



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 1-20-24 BO

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 1-20-24 BO

BO - ENTER!

Exodus - Shemoth 10:1-13:16

Jeremiah 46:13-28

Romans 9:22-29

This is a very simple message this week, based on Scripture. Study to show yourself approved by not mankind but by the Holy One of Israel, the Father, the Son, and the Ruach. Read these Scriptures and meditate on them.

We read in Exodus - Shemoth 13:1-2, 8-10, 12-15 the following:

And Elohim spoke to Mosheh, saying, "Set apart to Me all the first-born, the one opening the womb among the children of Yisrael, among man and among beast, it is Mine." And you shall inform your son in that day, saying, 'It is because of what Elohim did for me when I came up from Mitsrayim.' And it shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a reminder between your eyes, that the teaching of Elohim is to be in your mouth, for with a strong hand Elohim has brought you out of Mitsrayim. And you shall guard this law at its appointed time from year to year. That you shall pass over to Elohim everyone

opening the womb, and every firstborn that comes from your livestock, the males belong to Elohim. But every first-born of a donkey you are to ransom with a lamb. And if you do not ransom it, then you shall break its neck. And every first-born of man among your sons you are to ransom. And it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' then you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand Elohim brought us out of Mitsrayim, out of the house of bondage. And it came to be, when Pharaoh was too hardened to let us go, that Elohim killed every first-born in the land of Mitsrayim, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast. Therefore, I am offering to Elohim every male that open the womb, but every first-born of my sons I ransom.'

Jeremiah 46:27-28:

But as for you, do not fear, O My servant Ya'aqob, and do not be discouraged, O Yisrael! For look, I am saving you from afar, and your descendants from the land of their captivity. And Ya'aqob shall return and shall have rest and be at ease, with no one disturbing. Do not fear, O Ya'aqob My servant, declares Elohim, For I am with you. Though I make a complete end of all the gentiles to which I have driven you, yet I do not make a complete end of you. But I shall reprove you in right-ruling, and by no means leave you unpunished.

Romans 9:22-33:

And if Elohim, desiring to show wrath, and to make His power known, with much patience tolerated the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His esteem on vessels of compassion, which He had prepared beforehand for esteem, Even whom He called, not only us of the Yehudim, but also of the gentiles? As He says in Hoshea too, "I shall call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved." And it shall be in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living Elohim." And Yeshayahu - Isaiah cries out on behalf of Yisrael, "Though the number of the children of Yisrael be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved. For He is bringing a matter to an end, and is cutting it short in righteousness, because Elohim shall cut short a matter on the earth." And as Yeshayahu said before, "If Elohim of hosts had not left us a seed, we would have become like Sedom-Sodom, and we would have been made like Amarah-Gemorah." What shall we say then? Those gentiles not following after righteousness, have obtained righteousness, even the righteousness of belief, but Yisrael following

after the Torah of righteousness, has not arrived at the Torah of righteousness. Why? Because it was not of belief, but as by works of law. For they stumbled at the Stone of stumbling. As it has been written, "See, I lay in Tsiyon a Stone of stumbling and a Rock that makes for falling, and everyone who is believing on Him shall not be put to shame."

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 Bo: Summary

Exodus-Shemot 10:1-13:16

God brings the final three plagues on the Egyptians; the Israelites leave Egypt and receive the commandment to observe Passover.

God said to Moses, "Go again to the Pharaoh for I have hardened his heart so I may display My signs to the people. It is these signs which will enable you and the generations after you to recognize Me as your God. This is the story parents will pass down to their children and their children's children. I will be known as the God who brought you out of the land of Egypt."

"Moses," God continued, "this time tell the Pharaoh that if he doesn't let My people go, I will bring locusts to swarm the land." Moses warned the Pharaoh of the coming locust plague. His staff urged him to let the Hebrews go but Pharaoh would only relent enough to let the men go and not the women and children. Soon God sent so many locusts that the land was black with them.

The Pharaoh summoned Moses, "I have sinned against your God and you, Moses. Please forgive me and have your God remove this plague of locusts." Moses asked God to remove the plague and God did, but God also hardened the Pharaoh's heart so that he again refused to let the Jews go free.

The Last Straw

Then came the darkness. For three days the Egyptians were plagued by complete darkness while the area where the Hebrew lived had plenty of light.

Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, "Your people may leave but do not take your animals."

"No," responded Moses. "We must all go including our livestock."

"No!" shouted Pharaoh as God hardened his heart once again. "Moses, get out of here! The next time I see your face, you will die."

