



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 4-22-23 TAZRIA-METSORA**

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

Gabriel Martinez has a home group in El Paso (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](mailto: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](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. 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 4-22-23 TAZRIA-METSORA**

*Message originally shared 5/2/98*  
*Tazria - She bears seed-M'Tsora - Infected one*  
*Lev. 12:1-13:59 14:1-15:33*  
*2 Kings 4:42-5:19 2 Kings 7:3-20*  
*Luke 7:18-35 Matthew 23:16-24:2, 30-31*

**Leviticus 12:1-3**

***1: HaShem spoke to Moses, saying: 2: Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be contaminated for a seven-day period...3: On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.***

**Jeremiah 4:4**

***Circumcise yourselves unto HaShem--remove the barriers of your hearts...***

**Colossians 2:11**

***Also, it was in union with him that you were circumcised with a circumcision not done by human hands but accomplished by stripping away the old nature's control over the body. In this circumcision done by the Messiah...***

### **Leviticus 13:45-46**

***And the person with tzaraas in whom there is the affliction--his garments shall be rent, the hair of his head shall be unshorn, and he shall cloak himself up to his lips; he is to call out: "Contaminated, contaminated!" All the days that the affliction is upon him he shall remain contaminated; he is contaminated. He shall dwell in isolation; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.***

This week we read a double parsha. The main topic is that of "Tzaraas," mainly a skin condition which God sent as an admonishment. The condition occurred on a person's body, his clothing, or even the walls of his house. There is a cleansing process which the stricken person underwent, after which he was pronounced clean, and he would go back to his regular routine.

### **Leviticus 14:5-10; 14; 16-20**

***5: The Kohen shall command; and the one bird shall be slaughtered into an earthenware vessel over spring water. 6: As for the live bird: He shall take it with the cedar wood and the crimson thread and the hyssop, and he shall dip them and the live bird into the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the spring water. 7: Then he shall sprinkle seven times upon the person being purified from the tzaraas; he shall purify him, and he shall set the live bird free upon the open field. 8: The person being purified shall immerse his clothing, shave off all his hair, and immerse himself in the water and become pure. 9: On the seventh day. 10: On the eighth day, he shall take two unblemished male lambs...***

***14: The Kohen shall take from the blood...place it on the middle part of the right ear...on the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot.***

***16: The Kohen shall dip his right forefinger into the oil that is in his left palm; and he shall sprinkle from the oil with his finger seven times before HaShem. 17: Some of the oil remaining on his palm...shall put on the middle part of the right ear...on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot...18: And the rest of the oil...he shall place upon the head...***

***20: and the Kohen shall provide him atonement, and he becomes pure.***

This cleansing process is not meant to be only physical, because it needs to be the result of recognition of one's shortcomings and a resolution to change in a certain area of life. This area regards one's speech. The Sages tell us that this condition occurred to people who spoke badly of others.

People in general understand that it is wrong to spread false rumors about others. The Torah, however, takes this one step further. Even true statements which cast dispersions upon others are contained in the Torah prohibition regarding speech.

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagen (d. 1933), known as the Chofetz Chaim, made publicizing these prohibitions one of his life's works. He authored several works on the topic, extremely well researched. Besides the technical aspect of what is permitted and what is not, he authored works which explain the many statements made by our sages regarding this topic.

In the work "Shemiras HaLoshon, Shaar HaTevunah" (Guarding the Tongue, Chap.

14) the Rabbi explains some of the aspects of human nature which bring about the transgression of speaking ill of others. The Rabbi abbreviates the seven causes using the first letter of each of the seven words. Together the letters spell "KOL GEHINOM," which translated means "all hell". Let's Briefly look at each of them.

**1. KA'AS - ANGER.** If a person allows anger to control him, every time someone crosses him, he'll say anything about him that occurs to him. The Chofetz Chaim quotes a verse. "A man of fury - numerous sins.

**2. LAITZONUS - SCORN.** This trait is characterized by treating serious things lightly and is often something which is common among groups who get together and scorn others. Aside from the prohibition of scorning, it is a waste of precious time.

**3. GA'AVOH - HAUGHTINESS.** When a person feels that he is better than others, there is seemingly nothing wrong with speaking negatively about them. He will also be filled with jealousy and hatred for anyone else who is held in high esteem by others. The potential for speaking ill of others is very

great for someone who possesses this trait. There is really no place for haughtiness because one never knows who is truly closer to fulfilling his potential in life.

