

Ask The Rabbi – September 21 2021

Question:

Whereas Tammuz is a Babylonian idol, why is Tammuz on the Jewish calendar

Response:

Most modern Jews refer to the Fourth Hebrew Month as "Tammuz", the name of a pagan fertility deity mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel. The prophet Ezekiel described a vision in which an angel brought him to the Temple in Jerusalem:

Eze 8:13 He also said to me, "You will see even worse abominations that they are doing."

Eze 8:14 He brought me to the entrance of the north gate to Adonai's house; and there before me were women weeping for Tammuz.

Eze 8:15 "Human being," he asked me, "have you seen this? You will see practices even more disgusting than these."

Eze 8:16 He brought me into the inner courtyard of Adonai's house; and there, at the entrance to the temple of Adonai, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of Adonai and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east.

Eze 8:17 He asked me, "Human being, have you seen this? Does the house of Y'hudah consider it a casual matter that they commit the disgusting practices they are committing here, thus filling the land with violence, provoking me still more? Look! They are even putting the branch to their nose!

Eze 8:18 Therefore I will act in fury, my eye will not spare, I will have no pity. Even if they cry loudly right in my ears, I will not listen to them."

In the 19th century, archaeologists began to uncover archaeological remains that shed light on the ancient pagan religion that led the Israelites astray. Today we know the women were weeping over [Tammuz](#), because he was a fertility god who represented the life cycle of wheat. In Israel, wheat becomes ripe in early Summer when the wheat plant dies, leaving behind a viable seed that can be planted the next year. The Winter rains provide moisture, causing the new wheat crop to rise out of the ground. Unlike in Europe and North America, the Summer in Israel is characterized by a dry period with no rain in which everything green dies and the Winter is characterized by rain with abundant growth and life. The ancient pagans believed that this agricultural cycle of Summer death and Winter rebirth was a shadow picture of the life of Tammuz. The god Tammuz died in early Summer leaving behind the life giving food that sustained the world; then he was resurrected in the Winter, beginning the cycle again.

Tammuz is often thought to be a Babylonian fertility god. However, a stone monument discovered at [Arad](#) in southern Israel may be the earliest representation of the Canaanite Tammuz. The "Arad Stela" (see above image) dating to the [Early Bronze](#) Age shows a personified grain deity standing and lying down. Archaeologists have suggested that this represents the death and resurrection of Tammuz.

Later Israelites in the time of Ezekiel adopted this pagan belief. The women were weeping over Tammuz because of his tragic death, which brought life to the world.

Today, echoes of the worship of Tammuz survive in Jewish tradition. The name Tammuz itself only appears in the Bible in reference to this pagan deity. However, Jewish tradition adopted the name "Tammuz" for the [Fourth Hebrew Month](#). Over the centuries the pagan origins of the "Month of Tammuz" were forgotten, only to be rediscovered in modern times. Jewish tradition considers Tammuz to be a month of mourning, and [rabbinical Jews](#) even observe a fast on the [17th day of the month](#). They also refrain from listening to music and other joyous acts from the 17th to the end of the month. The origins of these mourning practices have

become obscured over time, and today tradition associates them with the destruction of the Temple. Little do they know that mourning during the Month of Tammuz began long before the destruction of the Temple with a mourning over the death of Tammuz.

<https://www.nehemiaswall.com/dont-call-tammuz>

Question:

Can the tithe (10 %) be given to charity or other programs and still be considered the tithe?

Or does it have to be given to the actual place of worship?

A friend who does not go to church asked me if he gave 10% of some money he is expecting would it be considered as a tithe by God.

(Note: This aspect I am presuming the person at one time attended a church and no longer is)

Response:

Here we have a situation where the concept of the tithe which is not fully understood by the person asking.

Is there such a thing a tithing when Adonai is not involved?

I make this specific stipulation because Adonai is most prominent within the concept of the tithe. That is a tenth (1/10) of that which Adonai has provided, He requests be returned to Him.

The first aspect we must acknowledge is that He is the source of our provision...

Deu 8:18 No, you are to remember Adonai your God, because it is he who is giving you the power to get wealth, in order to confirm his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as is happening even today.

There are two points that require emphasis here.

1. Adonai is the one who provides the power whereby you can obtain wealth.

We see this prominently in the structure that the nation of Israel function, agricultural and herding of animals.

We read that Adonai causes His creation to produce...

Gen 2:3 God blessed the seventh day and separated it as holy; because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce.

That production would lead to sustain us in our needs.

Likewise Adonai made provision for animals to reproduce and thus eventually become a means of provision for food that we may eat.

The birds of the air and everything in the sea was blessed by Adonai...

Gen 1:22 Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the water of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

All that was created on the sixth day man and animal were blessed by Adonai...

Gen 1:28 God blessed them: God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and every living creature that crawls on the earth."

