

# KOL MEVASSER

## Rabbi's Message

In the papers of Dr. Daniel J. Elazar, a past president of the American Sephardi Federation, is a thought piece called "The Special Character of Sephardi Tolerance."

As the title suggests, it is a celebration of a global Sephardi culture of welcoming and sophistication. In his telling, "Sephardim pride [our]selves" on our lack of fanaticism, the absence of liberal Jewish movements in our communities, and our embrace of the secular world as an essential component of our religious experience.

This characterization of Sephardim has become increasingly common. Many of my mentors, teachers, and colleagues have written about it at length, displaying it prominently on their websites, email lists, and publications. And there is a genuine extent to which they are correct: communities outside the Ashkenazi world have indeed produced leaders who shun fanaticism, create synagogues that host a wide spectrum of observance under the same roof, and serve as models of worldliness and culture. In a historical moment where Orthodoxy is becoming judgmental and self-secluding, there is every reason to celebrate the fact that Sephardim have flourished in an environment of tolerance.

Nevertheless, I can't help but to think that this conversation sacrifices some relationship with the truth for the sake of making a laudable political point. While Sephardim have produced modern/tolerant organizations like the Orthodox Union and the Jewish Theological Seminary (which was Orthodox under its original Sephardi leadership), we have also founded liberal Jewish communities



that made a conscious break with their Orthodox brethren. Three famous examples are the Reformed Society of Israelites (Charleston, 1824), the West London Synagogue of British Jews (London, 1840), and Temple Emanu-El (Curaçao, 1867). And while the modern Sephardic rabbinate has included benevolent visionaries like Yaakov Moshe Toledano, it also gives pride of place to stern dogmatists like Shelomo Eliezer Alfandari.

Only this past week, a Sephardi-Haredi initiative passed the Knesset that will force Israeli grocery stores to close on Shabbat. The so-called "Supermarket Law" is a form of coercive kiruv that will only bring Orthodoxy to mockery and widen the gap between secular and religious Jews in Israel. Even if its advocates are correct that it will not change the facts on the ground as much as is feared, what kind of society polices religious observance? The "worldly Sephardic spirit" of the tolerance narrative would find such an effort to be completely repellent.

Parashat Va'era resounds with the themes of resisting religious coercion. Moses's clarion call, which has been translated as "let My people go!" actually has a second part: "let My people go *so that they can worship Me!*" In other words, we are asking Pharaoh not just for general freedom, but specifically for religious freedom. Is that something that we truly value? Is Dr. Elazar correct that we should congratulate ourselves for our history of acceptance? Then we Sephardim have a responsibility to resist strong-arm measures like the Supermarket Law in the present. To be as cultured, positive and accepting as we claim, we have an obligation to celebrate our Judaism in peace and harmony with others.

## Parashat Va'era

Torah: Ex. 6:2–9:35, 121 Pesukim  
Hertz 232–244; Stone 318–339  
Haftara: Ezek. 28:25–29:21  
Hertz 244–247; Stone 1149–1150  
Tefillot: Mashiv Haruah, Hakhrazat  
Shevat (Wed)

## KJ Schedule

### Erev Shabbat

*Friday, January 12th*

Candle lighting ..... 4:46 pm  
Minha ..... PROMPTLY at 4:45 pm  
Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit ..... 5:15 pm

### Yom Shabbat

*Saturday, January 13th*

Shaharit ..... 8:30 am  
Keri'at HaTorah ..... 10:15 am  
Musaf ..... 11:40 am

Women's Tehillim ..... *right after kiddush*  
Minha ..... 4:15 pm  
Se'uda Shelisheet ..... 5:00 pm  
Arvit ..... 5:35 pm  
Havdala ..... 5:50 pm

*Sunday, January 14th*

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

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Seuda Shelisheet

is sponsored

in loving memory of  
Maurice Zekaria, z"l

by  
Alice Zekaria & Family



## Mazal Tov

Kahal sends best wishes to our friend Rabbi Yosef Khakshoor, who circumcised his new son with his own hands Wednesday morning. May little Moshe grow to a life of Torah, Huppa, and good deeds!