**4. HEFKER - ABANDONMENT.** Many people will respond to exhortations saying that it is impossible to be sooooo careful about one's speech. We find ourselves in so many situations where people are speaking ill of others. Nevertheless, God expects us to refrain from speaking negatively of others, and He commands us as such in the Torah. Our sages tell us that God never puts us in a situation which we cannot succeed in.

**5. YAI-USH - DESPAIR.** If we really want something badly enough, it's amazing how much we can accomplish. We can be careful about what we say if we choose to, and we really want to. There is no reason to ever despair of attaining a reasonable goal.

**6. NIRGANUS - NEGATIVENESS.** A person who possesses this trait looks at everything as if it was done against him. Such people read negative meanings into people's words, they imagine that no one likes them, and everything bad that someone else did by accident will be interpreted as if it was on purpose. It is not hard to see how such a person would come to speak negatively of others.

**7. Omer MUTAR** - One who believes he is allowed to say what he wants because of ignorance. The only cure for this is learning. The more one delves into what God wants from us, the more sensitive we can become in regard to God's expectations.

It is fitting to review these seven shortcomings which so strongly impact our attitudes toward the things we say. If we will take these words seriously, we will find that there is great potential in them for personal growth. Although nowadays we will not find the condition on our skin, clothing or houses, there is a great lesson for us to learn, and a great potential for the rewards which result from sensitivity about what we say, which are all still intact.

**Matthew 23:27-28**

***"Woe to you hypocritical Torah teachers and P'rushim! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside but inside are full of dead people's bones and all kinds of rotteness. Likewise, you***

***appear to people from the outside to be good and honest, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and far from Torah.***

**Matthew 23:23**

***...but you have neglected the weightier matters of the Torah--justice, mercy, trust. These are the things you should have attended to--without neglecting the others!***

I am going to close with this story: The Midrash relates that Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, sent his servant to the market, and said, "Bring me the best thing you can find." The servant came back with a tongue. Another time, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said to his servant, "Go to the market and bring me the worst thing you can find." Again, the servant returned with a tongue.

***Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel was startled and asked his servant, "How is it that you brought me tongue as the best thing you could find, and again a tongue as the worst?" The servant replied, "There is nothing better than a tongue that speaks good and nothing worse than a tongue that speaks evil."***

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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 Tazria: Summary Leviticus 12:1-13:59**

***God instructs Moses about the purification rituals for mothers following childbirth; God then describes to Moses and Aaron the procedures for identifying and responding to those infected with leprosy.***

The Lord spoke to Moses saying, “Speak to the Children of Israel regarding the rituals concerning childbirth of a boy. The mother shall be in the state of uncleanness for seven days. Upon the eighth day the flesh of a male baby’s foreskin is to be circumcised. For thirty-three days, the mother shall be in a state of purification and may not be in contact with any holy thing or area.

“If a girl is born, the mother remains unclean for two weeks, and for sixty-six days she will be in a state of purification. At the end of this time, she is to make offerings at the Tent of Appointed Meeting.”

God then spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, “When a person has a swelling, rash, burn, scaly eruption discoloration, or any other kind of distortion of the skin, it shall be reported to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons. The priest shall examine the skin for the contagious disease of leprosy and pronounce the person clean or unclean.

“As for the person with leprosy, the person’s clothes shall be torn, his head shall be disheveled and he shall cover over his upper lip and shall call out, ‘Unclean, Unclean!’ The person shall be unclean as long as the disease is on him. Being unclean, he shall dwell apart. The leper’s dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

“The clothes touched by leprosy must also be examined by the priest and declared clean or unclean. The clothes which are capable of being made clean may be washed until they are fully clean, but that which is unclean must be burned in fire.”

#### Parashat Tazria Discussion Questions

**1) Why is the mother in a state of purification after childbirth? Why is the amount of time for this state of purification longer for a mother who gave birth to a girl rather than a boy?**

**2) Why would God be so concerned about leprosy?**

**3) How do you think the people who had the disease of leprosy felt when they were banished to live outside the camp?**

**4) When you get sick, do you feel unclean? When you are sick, how do you feel towards God?**

## Haftarah for Tazria 2 Kings 4:42-5:19

### *The prescription for holy psoriasis.*

In the Torah, Parashat Tazria describes the biblical affliction known as *tzaraat*, normally translated as leprosy. (Though the skin disease in the Bible is afflicted by God as a punishment for certain transgressions and differs from what is considered leprosy today.) In the haftarah for Tazria, the appearance of this same kind of leprosy leads to a life-changing experience for a general in the Aramean army.

