



The Jewish Center

SHABBAT BULLETIN

JULY 20, 2019 • 17 TAMMUZ 5779 • PARSHAT BALAK

SHABBAT SCHEDULE

EREV SHABBAT

7:00/8:00PM Minchah (1st floor)
7:00PM Young Leadership Kabbalat Shabbat (4th floor)
8:06PM Candle-lighting

SHABBAT

7:45AM Hashkama (4th floor)
9:00AM Shacharit (5th floor)
9:15AM Hashkama Shiur with Rabbi Elie Buechler, *Privacy and City Living: Hezek Reiyah* (lower level)
9:13AM Sof Zman Kriat Shema
9:30AM Young Leadership (1st floor)
10:00AM Youth Groups
4:00PM Bikkur Cholim/Bikkur in the Home (meet at 730 Columbus Ave.)
7:15PM Daf Yomi
7:55PM Minchah (1st floor)
Seudah Shlishit with Rachel Blumenthal, *Fake it 'til you make it: Finding meaning in the Three Weeks* (5th floor)
9:05PM Shabbat Concludes

***Shabbat Hot Kiddush is on Summer hiatus.**

THANK YOU TO OUR KIDDUSH SPONSORS:

Community Kiddush:

Sherry & Mark Fessel to commemorate the yahrzeit of Mark's father, Harry Fessel

Ruby & Joseph Gottlieb in loving memory and commemoration of the yahrzeits of Ruby's mother Ruth Kestenbaum and Ruby's brother Harold William Kestenbaum

To sponsor kiddush or seudah shlishit contact the JC office or email Aaron at astrum@jewishcenter.org

DAILY MINYAN REMINDER: As many of our regulars begin to disperse for the summer, we encourage you to strengthen our daily minyan. Come once or come often! We would love to have you with us.

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday, July 21	Monday, July 22 -	Friday, July 26
Fast of Tammuz	Thursday, July 25	7/8AM Shacharit
4:30AM Fast Begins	7/8AM Shacharit	7:45AM Daf Yomi
7:45AM Daf Yomi	7:45AM Daf Yomi	7/8PM Minchah
8:30AM Shacharit	8:05PM Minchah	8:00PM Candle-lighting
7:55PM Minchah		
8:53PM Fast Ends		

WOMEN'S TEHILLIM GROUP:

Monday, July 29th, 2019 at 7:15PM
Contact Joyce Weitz for more information at 212-877-1176

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

MAZAL TOV

Phyllis Roth upon the engagement of her son Gabriel to Daniella Wilner, daughter of Judy and Phil Wilner of the Upper East Side. Mazal Tov to his sister Daniella and grandparents Miriam and Heshie Greenblatt

CONDOLENCES

To former Jewish Center Chazzan, Ira Heller and his wife Alysia Heller on the untimely passing of their daughter, Tehila Heller. Shivah has concluded.

THANK YOU TO OUR USHER

Lily Kaplan

Thank you to our **CSS** members whose efforts help maintain a safe shul for our community.

Special thanks to our guest Chazzan this Shabbat, Elie Landau

Seudah Shlishit with Rachel Blumenthal *Fake it 'til you make it: Finding Meaning in the Three Weeks*

Rachel Blumenthal is currently pursuing a Master's in Modern Jewish History at Yeshiva University and received an M.A. in Talmud from Yeshiva University's Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS). She graduated from Columbia University with a B.A. in Math and English

FACADE UPDATE

After more than a year of work, the facade has been repaired to comply with Local Law 11 requirements and cleaned of decades of dirt and grime.



Jewish Center Journey to Europe and Israel

The Jewish Center is currently in the planning stages of a 2020 shul trip. We would love your input and participation. To get involved, please contact Batsheva at batsheva@jewishcenter.org

Looking for a Few Good Men and Women

During these summer months, we are on the lookout for volunteers to serve on the many wonderful committees that make our shul warm and vibrant. For more information or to get more involved, please contact Andrew at andrew@jewishcenter.org.

Preparing for the Three Weeks, Nine Days & Tisha B'Av

Rabbi Elie Buechler

The laws of mourning guide the bereaved individual from a period of intense mourning, when the loss of a loved one is usually most deeply felt, through stages of decreasing intensity as the pain abates: the profound grieving of shivah is succeeded by the more subtle sadness of sheloshim, which is muted still further in the year-long practices of mourning observed for the loss of a parent.

Each summer, as we mourn the destruction of both Temples, we experience as a community a process exactly the opposite of the usual pattern of mourning. Instead of lessening our mourning as time goes on, we gradually increase the intensity of our sadness, beginning with the fast of Shivah Asar B'Tammuz (Sunday, July 21st) and culminating three weeks later with the deep mourning of Tisha B'Av (Motzei Shabbat, August 10th – Sunday, August 11th). Just as the personal process of mourning is marked by significant points (seven days, thirty days and a full year), so is the communal process of mourning for the Temple marked by stages. Our expressions of mourning become more apparent at each stage.

