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Shalom all! Welcome to Torah Notes + PLUS... (at no extra charge 😊)

## **FIRST UP**

**IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE ON THE LIST TO PRAY FOR YOU CAN SEND THEM TO ME 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.**

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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.

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**Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and now advises for the JSI Staff. TOLMM is moving into a new role in conjunction with JSI. TOLMM will provide oversight on Mesharet and Rabbinic students in the JSI classes and courses by offering Semicha (Ordination) as an Elder or Rabbi in Training. A student must be enrolled in the JSI classes and courses to be an Elder or Rabbi in Training.**

**Your support is needed for the Prison Ministry due to continuing rising costs. We now have an Affiliate in Australia.**

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## **POINT OF INFORMATION**

**BOTH RABBI BRANDT AND I HAVE BOOKS LISTED ON AMAZON AND ON HER WEBSITE-SEE BELOW. TO SEARCH FOR MY BOOKS ON AMAZON ENTER “**BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER**”. MINE ARE AVAILABLE IN PRINT OR KINDLE FORMAT.**

FOR RABBI BRANDT'S BOOKS YOU CAN GO TO HER WEBSITE AT [HTTP://WWW.DEBORAHSMESSIANICMINISTRIES.COM/BOOK%20NOOK.HTM](http://www.deborahsmessianicministries.com/book%20nook.htm) TO SEE THE LIBRARY OF BOOKS SHE CARRIES, BOTH THROUGH HER WEBSITE AND ON AMAZON. RABBI BRANDT HAS SEVERAL DEVOTIONALS TO AID YOU IN YOUR WALK WITH MESSIAH YESHUA. SHE TRULY HAS A SERVANT'S HEART FOR MESSIAH.

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## ***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.

Marcia Hedrick would like to host a group on the west side of El Paso in her home. She also needs someone to lead the group while she will be the host. If you are interested let me know and I will send her the information.

Gabriel Martinez has a home group in El Paso (different area). If interested let me know and I will send him the information.

Rabbi Deborah Brandt, Ph.D., is the Director of JSI and has classes and seminars for JSI and has online Bible studies. Contact her at [Rabbindmm@comcast.net](mailto:Rabbindmm@comcast.net). Rabbi Brandt has a Shabbat Service on Zoom and a Bible Study online on Zoom. Contact her for more information. Rabbi Brandt is located Illinois.

Rabbi Phillip Hammond has a Zoom Bible Study and a Shabbat Service on Zoom Sat. morning at 11:00am. Rabbi Hammond is in Australia and the time difference would be 5:00pm Friday Mountain Time. Rabbi Hammond also has a men's group. 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's at <https://www.etz-chayim.org/australia-affiliate/>.

We thank you for your support.

**Blessings in Messiah Yeshua,  
Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph. D**

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



***Message for 4-16-22***

***Message originally sent 4/25/97***

***Pesach - Passover***

***Exodus – Shemoth 33:12-34:26***

***Numbers – Bamidbar 28:19-25***

***Ezekiel 37:1-14***

The entire Seder ceremony is replete with symbolic gestures. We drink four cups of wine to represent four Biblical expressions of redemption. We dip and lean like kings to represent freedom and eat bitter herbs to remind us about the bitter slavery. We also eat other symbolic foods that portray our Egyptian bondage: salt water to remember tears, and charosets, a mixture of apples, nuts, and wine that looks like mortar, to remind us of the laborious years in Egypt.

The service is truly filled with symbolism - some direct, and some seemingly far-fetched - and all the symbols are meant to remind us of the slavery we endured centuries ago. But why not take a direct approach? There are overt ways to declare our gratitude, and there are more immediate ways to mark the celebration. Why don't we just recite the four expressions of redemption as part of the liturgy instead of drinking four cups of wine to symbolize them? Why don't we place mortar on the table instead of making a concoction to represent it? And instead of reminding ourselves of backbreaking work by eating horseradish, why not lift heavy boxes?