As the haftarah begins, a man brings the prophet Elisha 20 loaves of bread. The prophet orders that the loaves be given to the people of the land, many of whom are suffering from poverty. Elisha’s servant protests, insisting that it will not be enough for the crowd, but Elisha promises a miracle: “The Eternal has said that they will eat and have some left over” (4:43). His prediction comes true, and there is enough to feed everyone.

The narrative jumps to the story of Naaman, a revered commander in the Aramean army. He was highly valued as a warrior and thought to be favored by God. However, strangely, he also has leprosy, which implies that there was a limit to this favor.

One day, his wife’s slave, who was originally from Israel, suggests that Naaman go to Samaria to be healed by a prophet there. Naaman asks permission from the Aramean king, who writes a letter to the king of Israel explaining that he is sending Naaman to be healed of his leprosy.

When the king of Israel receives the letter, he thinks it is merely provocation to incite war, and tears his clothes in a gesture of mourning. Soon, he is visited by Elisha, who asks why he’s mourning. The king explains, and Elisha replies with confidence in his own healing powers: “Let this man (Naaman) come to me, and he will learn that there is a prophet in Israel!” (5:8)

When Naaman comes, however, Elisha's treatment is unexpected. The prophet tells Naaman to immerse himself seven times in the Jordan River. This angers Naaman, who expects that Elisha "would come out and stand here and call out in the name of the Eternal his God and wave his hand at the spot and cure the disease" (5:10). Naaman rants about how the Jordan is no better than the rivers back in Aramea, which apparently had failed to heal his leprosy.

Naaman's followers aren't as quick to dismiss Elisha. "Sir," they say, "had the prophet asked you to do something elaborate, surely you would have done it. Why not do it, then, when he only asks you to wash and be clean?" (5:13)

So Naaman consents to follow Elisha's advice. He goes down to the Jordan, strips, and dips—and his flesh becomes clear like the flesh of a small child. He and his entourage return to Elisha, where Naaman admits: "Now I know that the God of Israel is the only God in the whole world" (5:15). He offers a gift, which Elisha declines, saying that God is not interested in gifts.

Naaman declares faithfulness to the God of Israel, with one caveat: "When my master goes to the temple of [the god] Rimmon," Naaman says, "and he leans on my arm so that I must bow down...I hope God will forgive me this one thing" (5:18). In reply, Elisha tells him: "Go in peace" (5:19).

## Parashat Metzora: Summary

### Leviticus 14:1-15:33

***God describes the purification ritual for people and homes afflicted with leprosy; God also instructs Moses and Aaron regarding the laws of the emission of bodily fluids.***

God spoke to Moses, saying, "This is the instruction on how to purify a leper who is healed. When the time is right, a priest shall go outside the camp to the leper's area and confirm if the leper is healed. The priest then shall make a sacrifice with two clean, living birds. One bird is to be killed with ritual while the other is to be set free in open country.

"The healed leper must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe in water. Then he shall be clean enough to enter the camp, but he must remain outside his tent for seven days. On the seventh day, after he shaves off all the hair on his body, scrubs his clothes and washes his body, then he shall be clean.

"On the eighth day, the healed leper, two lambs without blemish, and a flour and oil offering shall be presented before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The priest shall ritually slaughter the lambs and use their blood and the flour and oil to make wave offerings, sin offerings, burnt offerings and guilt offerings for the leper who is to be cleansed. With ritual and ceremony, the priest shall make expiation for him before the Lord. Then he shall be clean."

Then God spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, “When you enter the land of Canaan and I inflict leprosy upon a house there, the owner shall come and tell the priest of the affliction. The priest must examine the house and pronounce the home clean or unclean. The unclean parts must be removed and replaced with clean materials. If the whole house is unclean, the house shall be torn down and its materials shall be taken to an unclean place outside the city. The house is to be rebuilt with clean materials.

“The priest will inspect the house again. If the priest pronounces the house clean of leprosy, then the priest is to perform a cleansing ritual for the house. He shall make offerings before the Lord with two clean birds. One is to be slaughtered and the other is to be set free in the open country. The priest thus effects purification for the house and it is clean.”

The Lord then spoke to Moses and Aaron and instructed them to tell the people about the laws concerning the emission of bodily fluids. There are times when a man or a woman is “clean” [in a spiritual, not physical sense] and a time when a man or a woman is “unclean.” There are specific rituals to transform a man or woman from unclean to clean.

