



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 4-1-23 TZAV

Ministry News

IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE ON THE LIST TO PRAY FOR YOU CAN SEND THEM TO US AT TOLMM@ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG OR BY TEXT MESSAGE TO 575 644-7706 AND I WILL SEND THEM BY EMAIL ONLY.

Remember that you can support the work of Tree of Life Messianic Ministries with a donation made via PayPal or by check to PO Box 467, Organ, NM 88052. Your donation helps our continued outreach to inmates and the time it takes to put this Newsletter together.

Donate



Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is 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. Elder Shawn Warren is an Elder affiliated with TOLMM and helps with one-on-one correspondence with inmates in our Prison Ministry Outreach. He also encourages people to contact us about affiliating with TOLMM through Home Groups and our help to group leaders.

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.

There is a new Home Group in Las Cruces. For more information email tolmm@etz-chayim.org.

Michael and Gayle Michelucci are forming a new Home Group in Idaho.

Rabbi Phillip Hammond has a Zoom Bible Study and a Erev Shabbat and Shabbat Service on Zoom Friday evening and Saturday morning at 11:00am. Rabbi Hammond is in Australia and the time difference would be 5:00pm Friday Mountain Time. Rabbi Hammond is looking into starting a men's group focused in the United States. You can contact Rabbi Hammond at Philip@etz-chayim.org. Rabbi Hammond is now affiliated with Rabbi Mordecai Silver and his ministry, Tree of Life Messianic Ministries. Check out Rabbi Hammond at <https://www.etz-chayim.org/australia-affiliate/>.

We thank you for your support. Blessings in Messiah Yeshua,
Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph. D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D. and our team

General News

TO SEARCH FOR MY BOOKS ON AMAZON ENTER **"BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER"**. MINE ARE AVAILABLE IN PRINT FORMAT ONLY. I HAVE TWO NEW BOOKS ON AMAZON: RAV SHA'UL AND REFLECTIONS ON TORAH. TO SEE MORDECAI'S BOOKS GO TO: **[HTTPS://WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG/SHOP-OUR-STORE/PRINT-AND-KINDLE-BOOKS/](https://www.etz-chayim.org/shop-our-store/print-and-kindle-books/)**

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

CHECK OUT RABBI MORDECAI SILVERS 3 YEARS OF VIDEO TEACHINGS ON THE TORAH PORTIONS AND FESTIVALS ON YOUTUBE.

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



MESSAGE FOR 4-1-23 TZAV

**Message for 3/28/97
Tsav - Command!
Vayikra - Lev 6:1-8:36
Jeremiah 7:21-8:3, 9:22-23
Hebrews 8:1-6**

Vayikra 8:29: *And Mosheh took the breast and waved it, a wave offering before Adonai. It was Mosheh's portion of the ram of ordination, as Adonai had commanded Mosheh. 30: And Mosheh took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood, which was on the altar, and sprinkled it on Aharon, on his garments, and on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him. And he set apart Aharon, his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.*

33: *And do not go outside the door of the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed - for he fills your hands for seven days.*

Beresheit 2:2: *And on the seventh day Elohim completed His work which he had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.*

Vayikra 8:34-36

Yirmeyahu 7:23: *But this word I did command them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I shall be your Elohim and you be my people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, so that it be well with you.'* 24: *But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in the counsels, in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.*

26: *But they did not obey Me or incline their ear but stiffened their neck. They did evil, more than their fathers. 27: And you shall speak all these words to them, though they do not listen to you. And you shall also call to them, though they do not answer you. 28: But you shall say to them, 'This is a nation that did not obey the voice of Adonai their Elohim, nor did they accept instruction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.*

Yochanan 8:45: *And because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.*

14:17: *The Spirit of the Truth, whom the world is unable to receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. But you know Him, for He stays with you and shall be in you.*

Romans 1:18: *For the wrath of Elohim is revealed from heaven against all wickedness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

Hebrews 1-6: *Now the summary of what we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Greatness in the heavens. 2: And who serves in the set-apart place and of the true Tent, which the Master set up, and not man. 3: For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and offerings. So, it was also necessary for this One to have somewhat to offer. 4: For if indeed He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the Torah. 5: Who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly, as Mosheh was warned when he was about to make the Tent. For He said, "See that you make all according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." 6: But now He has obtained a more excellent service, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was constituted on better promises.*

Hebrews 8:9-13 (Read and reflect)

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 stepped 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 Tzav: Summary Leviticus 6:1-8:36

God tells Moses to describe the rituals for some of the offerings to the priests; the priests then undergo the process of ordination.

