



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 8-27-22 - REEH**

### ***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 an approved Giving Charity by PayPal. To donate go to [etz-chayim.org](http://etz-chayim.org) and click on the PayPal 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.

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 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.

## **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.

FOR RABBI HAMMOND'S BOOK GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

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



## MESSAGE FOR 8-27-22

*Message originally shared on 8/29/97*

*Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17*

*Isaiah 54:11-55:5*

*John 7:37-52*

**Deuteronomy 11:26-28** See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: *The blessing, when you obey the commands of Adonai your Elohim which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commands of Adonai your Elohim but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other mighty ones which you have not known.*

**Deuteronomy 12:28** *Guard, and obey all these words which I command you, that it might be well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the eyes of Adonai your Elohim.*

The word "re'eh," meaning "see" or "behold," is given in the singular, whereas "lifneichem," "before you," is said in the plural.

Jewish commentary explains that this verse hints to a saying of our Rabbis (Talmud Kiddushin 40): a person should always view the world as if it is half good and half bad, or half meritorious and half lacking. If he does even one Mitzvah – good deed, then he tilts the scales and the entire world

is found meritorious; but if he commits even one transgression, then he tilts them the other way, and the entire world is found lacking.

Therefore, the verse tells each individual: see (in your mind) that I am placing the entire world in front of you, blessing and curse, and you control the scales...

People tend to view themselves only as individuals, and often resent interference from others. But there is a famous parable about a group of people traveling in a boat. One takes out a drill, and he begins to make a hole in the boat beneath his seat. When the other passengers protest, he responds "why is this your business? I'm making a hole beneath my seat! Leave me alone!" But when the water comes in, everyone will sink.

This parable drives home the idea that we are all interconnected. Yes, we are all responsible as individuals for our own actions, but we must also realize that everything we do affects those around us.

**Isaiah 55:1-5 Oh, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. And you who have no silver, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without silver and without price. *Why do you weigh out silver for what is not bread, and your labor for what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to Me, and eat what is good, and let your being delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, so that your being lives. And let Me make an everlasting covenant with you, the trustworthy kindnesses of David. See, I have given Him as a witness to the people, a Leader and a Commander for the people. See, a nation you do not know you shall call, and a nation who does not know you run to you, because of Adonai your Elohim, and the Set-apart One of Yisrael, for He has adorned you.***

**John 7:37-38 And on the last day, the great day of the festival, Y'shua stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me, and let him who believes in Me drink. *As the Scripture said, out of His innermost shall flow rivers of living water.*"**

An interesting sidenote is that the Scriptures here talk about the living water and that there was a ceremony done in the time of Y'shua that involved a water ceremony. In our study of Sukkot, we will cover this ceremony and its meaning.

**Deuteronomy 14:2 For you are a set-apart people to Adonai your Elohim, and Adonai has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a**

treasured possession above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

*Deuteronomy 12:32 All the words I am commanding you, guard to do it – do not add to it nor take away from it.*

*Revelation 22:17-19 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And he who hears, let him say, Come! And he who thirsts, come! And he who desires it, take the water of life without paying! For I witness to everyone hearing the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, Elohim shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, Elohim shall take away his part from the Book of Life, and out of the set-apart city, which are written in this Book.*

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We include a Traditional Torah Commentary and my Messianic Commentary. The reason for this is so you can see a Messianic Perspective and a Traditional Jewish one. Remember to use discernment in approaching Traditional Jewish teachings as they do not recognize Yeshua as the Messiah. There are various ideas in traditional Jewish circles about the Messiah and even that there is no Messiah, the thinking in Reform Judaism. So, please be careful to balance the teachings.

We do not agree with the Jewish position on Yeshua, but Believers need to know the Jewish thinking on Yeshua and not buy into this thinking and forsake faith in our Messiah. For those who say they would never do this, we must beg to differ, because we have seen it over our lives as Jewish Believer's in Yeshua. We have been Believer's in Messiah Yeshua for decades. We have seen a lot and had many discussions with our fellow Jews and non-Jews who ultimately turned away from Yeshua because they steeped themselves in Jewish teachings. One does not come out of either traditional Judaism or Christianity and come into the Messianic walk, and then going back, or into, traditional Judaism. *There are many good things in Judaism but denying Yeshua as Messiah is not one of them.* Berachot (Blessings), Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

## **A TRADITIONAL JEWISH PARASHAH AND HAFTARAH COMMENTARY**



## **Parashat Re'eh: Summary Deu. 11:26-16:17**

***Moses instructs the Israelites regarding idolatry, false prophets, clean and unclean foods, tithes, freeing slaves, and the pilgrimage festivals.***

In his last speech to the Israelites, Moses warns them, “If you follow God’s laws, you will be blessed more than all the peoples of the earth. However, if you worship false idols and ignore the other commandments, then you shall be cursed and perish.