#### Parashat Metzora Discussion Questions

**1) Why do you think there is a specific priestly purification ritual for a leper who is no longer sick? Do you have a purification ritual for when you become well after being sick? What is it?**

**2) In this portion, God says that God inflicts leprosy. Do you believe that God causes leprosy? Do you believe that God causes sicknesses? Why or why not?**

## Haftarah for Metzora 2 Kings 7:3-20

### *Four lepers save the Israelite camp.*

This week’s haftarah is set in the time of a brutal famine in Israel, while Jehoram son of Ahab was king of Israel. The scene opens with four lepers sitting outside the city limits, discussing their sad, hungry prospects.

The four lepers realize that they will soon starve to death if they take no action. They decide to defect from the Israelite camp and go to the camp of the Arameans, who had laid siege over the area. They explain that they have nothing to lose: “If they [the Arameans] let us live, we shall live; and if they put us to death, we shall but die” (7:4).

At twilight, they head for the Aramean camp. Much to their surprise, they discover that the camp was totally abandoned. God had created a miracle, causing the Arameans to hear sounds of chariots and horses, and flee their own camp in fear of attack.

The four lepers help themselves to all the Arameans had left behind: food, drink, silver, and gold. Then they realize they should share the wealth: “This is a day of good news, and we are keeping silent! Come, let us go and inform the king’s palace” (7:9).

The lepers return to the city and tell the gatekeepers about their discovery. The gatekeepers pass the news along and soon King Jehoram, receives the message. Yet he is skeptical, believing that the Arameans had left the camp as a trap, and would be waiting nearby, ready to ambush, as soon as the hungry Israelites entered the Aramean camp to look for food.

But one of the king’s courtiers—perhaps out of desperation in famine—encourages the king to investigate the situation further. The courtier proposes sending some horses ahead to see if the Arameans are really laying in ambush. The messengers on these horses discover that the lepers were in fact correct. The camp was fully deserted, and the road, all the way to the Jordan, was strewn with clothing and gear that the Arameans had thrown out in haste.

The people of Israel plundered the Aramean camp. The Israelite economy experienced an upturn, actualizing the prophecy which Elisha had delivered on the previous day: “This time tomorrow, a *seah* [a biblical measurement] of choice flour shall sell for a shekel at the gate of Samaria, and two seahs of barley for a shekel” (7:1, 7:18).

When Elisha had delivered this prophecy, the king’s aide had expressed disbelief, and even mocked Elisha: “Even if the Lord made windows in the sky, could this come to pass?” Elisha had responded harshly: “You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it” (7:2, 7:19).

Sure enough, the king appointed this aide to stand at the gate of the Aramean camp while the Israelites helped themselves to the loot. In their massive excitement, the crowd descended on the camp and trampled this aide to death.

### Connection to the Parashah

The name of this week’s parashah, *Metzora*, means “leper.” The parashah describes the process for ritual cleansing after one is afflicted with leprosy—a skin disease which the Bible also considers a spiritual affliction, and therefore different from what we call leprosy today.

According to the Torah, lepers must separate from the community: “As for the person with a leprous affection, his clothes shall be rent, his head shall be left bare, and he shall cover over his upper lip, and he shall call out ‘Unclean! Unclean’...He shall dwell apart; his dwelling shall be outside the camp” (Leviticus 13:45-46).

In our haftarah, we see that even though lepers are separate from the community—indeed, the four lepers were at first situated outside the city gates—they can, and should, still feel communal responsibility. Instead of resenting their outsider status, the four lepers choose to share the news of the wealth they had found and were therefore instrumental in saving Israel from starvation.



## ***From the Desk of Rabbi Philip Hammond***

### **FAMILY MATTERS PART 1**

Here you will find some helpful thoughts on issues families face in everyday life.

This week we are bringing some thoughts on the role of parents in bringing up children.

Bringing children into the world is filled with responsibilities. It also brings great change.... you are now a parent. Life will never be the same.

There will be great joy.... there is a chance there will be great heartache, disappointment, frustration, anger and even confusion.

Great joy we welcome with open arms....watching a child grow can be so engaging and inspiring....when all goes well.

Folks the outcome is squarely on the shoulders of parents. Is there a greater responsibility....hard to find one.

As parents we need all the help and guidance, we can get.... BUT.... we must be so careful where this help comes from. I am adamant that all our teachings, guidance and help must come from the Word and words of The Master....the Holy One of Israel.

He formed us, made us, knows us and therefore He and only He has the manual we must use for our learning.