God spoke to Moses, saying: Command Aaron and his sons to do the following rituals.

This is the ritual of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall remain burning upon the altar all night until morning. Every morning the priest shall feed wood to it, lay out the burnt offering on it and turn the fat into smoke. A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar for the fire is not to go out.

The ritual of the homage offering is out of respect to God. A handful of choice flour, oil and incense shall be mixed, and a token portion shall be turned into smoke on the altar as a pleasing odor to the Lord. What is left of it shall be eaten by Aaron and his sons as unleavened cakes in the sacred space of the Tent of Meeting. It shall not be baked with leaven.

The offering of anointment is to give everlasting tribute to God. Like the homage offering, take some choice flour, but this time prepare it with oil in a pan. It shall go entirely up in smoke. It must be burned in its entirety. It must not be eaten.

The sin offering which clears one who sins is a holy of holies. The place where the ascent offering is slaughtered for God shall also be the place where the sin offering is slaughtered. The priest, who offers this sin offering, shall eat it in the sacred enclosure of the Tent of Appointed Meeting.

A Holy of Holies

The ritual of the guilt offering is a holy of holies. The guilt offering shall be slaughtered at the same spot as the burnt offering. Its blood shall be dashed on all sides of the altar and its fat shall be turned by the priests into smoke as an offering by fire to the Lord. Every male among the priests shall eat of it.

A ritual sacrifice of well-being may be offered to the Lord. There are rules for whether or not you may eat it and exactly how it is to be prepared. If it is offered for thanksgiving, it shall be an offering with unleavened bread, along with loaves of leavened bread.

Meat that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten. It shall be consumed in fire. You shall not eat fat of ox or sheep or goat. Fat from animals that died or were torn by beasts may be put to any use except as food. You must not eat it. You must not eat any blood, of either fowl or animal, in any of your settlements.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Tell the Israelite people that offerings must be presented by one's own hands. These offerings are to be given to anointed priests who will enact these offerings by fire.

These are the rituals of the burnt offering, the homage offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the offering of ordination, and the sacrifices of well-being with which the Lord charged Moses on Mount Sinai, when God commanded that the Israelites present their offerings to the Lord, in the wilderness of Sinai.

Then God told Moses to assemble Aaron and his sons and the whole community at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Aaron and his sons washed thoroughly then dressed with all

the priestly vestments. Moses took the anointed oil and anointed the Tabernacle and all that was within it. He dedicated it to the Lord.

A bull was then sacrificed as a sin offering. A ram was sacrificed as a burnt offering. A second ram, the ram of ordination, was sacrificed as an offering by fire before the Lord. Then Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons and their vestments to dedicate them to the service of the Lord.

Then Moses told Aaron and his sons to cook the meat at the entrance of the Tent of Appointed Meeting and eat the bread in the basket of ordination. They should burn whatever flesh and bread is left in the fire. They must not remove themselves from the entrance of the Tent of Appointed Meeting, day, or night, for seven days until the ordination is complete.

Aaron and his sons carried out all the utterances that God had commanded through Moses.

Parashat Tzav: Discussion Questions

1) What makes an offering to God holy?

2) Why must an offering be presented “by one’s own hand?”

3) Why do you think there are sacrifices made to God for peace and well-being? What kind of rituals do you do to show God your peace and well-being?

Haftarah for Tzav Malachi 3:4-24

Sacrifices are not enough.

This Haftarah selection from the book of Jeremiah is a foreboding prophecy of destruction. It opens with an expression of God’s frustration with the Israelites’ sacrifices: “Add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat!” (Jeremiah 7:21) According to Jeremiah, what God really wants is for Israel to follow His ways and observe His commandments—not just to offer sacrifices devoid of meaning. Yet, the stubborn people refuse to obey.

Jeremiah claims that the people of Israel have been sinning since the day that God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. God sent countless prophets to urge them to repent, but this was to no avail: “They would not listen to Me or give ear. They stiffened their necks, they acted worse than their fathers” (Jeremiah 7:26).

Through Jeremiah, God instructs the people to engage in mourning practices—such as shear their hair and lament in the hills—because God has cast them off. What is the reason for God’s anger? Israel’s idolatrous ways. They have placed idols in God’s Temple and built shrines for child sacrifice in Topheth and the Valley of Ben-Hinnom.

