed from death by God.

**Isaiah 54:9-10**

***For like the waters of Noah this shall be to Me: Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again pass over the earth, so have I sworn not to be wrathful with you nor to rebuke you. For the mountains may be moved and the hills may falter, but My kindness shall not be removed from you and my covenant of peace shall not falter, said the One Who shows you mercy, the Lord.***

Brit shalom. Covenant of peace...

In this week's parshah, we read about the Flood and the teivah. The Hebrew word teivah has two meanings. It means "ark," like the ark which the Lord commanded Noah to build, and it also means "word," like the words in our prayer books and in the Bible.

The instructions which the Lord gave Noah about the teivah also teach us about the words of our prayers and studying the Word of God. The Lord tells Noah - bo el hateivah - "Come into the teivah." **We can learn from this that when we pray**

**and study Scripture, we shouldn't just hurry through the words.** We should "come into the teivah" - put ourselves into the words by putting our minds and hearts into what we are saying and learning.

The Lord also tells Noah - tzohar ta'aseh lateivah - "You should make light for the teivah."

Noah built a window which allowed light into the teivah. We must also make sure our teivos - our words of prayer and studying Scripture – are bright. They should shine with the bright light of Messiah in us.

Later, the Torah describes how the teivah floated on the waters. Vatorom hateivah - "And the teivah was uplifted." The gushing waters of the Flood are like the busy world around us. When we put ourselves into the words of our prayers and learning the Scriptures, those holy words lift us above the world.

We start our day with bo el hateivah, putting our minds and hearts into our prayers and learning the Word. We make those words shine with the light of the Ruach HaKodesh, and as we concentrate on these holy words, we feel uplifted. We are not bothered by all the things going on in the world around us.

Then, we are ready to go about our daily activities, spreading the light of Messiah all around. This is what we learn from the Lord's next command to Noah: tzei min hateivah - "Go out from the teivah." The Lord tells Noah "Be fruitful and multiply, rule over the land and conquer it." We too can conquer the world for the Torah, spreading the Lord's holiness in everything we do.

#### **Matthew 5:14-16**

***"You are light for the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Likewise, when people light a lamp, they don't cover it with a bowl, but put it on a lampstand so that it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven."***

***There was something about Noah that set him apart from the rest of his generation. He walked with God. He was a lamp. Are you?***

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 Noach: Summary**

***A flood destroys all living creatures, aside from Noah,  
his family and the animals in their ark.***

In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth, when the earth was astonishingly empty and dark, God's spirit hovered upon the surface of the waters.

God said, "Let there be light. God saw that the light was good. There was light of day and a dark of night, morning, and evening, one day." God said, "Let there be a firmament, a Heaven, separating the waters and dry land." God named the dry land Earth, and the waters Seas and then God brought forth from the earth seeds and plants and fruit trees. God said, "Let there be for earth light-bearers of a sun for the day, the moon and stars for the night. Let the seas swarm with living creatures and let there be birds to fly in the sky. God saw all that God created was good."

On the sixth day, God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures, each according to its kind, livestock, land animal, beast, or creeper of the ground. Let us make a human, male and female, in Our image. They shall rule over all the living things." So, God created humans and blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and multiply." God saw that all God created was good.

After Heaven and Earth and their array came to exist in six days, God ceased creating on the seventh day and sanctified the day of rest and made it holy.

When God completed Heaven and Earth and there had yet to be rain or man to work, a mist ascended from the earth and watered. And God formed man from the ground and blew into his nostrils the soul of life and man became a living being. God placed the man in the Garden God planted in Eden with its many trees, including The Tree of Life and The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad. God said to the man God had created, "You are to work in the Garden and guard it. You can eat fruit from all the trees except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad. For on the day, you eat it, you shall definitely die."

God told the man, Adam, to name all the living things. Afterwards God saw Adam alone. God said, "it is not good for man to be alone" and God cast him into a deep sleep and brought forth what Adam would call "the bone of my bones, the flesh of my flesh," a woman, and named her Eve. "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed.