A Jewish intellectual in post-war England approached Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, who headed the London Beth Din (Jewish Religious Court), with a cynical question: "In reviewing our

Hagadah service," he sniped, "I was shocked at the insertion of, 'Who Knows One', a childish nursery rhyme, at the end. Why would the sages put a silly rhyme - 'One is Hashem, two are the Tablets, three are the fathers,' and so on, at the end of the solemn, intellectual Seder night service? It is very unbecoming!"

Rabbi Abramsky was not shaken. "If you really want to understand the depth of that song, then you must travel north to the town of Gateshead. There you will find a saintly Jew, Reb Elya Lopian. I want you to discuss the meaning of every aspect of life with him. Ask him what the meaning of the sea and fish are, ask him what the meaning of the sun and the moon is. Then ask him what the meaning is of one, of six, of eleven and so on."

The philosopher was very intrigued. He traveled to Gateshead and located the Yeshiva at which Reb Elya served as the Mashgiach (spiritual advisor). He was led into the room where a saintly looking man greeted him warmly.

"Rabbi, I have many questions," the skeptical philosopher began. "What is the meaning of life?" "What is the essence of the stars?" And so on.....

Rabbi Lopian dealt with each question with patience, depth, and a remarkable clarity. Then the man threw out the baited question. "What is the meaning of the number one?"

Rabbi Lopian's face brightened, his eyes widened, and a broad smile spread across his face. "The meaning of one?" he repeated. "You would like to know the meaning of one? One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth!"

The man was shocked. "What about the depth of the numeral five?"

"Five?" repeated the sage. Why five has tremendous symbolism! It represents the foundation of Judaism - the Five Books of Moses!" The rabbi then went on to explain the mystical connotations that are represented by the number five, and exactly how each Book of the Torah symbolizes a component of the sum.

The man left with a new approach and attitude toward the simplest of our rituals.

At the Seder, we train ourselves to find new meaning in the simple things in life. We teach ourselves to view the seemingly mundane with historical and even spiritual significance. We should remember that when Moshe saw a burning yet non-consumed bush, he realized that his nation is similar - constantly persecuted and harassed, yet never consumed. At our Seder, we view horseradish not as a condiment for gefilte fish, but as representative of our suffering. The Matzoh is no longer a low-fat cracker but symbolizes the hardships of exile and the speed of our redemption. In addition, we finish the Seder with a simple song that reminds everyone at the Seder, next time you ask, "who's number one?" don't accept the answer: the New York Yankees or the Chicago Bulls - think on a higher plane! One is Hashem in the heaven and the earth!

***Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes would take the water of life as a gift.***

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I 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.

*NOTE: I 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, I must beg to differ, because I have seen it over my life as a Jewish Believer in Yeshua. I have been a Believer in Messiah Yeshua since 1976. I have seen a lot and had many discussions with my 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.*

## ***A TRADITIONAL TORAH AND HAFTARAH COMMENTARY...***



## **Biblical Readings for Passover**

***The selections highlight different aspects of the holiday.***

Following is a summary of the special Torah readings and Haftarah readings for the days of Passover.

## First Day

### Torah Reading

In the Torah reading (Exodus 12:21-51), Moses instructs the elders of Israel in all of the laws of Passover. All generations to come are to observe the Passover traditions. In addition, the children of succeeding generations are to be instructed at Passover as to the origin and significance of the festival.

The Torah reading concludes with the last of the 10 plagues: the slaying of the Egyptian firstborn. Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron and tells them that he wants them out of Egypt as soon as possible. Moses and Aaron comply, and the children of Israel begin to make a quick exit, not allowing time for their bread to rise.

### Haftarah Reading

The Haftarah is taken from the Book of Joshua (Joshua 5:2-6:1, 6:27) and describes the historic Passover that the Israelites observed at Gilgal after they had crossed the Jordan River. It was the first celebration of Passover in the Holy Land. In preparation for Passover observance, all of the Israelite males were circumcised. They then ate the first *matzot* made from wheat in the Holy Land. [In the Reform tradition Isaiah 43:1-15 is the prophetic reading for the first day of Passover. This reading, which contains a reference to crossing the Red Sea, is a reminder of God's role as Redeemer.]

