



CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM
 5915 Beacon Street * Pittsburgh, PA. 15217
 412-421-2288

Visit our Web Site: www.bethshalompgh.org



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Helen Feder & Stefi Kirschner. Sisterhood
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 Zoe Levenson & Miriam Steinberg USY

YAHREZITS FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 4 - JULY 10 * 12 TAMMUZ - 18 TAMMUZ

Herbert Abrams	Sidney Feinstein	Reuben Levine	Max Smolever
Leah Alpern	Mary Fetter	Ida R Levy	Mildred Snider
Meyer K Amdur	Anne Foreman	Joseph Loikrec	Irwin M Solow
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Anna Caplan	Norman M Halpern	Henry (Pat) Rubenstein	Harry Valinsky
Bessie Charapp	Maurice Heimowitz	Anna Rose Sarkoff	Jack Wagman
Alan M Cohen	David I Helfer	Dr Jacob Schoolnic	Anna G Watkins
Abraham Dezen	Benjamin Heller	Edith Schwartz	Fannie Weil
Era Dribinsky	Louis Hilk	Valerie Schwartz	Faith Weinstein
Michael Dribinsky	Rae Hoffman	Martha Golding Segman	Faye Rubenstein Weiss
Yehuda Dribinsky	David Jaskoski	Hilda Z Shames	William Williams
Hannah Eisner	Ethel Kwall	Joseph Shapiro	
Jacob Elinoff	Edith Letwin	Rose Gertrude Shapiro	
Mariam Mendel Emerman	Melvin H Levenson	Gittel Siff	

The Book of Remembrance is Beginning Production

Please make sure your loved ones are included in the upcoming edition which will be used during Yizkor Services throughout the New Year 5770. We treasure the memories of our loved ones and they will always be remembered. Contact the Beth Shalom Office at 412-421-2288.



CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM
 AN EGALITARIAN CONSERVATIVE CONGREGATION
 WELCOMING ALL TO WORSHIP, STUDY AND GROW TOGETHER

12 Tammuz 5769

July 4, 2009



**TODAY'S TORAH PORTION CHUKAT-BALAK BEGINS
 ON PAGE 652 IN YOUR SONCINO CHUMASH.
 THIS WEEK'S HAFTARAH CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 682.**



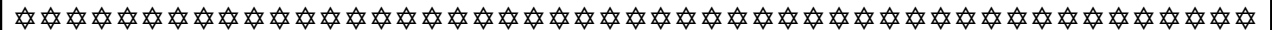
Please plan to join us for

Picnics in the Park

following Services and Kiddush

**Next Saturday, July 11th
 and Saturday, August 8th**

Meet at the Blue Slide Park
 with a dairy or parve lunch for your family.
 Bring blankets, balls and games for all to enjoy
 a leisurely and relaxing lunch in the park.



**ALL BETH SHALOM MEMBERS AND GUESTS
 ARE INVITED TO VISIT OUR PARALLEL SABBATH SERVICES
 SHABBAT SHALOM FAMILY CIRCLE - 11:00 AM - ROOM 307**

**3rd floor
 Infant Care - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
 Room 326**

**3rd floor
 Kiddie Minyan & Kiddie Minyan Plus
 10:30 a.m. (3 yrs - 5 yrs) with (K - 2nd) Room 304**

SHABBAT SHALOM

Rabbi Steindel and Rabbi Werbow join our Officers and Trustees in welcoming all members and guests to our Shabbat Services. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Yasher Koach to all of the participants of this week's Shabbat Morning Service. Everyone is invited to the kiddush in the Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom immediately following services sponsored by Leah Ackner and Jonathan Loring in honor of Zev's 2nd Birthday, Ellen and Mike Siegel in honor of their 43rd Wedding Anniversary and Reva and Lee Neiman in honor of their 43rd Wedding Anniversary.

SATURDAY EVENING SERVICES:

Saturday Evening Mincha/Ma'ariv.....:8:55 p.m. Helfant Chapel
Shabbat Ends at 9:36 p.m.

IN OUR CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY:

- * Donald Klein celebrated his 80th Birthday.
- * Natalie and Donald Klein celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.
- * Special thanks to Elaine Beck and Anna Wecht for helping to beautify the synagogue grounds with lovely landscaping.

