



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 1-14-23 SHEMOT**

### ***Ministry News***

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

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

**Donate**



**Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is an approved Giving Charity by PayPal. To donate go to [etz-chayim.org](http://etz-chayim.org) and click on the PayPal Link.**

**Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and helping form groups in the prisons. TOLMM also seeks to help Home Groups and offers a covering for Home Groups and the combined experience of leadership from Rabbi Philip Hammond and Rabbi Mordecai Silver. Group leaders can receive recognition as Elders under TOLMM, which will help in an advisory role.**

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

## **HOME GROUPS, CONGREGATIONS AND PEOPLE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP..**

Shawn Warren lives in Arizona. If you know of someone who is looking for a group in that area, please let me know and I will send the information to Shawn.

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

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

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/>.

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.

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

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.

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 1-14-23 SHEMOT**

*Message originally shared 1/17/98*

*Sh'mot - names*

*Exodus 1:1-6:1*

*Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23*

*Jeremiah 1:1-2:3*

**Exodus 3:6**

*And He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to gaze toward God.*

**Exodus 3:10-11**

*And now, go and I shall dispatch you to Pharaoh and you shall take My people the Children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses replied to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Children of Israel out of Egypt?"*

**Exodus 3:14-15**

*The Lord answered Moses; "I Shall Be As I Shall Be." And He said, "So shall you say to the Children of Israel, 'I Shall Be has sent me to you.'" God said further to Moses, "So shall you say to the Children of Israel, 'The Lord the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has dispatched me to you. This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance from generation to generation.'*

The Hebrew word for I Shall Be is *Hayah*.

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Two parts to the word. Ha and Yah. Ha meaning the and Yah meaning God. Simply put, God told Moses that His Name is God. That's it, that's all you need to know. That's all you need to tell them.

Now after the Lord told Moses what to say to the Children of Israel who He was Moses came back with this reply:

**Exodus 4:1**

***Moses responded and said, "But they will not believe me and they will not heed my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'"***

**Exodus 4:10**

***Moses replied to the Lord, "Please, my Lord, I am not a man of words, not since yesterday, nor since the day before yesterday, nor since You first spoke to Your servant, for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of speech."***

This brings to mind Peter before he experienced the presence of God personally in his life. Do you remember what happened?

**Matthew 26:69-72**

***Kefa was sitting outside in the courtyard when a servant girl came up to him, "You were with Y'shua from the Galil," she said. But he denied it in front of everyone— "I don't know what you're talking about!" He went out onto the porch, and another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Y'shua of Natzeret." Again he denied it, swearing, "I don't know the man!"***

**Exodus 4:11-12**

***Then the Lord said to him, "Who makes a mouth for man, or who makes one dumb or deaf, or sighted or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? So now, go! I shall be with your mouth and teach you what you should say."***

And we see the same situation in the Book of Jeremiah.

**Jeremiah 1:4-5**

***The word of the Lord came to me, saying,***

***"Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you left the womb, I sanctified you; I established you as a prophet unto the nations."***

But did Jeremiah say?

**Jeremiah 1:6**

***But I said, "Alas, my Lord God, see, I do not know how to speak, for I am just a youth!"***

And God replied:

**Jeremiah 1:7-9**

***Then the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am just a youth'; rather, wherever I shall send you, you shall go, and whatever I shall command you, you shall speak. Do not fear them, for I am with you to rescue you—the word of the Lord." The Lord extended His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Behold! I have placed My words in your mouth.***

Matthew 28:19-20

*Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim...*

*And teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always...*

**Matthew 8:19**

***A Torah-teacher approached and said to him, "Rabbi, I will follow you wherever you go."***

**Revelation 14:12**

***This is when perseverance is needed on the part of God's people, those who observe His commands and exercise Y'shua's faithfulness.***

I am going to close with this thought which is in the following story.

### **Hide and Seek**

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, who was orphaned from his mother at the age of three, was raised by his grandfather, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.

One day, little Menachem Mendel was sitting on his grandfather's lap. The child was pulling on the Rabbi's beard and calling: Zeideh! Zeideh! (Grandfather! Grandfather!). "But this isn't the zeideh," protested Rabbi Schneur Zalman, "this is zeideh's beard!"

