

My Jewish Ancestral Herbalism

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I am researching my Jewish ancestral herbalism and the Judaism that existed before patriarchal christianity. I grew up in a Orthodox Jewish community and attended a religious yeshiva for the formative years of age 3 to 17. My parents wanted me to understand the religion enough to be able to make the choice whether or not to accept it. I always fantasized about leaving and consistently disassociated during prayer times. I never felt fully accepted by my community and always felt like I was doing something wrong. In a hyper-critical space, I felt judged and disparaged. I always felt a strong spiritual connection and loved hearing stories and prayers for traveling spirits and songs of peace. However, I was preached that Judaism was not a pick and choose religion, and thought I had to abandon the religion altogether. My grandfather never was able to receive a Jewish education in Tunisia and deeply wanted that for his children and grandchildren. I respect him so much. He gave me the keys to opportunity and instilled in me a responsibility to family and to the community. He rarely spoke but always made me feel supported and safe. His strength and his presence was like a mountain. He loved plants and gardening and I am convinced that he came back as a garden spider. After my grandfather died, I completely spiraled and lost all sense of security and stability. I ran all over the world trying to distract myself and fill the emptiness. I was always searching for wholeness, and used and abstracted from other people and cultures to come close to it. I opened the doors of consumption and was always searching for more. This thesis is dedicated to him.

Plants came at a time that I needed them most. They asked me to look beyond and into myself. They gave me hope in the dark. They asked me to be better and showed me the way, while holding my hand. Plants are my greatest teachers and my most trusted friends. They are my nourishment, symbols, inspiration, hope and medicine. It is my duty to protect and respect my ancestral medicine as well as others. I have definitely abused plant substances to numb and

detach. Secondary compounds, the medicinal constituents in plants, evolved as a defense system. Plants did not make medicine and fruits for me. They do not belong to me. I am learning how to give back and enter a relationship of reciprocity with them. I am learning ways to wildcraft medicine that are actually beneficial and healing to plants. I will listen and care for them as they have done for me. I want to help heal people the way plants have helped heal me.

The closest I have to come to wholeness has been through Jewish spirituality, ancestry and medicine. Medicine is a catalyst for healing. It is a wide and inclusive range that is specific to each and everyone. Every being in nature has the ability to heal themselves and others. We all have distinctive constitutions and indications and require our own characteristic medicine. The most potent medicine is ancestral medicine. As a white herbalist and ethnobotany major, I think it is incredibly important to know one's ancestral medicine so one does not appropriate, devalue and abuse plants and traditions that belong to other cultures. This summer and early fall, I was living on an herb farm and attended an herbalist internship. I was living with Jewish farmers that offered me a new spiritual connection to Judaism. They told me that Judaism, first, was an earth-conscious religion. The Judaism that exists today is the Judaism that survived Christianity. It became entangled and integrated into our patriarchal, westernized, capitalist society. So much has been lost due to assimilation, racism, sexism and anti-semitism. Dori Midnight, a radical queer Jewish herbalist, talks about the Sephardic curse, where we wake up in the middle of the night and cannot return to sleep. (*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019) My ancestors were persecuted for using magic, and had to hide prayers and potions in darkness. Folk traditions were prohibited and persecuted. Still, they hung garlic on their doors to keep their communities safe. They whispered songs of joy and peace into the challah braiding. They shook the lulav calling upon the four directions and preserved the mysticisms in the dogmas, waiting to be re-interpreted. They have

so many stories to tell me and songs to sing. My ancestors were witches, meaning they were healers, caretakers, dancers, drummers, environmental stewards and spiritual beings. Plants are also my ancestors. There is magic and wonder in everyone's ancestry, one does not need to exercise or abstract other cultures. The plant-person intimacy is a part of every culture. I want to understand Judaism that is foundational in spirituality and care for the earth.

My IDM is Ethnobotany, the study of the interrelationship between living cultures and plants. It is part of a larger field of Ethnobiology, that studies how humans interact with other living things. The history of ethnobotany is rooted in ethnocentrism, as western ethnobotanists studied how "primitive" peoples interact with plants. The ethics of respecting cultures must be recognized before researching a plant. Now the definition is continuing to expand and evolve to encompass an umbrella of theories. There is so much history in every plant. Ethnobotany affirms the fact that humans are woven into nature. It is tied to herbalism and the affirmation that the earth has sacred knowledge to teach us. Communities have been passing down traditional knowledge of curative plants for generations. My thesis is ethnobotanical by definition, as I am searching for how my ancestors interacted with plants and how plants have grown with me. It is necessary for me to both understand the cultural context and botanical and ecological significance. Using ethnobotanical methods, I can understand herbs more and build on my relationship with them. In the plant monograph section, natural history, habitat, active constituents, taxonomy, plant description, personal relationship, connection to Judaism, indications, energetics, uses and recipes are all outlined. I wanted to research my ancestral herbs to be both a better herbalist and a better ancestor. The ten herbs I chose are Anise, Cinnamon, Date, Olive, Garlic, Mint, Rose, Rosemary, Rue and Za'atar. They are only a small taste of the wide apothecary of Ancient Judea. They are all herbs that I have personal experience with and

am trying to enter a sustainable and healthy relationship with. I also introduce the plant section with a glossary of medicinal terms. The monograph research was incredibly satisfying and was a great starting place of future herbalist work. There will always be more information that the plants can share. I would like to create a book of Jewish monographs, and continue to add to them throughout my herbalist career.

The cultural context is made up of sections on Jewish history, Jewish healing, Jewish spirituality, plant knowledge and knowledge recovery and resilience. My section on Jewish history was short and gap-filled. However, it provides necessary context and explanation to better understand the progression of Judaism and Jewish folk medicine into what it is today. The connection between Judaism and Spirituality is essential as Judaism is first an eco-spiritual religion. Understanding the spiritualism connected to environmental stewardship, social justice, community solidarity and healing has made fall back into love with Judaism. Jewish spirituality is sustained in all traditions, holidays and facets of life. All the sections highlight the ancestral importance of plants and try to bring the distance closer to the ancestral viewpoint and customs around them. The sections on Judaism and knowledge recovery and resilience reminds us that what is lost can always come back. The sections ask how we can reconnect with our ancestors and reclaim our cultural identities. All these sections are interconnected, in hopes of bringing a sense of wholeness.

Condensed Long History of Jews and Judaism

The Judaism we know today is the Judaism that survived. Book burnings, genocide, exile, capitalism, colonialism, christianity, white supremacy, patriarchy, oppression and more mutated,

reduced, abstracted and hid the earth based, feminiconsconius knowledge system and worldview into a misinterpreted religion. Ancient Judaism was a human covenant with plants, animals, the earth and the cosmos that dictated responsibilities to the natural and spirit worlds. The Judaic peoples lived on the fertile crescent and the east coast of the Mediterranean sea. (cite) Their religion revolved around the patterns and rhythms of the earth. Harvest was sacred and animals were treated with the same rights of humans. God is oneness, and everything is God. We can attain God in all the small things and everything holds and aims for the essence of God.

Judaism is identified as the first monotheistic religion. The written history of Judaism came long after Ancient Judea and chronicles the stories of the matriarchs, patriarchs and prophets. It frames the cultural values, societal boundaries and hierarchical systems, rather than the essence of Judaism. Avraam, the “first” jew , destroyed the pagan idols in his father’s shop and claimed God as his one and only. His name then changed to Avraham and his wife, Sarai became Sarah both taking one of the letters of God’s name. God promised him their ancestors would be as abundant as the stars and told him to move into Canaan, the land of milk and honey. However, Sarah was barren and asked Avraham to marry a second wife, Hagar, their handmaiden to fulfill his obligation of producing an offspring. Hagar was never happy and fled to the desert with her unborn baby. She wandered into the desert, where God appeared as a well and nurtured and healed her. God commanded her to return to Avraham and that her son would become a patriarch to a fruitful nation. Ishmael became an important prophet in Islam, as the the ancestor of Muhammed. Both Hagar and Ishamel are buried in Mecca. Sarah was visited by the angel Gavre’el, the east wind of breath and passion and was promised a child. She was ninety years old and in disbelief. She gave birth to Isaac soon after and forced Ishmael out of the

inheritance. Isaac would be the seed of the covenant. Hagar and Ishmael were freed, without just compensation, to finally find the life they wanted. God continued to watch over them, as Ishmael had an important destiny of his own.

Isaac married Rivka, an Aramean young girl who offered him water and to feed his camel. Rivka gave birth to two fraternal twins, Esau, meaning well-developed and Jacob, meaning heel-catcher as he rode on Esau's heel out of the womb. God told her that they were fighting in her womb and would continue to fight their whole lives. Esau was akin to hunting and agriculture, without spiritual connection. Jacob was beloved by Rivka and was a simple stoic man that “dwelled in tents.” Jacob tricked a blind and elderly Isaac into giving him the birthright by wearing Esau’s clothes and covering himself in goatskin. Jacob had two wives, Leah and Rachel and two concubines, Zilpah and Bilhah and his twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Judea. Jacob took on the name Israel and had a vision of angels climbing up and down a ladder into the heavens, signifying the multiple exiles the Jewish people must face before the coming of the Messiah.

Following a drought in Canaan, Jacob and his twelve sons’ families migrated to Egypt. A new Pharaoh came into power and the Judaic peoples gradually became slaves in Egypt. The Pharaoh, received a divination that a Jewish prophet would rise up and lead the Jewish people out of enslavement. Out of paranoia and fear, he ordered that all male Hebrew children be killed and drowned in the Nile river. Moses, was hidden by his mother Jochebed and was sent on a little raft down the river, with the protection of the divine, and sailed into the hands of the kind and compassionate Bat Bitya, Pharaoh's daughter. Moses grew up as a prince, not knowing his heritage. At adulthood, he killed an Egyptian, who was whipping and harassing an old Hebrew man. He fled to Midian to escape the death penalty and married Tsiporrah. He became a

shepherd and one day lost one of his flock. While searching, he came upon a burning bush, the fire of life, and God asked him to take off his shoes to be connected to the earth. Moses and told him his destiny was to deliver the Jewish people back into the land of milk and honey. He asked the Pharaoh to free his people and was told no. Moses released the ten plagues, including blood, boils, locust, frogs and darkness. Each time, Moses asked the Pharaoh to release the Jews and each time the Pharaoh said no. The last plague was the death of the first born sons which the Jews escaped by marking their doors with ram's blood. This is the reason for the name of the holiday Passover, as the angel of death passed over the houses of the Hebrews. The Pharaoh conceded and the Hebrews fled in haste. Moses, the sorcerer parted the Red Sea and journeyed with his people for forty years. We built temporary homes, called Sukkot and were guided by clouds of divine light. There were many wars and conflicts. Moses received the Ten Commandments and died with the land of Canaan on the horizon. In Canaan, Ancient Judea became a kingdom, with always a King and a Prophet to guide over societal and spiritual matters. There were many prophets, each with stories and objectives that reflected the changing society and structures.

Plants framed the stories and lives of the ancient Judean people's. Cedars were burned at the entrance of the sacred temples. It is associated with purification and holding us in a spiritual space (*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019). Olive trees, a major part of Jewish medicine and religion, were abundant and characteristic of the ancient Judean homeland. Cloves and cinnamon were used as anointing oil for the high priests. Garlic defined the Jewish people. Anise and Peppermint were common garden plants and used in sacred offerings and cleansings. Za'atar and Rue were found in most gardens and hills to protect the home against the evil eye. Dates, considered the middle eastern tree of life, made an appearance in eerie ancient Judean home.

Rosemary and native species of Wild Rose soothed, calmed and healed the community. Our plant ancestors were always protecting, loving, illuminating, nourishing, inspiring and comforting the Jewish peoples.

The Jewish diaspora came with the destruction of the two holy temples. We were conquered by the Persians, Babylonians and Romans. The twelve tribes were spread across the globe. Many were sold as slaves shipped off to parts unknown. The motif of the wandering Jew arrived from a constant othering and exile of the Jewish people. Expulsions are the common thread in Jewish history, such as the ones that drove the Jews out of England in 1290, and Spain in 1492, or massacres, such as the ones that cost thousands of Jewish lives in the Rhineland during the Crusades and in Ukraine in the seventeenth century (Kirsch, 2018). Blood libel, the belief that missing christian children were thought to have been murdered by Jews to get their blood for challah baking, instigated hundreds of pogroms.

So many oppressors have tried to eradicate us, convinced the Jewish people would only survive in their history books. We were vilified into demons and witches. We acculturated and assimilated out of safety. In 1233, Pope Gregory IX ordered to root out heresy of any and all kind, forcing Jews to hide or put aside the mystery and sorcery, in order to survive as a people (Winkler, 2003). The Law of the Twelve Tables, which condemned the practice of magic, was written under the Roman establishment and later adopted by both christian and Jewish authorities (Labahn and Peerbolte, 2007). Social control and surveillance through social networks enforced repression of remembering, contemplation, ritual and prayer.