"You're right," Moses replied, "I shall never see your face again."

The Plague of The First Born

Later the Lord said to Moses, "My last plague will make the Pharaoh insist you leave. This plague will signal the beginning of months for the Israelites. Tonight, at midnight I will go among the Egyptians and kill every first-born. Now no Hebrew first-born shall die if they follow My instructions exactly.

“First, have all the Hebrews ask the Egyptians for their objects of gold and silver. They will give easily to you since they hold you in high esteem. Then, make sure every household has a lamb. These lambs are to be slaughtered as a community and then each family shall return to their home and place some lamb’s blood on each side of their doorposts. Then each family shall feast with roasted lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

“This 14th day of the beginning of months will be known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It shall be celebrated among all the Jewish generations for seven days. No leavened bread may be eaten during this time. On the first night of this Feast of Unleavened Bread, every Jew will remember and retell the story of how God brought the Hebrew slaves out of bondage in Egypt.”

In the middle of the night, just as God had warned, God killed all the first-born in the land of Egypt. Young and old, rich and poor, human and animal, all the first-borns were killed. Throughout Egypt there was a loud cry for there was no house where someone was not dead.

Remember This Day

Immediately, Pharaoh demanded Moses and the Jews leave Egypt. The Jews hurried from the land, carrying their unleavened dough before it could even rise into bread.

Moses said again God’s commandment to the Israelites, “This is the law of the Passover offering. You must remember this day as a covenant between Me and My people. Remember, this day you were freed from Egypt by God to go to the land of milk and honey. Remember, this day, for all generations and honor Me by not eating any leavened bread.”

“Remember also,” Moses said, “to redeem every first-born, whether animal or child, so that your children will ask, ‘what does this mean?’ Then you can answer to them, ‘It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’”

Parashat Bo Discussion Questions

- 1) Why do you think God hardened Pharaoh’s heart? Is there a time in your life when you feel God hardened someone’s heart against you? How?
- 2) Have you ever felt that God brought plagues upon you or your family or even the Jewish people? Describe these plagues. Describe God’s role in these plagues.
- 3) When in your life have you felt as if you were being freed from slavery?
- 4) Why do you think Passover, more than any other holiday, is the most celebrated holiday of Jews around the world? Why is it important to you?

Haftarah for Bo

Jeremiah 46:13-28

Jeremiah taunts the Egyptians.

In the Haftarah for *Parashat Bo* we read a part of Jeremiah's prophecies against Egypt. Jeremiah foretells an attack on Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia. Though Egypt is mighty, Jeremiah is confident that the Egyptian Pharaoh will be overpowered by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah taunts the Egyptians, reminding them that their gods would not withstand the power of the one true God. After the Egyptians flee from the Babylonians, Jeremiah promises, they will call their own Pharaoh "Braggart Who Let the Hour Go By" (46:17).

Egypt Will Return to Glory, Israel is Consoled

In the last three verses of the haftarah Jeremiah is less condemnatory, and in fact says that though Egypt, is soon to be destroyed, "afterward she shall be inhabited again as in former days" (46:26).

Then Jeremiah turns to Israel and delivers a short message of consolation. Even though Israel will be exiled, they will be redeemed, and God will deliver them back to their land. The nations around Israel will be destroyed for their bad deeds, but God says, "I will not leave you unpunished, but I will chastise in measure" (46:28).

Connection to Parashat Bo

In the Torah portion for this week, we read about the final three plagues that God inflicts on the Egyptians before the Exodus: locusts, darkness, and the plague of the firstborn. Similarly, the haftarah describes the Egyptians being punished and falling before their enemies. Israel's promise of redemption from Jeremiah is much like the promise that they received from Moses. But in Exodus, as in Jeremiah, the Israelites do not escape punishment: suffering from lack of food, water, and faith as they travel through the desert to the Promised Land.



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

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

Metzora-Infected One...

Metzora– infected one

- In this day and age, much is spoken about – infections etc.



Do we need to be worried about infections... this is the ?

Metzora...

- ³⁴ When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of tza'rat in a house of the land of your possession;³⁵ And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, Behold, to me there is as it were a plague in the house.³⁶ Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into it to see the plague, that that is in the house be not made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house.³⁷ And he shall look on the plague, and, behold, if the plague be in the walls of the house with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight are lower than the wall;³⁸ Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days.³⁹ And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look: and, behold, if the plague be spread in the walls of the house;⁴⁰ Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is, and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city.⁴¹ And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off without the city into an unclean place:⁴² And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house.

