



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 6-28-25 KORACH

Ministry News

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

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

Donate



Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is a 501 C-3 non-profit. To donate go to etz-chayim.org and click on the PayPal link.

Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and helping form groups in the prisons. TOLMM also seeks to help Home Groups and offers a covering for Home Groups and the combined experience of leadership

from Rabbi Philip Hammond and Rabbi Mordecai Silver. Group leaders can receive recognition as Elders under TOLMM, which will help in an advisory role. Your support is needed for the Prison Ministry due to continuing rising costs. We now have an Affiliate in Australia.

HOME GROUPS, CONGREGATIONS AND PEOPLE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP...

Home Groups joined:

Arizona – Elder Shawn Warren.

El Paso Texas – Rabbi Gabriel Levi Martinez. Phone: 915-407-1776.

Beit HaMidrash is a Home Study Group in Las Cruces. They meet on Friday evenings. Contact them at frietze96@gmail.com. Group leaders are Ruben and Yvonne Gonzales and Jean Fietze-Gomez.

Check out the Judaic Studies Institute Yeshiva at www.jsiyeshiva.com. We have classes of all shapes and sizes from short term to long term with Certificates of Completion and up to all degrees for a ministry college established in Louisiana.

Ba-Peretz Messianic Ministries as an Affiliate from Illinois. If you live near Wheaton, ILL drop us a line and we will refer you to the contact person for the Home Group.

We have a new Home Group forming in Nevada: The Group name is ‘Yeshua’s Chessed Messianic Congregation’. We meet in Sun Valley (Reno Metro) on Shabbos morning. They can contact Elder Djan Fermaint at 775-462-5539.

Don’t forget... Rabbi Silver is available to answer any questions on his weekly Parashah teachings... plus more.

If you need prayer – send an email. Not only have we witnessed prayers answered, but new relationships have been formed in Yeshua... praise His Holy Name.

ALL OF RABBI MORDECAI'S BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE ON AMAZON BY SEARCHING -
BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER. THERE ARE 20 BOOKS.

RABBI HAMMOND HAS A BOOK ON AMAZON-SEARCH ON HIS NAME-**RABBI PHILIP
HAMMOND OR EMUNAH CENTER.**

RABBI JOHNS, FROM JSI YESHIVA, **HAS SEVERAL BOOKS ON AMAZON AS WELL.**

IN HIM, RABBI MORDECAI SILVER

General News

TO SEARCH FOR RABBI SILVER 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/)

**RABBI MORDECAI HAS A NEW BOOK AVAILABLE. IT IS A SPANISH TRANSLATION
OF THE TORAH IS VALID: THE COVENANT OF ISRAEL. IT'S AVAILABLE ON
AMAZON.**

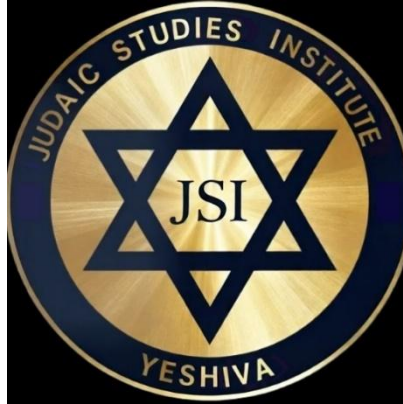
FOR RABBI HAMMOND'S BOOK, **HIS PERFECT GRACE**, GO TO AMAZON.COM AS
WELL.

CHECK OUT RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS BOOKS ON AMAZON.

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

RABBI PHILIP HAMMOND HAS VIDEO TEACHINGS ON YOU TUBE AT
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@EMUNAHCENTER-CY9TQ](https://www.youtube.com/@emunahcenter-cy9tq)

**WE HAVE 10 PRISON AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND OVER
2,300 INMATES ON OUR MAILING LIST.**



THE JUDAIC STUDIES INSTITUTE IS A POST-SECONDARY MESSIANIC YESHIVA THAT IS AUTHORIZED TO ISSUE ALL COLLEGE LEVEL DEGREES FOR MINISTERIAL PURPOSES. THE MISSION OF THIS INSTITUTION IS TO RESTORE THE ORIGINAL BELIEF SYSTEM FOLLOWED BY YESHUA AND HIS TALMIDIM (DISCIPLES) BY PROVIDING A TORAH-BASED, ACADEMICALLY SOUND, AND SPIRITUALLY VIBRANT EDUCATION FOR THOSE SEEKING A NEW OR IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF YHVH AND HIS WAYS. CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.JSIYESHIVA.COM. OUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS JSIYESHIVA@GMAIL.COM. JSI YESHIVA IS ACCREDITED.

