

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

The story of Shemot leads us to very different places depending on how we tell it. The way it is explained in the Torah has the broad perspective of the nation in mind, and resounds with positivity. From the time of God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 15), the family that became the ancient Israelites knew that we would come out ahead. Granted, we would go through a long period of trouble, but eventually we would emerge in triumph on the other side. Those who afflicted us would get their just desserts while we, their onetime victims, would receive the Torah, stage a dramatic homecoming, and live happily ever after.

Yet if we tell the story through the narrow angle of the individual, it can be problematic. Imagine that you are an Israelite born ten years before the new Pharaoh's reign. Since the redemption that Moses ushers in might well occur after your lifetime, your entire worldview would be shaped by the experience of becoming a slave in your late childhood. You might cry out to God, but no answer would come. From the time you were barely old enough to perceive the injustice, your body would be forfeit to a dictator with the power to impose a wretched, miserable life upon you.

Recently I had a polite exchange of ideas with a friend who left Christianity over issues like this. The Bible is full of injustices, he argued, so what are we to make of God suddenly "remembering" and "hearing" the cry of the Israelites? (Ex. 2:23-35). Had He forgotten them before?! Was He not listening until that point?! What suddenly made Him pay attention now? And if the price paid in the meantime was the actual suffering of real



people, where is the justice? Wasn't Abraham's morality plea "how can the Judge of All Earth not act justly?!" (Gen 18:25).

This is a difficult challenge to respond to, but our tradition has not shied away from it. One of the techniques that rabbinic literature uses when God appears to act unfairly is to assume that there is more going on than what the literal words of the Torah report. In this case, if God did not answer the Israelites' prayers over a long period of time, we must have been doing something that prevented us from drawing near to Him. The Midrash argues that the Israelites had a collective problem with social morality, and only when we tasted the worst of Pharaoh's brutality did we mature enough to see why we should improve our own character. From the very first moment that God could tell this was happening, He spoke to Moses and initiated the Exodus (Shemot Rabba 1:34-36). Even if this is not the literal truth of the story, it demonstrates that information which is left out of the Biblical text could completely reshape its moral impact.

A parallel to this is the idea behind Psalms 94:12, "happy is the man whom God chastises." How interesting that the words for "chastisement" and "moral instruction" are identical in Hebrew (*musar*). While it may indeed sound unfair, one who endures privation and suffering inevitably grows for the experience. They may even look back on their suffering afterwards as an essential part of their improved identity. Neither this response nor the one above is "the" answer that should remove all doubts about the presentation of God's morality in the Torah. But both show us that there is often more than meets the eye. If we pray for God to give us a second look, let's repay Him in kind and give Him the benefit of the doubt.

Parashat Shemot

Bat Mitsva of Talia Davoudian

Torah: Ex. 1:1–6:1, 124 Pesukim
Hertz 206–224; Stone 292–317
Haftara (Iraqis): Ezek. 16:1–13
Handout; not in the Hertz or Stone
Tefillot: Mashiv Haruah

Reminder

*Shaharit this Shabbat
will start at 8:15 am.*



KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, January 5th

Minha	4:30 pm
Candle lighting	4:39 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, January 6th

Shaharit	8:15 am
Keri'at HaTorah.....	10:00 am
Musaf	11:40 am

Women's Tehillim.....	<i>right after kiddush</i>
Minha	4:00 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet.....	4:45 pm
Arvit	5:30 pm
Havdala	5:44 pm

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Mazal Tov

Talia Davoudian
on your Bat Mitsva

Besiman Tov

to your father
Keyvan Davoudian

grandparents
Flora & David Davoudian

sister, Eliana

& all your extended family

Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored

in honor of
Talia's Bat Mitsva

by
Keyvan Davoudian

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Sunday, January 7th

Shaharit..... 7:30 am
Talmud Torah 9:45 am

Monday to Friday, January 8th to 12th

Shaharit..... 6:25 am

Next Shabbat / Fri-Sat, January 12-13

Shabbat Candle lighting..... 4:46 pm
Friday Minha PROMPTLY at 4:45 pm
Shaharit 8:30 am
Saturday Minha 4:15 pm
Havdala 5:50 pm

Welcome

Shabbat Guest Speaker
Dr. Nadia Malinovich

Importance of the AIU

The Alliance Israélite Universelle is one of the oldest and most influential Jewish advocacy organizations in modern times. Founded in Paris in 1860, it pursued diplomatic and educational projects on behalf of mostly Sephardi Jews from Morocco to Iran. At its height, it operated over 100 schools for tens of thousands of students, pushing a Francophilic, modernizing curriculum. We are very interested to hear about your research and perspectives on this historic organization.

Membership Benefits Everyone!

You get . . .

- ◆ To be part of the Kahal family
- ◆ High Holy Days tickets
- ◆ Rabbi for lifecycle events
- ◆ Pastoral counseling
- ◆ Preferential rates for space rentals, Talmud Torah tuition, & children's programs

You support . . .

- ◆ Educational programs
- ◆ Social events
- ◆ Prayer minyanim
- ◆ Keeping KJ here for you when you need it!

**Contact the office at 310-474-0559
or speak to Rabbi Melhado to join!**

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries from January 6 to 13, 2017. It is customary to light memorial candles, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services in honor of loved ones.

