



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 11-5-22 LECH LECHA

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.

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Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is an approved Giving Charity by PayPal. To donate go to 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. Gabriel is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM as is his Home Group, Ohr Ha'Brit Messianic Assembly.

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/>.

Elder Shawn Warren is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM and helps with one-on-one correspondence with inmates in our Prison Ministry Outreach.

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 11-5-22 LECH LECHA

Message originally shared 10/23/99

Lech L'Cha – go forth, yourself!

Genesis 12:1-17:27

Isaiah 40:27-41:16

Acts 7:1-8; Heb. 7:1-19

In the Sidra/Parashah Lech L'cha ("Go forth") (Genesis 12), Abraham and Sarah and their household are told: *Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you* (12:1). Thus, their great adventure begins, and above all it is an inner journey, symbolized by the establishment of a covenant between Abraham and Yahweh. The Sidra sums it up with the words: *Walk along before Me and be pure of heart* (17:1).

We begin a journey at birth, whose destination we discover as we go along. In our journey we learn, as did Abraham and Sarah, that wonders, and trials abound along the way.

Bereisheet-Genesis 12:1-4a

¹ *Yahweh said to Abram, "Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you." ^{4a} So Abram went as Yahweh had spoken to him...*

Bereisheet-Genesis 17:4-7

⁴ *"As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be a father of a multitude of nations; ⁵ your name shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you*

the father of a multitude of nations; ⁶ I will make you most exceedingly fruitful and make nations of you; and kings shall descend from you. ⁷ I will ratify My covenant between Me and you and between your offspring after you, throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant, to be a God(s) to you and to your offspring after you.

Yesha'yahu-Isaiah 41:8-10

⁸ But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, offspring of Abraham, who loved Me: ⁹ whom I have grasped from the ends of the earth, I have summoned you from its leaders, and I have said to you, "You are My servant, I have chosen you and not despised you." ¹⁰ Fear not for I am with you, do not go astray for I am Your God; I have strengthened you, even helped you, even supported you with My righteous right hand.

Acts 7:1-8

7:1 The *cohen hagadol* asked, "Are these accusations true?" ² and Stephen said: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to Avraham *avinu* in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran ³ and said to him, 'Leave your land and your family, and go into the land that I will show you.' ⁴ So he left the land of the Kasdim and lived in Haran. After his father died, God made him move to this land where you are living now. ⁵ He gave him no inheritance in it, not even space for one foot; yet he promised to give it to him as a possession and to his descendants after him, even though at the time he was childless. ⁶ What God said to him was, 'Your descendants will be aliens in a foreign land, where they will be in slavery and oppressed for four hundred years. ⁷ But I will judge the nation that enslaves them,' God said, 'and afterwards they will leave and worship me in this place.' ⁸ And he gave him *b'rit-milah*. So he became the father of Yitz'chak and did his *b'rit-milah* on the eighth day, and Yitz'chak became the father of Ya'akov, and Ya'akov became the father of the Twelve Patriarchs. (CJB)

Bereisheet-Genesis 14:18-20

¹⁸ But Malchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God, the Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed him saying: "Blessed is Abram of God, the Most High, Maker of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed is God, the Most High, Who has delivered your foes into your hand"; and he gave him a tenth of everything.

The sages derive that Malchizedek did not pass on the priesthood to his heirs; it was stripped from him and given to Abraham. Even though Abraham himself was a descendant of Malchizedek (the sages identify Malchizedek as Shem, the son of Noah), he won the priesthood through personal merit, not through inheritance.