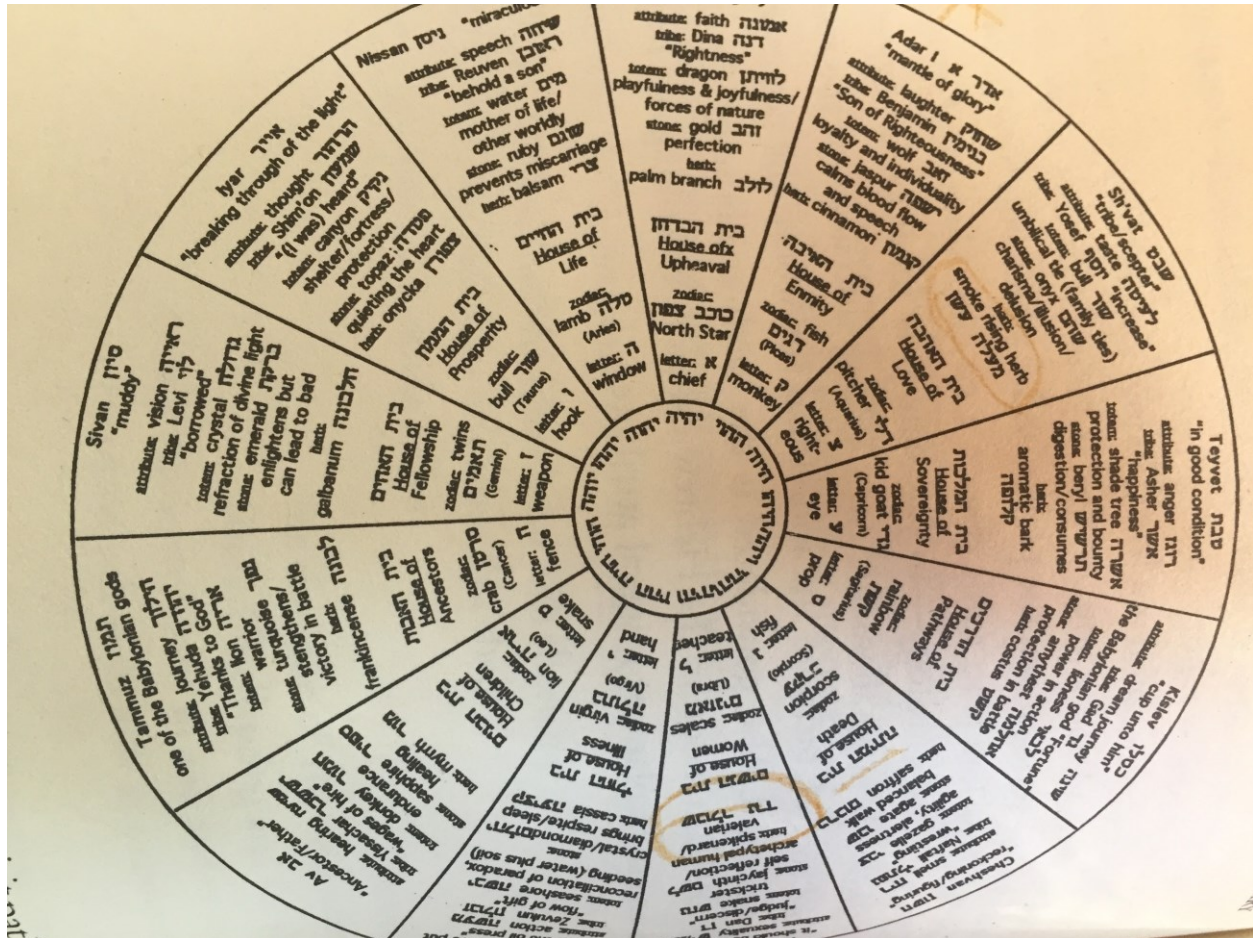
Gloria Anzaldua, a queer Chicana poet, writer, activist and feminist cultural theorist, taught that to survive in the borderlands, one must be at a crossroads and live in the liminal spaces of merging and blending (Anzaldua, 1987). There is no fixed Jewish identity but society has

constructed one built around fear, guilt, shame and survival. We are so much more than our surviving parts. The Jewish community straddled in the liminal space between whiteness and otherness, between oppressor and oppressed. The image of the Jew is associated with European white washed Ashkenazi Jews. However, the tribal nations of Judea spread all over the world after exile. Ashkenazi Jews are the descendants of Jews that migrated into northern France and Germany, and later into Eastern Europe. Sephardic Jews have ancestors that lived in Iberia, Spain before the Spanish expulsion. Mizrahi Jews have ancestors in the middle east and North Africa from biblical times into modernity. Although separated, common threads connect Jews from all over the world.

Jewish Medicine

Jewish healing addressed the realm of spirit, aiming to realign the balance between body and spirit. Illness can be any obstacle that impedes and restricts us. Healing and medicine is interwoven with spirituality and faith. It is an obligation to visit the sick and pray for their recovery. Illness is seen as a communicative opportunity for the soul, lifestyle and worldview. One can choose to either go inward or outward in confronting the pathogens (Winkler, 2003). Faith and openness in the ritual, allows a breakthrough of emotional and physical barriers to heal. Drumming, chanting, blowing, smudging, drawing circles, hanging stone and amulets all return the soul back to the body in realignment. Smoke “will oppose the nature of the patient’s constellation, since it is explained to masters of the Kabbalah that smoke emissions engender miracles by bringing down the effluvia of stars” (Ruderman, 1988). A traditional medicine bag for any healer should contain shofar, herbal oils, olive oil, leaves for smoking, matches, a prayer shawl, and a tambourine or drum. There is magic of faith and prayer and herbs and potions. Performing rites with people that share the same indigenous traditions will always

hold more power.



Jewish Calendar, with letter, zodiac, family, herb, stone, archetype and attributes assigned to every month (Winkler, 2003).

People would walk around on the Sabbath with charms, for example locust eggs for earache and fox tooth for sleep disorders. Non-Kosher foods were allowed for medicinal purposes like donkey flesh for jaundice. Leftover wine and holiday candle oil were imbued with kedushah, divine holiness, and used for healing. Amulets, Talisman and stones were used as protection. Rocks are important medicine in Judaism, with each stone holding a different power. Plants are conduits of psychotherapy in Judaic healing. Meditations on the Bitul hayesh, the bimah, the Without what, the divine nothingness allows us to be freed of the draining forces that

are harming our vital force(Winkler 2003). The talmud and Kabbalah cite a myriad of remedies, from a good's night sleep, binding an ant with sixty seals, sex to invoking sacred names and circles. One of the remedies for a persistent fever suggested by Eyma D'Abbaya is to "take a small fresh jar to a river and say to the river: ""River, O River, please loan me ajar full of water for a guest who is visiting me." Fill the jar with water...spin the jar seven times around your head and pour the water over your back while saying: "River, O river, please take back the water you gave to me, for the guest who visited me came and left on the same day"(Winkler, 2003). The Synagogue of antiquity, a center of healing, was often accompanied by christian accusations of jewish witchcraft or sorcery. Sefer Ha Razim is one of the oldest Jewish texts that acts as a magical sourcebook to call upon angels, especially for healing.

Healing doesn't have to look some type of way. Sometimes it can be sweet like honey. We all need to remember our own sweetness. Mana, the divine nourishment that fell from the heavens and sustained the people during the jewish pilgrammage out of slavery, is said to taste like honey, 1/60th of the divine. There is a tradition to keep a bowl of honey out from Rosh Hashanah, the new year to sukkot. In Sephardic healing, honey is used to sweeten someone who has experienced suffering(*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019). Knives are kept over jars of honey for three days as a protection ritual. Honey is also offered to demons so they do not visit anymore(*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019). Fat and sweetness are divine spiritual nourishment. Pleasure is as central to healing as pain.

Gershon Winkler quotes Dr. Barstow explains,witches and Jews were persecuted interchangeably. Both witches and Jews were perceived as traitors to Christian society who must be eradicated"(Winkler, 2003). Winkler also cited Van Hock, noting, "both Jews and women in general have had to suffer the consequences of being identified with the shadow side of the

self:the irrational, emotional, uncontrollable aspects of self, the aspects which must be repressed and denied if the illusion of control is to be maintained.”(Winkler, 2003) Witchcraft was assigned to the realm of women. In Apocrypha, Book of Enoch (9:7) it is said, “*the angels taught the daughters of men incantations, exorcisms, the cutting of roots, and revealed to them healing plants.*”(Jewish Plant Magic, 2019). The word women was used but really means those without institutional powers. Dori Midnight, a radical queer jewish herbalists, hold so much value in this idea. Daughters of men represents all the marginalized voices and those with minimal power and privilege in a patriarchal homophobic hierarchy. Jewish folk medicine has always been an act of critical resistance.

Many jewish folk traditions, especially Sephardic Jews who lived in Spain before the Spanish inquisition, mirrors practices in curanderismo and other folk traditions around the world. Medicine was one of the main professional activities among Jews of Spain before their expulsion in 1492(Rivera et al., 2019). These healing rituals and remedies were passed on orally. The “Livro de Milizinas” is written in Judeo-Spanish in Hebrew letters (“aljamiado”) published in Thessaloniki, Istanbul and Smyrna. These were devoted primarily to help households, poor patients and women in labour(Rivera et al., 2019). The 502 recipes from the Sephardic culture use 154 different ingredients of which 38 are animals, 23 are minerals and rocks and 93 are plants. Most of these local ingredients persist in modern ethnobotanical records of Greece and Turkey but others are lost(Rivera et al., 2019). While reading the inventory of the standard apothecary of the Sephardic Jews in Spain, I was surprised by the range of plants that my ancestors engaged with. It was a hub of cultural sharing and healing.

Jews constituted one of Egypt’s significant minorities, due to social mobility and connections, the Jewish community mirrored the Mediterranean society as a whole, but was also

known for its medical heritage and knowledgeable physicians and pharmacists. Two hundred and twenty-three substances of plant origin are recorded as being in practical use for medicinal purposes by the Genizah people. Dog rose, licorice, saffron, borage, sesame, camphor, aloe, almond, pepper, and basil were some of the herbs used (Lev, 2015). The medicine was engaged mostly by the poor and was strongly influenced by the local systems of medicine and availability of resources. The Cairo Genizah is an historical source containing about 250,000 documents, found in synagogues and graves (Lev, 2015). In accordance with Jewish religious practice, sacred books which were no longer to be used were not ideally discarded but were buried in Jewish cemeteries or committed to such rooms allocated as a Genizah (Lev, 2015). Since Cairo became the capital and consequently the economic and administrative center of the Muslim empire, the Jewish community had close connections with the Jewish communities of the Middle East, North Africa, Southern Europe, Sicily and India (Lev, 2015). Therefore, these highly valued documents record every aspect of life and reflect on the whole Mediterranean region and beyond.

In the talmudic age, remedies were mostly based on the principle of *similia similibus curantur*, using natural materials and treatments that seemed to have some analogous/symbolic association with an illness (Ruderman, 1988). An example of this homeopathic approach would be using parts of a bush to cure a fever, in reference to the burning bush. Cupping, bloodletting, poultice, prayer and healing touch were popular remedies of the Jewish community during the medieval period (Ruderman, 1988). Poor sanitation, bubonic plague, overcrowded cities and limited food were everyday precursors to death and disease. European Jews were educated in the galenic principles of the four humours, blood, phlegm, choleric and melancholic (Ruderman, 1988). This was a shift from magical homeopathic empiricism and still based in engagement with the natural and supernatural. Jewish healers also used Arab interpretations of Greek methods,

never committing to any one system(Ruderman, 1988). Pathogens and persecution followed the Jewish people. As noted,“Jews in the sixteenth Century lived in constant insecurity not only because they were a beleaguered minority but also because, like other human beings, they were constantly subject to pain, illness and premature death”(Ruderman, 1988). During the scientific revolution, traditional folk medicine became devalued and neglected. There was a fear of sacred healing knowledge being abused and so it became hidden and buried.

Judaism and spirituality

The Judeochristian framework is antithetical to the Judean people that received the Torah, “the showing or the teaching,” five thousand years ago. Judaism, magic and religion are one in the same. Avrahaam and Sarai, meaning Warrior Princess, were introduced as the first Jews, that practiced loving kindness. Earlier Judaism found awe and the divine in a broken twig as much as a shooting star. Spiritual expansion was contingent on a larger earth consciousness and Devakut or soul merging. We are Klippot, shattered vessels or husks of light that seek mending. Following the tenets of Judaism and spiritual guidance was to give compassion and attention to the soil, plants, animals, family, community and oneself. We believe every person, every rock, every blade of grass, has a spirit that is spiraling it into existence and mirroring it into the spirit worlds(Winkler, 2003). We are equal with all things; rivers, rocks, plants, animals and other humans. Each species of animal, much like everything is endowed with a special attribute that is medicinal or educational for us. The goal of knowledge is to respect life and be able to learn and grow with it.

In the Jewish framework,“in order to serve God, one needs access to the enjoyment of nature, such as the contemplation of flower-decorated meadows, majestic mountains, flowing

rivers and so on. For all these are essential to the spiritual development of even the holiest of people”(Winkler, 2003). Faith is an active commitment, like farming, “just as the fruit tree cannot live without plowing and fertilizing and watering, neither can the human body. For the body is like the tree, the medicine is like the fertilizer and the healer is like the tiller of the soil”(Winkler, 2003). Speaking the language of the flora and fauna, mountains and trees is sacred Jewish knowledge, that is accessible to anyone that is open and patient to it. The most sacred chants come from the grasses. To invoke a power of the plant, one must invoke not its name but name of its living soul or essence. In Bereshit Rabbah, it is noted “There exists no blade of grass from below without a constellation in the sky that beats it and tells it to grow”(Ruderman, 1988). While invoking sacred grass medicine, it is important to call upon the spirit of grass, As’vee’el or Grass Power rather than simply calling upon grass (Winkler, 2003). Everything has the essence of the creator. The shechinah or feminine divine presence hovers over us, the herbs, and all beings, being imbued and filtered out and refracted back in. Shekinah is the energy of the divine feminine that breathes matter into spirit reflected back into matter. Her energy radiates from the above that guides, grows and nurtures with us (Winkler, 2003).