God warns that punishment will be meted out in these same places of sin. The Valley of Ben-Hinnom will be renamed the Valley of Slaughter, and abandoned corpses will fill Topheth, where they will become food for birds and animals. In an inversion of the oft-quoted (and oft-sung) verse about happy, prosperous times in Jerusalem, Jeremiah promises: “I will silence in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sound of mirth and gladness, the voice of bridegroom and bride” (Jeremiah 7:34).

A Punishment Worse Than Death

Jeremiah continues to describe how the Israelites’ corpses will be desecrated. The bones of the kings of Judah, its officers, priests, prophets, and all its inhabitants will be unearthed and exposed to the elements. But the worst suffering will be saved for the living: “Death shall be preferable to life for all that are left of this wicked folk” (Jeremiah 8:3).

It is common at the end of negative haftarot, such as this one, to add a few uplifting verses at the end, to not leave the reader with a disparaging view of God. This week, after hearing about the destruction in store for the Israelites, we flip to the next chapter of Jeremiah and read poetic words about devotion to God and God’s goodness:

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom;
Let not the strong man glory in his strength;
Let not the rich man glory in his riches.
But only in this should one glory:
In his earnest devotion to Me. (Jeremiah 9:22-23)

God acts with kindness, justice, and equity, Jeremiah adds. These are his true delight.

Connection to Parashat Tzav

In Parashat Tzav, we read the laws of numerous sacrifices, and learn about how to choose animals for an offering, how to prepare them, and who can eat which parts of a sacrifice under different circumstances. Though the Torah portion emphasizes the centrality of animal sacrifice as a means of worship, the haftarah reminds us that animal sacrifice is but a means to attain closeness to God—not God’s ultimate desire.



From the Desk of Rabbi Philip Hammond

WORDS OF WISDOM CHAPTER 29

There are times when we are required to have an injection of courage so that we can stand against extreme challenges that come our way. These challenges can be those we choose to engage in or they can be challenges that are thrust upon us due to an array of circumstances.

It can be very intimidating to reach into the “bag” of courage, as it usually requires a sacrifice from our self. Doubt can plague our minds, weighing up the outcome becomes an important aspect, knowing what, when and how to apply courage is crucial to a healthy outcome. Sometimes no matter what course one takes the results can be difficult to accept. It can appear that there is no good road to travel, and it is at these times an injection of courage is needed. These are opportunities to draw closer to the Holy One of Israel, blessed be His Name.

“Put your hope in Yahweh, be strong, let your heart be bold, put your hope in Yahweh.” Psalm 27:14 [NJB]

“Be brave, take heart, all who put your hope in Yahweh.” Psalm 31:24 [NJB]

It is when we put our hope in The Almighty that we gain the courage needed to face and navigate the circumstances that challenge us beyond

our own strength and capabilities. We are encouraged by the words of the Master Yeshua.

“I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me. In the world you will have hardship but be courageous: I have conquered the world.” John 16:33 [NJB]

We are constantly warned of the many hardships that will come our way, as Children of The Almighty. We need only look back throughout history that is both recorded in the bible and books of history to witness the truth behind this statement. It is the belief of this author that we Children of Israel are going to face challenges perhaps beyond what we can imagine and picture. Please keep in mind the depravity that “man” is capable of. We witness this every day on our media outlets and unless you have experienced this kind of wickedness you will not fully absorb the evil that some have to experience. It may sound histrionic and theatrical, but it would appear our world is fast becoming increasingly impacted by demonic influence. This is disturbing to say the least, yet it is written in the Holy Bible and therefore we should not be shocked or taken by surprise. The standard of living as given to us by God [the Torah] is under attack from every quarter. The very lifestyle Yeshua HaMoshiach lived and commanded us to live by, is derided and laughed at by the masses. It is becoming so bad in many areas that human laws are being created to incarcerate anyone who would question the anti-Messiah system and espouse the beauty of HaShem, Torah and Yeshua HaMoshiach.

Countries that have been blessed by employing the foundations found in Judaism and Christianity are now controlled by leaders and groups who want to destroy that system. Not only that, but they are embracing a system that is totalitarian to the extreme and offers nothing but heartache, death, and ruin. Talk about the blind leading the blind.

If you decide to swim against this tide, then you will need plenty of courage to stand. The fact of the matter is that you will never be able to stand against this opposing force alone. We can only gain the strength and courage to do so with the helping Hand of HaShem. **There is no other**

way! When Israel faced the might of Goliath and the Philistine armies, they froze with dismay and fear. They could see no way to defeat Goliath and the Philistines. Yet we know from the account there was one who knew Goliath could and would be defeated. It was the same one who was described as a man “after God’s own heart”.