Hebrews 7:1-19

1 This Malki-Tzedek, king of Shalem, a *cohen* of God *Ha'Elyon*, met Avraham on his way back from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; ² also Avraham gave him a tenth of everything. Now first of all, by translation of his name, he is "king of righteousness"; and then he is also king of Shalem, which means "king of peace." ³ There is no record of his father, mother, ancestry, birth or death; rather, like the Son of God, he continues as a *cohen* for all time. ⁴ Just think how great he was! Even the Patriarch Avraham gave him a tenth of the choicest spoils. ⁵ Now the

descendants of Levi who became *cohanim* have a commandment in the *Torah* to take a tenth of the income of the people, that is, from their own brothers, despite the fact that they too are descended from Avraham. ⁶ But Malki-Tzedek, even though he was not descended from Levi, took a tenth from Avraham. Also, he blessed Avraham, the man who received God's promises; ⁷ and it is beyond all dispute that the one who blesses has higher status than the one who receives the blessing. ⁸ Moreover, in the case of the *cohanim*, the tenth is received by men who die; while in the case of Malki-Tzedek, it is received by someone who is testified to be still alive. ⁹ One might go even further and say that Levi, who himself receives tenths, paid a tenth through Avraham; ¹⁰ inasmuch as he was still in his ancestor Avraham's body when Malki-Tzedek met him. ¹¹ Therefore, if it had been possible to reach the goal through the system of *cohanim* derived from Levi (since in connection with it, the people were given the *Torah*), what need would there have been for another, different kind of *cohen*, the one spoken of as to be compared with Malki-Tzedek and not to be compared with Aharon? ¹² For if the system of *cohanim* is transformed, there must of necessity occur a transformation of *Torah*. ¹³ The one about whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar; ¹⁴ for everyone knows that our Lord arose out of Y'hudah, and that Moshe said nothing about this tribe when he spoke about *cohanim*. ¹⁵ It becomes even clearer if a "different kind of *cohen*," one like Malki-Tzedek, arises, ¹⁶ one who became a *cohen* not by virtue of a rule in the *Torah* concerning physical descent, but by virtue of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is stated, "You are a *cohen* FOREVER, to be compared with Malki-Tzedek." ¹⁸ Thus, on the one hand, the earlier rule is set aside because of its weakness and inefficacy ¹⁹ (for the *Torah* did not bring anything to the goal); and, on the other hand, a hope of something better is introduced, through which we are drawing near to God. (Heb. 7:1 CJB)

But the important thing to note here is that the priesthood that we are a part of is the one patterned after Melchizedek not the one based on the Levitical priesthood which ended with the destruction of the Second Temple. We are the Temple, and we are the priests, but more important than all of this is that Melchizedek is a type of Messiah in that while he was *a* king and priest of Yahweh, Yeshua *is the* King and High Priest of His Father Yahweh.

One must keep his eye on the goal -- to love Yahweh, to be happy, to have a happy marriage, to raise healthy, happy children; to live life with integrity. Don't be distracted by desires. People confuse "want" and "desire." The soul "wants," the body "desires." Go for the soul every time!

The *Torah* is not a storybook. It is a book of Yahweh's instructions and teachings that guides us through life. Overall, it is downright stingy with words and avoids details with a passion. How then can we account for the length and minute detail devoted to describing the lives of the patriarchs in the Book of Genesis?

Nachmanides explains that the events of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shaped the Hebrew soul, and became the forerunners for all that took place throughout those who believe in Yahweh and Yeshua.

As all existence is Divine in origin, the spiritual aspect of all being must necessarily precede its appearance in the physical world.

The history of the Israelite people is the physical manifestation of the spiritual force generated by the deeds of the patriarchs.

The offspring of Adam after his sin did not resemble the human beings Yahweh intended to create. Spiritual man did not make a re-appearance until much later. The climb back to the pinnacle of spirituality that Adam fell from had to be made by human beings through the exercise of their free will. It was incumbent on man, not Yahweh, to repair what man himself had broken. The first to begin that work was Abraham, and his descendants, Isaac, and Jacob, continued his lead. We were called to faith, and it is through that faith in Yeshua that we can overcome what Adam laid on us all.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob completed the story of the creation of the human being in the image of Yahweh. In so doing they shaped the nation of Israel, not the Jewish people but all the people who believe that Yeshua is Messiah and Yahweh.