OUR CLASSES ARE SELF-PACED, AND MOST ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH SELF-STUDY. ALL HEBREW CLASSES ARE TAUGHT LIVE VIA ZOOM. THERE ARE OTHER LIVE CLASSES, BUT THEY ARE DEPENDENT ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT. WE TRY TO OFFER TWO TO FOUR LIVE CLASSES PER SEMESTER. THEY LAST FOUR TO EIGHT WEEKS.

WE ARE A NON-TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION AND DO NOT REQUIRE A STANDARD NUMBER OF CLASSES PER SEMESTER. STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO PAY PER CLASS. MOST CLASSES REQUIRE A 10–12-PAGE PAPER, BUT THERE ARE SOME THAT REQUIRE QUIZZES, AND WEEKLY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS. MOST CLASSES HAVE AN ASSIGNED BOOK THAT IS ACCOMPANIED BY AUDIO TEACHINGS. CLASSES GENERALLY TAKE A MONTH BUT CAN TAKE LONGER DEPENDING ON THE STUDENT.

JSI YESHIVA DOES ACCEPT CREDITS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND YESHIVA'S. WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION PLEASE SUBMIT UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.

PASS ALONG THE INFORMATION. CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CLASSES.

IN HIM, *RABBI MORDECAI SILVER, PH.D. AND RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS, PH.D.*

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



Rabbi Mordecai Silver tolmm@etz-chayim.org

MESSAGE FOR 6-28-25 KORACH

Korach - Korah (Bald)

Numbers 16:1-18:32

1 Samuel 11:14-12:22

Acts 5:1-11

Numbers 16:3

3: They gathered together against Moses and against Aaron... "the entire assembly -- all of them -- are holy and the Lord is among them; why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of the Lord?"

In the Torah portion Korach we read how Korach led a band of 250 men in a rebellion against Moshe and Aharon. Underlying their revolt against Aharon's High Priesthood was the charge: "All the people in the community are holy and God is in their midst; why are you setting yourselves above God's congregation?"

From Moshe's response, "...and you seek the priesthood as well," we readily perceive that Korach and his band desired to become priests. This being so, their argument that "All the people...are holy," and nobody can set himself above anybody else seems to contradict their desire to be above others by obtaining priesthood.

The Kohanim, the priestly class, differed from the rest of the Jewish people in that the Kohanim were wholly dedicated to spiritual matters.

This was especially true with regard to the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, who was commanded "not to leave the Sanctuary."

Their apartness from the general populace notwithstanding, the Kohanim in general, and the Kohen Gadol in particular, imparted their level of sanctity to all the Jews. Thus, we find that Aharon's service of lighting the Menorah in the Sanctuary imparted sanctity to all Jews, and enabled them to reach Aharon's level of service and love of God.

Korach, however, argued that just as Kohanim were removed from worldly matters - a quality lacking in the rest of the Jewish people - the rest of the people possessed a quality that the Kohanim lacked: the ability to occupy themselves with worldly matters and transform physical objects into vessels for Godliness.

Since the Jewish people as a whole possessed qualities that Kohanim lacked, Korach therefore rebelled against the thought that Kohanim in general and Aharon in particular could set themselves apart from the rest of the people because of their ability to impart holiness to them.

Korach and his band's complaint that "All the people...are holy," however, did not contradict their own desire for priesthood, for they desired a manner of priesthood totally removed from the rest of the congregation.

This manner of priesthood would not cause them to feel superior to the rest of the Jewish people, a superiority that resulted from their imparting holiness to them, for in their scheme of things they would not impart holiness to other Jews - they would remain totally separate and apart.

But Korach and his band were badly mistaken: It is true that there are different categories of service - Believers who are solely occupied with spiritual matters, and other Believers whose task it is to purify and elevate the physical world through the service of "All your actions should be for the sake of heaven," and "In all your ways you shall know Him."