Magic is intertwined with religion and spirituality. The western colonialist mindset separates them in opposition and deems magic as pre-religious and primitive (Labahn & Peerbolte, 2007). The dichotomy between religion and magic, was a way to delegitimize ancestral traditions and spiritual intimacy. Magic’s etymology is rooted in Ancient Greece, as they were at war with Persia and Magosh were Persian ritual priests. Mageai came to mean any foreign, unorthodox, or illegitimate ritual practice. The word *Magic* tells the history of devaluing, prohibiting, stigmatizing, exoticizing and disrespecting the supernatural, while subordinating it to the dogmas and rationalism of religion and supremacy (Labahn and Peerbolte,

2007). However, Magic can be only understood as part of the creator God, meaning as part of everything. Magic is concerned with the basics of human life; fertility, security, community food and death. It is alive and dwells in all of the worlds. It transcends religion, while giving life and shape to it. As Marcel Simon, an early twentieth century French Judaic historian, posits, “Si l’on définit le judaïsme par sa foi monothéiste et sa Loi morale, la magie n’est qu’une déformation et une caricature, tout comme elle l’est par rapport du vrai christianisme. Mais le point de vue de l’histoire n’est pas celui de la théologie...If one defines Judaism in the way of Monotheism and Moral law, the magic becomes a deformation and a caricature, just as it is in respect to true Christianity. However, the perspective of history is not that of theology” (Labahn and Peerbolte, 2007). By aiming to define and categorize the properties of the supernatural, we only distance ourselves from further truth and knowledge. As outlined in Cajete’s *Native Science*, the rational mind, birthed from the Metaphoric mind, seeks to understand control, leading to black and white thinking and sterile absolutism. The Metaphoric mind comes from the earth mind, emphasizing the unity of spirit and matter in endless correspondence. The Metaphoric mind is perceptual, imaginative, creative and seeks symbols and knowledge (Cajete, 2000). Participatory experience, presence and gratitude allow the supernatural to pervade our day-to-day. It reminds us that objectivity stems from subjectivity and to truly understand the world, we must understand ourselves. Sex can be a sacred ritual that joins creator with creation, sky with earth and spirit with matter (Winkler, 2003). Dancing is magic, enabling joy, experience, compassion and surrender to one’s body. Everything can be a catalyst of soul expansion.

Sorcery is tied to the mystical and esoteric study of Kabbalah, literally meaning receiving. This sacred information is carefully protected out of fear of misuse. As it is said, “As I made you swear, child, in the temple of Jerusalem, when you have been filled with divine

wisdom, dispose of the book so that it will not be found.”Naomi Janowitz describes sorcery as a specific type of religious behavior in which a human being tried to influence the supernatural world by means of manipulation”(Labahn and Peerbolte, 2007). Sorcery was exercised by some individuals on behalf of the group rather than by solitary individuals, at times of crisis and to acquire knowledge. It is written in the Torah, -תְּחִיָּה לֹא תִחַיֶּה: - This infamous line that has been mistranslated to “One shall not suffer a witch to live”(Winkler, 2003). The scripture shows the abundance and popularity of witchcraft in Judaism and really means one should not support or sustain a sorcerer. Witchcraft in Judaism is access to divine entities and channels of energies to shape change. Witchcraft and sorcery should only be used to help the community never one’s own individual gain.

Sorcerer's manual tradition in papyrus was connected to magic in the second temple(Labahn and Peerbolte, 2007). After seeing the carnal acts and sins of the humans, cosmic spirits begged the Creator that they would treat Earth with more respect and love. The Creator sent the begging spirits to this physical realm and the force of earthly impulses overtook the fallen angels(Winkler, 2003). To help restore balance they committed to teach sorcery to all those who wanted to learn it. he earthy obligations are both a prerequisite and conduit for seeking out the divine(Winkler, 2003). Sorcery rituals draw energy from the sacred circles, sacred name invocations that involve the ground below our feet and the flora, fauna and all other beings that animate our environment.

Magic and symbols were and are entrenched in daily life. In Kabbalah, there is the concept of the פֶּרֶג, the veil or fig leaf of illusion and meeting place of spiritual and physical realm(Winkler, 2003). It is only an illusion that we are separated from the spiritual realm. There are many realms, but we are only aware of this physical one(Cajete, 2000). Of the Without What

(בלמה) and the Everything. There must be emptiness and space for the divine to fill. (Winkler, 2003) Illness, joy, sex, love, rock, plant, earth and all beings, spirits and energies are all manifestations of the divine. The prerequisite for engaging in invoking the sacred names is being a conscientious, fair, compassionate, devoted and kind in community, family and the earth. The physical realm is in no way secondary to the physical realm or vice versa. The supernatural is rooted in the presence and respect of nature. Manic, depressive, ecstatic, angry, bitter, solemn, silly and all interpretations of emotions from the widest spectrums are all the Creator (Winkler, 2003). Evil can come from Good and Good can come from evil. The Primordial Light is all encompassing, consuming and unifying. It is absolutism that can breed supremacy, superiority and justification of oppression. The Primordial shadow seeks out diversity, uniqueness, distinction and difference in a solidarity of interconnection (Winkler, 2003). The balance lies in understanding and honoring individuality and Free Will simultaneously with community and oneness. There is no border between the phenomenal and absolute. The four beings; Still beings, Sprouting beings, Walking beings and Speaking beings are all completely different and completely the same.

In Judaism, the four directions or four winds travel and grow with you on your soul's journey and they form together the singular spirit that animates all of creation (Winkler, 2003). Ceremonies, harvest and all aspects of life can be attributed to the four directions. In Magic of the Ordinary, Gershon Winkler reiterates, "The very breath of primeval Creation. The primeval breath blow becomes the Four Winds, and the primeval breath moisture becomes the Four Rivers. The primeval heat becomes the Sacred Fire, and the primeval breath sound becomes the Song of the Planets which manifest as planets, stars, suns and moons and these are the ten s'firot (spirals of divine emanation into manifestation) each void of anything: one is the breath of

the Source of the Powers of all Lives;breath from breath; water from breath;fire from water; up(sky);down(Earth);east, west, north, south.”-Sefer Yetzirah””(Winkler, 2003).

The Four winds call on ancestors and spirits from all around reminding us we are never alone.(Gonzales, 2012)West (Maarav מערב)is a place of merging, death, introspection, reflection, transformation, restoration. It is linked with Autumn and the element Earth(Winkler, 2003). North (tzafon צפון) is an energy of emptiness, peacefulness, mystery, dormancy, water and winter. The Wind to the East (Meetzrah מזרח)is emphasised in spring and air, as the fresh life breath of passion and renewal is blowing across the land to reawaken all that has been dormant. (Winkler, 2003) In the summertime, the South Wind (Negev “to wipe/cleanse נגב)is amplified and defined by fire, diversity, aliveness and color. The four spirit guardians or misinterpreted “angels,” of the four winds is Rafa’el of the West (healing), Meecha’el in the South (reflection), Gavree’el to the East(balance) and Uree’el in the North (Vision or Illumination)(Winkler, 2003). The hebrew word Ruchot רוחות means winds or energies and has been christianized into the word “angel.” There are animal images associated with each of the four directions as guides and teachers. North is associated with the Eagle, a spirit-soaring, protective inaccessible, mysterious and elusive creature of the sky, in the direction of the Creator. The essence of the Warrior Lion is invoked in the East, the place of balance, striking when necessary, power and newness. The Merger Buffalo plows ahead to the West, symbolizing persistence, wisdom, blending and peace of mind(Winkler, 2003). The Snapshot of Creation Human is placed in the South dancing with shadows of extreme emotions, dynamism, chaos, creativity and change. Above to the Spirit realm is the Deliberate Panther, waiting patiently and cautiously for the perfect moment to impart blessings from the Divine. The gluttonous Bear signifies the Earthly Realm of Below,

enjoying, receiving and acknowledging the abundance of blessings and to remember blessings will come again, when they are without(Winkler, 2003).

In kabbalah, the tree of life is a map and geometrical symbol of the universe, made up of ten sefirot or divine energies and twenty two connecting paths. (*Tree of Life / Pittsburgh Response*, n.d.)The hebrew word for tree is עץ (Eitz) and the hebrew word for advice is נסיון. The tree of life maps the path to our soul's ascent. Divine manifestation and creativity is always accessible to us. This map represents the journey that each of us undertakes in our lives. Humans have the ability to unify the spiritual and physical realms, to receive and share in the light. There are four levels or dimensions of reality: All the worlds, **Atziluth**, the world of Emanation, **Briah**, the world of Creation, **Yetzirath**, the world of Formation, and **Assiah**, the world of Action(Winkler, 2003). All the worlds and pathways hold the same essence and collective energy. This re-enforces the philosophy “as above, so below,” what is happening in this world has consequences in the other worlds. We are affected and interconnected. The tree of life is both universal and collective and individual and personal.

In the Jewish framework, demons is an expansive term. There are demons all around us. From a cough to epilepsy to intergenerational trauma, there are demons in all walks of life. There is magic in the ordinary. The word demon is incredibly christianized and detracts from the native jewish theology. Sheydim are half-human and half-spirit, forever wandering in the twilight of material and spiritual. Rabbi Yehuda Hanashee taught in the second century, “These are the sheydim, whose souls the creator fashioned and whose bodies the Creator was about to form when the Settling time(Sabbath) and the creator did not complete them”(Winkler, 2003). They can appear in temporary material form or remain invisible. They are both the primordial light and the primordial shadow. They can be used for both good and evil. It is forbidden to invoke a

they'd as a primary source power or to interfere with Nature. However, it is permissible to seek them as a supplemental aid for information and effecting the supernatural(Winkler, 2003). To save the Talmud, a conversational text of how to interact with the world, the concept of sheydim had to be reduced and proscribed.

Judaism and Knowledge Resilience

It is forbidden for a Jew to marry a Non-Jew. This rule, although infuriating and constraining, is one of reasons why Jews and the tenants of Judaism have survived distinctively. There is focus on intense and conforming regulation out of fear. Jewish guilt is misguided, sin is a christian value not a Jewish one. Many have lost and forgotten the Judaism that is inspired by love, by clinging desperately to fear and the shell of Judaism. The Jewish people are going through a collective identity crisis. The traditions may have recentered around dogmas and regulations, but, the spirit of the essence still resides. All religious and spiritual hebrew scripture are written without vowels(Winkler, 2003). The essence waits in the texts to be reinterpreted, reimagined and reconnected.

We were persecuted for accessing the spiritual and the divine. We were cast off as demons and witches. We acculturated out of necessity. Magic became hidden in the codices and everyday life. Spells became whispered into breadmaking. The hamsa and red thread protect against the evil eye. Brooms are kept for cleansing and wedding ceremonies. The sacred circle is honored at Orthodox weddings when the groom walks around the bride seven times while praying. Yahrzeit candles are lit for the dead and honor the practice of remembering. Jewish cosmology and naming systems hold immense ancestral knowledge and direction.

Although countless traditions and pieces of information have been lost, the Jewish people have been very successful in holding onto traditions. We have countless jewish holidays

and each hold a story and a tradition. Although Jewish holidays have been reorganized and revalued, they keep oral and physical traditions alive while we remember our plant and people ancestors. The moon waits for us to rejoice and celebrate her ecstatically every New Moon. Bitter, salty and sweet are eaten on Passover, as we are told the story of Exodus and the hardships and choices of slavery and freedom. Purim shares customs with Halloween as we dress up, share food and drink until we forget the difference between evil and good. Purim is a story of the Creator mediating between the primordial light and primordial shadow. The four directions are honored in the shaking of the lulav on the holiday of Sukkot. "In the time of the Sacred Temple, the people would observe the direction of the rising smoke of the Sacred Fire during the autumn harvest rites (Sukkot) to determine the fate of their harvest and future crops" (Winkler, 2003). The four plants used ceremonially on Sukkot, the holiday of harvest and the pilgrimage of Canaan, are lulav, *Phoenix dactylifera*, an immature palm branch, et'rog (*Citrus medica*), a dioecious (both male and female) citrus species, hadass, a branch of a myrtle tree, *Myrtus communis* and Aravah, *Salix alba*, otherwise known as a white willow. Willow symbolizes vulnerability, as it cannot subsist away from water. Myrtle symbolizes faith and transcendence because it retains its color and aroma after being severed from its roots. Palm branch symbolizes an oasis of shelter, food and water. Et'rog symbolizes the sanctity and necessity of both the feminine and the masculine (Winkler, 2003).