So the child grabbed his grandfather's head: "This is the zeideh," he tried. "Oh no" said Rabbi Schneur Zalman "this is the zeideh's head. Where is zeideh?"

And so it went. The child pointed in turn to his zeideh's eyes, hands, body. "But where is zeideh?" Rabbi Schneur Zalman kept insisting.

Suddenly, the child was off his grandfather's lap and behind the door. From his hiding place, little Mendel cried out: ZEI--DEH!! "What is it?" called the Rabbi, turning towards the child. "Aha," exclaimed the grandson, "there is the zeideh! "

Do we do as that little boy did and seek out God wanting to serve Him or do we do as so many others have done throughout the Bible and seek to hide from God, pretending that we do not hear Him. Or do we argue with God, knowing full well that He is right, telling Him that we are not the right one for the job.

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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 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 Shemot: Summary Exo: 1:1-6:1

## *A new Pharaoh rises.*

### A New Pharaoh Rises

The sons of Israel in Egypt were fruitful in births, and the people grew strong. Now a new Pharaoh rose up over Egypt who knew nothing of Joseph. This Pharaoh was worried that the Israelite nation was too mighty. First, he levied a tax on them, then he decided to make them slaves.

Next, Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives, Shifra and Puah, to kill all the Hebrew baby boys. But the midwives feared God and told Pharaoh that the Hebrew woman gave birth before they could arrive. God dealt well with the midwives and the Hebrews continued to multiply. The Pharaoh then commanded the people to throw every Hebrew baby boy into the river.

### Moses is Born

Now, a Hebrew couple from the house of Levi had a son and kept him hidden for three months. When the mother could hide him no longer, she wove a basket, laid the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the banks of the river. Her sister placed herself at a distance to see what would happen to him.

When the Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe, she saw the basket with the crying child. She took pity on him so that when the baby's sister asked, "Shall I call a Hebrew woman to nurse the baby for you?" she said yes. The sister then fetched her mother. When the child had grown sufficiently, the mother brought him to the Pharaoh's daughter. She named him Moses because "I drew him from the water."

### Moses Strikes an Egyptian

When Moses was an adult, he could see the burdens of his Hebrew brethren. One day, he saw an Egyptian man beating a Hebrew man. Moses turned this way and that and when he saw that no one was there, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

The next day Moses came upon two Hebrew men fighting. Moses said to the one in the wrong. "Why are you striking down your neighbor?" The man replied, "Who has made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

"So, the matter is known," Moses said in fear.

Pharaoh heard too and sought to kill Moses. Moses thus fled to the land of Midian. There he watered the sheep for the daughters of the priest of Midian and later married the priest's daughter, Tziporah. She bore a son whom he called Gershom, for "I was a stranger in a foreign land."



In Egypt Pharaoh died, but the sons of Israel remained slaves. God heard the Hebrew slaves' cry of distress and remembered the covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### The Burning Bush

Meanwhile Moses was tending sheep for his father-in-law, Yithro, near the mountain of God at Horeb. An angel of God appeared to him in the heart of a fire from the midst of a thorn bush. He saw and lo! the thorn bush was on fire but was not consumed. Moses looked at this great sight and went to see why the thorn bush did not burn up.

God called to Moses from the middle of the bush, "Moses, Moses."

"Here I am!" Moses said.

"Do not step here!" said God. "Take off your shoes for the place you are standing on is ground with a holy destiny. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob."

And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look toward God.

God continued, "I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt and have heard their cries as slaves. Now I have come down to rescue them from the hand of Egypt and bring them to a good and spacious land, a land that can flow with milk and honey. Now, therefore go, I will send you to Pharaoh and to bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

"Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" asked Moses.

"I will be with you. If you will bring the people out from Egypt, you will become the servants of God upon this mountain."

"But" Moses said, "when I tell this to the sons of Israel, they will ask me 'What is God's name?'"