Metzora...

- ⁴³ And if the plague come again, and break out in the house, after that he hath taken away the stones, and after he hath scraped the house, and after it is plastered;⁴⁴ Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house; it is an active tza'rat in the house; it is unclean.⁴⁵ And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place.⁴⁶ Moreover he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up shall be unclean until the even.⁴⁷ And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes; and he that standeth in the house shall wash his clothes.⁴⁸ And if the priest shall come in, and look upon it, and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plastered: then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed.⁴⁹ And he shall take to cleanse the house two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop.⁵⁰ And he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water.⁵¹ And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times:

Metzora...

- ⁵² And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet: ⁵³ But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean. ⁵⁴ This is the Torah for all manner of plague of tzara'at, and scale, ⁵⁵ And for the tzara'at of a garment, and of a house, ⁵⁶ And for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot: ⁵⁷ To teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean: this is the Torah of Tzara'at. Leviticus 14:34-57
- As we read through these passages of scripture I would like to focus on the need for spotting leprosy/ Tzara'at, and dealing with it ...

Metzora...

- Very important point: YHVH put the Tzara'at in the house: ³³ And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, ³⁴ When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of Tzara'at in a house of the land of your possession;
- A little reminder - it is our Father who controls, and allows all ...
- When we come to an understanding of what Tzara'at involves we need to take a look at the remedies, prescribed by YHVH, and what relevance they have for us today.
- Leprosy/Tzara'at **צָרַעַת** = Something that erupts. Something that not only erupts but infects/Metzora
- The rituals that HaShem tells Mosheh to apply to the person who has Tzara'at show the importance of community to YHVH.

Metzora...

- Because of the threat this disease would spread throughout the community, the person who had Tzara'at was to be taken outside the camp.
- Now upon his day of purification, or on the day he/she believed their Tzara'at was healed, the priest was to examine the claim. Where was this examination to take place?
- None other than outside the camp. We learn some important biblical patterns from this. Who inspects the person? It is obviously the Priest.
- Yeshua is the only one who can declare a person clean or unclean. Yet, I want us to go to Leviticus 13:1-3

Metzora...

- And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying;² When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of tzara'at; then he shall be brought unto **Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests**.³ And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of tzara'at: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean [Tavmay – foul contaminated].
- Aaron or one of his sons: Aaron High Priest then his sons and others priests, then the children of Israel or community- rough structure outline.
- Yeshua is our High Priest– We are to have a structure of servant leadership, within our community, just as in Aarons time. Now to understand the pattern surrounding these issues of Metzora, tzara'at, and temai, we should take a brief look at the role of the **priest**...

Metzora...

- Priest/Kohen כהן = Serve as leader, one officiating – it is also used for Egyptian priests, Philistine priests, priests of Chemosh [deity of Moabites], of Asherim [pagan goddess], Baal, and others.
- ⁹ But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; 1 Peter 2:9
- To better understand this passage, we must view ...
- ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. Exodus 19:6.
- Question: Did everyone within the nation of Israel serve as priests regarding Tzara'at? NO – yet they were called a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. There were trained servant leaders [priests] to carry out such work.

Metzora...

- This brings us to a couple of cross roads:
- 1st If one is a servant priest leader, inspecting houses for Tzara'at, they should be priests trained and schooled by the High Priest. In our case Yeshua – Even in those days of Aaron and Moshe it was still Yeshua. Why...
- They followed the instructions as given to them by YHVH – the TORAH. We know Yeshua is the Living Torah Who was before the foundation of the world
- This then leads us to the problem of inspecting priests. These inspecting priests claimed a person, house clean or unclean. In other words they claimed the presence of Tzara'at or not.
- Suggestion: If a priest [servant leader] doesn't know YHVH's instructions/Torah that priest cannot be qualified to pronounce the presence or absence of Tzara'at. That priest will end up pronouncing that which is Tzara'at as clean, and that which isn't Tzara'at as unclean...

Metzora...

- Notice a crucial pattern here. If a person was declared to have Tzara'at then that person was dealt with outside the camp- community protection.
- If a house was declared Tzara'at, that house was to be dismantled and cleaned before it could be relived in. Warning
- ²³ He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. ²⁴ When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. ²⁵ And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. ²⁶ Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. ²⁷ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou hast sucked. ²⁸ But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it Luke 11:23-28

Metzora...