“These are the statutes which you are to carry out. You shall utterly destroy the places where the nations, whose property you are taking over, served other gods. You shall destroy their altars, break up their memorial stones, burn down their sacred trees, cut down the images of their gods, and you shall obliterate their gods from that place.

“Then, from among all your tribes, God will choose a place to give God’s Name habitation. When you search for the manifestation of God’s Presence, you will come to this place that God chooses. It is there that you will bring offerings and donations. There, before God, shall you eat with family and servants and the Levites, who have no portion or inheritance. All will rejoice before God.

“Take care to make offerings only in the place where the Lord chooses. But whenever you desire, you may slaughter and eat meat in any of your settlements, according to the blessing that the Lord God has granted you, but you must not partake of the blood. You shall pour blood out on the ground like water.

“You must not eat your tithes of new grain or wine or oil or the firstlings of your flocks or any of your offerings. These you and your household must consume before the Lord your God in the place that the Lord your God will choose.

“Take heed that you do not follow the lead of the nations who once dwelled in your land. Do not inquire about their gods or how to serve them. For everything that is detested by God, everything God hates, have they done. For they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire for their gods.

“Do not add or subtract from these commandments. If there arises among you a prophet or receiver of dreams, and if he gives you a sign and that sign comes to pass, and if he then says, ‘Let us go after other gods and serve them,’ stop. Do not hearken to that person’s words, because God is testing you with this to know whether you truly love your God with all your heart and all your soul. You shall only follow and fear your God.

“Then the receiver of dreams shall be put to death, for he has uttered untruth concerning God, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of slavery. Do not listen to anyone, family or friend, who urges you to follow other gods. Rather you, yourself, must bring him to death for leading you away from God.

“You are the sons of God, your God, so do not cut yourselves nor shave your heads in mourning.

“You shall not eat anything abhorrent. You may eat any animal that has true hoofs that are cleft in two and brings up the cud, like sheep, goats and oxen. Those with a cleft hoof, you may not eat, like camel and rabbits. Also, the pig, for though it has true hoofs it does not bring up its cud, so it is unclean.

“Of all that live in the water, you may eat anything that has fins and scales. You may eat any clean bird. You may not eat the eagle, the vulture, raven hawks, owls, storks and bats among others. All winged swarming things are unclean for you. You shall not eat anything that has died a natural death—give it to the stranger in your community to eat or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God.

“You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk. You shall set aside every year a tenth part of all the yield from your produce. Every third year, you shall have a full tithe on your field and leave it within your settlements. During that time the Levite who has no hereditary portion, and the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow in your settlements shall come and eat their fill, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your enterprises.

“Every seventh year, you shall practice a release. Every kinsman creditor shall release from his hand his debt. The debtor may no longer claim payment because of this release for the sake of God. In the promised land, you shall open up your hand to the needy and lend him what is sufficient for his need, for what he lacks.

“You shall free your Hebrew slave in the seventh year. Do not send him away to freedom empty handed but provide for him out of your flock and your wine press, that which your God has blessed for you. Remember that you were once a slave in Egypt when God redeemed you. If, however, the slave wants to stay, then he may do so as a bondsman or handmaid.

“Remember to make the offerings of the firstlings and make sacrifices to God with clean animals, those which are neither lame nor blind or blemished. Keep the Pesach offering to God, your God; for that is the eternal reminder of the time when God took you out of slavery to

freedom. You shall only eat unleavened bread for seven days in this memory of our God-given exodus. There shall be a Sabbath on the seventh day of this Passover holiday.

“Then, count seven weeks, and you shall come to the Festival of Weeks. Then you shall give a gift of your hand to God, such that God will bless you and you shall rejoice before the Lord. You will rejoice with your family and servants, with the Levites, with stranger, orphan and widow in your midst. You will come in the place that God will choose to give God’s presence.