Historical Judaic ritual cleansings at the Mikveh or with Para Adomah, an extinct red cow, was for people that have been around death and trauma and had to clean and isolate from the community for seven days. Sacrifice of the cow was made to raise the holy sparks from the Klippot. It has now been reduced in Orthodox communities as a rite for women when they become "impure" from menstruation. Purification is tied to regeneration not sin. Chaos, change, damage

and disorder are part of life and we are handed the tools to respond rather than react. Gershon Winkler identifies an essential tool in ancestry work; “One of the most powerful means of spirit journeying in the Jewish tradition is weeping: the body welling with intense feelings that allows the soul to connect more with the body” (Winkler, 2003). Suffering, relief, redemption is in our bodies. Mourning and grief is a necessary part of ancestry work. Disconnecting from our bodies is self-abandonment and leads to apathy and depression. In the scripture, Hanna, הַנָּחַ teaches us the importance of prayer and tears. She was the second wife of Elkenah who was barren and begged God for a miracle. Hannah was praying in her heart, silently. Her lips moved, but no sound was heard. ”Please! I’m a woman hard used. I haven’t been drinking. Not a drop of wine or beer. The only thing I’ve been pouring out is my heart, pouring it out to God. It’s because I’m so desperately unhappy and in such pain that I’ve stayed here so long” (*Bible Gateway Passage*, n.d.). Her tears soothed the bitterness in her soul. Tears are medicine. Crying is a hormonal response to being overwhelmed. Tears of grief, health, sadness, friendship doubt, gratitude, remorse, guilt, anguish, sorrow, danger and all emotions are featured and praised in all facets of Jewish life. We are meant to feel and experience life deeply. It is said God keeps and records our tears in a bottle to better know how to heal and comfort us. Many Jewish mystics allot an hour everyday to crying and lingering in sorrow (Winkler, 2003). Feeling our emotions to their truest depths brings us closer to ourselves and in turn God. Prayer is a form of resistance, recovery and resilience.

- **Judaism and Knowledge Recovery**

When it comes to revitalizing and disseminating knowledge, much has been lost and even more has to be gained from mindful participation with all facets of Creation. We have a long and fulfilling path to recovery. The names for the spirit essence of

animals, plants, stones and stars are found in ancient and early medieval Jewish magical texts, and some are hidden in oral traditions or forgotten. Ancestral knowledge can come back from elders, dreams, society, visions and relationships to place (Gonzales, 2012). This knowledge waits to be revitalized. Symbols and spirits lead the way to a sense of wholeness with others, the land, the cosmos and the great mystery. In the work of remembering and recovery, we must ask what experiences and beliefs we allow to shape our life and perspectives (Gonzales, 2012). History is ritual. Ceremony is education. Stories are self-recognition and transformation. Our bodies are altars. The past, present and future are a unified moment that cycles, repeats and expands. By reconnecting to our traditions, our ancestors and ourselves, we can begin to piece together a way of life.

Gerlad Vizenor, a cultural theorist of the Anishinaabe peoples, focused on Native American studies coined the concept of Survivance, as a frame of activities, practices and perspectives to make sure the indigenous way of being is preserved and continuous. (Vizenor, 2009) Continuity of spirit, dynamism and active presence undermine victims, exoticism and supremacy. Survival depends on flexibility and our ability to move creatively with the flow of events (Vizenor, 2009). Jews were uprooted from their indigenous homeland and lost survival consciousness that comes from deep sustained relationship to the land. We wandered and adapted and molded with different oppressors and opportunities. Some of us became oppressors. The religion co-opted the disruptive systems of oppression that threatened the essence of Judaism as a whole.

In the book *Truly Texas American*, Adán Medrano introduced me to the theory and image of ethnogenesis in place of the family tree (Medrano, 2014). Rhizomes are nodes of regeneration and transformation that can be rerooted, adapted and moved to new environments. History has been cut and made to seem forever lost. Knowledge can resprout in new forms. We are the outcome of connections through space, time, memory, family, intuition, resource and choice. Patrisia Gonzales opened her book, *Red Medicine: Traditional Indigenous Rites of Birthing and Healing* with the reality, “I cannot make the stories whole” (Gonzales, 2012). When it comes to knowledge recovery, we will never have all of the puzzle pieces. A CC alum that is committed to ancestral herbalism, compared knowledge recovery to following a trail of bread crumbs. Their queer identity isolated them from Jewish community and plants led them back to ancestry and Judaism. Their work is intuition based and somatic. They are researching weeds in occupied Palestine and Jewish concentration camps to trace Jewish plant knowledge and resilience. Plants are frequently one of the things taken with, when fleeing. This is no coincidence. Plants have helped them recover knowledge, spiritual care and ancestry.

When studying ancestral plant knowledge. It is important to ask what the plants want us to know. This practice requires patience. Cajete, a Tewa author and professor, stressed in *Native Science*, we are sensory organs of mother earth; to learn from her, we must respect her as a cosmic body. (Cajete, 2000) We are all organs and body parts of the earth. Plants, rock, animals and people are all one. They are teachers, parents, friends and healers. Plants are breathing with us. They respond and react to us. They need care and attention just like us. They must be stroked and plucked sweet and fair. They must be given offerings of gratitude and apologies for damaging their wholeness. History is seeped into their soil. In the songs of Solomon, the songs

of the sprouting beings are written with divine love and light. Trees of the Field Declare: “Then shall the trees of the forest sing, before Infinite Being who comes to bring justice on behalf of the earth”(First Chronicles 16:33)(Winkler, 2000). Plants remember the ancestors that have cared and sustained them. They remember and grieve the oppression, genocide, white supremacy, patriarchy and colonization that has corrupted and erased countless organisms. Plants have the power to decolonize and resist. They have the power to restore and remember.

We were all once earth-conscious people. On a global scale, we are dealing with soul loss, land loss, spiritual and cultural fragmentation. However, we all have different history, sense of place, time and circumstance. We all must recover our own narratives. Ancestral and spiritual work can be recovered in all of us. Ancestors are alive in the present as much as they were in the past and as much as they will be in the future. However, this work is specific and individual as well as shared and universal. One of the central tenets of Judaism is tikkun olam or earth mending. We are shattered pieces whose destiny is to come together in wholeness. Wholeness is not universalism, globalization or absolutisms. On its own universalism stands against indigenous reclamation.(Hendrickson, 2014) As people search outside their ancestry for understanding, they often appropriate, abstract and exoticize, while misreading knowledge that is not entitled to them. There is danger in the single story. We can honor and acknowledge our sacred common origin, but as a stepping stone to uncovering our own ancestral way of life. We have to ask ourselves who our people are and in turn who we are and what we know. It is not about hiding but being alive in who we are. Our work lies in the support and restructuring of collective individualism.

Spiritual intervention is necessary and soul work is not only individual but collective. There is much to be recovered in codices, original instructions and sacred texts but we must also ask for permission and respect boundaries of knowledge and sacrality. We all have trauma and boundary work. However, to truly heal, we must address our systems of oppression, rematriate the land, redistribute our resources and participate in reparations. We must return to ourselves and return to the earth. Disassociating as a coping mechanism has led to a somatic intuition loss on a global scale. We must restore our relationship with the natural world and thus restore people to health(Gonzales, 2012). Teshuva is the spiritual accounting of looking into what is out of balance(Winkler, 2003). The biggest threat to systems of oppression is hope and willpower. By fighting and standing in solidarity for social justice and equity, we recover the right to maintain traditions. In Judaism,“medicines come from the earth where she is at peace, not when there is conflict upon her”(Winkler 2003).

As acknowledged in Red Medicine, we are nature looking into nature and signs and sacred symbols generate the path. We are God's eye always at the center of creation. We must go within ourselves to reflect and shape change. Ceremony transfers knowledge, remembers and passes on responsibilities to life and earth, restores balance and harmony, and honors and upholds traditions of communal and environmental renewal(Gonzales, 2012). Songs, symbols, dance, herbs, ceremony can guide us back to self-awareness, spiritual orientation, love and dedication for community, ourselves and our environment. Through ceremony and dreams, plants can inform us how to engage with them and how our ancestors have in the past. They can heal the soul wounds of colonization and generational trauma. Plants return people to time and place. Sense of place and purpose are the greatest acts of resistance(Gonzales, 2012). It is

ancestral and sacred knowledge that has been passed down intergenerationally. We must decolonize time by returning to our lunar, solar and astral cycles. For example, in Judaism, the month of iyyar or biblically Ziv meaning light or glow, usually falls between May and April, is a spiritual time marker for healing(Winkler, 2003). Prayer, intentions and offering are essential in ceremony. It transcends time and space and can be returned in dreams and plants. Without belief in ceremony, the medicine is less willing to heal the patient. Time is birth, death, ceremony and dreaming(Gonzales, 2012). We must decolonize time by returning to our lunar, solar and astral cycles. For example, in Judaism, the month of iyyar or biblically Ziv meaning light or glow, usually falls between May and April, is a spiritual time marker for healing(Winkler, 2003).

In *Well for Culture: Why Natives Shouldn't Go Paleo*, Luger and Collin define the term “to be well for culture” as to eat ancestral foods that are connected to land, generational and continuous, living and breathing, culturally significant and nutritious(Luger & Collin, 2015). We have been distanced from the harvest, gathering, seed saving, preparation, culture, ceremony and spirituality of food. Food must be emphasized as an act of critical resistance(Luger & Collin, 2015). It is empowering and gratifying to partake in foods that run deep. Jewish cuisine is a major guardian of our culture. Kugel or jewish casserole is known to have magical properties under Kabbalah. Challah, an ancestral dough offering tithed to priests in the sacred temple and two loaves offered at the first fruits of summer, is usually baked with prayers and spells every Sabbath(Winkler, 2003). In preparing kosher meats, the ritual centers around releasing the animal's spirit with as little pain and suffering. In ancient Judaism, an animal was allowed to appear in court with witnesses and were only killed on special occasions for sacrifices(Winkler, 2003). An authentic Jewish Butcher would cry out in pain with the animal and enter into a state

of compassion, grief and kindness as they prepare the meat. Jewish food and medicine, much like other global folk medicine, was defined by what was easy and accessible. Cooking meals for one's ancestors is an incredibly satisfying and fulfilling method in expressing gratitude.

Jewish incantations on agriculture and the feminine are waiting to be revisited. The Jewish festival of Ingathering, the final harvest celebration before winter exemplified the value of environmental stewardship of Ancient Judea. During Shabbat Shirah, Sabbath of Song, we feed the birds as acknowledgement for the songs they teach us (Winkler, 2003). Dori Midnight reminded me of the Jewish ancestral practice of interacting with honey, garlic and apples; all sacred foods. God's name is in the apple. Honey is divine nourishment. Jews are garlic people (*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019). Placing plants in one's pocket or on an altar, begins a mutual courtship. Dori advises us to treat one's plant like a romantic interest; be grateful, loving and a good listener. Dori Midnight states, "There are ancestors in you and plants around you that share in your longing. Honor desire in oneself and what is desirable to me" (*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019). Creation came from nothingness and longing for more. We are grounded in desire. Our personal power and authority is embodied knowledge. Ancestry recovery is supposed to be enjoyable and satisfying. It is a tremendous privilege.

What plants knew my ancestors?

Glossary of terms

Alterative

Supports the body in its natural cleansing processes and gradually restores the body to health and vitality. Alterative herbs work in many different ways. Each with certain affinities and secondary actions. (Hoffman, 2003)

Aperiant

Eases constipation (Levy, 1974)

Adaptogen

Brings people back to the parasympathetic state. Regulate and moderates stress hormones and regulators, influences the pituitary gland system (Hoffman, 2003)

Astringent

Causes the contraction of tissues, primarily the skin. Called sphyctics when used to stop bleeding. (Hoffman, 2003)

Antispasmodic

Relieves and reduces spasms. (Levy, 1974)

Antimicrobial

Helps create an environment in the body to destroy or resist pathogenic microorganisms including viruses, bacteria and fungi through a variety of direct and indirect mechanisms and processes. (Hoffman, 2003)

Antiseptic

Acts as a specific poison to certain organisms. (Hoffman, 2003)

Antioxidant

Inhibits oxidation and the production of free radicals, which are linked to cancer, heart diseases and other diseases. (Hoffman, 2003)

Antiparasitic

Helps create an environment in the body to destroy or resist parasites. (Hoffman, 2003)

Anticoagulant

Blood thinner. (Levy, 1974)

Anodyne

Pain Relieving. (Levy, 1974)

Anti-Inflammatory

Helps the body work with and support the bodily process of inflammation, should be used in combination with other herbs to address the underlying problem. (Hoffman, 2003)

Anticatarrhal

Expels excessive mucous or decreases mucous secretion, usually through astringency from tannins. (Hoffman, 2003)

Carminative

Aids digestion and eases discomfort caused by flatulence (Hoffman, 2003)

Chollogage

Stimulates movement of bile from the liver (Hoffman, 2003)

Demulcent

Mucilaginous and soothes inflammation or irritation. (Levy, 1974)

Diaphoretic

Induces sweating. (Levy, 1974)

Laxative

Loosens stools and promotes bowel movements. (Levy, 1974)

Diuretic

Promotes the formation and release of urine. (Levy, 1974)

Emollient

Substance that softens, especially the skin. (Hoffman, 2003)

Emmenagogue

Stimulates menstrual flow and activity and tones and aids the reproductive system (Hoffman, 2003)

Expectorant

Stimulates or relaxes the respiratory system to remove bronchial secretions through mucilage and volatile oils. (Hoffman, 2003)

Hypnotic

Induces a deep and healing state of sleep. (Hoffman, 2003)

Nervine

A catchall term for any remedy with an effect on the nervous system. All members of the mint family are nervine and restore and strengthen damaged nervous tissue. (Hoffman, 2003)

Tonic

Nurtures and enlivens. Increases the physical tone of an organ or tissue. Tonics herbs can be taken long term safely to provide gentle and long-lasting change. (Hoffman, 2003)

Vermifuge

Expels worms. (Levy, 1974)

Vulnerary

Useful in healing wounds. (Levy, 1974)

Note to the Reader:

The plant section has been organized in both sub-headed and paragraph format. The information is mostly the same but has been separated for the reader's preference. The sub-headed format is structured for those of a scientific and botanical background, to find the information that is relevant to them. The paragraph format is structured to be easier to read.

