

KOL MEVASSER

Torah and Nature

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

In the Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers), the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yaacov is quoted (3:9): "One who is walking along while studying [words of Torah] and interrupts his study and says 'how beautiful is this tree, how beautiful is this field'—the Torah considers him as though he is guilty of death." The source for this statement is usually given as a verse in this week's Torah portion that teaches that one is supposed to contemplate words of Torah when walking on one's way (Devarim 6:7). The assumption is that if one interrupts Torah study, even to admire the beauties of nature, one risks one's life.

Rabbi Yaacov's statement has often been understood to reflect a Torah-centered religious vision that denigrates the natural world. Presumably, one should be so engrossed in Torah so as not to be distracted by beautiful trees or fields!

I suggest that Rabbi Yaacov's statement actually may have something else in mind. It is not anti-nature or anti-aesthetics. It reflects an entirely different message.

There are two basic paths to the Almighty: Torah and Nature. These are not mutually

President's Message

Dear Members,

It is important that ALL members attend our General Membership Meeting on Sunday, August 5th, at 1:00 P.M.

At this meeting we will discuss the state of the synagogue and an important vote will be taken with regards to the sale of the Crestview house owned by Kahal Joseph.

Please make every effort to attend. If you have voted already by mail, you should still attend this important meeting.

I look forward to seeing you.

Ronald Einy, President

exclusive paths, but are complementary. When we study Torah, we study the word of God. When we experience the beauties of nature, we confront the awesome creations of God. A proper religious worldview entails proper appreciation of both Torah and

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KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat Nahamu Friday, August 3, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir HaShirim	6:45 pm
Minhah/Arbith	7:00 pm
Shabbat Candle Lighting	7:32 pm

Shabbat Nahamu/ Parashat Va'etchanan Saturday, August 4, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	8:30 am
Women's Tehillim	6:00 pm
Rabbi's Class.....	6:30 pm
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit.....	7:00 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah	8:31 pm

Sunday, August 5, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	7:30 am
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Monday to Friday, August 6 to 10, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Women's Tehillim Group Monday@10:30 am	

Friday, August 10, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir HaShirim	6:45 pm
Minhah/Arbith	7:00 pm
Shabbat Candle Lighting	7:25 pm

SHABBAT TORAH PORTION
Parashat **Va'etchanan** 755 to 776
Haftara 776 to 779

Kahal Joseph Congregation
Rabbi Hagay Batzri

10505 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles 90025
www.kahaljoseph.org 310.474.0559



**SEPHARDIC EDUCATIONAL CENTER'S
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Robert Israel, Producer & Marketing Expert
Betty Jane Cohen, Documentary Filmmaker
Brooke Keesling, Academy Award Winning Animator

The filmmakers will present clips of their work and discuss the moments and people who inspired them

Sunday, August 12th, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

The Jewish Federation Building

6505 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles 90048

*RSVP requested by Thursday, August 9th to the
SEC Office at 323.272.4574 or denahangel@gmail.com*

Kahal Joseph Congregation

Legacy of Kindness

Gala Tribute Dinner



Honoring

Rylla & Benjamin H. Elias

SUNDAY, THE NINTH OF SEPTEMBER, TWO THOUSAND & TWELVE
SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING
ERROL LEVI BALLROOM AT KAHAL JOSEPH
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Thank You Abe Abraham

On behalf of the entire congregation and the Religious Committee, we express our deep gratitude and appreciation to our Honorary Gabay, Abe Abraham, for conducting the Tisha B'Av services, Saturday night, Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon as well as all those who participated. You keep our traditions alive!



**Women's Tehillim Group
with Rabbanit Orly Batzri**

Shabbat at 6:00 pm
Mondays at 10:30 am

Bring a friend to the KJ Library & Do a Mitzvah

Refuah Shlemah

Gerry Shapiro • Yocheved bat Rachel •
Salha Matana bat Mazal Tov • Rachamim ben Sarah • Hinah Titza bat Itah • Yitzhak ben Abdullah •
Mazal bat Malka • Dan Herdoon •
Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana Amron
Moshe Ashkenazi ben Rachel

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversary of passings, for August 4 to August 11, 2012. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedakah, and attend prayer services the preceding Shabbat.

17 Av / Sunday, August 5th

Jacob Jonah Yaacov Yonah ben Yonah
Yitzhak

Sabiha Kattan Sabiha bat Gurjiya Horesh
Matilda Levi Massoodah bat Tirkie

18 Av / Monday, August 6th

Khadoori Sasson Kadoori ben Sasson

19 Av / Tuesday, August 7th

Esther Shapiro Ester bat Rivka

21 Av / Thursday, August 9th

Ketty E. Hanoon Khatoon bat Noosha
Farangis Shaye Farangis bat Hanonbibi

22 Av / Friday, August 10th

Rahel bat Zivar

23 Av / Shabbat, August 11th

Rachel Moses Rahel bat Moshe

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Nature, and sees the ultimate harmony and unity of both.

If one seeks God only through Torah, one's religious outlook lacks the sense of wonder and aesthetics that Nature provides. If one seeks God only through Nature, one's religious outlook lacks the direct contact with God's words.

