

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

Gal Gadot's recent debut as Wonder Woman has made superheroes the talk of the town once again. With their incredible feats of strength and paranormal powers, they can rise to the challenges of life in ways that regular people can only dream of.



While we can be proud that many superheroes are explicitly written as Jewish, the Torah actually shows Aaron the Priest to be the kind of larger-than-life figure that is the stuff of comic book narrative. Millennia before graphic novels were invented, we have our very own Jewish superhuman in Moses's indomitable brother.

Possibly one of the most surreal passages of the Torah is when God tells Aaron how to inaugurate the Levites into the sacrificial cult. First he must offer them up as a symbolic sacrifice, and then they in turn offer a real animal sacrifice that mirrors the ritual done to them. All of this sounds reasonable until God commands Aaron to "offer the Levites as a wave-offering to the Lord" (Deut. 8:11, 13, and 15).

Let's think about the physics of that for a moment. The wave-offering, or Tenufa, requires lifting and moving the sacrifice in all four directions as well as up and down (Menahot 62a). Most wave offerings were done either with small objects or with a severed limb of the sacrificial animal; only the lamb of the leper's guilt offering must be waved live (and therefore whole), and we are just skirting the edge of practicality with an animal of that size. To do the Tenufa with even one fully-grown adult human must have been quite difficult, yet the

census of the Levites showed that their tribe had 22,000 males over the age of 30 days (Deut. 3:11-39). For Aaron to fulfill this commandment in a single day, he would have had to pick up and wave one Levite every 2 seconds for over 12 hours without a break.

The Midrash seems to have no problem with this interpretation, and it even elaborates that Aaron was so strong that he could throw a lightweight part of the sacrifices to land exactly behind the altar 32 cubits away from the point of slaughter! (Eccl. Rabba 12:7:1) To get a sense of this feat, try balling up a tissue and see if you could even come close to throwing it to a specific point over 50 feet away.

The only commentator I could find with a rational explanation of this passage was Rabbi Samuel David Luzzato, who suggests that the "waving" of the Levites meant leading them in a public circuit around the holy altar. All the other sages I read either accept Aaron's achievement as miraculous or simply skip the passage without explaining it.

So what are we to make of a superhuman Aaron? To answer this, I return to the appeal of comics, which derives from their ability to inspire us. The human condition makes us susceptible to abuse of power and mindless cruelty, and we channel our hopes for rising above that into superheroes that "sock it" to the forces of Evil. The sacrificial cult is supposed to be a similar beacon, limiting bloodshed to a spiritual worship cult in a world to which other violence must be an anathema. Perhaps you won't see "Kohen Man" as the next Marvel trilogy, but his message of meeting the injustices of the world through a divine system of mitsvot is something we can all get behind!

Parashat Beha'alotekha

Torah (§): Num. 8:1–12:16, 136 Pesukim
Hertz 605–619; Stone 774–797
Haftara: Zach. 2:14–4:7
Hertz 620–622; Stone 1182–1184
Tefillot: Morid Hatal; Tsidkatekha resumes at Minha

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, June 9th

Shaharit 6:30 am
Candle lighting..... 7:45 pm
Minha..... 6:30 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit 7:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, June 10th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah 10:15 am
Musaf 11:40 am

Women's Tehillim 6:15 pm
Minha 7:15 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet..... 8:00 pm
Arvit 8:35 pm
Havdala 8:49 pm

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“Rabbi, why do we skip the Tahanunim prayers for twelve days in the month of Sivan?”

A member of our congregation recently asked me this question, and since the answer may interest others in our community, I have included a summary for our general readership.

Tahanunim prayers are a short, daily ritual in which we ask God’s forgiveness for our transgressions. Essentially a “5-minute Yom Kippur,” they are a nice way to take stock of our moral lives without having to wait around for the High Holy Days. The prayers are usually read at Shaharit and Minha, and we add even more supplications for days with Torah reading or fasting.

