

# KOL MEVASSER

## The Faith of Generations

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

After 22 years of separation, Jacob was finally to be re-united with his beloved son Joseph. Jacob and family came to Egypt where Joseph had risen to a position second only to Pharaoh.

The Torah reports the long-awaited reunion of father and son. "And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen: and he presented himself unto him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while" (Bereishith 46:29). Joseph was obviously very emotional to once again see his father.

While Jacob was surely overwhelmed to re-unite with Joseph, the Torah does not describe him as embracing Joseph or weeping in joy. Rashi, citing a Midrash, explains Jacob's lack of demonstrativeness: Jacob did not embrace Joseph or kiss him, because Jacob was reciting the Shema! At the very moment when Joseph was hugging Jacob, Jacob was busy saying the Shema!

This is a very perplexing Midrashic comment. Couldn't Jacob have recited the Shema a few minutes earlier? Did he really need to recite the Shema at the very moment when Joseph was hugging him? And does it take more than a few seconds to say the Shema?

Even more perplexing is the fact that the Torah had not yet been given at that time. There was no Shema text for Jacob to recite! And to deepen the

perplexity, a Midrash posits that the Shema verse was actually first stated by Jacob's sons when Jacob was on his deathbed, years after Jacob's meeting with Joseph.

What then is Rashi, and the Midrash before him, trying to teach by describing Jacob as reciting the Shema when he first met Joseph after so many years of separation?

Let us think more carefully about the Midrash that describes the origin of the Shema. Jacob was dying, surrounded by his family. The Midrash suggests that Jacob was worried: would his children carry on his teachings? Would they be faithful to the God of Israel (Israel being Jacob's other name)? Sensing his concern, his children said in unison: Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. This is the origin of the Shema! The children were reassuring their father that they would follow his teachings and his faith.

According to this Midrash, the Shema is not merely a general proclamation of faith, but is a very personal and direct statement connecting child and parent. It demonstrates an unflinching commitment to continue the faith and traditions maintained by the parent. It is a powerful link in the religious tradition, connecting the generations in a bond of faith.

With this idea as a backdrop, we may now revisit the reunion of Jacob and Joseph. Jacob was not really sure about the spiritual life of his son. After all, Joseph had lived in Egypt for many years,

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## KJ Schedule Vayigash

### Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 26th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am  
**Shabbat Candle Lighting..4:32 pm**  
Minha / Arvith ..... 4:32 pm

### Shabbat

#### Parashat Vayigash

Saturday, December 27th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer .... 8:30 am  
Minha, Seudah, Arvit..... 4:00 pm  
Motzei Shabbat / Havdala... 5:36 pm

### Weekdays

Sunday, December 28th

Shaharit ..... 7:30 am

Mon to Wed, Dec. 29 to 31

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am

### Asara B'Tevet / 10th of Tevet Fast Day

Thursday, January 1st

Fast Begins ..... 5:39 am  
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 7:30 am  
Fast Ends ..... 5:35 pm

### Erev Shabbat

Friday, January 2nd

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am  
**Shabbat Candle Lighting..4:37 pm**  
Minha / Arvith ..... 4:37 pm

## Torah & Haftara Readings

Genesis/Beresheet:  
Parashat Vayigash 169 to 177  
Haftara 178 to 179

## Shabbat Shalom

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was dressed as an Egyptian, was married to an Egyptian woman, was raising his children in the midst of Egyptian society. Was Joseph still loyal to the God of Israel? Did Joseph still maintain the values and ideals of Jacob?

As they were about to meet, Jacob was not certain that Joseph still belonged to the people of Israel in a spiritual sense. But when Joseph was so effusive in his embrace of his father, Jacob realized that this Egyptian-looking man was in fact still a son of Israel. In a symbolic sense, Jacob recited the Shema, the proclamation of assurance that his child would indeed follow the faith and ideals of Israel. Although Jacob did not literally recite the Shema text, he deeply felt its message of unity among the generations.

When parents and children can recite the Shema together, the generations embrace each other in a mighty chain of continuity. When there is a generation gap—when either parents or children cannot or do not recite the Shema together—the Jewish tradition unravels.

In a sermon delivered at his grandson's Bar Mitzvah in May 1962, Rabbi David de Sola Pool spoke of the need for the generations of Jews to live their Judaism actively. "We must not allow ourselves to become decrepit veterans dreaming of past victories in the struggle for holiness. We have to be something more than feeble survivors of once glorious days...Our life as Jews must be the result of something more than inertia based on the physical fact that we were born into

## Thank You

Elsa Singman and the Sisterhood  
of Kahal Joseph for a wonderful  
Children's Hanukkah Party  
for our youngest members

## Seudah Shlisheet

is sponsored in memory of  
Gohar Taj (Taji) Darovar Hawa  
z"l

## Refuah Shlemah

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

the Jewish people....Within every one of us who is worthy of bearing the Jewish name there must be a conscious sense of a divine call to serve our fellow men for today and tomorrow.... Weaklings among us may fall away as they have done in every generation. But the true spiritual descendants of Abraham, of Moses, and of all our heroic sages and saints keep the Jewish light kindled, and hand it down from generation to generation."