"I shall be that which I wish to be," replied God. "So, say to them, 'God, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob has sent me to you.' This is My Name for the distant future, and this is My memorial for every generation. Go and gather the elders of Israel and tell them. They will hearken to your voice. Then go to Pharaoh and say, 'God, the God of the Hebrews has met with us and now please let us go on a three day's journey into the wilderness to offer up a sacrifice to God, our God.'"

### God Gives Moses The Signs

"Now," God continued, "I know that Pharaoh will not let you go, not even by the threat of a mighty hand. Then I will stretch out My hand and strike down Egypt with all My miracles. After that, he will send you away and you shall leave with gold and silver and clothing."

"But what if they do not believe that God appeared to me."

"What is that in your hand?" God said.

“A staff.”

“Throw it on the ground.”

Moses threw his staff on the ground, and it turned into a serpent and Moses fled from it.

“Put out your hand,” God said, “and grasp it by its tail.” Moses did and it turned back into a staff.

God then had Moses put his hand to his chest. When Moses took out his hand, it turned leprous. When he put it back into his chest, it turned to flesh again.

“If they do not believe the first sign,” said God, “they will believe the second sign. But if they still do not believe, you shall take the waters of the river and pour it on dry land. The water will then turn into blood.”

“O Lord, I am not a man who is good at speaking.”

“Who has made man’s mouth or who makes one mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, God? And now, go! I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

“Oh Lord,” said Moses. “Please send this message through someone else.”

Then the anger of God was kindled against Moses. God said, “Aaron, your brother, will gladly speak for you. Behold! He is coming to meet you. You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what you shall do. And you shall take into your hand this staff with which you are to perform the signs.”

So, Moses took his wife and his sons and returned to Egypt.

Let My People Go

God said to Moses, “You shall perform convincing wonders before Pharaoh, but I shall harden his heart and he will not let the people go until you will say to Pharaoh: This is what God has said, ‘Israel is My son, My first-born. I have told you, let My son go so that he may serve Me, but you have refused to let him go. I will therefore kill your own son, your own first-born.’”

God told Aaron to meet Moses. Moses told Aaron what God said. Moses and Aaron then gathered the elders of the sons of Israel. Aaron uttered the words that God had spoken to Moses and the signs were performed. The people bowed their heads in trust.

Afterwards, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh saying, “God, the God of Israel says: ‘Let My people go so that they may celebrate a festival for Me in the wilderness.’”

“Who is God that I should let Israel go?” said Pharaoh. “I do not know God and I will not let Israel go.” That same day Pharaoh commanded that the slaves were to no longer to be given straw to prepare bricks. “Instead,” said Pharaoh, “the slaves are to go and gather themselves

their own straw. But the quota of bricks they are to make remains the same. Because they are lazy, they cry for this holiday to worship their God.”

The Hebrew slaves went to Moses and Aaron and said, “May God look down upon you and judge, because you have brought us into foul odor in the eyes of Pharaoh!”

Moses returned to God and said, “My Lord! For what purpose have you made this misfortune for the people? Why did You send me to do this? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, Pharaoh has abused the people even more and You have not rescued Your people even from this?”

And God said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh; for by a strong hand will he let them go. Indeed, by a strong hand will he drive them out of his land!”

Parashat Shemot Discussion Questions

1. God heard the cry of the Hebrew slaves. Do you feel God hears your cries of distress? How can you tell if God is listening? How can you tell if God cares?
2. Do you think God could make a burning bush not consume from the fire? Why or why not?
3. God tells Moses what actions to take and how Pharaoh will respond. God foresees exactly what will happen. Do you believe that God foresees what will happen to people? What do you think God foresees for you?
4. Moses wants proof to show the elders of Israel that God spoke to him. What proof would you give that God speaks to you?
5. Do you believe that God makes people mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Why or why not?

## **Haftarah for Shemot Isa. 27:-28:13, 29:22-23**

### ***Promises of hope, threats of destruction.***

Samaria, the capitol of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 BCE. In the Haftarah read by Ashkenazi Jews this week, Isaiah gives a prophecy concerning Israel, explaining why it fell to its enemies, but also giving hope for a future of redemption.