Is the them referring only to mankind in the previous verse or is them referring to everything created on the sixth day, including the animals. Our own eyes need only be able to look at the animals and thus conclude their ability to reproduce and thus Adonai being a source of that life, giving permission for His creation to reproduce.

2. Confirmation of the Covenant.

Adonai's provision as given to Israel is to remember that is intended to honor Adonai and thus in remembering Him we are to remember the Covenant He established with the Nation. Adonai is a provider to those who enter into His covenant.

An actual tithe for the first time, pertaining to contributing from your own resources is found in B'resheet (Genesis) 14...

Gen 14:17 After his return from slaughtering K'dorla'omer and the kings with him, the king of S'dom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley, also known as the King's Valley.

Gen 14:18 Malki-Tzedek king of Shalem brought out bread and wine. He was cohen of El `Elyon [God Most High],

Gen 14:19 so he blessed him with these words: "Blessed be Avram by El `Elyon, maker of heaven of earth.

Gen 14:20 and blessed be El `Elyon, who handed your enemies over to you." Avram gave him a tenth of everything.

Malki-Tzedek, king of Shalem is also cohen of El Elyon. A king and a priest whose name means King of Righteousness is recognized by Avram who is compelled to give a tenth of everything from his possessions. In that he has not done so on a regular basis, consider Avram's action based on an accumulation of past income thus this is a single tithe that takes into account all of Adonai's provision give to Avram.

Adonai's establishment of the tithe as revealed through Avram's action is incorporated into the structure established by Adonai as it pertains to Israel. The premise is foundation, yet its function within Israel is to act as a provision for the tribe of Levi who, for their inheritance have not been given a portion of land, but their inheritance is service to Adonai.

Num 18:20 Adonai said to Aharon, "You are not to have any inheritance or portion in their land; I am your portion and inheritance among the people of Isra'el.

Num 18:21 "To the descendants of Levi I have given the entire tenth of the produce collected in Isra'el. It is their inheritance in payment for the service they render in the tent of meeting.

Num 18:22 From now on, the people of Isra'el are not to approach the tent of meeting, so that they will not bear the consequences of their sin and die.

Num 18:23 Only the L'vi'im are to perform the service in the tent of meeting, and they will be responsible for whatever they do wrong. This is to be a permanent regulation through all your generations. They are to have no inheritance among the people of Isra'el,

Num 18:24 because I have given to the L'vi'im as their inheritance the tenths of the produce which the people of Isra'el set aside as a gift for Adonai. This is why I have said to them that they are to have no inheritance among the people of Isra'el."

Deu 10:8 At that time Adonai set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark for the covenant of Adonai and to stand before Adonai to serve him and to bless in his name, as they still do today.

Deu 10:9 This is why Levi has no share or inheritance with his brothers; Adonai is his inheritance, as Adonai your God had said to him.

It is the emphasis of their service to Adonai and thus serving the tribes on behalf of Adonai...

Deu 18:1 The cohanim, who are L'vi'im, and indeed the whole tribe of Levi, is not to have a share or an inheritance with Isra'el. Instead, their support will come from the food offered by fire to Adonai and from whatever else becomes his.

Deu 18:2 They will have no inheritance with their brothers, because Adonai is their inheritance—as he has said to them.

Deu 18:3 "The cohanim will have the right to receive from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether ox or sheep, the shoulder, the jowls and the stomach.

Deu 18:4 You will also give him the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep.

Deu 18:5 For Adonai your God has chosen him from all your tribes to stand and serve in the name of Adonai, him and his sons forever.

Deu 14:22 "Every year you must take one tenth of everything your seed produces in the field,

Deu 14:23 and eat it in the presence of Adonai your God. In the place where he chooses to have his name live you will eat the tenth of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your cattle and sheep, so that you will learn to fear Adonai your God always.

Deu 14:24 But if the distance is too great for you, so that you are unable to transport it, because the place where Adonai chooses to put his name is too far away from you; then, when Adonai your God prospers you,

Deu 14:25 you are to convert it into money, take the money with you, go to the place which Adonai your God will choose,

Deu 14:26 and exchange the money for anything you want—cattle, sheep, wine, other intoxicating liquor, or anything you please—and you are to eat there in the presence of Adonai your God, and enjoy yourselves, you and your household.

Deu 14:27 "But don't neglect the Levi staying with you, because he has no share or inheritance like yours.

Deu 14:28 At the end of every three years you are to take all the tenths of your produce from that year and store it in your towns.

Deu 14:29 Then the Levi, because he has no share or inheritance like yours, along with the foreigner, the orphan and the widow living in your towns, will come, eat and be satisfied—so that Adonai your God will bless you in everything your hands produce.

In addition to the provision made to Levi and his descendants, Adonai made provision to those in need whereby the tithe in the third and seventh year were designated specifically...