Rabbi Yaacov was teaching that we need to maintain sensitivity to both pathways to God: to Torah and to Nature. If we are studying Torah while walking, and we see a beautiful tree, it is appropriate to praise the tree's beauty as a manifestation of God's wisdom. There is no problem with admiring the tree or field or any other feature of the natural world. A problem arises, though, if we see our admiration of nature as an "interruption" in our Torah study. If we do not view Torah and Nature as harmonious and complementary approaches to God, then we are "guilty of death". Rabbi Yaacov was reminding us to maintain a unified religious vision, not to view Torah and Nature as two separate and unrelated entities.

In his code of Jewish law, the Mishneh Torah, Maimonides highlighted the traditional emphasis on Torah study. "Among all the commandments, none is equal to the study of Torah. Study

leads to proper action." (Laws of Torah Study 3:3) Through Torah study and mitzvah observance, a person can find a direct relationship with the Almighty.

Yet, Maimonides also highlighted the role of Nature in our religious development. "What is the way to love and fear Him? When a person contemplates His wondrous and great works and creations, and he sees in them His infinite wisdom, immediately he loves and praises and exalts and yearns with an overwhelming yearning to know His great Name....On meditating these very things, one immediately recoils, fears, and trembles, realizing that he is a tiny, low and obscure being of small intelligence standing before the One with perfect wisdom..." (Laws of Foundations of the Torah 2:2)

So this is the real message of Rabbi Yaacov: study Torah as a manifestation of God's words and will; admire Nature as a reflection of God's wisdom and creative powers. View Torah and Nature as complementary paths to God. Do not "interrupt" between them; do not see them as distinct and separate domains.

As we read in this week's Torah portion: Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. One God is the God of Torah and the God of Nature.

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Tzur Mishelo Translation

(continued)

*With song and thanks we will praise our G-d
For the good, desirable land He bequeathed to our fathers
With nourishment and sustenance He has satisfied us
He shows great kindness towards us and Hashem is true*

*Have mercy in Your kindness towards Your nation, our
Almighty
And upon Zion the home of Your glory, the palace of our
splendor*

*The son of David, Your servant, will come and redeem us
The breath of our life, Mashiach of Hashem*

*The Temple will be rebuilt; the City of Zion will be restored
And there we will sing a new song and go up with joy
The Merciful and the Sanctified will be praised & exalted
Over a cup full of wine, according to Hashem's blessing.*

Shabbat Shalom

High Holy Day Seats & KJ Membership

Now's the perfect time to renew or begin your membership in our lovely synagogue. We are a community and the support of our members enables us to provide the wonderful dinners, programs, and educational opportunities for young and old. It's in your hands. Take this opportunity to perpetuate the musical and spiritual traditions of your parents, grandparents, and loved ones. Membership includes seats for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur For information contact Sarah at 310.474.0559.

Tzur Mishelo Akhalnu

The Rock from Whose [Bounty] We Have Eaten

Listen to Rabbi Batzri perform this beautiful melody at <http://youtu.be/W9cn1pytmYI>

Tzur mishelo achalnu, bar'chu emunai
sav'anu vehotarnu kid'var Adonai

Hazan et olamo, ro'einu avinu
achalnu milachmo, umiyeino shatinu
Al ken nodeh lish'mo, unehalelo befinu
amarnu ve'aninu, ein kadosh k'Adonai

Beshir vekol todah, nevarech le'Eloheinu
al eretz chemdah tovah, shehin'chil la'avoteinu
Umazon vetzedah, his'bia lenafsheinu
chas'do gavar aleinu, ve'emet Adonai

Rachem bechasdecha, al am'cha tzureinu,
al tzion mish'kan k'vodcha, z'vul beit tif'arteinu.
Uven David avdecha, yavo veyig'aleinu,
ru'ach apeinu, meshi'ach Adonai

Yibaneh hamikdash, ir tzion temale
vesham nashir shir chadash, uvir'nanah sham na'aleh
Harachaman hanik'dash, yit'barach veyit'aleh
al kos yayin male, kebirkat Adonai

*The Almighty whose food we have eaten, praise Him,
all who are faithful
We have eaten enough and been more than satisfied,
according to Hashem's word*

*He Who provides for His universe is our shepherd and
our father
We have eaten His bread and drunk His wine
Therefore we will thank Him and speak His praise
We have said and have responded, there is none as
holy as Hashem* (continued on p. 3)

צור משלו אכלנו, ברכו אמוני,
שבענו והותרנו כדבר ה'!

הזן את עולמו, רוענו אבינו,
אכלנו מלחמו, ומיינו שתינו.
על כן נודה לשמו, ונהללו בפינו,
אמרנו ועינינו, אין קדוש כה'!

בשיר וקול תודה, נברך לאלהינו,
על ארץ חמדה טובה, שהנחיל לאבותינו.
ומזון וצדה, השביע לפשנו,
חסדו נבר עלינו, ואמת ה'!

רחם בחסדך, על עמך צורנו,
על ציון משכן כבודך,
זבול בית תפארתנו.
ובן דוד עבדך, יבא ויגאלנו,
רוח אפינו, משיח ה'!

יבנה המקדש, עיר ציון תמלא,
ושם נשיר שיר חדש, וברננה שם בעלה.
הרחמן הנקדש, יתברך ויתעלה,
על כוס יין מלא, כברכת ה'!



STEP THROUGH THE MYSTERIOUS DOORS...



*Journey to Mythical Lands
Behold Past & Future
Seek Enchanting Melodies
Feast on Ambrosial Foods*



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