

## Rabbi's Message

By Rabbi Melhado



Several of us may recognize Bilam's personality from our life experiences. The archetypal case begins with someone who has mastered a skill that most others find difficult to acquire. By itself this is commendable, but a person of weak character can interpret their talent as a license to treat others poorly. As they taste the status and privileges to which their ability grants them access, they become arrogant and entitled. They believe themselves a cut above their peers, and they resist any perceived threats to their power with startling intensity.

All of these elements are on display with Bilam, either in the Scriptural narrative or its expanded motifs in Rabbinic literature. Bilam's special skill is to have his blessings and curses come true, leading actual Kings to curry favor with him (Num. 22:5-7, 15-18). According to the Midrash, his Prophetic knowledge ranked him as high as Moshe Rabbenu, with each having only a single attribute that surpassed the other (Tana Debe Eliyahu Rabba, 28). Yet despite this achievement, he thinks nothing of cursing victims he doesn't even know, cynically trying to outsmart God along the way (Bemidbar Rabba 21:9-10). He cares mainly for prestige and wealth (ibid., 20:17), giving only hollow lip-service to God's principles. When his donkey points to the dangers of this path, he simply attacks her because he cannot fathom that he could be wrong (Num. 22:21-33).

Every time Parashat Balak rolls around, I find myself wondering what the best response is to the Bilams we meet in our lives. Drawing firm

moral lines in the sand sounds principled, but it often backfires with such an assertive personality. Your Bilam will take contradiction as a severe personal insult, responding explosively and nursing grudges over long periods. On the other hand, a full withdrawal from confronting them is tantamount to surrender. Their goals and desires can be inappropriate and harmful, so if we let them have their way just to avoid conflict, we are compromising on our own values.

Equally important is finding a way to combat Bilams that keeps us on a level emotional keel. Being around them presses all our buttons, which is wearing over time and can lead us to lash out in ways we do not expect. Part of Bilam's power lies in the fact that he shakes his enemies out of their composure and impairs their good judgment. A solution will only be successful if it can model what civil discourse and fair arbitration actually look like. We must show a Bilam that these qualities are admirable and effective, and will secure people's respect more lastingly than fear of harm.

Despite the low reputation of the donkey in rabbinic literature, I think she actually has the best response that I've encountered so far. Essentially she knows that she cannot resist Bilam every time, so she saves up her strength for the fights that really matter. When she does contradict him, it is with patient, justifiable action that minimizes confrontation while demonstrating her points very effectively. When he abuses her, she does not repay him with similar bad behavior, but responds with words whose strength comes from their obvious rectitude. Though it is not a pleasant experience for her, she uses forbearance and level-headedness to change Bilam's course when it really counted.

## 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

## 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, July 19th

Candle lighting .....	7:45 pm
Happy Minyan .....	5:30 pm
Minha .....	6:00 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat & Arvit .....	6:30 pm

### Yom Shabbat

Saturday, July 20th

Shaharit .....	8:30 am
Keriat HaTorah .....	10:15 am
Sermon .....	11:20 am
Musaf .....	11:30 am

Women's Tehillim .....	6:00 pm
Minha .....	7:00 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet .....	7:45 pm
Arvit .....	8:35 pm
Havdala .....	8:48 pm

(Continued on page 2)

## Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored in honor of  
the 99th Birthday of

**Michael Amron**

by  
The Amron Family



## Mazal Tov

Kahal Joseph & the Amron Family  
wish fond blessings for  
our beloved member  
**Michael Amron**  
on the occasion of his  
99th birthday celebration

## Condolences

With sorrow we send our deepest  
condolences to the family and friends of

**Joe Elisha, z"l**

*Yosef ben Mozelle and Sassoon* (1932-2019). He  
passed away on Tue., July 16th, the 14th of Tamuz.

Joe was born in Singapore and studied account-  
ancy in Australia as a young man. After moving to  
Los Angeles with two of his sisters in 1957, he  
established himself as a bookkeeper, a profession  
he devoted himself to for his entire career.

Joe was known as a jovial person who always  
greeted people warmly and never complained. He  
wished God's blessings on everyone. He loved to  
sing and had a beautiful, melodious voice.