“Then they demanded a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. After forty years, he deposed him and raised up David to be king, whom he attested with these words, ‘I found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will perform my entire will’”. Acts 13:21-22 [NJB]

“But now your sovereignty will not last; Yahweh has discovered a man after his own heart and designated him as leader of his people.....” 1Samuel 13:14a [NJB]

When faced with a challenge that appears to have a “Goliath” onside backed by an aggressive army we would be wise to do as David did. David acknowledged that this threat was made against Israel, the chosen nation of The Almighty. Then he asked, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, to challenge the armies of the living God?” David had an unrelenting trust in the Holy One of Israel. David was confident the one true Living God could easily deal with this uncircumcised Philistine. Goliath may have seemed like a giant in the eyes of the doubtful, but David knew Goliath was as an ant in the eyes of HaShem. When we view this account in 1Samuel 17, our attention should be drawn to some valuable points. Firstly, David took off the man-made armour that Saul gave him. It did not fit well, and David was used to relying on the armour of HaShem, not the armour of man. David collected five smooth stones from the riverbed with which he would use to topple the great Goliath. David spoke some very bold words.

“David retorted to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with sword, spear and scimitar, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh Sabaoth, God of the armies of Israel, whom you have challenged. Today, Yahweh will deliver you into my hand; I

shall kill you, I shall cut off your head; today, I shall give your corpse and the corpses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the wild beasts, so that the whole world may know that there is a God in Israel, and this whole assembly know that Yahweh does not give victory by means of sword and spear – for Yahweh is lord of the battle and he will deliver you into our power.’” 1Samuel 17:45-47 [NJB]

Please understand that for the Children of Israel, victory comes through the Arm of The Almighty – the Holy One of Israel. It is Yeshua and the Torah that we use as our armour. Therefore, David took five smooth stones, that represent the five books of the Torah and it took only one stone, the Torah made flesh, Yeshua HaMoshiach, to fall the Philistine hero - Goliath.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of employing the same tactics as David employed to defeat the “Philistines”. Our only hope and protection is found under the “wings” of our Master. It is He and He alone that provide us Godly victories, any other will be short lived and exposed for what it is, one without merit. A word of caution! Never underestimate the power of the enemy, do not mistake your own confidence and strength, as authority from HaShem. Many have made this fatal mistake, going where angels indeed fear to tread. Our power, confidence and authority must come from our Father in heaven, through the nail scarred hand of HaMoshiach Yeshua and the Holy Torah. We will have our troubles and tribulations and I believe they will ever increase until the return of Yeshua HaMoshiach as Lord and King.

As many know I have a farming background, and one of the sayings we had as farmers was, **“If you had live animals, unfortunately you will have dead ones”**. The same goes for us. If we are alive, we will have troubles and challenges. Yet with all this we must not allow the “dead animals” to rob us of the joy we have with “live animals”. One of my favourite promises in the bible is:

“Make no mistake about this, my dear brothers: all that is good, all that is perfect, is given us from above; it comes

down from the Father of all light; with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow caused by change.” James 1:16-17

Our Father shines a Light on all darkness. He has a recipe to heal us of our hardened sick hearts. Without these blessings from above we will never withstand the attacks coming from the enemy. Without the healing hand of Yeshua, we are in no condition to resist our enemies. It takes courage to stand up against a rampant enemy that is crushing all before it. Such an enemy can appear as a huge tidal wave that will drown all before it. However, we have One who controls all “tidal waves” and there is nothing or no one who can changes His plans or promises. We can be confident that nothing takes HaShem by surprise and He is more than capable to give us the courage and strength we need to stand against the enemy. This does not mean we will escape injury on this present earth, but it does mean we can handle whatever comes our way, if we are faithful to The Almighty, the Holy One of Israel blessed be He. No matter what my friends stay connected to the nail scarred Hand of Yeshua HaMoshiach and never let go. He will see us through to the end and we will reside with Him for evermore. Baruch HaShem.

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

This, that and the other ...



Kosher Food: What Makes Food Kosher or Not

The word "kosher" literally means "fit" or "appropriate."

Ask an average person to describe kosher food and they might say it is food “blessed by a rabbi.” The word “kosher,” however, is Hebrew for “fit” or “appropriate” and describes the food that is suitable for a Jew to eat. With its roots in the Hebrew Bible, the system of defining which foods are kosher was developed by the rabbis of late antiquity. Its application to changing realities has been the work of subsequent generations, including our own.