The serpent, now, was the most cunning of all the wild beasts made by God. The serpent said to the woman, "You will certainly not die! God knows on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Eve saw the fruit was beautiful to look at and could be a means to wisdom and ate of it, as did Adam, and their eyes were opened. With open eyes they realized they were naked and rushed to make clothes out of leaves.

The man and the woman heard God in the Garden and hid. God called to man, "Where are you?" And the man replied, "hid because I was naked." God said "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree you were commanded not to eat?" Adam said, "I got it from the woman." And the woman said, "The serpent seduced me and I ate it."

God said, "Serpent beast, you are cursed to slither on the ground. Woman, you are cursed to suffer in childbirth. Man, you listened to your wife and ate what you were told not to



eat. Accursed is the ground because of you and you will work by the sweat of your brow. You will work until you return to the ground from which your life began. For you are dust and to dust shall you return.”

Thereafter God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and guarded the Tree of Life and Immortality with a cherubic angel and the flame of an ever-turning sword.

Adam knew his wife Eve and when she conceived and bore Cain she said, “I have born a man with the help of God.” Eve then bores Cain’s brother Abel. Cain became a farmer and made an offering of his fruit to God. Able became a shepherd and gave the best from his flock of sheep. God smiled upon Abel but not upon Cain. Cain became greatly distressed. God said to Cain, “Why are you sad? You can improve. Now is the time you must choose to act good or bad. Sin lusts after you but you can dominate it. Evil tempts you so that you can learn to master it.”

In time, Cain killed Abel. God said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” God said, “Your brother’s blood cries to me from the ground so now this soil shall no longer give you strength and you shall become restless upon the earth.” And Cain replied, “My sin is greater than I can bear, and someone will kill me” God said, “I shall put a mark on your forehead so any would be killers will know your death will be avenged seven-fold.”

Cain left God’s Presence and settled in the land of Nod with his wife. He became a city-builder, and they had a son Enoch to begin the lineage of Cain. The lineage of Adam begins with Eve giving birth to Seth and then Enosh.

Many generations later, God saw that man’s wickedness on earth was increasing. Everyday man’s innermost thoughts were plotting evil. God reconsidered God’s creation of humans and grieved deeply. God said, “I will obliterate all of my creations, from humans to birds, I will destroy every living thing on the earth.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of God.

Discussion Questions for Parashat Bereshit

- 1) How do you separate the light and darkness in your life?
- 2) Is it the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil or Good and Bad? Why?
- 3) How do you handle temptation?
- 4) What actions have you reconsidered?

## **Haftarah Noach**

***Isaiah 54:1-55:5 has several layers of metaphors alluding to the great flood.***

This week's Torah portion tells the story of the world's creation, and the Haftarah provides its own sort of commentary on the Torah's first portion. Isaiah introduces God at the beginning of this Haftarah as "the One who created the heavens and stretched them out, who made the earth and all that grows in it" (Isaiah 42:5).

But Isaiah doesn't stop there. Instead, he draws a connection between creating the world to fulfill a specific task and creating the Israelites to fulfill their covenant. And he urges everyone to proclaim the glory of God: "Let the desert and the villages rejoice?let those who live in Sela sing out, and shout from the mountaintops!" (Isaiah 42:11).

Isaiah's prophecy was delivered to a world in tumult. The Babylonians, who forcibly removed the Children of Israel from the Land of Israel around 605 BCE, were subsequently overthrown by other armies, and the Israelites hoped that they might be allowed to return to their country. God is coming, Isaiah tells them: coming "like a soldier in fury ready for battle?Long enough have I held My peace, I have kept still and held Myself back. Now, I cry out like a woman in labor" (Isaiah 42:14).

The prophet then offers a description that is both frightening and thrilling—of God sweeping through the land in order to reclaim Israel for God's people, destroying mountains and rivers, but also leading the blind and "guiding them along roads they have not traveled" (Isaiah 42:16).