## Second Day

### Torah Reading

In the Torah reading (Leviticus 22:26-23:44), Moses instructs the Israelites in the observance of the Sabbath and festivals. The reading presents a comprehensive description of the sacred seasons of the Jewish year, including Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.

### Haftarah Reading

The Haftarah for the second day of Passover (II Kings 23:1-9, 21-25) was chosen because of its account of the great Passover celebrated after King Josiah's reformation. In the 18th year of his reign (621 BCE), during the course of repairs to the Temple, a scroll of the Torah (possibly the Book of Deuteronomy) was discovered. King Josiah was so stirred by its message that he proceeded to vigorously cleanse the Temple of all idolatry. Part of the account of his reform prefaces the description of his celebration of Passover in the Haftarah, and thus its selection as the Haftarah of the second day of Passover.

## The Intermediate Shabbat

### Shabbat Torah

(Exodus 33:12-34:26) After Israel worshipped the golden calf, Moses shattered the first set of tablets. Now Moses again ascends Mount Sinai in order to receive the new set of tablets. Moses pleads for God's assurance of support. God reassures Moses and also reveals His 13 divine attributes. Moses then brings down a new set of tablets with the Ten Commandments.

### Shabbat Haftarah

The Haftarah is taken from the Book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37:1-14). The prophet finds himself in a valley of dry bones and, under the vivifying effect of God's spirit, the bones knit together and become covered with flesh. Ezekiel understands this vision to mean that the people of Israel, having been exiled to Babylon, will again be reborn as a nation.

Both the fact that Passover, recalling past deliverances, looks forward to future redemption and an old tradition that the resurrection of the dead will take place during Passover determined the choice of this passage as the Haftarah for the Intermediate Sabbath of Passover.

### Seventh Day

#### Torah Reading

The Torah reading (Exodus 13:17-15:26) describes Israel's experiences following the exodus. Pharaoh mobilizes the Egyptian army and begins his pursuit of the fleeing Israelites. When Moses and the children of Israel reach the Red Sea, Moses raises his rod, the waters split apart, and the Israelites are miraculously saved. When the Egyptians reach the water, they become bogged down, sink to the bottom, and drown. Moses and the children of Israel sing a magnificent song of thanksgiving.

#### Haftarah Reading

The Haftarah (Second Samuel 22) connects to the theme of thanksgiving in the Torah reading. In the Haftarah, King David composes his own song of thanksgiving to God for all of his victories and deliverances from the enemy. The Haftarah concludes with this sentence, which is also included at the conclusion of the grace after meals, "A tower of salvation of His king, who shows mercy to His anointed, to David and to his heirs forever" (Second Samuel 22:51).

### Eighth Day

#### Torah Reading

The Torah reading for the eighth day of Passover (Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17) deals with a variety of laws, including those related to tithes, the year of release, the release of slaves, and a comprehensive description of the three pilgrimage festivals.

## Haftarah Reading

The Haftarah, from the Book of Isaiah ( [Isaiah 10:32-12:6](#) ), begins with a prediction that Assyria will be defeated. This prophecy comes true. The Haftarah continues with Isaiah's message of hope that the Israelites will again be gathered together from lands of exile and return to Israel.

The Haftarah also contains the famous great vision of the Messianic Era when peace and harmony will reign supreme among all people. Because the Haftarah contains several allusions to the redemption from Egypt, it was especially chosen to be chanted on the last day of Passover.