Nevertheless, it is necessary for the Kohanim to bestow their sanctity upon the Jewish people so that they too may aspire to the level of "priesthood,"

i.e., that during certain portions of the day, even the "regular" Jew will occupy himself with Torah study and divine service, to the exclusion of all else.

Our Sages imply this when they say, "Minimize your business activities and occupy yourself with Torah." A businessperson should not only "set aside certain portions of the day and night for Torah study," but should also "steal away" time from his business affairs - minimize his business activities - and dedicate that time to "priesthood," to the study of Torah and divine service.

1 Samuel 12:13

"And now, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have requested; and behold, the Lord has set a king over you."

The Israelite's request for a king was viewed as an ungrateful rejection of both Samuel and of God Himself.

Acts 5:1-11

1: But there was a man named Chananyah who, with his wife Shappirah, sold some property 2: and, with his wife's knowledge, withheld some of the proceeds for himself; although he did bring the rest to the emissaries. 3: Then Kefa said, "Why has the Adversary so filled your heart that you lie to the Ruach HaKodesh and keep back some of the money you received for the land? 4: Before you sold it, the property was yours; and after you sold it, the money was yours to use as you pleased. So, what made you decide to do such a thing? You have lied not to human beings but to God!" 5: On hearing these words, Chananyah fell down dead; and everyone who heard about it was terrified. 6: The young men got up, wrapped his body in a shroud, carried him out and buried him. 7: Some three hours later, his wife came in, unaware of what had happened. 8: Kefa challenged her: "Tell me, is it true that you sold the land for such and such a price?" "Yes," she answered, "that is what we were paid for it." 9: But Kefa came back at her, "Then why did you people plot to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The men who buried your husband are at the door. They will carry you out too!" 10: Instantly she collapsed at his feet and died. The young men entered, found her there dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11: As a result of this, great fear came over the whole Messianic community, and indeed over everyone who heard about it.

1 Samuel 12:24-25

24: Only fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully, with all your hearts, for look at how much He has done for you. 25: But if you act wickedly, both you and your king will perish."

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 Chavahn 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 Believers in Yeshua. We have been Believers 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 Korach: Summary

Korach and his followers' rebel against Moses' and Aaron's leadership and are killed; God instructs Aaron regarding laws of the priesthood

Numbers 16:1-18:32

Now, Korach, a Levite, along with two sons of Eliab, decided to rise up against Moses with the support of 250 community leaders. They combined against Moses and Aaron, saying "You've gone too far. Why do you raise yourself up above us?"

When Moses heard this, he fell on his face, saying to Korach and his followers, "Come morning, God will make known who God is and who is holy." Then Moses added, "You have gone too far, sons of Levi. Is it not enough that God has set you apart from the community of Israel by having you perform the duties of the Lord's Dwelling Place? Will you seek priesthood too? Truly, you rebel against God."

Moses sent for the two sons of Eliab, but they would not come, saying it was unfair that Moses lord over them and force them to die wandering in the wilderness. Moses then told Korach and his followers to make a priestly fire and give incense offerings to God.

At the entrance to the Tent of Appointed Meeting, Moses and Aaron gathered in front of those rebelling and the rest of the community. Then the Presence of the Lord appeared to the entire assembly. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Stand back from these rebels that I may destroy them in an instant!" And they fell upon their faces and said, "O God, if one-man sins, will you be angry with the whole community?"

God then had Moses say to the community, "Get away from Korach and the sons of Eliab. Move away from these wicked men and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be wiped out for all their sins." So the people moved away from them.

Then Moses said, "By the coming actions, you shall know it is the Lord who sent me and not my own doing. If these men die like all men normally do, then it was not the Lord who sent me. But if the Lord creates a phenomenon so that the ground opens its mouth wide and swallows them and their property and they go to the grave alive, then you will know that these people have provoked God."

When Moses finished speaking the ground under Korach, the sons of Eliab and their followers split, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and all of their property. They and their belongings went down into the grave alive and the earth closed over them and they vanished.

Then a fire went out from God and it consumed the two hundred and fifty men of Korach's followers who were offering incense.

The next day, the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You two have brought death upon the Lord’s people.”