## 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

## Appreciation

*We offer a warm KJ thanks to everyone who made our special children's program happen last week:*

### Staff

Jessica Melhado  
Penina Meghnagi Solomon  
Sarah Bouchoucha  
Rosa Maldonado

### Volunteers

Orly Kattan  
Baruch Isaac  
Daniel Itzhakov

### Liked what you saw?

*Mark your calendars and tell a friend!  
The next date will be February 3rd.*

## 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 13 to 20, 2017. It is customary to light memorial candles, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services in honor of loved ones.

### 26 Tevet / Shabbat, January 13th

Ronny Assia *Ronny ben Naji*

### 27 Tevet / Sunday, January 14th

Sassoon Elias

Stanley Feinberg *Stanley ben Jesse*

### 28 Tevet / Monday, January 15th

Maurice Zekaria *Moshe ben Seon*

### 29 Tevet / Tuesday, January 16th

Mollie Konigsberg *Mazaltov bat Masooda*

### 1 Shvat / Wednesday, January 17th

Mozelle Solomon *Mozly bat Haviva*

### 2 Shvat / Thursday, January 18th

Joseph Haghighi *Yosef ben Ezra*

Mahboobeh Haykani

Samuel Sheff *Shlomo ben Binyamin*

Albert Zekaria *Abdullah ben Seon*

### 4 Shvat / Shabbat, January 20th

Khorshid Farzaneh Farahi *Rahel bat Esther*

*(Continued from page 1)*

### Martin Luther King Jr Day / Mon, January 15

*Mon-Tue, Thurs-Fri, January 15-16, 18-19*  
Shaharit ..... 6:25 am

**Rosh Hodesh Shvat / Wed, January 17**  
Shaharit ..... 6:05 am

**Next Shabbat / Fri-Sat, January 19-20**  
Shabbat Candle lighting ..... 4:52 pm  
Friday Minha ..... 4:45 pm  
Shaharit ..... 8:30 am  
Saturday Minha ..... 4:15 pm  
Havdala ..... 5:57 pm



# Challah Bake

in Memory of Anita Wozniak, z"l

Learn the art of Challah making and hear an inspirational speaker

Thursday, February 1

7:00 PM - Light fare & Dessert

8:00 PM - Baking begins

\$18 prepaid RSVP or \$26 at the door

RSVP to Sharon Gomperts 310.621.5419/[sharongomperts@gmail.com](mailto:sharongomperts@gmail.com)

or Esther Avrahamy 818.469.5622/[avrahamy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:avrahamy@sbcglobal.net)

Kahal Joseph Congregation

10505 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90025

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](mailto:jessica@kahaljoseph.org)

KAHAL'S

Children's Shabbat



FIRST SHABBAT OF THE MONTH

FEB 3 - MAR 3 - APR 7 - MAY 5 - JUNE 2

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

EXPLORE THE WEEKLY PARASHA 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](mailto:Jessica@kahaljoseph.org) for more information or to volunteer!

Community  
Shabbat Dinner  
in honor of Tu Bishvat

Friday, February 2 <sup>Limited  
space!</sup>

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](http://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





**KAHAL JOSEPH INVITES YOU TO**  
**THE PURIM CARNIVAL**  
**Games! Food! Fun! Prizes!**  
**Sunday, February 25**  
**11:00AM - 3:00PM**  
**Event Chairs: Jonathan Kelly, Molly Jalali, Jessica Melhado**



**FORGOTTEN YOUR HEBREW? NEVER HAD ANY?**  
**HEBREW FOR BEGINNERS**  
**WITH RABBI MELHADO**  
**NEXT MEETING**  
**WED. JAN. 31 AT 6:30PM**

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**Adult Bat Mitzvah Class**  
**Next Meeting**  
**Wed. Jan. 31 at 7:30PM**  
**Women with all levels of Hebrew & Jewish knowledge welcome!**

**Contact Yvette Dabby at [YvetteDabby@gmail.com](mailto:YvetteDabby@gmail.com) to sign up for either class or both!**

**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](http://www.kahaljoseph.org/donate)



**Living Room Learning**



**Got a pressing Jewish question?**  
**Something on your mind? A topic of interest?**  
 Host Rabbi Melhado in your home for a class to explore a topic of your choice, or work with the rabbi to find something that interests you. Invite your friends, and learn together with the rabbi in a relaxed environment.

Interested? Questions?  
 Email the rabbi at [RabbiMelhado@kahaljoseph.org](mailto:RabbiMelhado@kahaljoseph.org).