Though Isaiah’s primary concern is to bring a message of doom for Israel, he begins noting that eventually, “Israel shall sprout and blossom, and the face of the world shall be covered with fruit” (Isaiah 27:6).

Immediately following this statement of forthcoming redemption, Isaiah launches into a tirade against the Israelites and their worship of the Syrian goddess Asherah. He chastises the leaders and priests of Israel, calling them drunk, implying that their judgment is poor. Isaiah is outright

disgusted by the behavior of Israelites, saying, “Yea, all tables are covered with vomit and filth, so that no space is left” (Isaiah 28:8).

But the people are not receptive to the words of the prophet, and Isaiah promises that as long as they refuse to repent, “they shall fall backward, and be injured and snared and captured” (Isaiah 28:13).

Though much of what Isaiah has to say is pessimistic and angry, the rabbis chose to end the haftarah with two lines from a later chapter (Isaiah 29:22-23). These lines emphasize the redemption that will come to the people from God, just as it came for Abraham and his descendants

### Connection to *Parashat Shemot*

In Parashat Sh'mot the people of Israel are enslaved by the Egyptians, suffering greatly at the hands of others. Finally, Moses arrives and begins to move the people toward redemption.

Similarly, in Isaiah, the people in the Kingdom of Israel suffered greatly, though in this case it is suffering that has been brought on by their own lack of faith in God, and by the corruption and greed of their leaders. Isaiah brings them a message of hope and redemption.

### Jeremiah As Moses

In Sephardic congregations the Haftarah is taken from the beginning of the Book of Jeremiah. When God first begins speaking to Jeremiah and charges him with a mission, Jeremiah is reticent to receive the word of God. Just like Moses, Jeremiah tells God that he will not be a good messenger. He is just a boy, he protests.

But God will not take no for an answer and immediately gives Jeremiah two metaphorical visions of an almond branch and steaming pot. These visions are meant to motivate Jeremiah to embrace his mission and to inspire him to go to Jerusalem where he will remind the people not to dishonor God, and not to eat of the first fruits that are set aside for God.

Jeremiah's leadership and the way he is anointed as a leader are parallel to Moses' initial encounter with God and ascension to leader of the Israelites.



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

### **WORDS OF WISDOM CHAPTER 18**

The most widely known prayer in Judaism is the “shortened version” of the “Shema”.

*“Hear, O Israel: HASHEM is our God, HASHEM the One [and only].*

*Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.”* **These scriptures taken from The Schottenstein Edition Siddur for the Sabbath and Festivals**

One of the challenges we Children of Israel have is our faithfulness in our relationship with HaShem. We tend to talk more than we act. HaShem acts more than He talks. We must admit the faithfulness HaShem shows to His people cannot be questioned. This is shown with absolute clarity in the death and resurrection of Yeshua HaMoshiach.

When one comes to consider this level of faithfulness, we can but ask the question! What are we prepared to die for? As this question is posed, my thoughts go back to a time when the Master Yeshua prayed the following.

*“Father, He said, if it pleases thee, take away this chalice from before me; only as thy will is, not as mine is.”* [KTB]

It is said that; **“if you have nothing to die for, then you have nothing to live for”**. We witness the power and truth of this statement when we consider the life and death of Yeshua HaMoshiach. Yeshua both lived and

died because of His faithfulness to the Father. Yeshua has given us the footprint for us to follow.

History is full of accounts where people have died for their faithfulness to a cause. We witness in “Nature” where a mother is prepared to die for her young. Soldiers constantly face death in the hope others will be able to live. People enjoy and engage in a variety of activities where death is a very real possibility. Yet in saying this, the vast majority would not engage in these activities if they knew death was certain.

In this day and age, it is not difficult to find a group of people who are more than willing to die for their faithfulness to a cause. A percentage of Moslems are only too willing to die for their faith. Whilst this author can understand their position, I believe it is a warped and evil position they hold. So let us move on and briefly visit this question as regards the Children of Israel.