Anise-*Pimpinella anisum*

Hebrew name

Anise -אניס

Family:

Apiaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Anise is a delicate erect annual growing to two feet with a hollow stem. Feathery green leaves that are cordate on lower parts and pinnate in the higher portions that emit an anise scent when bruised. Umbels of creamy yellow flowers that bear small, ridged, green-yellow seeds in late August. (*Anise Monograph: Pimpinella anisum – Herbal Academy*, n.d.)

Habitat and Natural History:

Anise is native to the eastern Mediterranean, western Asia and North Africa. Found on hedgerows, fields and rocky hillsides. Anise seed takes a long time to come to maturity, requiring a growing season of at least 130 days. (Levy, 1974) Herbalist Laura Dewey sees the personality of anise as a meticulous perfectionist that hates being rushed and works on their own time and tempo. (*Anise Monograph: Pimpinella Anisum – Herbal Academy*, n.d.)

Contraindications:

Use not advised during pregnancy. The oil of the seed is toxic internally can produce tremors, spasms and organ damage. If used frequently without rest, an intense anise regimen can cause oversaturation and slow the metabolism (Wood, 2008).

Organ affinity:

Digestive, Reproductive and Respiratory System

Uses:

Anise is a powerful tonic herb for the body with an affinity for the digestive, reproductive and respiratory system. The seeds are the parts used for medicine. An ancient name for anise was *solamen intestinorum* (comforter of the bowels), because anise sweetens the bowels. The herbs are carminative, anodyne, emollient, antiseptic, anticatarrhal, expectorant, antispasmodic, antimicrobial, aromatic and a parasympathetic relaxant. (Hoffman, 2003) The anodyne properties of anise are helpful for mild pain relief for menstrual cramps, sore throats and stomach aches.

Anise aids in the reduction of fat, especially lipids in the liver and improves antioxidant defense mechanisms. Like other members of the carrot family, Anise is also a powerful nervine and relaxant that can calm psychological stress, anxiety and depression and rebuild the nervous system.

Indications:

Anise is indicated for watery and earthy constitutions that have strong will, stamina and rigidity that can be prone to lethargy, depression, stress and nervousness. Anise is also indicated for lice, scabies, whooping cough, colic, eye strains, palpitations, migraines, fevers, spasms, pains, diabetes, flatulence, digestive issues, asthma, bronchitis, loss of appetite. (Wood, 2008) Anise has been worked with in cases of bad breath, gallstones, low libido, scanty urine and epilepsy. Anise facilitates birth and milk secretion. (Levy, 1974)

Energetics:

Warming, Moistening and Nourishing

Parts Used:

Seed

Active Constituents:

The active constituents are flavonoids (including quercetin), rutin, sugars, malic acid, iron, sodium, phenylpropanoids, lipids, fatty acids, sterols, proteins, carbohydrates and volatile oils (including anethole) (Wood, 2008).

Dose:

The seeds must be freshly ground as they quickly lose their properties. Pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1 to 2 teaspoons of the seeds and infuse in a covered container for 5 to 10 minutes.

Take 1 cup three times daily (Hoffman, 2003). Then rest for ten days, repeat the course for three

weeks, with rest, and again. Tincture of the whole seed: 9–12 drops a day is in the “normal range”; for pain and spasm take a lower dose, 1–2 drops, 6x/day (Kenner and Requena, 2001). Topical salve: 5 drops of anise seed oil in 1 tablespoon of base oil, rub on spasmodic abdomen (Dewey)(Wood, 2008).

Formulations and recipes:

A warm cup of milk with fresh crushed anise seed is a powerful and delicious insomnia remedy. In sephardic healing, anise has been formulated with cloves, schnapps, saffron, myrrh and aloe. For a wide range of ailments, cloth was soaked with schnapps and anise and applied to the area of pain or discomfort.(Rivera et al., 2019) Pain petri is a morrocon jewish bread braided with anise that is eaten on the new year and the Sabbath.

History in Judaism:

Anise was a common herb in the gardens of ancient judea. It was popular as a form of currency for taxes, given to the temple priests and a sacred herb in offerings(“Anise,” 2013). Anise is more popular in sephardic and mizrahi culture.

Personal relationship:

Whenever I think about Anise, I think of my great grandmother Henriette. She died when I was six and would visit from Israel and bring her homemade anise caques. They were perfect with tea after a long meal. I learned this summer of the carminative properties of anise. My great-grandmother practiced herbalism everytime she made her tea cookies. Anise is an herb that I do not know well but I know that Anise knows my ancestors well. I do not engage with Anise regularly but hopefully that will change. My grandfather would drink Arak every sabbath, which is cloudy alcohol made from Anise. Anise helps me bring the distance closer to my dead loved ones.

Cinnamon-*Cinnamomum verum*

Hebrew Name:

Kinnamon-קינמון, meaning erect or upright quills

Family:

Lauraceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Bushy evergreen tree that grows from twenty to thirty feet high with a thick scabrous bark and strong branches. (*Cinnamomum verum Cinnamon, Ceylon Cinnamon Tree PFAF Plant Database, n.d.*) New shoots come every year speckled with green and orange. The long deeply veined leaves are petiolate, entire and leathery when mature with a lighter underside. When the leaves are bruised, the aromatic scent of cinnamon is released. The small and white flowers come in panicles with oval drupes with one seed or fleshy receptacles that become bluish with white spots when mature. (Emery, n.d.) The roots smell like cinnamon and taste like camphor.

Habitat and Natural History:

Native to Sri Lanka and Malabar Coast and the Tenasserim Hills of Myanmar. Cinnamon dwells in moist well-drained forest soils from sea level to heights of 700 meters. It can grow in no shade or semi-shade. (*Cinnamomum Verum Cinnamon, Ceylon Cinnamon Tree PFAF Plant Database, n.d.*)

Contraindications:

Pregnant women should refrain because of cinnamon's stimulant and abortive qualities.

(Hoffman, 2003)

Organ affinity:

Circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems

Energetics:

Warming, Stimulating, sweet and pungent

Active Constituents:

cinnamaldehyde, cinnamate, cinnamic acid, numerous essential oils, tannins, carotenoids, eugenol and mucilage. (Hoffman, 2003); (Wood, 2008)

Uses:

In Medical astrology, the herb is ruled by the Sun. Plant under the the influence of the sun are known as herbs for the heart and vitality. Cinnamon is a tonic for the whole system, astringent, mild emmenagogue, stimulant, antiseptic, antiviral, antioxidant, rubefacient, diaphoretic and digestive aid. (Wood, 2008)

Indications:

The herb is indicated for conditions of fatigue, weakness, cold, low immunity, poor circulation, congestion, bloating and sluggish digestion. The sunny herb has also been worked with in cases of viral infections, fevers with chills, hypoglycemia, unstable blood sugar levels, staph infections, botulism, E. Coli, Candida, diarrhea, early and profuse menstruation, menopause, lower back pain and sore muscles. Hemorrhages, rashes, wounds, bites, stings, depression and anxiety have been soothed with cinnamon(Wood, 2008).

Parts Used:

Bark and young shoots

Dose:

Whole quills are preferred over powder(Wood, 2008).

Formulations and recipes:

The holy anointing oil of priests in Ancient Judea is formulated with cinnamon, cassia, myrrh, galangal, good olive oil and Cannabis or *Calamus*` (*The Spiritual Protective Warming Energy of Cinnamon* | *Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin*, n.d.). Cinnamon has also been formulated with other pungent or bitter herbs to add sweetness, including Garlic and Rue.

History in Judaism:

Although cinnamon is not native to Ancient Judea, through trade, she has become a celebration of Judaism. In the times of the Ancient temple, cinnamon trees grew in Judea. Cinnamon is a protective herb that can enhance psycho and spiritual capacities. נִפְתִּי מִשְׁפָּבִי מֵרֶזְקֵהֶם וְקִנְמוֹן (משלי
יז, ט) – “I have perfumed my couch with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon” (*Mishlei 7:17*); (*Sefer HaShelah Hakadosh, Tractate Ta'anit, Matot/Masei*). `Because of its spiritual protective properties, cinnamon was chosen to be one of the eleven ingredients of the Temple incense and one of the four spices in the holy anointing oil, (*Shemot 30:29*). (*The Spiritual Protective Warming Energy of Cinnamon* | *Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin*, n.d.) In Jewish healing, fat and sweetness are divine spiritual nourishment. Pleasure is as central to healing as pain. Healing doesn't have to look some type of way, sometimes it can be sweet like honey. We all need to remember our own sweetness. In Sephardic healing, cinnamon is used to sweeten those who have experienced suffering and fear. (Rivera et al., 2019) Cinnamon has also appeared in Jewish weddings and on the Passover seder plate. The Hebrew name for cinnamon is Kinnamon meaning erect or upright rolls.

Personal relationship:

Cinnamon guides me through my daily rituals. Every morning, I sprinkle an abundance of cinnamon into my coffee. It is essential for me to go about my day. It brings warmth and

movement to my body when feeling lethargic and slow. It is one of the most influential herbs in my life, and it has reminded me of my love of plants and medicine.

Date-*Phoenix dactylifera*

Hebrew name-

-Tamar-תמר

Family:

Areaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Date palm is a monocot, grass-like flowering plants that can grow up to thirty meters tall and forty centimeters across in the Areaceae family.(Chao & Krueger, 2007)Date is dioecious, meaning male and female parts are separated on two different plants. The name of date palm originates from its fruit; "phoenix" from the Greek means purple or red (fruit), and "dactylifera" refers to the finger-like appearance of the fruit bunch.(Chao & Krueger, 2007) Around the trunk of the date tree, the palm branches grow in a spiral pattern and form a crown with hundreds of leaves that are gray in color. (*Phoenix Dactylifera Date Palm PFAF Plant Database*, n.d.)The leaves have a needle-sharp point at their tips to deter predators. The palm's flowers are small and white or yellow in color. (*Phoenix Dactylifera Date Palm PFAF Plant Database*, n.d.)The fruit can vary in color from bright yellow to bright red. The five stages of maturity for the date fruit include "habakuk," in which the fruit is pea-sized and fully layered; "kimri," in which the fruit is small, oblong, and green; "khalal" or "besser," in which the fruit changes from green to yellow to red and reaches maximum weight and size; "rutab," in which the flesh becomes softer and darker; and "tamar," the hebrew name for date, in which the fruit is fully ripe.(Chao & Krueger, 2007)

Habitat and Natural History:

Date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) is one of the oldest fruit crops grown in the arid regions of the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Middle East. The most probable area of origin of the date palm was in or near what is now the country of Iraq, but date cultivation spread to many countries starting in ancient times. Dates can grow in very hot and very dry climates. They are relatively tolerant of salty and alkaline soils. (Chao & Krueger, 2007) Date palms require a long, intensely hot summer with little rain and very low humidity during the period from pollination to harvest, but with abundant underground water near the surface or irrigation. (*Phoenix Dactylifera Date Palm PFAF Plant Database*, n.d.) One old saying describes the date palm as growing with "its feet in the water and its head in the fire." (Chao & Krueger, 2007)

Contraindications:

None known

Organ affinity:

Liver, Lung and Stomach

Indications:

Tamar is indicated for wounds, burns, poison, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, viruses and infections, respiratory diseases and fevers, diarrhea, liver issues, cancer, gas, memory loss, chronic diseases, bloating, indigestion, mucus and infertility. (Ashraf & Hamidi-Esfahani, 2011)

In sephardic medicine, an ointment of date kernels and oil is spread on head to treat hair loss and baldness (Rivera et al., 2019). Dates help facilitate childbirth and soothe the pains of labor (Ashraf & Hamidi-Esfahani, 2011).

Uses:

The properties of Date Palm are antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, aphrodisiac, anticarcinogenic, anti-hyperglycaemic, anti-hyperlipidemic, antimicrobial and a sweetener. Date palm is a powerful tonic and protector for the kidneys, liver and stomach. (Hossain et al., 2014)

Energetics:

Warming and Sweetening

Parts Used:

All parts used

Active Constituents:

Alkaloids, protein, carbohydrate, fatty acid (linoleic, lauric, palmitic, and stearic acid), carotenoids, vitamins, polyphenolic compounds, flavonoids, and tannins. “There are 23 amino acids present in the date fruit and 17, including all nine essential amino acids, in the date pit”(Shi et al., 2014).The fruits also are rich sources of minerals, including iron, calcium, magnesium, potassium, manganese, phosphorus, and zinc, as well as trace amounts of sulfur, cobalt, copper, fluorine, boron, and selenium(Baumana and Abohosh 2017).

Dose:

The pollen can be taken in doses of two to four gram everyday for two to three months. There is not enough research to standardize a dose for the other parts of Date Palm.

Formulations and recipes:

In sephardic medicine, an ointment of date kernels and oil is spread on head to treat hair loss/baldness(Rivera et al., 2019).

