

KOL MEVASSER

We are pleased
to inform our members that
Rabbi Raif Melhado
will be returning to Kahal Joseph for
Shabbat, February 14th
to pray with us and deliver his sermon

Rabbi Raif Melhado studies at Yeshivat Chovevai Torah and previously studied at Yeshivat Hakkibutz Hadati at Ein Tzurim and the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem. He holds a BA in history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he served as the executive director of the Cohen Hillel Center. Rabbi Melhado is currently earning his Master's Degree in Modern Jewish History at Yeshiva University, and serves as assistant director for the university network at the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. In his spare time, he operates Ketershemtov.com, a website devoted to the works of Rabbi Shemtob Gaguine in documenting and explaining Sephardi customs & traditions.



KJ Schedule Parashat Yitro

Erev Shabbat

Friday, February 6th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am
Shabbat Candle Lighting. 5:10 pm
Minha / Arbith 5:10 pm

Shabbat / Parashat Yitro

Saturday, February 7th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Professor Lev Hakak, Guest Speaker
Minha, Seudah, Arvit 4:45 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdala ... 6:14 pm

Weekdays

Sunday, February 8th

Shaharit 7:30 am
KJ Kids Talmud Torah..... 10:00 am
Monday to Friday Feb 9 to 13
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am

Erev Shabbat

Friday, February 13th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am
Shabbat Candle Lighting. 5:16 pm
Minha / Arbith 5:16 pm

Judaism's Top Ten

(Parashat Yitro Exodus 18:1 – 20:23)

Rabbi Daniel Bouskila

How many commandments are there in the Torah? To most people the answer is simple: 10.

True, there are those who know the Torah contains 613 commandments, but the majority of people believe that there are only “The Ten Commandments.” For them, the number 613 comes as a shock. And even among those who are aware of the 613, you will sometimes hear,

“Yes, I know, but there are really 10 ‘big’ commandments.”

Perhaps the confusion stems from the fact that the term “Ten Commandments” is foreign to the classic Jewish tradition. The birth of “The Ten Commandments” tradition is in the Christian world, where Christian theology asserted that only these 10 statements, spoken by God at Mount Sinai, were relevant. The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Torah, translated the biblical term Aseret Hadevarim (10 statements), as dekalogos, which means “10 words.” Largely

due to Christianity’s theological conclusions, the commonly known word “Decalogue” came to be known in Hellenistic and Christian circles as “The Ten Commandments.”

Rabbinic Judaism never used the term “Ten Commandments,” which in Hebrew would have been “Aseret Hamitzvot.” Instead, the rabbis named them **Aseret Hadibrot** (10 “sayings” or 10 “utterances”).

What made these particular commandments

(Continued on page 3)

Kahal Joseph Events

Rabbi Raif Melhado Return Visit

*Shabbat, February 14, 2015
during morning services*

We invite our members to join us as Rabbi Melhado, rabbinical candidate for Kahal Joseph returns to our community next Shabbat to share in prayers and give a sermon.

Evening of Cards & Backgammon

*Tuesday, February 10, 2015
6:00 pm*

Bring your friends to a friendly evening at Kahal with great company, enjoyable competition, and delicious refreshments. Entrance donation \$10.

Purim Baking for KJ Baskets

Sunday, March 1, 2015 at 10:00 am

Participate in a two-fold mitzvah—prepare traditional Iraqi baked delights to include in KJ's community gift baskets for Purim, also known as Mishloah Manot. These special baskets are sent to individuals experiencing challenging life events.

KJ Purim Carnival

*Sunday, March 8, 2015
11:00 am to 4:00 pm*

A wonderful and festive celebration for kids of all ages. Fabulous prizes. All ride and game booth wristbands \$20. Tickets for rides, food, and other booths \$1 each. See you there!

Torah & Haftara Reading

Torah from the Book of Exodus/Shemot
Parashat Yitro 288 to 301
*Haftara from the Prophets
Yishayahu / Isaiah 302 to 305*

Shabbat Shalom

Shabbat Guest Speaker Professor Lev Hakak

*Professor Lev Hakak dedicates this sermon
in everlasting blessed memory of his
beloved first born son Jacob Hakak
(1980-2014)*

Having graduated with a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the University of California Santa Barbara, Jacob Hakak was a talent of all creative capacities, including architecture, music, writing and literature, computer engineering and technology, glassblowing, various arts and sciences, and was an all around creative genius.



He loved and was loved deeply by family and friends. A true Eagle Scout, and devoted to service, he was a passionate believer in Tikun Olam, the repair of the world, and a passionate, benevolent, fun-loving, and liberated individual thinker. He had a deep love for Israel and profound appreciation for Judaism and his Jewish community.