I would suggest that we live, so we can die to self or die to self so we can live! The greatest hindrance we have in developing a consistent, devoted, and trustworthy relationship with HaShem is “self-interest”. May I further suggest, living a life and installing programs that help the death of self, will build, and enhance our relationship with HaShem. We are given the perfect example of dying to self in Yeshua, as in the account mentioned above. This preparedness to die for our faithfulness does not always mean a physical death, it may at some stage, and sadly it does for some, but for most this will not be the case, Baruch HaShem.

I become a little amused when “believers” say they are willing to die for God but refuse to follow His Torah. These people prefer to follow “mans” torah because changing would mean the “death” of something they hold dear. As mentioned, countless times, this is shown in the preferred Sabbaths that people keep. Christians prefer to keep the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week instead of the 7<sup>th</sup> – HaShem’s set apart day. Christians prefer to celebrate the birth of HaMoshiach Yeshua on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December instead of keeping Yom Teruah – The day that PERHAPS Yeshua was born. We know He was not born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. Christians prefer to keep Easter instead of Pesach and the list goes on. On the other hand, Rabbinical Judaism has its own problems often following the revered teachings of men over and above “Biblical Judaism”.

Let us return to the “Shema”.

If HaShem is to be our one and only God, [absolutely this is to be the case] then the command to “love HaShem with all your heart, soul and strength” should be the foundations of our lives. Yet we find this no easy task, because for this to take place, we are required to die to self. This dying to self requires the most intense and scrupulous examination of our very being. This examination is only the beginning of our journey, as if done biblically we will no doubt recognise our need to change. When this reality hits us, we then require the courage, strength, and willingness to change. This change will necessitate a quantum shift, a shift impossible without the healing Hand of HaShem. We must come to terms with our own failings and strengths. However, these must be understood through the lens of Torah. We cannot achieve this unless HaShem flows into every aspect of our lives. How do we arrange our lives in order to program ourselves for this quantum shift? Unless we make a heart decision to change those aspects of our lives that are contrary to the Torah, we will fail most miserably. In fact, we must be “born anew”. Yeshua was asked an important question by one who had an interest in changing his life.

*<sup>16</sup> A man approached Yeshua and said, “Rabbi, what good thing should I do in order to have eternal life?” He said to him, <sup>17</sup> “Why are you asking me about good? There is One who is good! But if you want to obtain eternal life, observe the mitzvot.” <sup>18</sup> The man asked him, “Which ones?” and Yeshua said, “**Don’t murder, don’t commit adultery, don’t steal, don’t give false testimony** <sup>19</sup> **honor father and mother** and **love your neighbor as yourself.**” <sup>20</sup> The young man said to him, “I have kept all these; where do I still fall short?” <sup>21</sup> Yeshua said to him, “If you are serious about reaching the goal, go and sell your possessions, give to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come, follow me!” <sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he was wealthy. Matthew 19:16-22 [CJB]*

When we read this account, it is the change of heart that Yeshua was focusing on. This individual had no problems with certain aspects of the Torah, but he was still unable to bring about a quantum shift in his attitude to self. Giving over to HaShem those “items” we hold dear is the challenge. It is prayer and Torah application that allows us to reach the point that we can achieve this very difficult task. The individual in this case was not

willing to die to self so he could be “born anew”. There was no way he could fulfil the commandment of loving HaShem with all his heart, soul and strength.

We are told that HaShem is the one and only God that Israel should trust and worship. How is it then that we have the audacity to not only question Him, but change His rules and regulations to suit our own selfish purposes? If HaShem is the only God we believe in, trust and worship, then we can follow the directive to love HaShem with all out heart, soul and might.

We Children of Israel must ask the question: “Is HaShem the one and only God we fully worship”? An easy question to ask, but the answer can be tough, requiring an honest appraisal of our living “standards”. The acts that we engage in, are they acts of false gods [evil in the sight of HaShem] or are they acts manifested through application of Torah, showing our faithfulness to HaShem and Yeshua HaMoshiach, guided by the Ruach HaKodesh? The Master spoke the following words.