The next verses suggest that it's not physical blindness that Isaiah's talking about, but spiritual blindness: "All who trust in idols and call metal things their gods shall fall back in shame" (Isaiah 42:17). He proceeds to rebuke the Israelites and blame them for their own exile: "Who gave Israel to the despoilers?" Isaiah asks. "It was none other than the Eternal" (Isaiah 42:24). But Isaiah's focus is praise, not punishment, and he follows with a rejoinder to remind Israel of God's promise of a better future: "Have no fear, for I will redeem you; I have called you by name, you are Mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

The Babylonian Exile, Isaiah says, was punishment for Israel's sins. He continues, promising a safeguard through their hardships — "When you walk through fire, you shall not be scorched" (Isaiah 43:2) — promising an eventual redemption. "Have no fear," Isaiah says, now speaking in God's words in a speech that rises into a flurry of triumph, "I will bring your offspring from the east, I will gather you in from the west. Be sure that I am God, and I alone can deliver you" (Isaiah 43:10-11).



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

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

### **LIFE IS WHAT IT IS??**

### **TIME TO TAKE STOCK!**

There are defining moments in our lives. These can arrive at any time. Sometimes we are given forewarning, other times we have them arrive on our doorsteps unannounced. These moments can be difficult to navigate, resulting in positive to negative outcomes. A number of these defining moments are due to our own decisions whilst others are “forced” upon us. Some of these defining moments allow us to have an influence on the outcomes, yet there are many we have little if any influence over. It is how we handle these moments that is vital to our health and wellbeing. At times positive outcomes can eventually turn into negative outcomes. The same goes for what can appear to be negative outcomes. They can often turn out to have positive outcomes.

The bible is full of examples where this is the case. The nation of Israel is a prime example. Take the time to evaluate the relationship change between the Children of Israel and HaShem when “things” are going well and when “things” are not going so well. You will notice that when Israel is doing well, the people will find themselves drifting further and further from HaShem. What starts out as a “positive” position ends up becoming a “negative” position. Taking the reverse position, we quickly discover that when Israel is in a challenging or “negative”

position, they will often end up in a very “positive” position. This is due to their despair, causing them to turn to the Holy One of Israel, who rescues and directs them along a path that results in a change of direction and attitude. The exodus from Egypt is a prime example.

As a people we can learn much from this. It is my opinion that we are presently under the system of Pharaoh. We are under hard task masters who have no interest in us as individuals. I am becoming more convinced that we are fast finding ourselves in positions that we have no control over, thus defining moments are being thrust upon us. Very few people who are in positions of power have any interest in showing faithfulness to HaShem. In fact, most, if not all, reject the Torah and prefer to install their own rules and regulations. This puts those of us who want to be faithful to HaShem in a “negative” position. We are being forced out of the “conversation” to the extent that we can quickly find ourselves before the courts of the land if we show our faithfulness to HaShem. Are we coming to the point whereby this defining moment is bringing us back to HaShem the Holy One of Israel? Only HaShem can rescue us from this dilemma that has been thrust upon us. We must beseech Him with a contrite heart, asking Him to supply us with the strength, wisdom, and faithfulness we require to fight the good fight.

I am convinced that we face a continuing hatred of HaShem, HaMoshiach and Torah from the majority of the populace. Not only are we facing this challenge, but I am persuaded this hatred will increase with new dangers arriving on our doorstep. We often hear the quote, “never again” in relation to the holocaust, but these words ring hollow when you witness the support for those who hate Israel and the Jewish people.

Friends, I fear it may not be far into the future when we experience another defining moment in our lives. It would be a relief to be totally wrong on this occasion, but I think not.

I suggest you find HaShem whilst He can be found and turn this negative into a wonderful positive.

