



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 6-10-23 BEHALOTECHA**

### ***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. 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 Torah 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.

WE HAVE 7 PRISON AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

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



Rabbi Mordecai Silver [tolmm@etz-chayim.org](mailto:tolmm@etz-chayim.org)

## **MESSAGE FOR 6-10-23 BEHALOTECHA**

*B'haalot'cha – In Your Going Up*

*Numbers 8:1-12:16*

*Deu 15:19-16:17*

*Zech 2:14-4:7*

*Rev 11:1-14*

**Numbers 8: 9-14, 16-19**

***And you shall bring the Levites before the Tent of Meeting, and you shall assemble all the congregation of the children of Yisrael. And you shall bring the Levites before Adonai, and the children of Yisrael shall lay their hands on the Levites, and Aharon shall wave the Levites before Adonai, a wave offering from the children of Yisrael – so shall they be for doing the service of Adonai. And the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls. And one shall be prepared as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to Adonai, to make atonement for the Levites. And you shall have the Levites stand before Aharon and his sons, and then wave them, a wave offering to Adonai. Thus, you shall***

*separate the Levites from among the children of Yisrael, and the Levites shall be Mine.*

*For they are given ones, given to Me from among the children of Yisrael. **I have taken them for myself instead of all who open the womb, the first-born of all the children of Yisrael.** For all the first-born among the children of Yisrael are Mine, both man and beast. **On the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Mitsrayim I set them apart unto Myself.** And I have taken the Levites instead of all the first-born of the children of Yisrael.*

**Ephesians 5:1-2:** So, imitate God, as His dear children; and live a life of love, just as also the Messiah loved us, **indeed, on our behalf gave himself up as an offering, as a slaughtered sacrifice to God with a pleasing fragrance.**

**2 Corinthians 5:21:** *God made this sinless man be a sin offering on our behalf, so that in union with Him we might fully share in God's righteousness.*

**John 1:29:** *The next day, Yochanan saw Y'shua coming toward him and said, "Look! God's lamb! The One who is taking away the sin of the world!"*

**Colossians 1:19-22:** *For it pleased God to have His full being live in His Son*

*And through His Son to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace through Him, through having His Son shed His blood by being executed on a stake. In other words, you, who at one time were separated from God and had a hostile attitude towards Him because of your wicked deeds, He has now reconciled in the Son's physical body through His death; in order to present you holy and without defect or reproach before Himself.*

And this promise extends to Jew and non-Jew.

**Numbers 9:14:** *And when a stranger sojourns among you, then he shall perform the Passover of Adonai. He shall do so according to the law of the Passover and according to its right ruling. You have one law, both for the stranger and the native of the land.*

***Ezra 6:20-21: For the priests and the Levites had cleansed themselves – all of them were clean. And they slaughtered the Passover for all the sons of the exile, and for their brothers the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Yisrael who had returned from the exile ate together with all who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the gentiles of the land in order to seek Adonai Elohim of Yisrael.***

**1Co 5:7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Y'shua, has been sacrificed.**

As we begin to come to a close, I want to share the following thoughts written by a non-believing rabbi.

Even though today it seems that all of the remnant of the majesty of the Royal House of David has been uprooted and has vanished into nothingness, nevertheless, the root is still living, hidden and dormant.

Immediately prior to the coming of the Mashiach, there will be tremendous confusion in the world. Everything will seem to have gone haywire. The natural order will be turned on its head: Age will bow to youth. Ugliness will be trumpeted as beauty, and what is beautiful will be put forward as unattractive. Barbarism will be lauded as culture. And culture will be dismissed as worthless.

The hunger of consumerism and the lust for material wealth will grow more and more, and it will find less and less to satisfy its hunger. Eventually Materialism will grow so rampant that it will become its own angel of death. It will literally consume itself and regurgitate itself back out.

However, from this decay, the line of David will sprout, like a plant that springs forth from no more than the dirt of the ground. There will be wars of confusion, and then, at the appropriate moment, the Mashiach will appear like a majestic tree flourishing from barren ground, laden with fruit, revealed to all.

**Revelation 11:17-19 We give You thanks, O Adonai El Shaddai, the One who is and who was and who is coming, because You have taken Your great power and reigned.**

***And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the reward to Your servants the prophets and to***

*the set-apart ones, and to those who fear Your Name, small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.*

Revelation 10-11 And I heard a loud voice saying in the heaven, “Now have come the deliverance and the power and the reign of our Elohim, and the authority of His Messiah, for the accuser of our brothers, who accused them before our Elohim day and night, has been thrown down.

