

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message



We remember Moshe as the greatest of the Prophets, and the foremost human who helped carry out God's plan for the Exodus. We remember that he received God's revelation, and was the vehicle that God used to transmit the Torah. We remember his patience, his humility, his courage; basically anything good about him.

What we wish very much to forget is that one of Moshe's first meaningful acts as an adult was to kill a man. Strangely the Torah has very little to say about this event, making it difficult to form a moral evaluation. Is Moshe a murderer? Was he acting in self-defense? There is a yawning gap in the sources that we tend to paint over with the righteousness of the rest of his career.

Fortunately, the resource of Rabbinic literature is available when we face problems like this. The Aggadic Midrashim in particular tend to fill in missing parts of the narrative, offering key information that alters and improves our assessment of ambiguous passages in Scripture.

In Shemot Rabba (1:28), Our Sages fill in a rich back story behind the Egyptian taskmaster and the Israelite whom he was beating. According to their account, the taskmaster cast a lecherous eye on the wife of one of his Israelite officers. Planning a tryst, he called the officer to work before sunrise and impersonated him in the bedroom while it was still dark. However, the officer returned at sunrise to find his taskmaster

leaving the house, and the scheme was revealed. Embarrassed that he had been caught, the taskmaster planned to beat the officer to death in the field, and Moshe happened upon this scene in Exodus 2:11-12. By divine Prophecy, God showed him a vision of the taskmaster's past affair and future murder, urging Moshe to simultaneously save a life and punish the adulterer.

While this source exonerates Moshe and puts the moral decision-making on God, not all the Sages gave him such a pass. In a minor Aggada called "Midrash Petirat Moshe," we find Moshe arguing that he should be allowed to live eternally for being so upstanding. Every time God points out that other great figures among the Prophets died eventually, Moshe claims that he is more deserving than they! At the end of this exchange, God reminds Moshe of the crime of killing the Egyptian on his own initiative. In a shocking departure from his usual humility, Moshe retorts, "You killed every firstborn in Egypt, yet I must die for killing a single Egyptian man?!" God explains that only He has the power and moral authority to decide life and death, and Moshe is forced to accept his mortality.

I am glad that our tradition has the emotional maturity to contain both of these options. The first answer responds to our innate sense that it is inappropriate to have a criminal in a position of moral and social power. Yet the second answer is not afraid to put the ball in Moshe's court and make him accountable for serious failings. Ideally we should seek leaders whose good example we can emulate, but when the ugliness of the real world makes defective leaders the norm, we have a vocabulary for the challenges of maintaining our integrity.

Parashat Shemot

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

This week, Minha times will begin moving later. We try to adjust them in increments of fifteen minutes so that we can keep them the same for at least 2 weeks running.

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 28th

Shabbat Candle lighting.....	4:33 pm
Minha	4:30 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat & Arvit.....	5:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, December 29th

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

Minha.....	4:00 pm
Seuda Shelisheet.....	4:45 pm
Arvit	5:25 pm
Havdala	5:38 pm

Sunday, December 30th

Shaharit.....	7:30 am
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Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in honor of
the engagement of

**Jennifer Reiz &
Efraim Keren**

by
The Reiz and Keren Families

Mazal Tov

**Jennifer Reiz &
Efraim Keren**
on your engagement

Besiman Tov
to

Parents

Renee and Norman Reiz
Esther and Tzvika Keren

Grandparents

Senior Hazan Sassoon Ezra
Sylvia Reiz
and all the extended family

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries from December 29, 2018 to January 5, 2019. We light memorial candles, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services to honor the memory of our loved ones.

21 Tevet / Shabbat, December 29th

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

22 Tevet / Sunday, December 30th

Matooka Girjiyr *Matooka bat Farha*

23 Tevet / Monday, December 31st

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

24 Tevet / Tuesday, January 1st

Rev Moses Hai Abraham *Moshe Hai ben Avraham*
Louise Jacob *Louise Jacob*
Sulman Sheeri *Sulman ben Yosef*
Shather Shokri *Shather bat Jacob*

26 Tevet / Thursday, January 3rd

Ronnie Assia *Ronnie ben Naji*

27 Tevet / Friday, January 4th

Sassoon Elias *Sassoon Elias*
Stanley Feinberg *Stanley ben Jesse*

28 Tevet / Shabbat, January 5th

Maurice Zekaria *Moshe ben Seon*

Volunteers!

KJ Wants You

KJ needs individuals with data entry skills to compile a database, using a provided template, for azkara/yahrzeit information collected from community records.

This task does not require being physically present at Kahal. It may be completed from your home, using your computer.

Skills required: familiarity w/Excel, ability to pronounce/read Hebrew & English.