Then the Presence of the Lord appeared. God said to Moses and Aaron, “Remove yourselves from these people so that I may annihilate them in an instant.”

The people fell on their faces with a plague sent by God, and Moses immediately sent Aaron to perform an incense ritual of atonement for the people. Aaron stood between the dead and the living and the plague was checked, even though over fourteen thousand died because of the Korach rebellion.

Then God had Moses get each of the chieftains of the twelve tribes to inscribe a staff. The finished rods were then placed before God at the Tent of Appointed Meeting in front of the Ten Commandments.

God said, “The staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout.” And Aaron’s rod did sprout with blossoms and almonds. Then God told Moses to leave Aaron’s rod in front of the Pact as a sign for the rebellious. “Those who complain of Me must stop complaining lest they die.”

Suddenly, the Israelites were scared that everyone was doomed to perish.

The Lord said to Aaron, “You and your sons shall be the priesthood. You shall take charge of the altar and partake of all the sacred offerings. All that the people bring to God shall be yours, including the best oils and the first fruits, but the first-born male and all the unclean animals must be redeemed according to value. You shall have all these sacred gifts set aside for the Lord, but you shall have no share of the land among the people. I am your portion and your share among the Israelites.”

God continued to Aaron, “The sons of Levi shall have the tithe, the uplifted donation, as their inheritance for the work that they do in the Sanctuary. Thus the Children of Israel shall not approach the Tent of Appointed Meeting and die. You shall take one-tenth of all the tithes as a gift to the Lord. This shall be your contribution. You shall take the choicest portions for the Lord. Do not profane the sacred donations of the Israelites lest you die.”

Parashat Korach Discussion Questions

1. Korah and his followers accuse Moses and Aaron of taking power and prestige for themselves at the expense of the community. Do you think Moses ever sought power? Why or why not?

2. Moses defends himself against these rebels by saying that the Lord will make God’s presence known by how God kills these rebels. Then God opens the ground and swallows’ people and their possessions? Do you believe God did kill them exactly like this? Can God do anything at any time?

3. Aaron and his sons are again given the command to be the priests in charge of all the sacred offerings. Why was priesthood so important back in Moses' day? Is the function of a modern-day rabbi to also take sacred offerings? How is a rabbi today different than a priest in those days?

Haftarah for Korach

Two Spies Tour Jericho

Having a king won't necessarily make life easier for the 12 tribes of Israel.

*The haftarah selection is from **Samuel I, 11:14-12:22**.*

In the Book of Samuel, when the Israelites demand a king, God grants their request, and directs the prophet Samuel to find a young man named Saul and anoint him as king (Samuel I, chapter 9). The haftarah for Parashat Korah, which tells the continuation of this story, begins with Samuel preparing to travel to the town of Gilgal to perform Saul's official crowning.

At this ceremony, after the Israelites offer sacrifices and celebrate, Samuel reminds the tribes that this coronation was their idea, not his—"I have listened to your pleas and done everything you asked of me, and set a king over you" (12:1).

Samuel proceeds to reflect on his own leadership, asking the assembled for their judgment. "Testify against me in the presence of the Eternal and in the presence of God's anointed," he challenges them. "Have I taken anyone's ox or anyone's donkey? Have I maltreated or oppressed anyone? Have I taken a bribe to turn a blind eye to anyone? Tell me, and I will return it!" (12:2-3)

The people assure Samuel that he has committed no wrong.

Then Samuel relates the history of God and the Children of Israel, beginning with Jacob and his family entering Egypt and continuing to his present moment. Samuel praises God's "victorious acts" (12:7) and bemoans how, when the Israelites forgot God, Sisera and the Philistines defeated Israel (which we read about in the **Haftarah for Beshalach**).

Samuel explains that God redeemed the Israelites from their enemies after they expressed regret for their idolatrous ways and cried out to Him for help. And yet the Israelites still requested a king to keep them safe—even though God had repeatedly saved them from their enemies.

Samuel cautions the Israelites' that their newly appointed king is neither a substitute nor a replacement for God. He emphasizes that the people must continue to follow God and obey His commandments if they want themselves and their king to be successful.