- Pondering - Tzara'at, outside the camp, cleansing houses Metzora, unclean spirits, the state of our nation- I see our Father at work as never before.
- Big statement considering the flood, the death and resurrection of Yeshua, the moment in the Garden of Eden, the birth of Yeshua, the priest hood system, the exodus and much more..
- Yet I suggest all the above and more are coming into play. Consider the state of our nation. Where are the headquarters of those who profess biblical truth outside of our capital Jerusalem.
- We are being given a wonderful chance to clean our houses, and ourselves up. To reside with the King in the World to come, we will need to know what Tzara'at is and depose of it outside in an unclean t'elmai place.
- An unclean place for refuge being burnt up = Gehenna @But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell/Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, Fear him Luke 12:5

Metzora...

- Gehenna = Hebrew: Gey Hinnom = Valley of Hinnom. A place where refuse was continually burnt and disposed of. That is where Tzara'at needs to go..
- Questions – Have we Tzara'at in our houses? If so how do we deal with it? Is there a biblical pattern and process?
- There is one word we should always have in these conversations
- Repentance: There are 2 Hebrew words translated as repent:
 - **Nacham**/נחם = change attitudes, sorry, reconsider & even comfort.
 - **Shuv**/שב = Return, move backward, Move back to point of departure.
 - **Greek: Metanoia** = Change of mind, turn from sin back to YHVH through faithfulness.
- Without understanding of Torah, you are hard pressed to repent. Without repentance, you are full of Tzara'at..

Metzora...

- Full of Tzara'at, you are Metzora [infected] – not only that but what you have is contagious..
- In closing I am going to leave you with some thoughts to consider
- Remember it was YHVH creating the Tzara'at – so could this only infect a house/person in an unclean state already?
- Could the Christian house, the Judaism House, be houses infected by Tzara'at? Could the house of so-called Torah followers be open to infection? How do we know the answer..
- Perhaps we should invite our High Priest to do an inspection maybe that is a good idea or maybe not such a good idea, depending on your position, and what you are prepared to face.
- Let me ask another question..

Metzora...

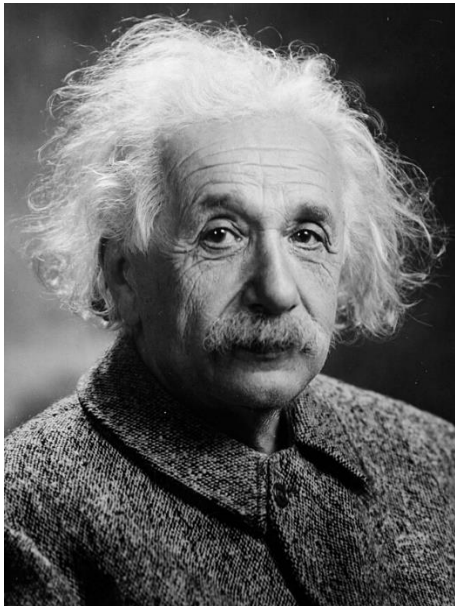
- Imagine Yeshua the King is coming to inspect your house tomorrow – your house of faithfulness. How are you feeling? What Tzara'at is He going to find that puts you outside the community, until you have unloaded it to burn in Gehenna, allowing you to be pronounced clean.
- No I am not talking about salvation by works, but I am talking about pleasing the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Perhaps we could simply call it STANDARDS.
- I suggest the house of Israel has lowered its ' standards, and allowed 7 more evil spirits into the space – it is full of Tzara'ah. The house has been left unprotected ...
- **And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day ... Nehemiah 13:22a**
- **Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: launder me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
⁸ Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
⁹ Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Pslam 51:7-10**
- Surely there is no God ...

Insights into Judaism



Eight Famous Jewish Nobel Laureates ***From Albert Einstein to Bob Dylan, there are many Jewish Nobel laureates who have become household names.***

Albert Einstein, Physics, 1921



Albert Einstein is probably best known for his Theory of Relativity, which revised Newtonian mechanics, and his discovery that matter and energy are two sides of the same coin, as represented by the famous equation $E=mc^2$. But he actually won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921 for his discovery of the law of photoelectric effect. Such was his remarkable range as a scientist able to reimagine and more deeply understand the underpinnings of the universe than anyone who came before.

A largely secular Jew, Einstein nonetheless articulated respect for Judaism. He has been quoted as saying that conflicts between science and religion “have all sprung from fatal errors,” and that “science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” Did he believe in the Jewish God? Einstein is on record as describing himself a believer in “Spinoza’s God” — an impersonal, possibly

pantheistic view of God who “reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with fates and actions of human beings.”