REFUAH SHLEIMAH:

TO: Ruth Ganz Fargotstein, Ann Gould (Shadyside)

Beginning Sunday, July 5th thru and including Sunday, August 9th, the office will be closed on Sundays. Daily Minyan will still take place Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. and Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. We appreciate your support for this cost saving measure during our slow summer period and we ask that you please contact the Administrative Office at 412.421.2288 so that we may coordinate Giant Eagle and Murray Avenue Kosher gift card purchases and pick-ups with your schedule.



Production has begun for the
2009-2010 Beth Shalom Youth Calendar

Support our Future Leaders by

highlighting birthdays, yahrzeits and personal or business advertisements.

Contact Sam Greenfield at the Beth Shalom office for additional information at: 412-421-2288 ext. 401

All of the Women of Beth Shalom are Invited to
Study Torah at Beth Shalom

with **MELISSA WERBOW**

SHABBAT AFTERNOON: 4 PM
 JULY 18, 2009 (26 Tammuz)

Come alone, bring a friend, bring your daughter, all women are invited!
 Join us for ice cool refreshments!

Sisterhood Evening Book Club



Monday, July 13th at 7:30 PM

at Melissa Werbow's house:
820 Hastings Street

The book is Dearest Anne
 by *Judith Katzir*

Kindly RSVP to Vicky Hoffman at:
vickyh@katz.pitt.edu or 412.521.1105

BETH SHALOM WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sunday, July 5 13 Tammuz	8:00 a.m. Morning Minyan - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 10:00 a.m. Past President Meeting - Lehman Center 7:00 p.m. Mincha/Ma'ariv - Homestead Hebrew Chapel	OFFICE CLOSED
Monday, July 6 14 Tammuz	7:30 a.m. Morning Minyan - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 7:00 p.m. Mincha/Ma'ariv - Homestead Hebrew Chapel	
Tuesday, July 7 15 Tammuz	7:30 a.m. Morning Minyan - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 7:00 p.m. Mincha/Ma'ariv - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 10:00 p.m. Camp Ramah Berkshire arrives	
Wednesday, July 8 16 Tammuz	7:30 a.m. Morning Minyan - Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom 9:00 a.m. Camp Ramah Berkshire departs 7:00 p.m. Mincha/Ma'ariv - Homestead Hebrew Chapel	
Thursday, July 9 17 Tammuz Fast of Tammuz	7:30 a.m. Morning Minyan - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 7:00 p.m. Mincha/Ma'ariv - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 7:30 p.m. Introduction to Judaism - Yecies Conference Room (Until 9:00)	
Friday, July 10 18 Tammuz Candle Lighting - 8:34 p.m.	7:30 a.m. Morning Minyan - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 10:00 a.m. Soup and Challah Sale - Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom 7:00 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat Services - Homestead Hebrew Chapel	
Saturday, July 11 19 Tammuz Shabbat Ends at 9:34 p.m.	6:30 a.m. Early Minyan - Homestead Hebrew Chapel 9:00 a.m. Please Join us for Family Shabbat Services in our Summer Sefardic Setting in the Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom 12:00 p.m. Kiddush - Samuel and Minnie Hyman Ballroom 1:00 p.m. Please Join us for a Picnic in the Park at the Blue Slide Park 8:55 p.m. Mincha/Ma'ariv Service - Helfant Chapel	



Please join us for our annual

TISHA B'AV

Conservative Movement Service and Learning

on

Wednesday Evening - July 29th

Learning with Rabbi Daniel Schiff at 7:00 p.m.

Tisha B'Av Services at 8:00 p.m.

at

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM

This special service recalls the tragic events of Jewish History that are traditionally recalled on the 9th day of the Hebrew month of Av. Jews all over the world commemorate Tisha B'Av as a day of national mourning and as a yahrzeit for the two Temples in Jerusalem and for Jewish Martyrs throughout the ages.

We will hold prayer services at Beth Shalom at 2:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 30th



Parashat Chukat-Balak

Prepared by Rabbi Joyce Newmark

God instructs Moses and Aaron concerning the ritual of the red cow, whose ashes were to be used to purify people who had become ritually impure through contact with a corpse.