Jacob Hakak died peacefully from a heart arrhythmia in his home on August 3, 2014, at the young age of 34 and was buried at Hillside Memorial Park in Los Angeles. Jacob is survived by his sister, Dr. Rashelle Hakak-Lavi and brother, Oshri Hakak, by Tal Lavi, his brother-in-law, his Mother and Father, Carole and Dr. Lev Hakak, and his nieces Elah and Noah Lavi. We carry with us his joy and determination to be a light in this world.

Refuah Shlemah

Moselle Amron • Maurice Ovadia
Abe Abraham • Michael Herzbrun
Saul Sassoon • Sassoon Ezra • Tilda Levy

In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries for February 6 to 14, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

18 Shvat / Shabbat, February 7th

Manachi Kemareh

Raphael Mizrahie Raphael Hai ben Eliyahu Mordehai

19 Shvat / Sunday, February 8th

Doris Shemtov David Doris bat Kahela

Sassoon Moshe Sassoon Sasson ben Moshe

20 Shvat / Monday, February 9th

Edward David Ezra ben Meir Shemtov

Nissim Moondani Nissim ben Moondani

Georgette Solomon

21 Shvat / Tuesday, February 10th

Avraham Lubovsky Avraham Yedidiah ben Aryeh

23 Shvat / Thursday, February 12th

Victoria Elie Victoria bat Caden

Maurice Shamash Menashe Hayim Shamash

Carl Zekaria Katsuri ben Sion

24 Shvat / Friday, February 13th

Rachel David Rahel bat Regina

25 Shvat / Shabbat, February 14th

Norma Dabby Naima bat Farha

Morton Raymond Einy Mordecai ben Rahamim

Abraham Sales Avraham ben Sassoon

We want you to be a member!

*Did you join us for services, guest speakers
or special events this year? Consider an
annual membership in Kahal Joseph.*

Join our wonderful community!

Call Sarah at 310.474.0559

Sephardic Mini-Course

with Rabbi Daniel Bouskila
Sephardic Educational Center

Tuesday, February 10th
"From Toledo to Jerusalem"

A one hour film starring Yehoram Gaon with English subtitles, followed by Q&A with Rabbi Bouskila

Tuesday, February 17th
Arabic Music in Synagogue?

Exploring the Judeo-Arabic Maqam & Piyyut Cantorial Tradition
Lecture & audio excerpts with Rabbi Bouskila

Tuesday, February 24th

Haim Sabato: Sephardic Storyteller

Select readings from Sabato's bestselling novels and discussion with Rabbi Bouskila

All evenings at 7:00 pm at Jewish Federation Bldg
6505 Wilshire Boulevard, LA CA 90048
NO CHARGE, but RSVP A MUST
323.272.4574 or info@secjerusalem.org

In the LA Community . . .

JVS Scholarship Available

The Jewish Vocational Service Scholarship is a need-based program for college and graduate school for Jewish students who are permanent residents of Los Angeles County. The online application period for the 2015-2016 academic year begins January 15, 2015, and closes March 15, 2015. Information at www.jvsla.org.

Film on Gett Refusal Screens Feb 15th

A benefit screening of the acclaimed Israeli film "Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem" on Sunday, February 15, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. Panel discussion to follow at the Laemmle Royal Theatre 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. L. A. 90025. For details and to purchase tickets visit getjewishdivorce.org

(Continued from page 1)

unique to the rabbis was obviously not their exclusivity to all other commandments, but the manner in which they were transmitted to the Israelites. Most of the Torah's commandments were transmitted through Moses. God would teach Moses, and Moses in turn would teach the people.

This is reflected in the oft-repeated verse "And God spoke to Moses as follows: Speak to the Children of Israel and instruct them...." This phrase, with either "God spoke to Moses" or "God said to Moses," appears in the Torah 146 times. By contrast, the introduction to the *Aseret Hadibrot* — "God spoke all these words, saying..." — appears only in this instance. The fact that God chose to speak these 10 statements in first person, without an intermediary, is what caught the eyes of the rabbinic tradition. In fact, the *Midrash Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael* goes one step further, saying that all 10 statements were actually spoken by God as one: **"God spoke all these words. This teaches us that God spoke the Aseret Hadibrot in one utterance — something impossible for creatures of flesh and blood. If so, why then is it said 'I am the Lord your God,' 'You shall have no other Gods,' and so on? It simply teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, after having said all of the Aseret Hadibrot in one utterance, repeated them, saying each commandment separately."**

The words of this Midrash have even impacted the way the *Aseret Hadibrot* are read in the synagogue from the Torah. It is the custom in most communities to stand during the reading of the *Aseret Hadibrot*, a show of special reverence for this being the actual voice of God that was heard at Mount Sinai when these commandments were spoken. Additionally, when the Torah reader chants them, he must choose, based on the custom of the community, *how* to

chant them. There are two alternative systems of cantillation for the *Aseret Hadibrot* — "lower cantillation" (*ta'am tachton*) and "upper cantillation" (*ta'am elyon*). The former divides the Hebrew text into verses, in the usual grammatical manner of the rest of the Torah, where the latter divides each commandment into its own unit, reflecting the manner in which God actually spoke them.

