

# KOL MEVASSER

## Father and Son

**By Rabbi Daniel Bouskila**

Parashat Vayeshev (Genesis 37:1-40:23)  
Article reprinted from *The Jewish Journal*



Communication between Jacob and Joseph was sparse, and the dynamic between them was less than exemplary. The first time we hear Joseph speaking to his father, he is gossiping against his brothers. Jacob does not respond. Instead we are told, "he loved Joseph more than all his children," and he displays his favoritism by giving him a "coat of many colors."

Joseph begins to dream big dreams, and when he next speaks to his father, he tells him he dreamt "the sun, the moon and 11 stars bowed down to me." Jacob disapprovingly responds, "What is this dream you have dreamt? Shall I, your mother and brothers indeed come to bow down to you?" Jacob is disturbed at Joseph's perceived arrogance. Perhaps he was also disturbed that he may have helped nurture this arrogance. One way or the other, Joseph does not respond.

Jacob then asks Joseph to go find his brothers. Joseph agrees, and Jacob says, "Bring me back word." Joseph leaves, finds his brothers and soon discovers that the favoritism displayed towards him by his father has backfired. His jealous brothers plot to kill him, ultimately selling him into slavery to a passing caravan. As a result, Joseph never "brings back word" to his father.

What little communication existed between Jacob and Joseph comes to a complete stop. The elderly

## President's Message

Dear Friends,

Hanukkah begins this Tuesday evening. Each night, as we kindle the lights on the Hanukkah menorah, we witness the continuing miracle of Hashem's involvement in our world and his stewardship of the Jewish people. This year, let us pray for the protection of Israel, for the safety of its citizens, and for peace throughout the many countries on earth and for the human race whom He has created and brought into being, full of diversity, complexity and wonder.

Ronald Einy



Jacob, who had finally "settled down in the land of his ancestors," loses touch with his 17-year-old boy, who is off to eventually fulfill his dreams in Egypt. For the next 22 years, Jacob does not hear a word from Joseph.

In 1925, Israeli Nobel Laureate S.Y. Agnon wrote "The Fable of the Goat," a tale about a boy who follows a magical goat that leads him from his small town in Europe directly to the Land of Israel. The boy follows the goat through a magical cave, ultimately arriving in Safed. He is so delighted by this new environment that he decides he is not going home. He sends the goat back to

*(Continued on page 2)*

## KJ Schedule Vayeshev

### Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 12th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am  
**Candle Lighting ..... 4:26 pm**  
Minha / Arbit .. 4:26 pm

### Shabbat Vayeshev

Saturday, December 13th

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

### Weekdays

Sunday, December 14th

Shaharit ..... 7:30 am  
KJ Kids Talmud Torah ..... 10:00 am

Mon & Tue, December 15th to 16th  
Shaharit/Morning Prayer ..... 6:30 am

### Hanukkah, Nights 1 to 3

Tues. Eve to Thurs, Dec 16th to 18th  
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am  
**Hanukkah Candles light after dark**

### Erev Shabbat &

### Hanukkah Night 4

Friday, December 19th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am  
**Hanukkah Candles light with long-burning candles and light Hanukkah candles before Shabbat candles**  
**Shabbat Candle Lighting 4:28 pm**  
Minha / Arbit .. 4:28 pm

**We want you to be a  
Kahal Jospheh member!**  
*Join our wonderful community!*  
*Call Sarah at 310.474.0559*

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his father with a note tucked in its ear. He tells his father, essentially, "I am in the Land of Israel. Do not ask how I arrived here, just hold onto the rope on the goat's tail and follow its footsteps, and you will safely arrive to the Land of Israel."

The father fails to find the note, and, thinking his son is dead, butchers the goat in a fit of rage. Only after the goat is dead does the note fall out with the son's message. Since the goat was the father's only means of journeying to Israel to see his son, its death marks the permanent and irreversible severing of ties between father and son. Drawing from the Jacob-Joseph narrative, Agnon's story produces a series of ironic plot twists and parallels to the original story. Whereas the elderly Jacob settled comfortably in Israel and the young Joseph went to Egypt, Agnon's tale has the father living comfortably in the Diaspora while his son seeks the new Zionist dreams in Israel.

For 22 years, Joseph never wrote a letter to Jacob. While biblical commentators Nahmanides and Abarbanel sharply criticize him, Joseph's silence is a strong indication that communication between "Jacob the patriarch" and "Joseph the dreamer" was never really healthy.

In Agnon's tale the son writes a letter, but the father tragically discovers it only after he kills the goat. Agnon's interpreters understand the father's missed opportunity to read the note as a metaphor to a lifetime of missed opportunities for the traditional Diaspora father and the idealistic Zionist son to communicate with one another.

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Both fathers believe their sons have been killed, and both deaths are connected to goats. With Jacob, the sight of goat's blood on his son's coat causes him to tear his garments in grief. In Agnon's story, the father's reaction to the sight of the goat without his son is to shed the goat's blood. Both narratives present tragic twists on the scapegoat motif.

Neither have happy endings, either. Joseph reunites with Jacob, only to hear his father say, "Few and unhappy have been the days of the years of my life" (Genesis 47:9). Agnon's father and son never reunite, living in physical and emotional alienation from each other. Both stories point to the painful price paid by a breakdown in communication. What might have been had Jacob and Joseph talked about family matters and dreams? What if Agnon's father and son had a functional dialogue about "Diaspora vs. Zionism"?

