

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

Could there be rational science behind miracles? Pharaoh thought so, and Marvel legend Stan Lee still does. At face value it seems surprising: one was a harsh oppressor, the famous tyrant of Egypt, and the other continues to be a Jewish dreamer, the creator of comic superheroes. What ideas could they possibly share?



Pharaoh used the science of his day to oppress others. For him, a natural explanation of God's miracles was a way to counter Moses. Liberty remained, at best, a vague future promise. If miracles would help Moses win the slaves' hearts and minds, and Pharaoh could explain them away with reason, he would sap Moses of the people's goodwill and support. Why would the Jewish slaves follow their leader when freedom required bitter self-sacrifice first?

Exactly this scenario is put into words in Shemot Rabba (9:6): *"Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers' – Pharaoh began to mock [Moses and Aaron,] saying, 'These are the special miraculous signs of your God?! ...Don't you realize that I have figured out a logical way to perform them too?!' He then pulled small children from their lessons at school to demonstrate that they had mastered the signs; and finally he summoned his wife to show that even she could do them."* Against such a critique it's no small wonder that Moses was disheartened, returning to God in understandable irritation after his efforts left his people worse off than when he started.

Stan Lee, on the other hand, searched for the science behind modern-day miracles as a way to awaken the human spirit. Over four seasons from 2010-2014, he ran a documentary on the History Channel called *Stan Lee's Superhumans*, in which he found real people with incredible abilities and tried, logically, to understand their talent. Lee met people who really seemed a cut above the general population. "Professor Splash" survived a 36-foot dive into a 12-inch pool of water. John Ferraro could pound a nail into a board with nothing but his own forehead. Tim Friede lived through multiple self-inflicted snakebites for the sake of venom research. How could such people exist?

While Lee's analyses revealed that a few contestants had less-than-super abilities, most shows were a tribute to the outer limits of the human mind and body. What's more, the fragility of most human existence was brought into relief by the superhuman feats of the select few. In the end, each episode left the audience with a sense of reverence for simply being alive.

Like miracles, science and logic are, in some sense, just tools. Their usefulness depends, in part, on how they are used and towards what end. Being rational and skeptical, converting the stuff of legends into hard science, potentially keeps our pride in check and keeps our feet on the ground. On the other hand, sometimes what's needed is the ability to see miracles where they really do exist. As we face the Pharaohs of our time, may we all keep a little bit of Stan Lee in our pockets.

Parashat Va'era

Rosh Hodesh Shevat

Torah: Ex. 6:2–9:35, Num. 28:9–15

Hertz 232, 695; Stone 318, 890

Haftara: Isaiah 66:1–24, repeat 23

Hertz 944–947; Stone 1208–1210

Tefillot: Mashiv Haruah, Ya'ale Veyavo

Half Hallel, Ata Yatsarta in Musaf

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, January 27th

Shaharit..... 6:25 am

Candle lighting 5:00 pm

Minha promptly at 5:00 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit 5:30 pm

Yom Shabbat

Rosh Hodesh Shevat

Saturday, January 28th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer..... 8:20 am

Keri'at HaTorah 10:15 am

Musaf 11:45 am

Women's Tehillim..... right after kiddush

Minha 4:30 pm

Se'uda Shelisheet 5:15 pm

Arvit 5:50 pm

Havdala 6:05 pm

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Tu Bishvat

Community Hike

Sunday, February 12 - 10 AM
Will Rogers State Historical Park

Join our community and the
Talmud Torah for a
meaningful walk in the wild

Inspirational Hike * Games
Raffle * Wear walking shoes
Bring your own lunch

RSVP to Jessica at Jessica@kahaljoseph.org

Refu'a Shelema

Moselle Amron • Sally Amron • Haskell Avrahamy Sylvia Cohen • Simcha bat Rooha
Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke • Sassoon Ezra • Lev Hakak • Yoel Iny Tilda Levy • Florice Newberry
Maurice Ovadia • Grace Tizabi • Katie bat Farha • Miriam bat Yetta • Aliza bat Rahel
Aliza bat Victoria • Adam Moshe Chaim ben Olga