Samuel then creates a supernatural event to strengthen his message and credibility. Though it was a time when thunderstorms do not normally occur in the land of Israel, he beseeches God to send thunder and rain, and immediately rain begins to fall. The people are stunned and fearful that they committed a great sin by requesting a king. They cry to Samuel to pray for them and keep them well. Samuel tells them that all will be fine, so long as they obey God.

Connection to Parashat Korach

In the portion that bears his name, Korach and his associates make a bid to abdicate Moses' power. They are subsequently swallowed up by the earth. The Haftarah for Korach compares this inappropriate bid for power to the request for an Israelite king. In many societies of the time, kings saw themselves as gods or as replacements for deities, and their power was unrestricted. If the Israelite king were to behave in such a fashion, he would be just as bad as Korach.

Throughout the Bible, when Israelite leaders reach out to God for help, God comes to their aid. We see this when Moses is threatened by Korah, and God vanquishes Moses' enemies. In a similarly supernatural fashion, when Samuel needs God to affirm a decision, God sends a thunderstorm.



***From the Desk of
Rabbi Philip Hammond. Ph.D.***



GALATIANS STUDY

Galatians 4:1-2

- Chapter 4 continues on with the description of believers at various stages of their walk.
- You may have noticed in your readings of the Apostolic scriptures that the term child or children is used a number of times to describe the walk of a professed believer.
- There are a number of words in the Greek that the English has translated as child/children.
- We have Teknon, Teknion, Huios, Pais and it's associated words and Nepios.
- In this instance we have Nepios = Lit "Not speaking" or 'old enough to speak'. Lacks the skill, education or authority to speak.

Galatians— 4:1-2

- It is pointing to one who is in training and as such can be seen at this stage to be on the same level as a servant.
- This continues the pattern of our verses in Chapter 3:24-25. The under aged one is being trained by a paidagogos.
- So the HEIR; whilst underage, uneducated and still in training has to wait under tutorage until the pre-appointed time as set by the Father.
- Heir - Kleronomos = One who obtains a portion, but in this instance actually means [according to Vine]" one to whom something has been assigned by God, on possession of which, however, he has not yet entered."

Galatians— 4:1-2

- When the time comes for the Heir to take or be given their pre-appointed portion as assigned by HaShem, they are to know what is required to hold such a position.
- Until that time arrives the Heir is no different to the servant!!
- How does the Heir obtain such knowledge???
- It is via the instructions set down by HaShem in His written word. Instructions that Paul himself had to revise and learn.
- This position of the underage /childish heir is the same position we were all in and to an extent still find ourselves in.

Galatians— 4:1-2

- Our growth into a mature age believer comes by learning the Torah:
- We read it every Shabbath:
- **Psalm 1:1-3**
- Then we continue:
- **Ps 119:47, 72, 97-98, & 104-105.**
- We must embrace HaShems Torah because it is this that actually brings us to our High Priest - Yeshua - who is the perfect Light removing the darkness of this world.

Galatians— 4:3

- If we are in a state of being "uneducated", lacking knowledge and know how, then we are certainly in danger of being held in **bondage** to **elements the world** - teachings and actions that are not from our Heavenly Father.
- **Bondage** - **Doulou** - Becoming enslaved, serving a master.
- **Elements** - **stoicheion** - rudiment, conform too, philosophy.
- Unfortunately, some Christian circles, actually teach that these "elements" are in fact our Father's Torah. – reason – they see the torah/law as Jewish. In their minds YHVH has done away with the Jews, and as such the Law, and all can go to.... This is close to blasphemy!!

Galatians— 4:3

- How anyone can align HaShem's Torah with the destructive elements of the World, when we consider scriptures such as:?
- **Rom 12:2; 1Cor 3:19; 2Pet 2:20; Eph 6:12; 1John 5:1-4**
- What may have been the "Elements of the world" in this context?
- We get a hint at the beginning of our "book" of Galatians.
- In Galatians 1:4 we read that "... that He might deliver us out of this present evil age....."
- The age/time [Aion in Greek -sometimes translated as world] of many other gospels.
- Supposedly "good news" stories that were from the prince of this world.

Hebraic Life



How the Lion of Judah Became a Jewish Symbol

From menorahs to tombstones, how and why the majestic lion represents the Jewish people.

The lion of Judah has been a Jewish symbol since ancient times. Though originally associated specifically with the tribe of Judah, it has since become a Jewish symbol representing the entire people.

