

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

"Is Balaam really such a bad guy, Rabbi? I mean, if you read the Torah it sounds like he did exactly the right thing. He told Balak's messengers that he couldn't do anything against God's will even if he wanted to, and when push came to shove he followed through on that even though it put his life at risk. If that is true, why does our tradition preserve his name as 'Balaam the Wicked'?"!

This question from the Se'uda Shelisheet table last week poses a serious moral problem. How could we let an apparently unjustified attack on someone's character go unchecked? If Balaam was carrying out God's will, why would we preserve statements like the following in the Mishna?

"These qualities are observed by the students of Our Father Abraham: accepting one's lot, profound humility, and distancing oneself from base passions. These qualities are observed by the students of Balaam the Wicked: pursuing unethical gain, haughty temperament, and hedonistic nature." (Pirke Avot 5:19)

Ouch. Even though we are talking about a long-dead Biblical figure, we can readily appreciate the damage caused by allowing a false accusation to linger. In the 1993 film *The Fugitive*, Harrison Ford plays a normal doctor like any of us might know in our private lives. Yet because of an unfounded accusation that he killed his wife, he has to spend the majority of the movie on the edges of society as he fights to prove his innocence. Now imagine if this happened in the age of the Internet! Even though he had been exonerated, his reputation might never recover.



To resolve this problem with Balaam, we must take a closer look at the Biblical text. Every negative Midrash has to have a basis in the verses, and in his case there is a clear passage in which God expresses so much anger at Balaam that He places an Angel of Death in his path (Num. 22:22). Our Sages assume that God would not do so unless He felt that Balaam transgressed an important value, and they credibly use this to read his interactions with God in a negative light.

One of the more convincing explanations of this variety comes from Ramban (1194-1270). He suggests that Balaam is too eager for Balak's promised reward and forgets to inform the messengers that God only allowed him to go on condition that he not curse the Israelites. The messengers in turn believe that God changed his mind on the subject, and this causes a *hilul hashem* - a public desecration of God's name - when Balaam's promised curses come out as blessings.

Balaam's repeated effort, his attempt not once but three times to placate Balak, comprises his arrogance, an all-too-human failing. His haughtiness is in repeatedly trying. His lack of ethics is in pretending to be something he knows he is not, misrepresenting himself as superhuman or having divine ability, and feeding Balak's misperception.

Balaam is not universally panned in Rabbinic literature, some of which presents him as a highly renowned prophet on the same level as the best of the Jews (cf. Zebachim 116a). Yet a significant number of Rabbinic texts do assert his wickedness, causing him to have the same inconsistent reputation that his own actions create for God. In that sense his punishment is at least appropriate, even if it doesn't feel entirely fair.

Parashat Balak

Torah: Num. 22:2–25:9, 104 Pesukim
Hertz 669–682; Stone 856–875
Haftara: Mic. 5:6–6:8
Hertz 682–685; Stone 1189–1190
Tefillot: Morid Hatal, Hakhrazat Hatsom

17th of Tamuz is Tuesday

"Our brothers, the whole House of Israel, take heed! The Fast of the Fourth Month will be this Tuesday – may God turn it into a day of gladness and rejoicing!"

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, July 7th

Shaharit	6:25 am
Candle lighting	7:49 pm
Minha	6:30 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat / Arvit	7:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, July 8th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer	8:30 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	8:40 pm
Havdala	8:52 pm

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Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in loving memory of
Rashel Maslavi, z"l
by Blanche & Fred Maslavi

Se'uda Shelisheet

is sponsored in loving memory of
Mordechai ben Rebbie Eliahu
Morad Rafie, z"l
by Farshad Rafie &
Shadi & Talasazan Families

Volunteers Needed for the Playroom!

Join us on Sunday, July 16th
10 am to 2 pm
& enjoy a pizza
lunch for your
trouble.