## The Song of Songs

It is customary to read the biblical book Song of Songs on the intermediate Shabbat of Passover. (In 2018, there is no intermediate Shabbat, so it is read on the final day of the holiday, which coincides with Shabbat.) Rabbinic tradition interprets the book as a love song, where the "beloved" is taken to mean God and "the bride" to mean the congregation of Israel. This tradition made the Song of Songs especially appropriate to Passover, because it marked, as it were, the beginning of the courtship of Israel and God before, metaphorically speaking, they became finally wedded at Mount Sinai by Israel's acceptance of the Torah.

Another reason given for the reading of this book on Passover is that it is a song of the spring. To the poet and the singer, spring is synonymous with hope and happiness. A people's hope lies in its freedom and its attachment to the law of God. This, too, is the lesson of Passover, for which the people of Israel have fought since they left Egyptian servitude, and this is the eternal message it wishes to convey to the whole of the human race.

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## *Jewish Tidbits...*



***Passover celebrates the biblical exodus from Egypt, but its focus on freedom in general has earned it a special place on the Jewish calendar. More Jews participate in a seder than any other Jewish ritual. How much do you know about Passover history and rituals?***

### QUESTION 1 OF 10

What do we do for the prophet Elijah at the seder?

- *Open the door for him and pour him a cup of wine*
- *Ask him to bring needy families to join our seder*
- *Bless him for taking care of baby boys at their brit milah*
- *Leave a piece of matzah for him*

**QUESTION 2 OF 10**

True or False: Ritual hand washing takes place at the seder twice.

- *True*
- *False*

**QUESTION 3 OF 10**

What is Maot Hittin?

- *Assisting the poor during Purim*
- *Money give to the poor to purchase wheat for making matzah*
- *A special kind of haroset made from pears*
- *An organization that collects clothes for the homeless*

**QUESTION 4 OF 10**

Passover celebrates

- *God leading the Israelites out from slavery in Egypt to freedom*
- *God giving the Israelites the Torah in the desert*
- *The finishing of the Torah and starting it over*
- *The building of the Temple*

**QUESTION 5 OF 10**

In medieval Europe, what was the most pressing problem that Jews faced around Passover?

- *They lived in the ghettos, making it hard to hold a proper seder*
- *They were too poor to make matzah and buy the wine*
- *There was no problem, they celebrated Passover just fine*

- *It was illegal for them to celebrate any Jewish holiday*
- *Widespread accusations of blood libel*

**QUESTION 6 OF 10**

**A cup of wine is included for what prophet**

- *Elijah*
- *Obadiah*
- *Jeremiah*
- *Moses*
- *Malachi*

**QUESTION 7 OF 10**

**Which step of the seder includes the retelling of the story of the Exodus?**

- *Kadesh*
- *Karpas*
- *Maggid*
- *Nirtzah*

**QUESTION 8 OF 10**

**The earliest version of the Four Questions was preserved by**

- *Christian Monks*
- *The Tannaim*
- *The Jerusalem Talmud*
- *Pirkei Avot*

**QUESTION 9 OF 10**

**The song Had Gadya is about**

- *One stick*
- *The Ten Commandments*

- *One Goat*
- *Two Tablets*

**QUESTION 10 OF 10**

**Which of the following generally are not considered kitniyot (legumes)**

- *Beans*
- *Rice*
- *Bananas*
- *Corn*
- *Peanuts*

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## Prayer



## Passover (Pesach) In the Community

*Although the central ritual of this festival is the home seder, there are a number of rituals that are observed within the wider community.*

Passover—*Pesach* in Hebrew— is usually marked as a family celebration of Jewish freedom. Although the central ritual of this festival is the home *seder*, there are a number of rituals that are observed within the wider community.

### Pre-Passover Observances

In the six weeks preceding Passover, there are a number of special Sabbaths, during which additional or special biblical readings are included in the service. The readings and special days relate to purification rites (*Shabbat Parah*), the month of *Nisan* in which Passover falls (*Shabbat*

*Ha-Chodesh*), or a time to request instruction on the observances of the upcoming festival (*Shabbat HaGadol*).

