

KOL MEVASSER

Tampering With Tradition: A Spiritual Fire Hazard

Rabbi Daniel Bouskila

(Parashat Shemini – Leviticus 9:1 – 11:47)

I have always taught my students that the Torah is not merely a record of the past. Reducing the Torah to a book that tells us “what happened once upon a time” is a complete misunderstanding of the Torah, and, I would argue, of Judaism. The word “Torah” means instruction, and the book we refer to as “*The Torah*,” along with the interpretations and commentaries of the Oral Law, is Judaism’s book of instructions on how to live our lives today. When a Jew reads and studies the Torah, he/she is not so concerned with “what happened,” (past tense) rather the concern lies with “what’s happening” (present tense). Every law and story in the Torah gives us pause for reflection on how the Torah relates to our current lives.

Sometimes, the Torah tells us a story that may serve as a metaphor for larger issues that we face today. This week’s Torah Portion – Parashat Shemini – relates the strange story of Aaron’s sons Nadav and Avihu. As sons of the first *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest), Nadav and Avihu were also *Kohanim* who received instructions from their father on how to conduct the sacrificial services inside the newly inaugurated *Mishkan* (the portable Temple/Tabernacle). When they entered the sacred space

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President’s Message

Dear Members,

I am very pleased to announce that Rabbi Raif Melhado will be joining Kahal Joseph as our Rabbi and spiritual leader as of August 1, 2015.



This follows a very serious, in-depth search that started in May 2014, where several candidates were interviewed for the position. Rabbi Melhado was invited to Kahal Joseph on two occasions and proved to have the most comprehensive qualifications and capabilities.

Our Board of Directors had the opportunity to personally interview Rabbi Melhado at length, and was very impressed by his knowledge, his energy, his understanding of community building and his confidence in his convictions. As a result, the Board voted in favor of offering Rabbi Melhado the position commencing in August.

It is rare to meet someone who exceeds all your expectations. I look forward to what Rabbi Melhado will bring to Kahal Joseph as its spiritual leader, and G-d willing, we will share a fruitful and resonant tenure together.

Sincerely

Ronald Einy, President

KJ Schedule Parashat Shemini

Erev Shabbat / Friday, April 17th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit..... 7:08 pm
Candle Lighting 7:08 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Fourteenth Night

Shabbat

Saturday, April 18th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 8:30 am
Minha & Arbit..... 7:45 pm
Havdalla..... 8:17 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Fifteenth Night

Rosh Hodesh Iyar

Sunday, April 19th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 7:30 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Sixteenth Night

Monday, April 20th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:15 am
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Seventeenth Night

Weekdays

Tuesday to Friday, April 21 to 24
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am
FIDF Memorial at Saban... 7:30 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, 18th to 21st

Yom HaZikaron

Wednesday, April 22nd

Yom Haatzmaut

Thursday, April 23rd

KJ Celebration 7:00 pm

Erev Shabbat/ Friday, April 24th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit..... 7:13 pm
Candle Lighting 7:13 pm
Sefirat Ha'Omer, Twenty-first Night

24 Days / 24 Jours

"24 Days" will have a nationwide release on April 24, 2015. In Los Angeles, the film will be at Laemmle's Music Hall and will also be available on iTunes. January 20, 2006. After dinner with his family, Ilan Halimi called an attractive girl he had met at work and made plans to meet her for coffee. Ilan did not suspect a thing; he was 23 and had his whole life ahead of him. The next time Ilan's family heard from him, it was through a cryptic online message from kid-nappers demanding a ransom in exchange for their son's life. Director Alexandre Arcady presents the vicious circle from the kidnapping and torture of Ilan Halimi, to the 100s of phone calls, insults, and threats received by the family, through the Parisian police's incompetence in dealing with what was clearly an anti-Semitic crime.



Rabbi Daniel Bouskila
will be delivering the sermon
at KJ this Shabbat on the topic of
**"Pirkei Avot: Ancient Wisdom
for Our Modern World"**

Thank You
to Jack Mashihi
for sponsoring additional
new tallitot for KJ

Congratulations
Laura & Michael Kooby
on the birth of a baby boy

Mazal Tov
to big sister Gabrielle
grandparents, Yvonne Kooby
Dr. Ellis Kooby, and
Julie & Hayim Abulafia
and the entire family

Refuah Shlemah

Moselle Amron • Maurice Ovadia • Tilda Levy
Esther Duke • Abe Abraham • Sassoon Ezra

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for April 18 to 25, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

