

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

At this week's annual conference of the International Rabbinic Fellowship, it was my pleasure to learn at the feet of keynote speaker Rabbi Dr. Binyamin Lau. His kindly nature and twinkling smile belie his many accomplishments as a communal rabbi, social activist, and Torah scholar with a rich capacity for moral reasoning. I humbly devote this week's Rabbi's Message to an issue of ethics in halakha that crossed his desk, in the hopes that you too will find it inspiring.



Three years ago, a friend contacted Rabbi Lau with a difficult story. At the age of 87, a respected Kohen in the community had become too weak to stand, but he went to synagogue on Shabbat in his wheelchair, happy to still be able to pray with his congregation. When it came time for the *birkat kohanim*, he rolled up to the *dukhan* with the expectation that he could give the blessing from his chair. Yet partway to the front, the Gabbai barred his way and commanded him to stop. "A Kohen may not bless while seated!" he thundered, with no sensitivity to the elderly man before him. Heartbroken, the Kohen turned around and left the service. He lay at home in a deep depression, declaring that if he could not give the blessing after more than 70 years of doing it, life was not worth living.

Rabbi Lau's moral instinct was that this was wrong, but he wanted to give the Gabbai the benefit of the doubt before ruling against him. It was clear that the Gabbai should not have humiliated the Kohen in public, but what about his understanding

of the rule for sitting during *birkat kohanim*? After looking at the sources, it did indeed seem that the Gabbai had a point from the technical side:

The service of the Kohanim is mentioned a few times in the Torah, and the verses do discuss standing (Deut. 10:8, 18:5, and 27:12). Although they don't deliver a slam-dunk like "thou shalt stand when blessing the nation," the halakhic Midrashim seem to agree that this is the correct interpretation of God's words (cf. Sifre Bemidbar Piska 29, Babli Sota 38a, etc.). Hence it became codified in the major works of Jewish law, and that is the reason the Gabbai made the judgment call that he did (Rambam Tefila 14:11 and Shulhan Arukh OH 128:10).

The case against the Gabbai now may seem unwinnable for Rabbi Lau, but it's actually more doable than you might think. Based on a responsum from a 17th century Austrian haham (Shevut Yaacov 2:1), Rabbi Lau convincingly argued that the requirement for Kohanim to stand is only rabbinic, not from the Torah. As we noticed before, none of the Torah verses above actually forbids the Kohanim from sitting, and there is also the major value of *kevod haberiyot* – the need to give dignity to all God's creation. When a respectable Kohen is clearly trying to honor God in return, we can allow him to follow his wishes even if it means trumping a rabbinic rule.

Rabbi Lau's ruling reflected the strength of his rabbinic learning as well as his moral compass. He saw beyond the Gabbai's initial negative response to a Torah truth. I am very grateful for the opportunity to learn from such a moving teacher and mentor. May we merit to find new teachers and new ways of thinking, all the days of our lives.

Parashat Emor

Omer 32 / Bar Mitsva of Gabe Vovlovic

Torah: Lev. 21:1–24:23, 124 Pesukim

Hertz 513–528; Stone 672–695

Haftara: Ezek. 44:15–31

Hertz 528–530; Stone 1176–1177

Tefillot: Morid Hatal

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, May 12th

Shaharit 6:25 am

Candle lighting..... 7:27 pm

Minha 6:30 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit 7:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, May 13th

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 8:15 pm

Havdala 8:31 pm

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Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in honor of

**the Bar Mitsva of
Gabriel Volvovic**

by The Volvovic Family

Congratulations to parents
Lisa & David Volvovic
brother, Nathaniel
grandmother, Colette Volvovic
and the entire family

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Lag La'omer (no Tahanun)

Sunday, May 14th

Shaharit 7:30 am
Talmud Torah 9:45 am to 12:30 pm

Monday to Friday, May 15-19

Shaharit 6:25 am

Next Shabbat

Fri-Sat, May 19-20

Shabbat Candle lighting 7:32 pm
Friday Minha 6:30 pm
Shaharit 8:30 am
Saturday Minha 6:45 pm
Havdala 8:36 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

In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries from May 13 to 20, 2017. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

18 Iyar / Sunday, May 14th

Rachel Judah *Rachel bat Tifacha*
Seemah Sofaer Shamash *Seemah Sofaer bat Hanna*

19 Iyar / Monday, May 15th

Helen Ezra Shemtob *Habiba bat Lulu*

21 Iyar / Wednesday, May 17th

Lulu Ezra Azoory *Lulu Katoon bat Masooda*
Michael David Adrian Meyer *Michael David ben Yoseph Meir*
Murad Saddick *Mordechai ben Sasson*
Maisie Solomon

22 Iyar / Thursday, May 18th

Ezekiel Joseph *Yehezkel ben Itzhak Yosef*
Grace Mussry *Grace bat Toba*
Iran Rojhani *Iran bat Monavar*

23 Iyar / Friday, May 19th

Moshe Bensabat *Moshe ben Clara*
Sally Saul *Salha bat Simcha*

24 Iyar / Shabbat, May 20th

Judah Freddy Bekhore *Yehuda Faraj ben Yosef Simcha bat Habiba*



Rabbi Lau at the conference with the DC area's "Beltway Vaad"

Appreciation

Rabbi Melhado thanks the Kahal Joseph community for supporting his trip to the IRF conference. This gathering of rabbis from across the Modern Orthodox world is a rich environment of Torah learning and professional growth.

The keynote speaker was Rabbi Dr. Binyamin Lau, who taught several insightful sessions on the values of inclusion in the synagogue. Dr. Michelle Friedman discussed her new book on Jewish pastoral counseling, and Dr. Elana Stein Hain gave a powerful presentation about how to host civil conversations between people who violently disagree. Many of Rabbi Melhado's teachers and mentors were also present, teaching their Torah to the conference and sharing their personal perspectives with him one-on-one. He is coming back charged and ready to serve the community with renewed strength!

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 יתזיר עבודת בית המקדש למקומה במקרה 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.



Celebrate
Israel
2017!



Restricted Items:

Dogs
Weapons
Knives
Food
Drinks
Bad Moods



Like us on facebook! facebook.com/kahaljoseph.congregation



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.