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries from January 28 to Feb 4, 2017. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

1 Shevat / Shabbat, January 28th
Mozelle Solomon *Mozly bat Haviva*

2 Shevat / Sunday, January 29th
Joseph Haghighi *Yosef ben Ezra*
Mahboobeh Haykani

Samuel Sheff *Shlomo ben Binyamin*
Albert Zekaria *Abdullah ben Sion Zekaria*

4 Shevat/ Tuesday, January 31st
Khorshid Farzaneh Farahi *Rahel bat Esther*

6 Shevat / Thursday, February 2nd
Albert Gaub *Avner Abraham ben Khatoon*
Maurice Jacob Jonah *Maurice Yaacov Yonah*

8 Shevat / Shabbat, February 4th
Ezra Ekaireb *Ezra Sion ben David*
F. Ellis Meyer *Eliyahoo Faraj ben Abraham Shalom*
Rebecca Mizrahie *Rivka bat Toba*
Edward Shashoua *Sion Edward ben Elisha*

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Weekdays

Sunday, January 29th

Shaharit 7:30 am
Talmud Torah 9:45 am

Monday to Friday, January 30 to Feb 3

Shaharit 6:25 am

Next Shabbat / Friday & Saturday, Feb 3 & 4

Shabbat Candlelighting 5:07 pm
Friday Mincha 5:00 pm
Shaharit 8:30 am
Saturday Mincha 4:30 pm
Havdala 6:12 pm

MAKING ROSH HODESH SPECIAL



It's a rare treat that Rosh Hodesh falls on Shabbat, usually only twice a year. To mark this sweet occasion, we are making a few special changes in the synagogue:

- ♦ We will bring out two Sifre Torah, one for Parashat Va'era and one for the Rosh Hodesh reading
- ♦ The Parokhets have been changed to a set that honors the memory of Naima Dabby, whose yahrzeit falls in the month of Shevat.

May these observances find favor in God's eyes, and may He usher in a month of the best tidings for us and all the Jewish people!

This Week Only: Shaharit Starts at 8:20 am

Ladies! Knead a little love?

Make challah dough to take home and bake

Learn about challah & why we make it

Bring your girlfriends & meet new people

**Challah Making * Sunday, January 29
12:30 PM at Kahal Joseph**

\$18 per person

\$72 Silver Sponsor

\$180 Gold Sponsor

\$360 Women's Circle



**RSVP to Louise at 818-884-0120
by Wednesday, January 25**



Scholar-in-Residence
Rabbi Ben Hassan
Sephardic Bikkur Holim,
Seattle

February 18-19
Parashat Yitro

Friday, February 18 - Young Professionals Dinner

Join the rabbis and their families for a delicious dinner and topical discussion at Rabbi Melhados house. RSVP to rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org

Saturday, February 19 - Special Seuda Shelisheet

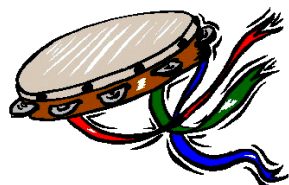
Rabbi Hassan will speak with an expanded meal.



Purim Extravaganza!

COMING SUNDAY, MARCH 12!

Carnival * Morning Megillah
Board elections



MOMMY & ME

Winter Session

Thursdays - Music & Movement

10:00 - 11:00 - 18 to 24 months

11:30 - 12:30 - 9 to 16 months

1:15 - 2:15 - 8 to 14 months

Fridays - Shabbat

10:00 - 11:00 - 18 to 30 months

11:30 - 12:30 - 11 to 17 months

8 sessions starting January 19 * \$225 per child per session

Questions? Jessica@kahaljoseph.org

To register www.playcreationskids.org

SAVE THE DATE

Purim Baking!

Sunday, March 5 * 10:00 AM

Bake traditional Iraqi treats
with friends for the KJ Purim
baskets. It's a mitzvah!

Monetary donations to the Purim Baskets may be made to the Kahal Joseph office.