

KOL MEVASSER

Torah: The Gift of Joy

Dafna Ezran-Young

This week we celebrate many special holidays clustered at the end of Sukkoth-- Hoshana Raba, the last day of Sukkoth; Shemini Atzeret; and the day beloved by young and old for its joy and festivity-- Simhat Torah.

On Simhat Torah we renew the annual Torah reading cycle by chanting the concluding verses that describe the end of Moses' life, then immediately beginning to read anew the story of Creation from Genesis/ Beresheet. We rejoice in the continuity of Jewish knowledge and tradition through rounds of song, festivity, and celebration.

As we link arms, dance and circle about the Torah scrolls, we acknowledge and celebrate the tremendous gift we receive from G-d: the Torah's teachings, its wisdom and guidance. When kids dance with their parents, wave flags, and taste the sweetness of candy, they learn firsthand how important the Torah is to all of us and how we value our Jewish heritage.

The precious knowledge contained in the Torah, Tanakh and Talmud, knowledge al-

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Thoughts on Genesis

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

It is the most famous, majestic and influential opening of any book in literature: "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth." What is surpassingly strange is the way Rashi – most beloved of all Jewish commentators – begins his commentary:

Rabbi Isaac said: The Torah should have begun with the verse (Ex. 12: 1): "This month shall be to you the first of the months", which was the first commandment given to Israel.

Can we really take this at face value? Did Rabbi Isaac, or for that matter Rashi, seriously suggest that the Book of books might have begun in the middle – a third of the way into Exodus? That it might have passed by in silence the creation of the universe – which is, after all, one of the fundamentals of Jewish faith?

Could we understand the history of Israel without its prehistory, the stories of Abraham and Sarah and their children? Could we have understood those narratives without knowing what preceded them: G-d's repeated disappointment with Adam and Eve,

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KJ Schedule

Erev Hoshana Raba

Tuesday, September 24th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer6:30 am
Minha /Arbith TBA
Hatima & Tikkun for Lel Hoshana Raba
Night of Learning 10:00 pm

Hoshana Raba / Erev Shemini Atzeret

Wednesday, September 25th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer6:30 am
Minha /Arbith6:15 pm
Eruv Tavshilin..... before candle lighting
Candle Lighting6:28 pm

Shemini Atzeret / Erev Simhat Torah

Thursday, September 26th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer8:30 am
Minha /Arbith6:15 pm
Candle Lighting after 7:22 pm

Simhat Torah Celebration & Hakafot

Dancing with the Torah after Minha / Arbith

Simhat Torah / Erev Shabbat

Friday, September 27th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Morning Hakafot during services
Shir Hashirim6:00 pm
Shabbat Candle Lighting6:24 pm
Minhah/Arbith6:15 pm

Shabbat / Parashat Beresheet

Saturday, September 28th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer8:30 am
Women's Tehillim4:45 pm
Rabbi's Class4:45 pm
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit5:30 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah7:10 pm

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Weekdays

Sunday, September 29th

Shaharit 7:30 am
KJ Kids Sunday School 10 am to 12 noon

Monday to Thursday, Sept. 30th to Oct. 3rd

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:30 am

Erev Shabbat / Rosh Hodesh Heshvan

Friday, October 4th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer..... 6:15 am
Shir Hashirim 6:00 pm
Shabbat Candle Lighting 6:15 pm
Minhah/Arbith 6:10 pm

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most miraculously passed down through millenia and generations, is as relevant to our lives today as it was thousands of years ago. Our task, personally and as a community, is to unearth and discover these vibrant secrets to good life that the Torah shelters and preserves for each of us.

Kahal Joseph's Simhat Torah Celebration takes place this Thursday night, September 26th, following the evening prayers. We look forward to dancing with you, singing with you, and listening to our age-old melodies and taamim chanted.

And we look forward to learning from the Torah together with you during this new Jewish year of 5774.

Dear Congregants, we ask that you refrain from wearing perfumes or colognes in the sanctuary

Kiddush

Is sponsored in memory of

Rahamin ben Salman Saleh, z"l

by David Salehani & Family

Refuah Shlemah

Yocheved bat Rachel

Mazal bat Malka,

Dan Herdoon

Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana

Moshe ben Ezra

Vera Levi

Penina bat Henia

Sasson ben Rahel/Sassoon Moses

Ruth bat Aliza

Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha

Dina bat Simha

Shoshana Goury/ Shoshana bat Rahel

Yossef ben Jamila

Yehoshua ben Channah

Pnina bat Esther

Chaim Aryeh Yehuda ben Yocheved

Dov Ber ben Sonia

Farid ben Odette Levy

Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam

Yehudit Devorah bat Esther

Michul ben Malka

Hag Sameah ♥ Moadim L'Simha

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for September 28th to October 5th, 2013. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, and attend services the preceding Shabbat.

24 Tishri / Shabbat, September 28th

Flora Cohen *Farha bat Salha*

Miriam Solomon *Miriam bat Rachel*

25 Tishri / Sunday, September 29th

Farha Ezrapour *Farha bat Rachel*

26 Tishri / Monday, September 30th

Moshe ben Aharon *Duewk HaCohen*

Irving Saber *Yitzhak ben Aharon*

27 Tishri / Tuesday, October 1st

Abraham Kattan *Avraham ben Eliyahu*

28 Tishri / Wednesday, October 2nd

Georgina Amron *Girji Hoogi bat Farha*

29 Tishri / Thursday, October 3rd

David Isaac *David ben Eliyahu Itzhak*

Jack Jonah *Yaacov ben Yitzhak*

30 Tishri / Friday, October 4th

Irving Henry Pack *Yitzhak ben Moshe*

1 Heshvan / Shabbat, October 5th

Nissan Gad *Nissan ben Avraham*

Joseph Aaron Judah *Yoseph ben Aharon Yehudah*

Torah Readings

Shemini Atzeret

Deuteronomy/ Devarim 810-818, Numbers/
Bamidbar 698 Haftara 982-83

Simhat Torah

Deuteronomy/ Devarim 909-917
Genesis / Beresheet 2-6
Haftara 984-86

Shabbat Parashat Beresheet

Genesis / Beresheet 2-20 Haftara 21-25

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Cain, the generation of the Flood and the builders of the Tower of Babel?

