

# KOL MEBASSER

## Rabbi's Message

On Wednesday, just two miles made the difference between grisly murder and a normal day at the synagogue. As Mainak Sarkar completed his journey from Minnesota and prepared to brutally execute his onetime mentor, I was having a typical morning of Shahrarit, breakfast with my family, and enjoying the California weather on my short bike ride to work. Were it not for the Internet, I might not have even sensed it happening, since the neighborhood around Kahal Joseph looked normal and nothing untoward could be seen or heard.

But I did hear of it, and the whole sad tale and its proximity to our community set my mind roiling. In a world so full of tragedy that this one is no more arresting than the next, it is a basic coping mechanism to choose which calamities we count as "ours" more selectively. But on the other hand, if we can open our hearts to share in the experiences of those around us, even when they are at their lowest, we lend a hand in filling the world with positivity and encouragement. When I volunteered my pastoral services to UCLA Hillel in this spirit, it was meaningful to have asked even though they were able to handle the situation without my help.

Processing the carnage on my own, I was confronted with the contrast between it and the theological message of causality in Parashat Behukotai: "*If you walk in My statutes... I will give peace in the land, and none will make you afraid when you lie down; and I will eliminate evil beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through the land anymore.*" (Ex.26:3, 6)



If we think of ourselves as keeping God's statutes, then what are we to make of the fact that there is *not* peace in the land, and that we *were* afraid when we lay down as the "sword" most certainly *did* pass through? Yet if we think of ourselves as having broken God's statutes, then what are we to make of a God Who would punish someone's wrongdoing through the execution of an upstanding citizen and father of two?

There is no easy answer to this, and many of the most pious leaders of our tradition have devoted an entire intellectual discipline to it called theodicy, or "the vindication of divine attributes." The space I have in Kol Mebasser cannot possibly do justice to it, but I hope to make a small beginning through the words of the Mishna in Abot 5:8.

The text says "*The sword comes to the world for delay of justice, perversion of justice, and subversion of Torah.*" Between these three issues, we notice that the shared factor is the free will of individuals – the choice to work towards making the world fair or to be an agent in its becoming a cruel, wretched place. Since God withholds from directly controlling our own actions, we inherit a reality in which humans have both the capacity to be constructive and the power to be destructive.

In such a world, the sword may come, but if we like the free will that makes our lives meaningful, then we must accept it from God along with responsibility for what it can become if we don't take it seriously. If we acknowledge this and devote our lives to modeling the way of justice and Torah for others to follow, we may yet see the ideals of Behukotai come true. And until we do, a visit from the sword could say more about our own kind than it does about God.

## Parashat Behukotai End of Vayikra / Omer 42

**Torah:** Lev. 26:3–27:34, 78 Pesukim

Hertz 542–550; Stone 708–723

**Haftarah:** Jer. 16:19–17:14

Hertz 551–553; Stone 1179

**Tefillot:** Morid Hatal, Hakhrazat Sivan  
(Tuesday)

## KJ Schedule

### Ereb Shabbat

*Friday, June 3rd*

Shahrarit ..... 6:25 am

**Shabbat Candle Lighting 7:42 pm**

Minha ..... 6:30 pm SHARP

### Yom Shabbat

*Saturday, June 4th*

Shahrarit/Morning Prayer .... 8:30 am

Keri'at HaTorah ..... 10:15 am

Musaf ..... 11:30 am

Minha ..... 7:00 pm

Se'uda Shelisheet ..... 7:45 pm

Arbit ..... 8:30 pm

Habdala ..... 8:46 pm

*(Continued on page 2)*

*Questions? Not satisfied with the answer? Rabbi Melhado welcomes further discussion of a problem that all religions face.*



## 17th Annual Jewish Community Day at Dodger Stadium

**Los Angeles Dodgers v. Chicago Cubs**  
**Sunday, August 28, 2016**  
**Game time 1:10 PM**

Seats are limited and may be purchased through Sarah at the Kahal Joseph office by calling 310.474.0559.



**Tickets are in the Infield Reserve @ \$34 each & include a Dodgers T-Shirt**  
The last day to purchase tickets is Monday, June 20th 2016.

## Shabuot Program for Kids



On Shabuot, we commemorate receiving the Torah. What better way to do it than to help pass Judaism on to our kids? Join us and bring a friend for a fun morning with special dairy snacks!

### Torah and Tots - ages 0 to 4

Tots & guardians (at least 18, please) join together for stories, activities, songs & games on Shabuot. Special snack included!

### Yeladenu - ages 5 to 12

Find out what Shabuot is all about! The morning will include special snacks and a raffle for prizes!

Please RSVP to Jessica by Friday, June 10 at [jessica@kahaljoseph.org](mailto:jessica@kahaljoseph.org)

## KJ Schedule (continued)

**Yom Yerushalayim / Sunday, June 5th**  
Shaharit ..... 7:30 am  
Talmud Torah ..... 10:00 am

### Weekdays

*Mon, June 6 & Wed to Fri, June 8-10*  
Shaharit ..... 6:25 am

**Rosh Hodesh Sivan / Tuesday, June 7th**  
Shaharit ..... 6:15 am

**Ereb Shabbat / Friday, June 10th**  
Shaharit ..... 6:25 am  
**Shabbat Candle Lighting..... 7:46 pm**  
Minha..... 6:30 pm SHARP

### Coming Up

*Shabuot starts on Motsa'e Shabbat, the night of Saturday, June 11th and continues through Monday, June 13th*

## A Discussion with the Rabbi "Having a Spiritual Conversation with a Child"

Our members Jack and Adele Mussry are hosting a conversation with Rabbi Melhado in their home this Tuesday. The goal is to learn some Torah that touches on our own lives in a more intimate setting, and with plenty of room for participants to share their own experiences and thoughts. Interested in hosting one in your own home on this or a different topic? Contact Rabbi Melhado to set it up.

## Refuah Shelemah

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron • Sylvia Cohen  
Sally Amron • Tilda Levy • Esther Duke  
Mordechai Cohen • Lev Hakak • Maurice Ovadia  
Gracie Tizabi • Florice Newberry • Katie bat Farha  
Miriam bat Yetta • Sassoon Ezra • Doris Moshi  
Aliza bat Rahel • Aliza bat Victoria

## In Memoriam

We remember yahrzeit anniversaries from June 4 to 11, 2016. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

### 27 Iyar / Shabbat, June 4th

Sassoon Elisha Sassoon Yoseph

### 28 Iyar / Sunday, June 5th

Hannah Sassoon Hannah Khatoon bat  
Mozelle Tov  
Yoseph Hai Ezra Shimon

### 1 Sivan / Tuesday, June 7th

Ezra Shalom Avraham

### 3 Sivan / Thursday, June 9th

Abraham Blank Avraham ben Yaacov Dov  
George Sher Gedaliah ben Moshe Litman  
Hacohen

### 4 Sivan / Friday, June 10th

Victoria Cohen Victoria bat Hanina

### 5 Sivan / Shabbat, June 11th

Avraham Godsi Avraham ben Shlomo  
Ezra Kelly Elias Levi Ezra Kadoori Eliyahu Levi  
Sara Moses Sara bat Sarah  
Turan Pourati Turan bat Aghajan  
Khodadad Zakariyaie Moshe Haim



## Tree of Life Milestones Dedications Available

What a great opportunity to commemorate a happy occasion—an anniversary, wedding, birth, or bar or bat mitzvah! Engrave a Milestone for a donation of \$1800.  
Contact Sarah at 310.474.0559

## Shabbat Shalom & Hodesh Tov