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December 2014

Special Guest Article By David Nekrutman.
David Nekrutman is the Executive Director for
the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and
Cooperation

The Siddur - An Inner Understanding of the Jewish People

By DAVID NEKRUTMAN

I have often been asked if there is one book that
will help Christians understand Judaism and the
Jewish people. To Be A Jew: A Guide To Jewish
Observance In Contemporary Life by Hayim H.
Donin

; Understanding Judaism: A Basic Guide To Jewish
Faith, History And Practice by
Mordechi
Katz,;

Understanding Judaism: The Basics of Deed and
Creed and even The Complete Idiot's Guide to
Understanding Judaism both authored by Rabbi
Benjamin Blech, are all great books on
understanding the Jewish religion. However, I
believe the best work to date has always been the
Jewish prayer book known as the Siddur.

Lex
orandi

, lex

credendi - what we pray is what we believe.

Comprised of a collection of biblical texts along with personal prayers of rabbis that have been adopted into the corporate body of Israel, the Siddur is a masterful tapestry of prayers that are grouped into categories of thanksgiving, praise and petition.

Those prayers inform our lives from morning until night. Upon waking from the slumbers of sleep in the morning, we immediately acknowledge God's returning of the soul back to consciousness with, I thank You, living and eternal King for giving me back my soul in mercy. Great is Your faithfulness (Note: The English translation of the Siddur was taken from the

Koren Sacks Siddur

published by Koren Publishing). Before petitioning for our daily bread, we ask God to give us a sweet tooth for His word, requesting that He continue to divulge new insights into the Torah

Invoking Daniel 9:18, we confess our bankruptcy before God. We admit that no deeds or righteousness have sway over Him, declaring our total reliance on His compassion and grace. As people of the Abrahamic covenant, we have a duty to praise and glorify the Lord as well as to accept His kingdom and be His witnesses to the world when reciting the Shema: Listen, Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One (the last letter of first word, Shema, and the last letter of the last word, Echad, formulate the word Hebrew word for witness - Eid).

The beliefs of the Restoration of Zion, Messiah, Resurrection of the Dead, Repentance, God as Creator and Redeemer, and the ultimate triumph of His will are all declared in our prayers. Even in the most tragic of events such as losing a loved one we say the following prayer for mourners: May the Omnipresent (HaMakom) comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

We use the name "HaMakom" (literally, The Place) and not "HaRachaman" (the Merciful One) for often a person who has lost a loved one feels abandoned by God. We pray that the individual be blessed by a

renewed awareness of His presence, even in the grief-stricken place in which the person now finds him/herself - for that place, too, is HaMakom, the place of God. It also asserts that God is everywhere and in everything: physical and spiritual, matter and energy. All of this makes up the oneness of God, and at the end of life, the soul returns to its Makom. It is our way to tell the mourner: If you could see The Place where the deceased now dwells, you'd be comforted.

I am quite cognizant that many Evangelical non-denominational congregations are reluctant to use prayer books or a set of prescribed liturgy. Worship services are often very "free flowing," and include the latest from contemporary Christian music artists such as Chris Tomlin, Michael W. Smith

and Hillsong Church. But from Judaism's view point, we know that even the greatest of prophets were tongue-tied (Exodus 4:10, Isaiah 6:5, Jeremiah 1:6) and before petitioning God for divine help we recite: O Lord, open my lips, so that my mouth may declare Your praise (Psalm 51). The purpose of liturgy is to help people who feel speechless before God with texts that can jumpstart the emotion to commune with Him. The Siddur is the emotional result of forty centuries of God's hand in Jewish history.

