

Rabbi's Message

Recently, several congregants asked me if we should adjust our prayers for the holiday of Thanksgiving. Specifically, they wanted to know if we can skip the Tahanunim (penitential prayers) according to the same custom by which we mark Jewish festival days. Since this touches on the interplay of Jewish and American identity, I feel moved to share my answer with the public.



it was used as an outdoor garment by Catholic clergy. The original source (#88) makes it clear that "*behukotehem*" has an extremely limited application in modern times.

The part of the Shulhan Arukh that we should really be consulting is Orah Hayim 131:4-7, which specifically lists the occasions on which we omit Tahanunim. Noting that each of these is introduced with the expression "it is customary to omit..." Rabbi Yaakov Hayim Sofer of Baghdad explains that many rabbis since the 9th century have understood Tahanunim to be optional in public worship. Therefore, when a special occasion arises such as a circumcision, wedding, or minor festival, it is totally permitted to skip them (131:53). Indeed, this is why Iraqi Jews omit the Tahanunim on the "Miracles of Tahmasp," two local Purims for the city of Baghdad that fall on the 16th of Tevet and the 11th of Av (see *Seder Tefilla*, Baghdad: S. B. Hussein, 1914, p. 59a).

One of the first American congregations to address the question of Tahanunim on Thanksgiving was Shearith Israel, Manhattan's Portuguese synagogue. Not only did they skip them in honor of the holiday, but they also created a Hallel-like service to be read after the usual prayers had concluded! This to-the-hilt acceptance of Thanksgiving's message of gratitude to God was preserved by Rabbi David de Sola Pool in a pamphlet called "*Minhat Toda*," which was released in 1945 on the first Thanksgiving after WWII. In the congregation that birthed the Orthodox Union, their piety in reflecting Thanksgiving in public prayer is above reproach. This year, we will put it in action at Kahal, replacing the usual penitence with a sincere reflection on how very much we have to be thankful for!

Two primary values are at play here. Because Judaism is a spiritual covenant, our worship cycle is set by sources of religious authority. Thanksgiving is not a Jewish holiday, and so a case can be made that the day should not affect our liturgy. On the other hand, the US has generally been hospitable to Jewish life, with freedom of religion enshrined in Federal and State law. When our nation calls upon us to give thanks, we should have plenty of gratitude to express.

Some public discussions of this issue have added a third component of "*behukotehem lo telekhu*," the Biblical injunction against following the laws of other religions. In particular they focus on a gloss to the Shulhan Arukh (YD 178:1) saying that we should avoid customs with "traces of foreign worship." Based on this, some respected Hahamim have ruled as recently as last year that Thanksgiving is forbidden because the original Pilgrims were Christian! I cannot understand how they reached this conclusion because the gloss is based on a responsum by Joseph Colon Trabotto (ca. 1420-1480) in which he allows doctors to wear a professional cloak called a *cappa* even though

Parashat Vayishlah

Torah: Gen. 32:4–36:43, 153 Pesukim
Hertz 122–134; Stone 170–197
Haftara: Obad. 1:1–21
Hertz 137–140; Stone 1141–1142
Tefillot: Mashiv Haruah

Reminder: Winter Shabbat Times

The time change makes Shabbat come in very early in November and December. For the next five weeks...

- Minha on Friday will be at 4:15 pm
- Minha on Saturday will be at 3:45 pm

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, November 23rd

Candle lighting 4:27 pm
Minha 4:15 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat & Arvit 4:45 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, November 24th

Shaharit 8:30 am
Keriat HaTorah 10:15 am
Sermon 11:20 am
Musaf 11:30 am
Women's Tehillim right after kiddush

Minha 3:45 pm
Seuda Shelisheet 4:30 pm
Arvit 5:15 pm
Havdala 5:30 pm

(Continued on page 2)

LAPD Clergy Council

Kahal Joseph thanks the LAPD West LA District and Captain Valencia Thomas for hosting a Clergy Council on Tuesday. We deeply value that our police department is proactively forging good relationships with our community.



Rabbi Melhado with officers Maria Gray and Christopher Ragsdale, Senior Lead Officers for Brentwood and Westwood, respectively.

Day to Mark the Departure & Expulsion of Jews from Arab Countries and Iran

As part of an international initiative begun by Sass Peress of Montreal, we will read a mass Haskhaba for all those buried in cemeteries in the Middle East and North Africa.

The rabbi's sermon will celebrate the surviving tradition of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry.

Guest Speaker Rabbi Shemtov Shabbat Day, 12/15



Rabbi Joobin Aaron Shemtov served as rabbi and hazzan of the Iraqi Jewish Association in Toronto, and worked for the Associated Hebrew Schools there for more than a decade.

For over 14 years, he has been involved with Jewish and Persian communities in California, and has led High Holy Day services for the **Elite Entrepreneur Organization** and the **Iranian American Jewish Cultural Organization** for the past 8 years.

Born in Tehran, Rabbi Shemtov immigrated as a young man to Vienna, where he performed as a chazzan. In 1998, he moved to Toronto, where he became involved in Jewish, Israeli and *kiruv* communities. He supported Israel through organizations such as NCSY, Sephardic Outreach, and Birthright. He graduated from York University with honors and received *semikha* from *Yeshivat Mikdash Melech* in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Shemtov is married to Daniela and together they have three children: Shyli, Lielle, and their newest addition, Liam Natanel.

