

KOL MEVASSER

Disguise

By Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Joseph is now the ruler of Egypt. The famine he predicted has come to pass. It extends beyond Egypt to the land of Canaan. Seeking to buy food, Joseph's brothers make the journey to Egypt. They arrive at the palace of the man in charge of grain distribution:

Now Joseph was governor of all Egypt, and it was he who sold the corn to all the people of the land. Joseph's brothers came and bowed to the ground before him. Joseph recognized his brothers as soon as he saw them, but he behaved like a stranger and spoke harshly to them... Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. (42: 6-8)

We owe to Robert Alter the idea of a type-scene, a drama enacted several times with variations; and these are particularly in evidence in the book of Bereishit. There is no universal rule as to how to decode the significance of a type-scene. . . . [H]owever, a type-scene seems to indicate a recurring theme. That is the case here. If we are to understand what is at stake in the meeting between Joseph and his brothers, we have to set it aside three other episodes, all of which occur in Bereishit.

The first takes place in Isaac's tent. The patriarch is old and blind. He tells his elder son to go out into the field, trap an animal and prepare a meal so that he can bless him. Surprisingly soon, Isaac hears someone enter. "Who

are you?" he asks. "I am Esau, your elder son," the voice replies. Isaac is not convinced. "Come close and let me feel you, my son. Are you really Esau or not?" He reaches out and feels the rough texture of the skins covering his arms. Still unsure, he asks again, "But are you really my son Esau?" The other replies, "I am." So Isaac blesses him: "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field blessed by G-d." But it is not Esau. It is Jacob in disguise.

Scene two: Jacob has fled to his uncle Laban's house. Arriving, he meets and falls in love with Rachel, and offers to work for her father for seven years in order to marry her. The time passes quickly: the years "seemed like a few days because he loved her." The wedding day approaches. Laban makes a feast. The bride enters her tent. Late at night, Jacob follows her. Now at last he has married his beloved Rachel. When morning comes, he discovers that he has been the victim of a deception. It is not Rachel. It is Leah in disguise.

Scene three: Judah has married a Canaanite girl and is now the father of three sons. The first marries a local girl, Tamar, but dies mysteriously young, leaving his wife a childless widow. Following a pre-Mosaic version of the law of levirate marriage, Judah marries his second son to Tamar so that she can have a child "to keep his brother's name alive." He is loathe to have a son that will, in effect, belong to his late brother so he "spilled his seed," and for this he too died young. Judah is reluctant to give Tamar his third son, so she is left an agunah, "chained," bound

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KJ Schedule

Rosh Hodesh Tevet / 7th Night Hanukkah Friday, December 14, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:30 am
Shir Hashirim 4:10 pm
Light Hanukkah Candles *1/2 hr before Shabbat*
Shabbat Candle Lighting 4:27 pm
Minhah/Arbith 4:27 pm

Shabbat Miketz / Eighth Night Hanukkah Saturday, December 15, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Ladies Tehillim Group after kiddush
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit 4:00 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah 5:12 pm
Light 8 Candles + Shamash.. after havdallah

Eighth Day of Hanukkah Sunday, December 16, 2012

Shaharit 7:30 am
Children's Hanukkah Party 11:00 am

Monday to Friday, Dec. 17-21, 2012

Shaharit 6:30 am

Monday, December 17, 2012

Women's Tehillim at KJ Library.... 10:30 am

Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 21, 2012

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:30 am
Shir Hashirim 4:15 pm
Shabbat Candle Lighting 4:29 pm
Minhah/Arbith 4:29 pm

Kahal Joseph Congregation

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Seudah Shlisheet

is sponsored in memory of

Ezat bat Avraham, z"l
Baruch Iraj ben Yaacov, z"l

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to someone she is prevented from marrying, and unable to marry anyone else.