Shivah Asar B'Tammuz: We begin with the fast of 17 Tammuz (July 21st), commemorating the Roman army's breach of Jerusalem's walls – a significant step toward the Second Temple's destruction. Starting from this day, we do not hold weddings or take haircuts. We also avoid saying the blessing of shehechianu, and therefore refrain from eating new fruits and buying or wearing expensive new clothing. On each Shabbat during this period, we read a haftarah which expresses these themes and warnings of destruction.

The Month of Av: The Talmud (Ta'anit 26b) instructs that as the month of Av begins (Friday, August 2nd), we are to mute our sense of joy as this month brings with it the day on which both Temples were destroyed. We abstain from meat and wine (except on Shabbat or for the infirm) because of their association with celebration. Washing or dry-cleaning clothing, other than children's clothing and other circumstances of great necessity, is delayed until after Tishah B'Av. Freshly laundered clothing (other than undergarments and clothing for Shabbat) should not be worn until the 10th of Av. (It is recommended that clothing to be worn between 1-10 of Av be worn very briefly before the 1st of Av.) Activities for the purpose of celebration or pleasure, such as beautifying or expanding one's home, are best suspended until after the 9th. Swimming for pleasure is avoided as well.

Tisha B'av: Motzei Shabbat, August 10th – Sunday, August 11th, our mourning reaches its depth on Tishah B'Av itself, the day of ultimate tragedy. History has singled out this day for catastrophe: beyond the destruction of both Temples, the 9th of Av has brought many other tragic events, including the evil report of the meraglim, the scouts sent to reconnoiter the Land of Israel.

This year the 9th of Av falls out on Shabbat and the commemoration of Tisha B'av is postponed until Motzei Shabbat/Sunday. As a result, a number of changes should be noted. First, Shabbat remains in full force as it would on any other week. Therefore, one may consume meat and wine, wear leather shoes and sit in regular chairs throughout the day. Furthermore, no Seudah HaMafseket is eaten.

The fast begins with sunset but Shabbat continues through nightfall. As a result, Mincha will be held early at 6:00PM to allow everyone to return home for Seudah Shlishit which must be completed by 8:02PM. Please note, that preparation for Tisha B'av, changing shoes etc should begin no earlier than 8:44PM. To accommodate for this restriction, Maariv will be held at 9:00PM allowing those who wish

to change at home to do so. You are welcome to leave the appropriate shoes at shul before Shabbat as well. Havdalah, which only includes a candle this year, will be recited in shul prior to the reading of Eicha.

Once Shabbat is over and Tisha B'av has fully begun, the following are prohibited: Eating, drinking, learning Torah (other than those portions which address the destruction or the laws of mourning); applying oils, creams, or fragrances for pleasure; engaging in marital relations; bathing and wearing leather shoes.

Particularly this year, as Tisha B'av is postponed from its proper date, pregnant, nursing, and postpartum women, as well as the infirm, should seek additional guidance about fasting.

Because we are all mourners on Tisha B'Av, we behave accordingly: we refrain from offering greetings the entire day, sit on low chairs until midday (1:00PM) and limit business dealings. In addition to the everyday prayers in the morning, we recite Kinnot, poems of lament and mourning, and delay wearing tallit and tefillin until Minchah.

At the conclusion of Tisha B'Av (8:31pm) Havdalah is recited on beer or grape juice.

Normally, swimming, bathing, haircuts, washing clothing, consuming meat and wine are not permitted until the 10th of Av midday, because this year Tisha B'Av is postponed from Shabbat to Sunday, so we are immediately permitted to resume all normal activities after the fast concludes except for consuming meat and wine which are not permitted until Monday morning.

“Whoever mourns over Jerusalem shall merit witnessing its rejoicing” (Ta'anit 30a). May our observance of this sad time enable us to merit greeting Tishah B'Av in the future with rejoicing at the rebuilding of the Temple and the return of God's presence to our midst.