“Then in the Festival of huts, You shall make huts and celebrate before God for all the produce, all the harvests, in all the work of your hands.

“Three times each year shall all your males appear in the immediate Presence of your God, in the place that God will choose: on the Festival of Matzah, on the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Huts. He shall not appear in the immediate Presence of God empty-handed. Every person must give according to the gift of his hand, in accordance with the blessing of God, your God, that God has given you.

### Parashat Re’eh Discussion Questions

- 1) In everyday life, how do you think God blesses and curses us?
- 2) Why is what we eat so important that Moses adds it to his last speech before the people?
- 3) What does it mean that in the promised land God will choose a place to give God’s Name habitation? Is there such a place in your community?

## Haftarah for Re’eh Isaiah 54:11-55:5

### *God promises to rebuild and restore Zion.*

In the seven weeks after Tisha B’Av we read a series of haftarot from the book of Isaiah that focus on themes of consolation. These haftarot are meant to comfort a nation that has just mourned for the destruction of its most sacred space and the exile from its homeland.

Isaiah’s prophecy in the haftarah selection for Re’eh focuses on how the downtrodden Israelites will once again rise to glory. Their buildings will be made of precious stones, their children will be raised in peace, and their cities will be safe. God reminds the people that no harm can come to them without His consent. If He decides that they will be strengthened and restored, this will happen. Isaiah promises that with the God’s help, the people of Israel will be invincible.

In the second half of the haftarah, God continues in the same vein, but adds a stipulation: the people must turn to Him in order to reap the rewards He promises. “Give heed to Me, and you shall eat choice food and enjoy the richest dishes” (55:2). God promises that just as He brought

David up from his common roots, and made him royalty, so shall the people be lifted out of their destitute situation.

This haftarah is also part of the haftarah for Parashat Noach.

**From the Desk of  
Rabbi Philip Hammond**  
*Coming Soon...*

**Can You Believe It?**



## Jewish Custom (Minhag) Versus Law (Halacha)

***Though often widely practiced, customs are not considered mandatory by traditional Jews.***

A Jewish custom — known in Hebrew as a minhag — is a religious practice that, though sometimes very widely practiced, does not carry the force of Jewish law and is thus not considered mandatory by traditional Jews.

Customs cover an extremely wide range of Jewish rituals, from variations in the order or language of particular prayers to swinging a chicken over one's head prior to Yom Kippur to the nearly universal practice of smashing a glass at the conclusion of a wedding ceremony. Customs typically have folk origins, but there are instances in which they may have been imposed by religious authorities. Other customs were maintained for so long and adopted so widely that they have become enshrined as obligations in Jewish legal codes and are no longer, strictly speaking, customs at all. Still others may have been adapted from practices of the cultures in which Jews lived and were only later sanctioned by Jewish authorities.

### Halacha (Jewish Law) vs. Minhag (Custom)

Jewish law is called halacha (literally the path or the way) and is grounded in the Torah itself or later rabbinic rulings.

In the former category are obligations that are explicit in the Bible, such as prohibitions on murder, idol worship and certain sexual behavior.

Rabbinic laws are of two types:

1. A *gezerah* (literally “fence”) is a rabbinic rule imposed to serve as a guard against violating a more serious prohibition, such as the ban on touching objects used to perform forbidden actions on the Sabbath;

2. A *takkanah* (literally remedy or fixing) is a piece of rabbinic legislation enacted for some other purpose, such as the celebration of the holiday of Hanukkah.

Customs are established practices that are not legally obligatory and do not derive from biblical or rabbinic mandates. They cover a very broad range of religious practices, including (but not limited to):

1. The manner, order and liturgy of prayer;
2. Certain wedding rituals;
3. Styles of Torah chanting and of decorative Torah scroll coverings;
4. Various holiday practices.

### Sephardic Custom vs. Ashkenazi Custom



Mimouna celebration hosted by North African Israeli families in Ashkelon, April 2013. (U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv/Wikimedia)

Many customs differ based on Jews' ethnicities — Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews observe many different customs from one another. Among them is the custom that Ashkenazi men begin wearing a prayer shawl only once they are married, while Sephardic custom is generally from a boy's bar mitzvah. (Many liberal Jewish women also wear prayer shawls.)

