

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

"Rabbi, who is Azazel?!" I was chatting with one of the guests at last week's *seu'da shelisheet* for Nassim Musrry z"l, and she suddenly wanted to know about this mysterious name.



While her question had no context in our conversation, it actually made sense that she would ask it because we had just read the beginning of Ahare-Mot at Minha. Since she and I were now speaking Hebrew, it was clear that she had understood every word as I read it from the Sefer a short time before, and the "scapegoat ritual" must have been fresh in her mind.

This memorable ceremony is presented in the Torah as the atonement ritual for Yom Kippur. On the morning of the holiday, the High Priest would take two identical goats and draw lots for them. The one that got the lot that said "for God" was sacrificed in the Temple as a sin offering, and the one that got the lot "for Azazel" was pushed down a mountainside to atone for our sins (Lev. 16:1-28).

Aside from the brutality of the second goat's death, it is also surprising to find a challenge to monotheism in this ritual. If God wants us to worship only Him, why would He invent a ceremony that looks like a sacrifice to two powers? To have the Kohen Gadol say, "this one is for God and that one is for Azazel" opens the door for the misunderstanding that there could be two supreme beings!

Apparently aware of this, the Talmud emphasizes that the word "Azazel" is nothing more threatening than a simple place name. The words "az" and "el" convey the meaning of "strength" and "power," so the combination name "Azazel" refers to "a mountain made of very strong stone." The goat's death then becomes a metaphor for what we want to happen to our transgressions. Just as its body is dashed to bits on the rocks before reaching the valley, so too may our sins be torn apart before reaching the final judgment (Yoma 68b).

I gave a version of this answer last week, emphasizing that we are only talking about God here and no one else. He gets the goat for the sin offering, and the other goat is pushed down a rocky mountain called Azazel. However, when I looked into it further after Shabbat, I found a Midrash that explicitly talks about a second power.

According to this account, an angel named Samael complained that when God gave him the ability to tempt gentiles, He did not give him a way to entice the Jews. God responded that Samael could be granted this power on Yom Kippur if the Jews remained sinful. Knowing this, the Jews would buy off Samael with the goat of Azazel so their true sacrifice to God could be effective (Pirke DeRibbi Eliezer, 46).

Yet when we look closely, we see that the "second power" of this tale is only a lesser being whose power derives from God. Hence, whether we are talking about a place or an evil angel, the message is the same: it is our loyalty to God and our sincerity in seeking forgiveness that count the most. If we are willing to do the work of soul searching and destroying our own personal demons, then Azazel has nothing on us!

Parashat Ahare-Mot / Kedoshim 25th day since the Omer

Torah: Lev. 16:1–20:27, 144 Pesukim
Hertz 480–508; Stone 636–671
Haftara (Sephardim): Ezek. 20:2–20
Hertz 511–512; Stone 1175–1176
Tefillot: Morid Hatal, Birkat Halevana

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, May 5th

Shaharit..... 6:25 am
Candle lighting..... 7:22 pm
Minha 6:30 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit..... 7:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, May 6th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah 10:15 am
Musaf 11:40 am

Women's Tehillim 5:45 pm
Minha 6:45 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet..... 7:30 pm
Arvit 8:10 pm
Havdala 8:26 pm

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Shabbat Kiddush

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Daniel ben Meir, z"l
Daniel Hakimipour, z"l

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The Hakimipour Family

Thank You

Elghanian Family hosts successful Living Room Learning!

Rabbi Melhado joined several families at the Elghanian home to discuss the internet, social media, and Jewish values. Bringing contemporary articles, Jewish sources, and a wide range of perspectives from the people in attendance, the group gained new perspective and understanding. It was an enjoyable evening of discussion, mingling and delicious shawarma!



Yom Ha'atsmaut Sameah!

The morning minyan enjoys a festive Hallel to mark Israel's 69th year. Join the KJ community this Sunday at Rancho Park for more holiday celebrations!

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Yom Ha'atsmaut (observed w/Kahal)
Sunday, May 7th

Shaharit 7:30 am
Talmud Torah meet at walk

LA Celebrate Israel Walk & Festival

at Rancho Park (Motor and Pico)

Walk Begins 10:00 am
Festival Begins 11:00 am

Monday to Friday, May 8-12

Shaharit 6:25 am

Pesah Shenit

Wednesday, May 10th (no Tahanun)

Next Shabbat

Bar Mitsva of Gabe Volvovic

Fri-Sat, May 12-13

Shabbat Candle lighting 7:27 pm
Friday Minha 6:30 pm
Shaharit 8:30 am
Saturday Minha 6:45 pm
Havdala 8:31 pm

Refu'a Shelema

Moselle Amron • Sally Amron • Sylvia Cohen
Simcha bat Rooha • Mordechai Cohen
Esther Duke • Sassoon Ezra • Tilda Levy
Haskell Avrahamy • Florice Newberry
Miriam bat Yetta • Aliza bat Rahel
Aliza bat Victoria • Yvonne Moalim
Miryam bat Malka • Moshe Ezra ben Mazal Tov
Malka bat Rahel • Chaya Chana bat Batya
Mehry bat Miriam Hakimipour • Katie bat Farha

Omer Counting Cards

This year, we received only 90 copies of the Omer counting cards, so Rabbi Melhado is handing them out in person. For those who cannot get one from him, we have it available as a PDF.