*And they overcame him because of the Blood of the Lamb, and because of the Word of their witness, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

*His sacrifice was a sweet-smelling fragrance to our God. And the Father accepted it, and need I say more?*

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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**



## **Parshat Beha'alotcha: Summary**

### **Numbers 8:1-12:16**

***The Israelites receive instructions regarding Passover, journey forth from Sinai and complain to God on several occasions.***

After the sanctification of the Dwelling Place for God, God spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to Aaron and have him light the menorah so that the seven lights shall cast light." And Aaron did so.

Then God said to Moses, "Take the Levites and purify them with waters that clear of sin and make animal and flour offerings to God. Then you shall assemble the whole community and have the Levites come before the Tent of Appointed Meeting." And it was done.

God spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the second year after their exodus from Egypt. "Let the sons of Israel make Pesach on the fourteenth day of this month, between the two evenings. Even if a man is unclean, the Pesach offering with matzah and bitter herbs must still be made. For one who neglects the Pesach offering to God shall be uprooted from among his people." And a Pesach offering was made.

On the day that the Dwelling Place was erected, a cloud covered. In the evening, above the Dwelling Place there was a fire-like glow. Only when the cloud rose from the Tent of Appointed Meeting did the sons of Israel journey forth. Only at the place where the cloud settled did the sons of Israel make camp. Even when the cloud remained over the Dwelling Place for many days, the sons of Israel did not journey forth. The cloud came and went for a day, a few days, a year, and each time the Israelites settled and journeyed by way of the utterances of God through Moses.

God then told Moses to "make two silver trumpets for calling the community. Aaron's sons, the priests, shall blow the trumpets. When the trumpets are blown, the whole community shall come before the Tent of Appointed Meeting. But if they blow only one trumpet, the princes, the heads of the families of Israel, shall come forth. Each blow will indicate a direction for the



next journey. When at war with an oppressor, you shall blow the trumpet and you will be remembered before God, and you will be delivered from your enemies. On that day of rejoicing and in your festive season and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets.”

It came to pass in the second year that the cloud rose from its dwelling over the Dwelling Place of the Testimony and the Israelites journeyed forth out of the wilderness of Sinai. When the Ark would journey, Moses said, “Arise, God, and let your foes be scattered, let those who hate You flee from before you.” And when it rested, Moses would say, “Reside tranquilly, O God, among the thousands of Israel.”

But the people took to complaining and that was evil in the ears of God. God’s anger was kindled such that a fire broke out against them and devoured one edge of the camp. And the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to God, and the fire died down. He named the place Taberah because the fire of God had broken out against them.

The Israelites cried again complaining that there was nothing to eat besides manna and they wanted meat and fish and fruits and vegetables like they ate in Egypt. Moses heard their weeping, and the wrath of God flared greatly. In the eyes of Moses, it was bad. Moses said to God, “Why have You placed the burden of this entire people upon me. I alone cannot carry this entire nation, for it is too heavy a burden.”

God said to Moses, “gather seventy men from among the elders of Israel and have them stand with you at the Tent of Appointed Meeting. They will then bear the burden of the people with you. As for the people complaining that life was better for them in Egypt, tell them that God will provide meat. Tell them it will be so much meat that they must eat it for a whole month until it comes out of their nostrils and makes them nauseated. Tell them it is because you have rejected Hashem who is in your midst and you have wept before Hashem saying, ‘Why did we leave Egypt?’”

Moses gathered the elders and then God sent a wind and drove quails from the sea to the camp. Some people arose and gathered quail and the meat was still between their teeth and not yet chewed when the anger of God broke out. God called this place Graves of Lust, for there they had buried the people who had been craving. The rest of the people journeyed to Hatzeroth.

There Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses regarding the “dark skinned woman” whom he had married, for he had indeed married a “dark-skinned” woman. They said, “Has God indeed spoken only with Moses? Has God not also spoken to us?” And God heard their words against Moses.

Now Moses was extremely humble, more than all the persons who live on the face of the earth. God suddenly said to Moses, to Aaron and to Miriam, “Go all three of you, to the Tent of Appointed Meeting.” God descended in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of Tent of Appointed Meeting. God called Aaron and Miriam. “Hear now My words: My servant Moses is trusted in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak with him, in a vision and not in riddles, and

he beholds the image of God. Why, then, were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

The wrath of God was kindled against them and when the cloud departed from the Tent, Miriam was leprous as snow. Aaron turned to Miriam and saw she was a leper.