The very last prophecy in the Bible predicts that before Elijah the Prophet announces the coming of the Messiah, he will "turn the hearts of parents towards their children, and the hearts of children towards their parents" (Malachi 3:24).

Until then, "fathers and sons" can study the Joseph narrative, read Agnon, and try not to make the same mistakes.

*Rabbi Daniel Bouskila is the director of the Sephardic Educational Center, an international educational and cultural organization with its campus in the Old City of Jerusalem. Follow his blog at [jewishjournal.com/through\\_sephardic\\_lenses](http://jewishjournal.com/through_sephardic_lenses).*

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## In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for Dec 13 to 20, 2014. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

### 22 Kislev / Sunday, December 14th

Joseph Israel *Yosef ben Rabbia*  
Earl H. Klein *Eliyahu Michael ben Yaacov*  
Ezekiel Isaac Raymond *Yehezkel ben Mulla Rahamim*

Meir Sawdayi *Meir ben Shaul*

### 23 Kislev / Monday, December 15th

Gorjeh Youssefzadeh  
Joseph Azar *Yosef Sion ben Yaacov*

### 24 Kislev / Tuesday, December 16th

Regina David *Regina bat Salha Matana*  
Lily Jacob *Leah bat Masooda*  
Mansour Sedaghat *Mansour ben Benayahu*  
Joseph Haim Yaacov *Yossef Haim Yaacov*

### 25 Kislev / Wednesday, December 17th

Ezra Abraham *Ezra Avraham ben Rahma*  
Rachel Moses *Rahel bat Hannah*

### 26 Kislev / Shabbat, December 18th

Dan Darwish *Daniel ben Rahamim*  
Sassoon Jacob Jonah *Sassoon ben Yaakov*  
Yitzhak Sinder *Yitzhak ben Shimon*

### 27 Kislev / Friday, December 19th

*Yoseph Rahamim ben Yaacov Shalom*

### 28 Kislev / Shabbat, December 20th

Joseph Jacob *Yosef ben Avraham Haim*  
*Habiba bat Aziza*

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## Refuah Shlemah

Moselle Amron • Tilda Levy • Joseph Sharaf  
Maurice Ovadia • Michael Herzbrun  
Saul Sassoon • Sassoon Ezra

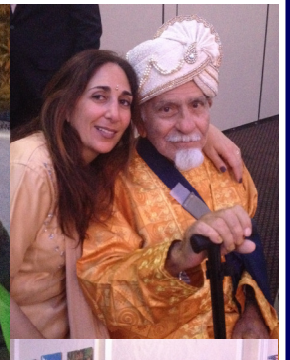
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## Torah & Haftara Readings

Genesis/Beresheet: Vayeshev 141 to 151  
Haftara from Amos 152 to 154

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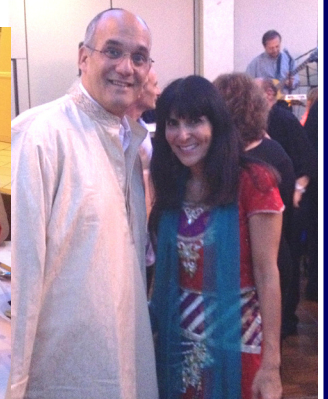


## Happy Birthday Hazzan Sassoon Ezra MAZAL TOV!

The Board of Directors of  
Kahal Joseph Congregation wish  
our Senior Hazzan Sassoon Ezra  
a very Happy Birthday and  
a healthy and happy year ahead

## INTERNATIONAL NIGHT

*The Sisterhood of Kahal Joseph, led by Elsa Singman and assisted by Diana Gazal hosted a soiree for the community. The festive night included live music, dancing and delicious authentic cuisine featuring lovingly prepared dishes from the Far East. Guests came in attire from countries around the world and their dress enlivened the beautifully decorated room. What a wonderful night! Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the evening a success!*





# Shabbat Hannuka Lunch & Learn

with Rabbi Daniel Bouskila

Saturday, December 20, 2014

Following Morning Services

Kahal Joseph Members—No Charge *but must RSVP*

Non-members—\$26 *with paid reservation*

*In celebration of Hanukkah, a holiday most deeply connected to the Zionist ethic of contemporary Judaism, join Rabbi Bouskila in a community conversation on a timely and important topic seriously affecting Israel & the Jewish people.*

Topic  
**Delegitimizing Israel:  
Who's Doing It, and Why We  
Should be Concerned**

*RSVP requested before December 16th  
to Sarah at 310.474.0559*



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

## Hanukkah Celebration

Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> 2014 at 10:00 am

*featuring wonderful entertainment*



**Clown & Balloon Art**

**Amazing Magician**

*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

Hannie 310.247.0220



The Jewish Women's Repertory Company presents

# Into The Woods

Saturday, December 13 at 8pm  
Sunday, December 14 at 2pm  
Sunday, December 14 at 7pm

**The Nate Holden Performing Arts Center**  
4718 W. Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90016

*For tickets, visit  
[www.JewishWomensTheater.com](http://www.JewishWomensTheater.com)  
or call 323-964-9766*

**FOR WOMEN ONLY!**  
*No One Under Age 4 Admitted*