When Jacob recited the Shema upon meeting Joseph, and when Jacob's sons said the Shema at their father's death bed, the generations were being united in a profound spiritual bond. We, their modern-day descendants, must also strive to say the Shema together. **Shabbat Shalom**

## In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for Dec 27, 2014 to January 3, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

### 5 Tevet / Shabbat, December 27th

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

### 6 Tevet / Sunday, December 28th

Salem Kooby  
Raquel Emquies Rahel bat Clara Levy

### 7 Tevet / Monday, December 29th

Eliezer David Levy Eliezer ben David HaLevy

### 8 Tevet / Tuesday, December 30th

Abraham Khazoon  
Rabbi Elias Levi Eliyahu Haim ben Shlomo  
Max Nathan Mordechai ben Rafael Natan  
David Sassoon Solomon David Sasson ben  
Shlomo Reuven

### 9 Tevet / Wednesday, December 31st

Eddie Jacob Ezra Yehezkel ben Yaacov Azoori  
Abid Nissim ben Abid

### 10 Tevet / Thursday, January 1st

Shalom Kamara Shalom ben Menashe  
Haim Baruch ben Shalom Mingail

## We want you to be a member!

*Did you join us this fall over the High Holy Days? Whatever you spent for tickets will be applied towards an annual membership in Kahal Joseph. Join our wonderful community! Call Sarah at 310.474.0559*

## Errol Levi Social Hall & Ballroom

*Engagement? Wedding? Brit Milah?*

*Bar Mitzvah? Baby Shower? Birthday?*

Kahal Joseph has one of the most beautiful ballrooms on the Westside for your private event including up to 200 guests.

Contact Sarah at 310.474.0559

Invitation to UCLA alumni who want to combat antisemitism on campus

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I would like to invite pro-Israel alumni to attend a strategy session to share ideas on how to combat the alarming tide of antisemitism and BDS activity at UCLA.

You will hear from noted expert on campus antisemitism **Tammi Rossman-Benjamin**, co-founder of **AMCHA Initiative**, who will speak on this topic and offer tools to help UCLA alumni unite to stop this onslaught of hate.

**Monday, January 12, 2015 at 7:30 PM**

At the home of Esther Kandel

2129 Beverwil Drive

Los Angeles, CA 90034

Event Sponsored by AMCHA Initiative

Feel free to invite other pro-Israel UCLA alumni

**Kindly RSVP with the name of each attendee to:**

**[esther@amchainitiative.org](mailto:esther@amchainitiative.org)**

Kosher dessert and light refreshments will be served

*No solicitations will be made*





## About AMCHA Initiative

AMCHA Initiative is a non-profit organization dedicated to investigating, documenting, educating about, and combating antisemitism at institutions of higher education in America.

AMCHA Initiative's efforts are bolstered by a network of more than 5,000 members and supporters in the Jewish community, including university alumni, parents and grandparents, rabbis, religious school principals and synagogue members, who have joined together to speak in one voice to ensure the safety and well-being of Jewish students on college and university campuses across the country.

Founded in 2011 by University of California Santa Cruz lecturer Tammi Rossman-Benjamin and University of California Los Angeles professor emeritus Leila Beckwith, the organization has worked tenaciously to bring about awareness of campus antisemitism on both the state and national levels. Rossman-Benjamin and Beckwith received the 2013 Heroes of Conscience Award from the American Freedom Alliance. Additionally, Rossman-Benjamin received the 2012 Tikkun Olam Award from the Haini Jewish Refugee Legacy Project and was nominated as a Jewish Community Hero in 2012 on behalf of her work with AMCHA Initiative.

AMCHA Initiative's work encompasses activism built upon research and documentation of campus antisemitism. One such notable work is a comprehensive report, the first of its kind, that tracked antisemitic discourse and anti-Israel bias in public events at UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies (CNES) from 2010 to 2013. The study revealed that 93% of Israel-related public events sponsored by CNES had an anti-Israel bias, and 75% contained antisemitic content. The results were presented in September to the UCLA Chancellor and UC President and Regents, with the objective of getting these leaders to acknowledge and address CNES's anti-Israel and antisemitic biases.

AMCHA's report also serves as primary evidence that Near and Middle East centers funded under Title VI of the Higher Education Act have failed to comply with federal law requiring that the programming of these centers be unbiased and present "diverse perspectives". The report was cited in a joint statement by ten organizations to the leaders of the Congressional House Education and Workforce Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. In addition, in response to AMCHA's report, Congresswoman Nina Lowey, the Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee, as well as Congressman Steve Israel and Senators Barbara Mikulski and Benjamin Cardin, sent letters of concern regarding Federal Title VI abuse to the Education Secretary at the Department of Education.

When Students for Justice in Palestine members at UCLA launched a vicious campaign calling for a Judicial Board investigation of student council members who had taken trips to Israel sponsored by Jewish organizations, AMCHA Initiative stepped in with a coalition letter to Chancellor Block and UC President Napolitano. In response, Chancellor Block issued a statement that he was "personally concerned" and asked the VP of Student Affairs to intervene. President Napolitano then joined in sharing "Chancellor Block's concerns about students at UCLA who target any student...who has a relationship with Israel."

Additional AMCHA Initiative campaigns have involved calling attention to and protecting Jewish students from harassment, intimidation and attempts to shut down Jewish students' events. The organization has been a leader in identifying and publicizing university departments, faculty members, academic groups, and administrative offices that sponsor, endorse, and/or fund events with antisemitic content – including creating a map overlay of faculty members who sanction antisemitic boycotts of Israel.

Serving as a watchdog organization to monitor antisemitic activity on campuses, AMCHA Initiative has garnered media coverage worldwide, including in the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Times of Israel*, *Jewish Journal*, *Jerusalem Post*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.