Aaron said to Moses, "O My Lord, do not count it as a grave sin against us what we have done thoughtlessly and how we have sinned. Let Miriam not remain like a corpse." And Moses cried to God, "O God, please heal her."

And God said to Moses, "If her father had spit in her presence, would she not have been ashamed for seven days? Have her confined outside the camp for seven days and afterwards she shall be taken in again."

Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey on until Miriam was brought back into camp. Afterwards the people journeyed from Hatzeroth and they camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Parshat Beha'alotcha Discussion Questions:

- 1. God sends a cloud to dwell in the Tent of the Testimony and to guide Moses in leading the Israelites in the wilderness. Do you ever feel guided by God when you are in a physical or spiritual wilderness? How?**
- 2. The Israelites weep because they have no meat. God gets angry because of their complaints. Why do you think God would be angry with the Israelites for complaining about their conditions? Do you ever feel that God gets angry with you and your own personal complaints about life?**
- 3. Miriam and Aaron question Moses' judgment on his choice of a wife. For this questioning of God's humble servant Moses, God punishes Miriam with leprosy but does nothing to Aaron. Why just Miriam and not Aaron?**

## **Haftarah for Beha'alotcha & Shabbat Hanukkah**

### **Zechariah 2:14—4:7**

***Looking toward the rebuilding of the Temple.***

The haftarah for *Parashat Beha'alotcha* and Shabbat Hanukkah begins with Zekhariah encouraging the people of Judah to rebuild the Temple that had been destroyed in 586 BCE.

Zekhariah prophesied towards the end of the 70 years that separated the destruction of the First Temple from the dedication of the Second Temple.

Many of the nations that surrounded Judah were opposed to the reconstruction of the Temple because they did not want to see Judah rise to power once again. Also, after decades of exile, many Judeans were less than enthusiastic about building another Temple. The haftarah addresses the people of Judah, and more directly Joshua ben Jehozadak, the High Priest, and Zerubbabel, the Judean Governor, appointed by the Persians.

### In God's Courtroom

The bulk of the haftarah is focused on a vision that Zekhariah has in which Joshua ben Jehozadak is in God's courtroom, defended by an angel of God, and up against an accusing angel, known as Satan.

Joshua is dressed in filthy rags, and the angel of God gives him new, clean clothes and says, "See, I have removed your guilt from you, and you shall be clothed in priestly robes" (3:4). The angel tells Joshua that as long as he follows in the ways of God and faithfully conducts God's work in the Temple, then God will allow him access to angels.

God puts a stone with seven sides before Joshua and explains that it will be engraved, and when it is engraved the guilt of Judah will be removed. On the day that it is engraved God explicates that "you will invite each other to the shade of vines and fig trees" (3:10). This refers to a vision of the prophet Micah ([Micah 4:4](#)) of a world without war.

### The Hanukkah Connection

In the final section of the haftarah Zekhariah receives a vision of "a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl above it. The lamps on it are seven in number and the lamps above it have seven pipes and by it are two olive trees, one on the right of the one, and one on its left" (4:2). This vision of a menorah, and the thematic rededication of the Temple link Hanukkah to Zekhariah. Parashat Bha'alotkha also contains discussion of a menorah, when God gives instructions for Aaron to light the menorah inside the tabernacle.

Zekhariah does not understand what the menorah represents and asks for an explanation. God provides an answer, but it is directed at Zerubbabel: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the God of heaven's hosts" (4:6).

Though this, too, is cryptic, commentators have interpreted this as God telling Zerubbabel not to squash his opponents through political counteraction, even though they oppose the rebuilding of the Temple. Rather, the second Temple would be built and rededicated on a foundation of holiness and spirituality.



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

### **LIFE IS WHAT IT IS ??**

#### **“The need for change of direction”!**

I was sitting in the lounge room on a rainy afternoon looking out the window with the fog drifting in. In the distance I could see some Kangaroos enjoying their surroundings. They were eating, playing and resting without a worry in the world. They were living in the moment in want of nothing. I am sure if you could interview any of them and ask if they were happy, they would respond with a very positive yes.