Miriam dies and is buried at Kadash. Once again, the Israelites lack water and turn to Moses and Aaron with complaints and recriminations. God tells Moses to take his rod, then he and Aaron should assemble the community and order a rock to produce water.

Moses strikes the rock with his staff and the rock produces enough water for the Israelites and their animals. But God is displeased and tells Moses and Aaron that they will not enter the land He is giving to the Israelites.

Moses sends messengers to the king of Edom, asking for permission to cross his territory. The king refuses and sends an armed force to prevent the Israelites from entering his land. The people take a different path and come to Mount Hor. Aaron dies on Mount Hor and Moses invests Aaron's son Eleazar as the new high priest. The people mourn for Aaron for 30 days. The Canaanite king of Arad attacks the Israelites and is defeated at Hormah.

The people begin complaining yet again and God sends poisonous snakes to punish them. The Israelites approach Moses saying they realize they have sinned and they ask him to intercede with God for them. God tells Moses to make a copper serpent and place it on a pole so that anyone bitten by a snake could look at it and be cured.

The Israelites continue their journey through the territory east of the Jordan. They ask Sihon, the king of the Amorites, for permission to cross his land, but he refuses and attacks. The Israelites defeat the Amorites and take possession of their land. The Israelites also defeat King Og of Bashan and his people, taking their land as well. The Israelites camp in Moab, across the Jordan from Jericho.

Balak, the king of Moab, sees that the Israelites have defeated the neighboring Amorites and is afraid. He joins forces with the Midianites in order to hire the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites to insure their defeat. Balaam receives the delegation from Moab and Midian and asks them to spend the night so that he can receive God's instruction. God tells Balaam he may not go with them, for he must not curse the Israelites, who already are blessed. Balaam sends the delegation away. Balak sends a second delegation, promising Balaam great riches for his services. Once again he asks them to wait overnight, and this time God tells Balaam that he may go if he wants to, but he will be able to do only what God commands.

Balaam sets out, riding on his ass. An angel appears and blocks the road. Balaam doesn't see it but his ass does and refuses to move. Balaam beats the animal, but it still refuses to move. After three beatings, the ass speaks, complaining that it doesn't deserve this treatment. God then allows Balaam to see the angel, who rebukes him for beating the ass but permits him to continue on his journey with the warning that he may say only what God tells him.

Balaam asks Balak to build seven altars and provide animals for sacrifices. After Balaam makes his offerings he speaks the words God gives him, praising and blessing Israel. Balak is furious, but Balaam explains that he can speak only as God commands him. Twice more Balaam offers sacrifices and then praises and blesses Israel. Balak sends Balaam away; he leaves after describing the defeat of several other nations.

While the Israelites are camped at Shittim, the men are enticed by Moabite women into illicit sex and worshiping their god, Baal-peor. God tells Moses to have the ringleaders publicly executed. An Israelite man brings a Midianite woman to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and engages in public sex. Pinhas, the son of Eleazar the high priest, grabs a spear and stabs them both, ending the plague that had resulted from God's wrath.

1. Is Greed Still Good?

Balaam replied to Balak's officials, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, big or little, contrary to the command of the Lord my God." (Numbers 22:18)

A. Hence it teaches us that his soul was greedy, and he coveted the wealth of others. (Balaam) said: It is proper for him to give me all his silver and gold, for he must (otherwise) hire many troops that might or might not conquer (his enemies), but I shall certainly conquer. (Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki), 1040- 1105, France)

B. "Hence it teaches us that...he coveted the wealth of others" (Rashi). This seems difficult, because we are told in Avot 6:9 that Rabbi Yose said: "If you would give me all the gold and silver and precious stones in the world, I would only live in a place of Torah." Why, then, in the case of Balaam is basically the same statement viewed negatively? The answer is as follows: A man came to Rabbi Yose and asked him to live in the man's city. In return, he would give Rabbi Yose a million gold dinars. It was the man who mentioned money in the first place, and Rabbi Yose therefore answered him along the same lines. In the case of Balaam, though, Balak had not mentioned any money, and had only told him, "I will honor you greatly." Why, then, did Balaam mention money? This proves that he desired the money of others. (Torah Temimah (Rabbi Baruch Epstein), 1860-1942, Russia)

