

KOL MEVASSER

Rabbi's Message

You have probably said the Shema thousands of times. It is our daily testament of faith, proclaiming our belief in the One God Who gave us the Torah with love. The words are imprinted on our hearts, and we have spoken them so reliably that many of us can recite them from memory.



Our deep familiarity with the Shema makes us start with surprise at the idea that anything else would be read along with it. Between the three passages (Deut. 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Num. 15:37-41) there is a little bit of everything: "God is unique, we love Him, and we place Him in our consciousness every day; there is reward and punishment, and when we look at our tsitsit, we remember to keep our end of the bargain that began at the Exodus." In just a few short citations we have highlighted some of the most powerful language of God's message. What could be more inspiring?

Well, the 10 Commandments, for one! Here is a fascinating case where a major Jewish ritual was curtailed in response to outside forces. The Mishna reports that the original reading began with the Decalogue, and only then did it move into what we now recognize as the Shema. After this was established, partisan movements began to attack Judaism by arguing that 10 Commandments are the only part of the Torah actually revealed by God. The attackers saw proof in the fact that we read the 10 Commandments

twice a day, so Our Sages deleted this section to prove that it is no more important than any other passage. (See Mishna Tamid 5:1, BT Berakhot 12a and YT Berakhot 3c.)

Their willingness to eliminate something from the Shema, no matter how much reservation they had, is spiritually challenging. If a passage deserved to be in our daily testament of faith, shouldn't we stick to it no matter who is pushing against it?! Shouldn't we stand up to those who try to persecute us and refuse to accommodate our rituals to their misconceptions?!

I may not have the answer to that today, but further reflection does reveal that this kind of thing happened a lot in the formative period of Jewish prayer. A great example is Parashat Balak, over 90% of which was seriously suggested for inclusion in the Shema as well. While it contains all of Balaam's blessings, and movingly captures the tension between personal and divine will, it too was rejected. The reason had nothing to do with the content, but was simply about the length of prayer. At 95 verses, it just wasn't pithy enough, and out it went!

As we read Parashat Balak this week, let us imagine an alternate universe where it did make it into the Shema. How would your spiritual life be changed if you encountered these words twice a day instead of once a year? What does it demand from you, and how might you rise to it? Even if this alternate reality doesn't exist, the questions it poses are worthwhile to answer.

Parashat Balak

Latest Shabbat of the Year

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

Fast of Tammuz is on Sunday

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

KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat

Friday, June 29th

Candle lighting.....	7:50 pm
Minha	6:30 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat.....	7:00 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, June 30th

Shaharit	8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah	10:00 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	8:53 pm

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A MINUTE OF MIDRASH

PARASHAT HUKAT * BEMIDBAR RABBA 20:2

Commenting on the opening verse of the Parasha, "BALAK BEN TSIPOR SAW" the Midrash observes that 'the wicked are better off being blind, because their eyes bring evil to the world.'

In the generation of the flood it is written: "THE DIVINE BEINGS SAW HOW BEAUTIFUL THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN WERE" and just a few verses later the whole of humanity has gone wicked. (Gen. 6:1-8)

After the flood recedes and Noah gets drunk, "HAM, THE FATHER OF CANAAN SAW HIS FATHER'S NAKEDNESS" and caused him shame. (Gen. 9:20-25)

In Abraham's generation "THE OFFICERS OF PHARAOH SAW SARAH" and they carried her off as a prize for Pharaoh. (Gen. 12:10-20)

The Midrash concludes: "So it was for all the wicked ones, and hence the verse 'BALAK SAW'"

It is interesting that the Midrash responds to wicked people's enhanced perceptive abilities with regret. Their problem is not really that they can appreciate beauty or get turned off by disgrace – by themselves these could potentially be valuable assets in a person's character. Rather, the issue is that having no internal filters can make an otherwise good person flawed.

To solve this with blindness might work, but it isn't really actionable in the everyday world. Rather, the Midrash pushes us to develop coping mechanisms against pursuing pleasure at the cost of decency and responsibility. If our senses drive us to surface beauty, how can we channel that productively for the greater good?

Sponsor a Kiddush or Seuda Shelisheet!

Celebrate a family milestone!

Honor the memory of a loved one!

Share a simha with the community!

Celebrate and commemorate with your Kahal Joseph community by sponsoring a Kiddush or Seuda Shelisheet for all to enjoy

Contact Sarah in the office at 310.474.0559 to reserve your date

New Blessing Cards

Rabbi Melhado has edited the Torah and Haftara blessing cards in large typeface. If you used the draft copies this week or got a chance to examine them, please give him your honest feedback for the final version.