Kashrut’s Biblical and Talmudic Origins

Close readers of the Torah might notice that according to the book of Genesis, vegetarianism was commanded by God as the ideal diet (see Genesis 1:29). However, in the course of the biblical narratives, this changed to include a variety of different animals. According to the Torah (Leviticus 11), only certain kinds of animals are considered inherently kosher. For land animals, any creature that both chews its cud and has split hooves is kosher. For sea creatures, any fish that has both fins and scales is acceptable, and for birds, only those birds approved by the Torah (or others that later authorities have judged to be like them, a list that excludes scavengers and birds of prey). In addition, it is repeated three times in the Torah that it is forbidden to cook a baby goat in its own mother’s milk.

The rabbis in the Talmud further developed these principles of *kashrut*. In order to consume kosher land animals and birds, it is necessary to slaughter them in a prescribed way, in a manner that has been described as a more humane method than is practiced commercially. In addition, the prohibition of cooking a baby goat in its own mother’s milk is the basis for the complete, physical, hermetic separation of all milk and meat products. These are the fundamental elements of *kashrut*.

Keeping Kosher Today

All questions, problems or issues about keeping kosher ultimately revolve around the basic principles of *kashrut* described above. Usually, the questions have to do with the last basic element, the complete separation of milk and meat products. The use of different sets of dishes and pots and pans, developed in order to ensure a greater separation between milk and meat

foods. This is also the basis of waiting several hours after eating a meat dish before eating a dairy product, so that the two types of food shouldn't even mix together in our stomachs!

Whether a particular food is considered kosher or not usually has to do with whether any substance or product used in its manufacture was derived from a non-kosher animal or even an animal that is kosher but was not slaughtered in the prescribed manner. Rabbinic supervision of the production of food (a practice called *hashgacha*) enables it to carry a "seal of approval" (but no, it is not "blessed by a rabbi").

The 3 Categories of Kosher Foods

Dairy

Often described with the Yiddish word *milchig*, these are foods, such as cheese, milk, yogurt, ice cream, etc.

Meat

Often referred to with the Yiddish word *fleischig*, this includes all kosher animals and fowl slaughtered in the prescribed manner, and their derivative products.

Pareve

A Yiddish word meaning "neutral," this describes foods that are neither dairy nor meat, such as eggs and fish, tofu, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables, and the like, provided they are not prepared with any milk or meat products.

In keeping kosher, it is necessary to keep all dairy and meat foods completely separate — which, unless one is vegetarian, necessitates separate sets of dishes and cooking utensils. Pareve foods, however, may be mixed in and served with either category of food since these foods are neither milk nor meat.

KASHRUT

Pronounced: kahsh-ROOT, Origin: Hebrew, the Jewish dietary laws.

KOSHER

Pronounced: KOH-sheer, Origin: Hebrew, adhering to kashrut, the traditional Jewish dietary laws.

PAREVE

Pronounced: PAHRV or pah-REV, Origin: Hebrew, an adjective to describe a food or dish that is neither meat nor dairy. (Kosher laws prohibit serving meat and dairy together.)

TORAH

Pronounced: TORE-uh, Origin: Hebrew, the Five Books of Moses.

MASHGIACH

Pronounced: mahshGHEEahkh, Origin: Hebrew, a kashrut supervisor, someone who ensures that a product or restaurant can be certified as kosher.

MILCHIG

Pronounced: MILL-khig, Origin: Yiddish, dairy, as an adjective to describe food containing dairy, or dishes used for foods containing dairy. (Kosher laws prohibit serving meat and dairy together.)

FLEISHIG

Pronounced: FLAY-shug, Origin: Yiddish, meaty, an adjective to identify foods containing meat or dishes that are used for meat. (Jewish dietary laws prohibit combining meat and dairy foods.)

PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY



Why Tzedakah Is Spiritually Important

Rabbinic sources, both ancient and modern, suggest that tzedakah plays an important role in the spiritual life of the donor.

Reprinted with permission from The Jewish Religion: A Companion, published by Oxford University Press. One additional view not covered here is a teaching of the medieval philosopher Maimonides: Tzedakah also develops the virtue of generosity in the donor—not only earning merit for the giver but also nurturing personality improvement. In this view, all of Jewish practice can be seen as a means of cultivating virtues or character traits.