At the end of the Book of Genesis, the dying patriarch Jacob gathers his sons, the primogenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel, and gives them each a blessing. In the blessing for Judah, he repeatedly compares his fourth son to the king of beasts:

Judah is like a young lion.

From prey, my son, have you risen up.

He crouches, lies low as a lion,

And like a lion, who can rouse him?

Genesis 49:9

In the following verse, Jacob asserts that “the scepter shall not depart from Judah,” foreshadowing the permanent dynasty of King David — who was said to have the heart of a lion (**2 Samuel 17:10**) — which will issue from this tribe, culminating one day in the Messiah.

Judah came to be the dominant tribe of Israel, and a symbol for the entire Jewish people, after the ten of the tribes were lost following a revolt that led to them being conquered by the Assyrians. The word Judaism itself derives from the tribe of Judah. Judah’s symbol thus became a Jewish symbol.

In ancient Jewish sources, the lion is a symbol of fierce strength and nobility. Though no longer found in that part of the world, they populated ancient Israel and posed a deadly threat to its

inhabitants. Biblical heroes, such as David and Samson, demonstrated their might by slaying them single-handedly. In the Talmud, the lion is called “king of the beasts” (Chagigah 13b) and rabbis refer to their most esteemed colleagues as lions (Gittin 83a, Shabbat 111a). The most significant medieval law code, the Shulchan Aruch, opens with the following line: “One should strengthen himself like a lion to get up in the morning to serve his Creator.” (Orach Chayim, 1:1)

Lions have been a part of Israelite and then Jewish imagery from the beginning: Lions adorned the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 7:29) and prophetic visions of the divine chariot described lions as part of God’s throne (e.g. Ezekiel 1:10). The lion has appeared on some of the earliest Jewish coins as well as, in the early 1980s, the half shekel of the modern State of Israel. It is a motif found on Jewish ritual objects, including menorahs, ketubahs and synagogue decorations, and on Jewish cemetery headstones. It is also found on the contemporary municipal seal of Jerusalem.

In another indication of its significance, Hebrew has several words that mean lion: *aryeh* (most common), *lavi* or *leviah* (often but not exclusively used for female lions), *kefir* (young male lion), *gur* (lion cub), *layish* and *shachal* (both more poetic). Many Jews name their children using a word for lion, most often Aryeh, Ariel (lion of God) or Ari (diminutive). Since the lion is a symbol of Judah, it is frequently combined with that name, making Judah Aryeh a popular choice. Aryeh and Judah are also often seen in combination with the Yiddish word for lion, yielding Aryeh Leib or Judah Leib.

The lion of Judah is a popular image beyond the Jewish community. Because the lion is associated with the messiah, it has also been adopted as a symbol of Jesus among Christians. In addition, the lion of Judah served as a symbol of the Solomonic dynasty of Ethiopia, a nearly nine-centuries long line of emperors who claimed descent from the Israelite King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. While the line ended with Haile Selassie’s death in 1974, the lion is still an important symbol for the Rastafarian movement.

עֲבָרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

Surroundings / סְבִיבָה

Pronounced: s'vee-VAH

The word *s’viva*, surroundings, shares a root with the Hebrew word *sevivon*, meaning dreidel (which goes round and round).



A Taste of Jewish Humor **A Tight Squeeze**

The local bar was so sure that its bartender was the strongest man around that they offered a standing \$1000 bet: The bartender would squeeze a lemon until all the juice ran into a glass, and hand the lemon to a patron. Anyone who could squeeze one more drop of juice out would win the money.

Many people had tried over time (weightlifters, longshoremen, etc.) but nobody was ever successful.

One day, a scrawny rabbi came into the bar, wearing thick glasses and a suit, and a black hat and said in a squeaky voice, "I'd like to try the bet."

After the laughter had died down, the bartender said okay, grabbed a lemon, and squeezed away. Then he handed the wrinkled remains of the rind to the little rabbi.

But the crowd's laughter turned to total silence as the rabbi clenched his fist around the lemon and six drops fell into the glass.

As the crowd cheered, the bartender paid the \$1000, and asked the little rabbi, "What do you do for a living? Are you a lumberjack, a weightlifter, or what?"

The rabbi replied, "I'm the principal of a Jewish day school."

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