I shall walk before Yahweh in the land of the living (Psalm 116:9). That is to say: I shall walk before Yahweh not only in the privacy of my home, but amidst the crowd, even in the public square.... From the Talmud

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 Lech-Lecha: Summary

Gen. 12:1-17:27

Abram and Sarai follow God's call to journey to Canaan, where the covenant between God and Abraham is affirmed.

God said to Abram, "Go forth from your homeland to the land that I shall show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth shall be blessed through you."

So Abram went as God had spoken to him. Abram was 75 years old when he took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot and all their possessions and left for Canaan. God appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring will I give this land." Abram built, in Moreh and Beth-El, altars to God and invoked God by Name.

Abram journeyed south but there was famine in the land, and he ended up in Egypt. When they were about to enter Egypt, Abram said to his wife Sarai, "Look, you are a beautiful woman, and it will come to pass in Egypt that they will kill me because you are my wife. Therefore, please say that you are my sister so they will keep me alive."

It came to pass that when the Egyptians saw the beautiful woman Sarai, she was praised to the Pharaoh. Sarai was then taken into the Pharaoh's house. The Pharaoh showed kindness to Abram for the beautiful woman's sake and gave him animals and servants.

Then God struck Pharaoh with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. And the Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What have you done to me? Why did you say that she was your sister, even when I took her as my wife? Take your wife and go."

Abram left with Sarai and all their possessions out of Egypt. Now Abram was very rich in herds and silver and gold and Lot too had flocks. Since the land could not support them both and

Abram wanted no strife between them told Lot to choose his preference. Lot left to settle in the land of Jordan near Sodom which was filled with wickedness. Abram dwelled in Hebron where he built an altar to God.

War among the Kings led to the capture of the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and its people, including Lot, Abram's nephew. Abram goes to battle to rescue Lot and is victorious, taking back everything, including Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram dismisses all the spoils except for what is due to him and his men.

After these events, Abram in a vision heard the words of God. God said, "Fear not Abram for I am a shield for you; your reward is very great." Abram said, "O Lord, God I fear I shall remain childless and then to whom shall I give my inheritance?"

God said, "You shall have a son from your own loins." God then took Abram outside and said, "Look at the sky and count the stars. See if you can count them. That is how numerous your descendants shall be."

Abram believed in God and God's charity.

A dark dream comes upon Abram with God saying to him, "One day your nation will be strangers in a land and be enslaved for 400 years. But I will judge their oppressors and set your nation free and with great wealth."

Now Abram and Sarah were very distressed for they had no children. God said to Abram, "Look toward heaven and count the stars to see how large your family will be. I am God who brought you to this land to inherit it." God gave Abraham specific markings of his territory.

Now Sarai, Abraham's wife, had no children, but she did have a maidservant, Hagar. Sarai asked Abram to go to Hagar so that she might birth him a child. After Hagar conceived, she acted as if Sarai was no longer important. Sarai complained to Abraham, who told Sarai to do whatever is good in her eyes. Then Sarai humbled Hagar and Hagar fled from before her.

An angel of God found pregnant Hagar by a spring of water in the desert.

God's angel said, "Return and submit to Sarai. I shall make your family so large you will not be able to count it. You will have a son. Name him Ishmael because God has heard your sufferings. He will be a rebel and have his hand against every man and every man's hand against him. He will take his place over all his brothers."

Hagar said, "You are the God of Vision." Ishmael was born when Abram was 86.

When Abraham was 99, God said, "I wish to set My covenant between Me and you. You shall become a father of the multitude of the nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful. Kings shall come forth from your nation. This covenant will be for you and your descendants after you for all generations as an everlasting covenant. Now I will give you the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession and I shall be God to you and your descendants but you, too, must keep

My covenant. Every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days, including all males that are born in the house or acquired with money from any stranger. My covenant shall thus be on your flesh as an everlasting covenant.”