History in Judaism:

The date palm is mentioned 34 times in the old testament, mainly as a place name or a person's given name, and only six times meaning the plant itself.(Dafni, A. & Boeck, B. 2019) In the

Middle East, the Date palm is considered to be one of the true Trees of Life, because it feeds and nurtures all. Sap from the tree can be drunk fresh, fermented, or distilled. Seeds are soaked and ground up for animal feed. Seed oil is used in soap making and in cosmetics. The leaves are used as thatching material. It yields fiber which can be used to make ropes, baskets, hats, and mats (Ashraf & Hamidi-Esfahani, 2011). The wood is strong and resistant to termite attacks. It is used in construction and for fuel. (*Phoenix Dactylifera Date Palm PFAF Plant Database*, n.d.) Date is a sacred emblem of Judea after the Exodus from Egypt. In the year 53 B.C. the Roman empire co-opted the image of the palm leaf to emphasize their conquest of Judea. (Lehner & Lehner, 2011)

Personal relationship:

I was not fond of dates as a kid and found them to be sickeningly sweet. Now, dates are one of my most beloved fruits. It is such a privilege to be able to eat fresh dates, and I am so grateful every time I experience them. I think if I could only have one fruit for the rest of my life, I would choose dates. They are so sweet and delicious and good in every sense of the word.

Garlic-*Allium sativum*

Hebrew name:

shoom שום

Family:

Alliaceae or Onion Family(monocot family, mostly perennial and aromatic, Alliaceae family use to be included in the Liliaceae family, but now seperated).(*Garlic, Allium Sativum - American Botanical Council*, n.d.)

Taxonomy/Description and Cultivation:

The latin name *Allium sativum* means burning, pungent and hot (All) and sativum means planted or cultivated. Other names include Garleac(anglo-saxon word meaning spear plant), Camphor of the Poor, Poor Man's Treacle, Rust Treacle, Stinking Rose and Russian penicillin(*Monographs — HerbRally*, n.d.). Garlic is a bulbous perennial herb with a tall, erect stem that can grow up to 2-3 feet. Flowers are small, starry pink, purple or white with a strong odor.(Levy, 1974) Leaves are long and narrow with parallel venation. The bulbs consist of many bulbets or cloves held together in a white paper-like sac. Propagated by separating parts of the bulb and planting bulbets individually.(*Monographs — HerbRally*, n.d.)

Habitat and Natural History:

Found in damp pastures and woodlands. Widely Cultivated. Thought to have originated to southwest of Siberia.(*Monographs — HerbRally*, n.d.) It has been cultivated in the Middle East for over 5,000 years. One of the earliest known cultivated plants. Naturalized in Europe and found wild in parts of Italy.

History in Judaism:

Garlic has been a protector spirit for the Jewish people. Garlic gives wisdom and medicine of fertility and vitality. Jews are identified with garlic. Dori Midnight says we are garlic people.(*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019) We were targeted because of it. The Jewish odor, "Foetor Judaicus" was garlic stench. Propaganda spread of the evil Jew, dishonest, beaky-nose, and rank-smelling from the Romans to the Nazis. Dori sees garlic as a diasporic plant that can be regenerated and moved from place to place. It can be grown from one clove. It connects all of the diasporic lines of judaism. Hanging on windows and doors for protection. The stigma around garlic breath is internalized antisemitism that goes back far and deep to distancing of being an immigrant. There is much loss in disconnecting from who we are. In sephardic healing, it is the

stink that is protective and supports immunity, fertility and heart. People were persecuted, exiled or murdered for cooking garlic in one's home It is a mitzvah to enjoy the delight of garlic on shabbat. (*Jews and Garlic: Love, Hate, and Confit – The Forward*, n.d.) When Jews were slaves in Egypt, they were given garlic for strength. In Exodus, many complained they missed the food in Egypt, including garlic and onion. Cohanim, caretakers of the Sacred Temple, were forbidden to eat it.

Personal relationship:

Garlic flowers were one of my first plant identification. Peeling and mincing garlic is a meditative ritual for me. Garlic brings me so much joy and nourishment. I am still learning how much garlic has cared and supported me and how much the stinking rose will in the future .

Contraindications:

Generally safe however may not be advised with certain pharmaceutical interventions and post-operation (due to the anticoagulant properties), not best for folks with adrenaline excess, possible side effects could be mild heartburn, flatulence or other digestive issues.

Organ affinity:

Large Intestine, Spleen and stomach

Energetics:

warm, stimulating and moistening

Active Constituents:

Alliinase, sulfur compounds(more than any other herb in the onion family), selenium, b vitamins, minerals and enzymes.(Boon, 2009)

Uses:

Useful in all disorders of the body, one of the most powerful antiseptics, catabolic and anabolic(expels waste and promotes bacteria and tissue replacement), induces parasympathetic state, general tonic, vermifuge, antiparasitic, anti-microbial, antiviral, expectorant, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, carminative, aphrodisiac anticoagulant and insecticide.(Chevalier, 2000); (Levy,1974)

Indications:

Fevers, tuberculosis, Earache, whooping cough, asthma, thyroid issues, obesity, rheumatism, arthritis, sciatica, intestinal worms and all infections, high blood pressure, earaches, stings, bites, high cholesterol, blood clots, delayed menstruation, AIDS immunity support, yeast infections, ulcers, colic, flatulence, digestive issues, loss of appetite, anxiety, insomnia, depression and more!(Woods, 2008)

Parts Used:

Bulb, flower and scape

Dose and Preparation:

Best used raw for medicinal purposes. Few cloves or handful of leaves daily for tonic use.

Tincture preparation is 1:1 and medicinal dosage is between 120-250 drops (herb rally)

Formulations and recipes:

Garlic is eaten raw to ward against the evil eye and hanged in homes for protection. In sephardic healing, eggs are boiled with dried garlic, honey and wine and eaten for voice complains. (Rivera et al., 2019)Two onions, four garlics, lupine flour and little vinegar are spread as poultices for hemorrhoids and wounds. Garlic can be amplified in formulations with other pungent herbs like rue, and cinnamon.

Peppermint-*Mentha piperita*

Hebrew name:

נענע (Naana)

Family:

Lamiaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Peppermint is a natural hybrid between *mentha aquatica* (watermint) and *mentha spicata* (spearmint). The genus name *Mentha* is from the Greek *Mintha*, the name of a mythical nymph who metamorphosed into this plant; its species name *piperita* is from the Latin *piper*, meaning pepper, alluding to its aromatic and pungent taste. (Lehner & Lehner, 2011) Peppermint is an aromatic perennial that grows to one meter tall with a square stem and spreads surface runners. (*Peppermint, Mentha x Piperita - American Botanical Council*, n.d.) Leaves are opposite, narrow, rough and fragrant, flowers are bilabiate, thin and pale mauve with one pistil and a superior ovary. Flowers are four nutlets. (Chevalier, 2000)

Habitat and Natural History:

The plant grows wild throughout Europe and North America in moist areas and has spread throughout the world. (Boon, 2009) The origin is unknown but is thought to be native to the Mediterranean. Found in sunny moist places, also amongst rocks and ditches. Widely cultivated. (Levy, 1974)

Organ affinity:

Digestive and nervous system

Uses:

Peppermint has carminative, anti-inflammatory, anti-catarrhal, diaphoretic, nervine antispasmodic, cholagogue, antiseptic, analgesic and antifungal properties. Naana has an affinity

for the nervous and digestive systems. Peppermint increases the white cell count, stimulates and improves the breakdown of old red blood cells.(Levy, 1974); (Wood, 2008) Menthol is antispasmodic and analgesic, meaning mint reduces spasms and pains while stimulating sweat and circulation. Mint is both cooling and energizing and soothes as well as excites.(Wood, 2008)

Energetics:

Cooling and relaxing and simultaneously heating and stimulating.(Wood, 2008)

Indications:

It is indicated for stomach pains, gas, rheumatism, loss of appetite, headaches, acid reflux, flatulence, gastritis, diarrhea and infertility. Mint also is healing for instances of urination issues, suppressed menstruation, dysentery, diarrhea, cold, cough, fevers, excessive mucus, IBS, brain fog, mouth ailments, anxiety, shingles, measles, insomnia, dizziness and fainting.(Levy, 1974); (Wood, 2008)

Contraindications:

Naana reduces lactation so is not advised for nursing mothers.(Levy, 1974)

Active Constituents:

menthol, menthone, and menthyl acetate; flavonoids (glycosides of apigenin, diosmetin, and luteolin); tannins.(Hoffman, 2003); (Wood, 2008)

Parts Used:

Aerial parts

Dose:

Tincture dosage is 1 to 2 ml three times a day (1:5 in 40%). To make an infusion, pour 1 cup of boiling water over a heaping teaspoon of dried herb and infuse in a covered container for 10 minutes. This may be drunk as often as desired.(Hoffman, 2003)

Formulations and recipes:

In sephardic healing, dry mint powder, incense powder and spider are applied for nosebleeds.

(Rivera et al., 2019) Lemon and mint are one of my favorite herbal formulations.

History in Judaism:

In ancient Judea, mint was used as a strewing herb at home and in the Temple for cleansing and aroma. It has also been used as one of the sacred herbs in the Passover feast. Mint was one of the herbs that was required to be tithed.(Watts, 2007)

Personal relationship:

Mint is an herb I have engaged with my whole life and forget and come back to continuously. I have fond memories of my grandfather drinking hot water, lemon and fresh mint in a clear glass after long meals at holidays and long family gatherings. Whenever I take a tincture of mint, I am returned back to the here and now. Mint has been incredibly helpful in opening my mouth during a TMJ flare up.

Olive-*Olea europaea*

Hebrew name

Zaayit-תִּיט

Family:

Oleaceae, including 28 genera and 700 species including Jasmine and ash

Order:Lamiales

Taxonomy/Description:

Olea europaea is an evergreen tree or shrub native to the Mediterranean. Can grow up to 30 feet.

The trunk is grooved, grayed and blackened on the inside. (*Olea Europaea Subsp. Europaea*

(*European Olive*), n.d.) *Olea* has the ability to grow suckers and extensive taproots. The leaves are

small, oblanceolate and leathery and can be gathered throughout the year.(Chevalier, 2000) The small greenish-white flowers come in panicles in the summers The green fleshy drupe fruit ripens to black in late summer with an elliptical stone.(*Olea Europaea Subsp. Europaea (European Olive)*, n.d.)

Habitat and Natural History:

Native to Asia Minor and was cultivated in the Mediterranean since the Neolithic Age.(Lehner & Lehner, 2011) Olive trees grow wild in the mediterranean and have adapted resistance to both drought and frost. It prefers full sun and can thrive in semi-arid to semi-moist temperatures and soils. It has escaped cultivation and spread wide and far. (Chevalier, 2000)In its native range, it is found in woody and rocky areas of elevation up to 3000 feet. (*Olea Europaea Subsp. Europaea (European Olive)*, n.d.) It is a natural windbreak and provides shade and shelter to all who seek her out.

Indications:

(Oil) Stress, weak gums and teeth, spasms of the pyloric sphincter, habitual constipation, colitis, gallstones, hepatic deficiency, renal colic, bedwetting in children, sore muscles, joints and tendons, inflammation, uterine colic, bites, stings, staph infections. Dr. Bach has used the flower essence is for exhaustion.(Wood, 2008)

(Leaf) Hypertension, Angina pectoris, Diabetes, Diarrhea, Fevers, Wounds, Sores, Ulcers, Herpes, Shingles, High blood pressure, cystitis, diabetes, more than one hundred pathogenic microorganisms (HIV, anthrax, tinea, chicken pox, chlamydia, cholera, common cold, diphtheria, Epstein-Barr, equine encephalitis, influenza, helicobacter pylori, herpes, giardia, Lyme disease, malaria, rubella, viral meningitis, mumps, pneumonia, rabies, salmonella, staph, strep, thrush, candida, warts, and others. (Wood, 2008)

Contraindications:

No part of the plant is connected with toxicity in short or long-term use.(Wood, 2008)

Organ affinity:

Blood, digestive system

Active Constituents:

oleuropein, olesterol, leine, oleic acid(Chevalier, 2000)

Uses:

Antiviral, antibiotic, antifungal, antiparasitic, antioxidant, hypoglycemic, mild laxative, mildly diuretic, nourishment, improves the balance of fat in the body, unkins the pyloric sphincters, demulcent(Wood, 2008)

Energetics:

Warm and nourishing

Parts Used:

All parts used

Dose:

Teaspoon of oil taken with lemon juice (Chevalier, 2000)

Formulations and recipes:

Olive oil is a solvent for most external treatments in oils, salves and balms. In sephardic healing, Olive oil is heated with herbs, cloves and ouzo and splashed out to rid the evil eye. Wax, nettle seeds and olive oil is made into a salve for dermatitis and arthritis. A poultice of oil and mustard seeds on wool cloth was given to induce menstruation. Olive oil can also be dripped in the ear for earaches(Rivera et al., 2019).

History in Judaism:

In Judaism, Olea Eurpeoais a symbol of peace and prosperity. Noah's dove carried an olive Branch from Ararat Mountain in present day Turkey. First botanical in the bible and has been used since antiquity for food, fuel and medicine. Olive oil is essential in a Judean's healing bag. It was used to anoint the sick and in holy ointments for priests and kings, for sacrificial purposes, in surgerys and a tonic for hair and skin.(Watts, 2007)

Personal relationship:

I grew up in a home of olive oil, garlic and onion. I have crafted many herbal salves and oils and enjoyed the fruits of the sacred olive. One of my favorite herbalists, Juliette Bariaclete Levy exposed me to the magic and love of olive trees. She protected her tree from all dangers with unconditional love and patience. It takes fifty years for an olive tree to reach maturity. It symbolizes stability and homeland for me. I want to live where the olive trees grow.