Refua Shelema

Sassoon Ezra • Moselle Amron • Sally Amron
Sylvia Cohen • Esther Duke • Mehry bat Miriam
Hakimipour • Tilda Levy • Yvonne Moalim • Florice
Newberry • Aliza bat Rahel • Aliza bat Victoria •
Arlette bat Rashel • Chaya Chana bat Batya •
Katie bat Farha • Malka bat Rahel • Miriam bat
Yetta • Miryam bat Malka • Moshe Ezra ben
MazalTov • Simcha bat Rooha • Moshe Hooman
ben Sara • Habiba bat Farha • Moshe Haim ben
Sara • Meir Ezra ben Rahel • Dina bat Rahel

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Fest of Tammuz

Sunday, July 1st

Fast Begins.....	4:14 am
Shaharit.....	7:30 am
Minha w/Birkat Kohanim.....	7:15 pm
Fast Ends (earliest for Sephardim)	8:30 pm
Fast Ends (for those who can wait).....	8:48 pm

Mon-Tue, Thu-Fri, July 2-3, 5-6

Shaharit.....	6:25 am
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Independence Day

Wednesday, July 4th

Shaharit.....	7:00 am
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Next Shabbat

Friday-Saturday, July 6-7

Shabbat Candle lighting.....	7:49 pm
Friday Minha	6:30 pm
Shaharit	8:30 am
Saturday Minha	7:15 pm
Havdala	8:53 pm

In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeits from June 30 to July 7, 2018. It is customary to light memorial candles, donate tzedaka and attend Shabbat services to honor loved ones.

17 Tammuz / Shabbat, June 30th

Abdallah Ezra Abdallah ben Ezra Itzhak

18 Tammuz / Sunday, July 1st

Naamat Zelkha Naamat ben Simha

20 Tammuz / Tuesday, July 3rd

Rachel Pourati Rahel bat Leah Nahid

22 Tammuz / Thursday, July 5th

Abraham Shamash Abraham ben Eliyahu

23 Tammuz / Friday, July 6th

Shalom Jacob Yaacov Shalom ben Yeshaiah
Lulu Farha Zekaria

24 Tammuz / Shabbat, July 7th

Aaron David Aharon David ben Avraham Haim
Elias Joseph Eliyahu ben Yitzhak



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

Registration forms at www.kahaljoseph.org/talmud-torah.html



Young Professionals Shabbat Dinner

Friday, July 27 at 7:30PM

Join Rabbi & Jessica Melhado at their home for
an interesting discussion and amazing meal
for members and friends in their 20s and 30s.

Bring your questions, your appetite and your friends!

RSVP to Rabbi Melhado at rabbimelhado@kahaljoseph.org

Join Kahal Joseph at the Ball Park!



Jewish Community Day at Dodgers Stadium!
Sun., Aug. 5 at 1:10 PM - Dodgers v. Houston Astros

← Group tickets \$36 including a
Dodgers in Hebrew baseball tee

RSVP by July 5 - call the office at 310-474-0559
If we get 20 tickets, Kahal's name will be on the Jumbotron!





Prints of Babylon

Recommended Reading on the Iraqi Jewish Diaspora

“Dispersion and Liberation”
Eight-volume series plus album
Edited by Abraham Twena

In 1961, Israeli geographer Zev Vilnay published a short tract on the city of Ramla entitled *Ramla: Past and Present*. Despite the existence of two Iraqi synagogues and 15 streets named for Iraqi hahamim, Vilnay's booklet overlooked the town's Babylonian Jewish heritage.

Abraham Twena, a local Iraqi Jew, pushed to set the record straight, and received sympathetic responses from Vilnay and the city council. In 1968, this resulted in the first volume of *Dispersion and Liberation*, which gave background on the Iraqis who appear on Ramla's street signs, and opened the door to the wider Babylonian Jewish world of which they were part.

Over the next thirteen years, this blossomed into a far-ranging series on the history of Babylonian Jewry in the 19th and 20th centuries. What began as a small booklet to correct a scholarly oversight grew to more than 1,500 pages of source material on the Jews of Iraq.

Citation:

טווינה, אברהם (עורך) “גולים וגאולים” (ח' כרכים ואלבום), רמלה: בית
כנסת גאולה, 1981-1968



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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
& YOUNG AT HEART

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Wine tastings from vineyards all around Israel
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July 12, 2018
7:30 PM

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Per Person

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