This started me pondering on what makes us humans happy. We are vastly different “creatures” to the Kangaroos I was watching. Not only don’t we enjoy eating grass, but our requirements for happiness are far more complicated. For instance a person living in the more affluent areas of Melbourne, London, New York, or some similar environment would require different elements for happiness than a person living in country China, India, Vietnam or some similar environment. I ask where would the Kangaroo prefer to live and it would no doubt be in the country areas. We can learn much from the Kangaroo. For instance, it can be the simple things in life that are available to the many which can and should make us happy.

The Kangaroo is happy with good food, shelter, peace, and family. The Kangaroo only worries about each day, if he/she has the above on any given day then “happy days”. As humans we can become so caught up in chasing “rainbows” that

we never take the time to appreciate the daily blessings that we often have. In saying this, it is not to deny the very real challenges many have in this present world. Yet I am sure for many of us who complain and feel unhappy we could do so much to change direction that would result in a positive outcome. I would assume most, if not all, who are reading this, have food enough to eat. I would assume the same goes for shelter. However, your family situation and peace may not be at the same level as the mob of Kangaroos I was watching.

We live in a time where the attack on family is unprecedented. This brings upheaval disturbing the natural peace that comes with a strong cohesive family. The constant drive to serve self has opened us up to embracing behaviours and systems that break the family and take away our peace. Every day we are bombarded with the message, that it is the “external world” that makes us happy. A new car, a bigger house, more money, greater status, losing weight, new clothes, etc. We are forever searching for an increase. Take some time to analysis the outcome of all this. This means a never-ending drive to chase rainbows. It means no rest, no peace, and no satisfaction. This pursuit must end in disaster. We go into debt to satisfy our desires. We are living on credit; thus, we are in fact living on borrowed time. I do not know of a Western country that is not in debt. The so-called most enlightened country in the world has a debt problem that has become so big, they have chosen to ignore it.

We have allowed others to take control of our lives. Our children are put into full time “childcare”, often before they can talk or walk. No wonder they no longer listen to their parents, as their parents have forgone their authority to others. Education comes from the internet and other environments outside the family home. This just adds to the lie that contentment, happiness, peace and satisfaction are found in the external world.

Great change is needed! If we do not change the direction, we are heading then we are heading for disaster. How do we change direction? We begin by taking back the ground we have given up and lost. The greatest ground we have given up and lost is our belief in the God of Israel. Unless we send out invitations to HaShem to come and dwell in our homes and lives, we have no hope of changing direction. No one wants to hear this truth, but that does not change the facts. Harsh as it may sound, we get what we deserve. The master you follow and serve will determine the rewards you receive. May I suggest that we consider following

the One who is called: “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of peace! After all it was, He who created the Kangaroo.

Rabbi Philip [Yochanan] Hammond. PhD.

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## ***Insights into Judaism***



### **Where the Word ‘Anti-Semitism’ Comes From**

***Hatred of Jews has been around for centuries, but only in the 1800s did it begin to be referred to as 'anti-Semitism.'***

Hatred of Jews has been a feature of world history for centuries. But only in the late 19th century did a new specific word emerge to describe it.

What prompted the coining of the neologism “anti-Semitism” was the perception of an altered relationship between Jews and the peoples among whom they lived that could not accurately be described as mere “Judeophobia” or “Jew-hatred.” The felt need for a new word affected not just self-identified anti-Semites. It was recognized by Jews and non-Jews throughout Europe and wherever Europeans settled in the world.

Anti-Semitism, as a concept and a movement, was a response to the so-called Jewish Question, which was itself precipitated by the remarkable economic, cultural and political ascent of the Jews during the 19th century and their entry into mainstream European life. For some of the peoples among whom they lived, this rapid accumulation of power was ominously threatening. Accustomed to seeing Jews as small-time chiselers, heretics, peddlers, and parasites, they were now confronted by Jewish political leaders, cultural luminaries, bankers, captains of industry, army officers, professors, and bosses. No longer powerless outsiders, Jews were seen as wielders of surreptitiously acquired power.

Seeing only the dramatic success stories, this view ignored the thousands of still impoverished Jews dwelling in Eastern Europe and in the slums of central and western European cities. Nevertheless, it was the fear of what Jews would do with their wildly exaggerated power that animated efforts to disempower them before it was too late — first in Germany, and then in many other countries. Conservative Christians, disaffected democrats, former liberals, nationalists, cultural critics, thwarted academics, and visionary social reformers took action against the Jewish enemy in a variety of ways. Some, though certainly not all, were convinced that a mass movement organized on the basis of Jew-hatred was the best way to proceed — assuming, probably correctly, that the great majority of their countrymen harbored some degree of resentment, suspicion, or disdain for Jews.