Einstein supported the creation of the State of Israel and is considered to have been a cultural Zionist. In the early 1950s, following the death of Israeli president Chaim Weitzman, then Israeli ambassador to the United States, Abba Eban invited Albert Einstein to step into the role, though he declined. Einstein did, however, bequeath his personal library to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem on his death.

S.Y. Agnon, Literature, 1966



Shmuel Yosef Halevi Czaczkes, pen name S.Y. Agnon (derived from his first published story, *Agunot*), was born in Galicia in 1888. The son of a rabbi, he was home-schooled and studied the Bible and Talmud until the age of nine. Agnon moved to Germany in the early 1900s, where his novels and short stories were published by Schocken Books and the newspaper Haaretz. A fire in his home led Agnon to settle with his family in Jerusalem in 1924, where he ultimately wrote the majority of work that made him one of the leading figures of modern Hebrew literature. His writing, known for its great depth and humor, captures the cultures and traditions of shtetl Judaism while also wrestling with modern Jewish experience. Similarly, his language mixes ancient and modern Hebrew.

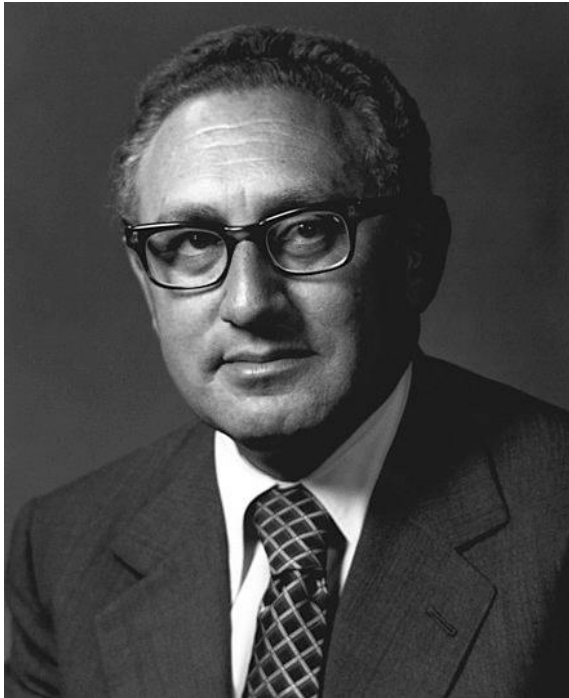
Agnon's first major publication, *Hakhnasat Kalah (The Bridal Canopy)*, showcases the golden age of Hasidism.

Arguably his most celebrated work is *Tmol Shilshom (Only*

Yesterday), which portrays Jewish immigration to Palestine. In 1966, he shared the Nobel Prize with Nelly Sachs, a German Jewish author. Because Agnon was an observant Jew and the award ceremony took place on a Saturday night during Hanukkah, he did not attend until he had made Havdalah and lit Hanukkah candles.

Agnon continues to be a central figure in Hebrew literature and his likeness appears on the 50-shekel bill printed from 1985 to 2014. Additionally, a street in Jerusalem is named after him, and he is memorialized by an exhibit in the Historical Museum in Buchach, where he was born.

Henry Kissinger, Peace, 1973



Henry Kissinger, former U.S. Secretary of State, was a Jewish refugee who fled Nazi Germany in 1938 and would become one of the most prominent Jews in postwar American politics. He received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1973 for helping to secure a peace treaty between North and South Vietnam. In addition, Kissinger is known for advising Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and later serving as secretary of state for Presidents Nixon and Ford. He is recognized for building relationships between the great powers during the Cold War. However, he was also widely denounced for his controversial foreign policy decisions, including supporting Pakistan's military dictatorship and his close association with Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet.

In the Middle East, Kissinger attempted to lay the groundwork for Arab-Israeli peace. His work resulted in a disengagement of forces during the Yom Kippur War and an interim agreement between Israel and Egypt — despite the fact that President Nixon wanted no Jewish Americans to participate in policy-making regarding Israel. Some of his positions have been controversial within the Jewish community, including reluctance to use his position to pressure the Soviet Union to stop persecuting Jews (which he viewed as not fulfilling American foreign policy objectives) and opposing the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (he feared it would create too high a profile for Jews and ignite antisemitism). He has been quoted as saying: “If it were not for the accident of my birth, I would be antisemitic ... Any people who has been persecuted for two thousand years must be doing something wrong.”

