

# Kol Mevasser

## SHABBAT MATOT-MASEI

26 Tammuz 5769

July 18, 2009

Kahal Joseph Congregation • 10505 Santa Monica Boulevard • Los Angeles, CA 90025

310-474-0559 • phone 310.441.4059 fax • www.kahaljoseph.org

### Living Judaism

*Rabbi Yosef Benarroch, SEC Jerusalem*

We find ourselves in the middle of the saddest time period in the Jewish calendar, the "Three Weeks" between the fasts of the seventeenth of Tamuz and the ninth of Ab. It is during this time period that both our Temples were destroyed. The Shulkhan Arukh, quoting the Talmud states, "When the month of Ab begins we decrease our joy" (SA OH 551:1). Jewish law imposes many restrictions during this time period. All of these serve to help us feel, on a personal and national level, the great loss that our people incurred.

But our Rabbis warn that these three weeks of mourning are not just to remind us about the past. By remembering the past, our Rabbis teach, we must learn valuable lessons for the present. The Talmud states that if in any given generation the Temple is not rebuilt, then the people of that generation are as guilty about the destruction as those who lived through it. By not correcting the transgressions of the generation that lived through the destruction of the Temple, we become accomplices to that event even though it took place over two thousand years ago. It is therefore important for us to understand the sin of that generation so that we can learn from it and hopefully correct it.

What then was the sin of that generation? What is it that we must correct? One of the answers mentioned by our Rabbis was causeless hatred. They point out that when the Temple stood people mistreated each other. Causeless hatred, they claim, was what led to the destruction of the Second Temple. Until we can correct this negative trait the Temple cannot be rebuilt. While I feel strongly about this teaching, today I would like to explore this question from a different perspective.

Rabbi Yosef Karo in his "Shulkhan Arukh" (Code of Jewish Law), records the various customs and restrictions that we follow during these three

### PRAYER SCHEDULE SHABBAT MATOT-MASEI

#### 25 Tammuz / Friday, July 17th

Shaharith .....6:30 am  
Minhah & Arvith .....7:00 pm  
Shabbat Candlelighting.....7:46 pm

#### 26 Tammuz / Saturday, July 18th

Shaharit .....8:30 am  
Minhah & Arvith .....7:15 pm  
Motzei Shabbat .....8:49 pm

#### 27 Tammuz / Sunday, July 19th

Shaharith .....7:30 am

#### Weekdays

#### 28 Tammuz-2 Av/ July 20th to 23rd

Shaharith .....6:30 am

### SHABBAT DEVARIM

#### 3 Av / Friday, July 24th

Shaharith .....6:30 am  
Minhah & Arvith .....7:00 pm  
Shabbat Candlelighting.....7:41 pm

weeks. There is one particular law which is quite peculiar. In his code he states the following, "One must be especially careful from the 17th day of Tamuz until the 9th day of Ab not to walk alone from the fourth hour (of the night) until the ninth hour, and that (teachers) should not strike their students during these days" (Shulkhan Arukh 551:18).

It is not my intention here to get into the question of teachers striking their students. While this may have been a common practice in yesteryears, suffice it to say that in Jewish education today this is no longer the case. Nevertheless I would like to explore the significance of this law.

Why does Rabbi Yosef Karo go out of his way to say that this practice should not be implemented during these auspicious days? Is there anything deeper to be understood from this restriction and its specific application during the "Three Week's"? Why is it worse to strike a student during these days?

*continued on page 2*

*continued from page 1*

The late Rabbi Avraham Yitshak Hakohen Kook (Rav Kook) offers a fascinating insight into this law. He says the following, "During the days between the calamities (the Three Weeks) our nation will be redeemed through teachers who are armed with spiritual courage, so that they do not need a rod to beat" (Meged Yerahim on Tamuz Rabbi Kook). Rabbi Kook chose his words carefully. What did he mean by this statement? What is the difference between a rod that beats, and spiritual courage? What does it mean to be armed with spiritual courage, and why is it so essential during the "Three Weeks"?

The answer is highly significant. According to Rabbi Kook the sin of the generation of the destruction was not only causeless hatred, but causeless indifference. Jews were not only indifferent to each other but to the way they lived as Jews. Yes they kept the laws, but not out of conviction. They went through the motions but their practice of Judaism lacked meaning.

The prophet Isaiah, who spoke during the times of the destruction, summarizes this all too well in the following statement, "And the Lord said: For as much as this people draw near, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor Me, but they have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment of men learned by rote. Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the prudence of their prudent men shall be hid (Isaiah 29:13-14).

The prophet Isaiah depicts a nation that was going through the motions. They followed the laws and kept the rituals, but they did it out of rote and fear. They practiced Judaism but they did not live it. It is this indifference that led to the destruction.

It is this dilemma that Rabbi Kook is addressing. The only way to redemption is to remove the yolk of fear and rote mechanical observance. During these three weeks specifically we must correct the great travesty that led to the destruction. We must develop a love for the Torah, by internalizing its beautiful message and living inspired and meaningful spiritual lives.