It is obvious that in the Jewish tradition, the *Aseret Hadibrot* are not *the* "Ten Commandments," but they do hold a special place within the tradition. Is the fact that they were spoken out loud by God enough of a reason for the special attention they are accorded? Or is the actual content of these commandments -- which is so powerful that God purposely chose to utter only these directly -- the reason for their special place in Judaism?

The answer to this question is best summed up in *Sefer Ha'ikkarim*, a 15th century work of Jewish philosophy by Spanish rabbi and philosopher Joseph Albo, who writes: **"These 10 statements are general, all-inclusive principles representing the two main categories of commandments in the Torah. The first five of these commandments represents man's faith in God, and his obligations toward God. The next five define the overriding principles governing man's relationship to his fellow man, and are mandatory to the existence of an orderly life in any state or society"** (Section 3, Chapter 26). What Albo brilliantly asserts is that the *Aseret Hadibrot* are a "preamble to the constitution," and without them, the rest of the Torah does not make sense.

If you ever want to hear God's voice, open up the Torah to Exodus chapter 20, verses 2-14. Read those verses – the *Aseret Hadibrot* – and you will hear God's voice speaking directly to you, loud and clear.

Shabbat Shalom

Yom Yom Odeh La'El

This piyut was composed anonymously and is traditionally sung in the Iraqi Jewish tradition before reading the Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Commandments, on the Shabbatot for Parashat Yitro and Parashat Va'et-hanan and on Shavuot. The piyut describes how the Jewish people stood in a suspended state, ready to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai, just before the occurrence of the momentous event.

Yom Yom Odeh la'El

Yom, yom odeh la'El asher bakhar banu
Min ha'amim li'sgulah lo l'kakhano
Al Har Sinai et Torah-toh hinkhilanu
Aseret dibrot kodsho, hishmi-anu
Tzva marom ribotayim yardu imo
B'et asher niglah l'Yisrael amo
Mi'Sinai va ve'zarakh mi'Seir lamo
Beh'kol shofar khazak meh-od ya-anenu
Kharad ve'ragaz Har Sinai et bi-atoh
Le'hankhil dat le'Yisrael segulatoh
Al yad Moshe eved El ne'eman bey-toh
Ve'sham ayin beh'ayin ra-ata eyneynu
Kadosh, k'az tegaleh malkhutkha alai
Le'mikdashi shuvah uskhon tokh ohalai
Ve'li ha-teh shalom ke'mey nahar ulai
Ve'enenu yir-u ve'yismakh libenu

יום יום אודה לאל אשר בחר בנו מן העמים לסגלה לו
לקחתו על הר סיני את התורה הנחלתו. עשרת הברות
קדשו השמיטנו:

מרום תבותים ירדו עמו. בעת אשר נגלה לישראל עמו.
מסיני בא ורחם משעיר לנו. בקול שופר חזק מאד יענינו:

ורגו הר סיני עת ביאתו. להנחיל דת לישראל סגלתו.
עליה משה עמד אל נאמן בוחו. ושם עין בעין ראתה
עינינו:

כאן תגלה מלכותך עלי. למקדשי שובה ושם תוך אהלי.
ולי השה שלום בסו נהר אולי. ועינינו יראו השמחה לפני:
ועינינו יראו השמחה לפנינו

Each Day I Thank G-d

Every day I give thanks to the G-d who chose us.
From all the nations around, He clasped us to Him.
On Mount Sinai, He bequeathed His Torah to us.
He proclaimed His holy Ten Commandments.

A myriad host from on high came down with Him
at the moment when He revealed Himself to Yisrael, His nation.
From Sinai He came and shone out of the wilderness,
with the loud cry of the shofar, He will humble & answer us.

Mount Sinai trembled and shook when He arrived.
To give the Law to [the people of] Yisrael around him.
Through the hand of Moshe, the servant of G-d faithful.
And there, eye to eye, our eyes perceived.

Holy as then, unveil Your Kingship to me.
To my holy places return and rest in my tents.
And turn peace towards me like a river.
And our eyes will perceive and our hearts, rejoice.