The term anti-Semitism emerged to describe these efforts. In Germany, Wilhelm Marr, if not the coiner of the word, then certainly one of its major early popularizers, thought of himself as a modern man, a student of history and science. Anti-Semitism allowed him to distinguish the party he launched in late 1879 — the Antisemites' League — from the religious bigotry of medieval Jew-hatred. Like many (but not all) who shared his goals, Marr defined the Jewish Question as one of race, not religious deviance. In the past, persecution had been episodic; outbursts of terrible violence alternated with long periods of quiet relations between Jews and their neighbors. In Marr's view, such lackadaisical Jew-hatred had allowed Jews to grow stronger and, in fact, launch plans for conquest of the non-Jewish world. Mere religious prejudice had failed to halt their rise. The Jews had become too powerful, too entrenched in society, to be beaten back by the occasional pogrom.

Anti-Semitism rejected these errors of the past. What was needed was disciplined and systematic struggle, nothing less than the institutionalization of anti-Semitism in political parties, grassroots organizations, lobbying agencies, newspapers, learned journals, and a variety of voluntary associations. Action would be buttressed by modern mass media and new technologies, by unceasing agitation. Anti-Semites had to be prepared for the long struggle which was to continue for as long as it took to solve the Jewish Question. Whether Marr's contemporaries wished to admit it or not, the modern world was engaged in a race war, a war that could not have a peaceful end.

While many agreed with Marr's goals and methods, the term anti-Semitism itself was never wholly embraced. Some found it too evasive, others too pseudo-scientific. The German philosopher Eugen Dühring (1833-1921) objected to its avoidance of naming the enemy directly. It was also seen as too imprecise. Not all Semites were deemed inimical. For example, when Nazis sought Arab allies before and during World War II, they found it advisable to disavow use of the term in propaganda directed at the Middle East, reassuring potential allies that Arabs were a noble race. Even today, Arabs — Semites themselves — object to being associated with the Jewish Question. Others, quite hostile toward Jews, claim that because they are Semites, they cannot be accused of anti-Semitism.

Another source of controversy that adheres to the term, even today, is its correct orthography. Should it be anti-Semitism or antisemitism?

The issue is with the word Semitism. The word emerges from the study of languages and may have once been a reasonably neutral description of the peoples and cultures of the Middle East, essentially just a means of distinguishing language groups. But those who favor antisemitism over anti-Semitism note that the term Semitentum, usually attributed to the German Enlightenment thinker A. L. Schlozer (1735-1809), was polemical from birth, invented to establish a polarity between superior white Christian cultures and those of the inferior Orient. By the time the word was appropriated by critics of the Jews, however, it had lost even a semblance of neutrality. Semitism came to signify a bundle of uniformly negative traits.

Placing “anti” and a hyphen in front of a word typically results in its opposite. But anti-Semitism is essentially a synonym of Semitism. As a result, it’s now commonplace in academic circles to drop the hyphen. The noted Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt has championed the change, saying the use of the hyphen “completely distorts the meaning of the word.” The Anti-Defamation League and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance have dropped the hyphen. However, the change is far from universal. The Associated Press, the standard bearer of journalistic style, continues to use the hyphen, as do many major news outlets, including The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. The Merriam-Webster dictionary and the U.S. State Department also continue to use a hyphen.

the wake of these debates, Jews today continue to struggle to reconcile the traditional Jewish belief in creation with the scientific theory of evolution.

## ***PRAYER & SPIRITUALITY***



### **Ahavah Rabbah: God’s Boundless Love**

***This blessing, recited prior to the Shema, asserts that God's love for us is expressed by the commandments.***

The first paragraph of the Shema, usually called the Veahavta after its first word, begins with a call to love God. But we anticipate that theme of love with a blessing before the recitation of the Shema that focuses on God’s love for us.



This blessing is recited prior to both the morning and evening recitation of the Shema, though the wording changes slightly. The version of the blessing that we recite as part of the morning service is sometimes called Ahavah Rabbah, “deep is Your love,” after its first words. The text of Ahavah Rabbah asserts that God’s love for us is boundless and that the mitzvot are an expression of that love.

Commandments might strike us as a strange way to show love. After all, if we want to remind someone that we love them, we might write them a sweet note, or cook their favorite food, or surprise them with a gift. We probably would not remind them to do the dishes or take out the trash.