Wild Rose- *Rosa spp.*

Hebrew name:

Varad/shoshanah-ורד/שושנה

Family:

Rosaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Wild Rose is the common name for any member of the genus *Rosa*, made up of around 100 species. They are usually characterized as Dense perennial shrubs and sometimes vines. The leaf structure is alternative pinnately compound with 5-9 toothed leaflets. Flowers are large, actinomorphic with colors ranging from creamy white to red sometimes.(Ackerfield, 2015)
Fruits or hips are orange-y-red, hard and crowned with 5 erect sepals often forming a 5- pointed

star shape. Inside the hip are many seeds attached to hairs. (*Elizabeth*, n.d.) *Rosa canina*, also known as Dog Rose, is an incredibly medicinal wild rose and native to the Middle East.

Habitat and Natural History:

Originated in the Asia Minor and one of the oldest flowers in cultivation. It was grown five thousand years ago in the gardens of Western Asia and North Eastern Africa. (Lehner & Lehner, 2011) Most roses like to grow in well drained soils, some preferring sand, some woodland shade and some like to grow on the edge of wetlands. (*Elizabeth*, n.d.)

Contraindications:

The seeds (not used in medicine) contain a glucoside and are toxic, producing torpor, vertigo, and headaches. (Chevalier, 2000)

Organ affinity:

Heart, Brain, Eyes and reproductive system

Uses:

The properties of roses are tonic for the whole system, especially astringent, slightly laxative (fruits), primary remedy for reducing autoimmune heat and excitation, refrigerant, antioxidant, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory and anti-parasitic. (Levy, 1974); (Wood, 2008) Moses Maimonides quotes his mentor, Abu Merwan Ibn Zuhr, on the use of the petals in various eye problems. "A lotion made of the liquid of roses and sugar strengthens vision. The regular use thereof heals farsightedness." Ibn Zuhr adds, "This has been substantiated by experience and I do not veer from using it to strengthen vision" (Maimonides; Rosner, 1989, 3:347).

Indications:

Roses became popularized by Avicenna as a cure for tuberculosis in the Middle ages. Rose medicine can be curative in conditions of heart ailments, hot blooded people, high blood

pressure, sore or strained eyes, wounds, bites, stings, female reproductive issues, diarrhea, chronic inflammation, acute respiratory issues like sore throat, lymphatic congestion, and constricted passageways.(Wood, 2008) Anemia, bedwetting, farsightedness, nose bleeding, gum bleeding, elongated bleeding, easy wounding, heat in the intestines, loss of semen, fatigue, ill effects of smog, chemotherapy, viral maladies, hernia and fevers has all been soothed with Rose magic.(Levy, 1974); (Wood, 2008)

Energetics:

Cooling, Slightly warming, Drying and Nourishing

Active Constituents:

Tannins, Kaempferol, Polyphenols, Flavonoids, Polysaccharides, Volatile Oils (Damascenones, Pinenes, Nerol, Linalool, Limonene, Geraniol)

Rose hips (fruit) contain tannins (Gallic acid), flavonoids, sugars, pectin, , Lycopene, B3, E, K, vitamin C, fruit acids (malic, citric, and ascorbic), essential oils, anthocyanins and carotene. (Hoffman, 2003); (Wood, 2008)

Parts Used:

Petals, sepals, thorns, hips, leaves, stalks, root bark and roots can all be made into medicine.

Dose:

Juliette de Bariacoli Levy says to pound two teaspoons of rose petals until softened and moistened and taken with honey every morning. Six tonight rose hips are recommended in a gentle infusion morning and night. Dose of the oil is a few drops in a lump of sugar. (Levy, 1974); (Wood, 2008)

Formulations and recipes:

Rosaceum- cosmetic cream of rose oil and honey popular in the Ancient Middle East. (Lehner & Lehner, 2011) In sephardic healing, Cumin paste, crushed roses, vinegar and a little placed on the abdomen for general cramps and pains. It has been formulated with breast milk, leek juice, barley flour, egg yolk, dried figs, seedless raisins, cumin, beans and pomegranate. (Rivera et al., 2019) Oil of Rose and rose water sweetened and strengthened the sephardic jewish communities for centuries.

History in Judaism:

Mentioned in Rose of Sharon in the Songs of Solomon, *Like a rose among thorns, So is my darling among the maidens* (Song of Songs 2:2.). However, it is unknown if the scripture is referring to a member of the hibiscus or rose family. Some say that the thorns of the rose came after the sins of Adam and Eve (Lehner & Lehner, 2011). According to Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch in The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols, roses are associated with the festival of Shavuot, which celebrates the receiving of the Torah, because the way rose petals open when they bloom is connected with the process of revelation (Bywater, 2019). Jewish mystics explored the idea of a rose as a metaphor for creation, with its petals opening outward in layers, revealing the center (Berger, 1998).

Personal relationship:

I fell on my grandparent's rose bush when I was a child and I have always stayed at a respectable distance since then. Rose thorns have taught me the importance of boundaries. Roses are vulnerable and open hearted balanced with protection and patience. Flowers and thorns are dependent on each other for survival. Without prickles, the rose would be decimated and overharvested. Thorn medicine has been calling to me.

Rosemary

Hebrew name-

Rozmarin-רוזמרין

Family:

Lamiaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Rosemary is an evergreen shrubby perennial that can live for more than thirty years.(Aronson, n.d) Romero can grow up to six feet. The leaves are small, pinnate and needle-like with a pale-green underneath.The leaves are very aromatic, hard and shiny sometimes sprinkled with dots resembling morning dew. The flowers are bilabiate meaning two-lipped or dragon-headed varies in color from white-silver to Dark-blue.(Levy, 1974) In warmer climates, rosemary is in constant bloom.

Habitat and Natural History:

Rosmarinus officinalis is native to the mediterranean and given her name by the sea (*Ros Marinus*). Found in sandy and rocky places, on mountain slopes and cliffsides, can root in scanty soil loves the sun and the dew(Levy, 1974). Rosemary has been naturalized throughout Asia, Africa and Europe. Although rosemary prefers the warmth and is ruled by the sun, she can tolerate both frost and drought(Aronson, n.d).

Contraindications:

Full-blooded, hot, sanguine persons where a stimulant would be irritating, observe care in nervous persons, headaches with hot, bursting symptoms, High blood pressure (however sometimes indicated for high blood pressure)(Wood, 2008). Avoid using large doses during pregnancy or when trying to conceive, and in cases of vasodilatory headaches(Aronson, n.d).

Energetics:

Warming and Stimulating

Active Constituents:

Flavonoids, proanthocyanidins, tannins, terpenoid bitters, phenols, acids, and volatile oils (1–1.5%). The oil contains borneol (16–18%), bornyl acetate (5–6%), dipentene, eucalyptol, and camphene. (Wood, 2008)

Parts Used:

Leaf and Oil

Dose:

20-30 drops of tincture or glycerite daily, 1 tbsp of herb to cup of water. (Wood, 2008)

Formulations and recipes:

Infuses well with Wine and Vervain, Sage and Lavender. In sephardic healing, cotton is soaked in rosemary juice and applied for earaches. (Rivera et al., 2019) Rosemary, sage, parsley and thyme is a highly medicinal and popular formulation in jewish cooking.

Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water over a tablespoon of leaf and flower. Leave in direct sunlight all day to make a solar infusion or white wine infusion (extracts best). (Levy, 1974)

Tincture: cut up and macerate rosemary then ass to alcohol of choice (cane, brandy, vodka, etc.)

SHAKE DAILY, PRAY and wait 2-6 weeks to strain. Add honey to taste. Dry: 1 5 (Herb to solvent) Fresh: 1:2

Oil: chop/crush herb. FOr dried herbs, mix with 1-2 tsp of alcohol, form a paste and let the herb rehydrate in the alcohol for 30 minutes. ADD OIL OF CHOICE (EVOO, coconut, almond, etc.)

Fod Dried herbs: 1:4 ratio (plant:oil) Fresh herb (1:2) Shake and let sit for at least two weeks before straining. Dried herbs do not need to be strained. Watch for rancidity in fresh

Infused Honey: Same recipe as oil but use honey and warm under a simmer for about an hour
Add rosemary to your altar.

Oxymel: Tincture recipe but substitute for ACV and honey

Salve: Double-boil beeswax and add infused oil 6:1-8:1 ratio of oil to wax

Organ affinity:

Brain, Blood, nervous system, brain and places where there is stagnancy in the mind, emotions, and areas of the body.(Wood,2008)

Uses:

Stimulates the body, warms, cleanses and oxidizes throughout the body, relaxes parasympathetic and sympathetic systems, helps lactation, cholagogue, carminative, nervine insecticide, emmenagogue, bitter, mucous-membrane tonic, astringent and antiseptic.(Levy, 1974);(Wood, 2008)

Indication:

Indicated in cold, sluggish conditions, slow persons with weak digestion and lack of energy, cleanses phlegm and stuck fluids, heart tonic, increases sense of selfhood, poor circulation, low blood pressure, depression, anxiety, nervousness, threatened miscarriage, protection against evil forces, hair strengthening, wounds, bites, stings, gastritis, torpid liver, headache, insomnia, fevers, memory and concentration.(Levy, 1974);(Wood, 2008)

Flower Essence:

“For those who tend to be forgetful, absent minded, dreamy, and not grounded in their physical body. They may feel insecure, and lacking warmth and vital energy. It increases warmth, vitality and confidence physically and emotionally, and awakens the mind.”(Aronson, n.d)

History in Judaism:

Rosemary wasn't explicitly talked about in the Torah or Talmud. However, was accessible and used by the people of the mediterranean. Rosemary aids in ancestral journey work to recover lost judaic ancestral knowledge. It is a cultivator and protector of memory and boundaries.

Rosemary takes us to Shvite, a place to name gaze and speak names of the divine. (*Jewish Plant Magic*, 2019)

Personal relationship:

I fell madly in love with rosemary this summer. She is so dependable and resilient and reminds me home is everywhere. Rosemary was one of the few herbs on my altar and has helped me create boundaries in my ancestry work. A symbol of love and hope, rosemary is a bridge to the spiritual realm. Rosemary helps the mourning process and reminds us that ancestral knowledge can return.

Rue- *Ruta graveolens*

Hebrew name:

Ruda רוּדָה or הַפִּיגָם /HaPegam in biblical texts

Family:

Rutaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Ruta graveolens L., is a perennial, scented and glabrous herb or a sub-shrub. Stem is slender, smooth, pale green and reaches up to a meter in height(Kannan & Babu, 2012). Leaves are flat, alternate , gland-dotted, divided and of greyish color with pinnate frayed leaf-lets. Petals are distinct, widely spreading, greenish yellow, wide and hooded at top, margin wavy and sometimes

toothed(Kannan & Babu, 2012). Flowers are greenish yellow, small and flat. Fruits are dry, hard, roundish and lobed at top. Strongly aromatic and bitter tasting.

Habitat and Natural History:

Rue is native to the Mediterranean region and has been distributed and spread around the world.

(Kannan & Babu, 2012) Found in mountainous, barren and open spaces. A sun loving plant.

Widely cultivated in gardens to protect against all evils(Levy, 1974). The leaves are collected in late summer; they can irritate the skin and mucosa(Wood, 2008).The genus name, Ruta, comes from the Greek work reuo, meaning "to set free," as rue frees people from pain and illness(Hoffman, 2003).

Organ affinity:

Digestive, reproductive and vascular systems

Uses:

It is used to overcome fears and makes one brave.(Levy, 1974) Rue is a strong bitter, meaning it stimulates the release of digestive juices from the pancreas, duodenum, and liver, strengthening and detoxifying the body. Rue is an antidepressant, emmenagogue, anti-microbial, abortifacient, antispasmodic and stimulant(Wood, 2008).

Indications:

According to Dorothy Hall, Rue is indicated for people that strain hard to repress unpleasant emotions and are afflicted in the vascular system(Wood, 2008). Rue has an affinity to strains, sprains, bruises, blows, and contusions(Wood, 2008). Juliette indicates rue in conditions of hysteria, epilepsy, convulsions in children, warts, dysuria, swelling, faulty menstruation, congestion of the uterus, extreme pain in childbirth, fertility, weakness and the palpitations of the heart, stagnancy in the blood, infants with upset stomach and blocked anus and ailments of the

arteries and veins(Levy, 1974). Rue has also negotiated with headaches, anxiety, depression, spasms, digestive issues. fevers, colics, worms, rabies, poison, head lice, ringworm, skin parasites, eye ailments, snake bites(Wood, 2008). Sephardic medicine has prescribed rue for dysentery, plague, cholera, increased sexual libido, espanto, evil eye and inflammation of the prostate(Rivera et al., 2019).

Contraindications:

Not suited for pregnant people, because of rue's abortifacient properties(Levy, 1974).

Energetics:

Hot and Stimulating

Active Constituents:

Rutin (effective in strengthening blood vessels, nerves and glands and hardens bones, teeth and nails), volatile oil, quercetin, coumarins (bergapten, isoimperatorin, psoralen, scopoletin, and umbelliferone); alkaloids (arborinine, graveoline); lignans (in the root): savinin and helioxanthin. (Hoffman, 2003); (Wood, 2008)

Parts Used:

All parts used

Dose:

Rue is an incredibly potent herb and should be taken in small does. To make an infusion, pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1 to 2 teaspoons of dried herb and infuse for 10 to 15 minutes. This should be drunk three times a day. Tincture dosage is 1 to 4 ml three times a day(Hoffman, 2003).