It is for this reason that Rabbi Kook explains that during these "Three Weeks" we must be careful to stay away from teachers who need a "rod to beat". When the only way a teacher can teach is by force and aggression, the Torah they are teaching is not being internalized. It means that people are following the

## **In Memoriam**

These anniversaries occur from Shabbat, the 26th of Tammuz (July 18, 2009) to Shabbat, the 4th of Av (July 25, 2009). It is customary to light a memorial candle in the evening and donate tzedakah. Family members are encouraged to attend services.

### **Shabbat / 26 Tammuz**

David ben Itzhak Hattanian

### **Monday / 28 Tammuz**

Ezra Said ben Simcha

### **Tuesday / 29 Tammuz**

Selim ben Ashair Hanoon

### **Wednesday / 1 Av**

Aharon Shraga ben Avraham

Ezra ben Avraham Hayim\*

Yohanan ben Yehezkel

### **Thursday / 2 Av**

Shlomo Dallal

Shimon Rabban Sarraf

### **Friday / 3 Av**

Habiba bat Lulu Nawy

David Stoler

### **Shabbat / 4 Av**

Yaakov ben Ezra Kemareh

*\*Yahrzeit names with asterisks are missing contact phone numbers and addresses for family members. To update the database, please call 310.474.0559.*

Torah not through choice but because they feel they have no alternative. They are at best going through the motions. Their relationship to the Torah is not one of love, but fear. This was the very sin that led to the destruction and so during the "Three Weeks" we must do everything we can to correct that sin.

It is for this reason that Rav Kook explains that during these weeks we must not see the Torah as a burden, but as a way of life that is filled with beauty and spirituality. We must accept the Torah out of choice and not through coercion. The Three Weeks teach us to not simply go through the motions but to internalize our practices. To do that, explains Rabbi Kook, we require teachers armed with courage. We need teachers who do not scare us but who inspire us and kindle in us an insatiable desire to know more and grow higher.

We too, as the prophet Isaiah mentions, are guilty of paying lip service to G-d and turning Judaism into rote practice. As we near the ninth of Av, let us all hope that we will begin living Judaism so that we may all speedily witness the building of our Temple. *Shabbat Shalom*  
*Published courtesy of the SEC*

We offer our  
deepest condolences  
to the family & friends of  
Tiffa Rubenfeld, z"l  
sister of Moses Judah  
and Gerald Meyers

Shabbat Kiddush  
is sponsored by  
The Sarraf Family  
in memory of  
Shimon Rabban Sarraf, z"l

We offer our  
deepest condolences  
to the family & friends of  
Elias Joseph, z"l  
especially  
to his wife, Wendy  
and his children

Seudah Shlisheet  
is sponsored  
in memory of  
Davoud ben Itzhak, z"l  
Yohanan ben Yehezkel, z"l  
Daniel ben Sion, z"l  
by the Hattanian Family

### **Refuah Shlemah**

*Please include these individuals in your prayers*  
Yonatan ben Alizah ▪ Mazal Tob bat Sulha  
Matana ▪ Jack Wickett ▪ Ayala bat Naomi  
Yosi ben Esther ▪ Yaheskel ben Regina  
Matilda Louisa ▪ Victor ben Pauline  
Haim ben Mordechai ▪ Khayah Noa bat Sara  
Pnina bat Esther ▪ Moshe ben Naji

### **Parasha & Haftara**

*Parashat Matot-Masei* pp. 702  
*Haftarah* pp. 725

### **KJ Calendar 2009-2010**

**DEADLINE July 24, 2009**

**Be a Sponsor of the Month for \$600  
Or join the Greeting Page \$26 / \$54 / \$72**

Send us photos of new babies by e-mail or on  
CD for our newborn collage . We also would  
like information about births, bar/bat mitzvahs,  
graduations and weddings from Sept. 2008 to  
Sept. 2009. *For more information please contact*  
*Yvette Dabby at [ydabby@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ydabby@sbcglobal.net)*  
*or Selena Dallal at [selenadallal@gmail.com](mailto:selenadallal@gmail.com)*

KAHAL JOSEPH CONGREGATION

Save the Date !  
Tuesday, September 1, 2009

# Grand Hillulah



For the  
**BEN ISH  
CHAY**



100  
**YEARS**  
of TORAH  
with LOVE

A Memorable Evening of Sephardic Music—Full Band & Arabic Singer  
Piyutim with Rabbi Hagay Batzri—Great Food & Open Bar

8:00 PM     \$75/person     Reservations: 310.474.0559

## SPICE READERS CLUB

Wouldn't you like to chant a haftara for a special occasion? Do you want to add spice to your reading? Then call the office to reserve your haftara at 310.474.0559!. Schedule time with Saeed & learn your haftara with authentic Baghdadi ta'amim, Iraqi melodies for chanting from the Torah.

## Talmud Torah Registration

for 2009-2010 is going on now!

For information contact Molly at  
310.474.0559 or [molly@kahaljoseph.org](mailto:molly@kahaljoseph.org)