



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Bechuktai

May 28, 2022 27 Iyar, 5782

TORAH
ARTSCROLL 708
HERTZ 542

HAFTORAH
ARTSCROLL 1179
HERTZ 551

SHABBAT MEVORCHIM
ROSH CHODESH SIVAN
MOLAD: MONDAY, MAY 30
@ 6:04:2 PM
ROSH CHODESH:
TUESDAY, MAY 31

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Bechuktai

The book of Vayikra draws to a close by outlining the blessings that will follow if the people are faithful to their covenant with God. Then it describes the curses that will befall them if they are not. The general principle is clear. In biblical times, the fate of the nation mirrored the conduct of the nation. If people behaved well, the nation would prosper. If they behaved badly, eventually bad things would happen. That is what the Prophets knew. As Martin Luther King paraphrased it, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." Not always immediately but ultimately, good is rewarded with good, bad with bad.

Our parsha starkly sets out the terms of that equation: if you obey God, there will be rain in its season, the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit; there will be peace. The curses, though, are almost three times as long and much more dramatic in the language they use:

"But if you will not

listen to Me and carry out all these commands ... then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength...

I will break your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze... I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted... Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins...

As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though

no one is pursuing them."
[Lev. 26: 14-37](#)

There is a savage eloquence here. The images are vivid. There is a pulsing rhythm to the verses, as if the harsh fate that would overtake the nation is inexorable, cumulative and accelerating. The effect is intensified by the repeated hammer blows: "If after all this ... if you remain hostile ... if in spite of these things ... if in spite of this." The word *keri*, key to the whole passage, is repeated seven times. It appears nowhere else in the whole of Tanach. Its meaning is uncertain. It may mean rebelliousness, obstinacy, indifference, hard-heartedness, reluctance or being-left-to-chance. But the

Times

Weekly Times

Shacharit: Sunday	7:30/8:30 am
Mon. & Thurs.	6:35/7:45 am
Tues., Wed. & Fri.	6:45/7:45 am
Mincha	8:00pm

Shabbat Times

Friday Mincha	7:00 pm
Candle Lighting	7:58 pm
Hashkama	8:00 am
Main	9:00 am
Youth Minyan	9:00 am
Beit Midrash	9:15 am
Gemara Shiur	6:50 pm
Mincha/SS	7:50pm
Shabbat Ends	9:07 pm

Latest Times for
Shema/Shemoneh Esrei

May 28 9:10/10:24 am

June 3 9:09/10:23 am

Next Shabbat
Bamidbar

Mincha 7:00 pm

Candle Lighting 8:03pm

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basic principle is clear. If you act toward Me with *keri*, says God, I will turn that same attribute against you, and you will be devastated.

It has long been a custom to read the *tochachah*, the curses, both here and in the parallel passage in [Devarim 28](#), in a low voice in the synagogue, which has the effect of robbing them of their terrifying power if said out loud. But they are fearful enough however they are read. And both here and in Devarim, the section on curses is longer and far more graphic than the section on blessings.

This seems to contradict a basic principle of Judaism, that God's generosity to those who are faithful to Him vastly exceeds His punishment of those who are not. "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands ... He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation" ([Ex. 34:6-7](#)). Rashi does the arithmetic: "It follows, therefore, that the measure of reward is greater than the measure of punishment by five hundred to one, for in respect of the measure of good it says: "maintaining love to thousands" (meaning at least two thousand generations), while punishment lasts for at most four generations.

The whole idea contained in the 13 Attributes of Compassion is that God's love and forgiveness are stronger than His justice and punishment. Why, therefore, are the curses in this week's parsha so much longer and stronger than the blessings?

The answer is that God loves and forgives, but with the proviso that, when we do wrong, we acknowledge the fact, express remorse, make restitution to those we have harmed, and repent. In the middle of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy is the statement, "Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished" ([Ex. 34:7](#)). God does not forgive the unrepentant sinner, because were He to do so, it would make the world a worse place, not a better one. More people would sin if there were no downside to doing so.

The reason the curses are so dramatic is not because

God seeks to punish, but the precise opposite. The Talmud tells us that God weeps when He allows disaster to strike His people: "Woe to Me, that due to their sins I destroyed My house, burned My Temple and exiled them [My children] among the nations of the world. " The curses were meant as a warning. They were intended to deter, scare, discourage. They are like a parent warning a young child not to play with electricity. The parent may deliberately intend to scare the child, but he or she does so out of love, not severity.