The word “tzedakah” in the Bible denotes “righteousness” in general, but in post-biblical Judaism it is used to denote charity, as if to suggest, according to many exponents of the idea,

that there should be no condescension in almsgiving. The poor are not to be patronized but given the assistance they need because they have a just claim on the wealthy. The Jerusalem Talmud records that in ancient Palestine a poor man when asking for help would say to his would-be benefactor: “Acquire merit for yourself,” as if to say: “I am doing you a favor.”

In a popular Jewish tale, when a rich man excuses the small size of his donation by protesting that he is unable to afford to give more generously because he has been obliged to pay his son’s gambling debts, the poor man retorts: “If your son wants to gamble let him do so with his own money, not with mine.” In a revealing midrashic anecdote, the Roman Governor [of second-century CE Palestine], Turnus Rufus, puts the question to Rabbi Akiba: “If, as you maintain, your God loves the poor, why does he not make them rich?” to which Akiba replies: “It is in order to give the rich the means of acquiring merit,” a quaint way of coping with the theological problem of why a beneficent God has created a world in which people suffer. A world without poverty would be an uncaring world; without those to whom compassion must be shown it would be a world without compassion.

A Hasidic master, in the same vein, once asked: “Since everything in God’s world must have a purpose, what purpose is served by the phenomenon of atheism?” God allows the possibility of unbelief, he concluded, because otherwise the rich would have so much faith that God will help the poor that they would not themselves think of trying to alleviate their suffering. Faith is admirable when exercised on one’s own behalf. Where the needs of others are concerned, it is essential to act as if there is no God to intervene.

עֲבָרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

תְּרוּמָה

te-ru-mah

Offering, contribution

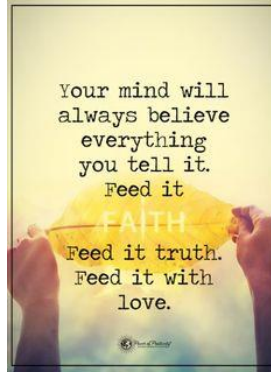


A Taste of Jewish Humor

Lightbulbs

How many Zionists does it take to replace a light bulb?

Four: One to stay home and convince others to do it, a second to donate the bulb, a third to screw it in and a fourth to proclaim that the entire Jewish people stands behind their actions.



This is not your Bubbie's Chicken Soup

This Kasha Varnishkes Recipe Was Almost Lost in the Holocaust

A beloved dish "made the old-fashioned way" with lots of mushrooms.

In "Honey Cake & Latkes: Recipes from the Old World by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Survivors," Tova Friedman writes, "My late husband's favorite food was tzimmes, but he also shared his family's recipe for kasha varnishkes. So, from the time I had my own family and had children, we always used to prepare tzimmes and varnishkes. This is the "old-fashioned" way to make it: with lots of mushrooms."

Ingredients

- 4 cups of water
- 1 cup kasha (buckwheat groats)
- 1 extra-large egg, beaten
- salt
- 1 cup bowtie (farfalle) pasta
- 3 Tbsp butter or
- vegetable oil
- 1 large yellow onion, diced

- 12 ounces white mushrooms, sliced about ¼ inch thick
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup soy sauce

Directions

1. Bring 4 cups of water to a boil and have it ready.
 2. Put the kasha in a medium bowl. Add the beaten egg to the dry kasha. Mix thoroughly so all the grains are uniformly coated.
 3. Heat a heavy-bottom 8-quart pot over medium-high heat until it is very hot. Add the kasha-egg mixture and stir continuously, breaking up clumps so that the kasha is very hot.
 4. Slowly pour the boiling water onto the hot kasha and add a pinch of salt. The kasha will explode and froth (this is the fun part).
 5. After all the water has been added and the pot settles down, skim any schmutz that might be floating on top. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook until the water is absorbed, about 30 minutes.
 6. While the kasha is cooking, prepare the bowtie pasta according to package instructions (cook in salted water for about 12 minutes).
 7. While bowties are cooking, heat the butter (or oil, if pareve) in a wide saucepan. Add the onion and cook until slightly softened, about 5 minutes.
 8. Add the mushrooms and then the garlic and cook until the mushrooms and onions are tender. Add the cooked kasha to the mushroom mixture, then add the soy sauce and toss gently to coat. Add the bowties just before serving.
 9. An alternative way of cooking this dish is to place the kasha mixture in a casserole dish and bake at 300°F for 20 minutes, or to desired dryness.
 10. When ready to serve, add bowties and mix. Serve hot.
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