One of the latest prayers adopted into the Siddur is the Prayer for the State of Israel. In it we acknowledge that our sovereignty over the Land is "the first flowering of our redemption" and we ask God to guide Israel's leaders with good counsel as well as lead diaspora Jewry back home. We recite this prayer on Shabbat and on Israel's modern day national holidays - Independence Day and Jerusalem Day. The conclusion of this prayer is the hope of Jewish people that the world will accept the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: Appear in Your glorious majesty over all the dwellers on earth, and let all who breathe declare: The Lord God of

Israel is King and His kingship has dominion over all. In the Hallel Psalms (113-118), recited during biblical feasts as well as certain rabbinic holidays, the shortest chapter in all of Hebrew Scripture is recited - Psalm 117. The question that baffles biblical commentators is why the gentile nations are praising God and not the Jewish people. One possible explanation is that only the nations who plotted against Israel could fully comprehend God's steadfast love and faithfulness in rescuing His people and foiling the plans of the nations. Only those gentiles can see clearly "God's kindness to us was overwhelming" and can adequately praise Him.

The Siddur is not written by one particular author or from a specific period. Rather, it is the expression of the Jewish soul to our Father in Heaven over the centuries of Judaism's development. No one can fully comprehend the Jewish people without a clear understanding of the religious truths preserved in our liturgy. And for Christians who are called to support Israel, that understanding is critical.

This article originally appeared in Bridges for Peace Dispatch Magazine on 12/01/2014

Announcement!

We have removed some things from the newsletter. Our Recommended products and emails with special announcements on other products that get sent out every once in a while have moved to a separate mailing list. If you wish to get this information you will need to sign up for that list on our website.

We have also started a separate mailing list for other special announcements like special guest appearances and upcoming events. If you wish to get this information emailed to you, you will need to sign up for that list on our website.

[Click Here to sign up on these lists.](#)

A friendly reminder...

For our U.S. contributors, your charitable contributions must be postmarked by December 31,

2014 to be eligible for deduction on your 2014 tax return. If it is postmarked after January 1, 2015, it will apply to your 2015 Individual Contribution Statement.

Thank you for your support to El Shaddai Ministries Taking Torah To the Nations!



Recipes

This month's newsletter has special holiday recipes. We hope you enjoy these Hanukkah recipes.

Hanukkah Star Challah

Recipe by AMG

PREP 1 hr
COOK 35 min
READY IN 2 hrs 5 mins



Ingredients:

Original recipe makes 1 loaf

- 1 cup water
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 3 tablespoons white sugar
- 3 2/3 cups bread flour
- 1 teaspoon active dry yeast

- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, or more if desired
- 1 tablespoon water

Directions:

1. Place 1 cup of water, eggs, salt, sugar, bread flour, and yeast into the pan of a bread machine in the order recommended by the manufacturer. Select the Dough setting, and start the machine.
2. When cycle is completed, remove dough from the machine, and set onto a floured work surface for 15 minutes to rest. Cover dough with a towel or large bowl to prevent drying out.
3. Knead the dough several times, and cut into 6 equal pieces. Roll each piece out into a rope about 10 inches long and 1 inch in diameter.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Lay 3 ropes of bread onto the prepared baking sheet, and pinch ropes together firmly at the ends to form a pointed triangle. Weave 3 more ropes over and underneath each point of the first triangle to make a second, interwoven triangle. Pinch it closed tightly at the edges to make a 6-pointed star. Set the baking sheet in a warm place, and allow to rise until doubled, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Whisk egg yolk with 1 tablespoon of water, and brush the mixture over the loaf; sprinkle with sesame seeds.
6. Bake in the preheated oven until the challah is shiny, golden brown, and sounds hollow when tapped, about 35 minutes.

[Find it here](#)

Jewish Grandma's Best Beef Brisket

Recipe by FRIENDLYFOOD

PREP 20 mins
COOK 4 hrs
READY IN 4 hrs 20 mins



Ingredients:

Original recipe makes 1 beef brisket

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 (4 pound) beef brisket
- ground black pepper to taste
- 2 onions, thickly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and cut in half
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large deep skillet or pot over medium-high heat. Season the brisket generously with black pepper. Place in the pan and cook until the surface is a rich brown

color, not burnt, but dark. Lift the roast and scatter the onions in the pan. Place the uncooked side of the roast down onto the onions. Repeat the browning process.

2. Add the garlic to the pan, and fill with enough water to almost cover the roast. Bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to low and cover with a lid or tight-fitting aluminum foil. Simmer for 4 hours, turning the roast over once halfway through. The roast should be fork tender.
3. Remove the brisket to a serving platter. Bring the broth in the pan to a simmer, scraping the bottom to loosen any browned bits. Cook until reduced to a thin gravy. Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed.