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries from April 29 to May 6, 2017. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

10 Iyar / Shabbat, May 6th

Ramah Ezra *Rahmah bat Lulu Khatoon*
Abraham Shaye *Abraham Amir Saed Zoghee ben Asher Michael*

11 Iyar / Sunday, May 7th

Irving Rosen
Elias Raymond Solomon *Eliyahu Rahamim*

12 Iyar / Monday, May 8th

Sara Ephraim *Sarah bat Sarah*
Molly Moses *Mesuda bat Aziza*
Aaron Sassoon *Aharon ben Elisha*
Rabbee Shadi

13 Iyar / Tuesday, May 9th

Devorah Lubovsky *Devorah bat Aharon*
Joseph Robert Saul
Violet Aziza Sheeri

14 Iyar / Wednesday, May 10th

Sally Ekaireb *Salha Matana bat Matooka*
Amir Ghoulia
Tala Eradat *Tala bat Javaher*
Salman Khadoori Shaby *Saliman ben Kadoori*
Eliyahu Hai Shamash *Eliyahu Hai ben Avraham*

15 Iyar / Thursday, May 11th

Daniel Hakimipour *Daniel ben Meir*
Rivka Matana *bat Miriam*
Rachel Yitzhaki *Rahel bat Chana*

16 Iyar / Friday, May 12th

Eliza Moses *Aziza bat Chana*
Albert Abraham Gazal Sassoon
Joseph Yehudah *Yoseph ben Yehudah*

Shabbat Shalom Umvorakh

Young Professionals Shabbat Dinner Friday, May 19 at 7:30 PM

In February, March and April, 10 to 15 people have joined us for an interesting discussion and a really delicious Shabbat meal - and we are excited to do it again!

Join Rabbi Melhado and his family at home for a great evening. Open to members and friends in their twenties and thirties

Space is limited, so register now by emailing Rabbi at rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org.

Blessings for Counting the Omer

Count after dark each evening between the second day of Pesah and the beginning of Shavuot

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם. אשר קדשנו במצותיו. וצונו על ספירת העומר:

היום _____ לעומר. שהם _____:

הרחמן הוא יחזיר עבודת בית המקדש למקומה במהרה בימינו. אמן:

Ba-rukhh a-ta a-do-nai, e-lo-he-nu me-lekh ha-o-lam, a-sheer kee-de-sha-nu be-meets-vo-tav, ve-tsee-va-nu al se-fi-rat ha-o-mer.

Ha-yom _____ la-o-mer, she-hem _____.

Ha-ra-ha-man hu ya-ha-zeer a-vo-dat bet ha-meeek-dash leem-ko-ma beem-he-ra ve-ya-me-nu a-men.

Blessed are you, God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and directed us to count from the Omer.

Today is the [blank] day of the Omer, which is [insert weeks and days]
May the Compassionate One, restore the service of the Temple to us promptly and in our lifetime. Amen.

Join Kahal Joseph for

CELEBRATE ISRAEL LOS ANGELES

Sunday, May 7, 2017

10:00 AM

Salute to Israel Walk

2551 Motor Ave (Pico & Motor)

Meet at the ticket booth

Register by emailing jessica@kahaljoseph.org

11:00 AM

Celebrate Israel Festival

Admission: \$15, kids under 3 free

Purchase Tickets:

<https://www.israeliamerican.org/celebrate-israel-festival-LA>



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Shavuot is coming!

Erev Shavuot & Tikkun Leil Shavuot
Tuesday, May 30

Shavuot I - Wednesday, May 31

Shavuot II - Thursday, June 1



Shabbat Matters: Rules, Ritual and Meaning

Mondays at 8PM online

Session I: May 22, May 29, June 5 & June 12

Session II: July 3, July 10, July 17 & July 24

Join Rabbi Melhado for an interactive, online series
about Shabbat:

What are we resting from?

What do we do with our time instead?

Why is it important to Judaism?

Each class stands on its own, but attending all of them
will help you develop a deeper understanding!

Questions welcome!



Color Me Mine at Kahal!

Sunday, June 4, 1 to 3PM

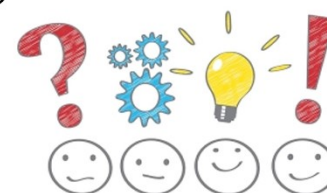
Express your creativity!
Connect with friends, new and old!

A variety of pottery pieces will be available, tons of
paint colors, and a Color Me Mine staff member.

\$50 registration fee includes
piece, paint, glaze, fire and snacks!

RSVP at www.kahaljoseph.org/events.html by May 29

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.