Formulations and recipes:

Sephardic women in the Ottoman Empire mix water, salt, rue and mayonnaise to spread on the body in cases of espanto. Rue has been smoked for infectious diseases. Rue has been formulated with nettles, hibiscus, incense, marjoram, castor oil, olive oil and garlic (Rivera et al., 2019). In Jewish mystic tradition, rue is heated with water, lead and prayer to remove negative energy (*Women on the Land: The Strong, Musty Scented Protective Rue*, n.d.).

History in Judaism:

In Jewish teaching, Rue is one of the plants that protects against the negative energy of the ayin hara, the evil eye. (*Women on the Land: The Strong, Musty Scented Protective Rue*, n.d.) Rue is included in Sephardic henna parties as protection for the wedding party. In the language of the Mishna, rue is called חַפְיָגָה /HaPegam, a word that is made up of the same Hebrew letters as the word מַגְפָּה/magefa – ‘epidemic.’ (*Women on the Land: The Strong, Musty Scented Protective Rue*, n.d.). Rue is extremely protective against epidemics and was carried in the pockets of many. Rue has also been used in Judaism as an incense in purification rituals (*Women on the Land: The Strong, Musty Scented Protective Rue*, n.d.). Rue is the Jewish queen of herbs and much is to be uncovered.

Personal relationship:

I met rue this summer. Although it is known as an unpleasant smell, I have really enjoyed her scent. I have added ruda to my broths and spells. She dwelled right outside my home as a protector spirit. I hope to see her again soon. I also learned more about Rue in my Religion and Ritual course as a principal healing plant in curanderismo. Mexican folk healing has used rue in similar ways to Jewish tradition, for protection and purification, to cure espanto similar to susto and as a formidable aid in childbirth.

Za'atar- *Origanum syriacum*, Wild Marjoram, Bible Hyssop

Hebrew name:

Ezov עֶזוֹב

Family:

Lamiaceae

Taxonomy/Description:

Origanum syriacum, Wild Marjoram, Bible Hyssop, Syrian Oregano or Za'atar is an herbaceous perennial herb that grows 2-3 feet tall. Like others in the genus *Origanum*, Za'atar is low growing and fast spreading with inconspicuous small white to purplish bilabiate flowers from mid to late summer with showy gray-green bracts bloom in spike-like clusters. (*Origanum Syriacum - Plant Finder*, n.d.) Hairy square stems are densely clad with opposite, ovate, highly aromatic, gray-green leaves. The latin Genus *Origanum* comes from the Greek word *oros* for mountain and *ganos* meaning beauty, referring to the plant as “beauty of the mountain.”

Habitat and Natural History:

Native to the Mediterranean, Za'atar is under dominion of the Sun, creeping around sun-drenched areas and absorbing solar energy from rocks. She lives close to ground and is hardy to USDA zones 9-10 (*Origanum Syriacum - Plant Finder*, n.d.). Za'atar likes well drained neutral or alkaline soils and thrives in gritty, sandy loams (*Za'atar*, n.d.).

Contraindications:

Mint family allergies, pregnancy and breastfeeding (somewhat abortive properties and reduces lactation) (Levy, 1974).

Taste:

Sweet, spicy and warm

Organ affinity:

Digestive tract, Lungs, Blood and Nervous system

Uses:

It is a powerful antiseptic and general tonic(Levy, 1974). The volatile oil thymol is known to help in cases of respiratory issues such as bronchitis and whooping cough. *Origanum syriacum* also has Anti-microbial (thymol and carvacrol-inhibits bacteria), Antihyperglycemic(inhibition of amylase by phenolics), Antibacterial (range of bacteria), Antifungal (clinically proven against *Candida albicans*), Antiparasitic, Antioxidant(polyphenol content and antioxidant), anticoagulant, carminative, expectorant, astringent,preservative and dentifrice properties(Chevalier, 2000).

Indications:

In herbalism, the oregonum family is specifically indicated for high strung people who push themselves to exhaustion but cannot relax(Wood, 2008). Gastrointestinal cramping, fatigue, diarrhea, constipation, fatigue, hyperglycemia, diabetes, Cancer, Parasites, Bacterial infections, fungal infections, inflammation of the liver, bad breath, flatulence, hysteria, nervous indigestion, nightmares, headaches, excessive menstruation, inflamed or diseased uterus, breast swelling, worms, promoted perspiration in fevers, abscesses and boils, fevers and dentistry.(Levy, 1974); (Wood, 2008)

Active Constituents:

Triterpenoids, flavonoids, tannins, oleanolic acid, ursolic acids, rosmarinic acid, lithospermic acid, volatile oils(carvacrol, thymol, gamma-terpinene,etc.), flavonols.(Wood, 2008)

Parts Used:

Leaves and flowers

Dose:

A generous sprinkling daily.

Formulations and recipes:

Za'atar is a blended spice of dried sumac, thyme and/or oregano, pounded and mixed in a mortar and pestle with roasted sesame, coriander seed, and salt. It can be sprinkled with love in most dishes. In sephardic healing, Za'atar has been formulated with rue, garlic, incense and olive oil for cases of Espanto(Rivera et al., 2019). Rue and Syrian Oregona are gathered and placed in baskets at home to protect against the evil eye. Za'atar with pepper is eaten in cases of earaches. A pinch of dried or fresh leaves to a cup, steeped is the simplest and accessible way to soothe indicated ailments.

Energetics:

Warming and Pungent

History in Judaism:

In the Jewish tradition, it represents modesty and tradition. Maimonides, a famous sephardic Jewish philosopher, astronomer and physician in 12th century, identified the Hebrew word Ezov in the Bible with the Arabic word Za'atar and prescribed it for a range of patients and afflictions(*What Is Zaatar?*, n.d.). In Exodus 12:22 Moses tells the children of Israel how to save their children by using the herb and lamb's blood. "*And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin.*" Psalms 51:7 refers to this plant: "*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*"(Za'atar, n.d.).

Personal relationship:

The za'atar spice mix was introduced to me very young, by my family. I now eat Za'atar every single day. I found out last year that Za'atar is actually a specific variety of Oregano native to the meditteranean. It tastes sweet ,warm and spicy, like a cross between Oregano and Thyme.

Figure 1, *Pimpinella anisum*, Anise, אַנִּיֶּס, Köhler, F. (1897). [Digital image]. Retrieved



December 15, 2020, from

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Koebler1887-PimpinellaAnisum.jpg>



Figure 2 *Cinnamomum verum*, Cinnamon, קינמון,
Eugster, S. (1920). [Digital image]. Retrieved
December 15, 2020, from

<https://pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Cinnamomum+verum>

Figure 3, **Date, *Phoenix dactylifera***, Tamar-תמר, Shebs, S. (2005). [Digital image]. Retrieved December 15, 2020, from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dates_on_date_palm.jpg



Figure 4, **Allium Sativum, Garlic שום**, Acharya, M. (2010). [Digital image]. Retrieved December 15, 2020, from <https://botanix.org/allium-sativum-2010/>



Figure 5, Peppermint, *Mentha x piperita*, נענע,
Naana, Köhler, F. (1897). [Digital image].

Retrieved 2020, from

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peppermint#/media/File:Mentha %C3%97 piperita -
K%C3%B6hler%E2%80%93s Medizinal-Pflanzen-095.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peppermint#/media/File:Mentha_%C3%97_piperita_-_K%C3%B6hler%E2%80%93s_Medizinal-Pflanzen-095.jpg)

Figure 6&7, *Olea Europaea*, Olive, זית, Zaayit, Alexander, I. (2019). [Digital image]. Retrieved
2020, from

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive#/media/File:Olive Grove prunings in neat rows. Ostuni, Puglia.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive#/media/File:Olive_Grove_prunings_in_neat_rows._Ostuni,_Puglia.jpg)



Fraser, N.
(2006).

[Digital

image]. Retrieved 2020, from

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive#/media/File:Olivesfromjordan.jpg>

Figure 8, Rose, *Rosa* sp., Varad/shoshanah-שׁוֹשָׁנָה/ורד, Thomé, O. (1885). [Digital image].

Retrieved December 15, 2020, from

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Illustration_Rosa_majalis0.jpg





Figure 9, Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis*, rozmarin , רוזמרין , Margalob. (2016). [Digital image]. Retrieved 2020, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosemary#/media/File:Rosemary_in_bloom.JPG



Figure 10, Rue, *Ruta graveolens*, Ruda-
רודה, Plenuska. (2015).

[Digital image].

Retrieved 2020, from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruta_graveolens#/media/File:Die_Weinraute,_lat._Ruta_graveolens,_Pflanze_mit_den_gelben_Bl%C3%BCten.jpg



Figure 11, **Origanum syriacum**, Za'atar,

Ezov, עזוב, Bena, D. (2015). [Digital image].

Retrieved December 15, 2020, from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origanum_syriacum#/media/File:Origanum_syriacum,_March_2015.jpg

Conclusion

How we process this knowledge is up to us. This thesis is the seed of what intentions and ways of being, I want to grow. This is a frame of reference for anyone interested in ancestry work and herbalism, and especially for lost Jews. I hope this knowledge could rekindle a spiritual spark as it has for me. I am proud to be a witch and reclaim what has been taken. I feel incredibly lucky to have been able to do this research. I feel my ancestors in my heart when I read of the hidden codices and forbidden rituals. I think they are proud that I am able to openly study what has been proscribed and devalued. I am beginning to welcome my ancestors into my life and restructure them into my everyday routines. Making hummus, I think of how many times my garlic people have soaked chickpeas and sprinkled Za'atar. This will have implications for the rest of my life.

The history of Judaism is incredibly murky and left up to multiple interpretations. It is empowering to reclaim a history of Judaism that is radical and inclusive. The ethics of Judaism are to care for the earth and its people, to access the divine in every waking moment and honoring ancestors. It offers a path to unconditional love, that provides space to support every emotion and a light that is rooted in darkness. It honors the earth that holds me, water that soothes me, wind that guides me and fire that feeds me. Everything has a soul that is open to the channels of energies around. There is magic in the ordinary. Every detail of life is an opportunity to be present and alive. Plants are sprinkled in every story and value of Judaism. I will continue to compile my ancestral apothecary and understand what herbs I am entitled to engage with. Knowledge recovery comes from dreams, plants and ancestors. Ancestry work can be found in

dancing, crying, praying, gardening, healing, dreaming, making music, building altars, defining boundaries and reclaiming one's life. Ancestors ask us to be present in the moment and show up for community. This knowledge holds the most value for me in my life. When I make medicine with my hands, I want to know the plants are happy to engage and negotiate with me. I want to work with plants that know me and are familiar with me. Rue, rose, garlic, Za'atar, rosemary, anise, cinnamon, mint, olive and date are all part of me. Plants have provided me the support and love of a green and growing family. Now, the work comes in recognizing who wants to be a part of my family. I do not interact with all of my ancestors. Many would not approve of my choices and most would probably want to disown me. This is where boundary work becomes absolutely necessary, intentions must be made to only engage with ancestors that offer support, respect and guidance. I want to open the space for my ancestors to dance, heal, sing, cook and breathe with me. I want them to enter my dreams and advise me with plants and people. I want to reclaim Judaism for both myself, my past and future ancestors. I will fight for a Judaism that is inclusive, kind and equitable.

The heart of Judaism is Tikkun Olam, putting back together the shattered vessels and mending this world. That is the destiny of every Jew. The institution of Judaism stands to keep us apart from tolerance and solidarity. Unification comes with acceptance and faith. I wake up every morning and praise that my soul has returned from my sleep journey with renewed faith. I have faith in change. I have faith in God, meaning you, myself and everyone. This research has helped me let go and what no longer serves me and illuminated my values. I have used spiritualism in the past as detached escapism or to justify unhealthy coping mechanisms, lack of standards and toxic relationships. I chased light, black and white thinking and fleeting pleasures, desperately wishing to feel happy and complete. I wanted control and to understand my world.

Through Judaism and plants, I hope to find how to be in a true relationship with others while protecting my heart. Judaism teaches me new ways of creating healthy boundaries, self-care, healing and community care. Plants like rose taught me to develop thorns to guard myself from people that want to engage without respect and care. I think it will take the entirety of life to come close to wholeness. Judaism has not cured my restlessness or emptiness. It has offered me a path to healing and trusting that I can change what I can and accept what I cannot. Security and stability can never be guaranteed. Chasing them, will only take me farther away from the magic and extraordinariness of the present moment. Judaic values are not idealistic or romantic. Environmental stewarding, community care, family obligations, kindness and presence are not easy. Judaism is not a passive religion. To be alive in each and every moment sounds impossible at times. Feeling every feeling and honoring as it comes is energetically, emotionally and physically draining. However, with every tear I shed, my body and soul came together in the promise of never abandoning myself. Ancestry, boundary and healing work is my personal path to inner security. I have learned that all healing is divine and I have a responsibility to try every avenue to heal others, without harm. I also have a responsibility to preserve my own health, both physical and spiritual. I must satiate the old woman inside of myself, that has complete trust in the unknown and my personal strength. My work comes with being present and accepting of every aspect of being without having to cry. With this knowledge, I promise to struggle for a new system built around nurturance, empathy and healing.

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