For information contact Rabbi Melhado at
rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org

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Weekdays

Monday, December 31st

Shaharit..... 6:25 am

Civil New Year

Tuesday, January 1st

Shaharit..... 7:00 am

Wednesday-Friday, January 2nd to 4th

Shaharit..... 6:25 am

Next Shabbat

Friday-Saturday, January 4-5

Shabbat Candle lighting..... 4:38 pm

Friday Minha..... 4:30 pm

Shaharit..... 8:30 am

Saturday Minha 4:00 pm

Havdala 5:43 pm

Refua Shelema

Sassoon Ezra • Moselle Amron • Sally Amron
Sylvia Cohen • Esther Duke • Mehry bat Miriam
Hakimipour • 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

We need your help! Keep the Iraqi Jewish Archives in the US

On May 6, 2003, just days after the Coalition forces took over Baghdad, 16 US soldiers entered the flooded building of Saddam Hussein's Intelligence agency, the Mukhabarat. In the basement, under four feet of water, they found tens of thousands of books, artifacts and documents belonging to the Jewish community of Iraq – materials that had been seized from synagogues, schools and other institutions.

The archive includes a 400-year-old Torah, a book of sermons from 1692, a 200-year-old Talmud, and thousands of books printed all over the Jewish world, as well as the writings of the late 19th century Baghdadi interpreter of Jewish Law, Rabbi Yossef Hayim, known as the Ben Ish Hai. The collection was moved to the US with the agreement of the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and painstakingly restored, preserved and digitized by the National Archives and Records Administration at great cost.

However, in the last several years, the Iraqi government has been asking for the archives back. There is a coalition of Jewish organizations, of which Kahal Joseph is one, as well as a bipartisan group of politicians working tirelessly to ensure that the archive remains in the United States where its protection can be guaranteed, and it can be accessible to the community from whom it was stolen.

As you might expect, these efforts come at a cost. Please consider donating to keep the IJA in the US – every dollar counts, and time is of the essence. Donate online at www.kahaljoseph.org/iraqi-archives or you can send a check into Kahal with the note "Keep the IJA in the US."

Yvette Dabby
President, Kahal Joseph

Save the Date!

Saturday, February 9

4 Adar I, 5779

Parashat Teruma

Adult Bat Mitzvah

**Ladies are invited
to the upstairs synagogue
for a Torah service
to celebrate the Adult
Bat Mitzvah class's
momentous achievement!**

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.

*The Norma & Sam Dabby
Talmud Torah invites you*

**Tu Bishvat Community Hike
Will Rogers State Park
Sunday, January 20**

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

**Join the Talmud Torah for a special
enrichment day at Will Rogers State Park
to learn about and celebrate Tu Bishvat.**

**Don't miss this wonderful lesson on
nature and its role in Judaism!**

Meet at the parking lot at Will Rogers

*Please bring your lunch, water,
sunglasses, sunscreen, hats, hiking
clothes & shoes and your sense of fun!*

**RSVP to Mora Molly at
molly@emetek.com**

Prayers of the Heart

Getting to Know the Shabbat Morning Tefilla Part III – The Shema of Shaharit

The Zemirot lead directly into Shaharit, the primary morning service. On Shabbat mornings at Kahal, our custom is to have three lay readers for Zemirot, and a single professional Hazan for Shaharit. To ensure a seamless transition between them, the Hazan starts reading from the last blessing of Zemirot, known as Birkat Hashir.

This special benediction praises God in 13 distinct ways that correspond to His Thirteen Attributes. Just as He protects us with His divine mercy, we reciprocate with the best we can offer of our human acclaim. To capture the blessing's majesty, the Ben Ish Hai recommends counting up each type of praise on our fingers (Vayigash 14).

The Hazan then marks the start of Shaharit with the Kaddish, an Aramaic prayer of sanctifying God's name. At points where one part of a service leads into the next, the Kaddish refocuses the congregation on God with the chorus: *"May His great name be blessed and hallowed for all time."* According to Kabbala, the service ascends to a higher spiritual plane at each Kaddish, with the most elevated state achieved during the Amida. (Ben Ish Hai, Vayhi 1).

After the final "Amen," the Hazan calls on us to directly bless God, and we respond *"Blessed be the hallowed God forever and ever!"* This exchange, which is called "Barekhu," begins the part of Shaharit known as the "Recital of Shema and its Blessings."

The Shema itself is a simple but powerful declaration of faith: God is our One Deity Whom we must love, and He has commanded us to follow a code of conduct that will strengthen us morally and spiritually.

In the morning & evening service, the Shema is surrounded by blessings appropriate to the time of day. During Shaharit, the blessings before the Shema are "Yotser," thanking God for the cycle of sunrise and sunset, and "Ahava," celebrating His unique love for our people. After the Shema, the final blessing of "Ge'ula" anticipates our national redemption, bridging into the next central aspect of Shaharit, the Amida.