C. Rabbi Eliezer HaKappar said, how do we know that someone who honors another person for the sake of money in

Sedra Chukat-Balak (in your Soncino Chumash)

Kohen:	כהן	Numbers	Chapter 19:verses	1 thru 20:6	page 652
Levi:	לוי	Numbers	Chapter 20:verses	7 thru 21	page 656
3:	שלישי	Numbers	Chapter 20:verses	22 thru 21:20	page 658
4:	רביעי	Numbers	Chapter 21:verses	21 thru 22:12	page 662
5:	חמישי	Numbers	Chapter 22:verses	13 thru 38	page 670
6:	ששי	Numbers	Chapter 22:verses	39 thru 23:26	page 673
7:	שביעי	Numbers	Chapter 23:verses	27 thru 24:13	page 677
Acharon:	אחרון	Numbers	Chapter 24:verses	14 thru 25:9	page 679
Maftir:	מפטיר	Numbers	Chapter 25:verses	7 thru 9	page 681

the end will have it taken from him in disgrace? From what we find concerning the wicked Balaam who honored Balak for the sake of money, as it is said, "Balaam replied to Balak's officials, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold." And how do we know it was taken from him in disgrace? It is said (24:11), "Back with you at once to your own place...The Lord has denied you the reward." (Avot d'Rabbi Natan)

D. There are eight things that in large quantities are harmful but in small quantities are beneficial... wealth. (Gittin 70a)

E. The Almighty has not created the universe that we may have opportunities to satisfy our greed, envy, and ambition. (Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1907- 1972, Poland, Germany, and the United States)

SPARKS FOR DISCUSSION

Our commentators understand Balaam's seemingly disingenuous remark – "though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold" – as an indirect demand for payment. Therefore, it is greed that prompts Balaam to disregard God's initial directive and ask again for permission to go with Balak's emissaries. Do you think Balaam was motivated primarily by greed? What other motives might he have had?

Certainly most people hope to earn a good living, to have a nice house, car, and other possessions, and to be able to send their children to college and enjoy a secure retirement. At what point does this desire cross the line into greed? Do you think that most people have a "price," that they would do something they know is illegal or unethical for enough money?

2. Willful Blindness

Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I erred [hatati – I sinned] because I did not know that you were standing in my way. If you still disapprove, I will turn back." (Numbers 22:34)

A. He said it because he was a cunning villain and knew that nothing can prevent retribution except repentance, and that if anyone who committed a crime says "I have sinned," the angel has no power to touch him. (Bamidbar Rabbah 20:15)

B. This also was to his disgrace, and against his will he confessed, for he prided himself that he knew the knowledge of the Most High (24:16), and his mouth testified, "I did not know." (Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki), 1040-1105, France, based on Tanhuma)

C. This seems surprising: If he did not know, what sin was there? The answer is that there are certain things where ignorance itself is a sin. For example, if a son beats his father, he cannot justify himself by claiming that he did not know that this is forbidden. Similarly, the king's bodyguard cannot claim that he did not know who is the king. The same is true in this case. Balaam was a prophet, and as such he should have known that there was an angel blocking his ass. Balaam indeed said, "I sinned because I did not know." As a prophet, I should have known that there was an angel blocking me. My ignorance is a sin in itself. (Kanfei Nesharim (Rabbi Isaiah Shur of Jassy), 1781-1881, Romania)

D. Rabbi Hayyim of Sanz once asked a rabbi of a certain town, who was a Sanzer Hasid, whether he was involved in trying to help one of the men in his town who was in dire straits. The rabbi answered: "I didn't even know he was in such trouble." Rabbi Hayyim became angry at the rabbi and said to him: "We are told that Balaam exclaimed, 'I have sinned because I did not know.' This seems difficult, for why should he be a sinner if he did not know? This shows that ignorance itself can be a sin. A rabbi or other community leader must know of any case of injustice or distress in his town; he must sense these things, and if he does not know and does not sense them, that is a sin." (Mei-Otzar Ha- Hasidut, cited in Itturei Torah, Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Greenberg)

E. The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference. The opposite of art is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. The opposite of life is not death, it's indifference. (Elie Wiesel)

SPARKS FOR DISCUSSION

Balaam confessed that he had sinned. To what sin was he confessing? Do you agree with our commentators that ignorance can be a sin? Under what circumstances?