Because these prayers discuss our human weaknesses, they don’t quite suit the spirit of happy days like Shabbat, holidays, or family semahot. When joyful

occasions such as these roll around, we simply skip the Tahanunim and move on to the next part of the service (Shulhan Arukh OH 131:4-7, and cf. Kaf Hachayim 131:107) .

In Sivan, this would naturally happen on Rosh Hodesh and the two days of Shavuot since they are holidays, but what about the rest? The only way to get 12 days without Tahanunim is to really maximize what counts as a festivity: we omit them on the 3rd-5th of Sivan to mark the “Prep days” that God commanded before giving us the Torah, and we skip a further seven days after Shavuot in honor of the days when we could make up a missed festival sacrifice in Biblical times. Meanwhile, the 2nd of Sivan, which apparently had nothing quite as memorable happen on it, gets a pass on Tahanunim simply because of its association with the other days.

What we see at work in these rules is an effort to make a cherished occasion feel as special as possible. It’s not enough for the holiday of Shavuot to be sanctified with its normal observances, but instead we seize upon the least excuse to help create a sense of a broader “Shavuot season.” For nearly two weeks, the impression of Shavuot is felt in our practice of Judaism, much as we savor the lingering scent of a well-seasoned meal in our kitchens for days after we ate the food. May all of our occasions stick with us in such a sweet way!

Shabbat Shalom

(Continued from page 1)

Sunday, June 11th

Shaharit 7:30 am
Talmud Torah 9:45 am

Monday to Friday, June 12th to 16th

Shaharit 6:25 am

Monday, June 12th

Shabbat Matters, online class..... 8:00 pm

Next Shabbat / Fri-Sat, June 16-17

Shabbat Candle lighting 7:48 pm
Friday Minha 6:30 pm
Young Professionals Shabbat 7:30 pm

at Rabbi Melhado’s home

Shaharit 8:30 am
Saturday Minha 7:15 pm
Havdala 8:52 pm

In Memoriam

We remember the following yahrzeit anniversaries from June 10 to 17, 2017. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

22 Sivan / Friday, June 16th

Rebecca Litvac *Rivka bat Esther*

23 Sivan / Shabbat, June 17th

Lily Judah *Lulu bat Toba*
Salim Kamara *Salim ben Ezra*

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

Young Professionals Shabbat Dinner

Friday, June 16 at 7:30 PM

Interested in....

a delicious dinner?
meeting new people?
an interesting discussion?



Join Rabbi Melhado and his family at home for a relaxed, joyful Shabbat dinner with good people.

Open to members and friends in their 20s and 30s.

Register now by emailing Rabbi at rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org.

 **CONGRATULATE**
Your
Graduate! 

Don't let your graduate go unnoticed! Let's celebrate the success and accomplishments of all our graduates from preschool to PhD.

Email the name, school and field of study of your graduate to jessica@kahaljoseph.org and they will be mentioned in the June 16 Kol Mevasser!



SAVE THE DATE!

Dodger's Jewish Community Day

Sunday August 13 at 1:10PM

LA Dodgers

v.

San Diego Padres

Group ticket info coming soon!





Register now for fall!

The Sam and Norma Dabby Talmud Torah

Hebrew * Fun * Parasha * History
* Friends * Values * Holidays *
* Food * Mitzvot *
and you!

Contact Molly Jalali at molly@emetek.com or Rabbi Melhado at rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org for more information!

Registration forms at www.kahaljoseph.org/talmudtorah.html



Shabbat Matters!

Rules, Rituals and Meaning
Mondays at 8PM live on YouTube!

Join Rabbi Melhado for an interactive,
online series on all aspects of Shabbat

Email rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org for the direct link

Session I:

May 22: What's it all about? The Philosophy of Shabbat

May 29: Get the Spirit: Honoring & Protecting Shabbat

June 5: Who/What/Why? Candles, Kiddush, Meals & Havdala

June 12: Trumped! Shabbat v. Special Circumstances



Session II:

July 3: What are we resting from: The 39 Labors

July 10: Is that Practical? Food & Transportation

July 17: Bend Me, Break Me: Shabbat & Other Values

July 24: Crescent & Cross: Shabbat & Non-Jewish Society