I ask.... how can a parent be the parent The Almighty would have us be if we lack knowledge of His teachings? We cannot be and we will fail most miserably if we neglect the teachings of our Father.

“Sons of mine, take a lesson from your father; a lesson that will make discerning men of you, will you but heed it. A precious heirloom it is, the tradition I teach, not to be lightly bartered away.” Proverbs 4:1-2 [KT]

“Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children.....” Deuteronomy 6:6-7a [NAB]

Parents are to lead by example... there is no other example worth following other than the example set down by our Father through HaMoshiach Yeshua and the Torah.

This is no easy task....it cannot be done without prayer... parents must be in constant communication with the Father... talk, share, listen... whatever you do, don't neglect prayer in the name of Yeshua HaMoshiach.

Parents must become true Children of the Most High God if they are to witness the joy children can bring... parents must know the lessons before they can teach their children.

**We will be writing about this topic over a number of issues....want to share some experiences or ask a question....Email us**

More thoughts on raising children.

Throughout these articles we will be approaching this topic purely from a Biblical World View. In other words, these thoughts are driven by biblical faith and faithfulness to The Almighty. Only those who hold YHVH as the one true God, will understand and gain full benefit from these thoughts.

Let us begin by repeating the fact that the earliest education children receive is from their parents.... so, it is vital parents are well educated on how to guide their children.

We are not talking of university degrees or diplomas, but education and guidance from the Word of the Holy One of Israel.

I cannot emphasize enough... the first lessons, habits and behavior patterns of children are modeled on YOU the parents.

Please re-read the above sentence and let the enormity of this sink in.

***“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not part from it.” Proverbs 22:6 [NASB]***

What is the first task of parents or a would-be parent? Suggestion.... look in the mirror and study the reflection you witness.

Children will mimic their parents. Think about the first word children often speak... NO... because parents are always saying “no” to their children. They reach for a sharp knife... NO. They start playing with food... NO. They pull the dogs ears... NO. You get the picture.

Children’s minds are ready to be filled with all kinds of information... they are an “open suitcase”. It is the parent’s responsibility to fill the suitcase.

When you go on a trip... you choose what goes in the suitcase. You choose what cloths, what books, what shoes, what personal items go into the case.

No different with your children. Parents choose what goes in the suitcase... this happens even when you are unaware. Foul mouthed parents have foul mouthed children... whose fault is that?

**Important fact.** You can only fill your suitcase with items you have... you cannot fill your suitcase with items you don’t have.

It is crucial you understand this point. As a parent **you** can only supply your children with items from **“YOUR CLOSET”**.

What is in your closet... this is the?

Next week we will continue the journey...

Share your thoughts... let us know what you think.

### **DOES YOUR CLOSET NEED A CHANGE?**

We all have various items in our closets. Some do us proud, others we would rather keep hidden.



When we open the closet door, we choose what we are going to wear... right? We usually try and choose what is suitable for the occasion... formal wear for a wedding... casual wear for a day watching football... shorts and tee shirt for the beach... old jeans for farm work... wet weather gear for rainy days etc.

The question I would like to ask is... what clothes are you wearing when you are a parent? Make no mistake it can be difficult to make the correct choice... without the guidance of Torah – impossible.

Suggestion! Wear what you would like to see your children wear. If you have “clothing” in your closet that you wouldn’t want your children to wear... throw them out.

If you wear the coat of “bad manners” ... your children will wear the same coat around. If you wear the trousers of a foul temper... so will your children. On the other hand, if you put on the coat of “good manners” ... baruch HaShem so will your children. Put on the trousers of calm and measured responses... so will your children.

Please understand – children can spot a hypocrite from a great distance. The old... “do as I say and not what I do”, just doesn’t work. It is vital for the health of children that parents “practice what they preach”.

It is a fact, few had or have “perfect” parents... many have made some dreadful mistakes in bringing up their children. I only need look in the mirror to see this fact... unfortunately these mistakes often become family traits.

### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PARENTS AND PARENTS TO BE??**

Take a careful look at what you have in your closet! There is every chance you will need to re-arrange your closet... you may even need a completely new “wardrobe”.

Parents before you can cloth your child in the coat of “good manners” you must first own the coat yourself... repeating ... you CANNOT give that which you DO NOT HAVE.

Consider the following statement of Yeshua for a moment:

***“I and the Father are one”.***

Take your time thinking about the above statement... how it relates to our topic.

Until next time... God Bless.

Send us your questions or comments...

## **BABIES AND SMALL CHILDREN ARE DELICATE... BUT PARENTS MORE SO!**

Why the above heading? Allow me to explain.

