

3 Kislev 5773

17 November 2012

# KOL MEVASSER

## “A Night in Italy” at KJ



### KJ Schedule

#### *Friday, November 16, 2012*

Shaharit/Morning Prayer ..... 6:30 am  
 Shir Hashirim ..... 4:15 pm  
 Shabbat Candle Lighting ..... 4:30 pm  
 Minhah/Arbith ..... 4:30 pm

#### **Shabbat Toldot**

#### *Saturday, November 17, 2012*

Shaharit/Morning Prayer ..... 8:30 am  
 Ladies Tehillim Group ..... after kiddush  
 Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit ..... 4:00 pm  
 Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah ..... 5:15 pm

#### *Sunday, November 18, 2012*

Shaharit ..... 7:30 am  
 Talmud Torah ..... 9:30 am  
 KJ Youth Choir ..... 11:00 am

#### *Mon - Wed. & Fri., Nov. 19 - 21, 23, 2012*

Shaharit ..... 6:30 am

#### *Monday, November 19, 2012*

Ladies Tehillim Group ..... 10:30 am

#### **Thanksgiving Day**

#### *Thursday, November 22, 2012*

Shaharit ..... 7:30 am

#### **Erev Shabbat**

#### *Friday, November 23, 2012*

Shaharit/Morning Prayer ..... 6:30 am  
 Shir Hashirim ..... 4:15 pm  
 Shabbat Candle Lighting ..... 4:27 pm  
 Minhah/Arbith ..... 4:27 pm

#### **Kahal Joseph Congregation**

Rabbi Hagay Batzri

10505 Santa Monica Blvd. LA 90025 310.474.0559



## The Sisterhood of Kahal Joseph

invites the children of our community to a



# Hanukkah Celebration

Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2012

11:00 am

### Wonderful Entertainment

*Sweets & Treats for the Children*

*Fun for the Whole Family*



### RSVP Requested

Elsa at 323.934.3439

Louise 818.884.0120

Rita 310.839.4206 or

Hannie 310.247.0220



Hag Sameah! ♥ Happy Hanukkah!



**Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorakh**



### SEC's

## Sephardic Film Festival

Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>

### 2:30 pm Screening

Film Competition Awards

Once Upon a Time at 55<sup>th</sup> & Hoover  
USA/ Spain, 2012 (25 min) English and  
Ladino with Subtitles

The Jews &

the Longest Kiss in History  
Sudan /Egypt/US, 2011 (60 minutes)

### 5:00 pm Screening

Iraq n'Roll

Israel, 2011 (54 minutes)  
Hebrew and Arabic with Subtitles

The Chosen Island

Cuba, 2012 (60 minutes)  
Spanish with Subtitles

All screenings take place at  
Laemmle's Music Hall  
9036 Wilshire Blvd.  
Beverly Hills, Ca 90211

[sephardicfilmfestival.com](http://sephardicfilmfestival.com)

## In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries of passings, for November 17 to 24, 2012. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedakah, and attend services the preceding Shabbat.

**3 Kislev / Shabbat, November 17th**

Rachel Jacob *Rahel bat Salha Mattana*

**5 Kislev / Monday, November 19th**

Elias Ezekiel Isaac *Eliyahu ben Yehezkel Itzhak*

Silas Moshe Kadoorie *Silas ben Moshe*

Flora Sassoon *Farha bat Simba*

Nassim Reuben Suleiman

**6 Kislev / Tuesday, November 20th**

Maggie Dabby *Marjorie bat Sam Dabby*

**7 Kislev / Wednesday, November 21st**

Eliyahu Ezer *Eliyahu ben Yoseph*

**9 Kislev / Friday, November 23rd**

Isaac Joseph *Yitzhak ben Yoseph*

Ezra Yitzhaki *Ezra ben Reuven*

Sholkat Zekaria *Sholkat bat Zekaria*

**10 Kislev / Shabbat, November 24th**

*Ruhama bat Chana*

## Refuah Shlemah

Gery Shapiro, Yocheved bat Rachel, Mazal bat Malka, Dan Herdoon, Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana, Moshe ben Ezra, Sasson ben Rahel / Sassoon Moses, Penina bat Henia, Dov Ber ben Sonia

## TORAH READINGS

Shabbat Portion 93 to 101

Haftara 102 to 105

## Women's Tehillim

Mondays 10:30 am, Shabbat after kiddush

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# God and Sandy

By Rabbi Dr. Nathan Lopes Cardozo

As the USA is trying to get back on its feet after the devastating “Superstorm Sandy,” which left over 120 people dead, destroyed the homes and possessions of tens of thousands, and left millions without electricity, ruining the lives of countless people, many good souls wonder what is the higher meaning behind all this. Particularly, religious people postulate that there is a divine purpose to all of this, and most of them believe that it must be human, moral and religious failure that caused this divine wrath to rain down on them and their fellow men.

Within these communities, such reactions and attitudes are part of the religious outlook on life, and there is a strong tendency to blame *themselves* for such disasters. As Jews, we are responsible for all the shortcomings of mankind and so we endlessly repeat: *mipnei chato’enu*, because of our sins, this has befallen us. Even disasters visited upon [others] are of our making.