The years pass. Judah's own wife dies. Returning home from sheep-shearing, he sees a veiled prostitute by the side of the road. He asks her to sleep with him, promising, by way of payment, a kid from the flock. She asks him for his "seal and its cord and his staff" as security. The next day he sends a friend to deliver the kid, but the woman has disappeared. The locals deny all knowledge of her. Three months later, Judah hears that his daughter-in-law Tamar has become pregnant. He is incensed. Bound to his youngest son, she was not allowed to have a relationship with anyone else. She must have been guilty of adultery. "Bring her out so that she may be burnt," he says. She is brought to be killed, but she asks one favor. She tells one of the people to take to Judah the seal and cord and staff. "The father of my child," she says, "is the man to whom these things belong." Immediately, Judah understands. Tamar, unable to marry yet honour-bound to have a child to perpetuate the

BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK FOR SALE from the studio of JALEH PARTIYELI

We have magnificent, limited edition hand crafted artwork for sale created by our member, Jaleh Partiyeli. Menorahs, chargers, serving platters and plates hand decorated and designed especially for Kahal Joseph, are available for purchase. These beautiful art objects on view in the synagogue's lobby showcase would make a wonderful addition to any home décor. The pieces make great gifts too. And every purchase is a donation to the synagogue. Please contact Sarah in the synagogue office with your interest.

memory of her first husband, has tricked her father-in-law into performing the duty he should have allowed his youngest son to do. "She is more righteous than I," Judah admits. He thought he had slept with a prostitute. But it was Tamar in disguise.

That is the context against which the meeting between Joseph and his brothers must be understood. The man the brothers bow down to bears no resemblance to a Hebrew shepherd. He speaks Egyptian. He is dressed in an Egyptian ruler's robes. He wears Pharaoh's signet ring and the gold chain of authority. They think they are in the presence of an Egyptian prince, but it is Joseph – their brother – in disguise.

Four scenes, four disguises, four failures to see behind the mask. What do they have in common? Something very striking indeed. It is only by not being recognized that Jacob, Leah, Tamar and Joseph can be recognized, in the sense of attended, taken seriously, heeded. Isaac loves Esau, not Jacob. He loves Rachel, not Leah. Judah thinks of his youngest son, not the plight of Tamar. Joseph is hated by his

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In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries of passings, for December 15 to 22, 2012. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedakah, and attend services the preceding Shabbat.

2 Tevet / Shabbat, December 15th

David ben Ezra

3 Tevet / Sunday, December 16th

*Vicky Messiah Rabma Victoria bat Khattoon
Isaac Jacob Itzhak ben Yaakov*

4 Tevet / Monday, December 17th

Seemah Meyer Simba bat Azizah

5 Tevet / Tuesday, December 18th

*Mida Judah Masooda bat Dina
Esther Sales Esther HaMalka bat Rivka
Elisha Samuel Elisha ben Sassoon Shmuel Hacham*

6 Tevet / Wednesday, December 19th

*Raquel Emquies Rabel bat Clare Levy
Salem Kooby*

7 Tevet / Thursday, December 20th

Eliezer David Levy Eliezer ben David HaLevi

8 Tevet / Friday, December 21st

*Abraham Khazzoom
Rabbi Elias Levi Eliyahu Hayim ben Shlomo
Max Nathan Mordechai ben Rafael Natan
David Sassoon Solomon David Sasson ben Shlomo Reuven*

9 Tevet / Shabbat, December 22nd

Eddie Jacob Ezra Yehezkeel ben Yaacov Azoori

Refuah Shlemah

Gerry 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, Hanna bat Esther

VISITING SCHOLAR SERIES

kahal joseph congregation



Rabbi Moshe Tessone, Shabbat Vayiggash
“Lessons from Joseph and Judah: How to Lead Judaism and Humanity in Today’s World?”