Babies and small children do not have the maturity or experience to process emotions and feelings... therefore they can be excused for “behaving badly” at times. They are playing with a toy and unfortunately it breaks... result tears and frustration.

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# ***Insights into Judaism***



## **Haredim (Charedim), or Ultra-Orthodox Jews**

***You've seen the black hats and long dresses--but who are the people underneath?***

Haredim are perhaps the most visibly identifiable subset of Jews today. They are easy to spot — haredi men in black suits and wide-brimmed black hats, haredi women in long skirts, thick stockings, and head coverings — but much harder to understand.

Indeed, the history, beliefs, and practices of these devout Jews remain a mystery to many who live outside their cloistered communities. The word “haredi” is a catchall term, either an adjective or a noun, which covers a broad array of theologically, politically, and socially conservative Orthodox Jews, sometimes referred to as “ultra-Orthodox.” What unites haredim is their absolute reverence for Torah, including both the Written and Oral Law, as the central and determining factor in all aspects of life. Consequently, respect and status are often accorded in proportion to the greatness of one’s Torah scholarship, and leadership is linked to learnedness.

In order to prevent outside influence and contamination of values and practices, haredim strive to limit their contact with the outside world, avoiding, as much as possible, both non-haredi Jews and non-Jews. Interaction with outsiders is generally confined to basic economic contact and unavoidable public interactions, such as going to the post office. However, certain groups of haredim, notably, but not exclusively, members of Chabad Lubavitch, do make contact with non-haredi Jews for the purpose of *kiruv* — encouraging others to adopt more stringent religious observance.

### **The First Haredim**

The haredi phenomenon is relatively recent, though its precise origins are difficult to trace.

In the 19th century, with the spread of industrialization and urbanization, the barriers that once kept Jews out of European society were loosened. The consequent emergence of a new, more worldly kind of Jew prompted a defensive backlash which led to the birth of an extremely conservative, anti-secular, isolationist expression of Judaism. Major haredi leaders of this era

included prominent Eastern European rabbinic figures such as Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821) and Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, also known as the Chofetz Chaim (1838-1933).

The founding in Poland in 1912 of the Agudas Yisroel, a group representing the social and cultural interests of fervently religious Jews, was a major moment in the emergence of the haredi movement. Created in response to escalating assimilation and secularization within worldwide Jewry, Agudas Yisroel aimed to preserve and maintain Torah-bound Judaism, both on the individual and collective level. The organization was also significant because it was created by a coalition of Hasidim and Mitnagdim — the two major camps of haredi Jews that had previously been rivals.

Hasidism, a movement that emerged in Eastern Europe in the mid-18th century, validated the simple piety of those who could not master the intricacies of advanced talmudic scholarship. The established rabbis, who decried Hasidism as false and corrupted, were referred to as “opposers” — or, in Hebrew, Mitnagdim. But as the Hasidic movement evolved, formal yeshiva scholarship became increasingly important in this community as well. This led to a lessening of the differences between Hasidim and Mitnagdim, and some rapprochement, making the 1912 Agudas Yisroel coalition possible.

## **The Holocaust**

The Holocaust was also a critical factor in the development of haredi Judaism. With the destruction of the major European *yeshivot*, as well as the deaths of myriads of the affiliated faithful, the extinction of religious life as practiced in the shtetl seemed nearly inevitable.

But the remaining few highly observant European Jews sought to preserve their lifestyle by moving their communities and learning institutions elsewhere, mainly to Israel and the United States. Leaving many of their followers behind, European rabbinic figures who were saved — such as the Beltzer Rebbe; Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter, the third Hasidic *rebbe* of Ger; and the Satmar Rebbe — helped reestablish learning centers for their communities in new locales.

Though haredi communities were established all over the world after World War II, when the State of Israel was formed, the center of haredi activity transferred there. In Israel, haredim established yeshivot, often bearing the names of destroyed European yeshivot, and haredi communal life started anew. Agudas Yisroel was organized into a political party called Agudat Israel, using the modern Israeli Hebrew pronunciation. Over time, the party spawned several factions, some of which became splinter parties representing various factions of Hasidim and Mitnagdim.

The state of Israel currently has the largest haredi population worldwide, with an estimated 1.2 million, with the U.S. trailing behind at about 700,000. With the most explosive birthrate of any Jewish group, haredi Judaism may very well come to dominate the population of the Jewish world in years to come.