19 Tevet / Shabbat, January 6th

Yeheskel Goury *Yeheskel ben Shaul*
Solomon Raymond *Shlomo ben Rahamim*

20 Tevet / Sunday, January 7th

Ronnie Kelly *Raphael ben Saleh Moshe Kadoorie*
Joseph Hayeem Messiah
Ruby Mussry *Reuven ben Yaacob Saleh*

21 Tevet / Monday, January 8th

Solomon Reuben *Shlomo ben Reuven D'loomy*
Behejohn bat Yehudah

22 Tevet / Tuesday, January 9th

Matooka Girgiyr *Matooka bat Farha*

23 Tevet / Wednesday, January 10th

Kovkah Cohen *Kovkah bat Yaakov Hacohen*
Pinchas Khalili *Pinchas ben Nissan*
Emma Moses *Amuma bat Farha*

24 Tevet / Thursday, January 11th

Rev Moses Hai Abraham *Moshe Hai ben Abraham*
Louise Jacob

Sulman Sheeri *Sulman ben Yosef*
Shather Shokri *Shather bat Jacob*

26 Tevet / Shabbat, January 13th

Ronnie Assia *Ronnie ben Naji*

Refua Shelema

Sassoon Ezra • Moselle Amron • Sally Amron
Sylvia Cohen • Haskell Avrahamy • Florice Newberry
Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke • Tilda Levy
Aliza bat Rahel • Aliza bat Victoria • Miryam bat Malka
Arlette bat Rashel • Chaya Chana bat Batya •
Yvonne Moalim • Katie bat Farha • Malka bat Rahel
Mehry bat Miriam Hakimipour • Miriam bat Yetta •
Moshe Ezra ben Mazal Tov • Simcha bat Rooha •
Moshe Hooman ben Sara • Habiba bat Farha •
Moshe Haim ben Sara

JANUARY *Children's Shabbat*



SATURDAY, JANUARY 6 - PARASHAT SHEMOT

PLAYROOM OPENS AT 10:00 - PROGRAM BEGINS AT 10:30

EXPLORE THE STORY OF MOSES WITH US!

START THE MORNING WITH *PRAYER*

***PARTICIPATE* IN GAMES & ACTIVITIES**

ENJOY A *PARASHA-THEMED* SNACK

TORAH TOTS - 0 to 5

TORAH & ME - 6 to 12

Email Jessica at Jessica@kahaljoseph.org for more information or to volunteer!



Kahal Joseph's 5778 Speaker Series



Professor Nadia Malinovich

Saturday, January 6, 2018



Professor Malinovich received her bachelors in History from Oberlin College and her PhD in History from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. After a Post-doctoral Fellowship at New York University, she began teaching in France.

Now an Associate Professor of American Studies at the Universite Picardie-Jules Verne, she has a special interest in French Jewish History, about which she has written extensively.

Her current project is an exploration of the lives of graduates of the Alliance Israelite Universelle schools in the Middle East and North Africa, both pre- and post-immigration to France, Canada and the United States.

FORGOTTEN YOUR HEBREW? NEVER HAD ANY?

HEBREW FOR BEGINNERS

WITH RABBI MELHADO

NEXT MEETING

WED. JAN. 10 AT 6:30PM

Adult Bat Mitzvah Class

Next Meeting

Wed. Jan. 10 at 7:30PM

**Women with all levels of Hebrew &
Jewish knowledge welcome!**

Contact Yvette Dabby at YvetteDabby@gmail.com
to sign up for either class or both!

**Did you or your parents attend
an Alliance Israelite Universelle school
in the Middle East or North Africa?**

In addition to speaking at Kahal, Dr. Nadia Malinovich will be in Los Angeles from January 5 to 13 to conduct in-person interviews with people who graduated from the Alliance Israelite Universelle schools in the Middle East or Africa.

In collaboration with the AIU Library in Paris and the Sephardi Federation in New York, she has already completed 40 interviews in Paris & Montreal. Now, she looks to the Los Angeles community.

To find out more, or to schedule a time to speak,
email her at nmalinovich@gmail.com.

*The Norma & Sam Dabby
Talmud Torah invite you*

Tu Bishvat Community Hike
Will Rogers State Park
Sunday, January 28

10:00 AM - Inspirational Hike
11:30 AM - Community Picnic

Bring your picnic lunch and your sense of fun!
RSVP to Jessica at jessica@kahaljoseph.org

**Community
Shabbat Dinner**
in honor of Tu Bishvat

Friday, February 2 *Limited Space!*

6:15pm - Tea & Games

6:45pm - Delicious Shabbat Dinner

\$18 for adults - Under 5 free

RSVP by Wed. January 31

**www.kahaljoseph.org/tu-bishvat
or 310-474-0559**

**Sponsored in memory of Soleiman Mizrahi, who would have
turned 99 this Tu Bishvat, by his children and their families**



**Young
Professionals
Shabbat Dinner**

Friday, January 12 at 7:30 PM
RSVP to RabbiMelhado@kahaljoseph.org

Members & friends in your 20s & 30s

**Join Rabbi Melhado at home for a delicious
Shabbat meal and an amazing discussion.**

**Bring your appetite! Bring your friends!
Bring your questions!**

Purim Baking!
Sunday, February 18
10AM until the dough is done

**Bake traditional Iraqi treats for the KJ Purim
baskets, which are distributed to members
of our congregation.**



Can't make it?
Make a dough-nation!
**Send a check to the Kahal Joseph
office, call 310-474-0559 or
www.kahaljoseph.org/donate**