God further said to Abraham, “You shall not call your wife Sarai because her name is Sarah. I will bless her and have already appointed for you a son from her. I will bless her, and kings of nations shall descend from her.”

And Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself in his heart, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old or shall Sarah who is 90 years old give birth?”

Then Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live before Thy countenance.”

But God said, “Not so, Sarah shall bear a son whom you shall name Isaac. With him will I uphold My covenant. As for Ishmael, I have blessed him already and will make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget 12 princes and I shall appoint him to be a great nation. But My covenant is with Isaac.”

When God went away from Abraham, that very same day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the male members of his household and servants. He circumcised the flesh of their foreskins and his own.

Questions For Discussion

- 1. Abram was called by God. What does it mean to be called by God? Have you ever felt called by God to do anything? How do you know it was God Who called you? How did Abram know it was God who called him?**
- 2. Abram laughs at God when God suggests that he and Sarah in their old age, after years of being childless, will become parents. Have you ever laughed at God? Or with God? Explain.**
- 3. Restate in your own words the covenant God made with Abraham. Is this Covenant still relevant and important today? Why?**

Haftarah for Lech-Lecha Isa: 40:27-41:16

God has not abandoned His people.

In Haftarat Lech-Lecha, Isaiah offers the people of Israel a message of reassurance. By the sixth century B.C.E., Israel had been in exile for decades, but Isaiah tells the people that God has not abandoned them, and is still concerned about their welfare.

Though the overall message of Isaiah’s words is of God’s support and attentiveness, the prophet’s tone is not always comforting. The Haftarah begins with a reprimand: “Why do you say, O Jacob, why declare, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the Lord, my cause is ignored by my God’? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is God everlasting.”

Isaiah bluntly reminds the people that God is still invested in their lives, and that He remains all-powerful. While He has not abandoned His people, they have lost faith in Him and have turned to idols and other gods. Isaiah is critical of this choice, comparing the idols, which can't even hold themselves up, with God, who is mighty and strong. The woodworker and the smith haplessly fasten the idol with nails so that it won't fall over, in sharp contrast to God, who made the earth tremble in fear, "delivered up nations" and "trodden sovereigns down."

God, through Isaiah, is reminding Israel that He wants His people to stay away from the idol-makers, and those who don't recognize God's might. Israel is "My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, seed of Abraham My friend," and so Israel is destined for a special role in the future.

Even though Israel is special, Isaiah still characterizes the people as a worm and a maggot (41:13). The nation is tiny and insignificant when compared to God's greatness. Their behavior is sometimes disgusting. Still, Isaiah reassures the people that they will see victory, and glory if they are devoted to God.

In the Torah portion of Lech-Lecha, Abraham is promised that his offspring will be a great nation, more numerous than all of the dust on earth. In order to realize this destiny, Abraham has to withstand many challenges and temptations. So too, the people of Israel are reminded in the Haftarah that they will have good fortune and great things in the future, if only they can be like Abraham, following God's proscribed commandments and resisting the lure of idols.

From the Desk of Rabbi Philip Hammond

WORDS OF WISDOM.

Engaging in certain behaviours can cause unimaginable damage and pain to individuals, families, communities and even countries. It is a very fortunate person who has not been in a situation that has caused some discomfort to themselves or others. While many of these damaging behaviours are a result of rebellion and self-gratification, a number actually result from people convinced they are doing the “correct thing”. There was a time not so long ago that the medical fraternity encouraged smoking to help calm nerves. They were either acting on false information or lack of good information. History abounds with sad and unfortunate stories and events as a result of people trying to do the right thing. There are dangers with an attitude that insists one is “doing the right thing” no matter what evidence is presented to the contrary.

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.” Proverbs 21:2 [KJV]

Too often we are ruled by our pride and find ourselves unable or unwilling to change our attitudes and behaviours. The world is full of people and institutions that justify damaging behaviours and ideas. Often these justifications come on the back of promised money or prestige. I don’t believe it is an overstatement to say that the present generation is infected with this damaging behaviour. The following quote explains this with stunning accuracy.