However, there are also a vast number of variations in customs even among Ashkenazi and Sephardic subgroups. The post-Passover celebration of Mimouna, for example, is a custom that originated among the Sephardic Jews of North Africa. The wearing of long curled earlocks (payot) is a custom practiced generally only by Hasidic Ashkenazi Jews.

### From Custom to Law

Some practices that began as customs became so well established in Jewish life that they are now broadly considered obligatory. One example is the wearing of a kippah by men. (Many liberal Jewish women also wear kippot.) The practice was described in the Talmud as the pious habit of a particular rabbi and codified by later rabbinic authorities as required at particular times — for Maimonides, during prayer ; for the Shulchan Aruch, when walking more than four cubits. (The Shulchan Aruch elsewhere records the view of some authorities that it is forbidden to recite God's name when not wearing a head covering.) In the 20th century, the American Orthodox authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein issued a special

dispensation for men to not wear a kippah at work if necessary — implying that the practice is generally obligatory.

Another example is the Ashkenazi ban on eating rice, lentils and legumes — known as kitniyot — during Passover. Though the practice of avoiding rice on Passover is noted in the Talmud, it only came into force as a broad ban centuries later. The ban remains in force among most Ashkenazi Jews today, though the Conservative movement, in a 2015 decision, overturned it.

Over the centuries, rabbinic authorities have employed various formulations to describe the obligatory nature of longstanding customs. When discussing the practice of observing a second day of festivals outside of Israel — originally instituted to ensure the proper day of the holiday was observed in places where word of the new month took a long time to arrive — the Talmud asks why the practice persists even after the establishment of a fixed calendar made it unnecessary. The Talmud replies: “Take care to observe the customs of your fathers that you received.” The Tosafot (scholars in 12th- and 13th-century France and Germany) commentary to the talmudic tractate Menachot asserts that the customs of our fathers are equivalent to Torah commands. And Maimonides, in the introduction to his Mishneh Torah, writes that it is forbidden to depart from customs that came into practice with rabbinic sanction.

### Non-obligatory Customs

Contemporary Jewish life is replete with examples of customs that have no obvious basis in biblical or rabbinic law but are nonetheless practiced — sometimes widely, sometimes only by particular communities. In the former category are various customs for Jewish weddings, including the bedeken ceremony — said to be inspired by the tricking of the biblical patriarch Jacob into marrying Leah instead of Rachel, but not mandated by the Bible or the Talmud — and the breaking of the glass at the ceremony conclusion. The latter custom, noted in the Talmud but not presented there as a religious obligation, was, only after it had been observed for generations, accorded a Jewish explanation: At the moment of our greatest happiness, we remind ourselves of the destruction of the ancient temple in Jerusalem.

A controversial practice — never mentioned in the Torah or Talmud and fiercely opposed by some rabbinic authorities — is the custom of kapparot prior to Yom Kippur, in which a live chicken is symbolically invested with a person’s sins and then ritually slaughtered. Most Jews have abandoned the practice entirely, or perform it with money instead of a chicken, but it is still common among Hasidic Jews. A more popular High Holidays custom — based on a biblical verse but coming into practice only in the 13th century — is the ritual of Tashlich, in which a person symbolically casts his or her sins into a moving body of water on Rosh Hashanah.

Some customs are practiced by only small minorities of Jews. German Jews, for example, ritually wash their hands before reciting the Kiddush prayer over wine at the Sabbath meal, while most other Jews wash their hands after drinking the wine. Some Jews stand for the Kiddush, others sit, and some stand for the first half and sit for the second half.

Among the Jews of Gibraltar, sand is added to the charoset dish on Passover to enhance its symbolism of the bricks used by the Hebrew slaves to build in ancient Egypt. Another unusual Passover custom, practiced by Persian Jews, is to whip seder participants with scallions in remembrance of the pain of bondage.

## Prayer Points



## 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.

**Hebrew - עֵבְרִי**  
**Word (s) of the Week**

הֵלָכָה - HA-LA-CHA

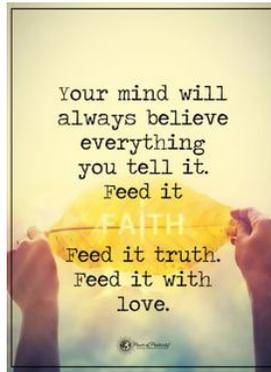
Pronounced: Ha-lah-Chah, Origin: Hebrew, according to Jewish law, complying with Jewish law.