### He is survived by his siblings

Esther Duke

Rita Hanin

Katie (Aaron) Shovers

Flexie Silpa and

Saul (Flora) Elisha

He was predeceased by his sister, Helen Lelah, z"l.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and  
loved ones. May they be comforted with all the  
mourners of Tsion. *Min hashamayim tenuhamu.*

*(Continued from page 1)*

### 17th of Tammuz / Sunday, July 21st

Fast Begins ..... 4:28 am  
Shaharit..... 7:00 am  
Minha w/Birkat Kohanim..... 7:15 pm  
Fast Ends (earliest for Sephardim) .... 8:27 pm  
Fast Ends (for those who can wait) . 8:45 pm

### Monday– Friday, July 22nd-26th

Shaharit..... 6:25 am

### Next Shabbat / Fri–Sat, July 26-27

Candle lighting ..... 7:40 pm  
Friday Minha ..... 6:00 pm  
Shaharit..... 8:30 am  
Saturday Minha ..... 7:00 pm  
Havdala ..... 8:43 pm

## In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries from  
July 20 to 27, 2019. We light memorial candles,  
donate tsedaka, and attend Shabbat services to  
honor the memory of our loved ones.

### 17 Tamuz / Shabbat, July 20th

Abdallah Ezra *Abdallah ben Ezra Yitzhak*

### 18 Tamuz / Sunday, July 21st

Naamat Zelkha *Naamat ben Simcha*

### 19 Tamuz / Monday, July 22nd

Rachel Joseph *Rachel bat Masuda*

### 20 Tamuz / Tuesday, July 23rd

Rachel Pourati *Rahel bat Leah Nahid*

Reuben Itzhaki *Reuben ben Ezra*

### 22 Tamuz / Thursday, July 25th

Abraham Shamash *Abraham ben Eliyahu*

### 23 Tamuz / Friday, July 26th

Shalom Jacob *Yaacov Shalom ben Yeshaiah*

Lulu Farha Zekaria

### 24 Tamuz / Shabbat, July 27th

Aaron David *Aharon David ben Avraham Haim*

Elias Joseph *Eliyahu ben Yitzhak*

## 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 • Chaya Chana bat Batya  
Katie bat Farha • Miriam bat Yetta  
Miryam bat Malka • Moshe Ezra ben Mazal Tov  
Simcha bat Rooha • Habiba bat Farha  
Chaya Rachel bat Simcha • Dina bat Rahel  
Rahel bat Ramah Regina • Karen bat Chana Meir  
Eti Esther bat Fortuna • Eliahu Shalom ben Avigayil  
Ezra ben Rahel • Albert Nissan ben Victoria



# Explore Jewish India!

By Rahel Musleah

If you are like me, your roots are important to you. Some of you might know my family. My father was the rabbi of the Calcutta community, and we moved to the United States when I was six years old. India enchanted me from a distance for most of my life.

We Baghdadi Jews have branched out all over the world, but we remain grounded in our glorious heritage. We can't go back to Baghdad, but we can still travel to India and delight in all it has to offer. Each tour I lead is a homecoming for me. Whether you are Baghdadi, Indian, or from another background, you will be treated as part of the family.

# INDIA

## EXPLORE JEWISH INDIA

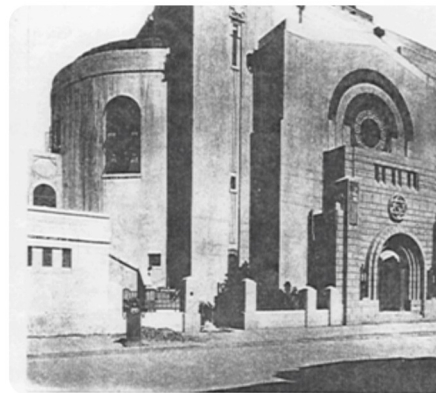
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## SISTER SYNAGOGUES SHANGHAI



The first Jew recorded in Shanghai arrived in 1848, and over the following decade the Baghdadi-run firm David Sassoon, Sons and Co. was established there. A small group of about 40 people prayed in private homes until an organized Jewish community was formed at the Beth El prayer hall in 1887.

In 1898, a Beth El congregant bought an Aliya to the Torah after he had arrived to Shabbat services in a carriage while smoking a cigar. In uproar, a group of traditionalists broke away to form their own group, and they opened a competing prayer hall called Shearith Israel the following year.

Both congregations later matured into lavish, monumental edifices financed by Iraqi Jewish businessmen. Beth El transferred its staff and ritual objects into Ohel Rachel in 1920, and Shearith Israel followed suit at Beth Aharon in 1927. These buildings were the beating heart of Jewish life in the city until the Chinese Civil War, with Beth Aharon even hosting the refugee Yeshivas Mir as it became the only European yeshiva to survive the Holocaust.

Alas, this noble preservation of human life would not be reflected in the fate of the physical buildings. Under the People's Republic of China, both were seized and forcibly converted to secular uses. Beth Aharon was demolished to make way for a high-rise in 1985, and Ohel Rachel has been designated one of the world's 100 Most Endangered Monuments.





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**SHABBAT, JULY 27, 2019**