December 22, 2012 during morning services

Rabbi Moshe Tessone, Director of the Sephardic Studies Department of Yeshiva University, New York will be our guest next Shabbat. He will speak on: “Leadership Lessons from Joseph and Judah: How to Lead Judaism and Humanity in Today’s World?” Rabbi Tessone has toured extensively throughout North America, South America, Europe and Israel as a rabbinic speaker on Torah, Sephardic history, and Jewish education. He has also featured as a cantorial concert soloist performing Judeo Arabic and Judeo Spanish religious music and liturgy. Rabbi Tessone received rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University’s Rabbi Isaac Elchannan Theological Seminary and is a graduate of New York University’s Stern School of Business. In addition, he holds a Masters Degree in Jewish Education & Administration.



Rabbi Aaron Finkelstein, Shabbat Vayechi
“From Family to Nation: The Secret Power of Blessings”

December 29, 2012 during morning services

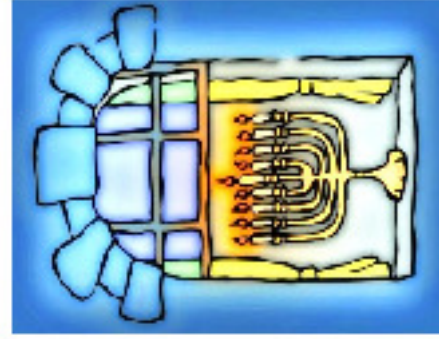
Rabbi Aaron Finkelstein, will be our guest and speak on: “From Family to Nation: The Secret Power of Blessings.” A native of Berkeley, CA, Rabbi Finkelstein studied Political Science and Jewish and Islamic Middle Eastern Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. He attended yeshiva in Israel before completing rabbinical ordination at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah. Rabbi Finkelstein launched the Prospect Heights Shul and currently teaches at the Hannah Senesh Community Day School. He is passionate about teaching midrash and parsha as well as trying new recipes and exploring the great outdoors.

SHABBAT / HANUKKAH READINGS Torah Portion 155 to 166, Haftara 987 to 989

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brothers. Only when they appear as something or someone other than they are can they achieve what they seek – for Jacob, his father’s blessing; for Leah, a husband; for Tamar, a son; for Joseph, the non-hostile attention of his brothers. The plight of these four individuals is summed up in a single poignant phrase: “Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.” Do the disguises work? In the short term, yes; but in the long term, not necessarily. Jacob suffers greatly for having taken Esau’s blessing. Leah, though she marries Jacob, never wins his love. Tamar had a child (in fact, twins) but Judah “was not intimate with her anymore.” Joseph – well, his brothers no longer hated him but they feared him. Even after his assurances that he bore them no grudge, they still thought he would take revenge on them after their father died. What we achieve in disguise is never the love we sought.

But something else happens. Jacob, Leah, Tamar and Joseph discover that, though they may never win the affection of those from whom they seek it, G-d is with them; and that, ultimately, is enough. A disguise is an act of hiding – from others, and perhaps from oneself. From G-d, however, we cannot, nor do we need to, hide. He hears our cry. He answers our unspoken prayer. He heeds the unheeded and brings them comfort. In the aftermath of the four episodes, there is no healing of relationship but there is a mending of identity. That is what makes them, not secular narratives but deeply religious chronicles of psychological growth and maturation. What they tell us is simple and profound: those who stand before G-d need no disguises to achieve self worth. **Shabbat Shalom**



The Sisterhood of Kahal Joseph
invites the children of our community to a

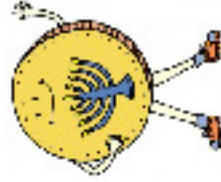
Hanukkah Celebration

Sunday, December 16th 2012 at 11:00 am

featuring a performance by

Kahal Joseph's Youth Choir

directed by Rabbi Batzri



& Wonderful Entertainment

Sweets & Treats for the Children

Fun for the Whole Family



RSVP Requested

Elsa at 323.934.3439

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Rita 310.839.4206

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Hag Sameah! ♥ Happy Hanukkah!