*“Then Yeshua told his talmidim, “If anyone wants to come after me, let him say ‘NO’ to himself, take up his execution-stake, and keep following me. For whoever wants to save his own life will destroy it, but whoever destroys his life for my sake will find it. What good will it do someone if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come in his Father’s glory, with his angels; and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct.” Matthew 16:24-27 [CJB]*

When Yeshua was offered “the world” by satan, He rejected the offer through application of Torah. The application of Torah provides us with the foundation to guard our souls from the many enemies we face. Yet more importantly it shows that we love HaShem with all our heart, soul and strength. Let us *“Hear, O Israel: HASHEM is our God, HASHEM the One [and only]. Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.”*

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

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## ***This, that and the other ...***



### **What Does Mazel Tov Mean?**

***This popular Jewish phrase of congratulation is a literally a comment on the alignment of the stars.***

The Hebrew phrase *mazel tov* (also spelled *mazal tov*, or *mazel tof*) literally translated means “good luck.” In practice, *mazel tov* is usually said to mean “Congratulations!” In modern Israeli pronunciation, it is said with the accent on the second syllable: ma-ZAL tove. In Yiddish and Ashkenazi pronunciation, the accent comes on the first syllable: MA-zel tof.

One can expect to hear people shout “*mazel tov*” at celebrations like Jewish weddings just after the glass is broken, at *brit milah* (*bris*) ceremonies, and at *bar* and *bat mitzvahs*. *Mazel tov* is an appropriate response to any good news, from an engagement to a graduation, a new job, a new house, or any other honor or milestone. In modern Israeli Hebrew, it is common to congratulate people on their birthday using this phrase.

*Mazel tov* isn’t always a perfect substitute for the English “congratulations.” Some people avoid saying *mazel tov* to a pregnant woman out of superstition that something might happen to the baby. Instead, it is customary to say “*b’sha’ah tovah*,” (*beh-shah-AH toe-VAH*) meaning “at a good time.” The implicit wish is that the baby will be born healthy and safe — at which point *mazel tov* would be an appropriate greeting.

The phrase *mazel tov* literally means “a good constellation,” implying that the recipient is experiencing good fortune because the stars have aligned for them. In fact, the medieval song incorporating this phrase — *siman tov u’mazal tov*, “a good sign, a good constellation” — makes this even more explicit.

Ancient rabbinic texts speak of good and bad *mazalot* (constellations), but the phrase *mazel tov* was not used in a congratulatory manner until the 19th century. A reasonable literal translation of the phrase might be “good luck” but this doesn’t, as it does in English, carry the connotation of hoping for future fortune. Rather, it acknowledges present good fortune. To wish a person future luck in Hebrew, one would say *b’hatzlachah* — may you have success.

# Prayer Points



## Form and Function

***Often, we are so attached to the outer forms of Judaism that we neglect the principle they are meant to embody***

According to the Torah, Moses received two stone tablets from God on Mount Sinai. Written on both sides by God's hand in God's handwriting, these tablets contained what are often called the Ten Commandments, but which the text literally describes as the ten "sayings." As Moses and Joshua descended the mountain to bring the sayings to the people, they heard the Israelites shouting down below.

At first, Joshua thought it was the sound of battle, of people shrieking in fear or shouting in victory. But listening more carefully, Moses discerned that it was the sound of singing. When the two men drew near the encampment, Moses saw the people dancing and worshipping a Golden Calf they had made. Furious, Moses smashed the tablets against the rocky ground (Exodus 32:19).

Two chapters later, God instructs Moses to prepare a second set of tablets: "*God said to Moses, 'Cut two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets, which you shattered.'*" (Exodus 34:1) In his commentary, Rashi asks why God adds the seemingly superfluous phrase "that you shattered" — in Hebrew, *asher shibarta*. After all, Moses is quite aware that he shattered them. Rashi's answer, which he reveals in his commentary on the final verse of Deuteronomy, is quite radical.

The final verse of Torah praises the now-deceased Moses "*for all the mighty deeds that (asher) Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel.*" (Deuteronomy 34:12) According to Rashi, we are to link the *asher* in Exodus 34:1 with the *asher* in Deuteronomy 34:12 and see hidden in the word *asher* the phrase *yashar koach*, which is the Hebrew equivalent of "bravo." In other words, God is praising Moses for shattering the tablets.