(Continued from page 1)

Sunday, November 25th

Shaharit..... 7:30 am

Monday-Friday, November 26th-30th

Shaharit..... 6:25 am

Next Shabbat/ Fri-Sat, Nov 30th-Dec 1st

Candle lighting..... 4:25 pm

Friday Minha..... 4:15 pm

Shaharit..... 8:30 am

Saturday Minha 3:45 pm

Havdala 5:29 pm

Next Sunday, December 2nd

KJ Children's Hanukkah Party@11:00 am

**Dinner in Honor of Moselle & Michael Amron
@6:00 pm with rsvp**

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeits anniversaries from November 24 to December 1, 2018. We light memorial candles, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services to honor the memory of our loved ones.

17 Kislev / Sunday, November 25th

Naim Lavi *Naim ben Moshe*

Moshe ben Moosa

18 Kislev / Monday, November 26th

Raphael Emquies *Raphael ben Salomon*

20 Kislev / Wednesday, November 28th

Alec Jacob Jones *Avraham ben Yaacov*

Moshe Nissan *Moshe ben Hayim*

22 Kislev / Friday, November 30th

Joseph Israel *Yosef ben Rabbia*

Ezekiel Isaac Raymond *Yehezkiel ben Mulla
Rahamim*

Meir Sawdayi *Meir ben Shaul*

23 Kislev / Shabbat, December 1st

Gorjeh Youssefzadah *Gorjeh Youssefzadeh*

Ronald Meyer *Ronen Sasson ben Avraham*

Refua Shelema

Sassoon Ezra • Moselle Amron • Sally Amron
Sylvia Cohen • Esther Duke • Mehry bat Miriam
Hakimpour • Tilda Levy • Yvonne Moalim • Florice
Newberry • Aliza bat Rahel • Aliza bat Victoria
Arlette bat Rashel • Chaya Chana bat Batya • Katie
bat Farha • Malka bat Rahel • Miriam bat Yetta
Miryam bat Malka • Moshe Ezra ben MazalTov
Simcha bat Rooha • Habiba bat Farha • Meir Ezra ben
Rahel • Dina bat Rahel • Chaya Rachel bat Simcha
Rahel bat Ramah Regina • Eti Esther bat Fortuna

KJ Children's Room

While children are always welcome in the sanctuary, the playroom upstairs is available every **Shabbat from 10 am to 12pm** for children needing a break or for those too young to sit for very long.

*Have questions or suggestions?
Talk to Rabbi or Jessica Melhado!*

Cafe Joseph

presents....

Hanukkah Family Traditions

Thursday, December 6 at 7PM

Join our members and friends in their 20s and 30s for lively, Hanukkah-themed discussion and music. Refreshments will be served. A night not to be missed!

Young Professionals Hanukkah Dinner

Join the rabbi and his family for an intimate dinner to celebrate the eighth night of Hanukkah!

Sunday, December 9 at 6:30pm

Hanukkah Candelighting - Light Dairy Dinner
Special Belgian Waffle Desserts!

Sefer Persume Nisa Advertising the Miracle of Hanukkah

היום מסתורין בגוואא ביותהום ומאציין בעבאדת
השירה ומשתגלילין כל תורה :
(א) ותנפ'עו לאגל אסתעדאל עמאילדו אל רדיין :
(ב) בהל אייאם אל קרושים לא יכון ימצי פיהום
בתוונים ובתמצ'חך ובלעב מן חית הל אשייה
פי' בע'ץ א אייאם לאום א אנסאן יבער נפסו מנהום
ינאנא דהיה אינא אלדו מלתומו לנשכר אל

Persume Nisa, or advertising the miracle of Hanukkah, is the primary mitsva of the holiday and the reason we light the Hanukkah candles.

Written in Judeo-Arabic in Calcutta in 1887, this 32-page booklet presents traditions and customs of Iraqi Jews for Hanukkah, including the blessings for the Hannukiah in Arabic and Hebrew.

See the text in full on our website at
www.kahaljoseph.org/iraqibooks

LETTERS from BAGHDAD

Airing
Tuesday,
Dec. 11
at 9PM
on PBS

"Letters from Baghdad" is the story of a true original, Gertrude Bell, sometimes called the female "Lawrence of Arabia." More influential and famous in her day than her colleague Lawrence, Bell was an explorer, spy, archaeologist and diplomat who helped shape the Middle East after World War I and established the Iraq Museum, infamously ransacked in 2003. The first feature-length documentary on Gertrude Bell, the film explores the choices that trail blazing women make, and how decisions made by Bell and her colleagues continue to influence current events in the Middle East and the world today.

You're Invited!

For 50 years of
magnanimous generosity
and love of our community,
the Board of Directors
and the Sisterhood
of Kahal Joseph Congregation
will honor

Moselle and Michael Amron
the first night of Hanukkah,
Sunday, December 2, 2018 at 6:00 PM

*Dinner
&
Dancing*



*Valet
Parking*

\$100 minimum donation, tax deductible
RSVP at www.kahaljoseph.org/50-years
or call the office at 310.474.0559 by Nov. 26
Kahal Joseph Congregation - 10505 Santa Monica Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90025 .

The Kahal Joseph HANUKKAH PARTY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2
11AM TO 12:30PM

Join us for
candelighting,
games, crafts,
friends, food
and more!

RSVP at
WWW.KAHALJOSEPH.ORG/HANUKKAH

SPONSORED BY HANNIE, JONATHAN
AND SIGAL KELLY