Isaac Bashevis Singer, Literature, 1978



Isaac Bashevis Singer received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1978. His works wrestle with the experience of the Jewish community in a fast-changing world, but also speak to universal human themes.

Born in Poland to a family of rabbis, Singer and his siblings chose to pursue writing over rabbinical school. Singer often wrote about Jewish culture in Poland before the Holocaust, mainly discussing the effects of secularism, modernity and assimilation. He is recognized for his wit, intelligence and descriptions of mysticism and the occult. His debut story, *Af Der Elter*, (*In Old Age*), was published in the Warsaw Literarische Bleter, and his first novel, *Der Sotn in Goray* (*Satan in Goray*) was published in Poland. In 1935, Singer moved to the U.S. and worked for the Yiddish newspaper Forverts while also translating books into Yiddish from Polish, Hebrew and German. Among many others, his most significant works include *Di Family Mushkat* (*The Family Moskat*) and *Der Kuntsnmakher fun Lublin* (*The Magician of Lublin*). He is also acclaimed for his short stories, including the National Book Award-winning *A Crown of Feathers*. Although Singer exclusively wrote in Yiddish, he is most commended for the English translations.

Elie Wiesel, Peace, 1986



Described as “the most important Jew in America” by the Los Angeles Times, Elie Wiesel received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 for “being a messenger to mankind: his message is one of peace, atonement and dignity.” When the Nazis invaded Hungary in 1944, the Wiesel family was deported to Auschwitz. Wiesel’s sister and mother died in the gas chambers, but Wiesel and his father were transported to Buchenwald. There, Wiesel was liberated by American soldiers at the war’s conclusion. He then traveled to a rehabilitation center in France with other child survivors, and in 1948, he moved to Paris where he studied at the Sorbonne and became a journalist for French and Israeli newspapers.

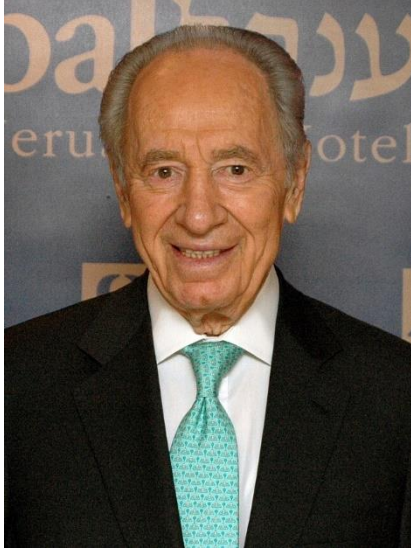
For many years, Wiesel refused to discuss or write about his traumatic experiences, yet Nobel laureate Francois Mauriac encouraged him to help others and himself by opening up that door. Soon enough, his first work *Un di Velt hot Geshvign (And the World Remained Silent)*, was published, and Wiesel became a leading spokesman on the Holocaust. He committed his life to bringing awareness to the genocide that the Nazis committed during World War II. Wiesel wrote 57 books, of which the most famous is *Night*, a novel based on his own experiences in the death camps.

When Wiesel won the Nobel Prize, the committee highlighted Wiesel’s commitment to all repressed peoples. Wiesel ran political campaigns for victims of violence, discrimination and oppression in Kosovo, Sudan and Nicaragua. He also was a founding board member of the New York Human Rights Foundation and chairman of The President’s Commission on the Holocaust. When he received the honor, he declared, “Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant.”

Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Peace, 1994



Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization Yasser Arafat for their efforts to make peace through the Oslo Accords. Born in Jerusalem, Rabin dedicated his life's work to the security and welfare of Israel. He joined the Palmach in 1940 as a soldier and commander, and he ultimately rose in the ranks to become the Israel Defense Force's chief of staff during the Six-Day War. He led his troops to triumph over Egypt, Syria and Jordan, inducing the reunification of Jerusalem. Rabin retired from the army in 1968 and became ambassador to the United States. In 1973, he was elected to the Knesset and eventually became prime minister himself. As prime minister, he signed the Disengagement of Forces Agreements with Syria and Egypt and ultimately became one of the faces of the Oslo peace process.



Shimon Peres immigrated to Palestine in 1934 and joined the Haganah. When Israel achieved independence in 1948, Peres became Israel's head of navy, where he upgraded the state's weapons production and established alliances overseas. He later served as Israel's prime minister (1984-1986 and 1995-1996) and president (2007-2014).