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.” Proverbs 30:12-13 [KJV]

If these words were describing the “pagan” nations then we would not be so alarmed, but unfortunately these words are focused on the behaviour of Israel. We who are supposed to be a light to the nations find ourselves doing what is right in our own eyes and rejecting what would be right in the eyes of HaShem. We deceive ourselves and foolishly believe we can walk our own walk and talk our own talk. Somehow, we must change and bring many of our habits and behaviours into alignment with the Torah and instructions of HaShem. It is not unreasonable to state that in and of ourselves we have nothing “pure” to offer. The further the human race drifts from the Torah the greater the pollution of our souls.

“God’s power has given us everything we need for life and godliness, through our knowing the One who called us to his own glory and

goodness. By these he has given us valuable and superlatively great promises, so that through them you might come to share in God's nature and escape the corruption which evil desires have brought into the world. For this very reason, try your hardest to furnish your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with perseverance, perseverance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if you have these qualities in abundance, they keep you from being barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. Indeed, whoever lacks them is blind, so short sighted that he forgets that his past sins have been washed away. Therefore, brothers, try even harder to make your being called and chosen a certainty. For if you keep doing this, you will never stumble. Thus you will be generously supplied with everything you need to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah." 2Peter 3-11 [CJB]

Optimum health for our souls comes from knowing our Heavenly Father's Torah, which leads us directly to HaMoshiach Yeshua. Healthy souls translate to healthy bodies and minds. Without the Torah and HaMoshiach we are caught in a web of sin and darkness. Unfortunately, the greater percentage of our people no longer recognise sin for what it is and thus reject both HaMoshiach and the Torah and therefore HaShem.

We are in desperate need of physicians and shepherds who are willing to dispense the medication of HaMoshiach and Torah. If these "medications" are administered and taken correctly then we will witness a dramatic change in our destructive behaviours. It is only when we are saturated in the "nature" of HaShem that we will be capable, willing and eager to distance ourselves from the destructive elements found in our present world. Let us encourage one another to pursue the goodness and godliness of HaShem. This will build up our faith and importantly our faithfulness to HaShem.

I am persuaded that HaShem is waiting ever so patiently to help us build the biblical nation of Israel. He has all the "materials" we need, but we insist on trying to use our own materials and architectural plans. This will never work and results in not only sloppy workmanship but risky and harmful behaviours. A popular band [Peter, Paul and Mary] or as we may say Kepha, Sha'ul and Miriam, wrote a song "Where Have All The Flowers Gone", with the following lyrics: "**When will they ever learn**". It is not improbable that HaShem is asking the same question of us. These lyrics surely head a question we should be addressing. After thousands of years of rebellion and wandering we must be entering a time when we are prepared to learn, listen and change our behaviours and attitudes. We can only pray this be the case.

May the grace, love and wisdom of HaShem and Yeshua HaMoshiach be with you!

This, that and the other ...



Is There a Jewish Afterlife?

Judaism is famously ambiguous about what happens when we die.

What happens after we die?

Judaism is famously ambiguous about this matter. The immortality of the soul, the World to Come, and the resurrection of the dead all feature prominently in Jewish tradition, but exactly what these things are and how they relate to each other has always been vague.

Jewish conceptions of heaven and hell — *Gan Eden* (Garden of Eden) and *Gehinnom* — are associated with the belief in immortality and/or the World to Come, and were also developed independent of these concepts.

Most Jewish ideas about the afterlife developed in post-biblical times.

What the Bible Says

The Bible itself has very few references to life after death. *Sheol*, the bowels of the earth, is portrayed as the place of the dead, but in most instances Sheol seems to be more a metaphor for oblivion than an actual place where the dead “live” and retain consciousness.

The notion of resurrection appears in two late biblical sources, [Daniel 12](#) and [Isaiah 25-26](#).