Finally, the day just before Passover is one of the minor fast days of the year. Called the Fast of the Firstborn, it is for firstborn males to commemorate the fact that no Jewish firstborn males were killed when the Angel of Death visited the homes of the Egyptians.

One of the ethical components of Passover is called *Ma'ot Chittim*, literally “money for wheat.” It is a tax imposed on the congregation in the period leading up to Passover to raise money so that the poor can buy wheat to bake matzah and buy other special foods required for the festival. Even though most congregations would not formally impose such a tax, it is very common in Jewish communities throughout the world to carry on with this custom by raising money or sending out Passover food baskets for the poor.

The first and last days of Passover are full festival days, when traditional Jews do not work. Traditional Jews outside of Israel observe the first two and last two days as full festivals, while in Israel and among liberal Jews worldwide, it is just one day at each end of the festival.

### Synagogue Services During Passover

The synagogue services of Passover begin with the evening service prior to the seder. A unique feature at this festival service is the omission of the *Kiddush* (blessing over the wine). On Passover it is assumed that even the poorest will have wine or be invited to a home where Kiddush will be recited at the seder.

The morning service of Passover is distinguished by the reading of the excerpt from Exodus chapter 12 that discusses the Passover celebration. The traditional haftarah (prophetic) reading is from Joshua chapters 5 and 6, which contains the first mention of the Passover festival in the prophets. The Reform haftarah reading is from Isaiah 43 wherein the prophet reminds the people of God’s protection throughout history and cites the salvation at the sea as the primary example. Hallel is recited as part of the service. On the last days of Passover only a shortened version of Hallel is recited. One of the special additions to the first-day Passover service is the prayer for dew, “*Tefillat Tal*.” This parallels the prayer for rain recited during the Fall holiday of Shemini Atzeret.

On the Sabbath that falls during Passover, the special reading is *Shir ha-Shirim* (Song of Songs), one of the *megillot* or five scrolls. The Torah reading contains parts of either Exodus 13, 14, or 15, depending on the particular synagogue’s tradition. It is the story of the crossing of the Red (Reed) Sea. The haftarah is from Second Samuel 22, another prayer of deliverance. This time David is saved from the hand of Saul. The last day of Passover is one of the four times of the year we recite *Yizkor*, the memorial service for the dead.

## Counting the Omer and Hol Ha Moed

The Counting of the Omer (*"Sefirat HaOmer"*) commences on the second night of the holiday. Omer was the measure of barley brought to the Temple on the second day of Passover as an offering for the beginning of the harvest. The days will then be counted publicly for seven weeks (a week of weeks), which culminates on the 50th day with Shavuot.

The intermediate days of Passover, called *"Hol HaMoed,"* are semi-holidays, on which Jews are permitted to work. Traditionally, the Torah is read in the synagogue every morning of Passover. The haftarah for the intermediate days is from Ezekiel [37](#), which contains the vision of the dry bones being resurrected by God.

Passover is truly one of the richest and most profound of Jewish festivals, combining historical and agricultural symbols, practices, and rituals, which together constitute a holiday that is a treasure box revealing layers upon layers of significance.

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## *Food for Thought*



## Hol Hamoed: The Intermediate Days of Passover

*Although they are not full festivals, they are still holy relative to ordinary days.*

The intermediate (*hol*) festival days (*hamoed*) — days three through six or two through six in Israel and for the Reform — have a special designation. Although they are not full festivals, they are still holy relative to ordinary days. Leviticus refers to them as *mikra'ei kodesh*, days of sanctity. Even though there are no biblical prohibitions against work or travel, the rabbis ruled that gainful work is forbidden (you can work if material loss would occur). This was to distinguish the time from normal weekdays and provide greater opportunity for Torah.

We read the Torah in synagogue on each intermediate day, conduct the *Musaf* (additional) service ordained for Shabbat and festivals [except in the Reform tradition], and recite the partial *Hallel* [Psalms of praise]. Because only part is said on the seventh day, which is a full festival, we cannot elevate a semi-festival above it.