For more information please contact Rabbi Buechler at ebuechler@jewishcenter.org

TISHA B'AV SCHEDULE

Erev Tisha B'Av

Shabbat, August 10th, 2019
Minchah 6:00PM
Seudah Shlishit at home
Fast begins 8:02 PM
Shabbat Concludes 8:44PM
Maariv and Eichah 9:00PM

Tisha B'Av

Sunday, August 11th, 2019
Shacharit 9:00AM
Special Shiur with Rabbi Yosie Levine: Do Children Observe Tisha B'Av? The Future of Mourning
Followed by explanatory kinnot
Early Minchah 1:40PM
Tisha B'Av films
Shiur by Rabbi Mark Wildes, 6:30PM
Minchah 7:40 PM
Maariv 8:00 PM
Fast ends 8:31 PM

Twenty-fifth Yahrzeit of Rabbi Isaac Bernstein

Elul 22 (September 22) will mark the twenty-fifth yahrzeit of Rabbi Isaac Bernstein, the fourth rabbi of The Jewish Center. To mark the occasion, the Bernstein family invites members to share memories which will be collected and included on a website where visitors can learn about his life. The family welcomes recollections of encounters, anecdotes, memorable lines, or simply general words of tribute and appreciation of Rabbi Bernstein's teachings, counsel and friendship. Please send your submissions to: rabbibernsteinmemories@gmail.com before September 1st.

Bilaam the Wicked?
Parshat Balak 5779
Rabbi Elie Buechler, Assistant Rabbi

Chazal spared no ink when it came to describing the wicked character of Bilaam. In Pirkei Avos, Bilaam is viewed as the foil to Avraham Avinu. This comparison is not all that strange, as there are multiple similarities between these two figures. Both of them woke up early in the morning to ride a donkey, and Avraham is told by God that those who bless him will be blessed, and those who curse him will be cursed. So in Chazal's perspective, Bilaam is that character who tests this promise by God and goes out to curse the Jewish people.

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (5:12) teaches us that whoever has a good eye, a humble spirit, and a moderate appetite are among the students of Avraham, while a person who has an evil eye, a haughty spirit, and an insatiable appetite are among the students of Bilaam. But when we look carefully at the text of the Torah in this week's parsha it isn't so clear that Bilaam is all that bad after all.

First, he consistently tells Balak that he will do only the will of God and that he will not act against God's will even for all of the money in the world. Second, he receives prophecy from God, which is accessible only to a select few spiritually attuned individuals in the world. There is, however, one place where the Torah explicitly tells us that God became angry with Bilaam. The Torah states that when Bilaam finally went on his way with Balak's ministers 'God was incensed by his going.' (Bemidbar 22:22) Although most commentators interpret this verse as sealing Bilaam's fate as a wicked person, the Ramban redeems Bilaam by noting that God was angry

only that he had not told Balak's ministers that he will only bless the Jewish people, and will not curse them. So according to the Ramban, the only thing Bilaam is guilty of is misleading wicked people. Not exactly the most incriminating accusation.

If we look back at the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos, it is fascinating to note that we compare the middos of Avraham to the middos of Bilaam. Why not compare their actions? We talk a lot about good middos, but if all you can say about some people is that they have bad middos then they are probably not all that bad. The Mishnah doesn't call him a hater of the Jewish people or a person who attempted to annihilate our people; rather he just didn't have good middos. Once we get to a point where all we can differentiate people by are their middos it doesn't seem all that bad after all.

This Mishnah may be teaching us that perhaps the only true difference between Avraham and Bilaam were their middos, their outlook on life and God. Avraham worshiped God because he wanted to fulfill the will of Hashem. He was humble and had a moderate appetite; he wasn't looking for more honor or more wealth. But Bilaam on the other hand was haughty and always wanted more prestige and glory. Bilaam was a prophet of God, yet he harbored an overall negative approach toward God. He viewed himself as worthy of what came to him, while Avraham, our forefather and our role model in life, was grateful and always saw himself as undeserving of the blessings that God bestowed upon him.

Yosie Levine
Rabbi

Eliezer Buechler
Assistant Rabbi

Noach Goldstein
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ISRAEL UPDATE

July 19th, 2019

IDF says Gaza-West Bank terror funding network exposed

On Wednesday, The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) announced it arrested Hamas members linked to a money transfer network that funneled cash from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank for terror purposes, the Times of Israel reported. The network was operated by a passport-issuing agency named "Al-Haramain" in the Gaza Strip, the army said. Money was transferred by offsetting debts between a number of independent money exchangers while using a minimal amount of cash. Hence, it did not require registration in the world banking systems. The large amounts of money transferred through this method were used for organizational terror activity and for funding the salaries of Hamas operatives. Additionally, this past Friday, a senior Hamas official, Fathi Hammad, urged members of the Palestinian diaspora to kill Jews around the world in a speech at a protest in the border region between the Gaza Strip and Israel. "A long time has passed with them warming up. All of you 7 million Palestinians abroad, enough of the warming up. You have Jews everywhere and we must attack every Jew on the globe," Hammad said.

Our synagogue partners with AIPAC, America's pro-Israel lobby, in educating our community on issues affecting the U.S.-Israel relationship. We encourage you to learn more by contacting AIPAC at (202) 639-5200 or by visiting www.aipac.org.