[Daniel 12:2](#) — “Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence” — implies that resurrection will be followed by a day of judgment. Those judged favorably will live forever and those judged to be wicked will be punished.

Resurrection and the Messiah

Later Jewish tradition, however, is not clear about exactly who will be resurrected, when it will happen, and what will take place.

Some sources imply that the resurrection of the dead will occur during the messianic era. Others indicate that resurrection will follow the messianic era. Similarly, according to some, only the righteous will be resurrected, while according to others, everyone will be resurrected and — as implied in Daniel — a day of judgment will follow.

The Daniel text probably dates to the second century BCE, and at some point, during the two centuries that followed, another afterlife idea entered Judaism: the immortality of the soul, the notion that the human soul lives on even after the death of the body. In the Middle Ages, Jewish mystics expanded this idea, developing theories about reincarnation — the transmigration of the soul.

The World to Come

The World to Come (*olam haba*) is the most ubiquitous Jewish idea related to the end of days. It appears in early rabbinic sources as the ultimate reward of the individual Jew (and possibly the righteous gentile). The Talmud contains scattered descriptions of the World to Come, sometimes comparing it to spiritual things such as studying Torah, other times comparing it to physical pleasures, such as sex.

However, not surprisingly, it is not obvious what exactly the “World to Come” is and when it will exist. According to Nahmanides, among others, the World to Come is the era that will be ushered in by the resurrection of the dead, the world that will be enjoyed by the righteous who have merited additional life. According to Maimonides, the World to Come refers to a time even beyond the world of the resurrected. He believed that the resurrected will eventually die a *second* death, at which point the souls of the righteous will enjoy a spiritual, bodiless existence in the presence of God.

Still, in other sources, the World to Come refers to the world inhabited by the righteous immediately following death—i.e. heaven, Gan Eden. In this view, the World to Come exists *now*, in some parallel universe.

Heaven and Hell

Indeed, the notion of heaven and hell may be the most ambiguous of all Jewish afterlife ideas. References to Gehinnom as a fiery place of judgment can be found in the apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple period. The Talmud embellished this idea, claiming that Gehinnom is 60 times hotter than earthly fire ([Berakhot 57b](#)).

The earliest reference to Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden) and Gehinnom as a pair is probably the rabbinic statement of the 1st century sage Yochanan ben Zakkai: “There are two paths before me, one leading to Gan Eden and the other to Gehinnom (Berakhot 28b).”

Many questions remain, however. If the sources that refer to the World to Come are referring to Gan Eden, then what is the world of the resurrected? And if judgment immediately follows death, then what need is there for the judgment that will follow the resurrection?

Though some Jewish scholars have tried to clarify these ideas, it would be impossible to reconcile all the Jewish texts and sources that discuss the afterlife.

Prayer Points



Tzitzit Hanging Out

Why do some people tuck them in, and others let them hang free?

Question: I live in an Orthodox neighborhood, and I see a lot of Orthodox men walking around with strings hanging out of their shirts. What are the strings, and why do only some of them have them?

–Jason, Chicago

Answer: The strings you see hanging out of their shirts are called *tzitzit* (sometimes pronounced *tzitzis*) and they are derived from the commandment in the Book of Numbers:

Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make for themselves fringes (*tzitzit*) on the corners of their garments throughout the ages. Let them attach a cord of blue to the fringe at each corner. That shall be your fringe; look at it and recall all the commandments of the Lord and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. (Numbers 15:38-39)

According to traditional Jewish law, one must have these *tzitzit* on every four-cornered garment one wears. However, today most clothing doesn't have corners, so a special garment called a *tallit* is worn. A *tallit* has four corners with *tzitzit* on each corner. Many people have the custom of wearing the *tallit* only when they are praying, but others, particularly Orthodox Jews, wear a special small *tallit*, called a *tallit katan*, under their clothes. When they pray, they may wear an additional larger *tallit* over their clothes.