Deu 26:12 "After you have separated a tenth of the crops yielded in the third year, the year of separating a tenth, and have given it to the Levi, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow, so that they can have enough food to satisfy them while staying with you;

Deu 26:13 you are to say, in the presence of Adonai your God, 'I have rid my house of the things set aside for God and given them to the Levi, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow, in keeping with every one of the mitzvot you gave me. I haven't disobeyed any of your mitzvot or forgotten them.

Deu 26:14 I haven't eaten any of this food when mourning, I haven't put any of it aside when unclean, nor have I given any of it for the dead. I have listened to what Adonai my God has said, and I have done everything you ordered me to do.

Conclusion:

Giving 10% of your income is not a tithe when Adonai is not present in your life. It is merely a donation that is 10% of the total. The tithe is an aspect by which we are to honor God as Lord of our life...that is provider and sustainer in all things. When God is not present, then we are relying on our own efforts and our own strength alone. Where is God in that dynamic?

We do so today, not that you are supporting the Levites, but you are supporting those who serve the community of Adonai as the Levites were instructed to do.

Paying a tithe for the sake of paying a tithe is an empty and hollow gesture if Adonai and the intent of the tithe is not prominent in your action.

Mat 23:23 "Woe to you hypocritical Torah-teachers and P'rushim! You pay your tithes of mint, dill and cumin; but you have neglected the weightier matters of the Torah—justice, mercy, trust. These are the things you should have attended to—without neglecting the others!

If you are not following Adonai, you have already robbed Him because you are not honoring Him and are not recognizing His Covenant. There needs to be a relationship between the giver and Adonai in order for the action to be associated with Adonai's structure of the tithe.

Mal 3:6 "But because I, Adonai, do not change, you sons of Ya`akov will not be destroyed.

Mal 3:7 Since the days of your forefathers you have turned from my laws and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. "But you ask, 'In respect to what are we supposed to return?'

Mal 3:8 Can a person rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How have we robbed you?' In tenths and voluntary contributions.

Because you did not honor Me and remember my Covenant and thus my Mitzvot, your action is even more severe in that you have stolen from Adonai. That which is required of His people was not given by His people.

In the land, remember, in many cases the Mitzvot is the same for the foreigner as it is for the citizen.

Num 15:13 " 'Every citizen is to do these things in this way when presenting an offering made by fire as a fragrant aroma for Adonai.

Num 15:14 If a foreigner stays with you—or whoever may be with you, through all your generations—and he wants to bring an offering made by fire as a fragrant aroma for Adonai, he is to do the same as you.

Num 15:15 For this community there will be the same law for you as for the foreigner living with you; this is a permanent regulation through all your generations; the foreigner is to be treated the same way before Adonai as yourselves.

Num 15:16 The same Torah and standard of judgment will apply to both you and the foreigner living with

you.' "

Is this not comparable to the Olive tree by which two different types of branches reside, that is two different types of people. Yet, there is one root (one way) for provision required for entire tree. Is the entire Olive tree, not the nation of Israel? See the parallel?

Rom 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you—a wild olive—were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree,

Rom 11:18 then don't boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you.

Rom 11:19 So you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

Rom 11:20 True, but so what? They were broken off because of their lack of trust. However, you keep your place only because of your trust. So don't be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified!

Rom 11:21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won't spare you!

Rom 11:22 So take a good look at God's kindness and his severity: on the one hand, severity toward those who fell off; but, on the other hand, God's kindness toward you—provided you maintain yourself in that kindness! Otherwise, you too will be cut off!

Rom 11:23 Moreover, the others, if they do not persist in their lack of trust, will be grafted in; because God is able to graft them back in.

Rom 11:24 For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree!

Consider the verse that immediately follows D'varim (Deuteronomy) 8:18 pertaining to Adonai establishing the power by which you can attain wealth...

Deu 8:19 If you forget Adonai your God, follow other gods and serve and worship them, I am warning you in advance today that you will certainly perish.

There is a tithe I had alluded to several weeks ago, yet very few consider it a tithe.

Exo 20:8 7 "Remember the day, Shabbat, to set it apart for God.

Exo 20:9 You have six days to labor and do all your work,

Exo 20:10 but the seventh day is a Shabbat for Adonai your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work—not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property.

Exo 20:11 For in six days, Adonai made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. This is why Adonai blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for himself.

Shabbat is a tithe, though it is not 1/10 it is actually 1/7. It is one portion of the whole, in this case the seven days comprising a single week. It is His Shabbat and thus belongs to Him, that is, it does not belong to us. Yet if it isn't technically a tenth what can we understand from the concept of the tithe.

A seventh is 14.28% as compared to 10% conveying that Adonai values time greater than the material aspect. Reproduction enables that our resources can be replenished, whereas time cannot be replenished. Once it is gone it is gone, thus making time a non-renewable resource and thus subject to depletion. Based on economic understanding anything which is non-renewable and subject to depletion becomes more and more valuable over time.