***Let there be Laughter***

***A doctor gave a man six months to live. The man couldn't pay his bill, so the doctor gave him another six months.***



## Chicken Soup or What???



## Summer Pesto and Gruyere Stuffed Challah

*There are few things better than a freshly baked challah. But sometimes even perfection needs a little shake-up.*

There are few things better than a freshly baked challah. But sometimes even perfection needs a little shake-up. Or perhaps more accurately, a little stuffing.

I have experimented stuffing challah with sweet combinations like my Balsamic Apple Date Challah and super savory varieties like my Pastrami Sandwich Challah. But I had been hankering to try something with a little summer flare to it.

This latest stuffed challah is a bit lighter than both my previous stuffed challah experiments, with brightness from fresh herbs and just a touch of richness from the cheese.

And the truth is you can stuff your challah with any pesto variation you like: kale pesto, fresh herb pesto or a traditional basil-pine nut pesto.

Don't want to include cheese? Just leave it out. You will still have a deliciously unique stuffed challah experience.

### Pesto and Gruyere Stuffed Challah

#### Ingredients

#### For the pesto:

1 bunch fresh garlic scapes, trimmed

1 garlic clove

1/2 cup fresh spinach, steamed

2-3 Tbsp fresh parsley

2-3 Tbsp fresh basil

1/2-3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

For the challah:

1.5 Tbsp yeast

1 tsp sugar

1 1/4 cup lukewarm water

4 1.2-5 cups King Arthur flour

3/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1/2 Tbsp salt

2 large eggs

3/4 cup shredded gruyere or crumbled goat cheese

1 egg yolk + 1 tsp water for glaze

Thick sea salt, sesame seeds and dried herbs (optional)

## Directions

### **To make the pesto:**

Place garlic scapes, garlic clove, spinach, basil and parsley in a food processor fitted with blade attachment. Start pulsing. Drizzle olive oil and continue to pulse. Scrape down sides with rubber spatula, add salt and pepper to taste and pulse until desired smoothness.

Place in an air-tight container until ready to use.

*\*Note: after steaming spinach, make sure to remove excess water very thoroughly.*

### **To make the challah:**

In a small bowl, place yeast, 1 tsp sugar and lukewarm water. Allow to sit around 10 minutes, until it becomes foamy on top.

In a large bowl or stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, mix together 1 1/2 cups flour, salt, and sugar. After the water-yeast mixture has become foamy, add to flour mixture along with oil. Mix thoroughly.

Add another cup of flour and eggs until smooth. Switch to the dough hook attachment if you are using a stand mixer.

Add another 1 1/2 cups flour and then remove from bowl and place on a floured surface. Knead remaining flour into dough, continuing to knead for around 10 minutes (or however long your hands will last).

Place dough in a greased bowl and cover with damp towel. Allow to rise 3-4 hours.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

After the challah is done rising, roll out dough into a large rectangle about ½-1 inch thick on a lightly floured surface. The challah dough may need an extra dusting of flour to work with at this point.

Spread a thin, very even layer of pesto all over the dough. You may have extra pesto leftover. Sprinkle gruyere or goat cheese in an even layer on top of pesto, leaving ½ inch border all around.

Working quickly, start rolling up the dough towards you. Try and keep the roll relatively tight as you go. Pinch the end and tuck under when you finish.

Create a pinwheel shaped challah by snaking the dough around and around in a circle around itself. When finished, tuck the end under the challah neatly and pinch lightly. This doesn't have to be perfect.

*Alternatively, you can split challah into three even sections and then roll into snakes. Flatten each piece slightly and fill with pesto and cheese. Pinch ends back up tightly and roll out slightly. Braid as usual. Makes two challot if you use this method*

Allow challah to rise another 30-60 minutes, or until you can see the size has grown.

Beat 1 egg yolk with 1 tsp water. Brush liberally over challah. If desired, combine 2 tsp thick sea salt with 1 tsp sesame seeds, 1 tsp dried basil and 1 tsp dried parsley and sprinkle on top of egg wash.

Bake for 26-27 minutes, or until middle looks like it has just set, and the color is golden.

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