30 Nisan / Sunday, April 19th

Yehezkel Jacob Yehezkel ben Avraham Hayim
Yaacov

Wendy Joseph Sara bat Avraham

1 Iyar / Monday, April 20th

Marcus Hayim Abraham Mordechai Haim ben
Moshe Hai
Eliahou ben Meir

2 Iyar / Tuesday, April 21st

Monique Mounie Abitboul Mounie bat Miriam
Moshe Shiri Moshi ben Rahma

3 Iyar / Wednesday, April 22nd

Hanina Cohen Hanina bat Chahla
Nedat Joshua Farahi Yehoshua ben Yehezkel
Sassoon Benjamin Gamal Sassoon ben Binyamin

4 Iyar / Thursday, April 23rd

Binyamin Sheff Binyamin ben Hasia

5 Iyar / Friday, April 24th

Simon Faraj Iny Shimon ben Faraj
Louise Mendel Aziza bat Nouna

6 Iyar / Shabbat, April 25th

Jane Ester Feldman
Cecile Masliah
Sophie Moses Tifaha bat Mazal

Q. Do you know Jewish children in public school?
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Sundays 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

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at 310.502.8548 or at dafna@kahaljoseph.org



Torah & Haftara Readings

Vayikra / Leviticus: Shemini pp. 443 to 454
Haftara pp 454 to 458

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designated for the *Kohanim* to offer sacrifices, the Torah relates a peculiar incident: *Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire pan, placed fire on it, and then incense on it. They offered it before God, but it was unauthorized fire which God had not instructed them to offer. Fire came forth from before God and it consumed them, so that they died before God.*

The Hebrew word for "unauthorized fire" is "*esh zara*," which, in addition to "unauthorized," is also translated as "foreign." Both of these translations point to the fact that Nadav and Avihu entered the House of God and introduced foreign elements that were strange to Judaism and Jewish tradition. By introducing these foreign practices, they tampered with the traditional flow of the services, and doing so was considered such a grievous offense that they were consumed by fire.

I often read Jewish newspapers more for the advertisements than for the articles and editorials. A quick scan of the program advertisements by synagogues and Jewish organizations tells you what's really going on in the Jewish community. Synagogues that are desperate to "draw in the big crowd" will resort to anything. I have seen advertisements for "Buddhist Shabbat Meditation Services," "Gospel Shabbat Concerts," and a colleague recently told me how shocked he was at his invitation to a "St. Patrick's Day Purim." Judaism with a twist, or so they call it.

What can we say about this growing – and in my opinion disturbing -- phenomenon in


the Jewish world? Perhaps we have, in fact, failed to make a compelling case for "old school" Jewish tradition, but are these wild, quick fix alternatives really the answer to our problems? Is the introduction of Buddhism, Gospel choirs, St. Patrick's Day revelries, or any other "*esh zara*," into our services the only way to infuse new meaning into tradition? Do those who lead or attend such spins on Jewish spirituality actually feel that they are participating in something with Jewish meaning?

Our transmission of a meaningful, compassionate and relevant expression of Jewish tradition certainly leaves a lot to be desired. But there are limits to where we can and should search for answers to our pressing questions.

Judaism is a rich, vibrant and fascinating tradition. It is intellectual, spiritual, cultural, communal and personal all at once. We have a vast treasure of Jewish literature, along with 3000-plus years of history. Shall we give that all away in the name of filling seats one Friday night at a gospel performance in synagogue? True creativity lies in the ability to infuse ancient traditions with modern meaning. Conducting a Shabbat service with Buddhism is hardly creative. It's a cheap imitation.

Nadav and Avihu brought an "unauthorized offering" whose spirit was alien to Jewish tradition. The foreign flames that they introduced into the services came back to burn them. Indeed, a powerful metaphor for many rabbis and congregants today.

Shabbat Shalom



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For more information please contact FIDF Western Region
(323) 843-2690 or email Molly.Soboroff@FIDF.org



KJ Memouna Celebration 2015

Our first ever Memouna Celebration last Sunday night was one of the most happy and heartwarming celebrations at Kahal Joseph. With over 200 members and friends in attendance, it was truly a great night of fun and friendship.

The Middle Eastern music of Eli's Band kept the party dancing until the end. How great it was to see so many in traditional costume. The customary foods, buttered dates, marzipan, freshly made Moufletta, arak, and the display of fruits and pastries were sumptuous!

Rabbi Bouskila opened the evening with an explanation of Memouna and a prayer to bless all with a wonderful year. We even had the privilege of hearing Shira Bouskila sing.

My special thank you and appreciation go to Rabbi Bouskila and his family for inspiring this beautiful event. And many thanks to Elsa Singman, Penina Meghnagi-Solomon, Sarah Bouchoucha, Diana Gazal, Simon Cohen and Nira Sayegh for all the love and effort wholeheartedly given to insure the success of every Kahal event. Finally, I thank all those who attended and supported such a terrific night. I am deeply grateful to you all.

Ronald Einy

YOM HA'ATZMAUT 2015

**KAHAL JOSEPH CELEBRATES
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