[Find it Here](#)

Potato Latkes I

Recipe by Rachel

Ingredients:

Original recipe makes 10 to 12 latkes



- 2 cups peeled and shredded potatoes
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 cup peanut oil for frying

Directions:

1. Place the potatoes in a cheesecloth and wring, extracting as much moisture as possible.
2. In a medium bowl stir the potatoes, onion, eggs, flour and salt together.
3. In a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil until hot. Place large spoonfuls of the potato mixture into the hot oil, pressing down on them to form 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick patties. Brown on one side, turn and brown on the other. Let drain on paper towels. Serve hot! (Suggested toppings: Applesauce and Sour Cream are popular options.)

[Find it Here](#)

Chocolate-Hazelnut Mini-Sufganiyot

PREP 45 mins
RISE 1 hr 10 mins
COOK 2 mins



Ingredients:

- 3-1/4 to 3-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 packages active dry yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil (like olive oil, coconut oil, etc.)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup chocolate-hazelnut spread (such as Nutella, or you can use your favorite jam/jelly)
- Cooking oil for deep frying (Peanut Oil works great)
- Sifted powdered sugar

Directions:

1. In a large mixing bowl stir together 1-1/4 cups of the flour, the yeast, and cinnamon; set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan heat and stir water, sugar, cooking oil, and salt just until warm (120 degrees F to 130 degrees F). Add oil mixture to flour mixture; add egg and vanilla. Beat with an electric mixer on low to medium speed for 3 minutes. Using a wooden spoon, stir in as much of the remaining flour as you can. (I use a kitchen aid mixer during this process instead of using a spoon, just mix till the dough comes away from the sides instead of sticking.)
3. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Knead in enough of the remaining flour to make a moderately soft dough that is smooth and elastic (3 to 5 minutes total). Shape dough into a ball. Place in a lightly greased bowl, turning once to grease the surface of the dough. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size (about 1 hour).
4. Punch dough down. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide in half. Cover and let rise for 10 minutes.
5. Roll dough, 1 portion at a time, to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut dough with a floured 1-1/2-inch biscuit cutter (or round cookie cutter), dipping cutter into flour between cuts. Place about 1/4 teaspoon chocolate spread (or jam/jelly) onto the centers of half of the circles. Lightly moisten edges of circles; top with remaining circles. Press edges together to seal. Repeat with remaining dough and fillings. Reroll and cut trimmings.
6. Fry filled doughnuts, 3 or 4 at a time, in deep hot oil (365 degrees F) about 1 minute on each side or until golden brown, turning once with a slotted spoon. Remove from oil; drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Cool

on wire racks.

Makes about 42 mini-sufganiyot. (I have never gotten that many out of this recipe.) Nutrition facts are given per sufganiyot.

Nutrition Facts:

Calories 60, Total Fat (g) 2, Saturated Fat (g) 1, Cholesterol (mg) 5, Sodium (mg) 24, Carbohydrate (g) 10, Fiber (g) 1, Protein (g) 1, Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

[Find it Here](#)

This Month in Jewish History

Kislev-Tevet

[9 Kislev]

- Jews of Paris expelled (again) by Charles VI, 1394. (Rabbi Bloch z"l points out that English, French, and Spanish Jewry were expelled roughly at 100 year intervals - 1290, 1394, 1492.)

[10 Kislev]

- 27,000 Jews of the Riga ghetto taken for execution, 1941.
- MBCS, 1976 (YHS).

[11 Kislev]

- 7000 Minsk Jews executed 1942.
- Yeshiva University received its charter, first American university under Jewish auspices, 1945.

[12 Kislev]

- Yahrzeit of the Maharshal (Yam Shel Shlomo), 1573.

[13 Kislev]

- Yahrzeit of Ravina, 499, co-author of Talmud Bavli. His death marks the end of the Talmudic period.
- Mass murder of Jews of Mogilev, 1761.