Contact jessica@kahaljoseph.org

Refu'a Shelema

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

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Sunday, July 9th

Shaharit 7:30 am

Monday & Wednesday-Friday, July 10, 12-14

Shaharit 6:25 am

17th of Tamuz / Tuesday, July 11th

Fast Begins..... 4:21 am

Shaharit 6:15 am

Minha w/Birkat Kohanim 7:15 pm

Fast Ends (earliest for Sephardim).. 8:30 pm

Fast Ends (those who can wait) 8:48 pm

Next Shabbat / Fri-Sat, July 14-15

Shabbat Candle lighting 7:47 pm

Friday Minha 6:30 pm

Shaharit 8:30 am

Saturday Minha 7:15 pm

Havdala 8:50 pm



FEEDBACK WANTED!

We're sure you have lots to say!

Parents, grandparents, friends, kids!

*We're looking to improve the children's
programming at Kahal.*

*What do you like now? What would
you like to see us do differently? What
new things do you think we should
do? How do you want to be involved
in the future?*

*Email Jessica at
jessica@kahaljoseph.org with your
thoughts. I'm looking forward to
hearing from you!*

In Memoriam

We remember the following yahrzeit anniversaries
from July 8 to 15, 2017. It is customary to light a
memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat
services.

14 Tamuz / Shabbat, July 8th

Rachel Meyer Judah Rachel bat Aziza

15 Tamuz / Sunday, July 9th

Mazal Sawdayi Mazal bat Rima Cohen

17 Tamuz / Tuesday, July 11th

Abdallah Ezra Abdallah ben Ezra Itzhak

18 Tamuz / Wednesday, July 12th

Naamat Zelkha Naamat ben Simha

20 Tamuz / Friday, July 14th

Rachel Pourati Rachel bat Leah Nahid

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 II begins in July!

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

Missed Session I?

Find them online at

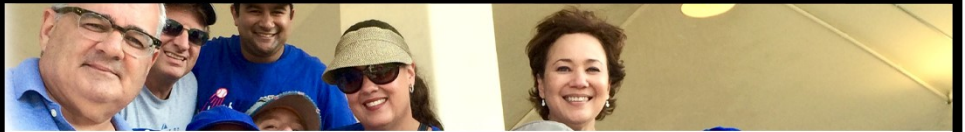
www.kahaljoseph.org/shabbat-matters.html

Class 1: What's it all about? The Philosophy of Shabbat

Class 2: Get the Spirit: Honoring & Protecting Shabbat

Class 3: Who/What/Why? Candles, Kiddush, Meals & Havdala

Class 4: Trumped! Shabbat v. Special Circumstances



Join Kahal Joseph at the Ball Park!

Jewish Community Day at Dodgers Stadium!

Sunday, August 13 at 1:10 PM

Dodgers v. San Diego Padres

Group tickets \$34 include Dodgers in Hebrew hat!

RSVP extended until JULY 11 - call the office at 310-474-0559



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

SHABBAT DINNER

FRIDAY, JULY 14 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.

Kahal Joseph's Annual Giving Days

Sunday, July 16 and 23, 2017

To all the members and friends of Kahal Joseph:

Sunday July 16 & July 23 will be our Annual Giving Days, days to give what you can to help our synagogue continue serving our community and enhance its programs for our members and their families.

As you know, we rely on the generosity of our members and friends to supplement our general fund and to continue improving our programs and enhancing our synagogue.

Thanks to an earmarked donation to our Building Fund, renovation is in progress to improve and beautify the building. The lobby will be partially widened and remodeled, the sanctuary will be given a fresh look, the social hall will be modernized and the restrooms remodeled.

Many members of our community have volunteered to take time on our first Annual Giving Day to call you. When you receive the call, please keep in mind that no amount is too small and that any donation you make will be greatly appreciated. If you contribute \$1,000 or more, your name will be listed on the Benefactors' wall in the lobby of the synagogue.

Kahal Joseph has succeeded and flourished due to the generous support of our members throughout the years. I look forward to your support, may Hashem bless you and your families.

Sincerely,

Vette Dabby,
President



Beat the rush! Donate online at www.kahaljoseph.org/donate.html or call at 310-474-0559