Yet when we frame the relationship between us and the divine as a metaphorical parent-child relationship, the words of this blessing suddenly resonate in a different way. Ask children what rules their parents have that show love and they will point to things like prohibiting cooking without adult supervision or requiring showers and tooth brushing. Parents also easily cite examples: A child should make their own lunch to demonstrate independence, go to school to learn and maximize their potential, get in bed at a reasonable hour to be rested and functional in the morning.

Kids may not always be happy to follow rules, but they can usually acknowledge that they are expressions of parental love. That understanding may not lead them to excitedly make their lunches or stop arguing about bedtime, but they may at least understand their parents’ motivation, and that may lead them to follow the rules — or at least balk at them less.

The language of Ahava Rabbah imparts a similar hope: “Grant us discernment and understanding. Then will we study Your Torah, heed its words, teach its precepts and follow its instruction, lovingly fulfilling all its teachings.”

We ask for the capacity to understand the mitzvot, God’s rules for us. Only after that, we express an intention to lovingly fulfill them. Our ability to experience the Torah and its mitzvot as divine gifts is contingent on our understanding the ways they have the power enrich our lives with a meaningful structure, to protect us, and to help us improve the world around us.

When we can experience mitzvot in that way, when we feel God’s love for us through the rules that we have been given, we are ready to recite the Shema and Veahavta and to express a love of the divine in return.

**עֵבְרִי - Hebrew**

**Word (s) of the Week**

אֶהְבִּי שִׁמְךָ:

Oh-hah-vay Shi-meh-cha

Love His (God's) Name



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

An observant Jew who lived on Park Avenue, built a Sukkah on his balcony.

Some of his 'high society' non-Jewish neighbors brought him to court. They claimed that the Sukkah on his balcony was an eyesore and was having a negative impact on the value of their homes in this posh neighborhood.

In court, the Jewish man was very worried about the outcome. It was the eve of the eight day holiday, leaving him no time to make alternative arrangements, in case the judge ordered him to take down the Sukkah.

He prayed for help. And Hashem listened.

Judge Ginsburg, who was Jewish himself, had a reputation of being a very wise man. After hearing both sides, he turned around to the observant Jew and scolded him: "Don't you realize that you live on Park Avenue, and not in Brooklyn? There is a certain decorum which is expected on Park Avenue. You have no right to be putting up a primitive hut on this lovely street without a building permit authorizing it. I hereby rule that either you remove the hut, or I will fine you one thousand dollars.

**"You have exactly eight days to do so! Next case!"**



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

With the popularity of Israeli cuisine, the Jewish foods of Yemen, Ethiopia and Egypt are becoming more and more well-known. Buzzy ingredients like hawaij, turmeric and the fruity liquor called arak have made their way into North American cupboards. The history of food in this region is celebrated and explored here.

In these desert-like regions, Jewish cooking was shaped by the hot, arid climate and trade with India. Turmeric, curry powder and fenugreek are all prominently used in soups and stews of the region. Cool, refreshing vegetable salads that combated the desert heat became common fare in Jewish Egyptian communities.

## **Vegetarian Yemenite Soup Recipe**

***The enveloping aroma of cumin, turmeric, coriander and black pepper just screams comfort food.***

One of the things I like most about Sephardic food is the enveloping aroma of warm spices that just screams comfort food. It's like a cure for everything from physical to mental.

Besides the Jewish-Lebanese-Syrian food we ate at home, we were exposed to a variety of different Sephardic cuisines. The first time we tasted a Yemenite soup was 7 years ago, and we still remember the warming comforting spiced broth, that we could not get enough of.

Yemenite soup is typically made with Hawajj, a spice mix that combines black pepper, cumin, cardamom, cloves, turmeric and coriander. For the Yemenite Vegetarian soup we made today, we used a mixture of turmeric, cumin, coriander and black pepper. We added a whole bunch of veggies and some enoki mushrooms for texture. The result is a warming, comforting and satisfying soup perfect for any occasion.

If you have a particular spice you love, or feel like getting creative, you can absolutely play around with the basic Hawajj and make it your own!

## Ingredients

- 1 medium celeriac (celery root), cubed (about 3 cups), divided
- 4-5 medium carrots, sliced (about 2 cups)
- 1 1/2 cups cubed butternut squash
- 1 medium onion, cut into eight pieces (about 1 cup)
- 1 medium parsnip, sliced (about 1 cup)
- 2 medium Yukon gold potatoes, cubed (about 1 cup)
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 4 Tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 10 oz Enoki mushrooms, roots removed

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