Why might God celebrate Moses' action? Here is my take:

Remember the setting: The people, thinking Moses had died on Mount Sinai and having lost faith in Moses' invisible God, demanded of Aaron that he create for them a new god smelted

from gold. If the people could worship an idol made from human hands, imagine what they would do with tablets wrought by the hand of God?

Moses suspected that the people would worship the tablets themselves rather than follow the teachings inscribed upon them, and thus to save the teaching, Moses had to smash the tablets. God supported his action and applauded it.

Often, we are so attached to the outer forms of Judaism that we neglect the principle the form is meant to embody. For example, the principle at the heart of kosher slaughtering is timeless: *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*, minimizing the suffering of animals. Yet the practice of kosher slaughtering is time-bound, reflecting a centuries-old technology that was, but is no longer, an optimal embodiment of the principle.

This, I suggest, is the kind of thing Rashi warned us against.

If we are to be true to the teachings of Moses, we must be ready to smash those forms that imprison them, trusting that when we do so, God is shouting *yasher koach!*

**עִבְרִי - Hebrew**

**Word (s) of the Week**

וּבִקְשֶׁתֶם מִשֵּׁם אֶת־יְהוָה

*Vi-Vee-kahsh-tehm Mee-shahm Eht YHVH*

**And seek the Lord your God**

## ***A Taste of Jewish Humor***

A woman on a train walked up to a man across the table. "Excuse me," she said, "but are you Jewish?"

"No," replied the man.

A few minutes later the woman returned. "Excuse me," she said again, "are you sure you're not Jewish?"

"I'm sure," said the man.

But the woman was not convinced, and a few minutes later she approached him a third time. "Are you absolutely sure you're not Jewish?" she asked.

"All right, all right," the man said. "You win. I'm Jewish."

"That's funny," said the woman. "You don't look Jewish."



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

# Leftover Turkey Noodle Soup with Matzah Balls

BY SHANNON SARNA

Thanksgiving was a sacred holiday in my family growing up. There were a series of rituals, smells, sounds and foods we knew we could expect each and every year without fail. The Macy's Day Parade on TV in the background. Pillsbury biscuits with lots of butter. Stuffed mushrooms. Glazed sweet potatoes. And at least one person lighting themselves on fire by accident.

One of the foods that always made an appearance occurred after Thanksgiving itself: leftover turkey noodle soup that my dad would make with the remaining turkey carcass. And it almost always happened the Saturday right after Thanksgiving for a warming lunch.

There is so much meat and flavor still left on the carcass of the turkey, and it's a great way to use up some of that leftover meat. Throw in some fresh veggies and aromatics, and you have a dish that isn't just leftovers, it's bestovers. In my version I add some matzah balls for good measure, but of course, add or subtract what you like. I have even been known to drive home from my in-laws with a few tinfoil wrapped turkey carcasses sitting in the back seat.

Not making a turkey this year? You can also make turkey stock from some turkey necks, turkey wings and/or turkey drumsticks – whatever is cheap and available.

## Leftover Turkey Noodle Soup with Matzah Balls

### Ingredients

- 1-2 leftover turkey carcasses
- 4 quarts cold water
- 2 quarts chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 large onion (or 2 small onions)
- 4 large carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 stalks of celery
- 2 parsnips
- 1 turnip
- 2-3 garlic cloves

- 1 bunch fresh parsley
- 1 bunch fresh dill
- a few sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 Tbsp whole peppercorns
- salt to taste
- leftover turkey meat for serving
- cooked egg noodles (optional)
- matzah balls for serving (optional)

## Directions

1. Place all ingredients in large stockpot and cover with cold water and stock (add additional water and/or stock if needed). Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to medium.
2. Simmer for 2 hours, skimming the top of the soup to remove fat and any scum that rises to the top.
3. Remove turkey and vegetables and set aside. Simmer again on low-medium heat for another 30-45 minutes until stock has reduced just slightly and flavor is rich.
4. Season with salt to taste.
5. Serve with the cooked carrots, diced leftover turkey meat, cooked egg noodles and matzah balls if desired.

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