The spirit of the Oslo peace process is perhaps best captured by the famous photo of a handshake between Rabin and Arafat at the White House. A year later, all three were honored with the Nobel Prize. Rabin was assassinated in 1995 by right-wing Jewish extremist Yigal Amir.

Bob Dylan, Literature, 2016



Singer Bob Dylan, born Robert Zimmerman, is probably best known for hit folk songs like "Blowin' in the Wind" and "Like a Rolling Stone." Many of his songs became synonymous with the counterculture of the 1960s. Widely regarded as one of the greatest lyricists of all time, his songs wrestle with the social, philosophical and political struggles of the mid-20th century,

while pushing the boundaries of musical convention. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016 for “creating meaningful poetic expressions within the American musical traditions.”

Born Jewish but not particularly vocal about his religion, Dylan’s work nonetheless evinces Jewish influences, especially in the way he plays with the feeling of being an outsider. Though he briefly converted to Christianity in the 1970s and wrote some overtly Christian songs, many of his songs before and after show marked Jewish influence. The opening verse of “Highway 61 Revisited” (1965), for instance, revisits the biblical Binding of Isaac, and his “Neighborhood Bully” (1983) has been described as a “thinly veiled parable about the Jews.”



Jewish Spiritual Crisis

In America around the turn of the 20th century, Jews had the freedom to not observe religion and rabbis were scarce.

East European Jews had to contend with a religious world radically different from the one they had known across the ocean. In Eastern Europe, Jews understood that for all of the difficulties that they faced, religion defined them; it was an inescapable element of their personhood. They were taxed as Jews and drafted as Jews. Religious affiliation was stamped into their passports and noted on their official documents. When they married or divorced it was done only according to Jewish law, by rabbis authorized by the state.

Indeed, the state recognized Judaism as a legitimate minority faith. Those who sought to observe Jewish laws and customs faced almost no difficulty in doing so, while those who sought to cast off Jewish identity entirely could not do so unless they converted.

Separating State & Synagogue

The situation in the United States was entirely different. Indeed, what made immigration so dangerous, from the perspective of traditional European Judaism, was that religion in America was a purely private and voluntary affair, totally outside of the state's purview. Nobody forced Jews to specify their religion; they were taxed and drafted as human beings only. When a Jew married or divorced in America, it was state law, not Jewish law, that governed the procedure; rabbinic involvement was optional.

Indeed, rabbis enjoyed no official status whatsoever in the United States. As a result, Judaism proved easy enough to abandon, but in the absence of state support, difficult to observe scrupulously.

Partly because of this situation, rabbis could provide immigrants with very little guidance in making the transition from old world to new. In fact, very few East European rabbis even

immigrated to America in the 1880s and 1890s. Rabbi Moses Weinberger, one of these few, claimed in 1887 that in all of New York City there were no more than "three or four" rabbis with the highest level of ordination, allowing them to issue rabbinic decisions based on Jewish law—this in what was already the largest Jewish community in the world. According to another source, there were but 200 rabbis of any kind (including Reform rabbis) nationwide in 1890—fewer than one for every 2,000 Jews.

"Sheep Without a Shepherd."

From a rabbinic perspective, this was a disaster; one rabbi compared immigrants to "sheep without a shepherd." From the perspective of the immigrant "sheep," however, the absence of rabbinic "shepherds" seemed no more problematic than it was to rabbi-less American Jews of earlier eras. Indeed, the immigrants seem to have taken their newfound freedom in stride, which explains why they failed to pay or treat their all-too-scarce rabbis any better than they did.

In New York City, Rabbi Weinberger reported (based in part on personal experience) that immigrant rabbis found positions "only after a great deal of trouble and effort," and even then they lived "penuriously," their small salaries "barely cover[ing] their basic human needs." He counseled Jews of his type to "stay home."

Rabbi Abba Hayim Levinson's experience gave credence to this advice. The poor rabbi trudged all the way up to Rochester, New York, in 1883 to offer his services to the city's East European Orthodox community. Yet, although there was no Orthodox rabbi for miles around, Beth Israel Congregation elected him by only a single vote and then offered him a paltry salary of \$150—far less (as offers many another rabbi also learned to his chagrin) than the \$400 paid to the same congregation's cantor.

In part, this mistreatment may be blamed on the fact that East European Jews were not used to paying for rabbis—back home that was the job of the government or of the organized Jewish community. Some immigrants also harbored longstanding grudges against rabbis based on bad experiences with coercive rabbinic authorities in their home countries.