***“Seek HASHEM, all you humble of the land who have fulfilled His law; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be concealed on the day of HASHEM’S anger.”*** Zephaniah 2:3 [AST]

# ***Insights into Judaism***



## **American Jews Are Concealing Their Jewish Identity Guest Article**

### ***And why that's an inappropriate response to antisemitism.***

In the past, when I thought of Jews concealing the fact that they are Jewish, black and white scenes from the Holocaust or the former Soviet Union came to mind. As a Jewish baby boomer who grew up in the United States, I always felt safe here and I wore my Judaica to show off my Jewish pride.

But over the past few years, the rise of antisemitism in the U.S. and abroad is making Jews question if they should openly wear religious symbols in public.

Just recently, a loudspeaker on a train traveling through Austria near Vienna began blaring Adolf Hitler's speeches and chanting "*Sieg Heil*" at the passengers. Someone aboard the train had hacked into the PA system, and it wasn't the first time this happened. One passenger, a concentration camp survivor, left the train crying. Police are investigating, and there is concern that this may be part of a disturbing trend.

### **40% of Jews have “changed their behavior” to conceal the fact they are Jewish.**

In my Long Island community, which is home to the fourth largest Jewish population in the U.S., antisemitism is virulent enough to require a community-wide response. The American Jewish Committee recently held a bipartisan meeting of more than 50 Nassau and Suffolk County elected officials to discuss antisemitism and formulate a cohesive response to it. Laura Shaw Frank, the AJC's director of Contemporary Jewish Life, said that 41% of American Jews indicated that they felt less safe than a year ago, when the figure was 31%. And 40% of Jews have “changed their behavior” to conceal the fact they are Jewish.

Concealing my Jewish identity is not something that I ever had to do growing up in Queens, New York. Neither did my own children, who attended a Jewish day school on Long Island. I remember a synagogue trip to France about 10 years ago when our rabbi told the men in the group to remove their kippot. But now in the U.S.? That is sobering – and very scary.

The AJC report evoked memories of my mother, who enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II as soon as she graduated from college. She had seen a film about Hitler and was determined to do her part to fight the Nazis. Growing up in a New Jersey community with a tiny Jewish population, she knew what it was to be a suspect minority; her friends had even accused her of killing Jesus. When she tearfully told them she had nothing to do with it, they accepted her explanation and resumed their play. That’s probably the reason she and my father chose to raise their family in an area that was heavily Jewish.

My mom shared stories of army life with my brother and me, but never explained why she didn’t wear a Jewish star. As a child, I didn’t understand it, but she didn’t stop me from wearing the Jewish symbols my grandmother gave to me.

## **Long Island’s German Gardens**

As someone who writes about the Holocaust and is a member of The International Advisory Board for Holocaust Survivor Day, I am very well versed in this dark chapter in our history. While doing research for my second post-Holocaust novel, “Shadows We Carry,” I learned that there was a community called German Gardens in eastern Long Island, which required residents to show proof of German lineage to live there. I used this community as a setting in a section of my book that explores neo-Nazism.

This German community still exists in Yaphank, a hamlet in Suffolk County, and it was one of the German American Bund’s main centers of activity before World War II. In 1935, the German American Settlement League bought a large tract of land in the hamlet and the neighborhood soon became a Nazi community for those of pure Aryan lineage. The fliers that were distributed at the time inviting German Americans to live there read, “You will meet people who think like you.”

The main street, which ran the entire length of the community, was named Adolf Hitler Strasse. This and other street names honoring Nazis have since been renamed, but it wasn’t until May 2017 that the requirement to be of German ancestry was dropped. New York State prosecutors reached a settlement with the League to end any discriminatory housing policies and practices.

As my Jewish community and others throughout our country cope with antisemitic incidents, we need to be vigilant in reporting such acts, and not just ignore them. These acts impact not only our lives, but also the next generation. It's heartening to see that the country as a whole is addressing this disturbing issue. It can no longer be shrugged off as an innocent prank.

The Nazis made the Jewish star pejorative, and that's probably what my mother was reacting to in not wearing one.