The fifty chapters of Genesis together with the opening of Exodus are the source-book of biblical faith. They are as near as we get to an exposition of the philosophy of Judaism. What then did Rabbi Isaac mean?

He meant something profound, which we often forget. To understand a book, we need to know to what genre it belongs. Is it history or legend, chronicle or myth? To what question is it an answer? A history book answers the question: what happened? A book of cosmology – be it science or myth – answers the question: how did it happen?

What Rabbi Isaac is telling us is that if we seek to understand the Torah, we must read it as Torah, which is to say: law, instruction, teaching, guidance. Torah is an answer to the question: how shall we live? That is why he raises the question as to why it does not begin with the first command given to Israel.

Torah is not a book of history, even though it includes history. It is not a book of science, even though the first chapter of Genesis – as the 19th-century sociologist Max Weber pointed out – is the necessary prelude to science, because it represents the

first time people saw the universe as the product of a single creative will, and therefore as intelligible rather than capricious and mysterious. It is, first and last, a book about how to live. Everything it contains – not only commandments but also narratives, including the narrative of creation itself – is there solely for the sake of ethical and spiritual instruction.

. . . Jewish ethics is not confined to law. It includes virtues of character, general principles and role models. It is conveyed not only by commandments but also by narratives, telling us how particular individuals responded to specific situations.

It moves from the minutest details to the most majestic visions of the universe and our place within it. But it never deviates from its intense focus on the questions: What shall I do? How shall I live? What kind of person should I strive to become? It begins, in Genesis 1, with the most fundamental question of all. As the Psalm (8: 4) puts it: “What is man that You are mindful of him?” Homo sapiens, that unique synthesis of “dust of the earth” and breath of G-d, is unique among created beings in having no fixed essence: in being free to be what he or she chooses.

It is . . . a strikingly Jewish account . . . one given by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in *Halakhic Man*: “The most fundamental principle of all is that man must create himself. It is this idea that Judaism introduced into the

world.” . . .

This emphasis on choice, freedom and responsibility is one of the most distinctive features of Jewish thought. It is proclaimed in the first chapter of Genesis in the most subtle way. We are all familiar with its statement that G-d created man “in His image, after His likeness”. Seldom do we pause to reflect on the paradox. If there is one thing emphasized time and again in the Torah, it is that G-d has no image. “I will be what I will be”, He says to Moses when he asks Him His name.

Since G-d transcends nature – the fundamental point of Genesis 1 – then He is free, unbounded by nature’s laws. By creating human beings in His image, He gave us a similar freedom, thus creating the one being capable itself of being creative. The unprecedented account of G-d in the Torah’s opening chapter leads to an equally unprecedented view of the human person and our capacity for self-transformation..

. . . As the rabbis put it (*Bereishith Rabbah* 8: 1; *Sanhedrin* 38a): “Why was man created last? In order to say, if he is worthy, all creation was made for you; but if he is unworthy, he is told, even a gnat preceded you.” The Torah remains G-d’s supreme call to humankind to freedom and creativity on the one hand, and on the other, to responsibility and restraint – becoming G-d’s partner in the work of creation.

Hag Sameah & Shabbat Shalom

Kahal Joseph Congregation
 Norma & Sam Dabby Jewish Education Center
 Dafna Ezran-Young, Educational Director

Sunday School for KJ Kids

Nurture Creativity
 Explore Spirituality
 Learn Jewish Heritage



THINK



Arts & Crafts
 Culture & History
 Music & Drama
 Shabbat & Holidays

\$60 a month for
 KJ Members
 \$110 a month
 Guests of KJ

Out of the Box

The fun & learning start
 Sunday, September 8th

For information contact
 Dafna Ezran-Young,
 our Educational Director
 at 310.502.8548 or
 dafnayoung@gmail.com



Friends &
 Community



♥ Sunday
 Buddies ♥



Home ♥ Study
 with Computers

SAVE THE DATE *Sunday, November 24th*
The Sisterhood's Children's Hanukkah Party

המרכז החינוכי הספרדי
 SEPHARDIC EDUCATIONAL CENTER
 CENTRO EDUCATIVO SEFARDI
 CENTRE EDUCATIF SEPHARADE

Sephardic Educational Center

HAMSA Israel Teen Winter Break Trip
December 22, 2013 - January 5, 2014
\$1800 - You pay the airfare, we cover the rest!
To apply, see SEC Hamsa Israel on Facebook!

Parties Shouldn't Be This Difficult

Errol Levi Social Hall & Ballroom

Did you know that Kahal Joseph has one of the most beautiful ballrooms on the Westside for your private event? Do you know that we have an amazing, kosher catering kitchen? And a modern playroom for younger visitors? KJ is fabulous for parties up to 200 guests.

Engagement Party
 Wedding ♥ Baby Naming
 Brit Milah ♥ Birthday
 Bar / Bat Mitzvah
 Company Event
 Anniversary

Do you know someone looking for a beautiful location for their special event? Let them know Kahal Joseph is available! Contact Sarah Bouchoucha at [310.474.0559](tel:310.474.0559).