Even those with no personal ax to grind found that the East European model of the rabbinate was difficult to transplant to America. In Eastern Europe, rabbis tended to define their responsibilities communally; they looked to serve all Jews in a particular territory. In America, organized Jewish communities on the European model did not exist and congregationalism ruled supreme; rabbis were expected to meet the needs of the synagogue members who paid their salaries.

Everyone a Rabbi (or No One)

Democracy, America's entrancing egalitarian ideal, also worked against rabbis' interests, it undermined the deferential social structure that Jews had one accepted, and it subverted rabbis' time-honored scholarly prerogatives. Men devoid of learning and piety, even boorish hand laborers who in their native lands would likely have received scant attention, now felt

themselves to be the rabbi's equal. Some went so far as to usurp rabbinic prerogatives, setting themselves up as teachers, preachers, ritual circumcisers, and (until a change in the law made this illegal) marriage officiators.

Precisely for this reason, many a rabbi and scholar described America as an "upside down world" and recoiled from it. Even some rabbis who had come to America prior to 1900, like Rabbi Weinberger himself, later abandoned the rabbinate and went into business.

The upshot was the collapse among immigrants of spiritual life as East European Jews had traditionally known it, parallel to what had happened in the early 19th-century America, when old religious structures gave way in the face of revolutionary changes. Henceforward, latitudinarianism [freedom of opinion on religious matters] reigned supreme in Jewish immigrant circles: Jews could practice their faith as they saw fit, without rabbinic intrusion.

The best evidence of this collapse may be seen in the astonishing number of immigrant Jews who failed to attend synagogue. Numerous surveys between 1900 and 1917 found that the number of "unsynagogued" Jews exceeded the number of "synagogued" ones by a wide margin. "Out of the estimated Jewish population of one million persons, or two hundred thousand families in the United States, four-fifths are 'unchurched,'" the American Jewish Yearbook calculated in 1900. Some of these, of course, were native-born Jews, but the overwhelming majority were not.

Hebrew - יוֹם

Word (s) of the Week

Day / יוֹם

Pronounced: YOME

***Yom tov* means "[have a] good day."**



A Taste of Jewish Humor

A Friendly Sale

Shmuli Horowitz was having a garage sale and invited some of his neighbors to sell their wares at his place as well. One of Shmuli's neighbors, Brent Mathews, took four tires over and was asking \$30 apiece. Brent needed to leave for a few minutes, so he asked Shmuli to watch the tires for me.

"Sure," Shmuli said, "but if someone offers less, how low are you willing to go?"

"Try your best for more, but I guess I'd be willing to accept \$15," Brent said, and left.

When Brent returned, his tires were gone. "How much did you get for them?" Brent asked excitedly.

"Fifteen dollars each."

"Who bought them?"

"I did!"



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



Crockpot Beef Barley Mushroom Soup Recipe

This gently seasoned beef and barley mushroom soup is a cold weather classic. The simple ingredients come together to form a comforting, glistening and nutritious dish that will fill your home with aromas like what you remember from grandma's kitchen.

A bit about texture: Barley absorbs liquid. It's just a fact of barley soup life that you'll need to add hot liquid (slowly) to achieve the right texture when serving. This soup is rich enough that using a few tablespoons of water will not affect the flavor.

Ingredients

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup barley
- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 lb beef stew or flanken (cubed or in chunks), rinsed and patted dry
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 8 oz portobello mushrooms, quartered
- 4 oz shitake mushrooms, sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 6 carrots, washed or scraped and chopped
- 4 celery stalks, washed and chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 Tbsp fresh dill, chopped (reserve 1–2 Tbsp for garnish)
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 3 cartons beef broth (32 oz each)
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste (better to salt after cooking as some broths are salty)

Instructions

1. Soak barley in cold water 2-3 hours or overnight. Rinse and drain. Place in slow cooker insert.
2. Heat oil in large sauté or cast iron pan. *Do not* use a nonstick surface.
3. Brown chunks of beef 6-8 minutes on each side, allowing space between each piece.
4. Place in slow cooker insert.
5. In the same pan (do not wipe it out) brown onions until golden, 12-15 minutes.
6. Add all mushrooms, stir and cook over medium heat for another 5-10 minutes.
7. Add garlic and sauté 5 minutes.
8. Place all of the above into slow cooker insert.

9. Add chopped carrots, celery, bay leaves, dill, tomato paste and broth. Season with salt and ground pepper.
10. Stir to combine well and set slow cooker to LOW and cook for 8 hours.
11. Remove bay leaves and ladle soup into bowls. Garnish with reserved chopped dill.

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