My response to today's antisemitism? To keep wearing my Judaica and feel proud of my Jewish heritage, as well as a sense of connectedness to all Jews. My mother felt constrained from wearing hers, which keeps me motivated to wear mine every single day. I think of her when I put it on and wish for a world in which all Jews can be proud to display their heritage. I can't change her experience, but I can change what's happening today and try to make the future brighter for my children and grandchildren.



## **Biblical Prayer**

***Spontaneity and creativity were hallmarks of prayer  
in the time of the Bible.***

In addition to the sacrificial rites there was a collateral form of worship, unofficial but fully recognized—private prayer. The Bible records private prayers by almost every important personality with whose life and activity it deals. The religious men and women turned to God in prayer, and their prayers, as recorded in the Bible, touch the heart, and stir deep religious sentiments.

### **Solomon's Prayer**

In general, the personal prayers in the Bible—exclusive of the Psalms—are very much like the prayers that we would utter today. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Jerusalem Temple may serve as an example. It contains all the elements of prayer—praise and thanksgiving, confession, and intercession:

"O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like Thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants, that walk before Thee with all their heart; ... Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded! Yet have Thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which Thy servant prayeth before Thee this day; that Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day.... And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place; yea, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place; and when Thou hearest, forgive" [I Kings 8:23, 27-30].



Like all the prayers uttered by biblical personalities or ascribed to them, Solomon's prayer is addressed directly to God. There are no priests or other intermediaries, nor does Solomon offer any sacrifices to win God's favor. Solomon supplicates God with words that come from the heart, and his prayer is uttered in the utmost faith that if he is deserving his prayer will be heard and answered.

## Primitive Elements

To be sure, some biblical prayers contain primitive elements, such as prayers that are conditional in content. The suppliant formulates his prayer in the framework of a vow to do something which he assumes is pleasing to God if his prayer is answered. The classic example of this type of prayer is Jephthah's vow before going to war against the Ammonites:

"If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace ... shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering" [Judges 11:30-31].

The Bible also contains a number of prayers in which the suppliants argue with God and persuade Him by their logical arguments to alter His intent. God graciously yields to the logic of the prayer and changes His original decree. Abraham's plea for Sodom and Gomorrah is the classic example. Abraham argues with the Almighty:

"Will You sweep away the innocent along with the guilty? What if there should be fifty innocents within the city; will You then wipe out the place and not forgive it for the sake of the innocent fifty who are in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty, so that innocent and guilty fare alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" [Gen. 18:23-25].

Unfortunately, Abraham's logic was not backed by the facts of the situation, and his plea did not save the doomed cities.

These primitive elements in some of the biblical prayers, however, are the exceptions. Most biblical prayers are so sophisticated in their formulation that they have been adopted as patterns of prayer for all time. These prayers usually consist of two basic elements-introductory words praising God for His might and mercy, and a concluding petition, often universal in scope. King Solomon's prayer, only part of which was quoted above, follows this pattern.

## Prayers of Praise

Not all biblical prayers are petitionary. Many of them concentrate solely on praising God or thanking Him for His mercies and blessings. One such prayer is the Song of Moses which he and the Israelites sang after safely crossing the Sea of Reeds and escaping from the pursuing Egyptians:

"I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; Horse and driver, He has hurled into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and might; He is become my salvation. This is my God, and I will enshrine Him;

The God of my father, and I will exalt Him”

[Exodus 15:1-2].

The ancient Hebrews found no contradiction between the two forms of worship: the sacrificial rites of the Temple and the informal words of prayer uttered by individuals. They coexisted without infringing upon each other. In those early times prayer was essentially a spontaneous “cry” to God for help. It was based on the intuitive feeling or the deep conviction that God gives ear to the supplications of the devout and answers the prayer that comes from the heart.

### Temple Prayer

In connection with the Temple functions only one brief prayer is prescribed in the Bible.

When the farmer brought his first fruits to the Temple, he was to recite a formula in which he briefly summarized the story of the bondage in Egypt, the redemption, and the “land flowing with milk and honey” which God had given to the children of Israel.