[14 Kislev]

- Birth of Reuven
- 2192 from creation.
- Czar of Russia provides for the establishment of Jewish schools and seminaries, 1844.
- Nazi's place Jews of Poland outside the law and beyond

protection of the courts, 1941.

- First plane of Operation Magic Carpet bringing Yemenite Jews to Israel, 1948.

[15 Kislev]

- A pagan altar was set up in the Beit Hamikdash, 167 B.C.E.
- Pulver Purim established by the Chayei Adam, 1804.

[16 Kislev]

- Hermann Ahlwardt elected to the German Reichstag, 1892, marking the beginning of political anti-Semitism in Germany.

[17 Kislev]

- Massacre of Jews of Ausburg, Germany, 1349.
- Anti-Jewish riots in Paris, many Jews killed, 1380.
- First Jewish author in America, and his mother, burned to death in Mexico City by the Inquisition, 1596.
- Jews of Nassau, Germany granted equality, 1848.
- Anti-Jewish violence in Bucharest, 1897.
- Hebrew date of the U.N. vote to partition Palestine, 1947.

[18 Kislev]

- Yahrzeit of Avraham Maimuni, the son of the Rambam, 1237.
- Jews of Strasbourg were forbidden to circumcise, to wear beards, and to own Hebrew books (which were to be burned), 1793.
- Polish forces attack Jews of Lvov, 1918.

[19 Kislev]

- Yahrzeit of the Magid of Mezrich, early leader of Chasidut, 1771.
- Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the Baal HaTanya, was released from prison, 1798. YUD-TET KISLEV is celebrated by Chabad chasidim.

[20 Kislev]

- Ezra urged the Jews in Jerusalem to dissolve all intermarriages and to purge the Jewish community of foreign elements and influence, 456 b.c.e.

[21 Kislev]

- Har G'rizim Day, ancient festival celebrating victory over the

Samaritans, 331 b.c.e.

- Austrian forces kill many Jews in Prague, 1744.

[22 Kislev]

- Charles IV issued letters of protection for the Jews of Strasbourg in 1357. Two years later, mobs burned 1000 Jews and baptized many others.
- King of Denmark invited Amsterdam Jews to settle in Norway and have religious freedom, 1622.

[23 Kislev]

- Year of Terror against Jews of Alsace began (with a well-poisoning accusation), 1348.
- Massacre of the Jews of Nuremberg in Black Death riots, 1349.

[24 Kislev]

- Foundation of second Beit HaMikdash was completed.
- Chaggai prophesied the downfall of Persia and the salvation of the Jews.
- British captured J'lem from the Turks, 1917.

[25 Kislev]

- First day of Chanukah.
- Cain killed Abel.
- Construction of the Mishkan was completed.
- Yahrzeits of the Vilna Gaon's father and son, 1758, 1808.
- Jews ordered expelled from Tennessee by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant.
- Zichron Yaakov founded, 1882.
- The order of the expulsion of the Jews of Spain (associated with Tish'a b'Av 1492) was officially voided on the first day of Chanukah 1968.

[26 Kislev]

- First Crusade proclaimed, 1095.

[27 Kislev]

- The Flood rains stopped.
- Agnon wins Nobel prize for literature, 1966.

[7 Tevet]

- Three leaders of Babylonian Jewry were arrested by Persian officials, 468, sparking a wave of persecution of the Jews of Babylonia.
- Supposed liberties granted Russian Jews by the Czar in 1804, actually spelled economic ruin for much of the Jewish community.
- The Prussian government decreed that Jewish services must be conducted in strict adherence to Jewish Tradition, 1823. The decree was "solicited" by the Traditional Jewish community in order to fight against the new Reform movement. Ultimately, however, we suffer much more harm from governmental intervention than good.

[8 Tevet]

- First translation of the Torah into a foreign language (Greek). Considered a tragic event; ancient fast day.
- Eichmann sentenced to death, 1961.

[9 Tevet]

- Yahrzeit of Ezra Hasofer and Nechemia. Ancient fast day.
- Yahrzeit of Rabbi Ezra HaNavi, Tosafist, Kabbalist, Teacher of the Ramban, 1227.

This Day in Jewish History found at OU.org.

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