## **Family and Lifestyle**

Haredi Jews usually live in communities populated mostly or exclusively by haredim. Each community has its own synagogues, yeshivot, and community-oriented organizations. The major centers of haredi life in the United States are in and around New York City: Borough Park, Monsey, and Williamsburg. The two largest haredi communities in Israel are the city of Bnei Brak and in Jerusalem's Mea She'arim district.

Because most varieties of secular education are frowned upon, few haredim hold professional degrees. Most adult men devote themselves to full-time Torah study, and their wives commonly assume the role of breadwinner. Because most haredim live in single-earner households with large numbers of children, haredi communities are generally characterized by extreme poverty, requiring subsidies from charities and governments in order to subsist. However, in recent years, a new haredi upper-class has emerged, especially in Israel, flourishing in upper-management business and the diamond industry. Children of the haredi upper-class attend the same yeshivot as their less-privileged peers, while their parents direct a very large portion of their income to communal charities and funds that support major rabbinic figures and their projects.

When faced with major life decisions such as where to live, whom to marry, and whether to study full-time or work, haredi Jews often consult their rabbis. This tendency is rooted in the principle of *da'as torah* (Torah knowledge), which mandates that one seek Torah-based guidance from a recognized rabbinic authority on all matters of life.

## **Haredi Politics**

Many haredim are fundamentally opposed to a secular, modern, pre-messianic Jewish state. A minority, including Sephardim and Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidim, are either ardently or passively Zionist. In 1947, Agudat Israel attempted to dissuade the General Assembly of the United Nations from voting in favor of the partition of Palestine. To this day, Agudat Israel members run for election and sit in the Knesset, but they refuse to accept any official ministerial post in the Israeli cabinet and remain steadfast in their anti-Zionist ideology.

Though resistant to active participation and affiliation with Israel's mostly secular democracy, haredi political groups function with the aim of aligning Israel's policies with *halakhah*, or Jewish law, as well as insuring that haredi schools and institutions continue to receive government funding.

Although one may be tempted to view haredi culture as a monolith, various subtle and not-so-subtle distinctions exist. For example, Sephardim may or may not be considered haredi — since, as a group, ultra-Orthodox Sephardim do not reject the validity of the modern state of Israel. Also, since the haredi phenomenon began exclusively among Ashkenazic Jews, there is debate as to whether Sephardic Jews educated and socialized in European yeshivot that were restored in Israel, should actually be called haredi. The existence of institutions such as the Israeli political party *Edah ha'Hareidit ha'Sepharadit* suggest that today there indeed is racial diversity among haredim.

Despite internal differences, the political and demographic strength of haredim — both in Israel, and in world Jewry in general — continues to grow dramatically. Their ardent and uncompromising devotion to their principles, together with their prodigious birth rate, virtually assure that the haredi community will be a major force in shaping the Judaism of the future.

## ***PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY***



### **God 101**

#### ***In Judaism, who or what is God?***

There is no single Jewish conception of God. God has been described, defined, and depicted in a variety of ways in different works of Jewish literature and at different historical moments.

#### **About God**

God is beyond human comprehension, but that has not stopped Jewish thinkers from attempting to describe God. The Jewish God is referred to with many names and euphemisms, though God's scriptural names are traditionally only pronounced during religious activities. Belief in one God is one of Judaism's defining characteristics. Nonetheless, some parts of the Torah seem less monotheistic than others. In addition, there are minor currents of thought within Judaism that play down the importance of belief in God.

#### **Biblical vs. Talmudical Depictions of God**

The God of the Bible has a multitude of roles and attributes that often contrast sharply with each other. In this sense, God is like a person — experiencing a range of emotions, often torn between competing allegiances and values. The God of the Bible communicates with people through prophets and is even open to critique. Of the varied biblical representations of God, the two that became particularly prominent in Jewish thought are God's oneness and God's role as creator of the world.

Classical rabbinic literature portrays God in a similar way. However, in rabbinic writings, God no longer communicates with people through prophecy, and God is no longer considered a direct legal authority. One of the most radical Jewish descriptions of God can be found in

the *heikhalot* literature, an early corpus of mystical texts, which actually describes the physical dimensions of God. Though most early Jewish thinkers did not shy away from depicting God in human terms, Philo, a first-century philosopher, was an exception. He integrated Greek philosophy with Judaism and conceived of God in a more abstract way.