So, when you see the strings hanging out, what you're seeing are the *tzitzit*. And when Jews see the *tzitzit*, we're meant to remember all of the commandments in the Torah, and remembering the commandments is meant to inspire us to avoid "lustful urges." But you're right that not all Orthodox men wear their *tzitzit* hanging out so they're visible. Some men choose to tuck their *tzitzit* in. Why do some tuck them in, and some let them hang out?

To some degree, this has to do with personal preference. Though many rabbinic authorities today advocate for men to wear their *tzitzit* hanging out to be a more obvious reminder, there

are a number of rabbinic texts, going back to the Shulhan Arukh in the 16th century (Oreh Hayim 8:11), that allow for tzitzit to be tucked in, particularly if there's a concern of anti-Semitism. The understanding is that the tzitzit will be untucked during the Shema prayer, when we read the lines from Numbers having to do with tzitzit, and that looking at the fringes then will be enough of a deterrent for lustful urges.

Some men choose to wear their tzitzit out, but tuck them into their pockets, or wrap them around their belts.

I asked Yeshivat Chovevei Torah rabbinical student Seth Winberg why he chooses to wear his tzitzit the way he does, and he said, "I wear my tzitzit tucked in. I feel immensely thankful to live in a time and place which affords me unprecedented religious freedom. I am not afraid to express my religious identity publicly. I wear a kippah, after all. I wear my tzitzit tucked in because I value appearing dignified to others. Letting my tzitzit hang out looks... shlumpy."

In other words, some folks, like Seth, think that tzitzit hanging out looks messy, and tuck the tzitzit in to avoid appearing undignified. Others may not necessarily like the look of tzitzit hanging out but are more stringent in observing the commandment and its exhortation to see the fringes. So, there are different ways that people make the decision about whether to let their tzitzit hang out or not, taking into account both their personal taste (and even sense of fashion) and how their community interprets the specific commandment of tzitzit.

עֵבְרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לוֹ

El-lo-him Yee-rih-eh Lo

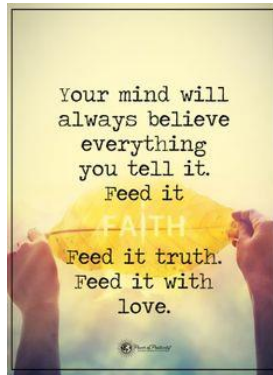
God will Provide

A Laugh a Day-Keeps the....? 🤔

Heck is where people go who

don't believe in Gosh. 😄

This is not your Bubbie's Chicken Soup



Sephardic Chicken Soup With Lemon and Egg Recipe (Sopa de Huevos y Limon)

A Balkan twist on the ultimate comfort food.

Sopa de huevos y limon is a traditional first course for breaking the Yom Kippur fast among Jews from Turkey, the Balkan states, and the Greek port city of Thessaloniki (known as Salonika in Ladino). This gently seasoned and comforting soup owes its velvety texture to tempered eggs rather than dairy, which makes it suitable for a meat meal under the kosher dietary laws.

Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 8 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup orzo
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 1/2 cups cooked, shredded chicken, such as from a rotisserie chicken
- fresh dill

- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until softened, about five minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Add chicken broth and bring to a boil.
3. Add orzo to boiling broth and cook until tender, 8-10 minutes.
4. While the orzo is cooking, whisk together the eggs and lemon juice in a large, heatproof bowl.
5. Once the orzo is cooked through, reduce the heat until the soup is at a gentle simmer. Temper the eggs by slowly adding one cup of hot broth to the egg-and-lemon mixture while whisking. Then, slowly add the tempered egg mixture back to the Dutch oven. (This will prevent the eggs from curdling in the hot liquid.) **Note:** It is important not to rush this process and whisk throughout, to ensure the eggs emulsify.
6. Add the cooked chicken to the soup and simmer until heated through. Do not allow soup to boil at any point after adding the eggs, which could cause the soup to break or curdle.
7. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve hot, garnished with fresh dill.

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