To these formulated prayers one may add a number of blessings which achieved official usage and later found their way into the *siddur* [prayer book]. One of these is part of the blessing which Jacob bestowed on Joseph’s sons: “God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh” (Genesis 48:20), which is to this day the paternal blessing that the Jew bestows on his sons on Friday evenings. Another biblical blessing that has been repeated innumerable times is the blessing which the Kohanim pronounced in the Temple. It, too, has been incorporated into the synagogue worship:

“The Lord bless you, and keep you! The Lord deal kindly and graciously with you!; The Lord bestow His favor upon you and grant you peace!” [Num. 6:24-26].

During the period of the First Jewish Commonwealth prayer was generally spontaneous, free, and independent. Except for the brief formula recited by the farmers, the priestly blessing, and some of the Psalms, prayers occupied no place in the official worship of the Temple. The introduction of public prayer as a form of worship was, as we shall see, one of the great contributions of the Jewish people to world culture. But this took place during the Second Commonwealth.

**עֲבֵרִי - Hebrew**

**Word (s) of the Week**

Holiday / חג

Pronounced: CHAG

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



**A Taste of Jewish Humor**

**A Creative Diagnosis**

Abe goes to the doctor's office to collect his wife Sara's test results. The receptionist tells him, "I'm sorry but there's been a bit of a mix-up. When we sent your wife's samples to the lab, they got mixed up with the samples from another Mrs. Cohen and we don't know which one is your wife's. The bottom line is that the situation is either bad or not so bad."

"What do you mean?" asks Abe.

"Well," says the receptionist, "one Mrs. Cohen has tested positive for Alzheimer's disease and the other for gingivitis. We can't tell which is which."

"That's terrible," says Abe. "Can you do the test again?"

"Normally, yes. But your health insurance policy won't pay for these expensive tests more than once."

"Well, what should I do?" asks Abe.

The receptionist replies, "The doctor recommends that you drop your wife off in the middle of town. If she finds her way home, don't borrow her toothbrush."



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

### **The Most Outrageous Matzah Ball Soup Recipe**

***With rice, noodles AND matza balls, this soup is a carb fest –  
and it's glorious.***



A few years ago when I was out in Los Angeles visiting my family, my brother insisted we head to Canter's Deli, an iconic Jewish deli that has been around since 1931. I am never one to turn down some good Jewish comfort food, and was thrilled to order a big bowl of matzah ball soup on a cool, rainy December night to share with my then 2 year old daughter. The bowl was filled to the brim with not only a larger-than-life matzah ball, but kreplach, rice *and* noodles. That's right – it was a matzah ball carb fest, and it was glorious.

Since that visit, I have been loading up my matzah ball soup with rice and matzah balls, sometimes alphabet noodles or ramen noodles per my daughter's request, and even awesome store-bought dumplings. If you are feeling adventurous, you can certainly try making your own meat kreplach. Although I have been opting for these store-bought Kosher'us veal or beef pelmeni I buy at Shop Rite or our local kosher butcher.

The key to making a good, loaded matzo ball soup is to keep all the ingredients separate until serving. After making soup, remove the veggies and the chicken and store them in separate containers until ready to serve.

Or if you decide to use store-bought chicken broth, cook your rice, noodles, and matzah balls separately, and then build the bowl of soup for each individual. This is truly the ultimate Jewish comfort food on a cool night, or any time you need a little chicken soup love.

## Loaded Matzah Ball Soup

### Ingredients

4 quarts prepared chicken soup

matzah balls

cooked rice

cooked egg noodles, alphabet noodles or other preferred noodles

kreplach (either homemade or store-bought)

### Directions

Prepare chicken soup. Can be made 1-2 days ahead of time.

Prepare cooked rice, noodles and/or kreplach according to directions.

Place rice, noodles, matzah balls and kreplach into soup bowls. Top with shredded, cooked chicken and carrots if desired.

Ladle soup on top. Serve hot.

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