### God in Medieval Jewish Thought

The medieval philosophers departed from the non-systematic theology of biblical and rabbinic literature. Philosophers like Maimonides worked tirelessly to make their philosophical interests coincide with the truths of the Bible. They wrote proofs for the existence of God and struggled with passages in the Torah that seem to compromise God's unity. The medieval mystics—or kabbalists—also developed systematic theologies. They posited that God in Himself—known as the *Ein Sof*, or Infinite—cannot be discussed or described. However, God is revealed in the 10 *sefirot*, divine attributes or powers, and this manifest form of God is intelligible to humankind.

### Modern Jewish Views of God

Secularization and the values of the modern world have created challenges for traditional conceptions of the Jewish God. Jewish thinkers adjusted to the rationalistic universalism of early modern philosophy by focusing on the ethical implications of Judaism's belief in one God. Later, existentialists like Martin Buber focused on the experiential relationship between humans and God. Mordecai Kaplan and Richard Rubenstein took the challenges of scientific naturalism and the Holocaust so seriously that they rejected the traditional Jewish God. Finally, feminism raised serious questions about the problems of a male God.

**עֲבָרִי - Hebrew**

**Word (s) of the Week**

וַיִּבְטְחוּ בַיהוָה:

Vi-Yee-vih-tih-hu Bah-Yih-ho-vah  
And trust in YHVH...



***A Taste of Jewish Humor***

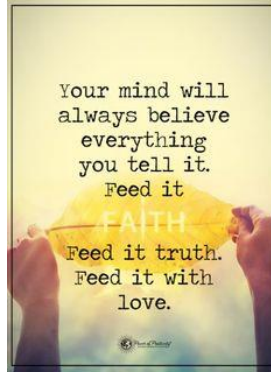
### **Charity**

The rabbi was angry about the amount of money his congregants were giving to charity. He prayed that the rich should give more charity to the poor.

“And has your prayer been answered?” asked his wife.

“Half of it was,” replied the rabbi. “The poor are willing to accept the money.”





## ***This is not your Bubbie's Chicken Soup***

**Mafrum is a Jewish Libyan dish of potato stuffed with spiced ground beef, then simmered in a tomato sauce. It is traditionally eaten on Shabbat and Jewish holidays.**

### **Ingredients**

- 4 white medium-size potatoes
- water
- salt

### **For the stuffing:**

- 3/4 lb (400 g) ground beef (80% lean, but not more)
- one bunch of parsley, washed and chopped
- 1 medium onion, grated
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 egg yolk (save the white – see below)
- salt and pepper
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 Tbsp breadcrumbs
- 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

**For the coating:**

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 3 eggs + the leftover egg white from the stuffing
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- ½ tsp salt
- oil, for frying

**For the sauce:**

- 2 large onions, sliced into rings (super thin – on a mandolin, if available)
- 2 medium tomatoes, grated
- 4 Tbsp tomato paste
- 2 cups water
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- pinch of ground nutmeg
- ⅓ cup oil, for frying

**Directions**

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1. Peel your potatoes. Slice each potato, lengthwise, into 4 slices. Then take each slice and make a cut, lengthwise, almost all the way through so you create a pocket. Fill a bowl with room-temperature water, add a pinch of salt, and place the potato slices inside for about 45 minutes, while you continue with the recipe.
2. By hand, mix all the stuffing ingredients in a bowl. Divide them equally into 16 meatballs and place on a tray.
3. Drain the potatoes and dry them completely. Sprinkle some flour inside each potato pocket. Take a meatball, smash it with the palm of your hand, and stuff the potato pockets with it. Make sure the meat doesn't stick out too much.
4. In a separate bowl, mix the 3 eggs, the remaining egg white, salt and tomato paste with a whisk.

5. Place all the flour for the coating on a large plate.
6. Using a large, deep-frying pan, heat 2 inches of oil on medium heat until it reaches 375°F.
7. Dip each potato pocket in flour, making sure each piece is fully coated, but tap off any excess flour. Then dip in the egg mixture and fry, in batches, until golden on all sides. Repeat with all the pockets and lay them on a plate or tray.
8. Heat the oven to 325°F.
9. Make the sauce in an oven-proof, large, deep skillet. Add the oil and fry the onions slowly until softened. Add the tomato paste and mix. Add the salt and the rest of the spices and mix again. Then add the fresh grated tomato, sugar and water.
10. When the sauce comes to a simmer, slowly place all the potato pockets into the skillet, laying them side by side. Cover, turn the heat to low, and cook for 10 minutes.
11. Place the skillet in the oven for 1-1.5 hours, or until the sauce has cooked down by half and potatoes are soft. Serve with chopped herbs, a fresh salad and tahini dressing.

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