Indeed, it can hardly be denied that the Torah and Jewish tradition are replete with examples of God warning the Jewish people of grave consequences if they do not follow the Divine Will. Maimonides’ famous statement in his *Mishne Torah* (Hilchoth Ta’anith 1:1-4) seems to bear this out. This great sage teaches us that after each catastrophe that has befallen the community, Jews should blow trumpets, fast, and repent. To believe that these tragedies are accidental and of no meaning is highly irresponsible, warns Maimonides. It is the epitome of callousness and denial of Divine Providence. It is close to atheism.

Still, this cannot be the whole story. Common sense and a keen understanding of Jewish religious philosophy and sources seem to tell us that there is more to this than meets the eye. In fact, the constant emphasis on the moral and religious responsibility of Jews, and mankind at large, for any disaster



that befalls them may well be a serious deviation from Jewish religious teachings. While many may argue that any denial of divine retribution would constitute . . . heresy, it may quite well be that the opposite is heresy and even a form of idol-worship.

Do good or evil events in this world really always depend on human behavior? Was there no other reason for God to create the universe than to test human beings and reward or punish accordingly? Is man really the measure of all things? Maimonides seems to doubt this in his *Guide for the Perplexed* (111:13-14) where he states that God made everything *lema’anehu* (Mishle 16:14), for *His* sake rather than for man’s sake. Are we compelled to believe that Stephen Hawking’s black holes and baby universes, the millions of stars and other celestial bodies were created only to test man’s moral and religious conduct? Would it not be more logical to conclude that God’s reasons for creating the universe are much greater and more significant than the problem of human behavior? Why create planets and invisible baby universes when what is of sole importance is human behavior on one tiny globe?

When Iyov (Job) demands an explanation from God as to why he has lost all his children, belongings and wealth and is suffering such terrible pain, God’s response is not that he has in any way misbehaved. Instead, He asks Iyov: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding” (38:4). God challenges Iyov’s [Job’s] very notion that suffering is always related to sin. *Who says that My treatment of man is always to be*

*judged by the criteria of righteousness? What makes you believe that I am always all-loving? There are larger issues at work.*

While Iyov’s [Job’s] friends argue that he *must* have sinned, God rejects this argument. He declares that such an attitude is a denial of His multidimensional being and His larger cosmic plan. Iyov’s suffering has nothing to do with sin. God protests this very idea and tells him it is a declaration of preposterous heresy and an expression of childishness to think that way. Even worse, it is a reflection of man’s arrogance. Is he really so important? Since when is man able to judge God and decide *why* He created the universe? Such haughtiness is nothing but an attempt by man to squeeze God into the parameters of what man believes God should be. It is based on preconceived ideas of what God is and is not. Man constantly tries to view God through his own prism. But that reveals more about man than it does about God. Such an attempt is nothing less than idol worship. It is as if one is trying to describe a three-dimensional image by way of a flat surface. . . .

The problem of creating God in our image is not a new one. Moshe asks God to reveal His name to him before he conveys the message to the Jews that He will redeem them from Egyptian bondage. God refuses to do so, and His answer is astonishing: “I will be Whoever I will be.” [G-d asserts] “I am not a “what,” or a “when.” I am not even a “who.” There is no term you can use to describe Me. Any attempt to give Me an image is a serious violation of My very being. Any conclusive explanation of My deeds is idol-worship. I permit you to describe Me in human terms only as long as you know that any such description will ultimately break down. No word can ever contain Me.’

When disasters befall mankind, they may very well have no correlation with man’s behavior. They may simply be part of God’s cosmic plan, perhaps alluding to other divine aspects that are totally beyond

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man and known only to God. As long as we do not know *why* God created the universe, including so many other worlds, we cannot say for sure whether every calamity is a result of man's shortcomings. Some may be, and some may not be. We should never deny the ever-present possibility that various divine factors are at work. The joy of life, which is so much a part of Jewish tradition, focuses on the fact that from a divine perspective, things could actually be much worse. Despite God's impenetrable nature and thoughts, He shared some of His good qualities with man, informing him that his existence has great meaning, though he will never know what it consists of. It is this aspect that is celebrated by Jewish tradition and beckons man to understand that despite all the pain, it is possible to enjoy life, to attain *simchat hayim!* . . .

Whether or not Hurricane Sandy is an expression of divine displeasure we do not know. Nor will it ever be known, unless we will again be blessed with prophets. What it should evoke in us is a feeling of deep humility. It should serve as a wake-up call, that all our boasting, our arrogance, our claiming that we know it all and that one day all of nature will be under our control is one of the most pathetic dreams man has ever entertained. One storm brought the mightiest nation in the world to its knees.

No doubt we should treat it *as if* it were a warning, a call for repentance and, above all, for humility. But we must be fully aware that it was perhaps part of God's cosmic plan far beyond human behavior. And we are not to be blamed. This is an important message to send to our young people, lest they despair under the yoke of religious pessimism. Better a God Who is incomprehensible than a God Who unremittingly causes man to feel that all calamities are his fault. Believing the latter is un-Jewish.

**Shabbat Shalom**