

11 Tevet 5774

14 December 2013

KOL MEVASSER

In Search of Greatness

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

This week's Torah reading brings us to the end of the book of Bereishith. During the past months, we have read the magnificent account of the creation of the universe; we learned about Noah and his times. We then were introduced to the lives of individuals who revolutionized human civilization: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his siblings.

These remarkable people laid the foundations not only for the people of Israel but for much of human civilization. The Torah describes these heroes of faith with their strengths and weaknesses, their victories and failures. They are not presented as having super-human talents or genius; rather, they appear to be very fallible human beings striving to fulfill their human potentialities. They are shepherds and seekers of God; they are parents and moral guides; they are courageous and wise...but not always.

These pillars of civilization were, to a great extent, loners. As Abraham himself said, he was a "stranger and a resident" among the people. A stranger—he was not at home within the pagan society in which he lived. A resident—he was a constructive and helpful member of the community. Our spiritual fa-

thers and mothers, while being cooperative and sociable, were not at home in general society. They had different dreams and aspirations. They heard God's voice. They were striving for something beyond their own time and place. They were not afraid to stand alone, to be different, to defy the popular norms.

Human greatness often entails loneliness and alienation. It is nurtured by successes and failures, by trials and errors. It is fostered in an environment of quiet thoughtfulness. The greatest people often are the most humble and self-effacing.

Dr. Fred Hoyle, a famous English astronomer of the 20th century, made an astute observation. "It seems to be characteristic of all great work, in every field, that it arises spontaneously and unpretentiously, and that its creators wear a cloak of imprecision ...The man who voyages strange seas must of necessity be a little unsure of himself. It is the man with the flashy air of knowing everything, who is always on the ball, always with it, that we should beware of. ("Of Men and Galaxies," 2005, p. 28)

Dr. Hoyle expresses concern for the over-specialization characteristic of modern society. To be a "success," one must increasingly be seen as an "expert," a

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KJ Schedule Parashat Vayechi

Fast of Asara b'Tevet / Erev Shabbat Friday, December 13th

Fast Begins	5:30 am
Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:15 am
Shir Hashirim.....	4:10 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	4:26 pm
Minhah/Arbith	4:26 pm
Fast Ends	5:25 pm

Shabbat / Parashat Vayechi Saturday, December 14th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	8:30 am
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit	4:00 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah	5:30 pm

Weekdays

Sunday , December 15th

Shaharit	7:30 am
KJ Kids Sunday School	10:00 am

Monday, to Friday, December 16th to 20th

Shaharit	6:30 am
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Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 20th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim.....	4:10 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	4:29 pm
Minhah/Arbith	4:29 pm

Readings: Shabbat Vayechi

Torah: Genesis/Sefer Beresheet
Hertz edition pages 180-191

Haftara Melachim Alef /Kings I, pages 191-192

Shabbat Shalom

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member of the in-crowd, a popular team-player. "More and more, the professions will cross over into the entertainment field. Those of us who are not employed directly in industry will come to realize that what we are really in is 'show biz.'" (52) What is increasingly valued in our world is entertainment, putting on a show . . . image-making.

Because of this cultural and spiritual degradation, the environment to produce real greatness is diminished. "It is a mistake to imagine that potentially great men are rare. It is the conditions that permit the promise of greatness to be fulfilled that are rare." (25)

As we read the stories of our Biblical ancestors, we are given a unique opportunity to delve into their world. We can re-focus on spiritual striving, and free ourselves of the glitz and show biz that pervade our lives. We can seek to develop our own personal greatness, even as we are fully conscious of our many weaknesses and failings. Most of all, we can shake off the artificiality and superficiality that attempt to choke our spirits; we can reclaim our own souls, our own essential selves.

Our Biblical ancestors were not flashy know-it-alls with a glib word for everyone. They were not show-people or seekers of popularity. They were able to stand alone, to strive for God and Godliness, to attain human greatness. These are qualities that can transform lives and change the world.

Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in memory of

Benyamin ben Shalom, z'l
by
The Aslemand Family

Thank You
to the ladies who attend
Rabbanit Orly Batzri's
Women's Tehillim Group
for their prayers on behalf
of our community
and for contributing towards
the Seudah Shlisheet



Laptops to Donate?

to KJ Sunday School &
Talmud Torah

If you have a laptop that
you will be replacing or that you simply are
not using, consider donating it to our Talmud
Torah program. Our kids and teachers would
really appreciate it!
Call or text 310-502-8548

In Memoriam
We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for December 14th to 21st, 2013. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, and attend services the preceding Shabbat.

13 Tevet / Monday, December 16th

Moises Maurice Abitboul *Moshe ben Yona*
Ester Avrahami *Ester bat Gazala*
Fortuna Sinder *Fortuna bat Suzan*

14 Tevet / Tuesday, December 17th

Joseph Isaac Joseph *Yoseph ben Itzhak*

16 Tevet / Thursday, December 19th

Rahel bat Khasnah

17 Tevet / Friday, December 20th

Ezekiel Menashe Akerib *Yehezkel ben Moshe*
Victoria Reuben *Victoria bat Chahla*
Farha Shamash *Farha bat Masooda*

18 Tevet / Shabbat, December 21st

David Davoudian *David ben Yehezkel*
Esperance Mathalon Shaaya *Esperance bat Simha*

Refuah Shlemah

Vera Levi
Joseph Sharaf / Yossef ben Jamila
Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha
Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam
Pnina Herzbrun / Pnina bat Esther
Michael Herzbrun / Michael Baruch ben Sarah
Meir ben Farha
Rahel bat Marsel

Please renew each name listing every two weeks. If you would like to add a member name to the list call 310-474-0559 or e-mail dafna@kahaljoseph.org



David Kelly Youth Choir

Rabbi Batzri, Director

Next Meeting January 12, 2014, b'H

KJ Kids Sunday School

Dafna Ezran-Young, Educational Director

Our philosophy at the Norma and Sam Dabby Jewish Education Center is to make Talmud Torah enjoyable and educational, maximizing learning through diverse, fun activities and a well-structured curricular program interspersed with holiday celebrations. We use games, crafts, art, music, drama, hands on demonstrations, prize raffles and more to encourage a positive attitude in our kids towards Judaism and Hebrew studies.

The activities and projects encourage foundational life skills and positive, Jewish character traits: helping one another, sharing knowledge & resources (generosity), working together (cooperation), being patient, teaching, being willing to learn and ask questions, tolerating differences in attitude and work styles, accepting momentary failure and trying again, etc. These skills set the tone for positive student interactions and support a healthy classroom environment.

Ultimately, we hope that along with knowledge of Hebrew, Jewish texts, prayers, and history our students take the lessons and values embodied in our holy literature, religion and culture out into the world and into their lives. If you would like to learn more about our program, I invite you to contact me at 310,502.8548 or at dafna@kahaljoseph.org.



At KJ Kids Sunday School we learn midot/ethical behavior, Hebrew, Jewish history, prayers, Torah, Shabbat & holiday customs, and we also enjoy fun activities. Above are Hanukkah good times at the Norma & Sam Dabby Talmud Torah, including our craft day at school and our booth at the Sisterhood's Children's Hanukkah Party.



Lunch & Learn

Save the Dates!

January 25, February 22, & March 29, 2014
following Shabbat Services

Kahal Joseph invites our members
to a series of three inspirational and
informative Shabbat Day lunchtime programs

with Rabbi Daniel Bouskila
SEC Director

More information to follow!



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?
- Do you know someone looking for a beautiful location for their special event? Let them know Kahal Joseph is available!

*KJ is fabulous for parties up to 200 guests.
Contact Sarah Bouchoucha at 310.474.0559.*