The classic instance is the book of Jonah. God tells Jonah the Prophet to go to Nineveh and warn the people, "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed." He does so. The people take him seriously. They repent. God then relents from His threat to destroy the city. Jonah complains to God that He has made him look ridiculous. His prophecy has not come true. Jonah has failed to understand the difference between a prophecy and a prediction. If a prediction comes true, it has succeeded. If a prophecy comes true, it has failed. The Prophet tells the people what will happen *if* they fail to change. A prophecy is not a prediction but a warning. It describes a fearful future in order to persuade the people to avert it. That is what the *tochachah* is.

In their new book, *The Power of Bad*, John Tierney and Roy Baumeister argue on the basis of substantial scientific evidence, that bad has far more impact on us than good. We pay more attention to bad news than good news. Bad health makes more difference to us than good health. Criticism affects us more than praise. A bad reputation is easier to acquire and harder to lose than a good one.

Humans are designed – "hardwired" – to take notice of and rapidly react to threat. Failing to notice a lion is more dangerous than failing to notice a ripened fruit on a tree. Recognizing the kindness of a friend is good and virtuous, but not as significant as ignoring the animosity of an enemy. One traitor can betray an entire nation.

It follows that the stick is a more powerful motivator than the carrot. Fear of the curse is more likely to affect behaviour than desire for the blessing. Threat of punishment is more effective than promise of reward. Tierney and Baumeister document this over a wide range of cases from education to crime rates. Where there is a clear threat of punishment for bad behaviour, people behave better.

Judaism is a religion of love and forgiveness. But it is also a religion of justice. The punishments in the Torah are there not because God loves to punish, but because He wants us to act well. Imagine a country that had laws but no punishments. Would people keep the law? No. Everyone would choose to be a free-rider, taking advantage of the efforts of others without contributing oneself. Without punishment, there is no effective law, and without law there is no society. The more powerfully one can present the bad, the more likely people are to choose the good. That is why the *tochachah* is so powerful, dramatic and fear-inducing. The fear of bad is the most powerful motivator of good.



Great Neck Synagogue
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516-487-6100

Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Rabbi Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi
Rabbi Yehoshua Lefkowitz, Intern Rabbi
Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z"l, Rabbi Emeritus
Yitzzy Spinner, Cantor
Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus
Rabbi Dr. Michael & Zehava Atlas, Youth Rabbi & Youth Director
Mark Twersky, Executive Director
Dr. James Frisch, Assistant Director
Jordan Wolf, President
Dov Sassoon, Chairman of the Board



SAVE THE DATE

**WOMEN'S
SHABBATON**

**MRS. JACKIE
BITTON**

DETAILS TO FOLLOW

JUNE 11 PARSHAT NASO

SPONSORSHIPS START AT \$100

EMAIL MTWERSKY@GNS.ORG



The Florence Shaffer Memorial Fund Scholarship is a program run by the Sisterhood of Great Neck Synagogue. The program provides financial assistance to help young women with some of the expenses of college or a program for their gap year in Israel. The scholarship is intended to benefit girls in circumstances where their families are having difficulty with college and /or gap year expenses. The Scholarship Fund was endowed in the memory of Florence Shaffer z"l, a beloved leader of the Sisterhood and longtime Recording Secretary of Great Neck Synagogue, by her husband, Dr. Bernard Shaffer. The Scholarship Fund is a particularly meaningful tribute to Florence Shaffer because, as a young woman, she could not afford to attend college, despite her burning desire to earn a college degree.

This year, the Scholarship Committee is planning to award one scholarship of up to \$1,000 to the winning applicant. To be eligible, the applicant's family must be members of Great Neck Synagogue and the applicant currently must be a senior in High School who plans to go to college or to seminary in Israel next fall. Each applicant should submit a short essay (approximately one single-spaced page) describing her ambitions and what she hopes to achieve with her further education. The applicant should also submit a list of colleges and/or programs in Israel to which she is applying and a copy of any scholarship application submitted. All information will be held in the strictest of confidence.

Please email applications to cindy.korman@gmail.com. If you do not get a confirming email within 24 hours please text 516.317.9632 inquiring whether the application was received. Applications must be submitted by no later than June 1, 2022.

PROPOSED SLATE

Officers and Trustees 2022-2023

Executive Board

Chairman – Jordan Wolf*
President – Daniel Aharon*
Executive Vice President –Bart Baum*
First Vice President – Aryeh Karkowsky*
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Term Expiring 5/24

Frank Bachrach
Brian Edelman
Elly Engelstein
Matt Gorski
Donna Hecht
Arik Hirschfeld
Ziggy Zborowski*
Jeremy Orenstein
Jonathan Reiss
Aviva Rosenberg
Evan Shusterman
Jerry Weinstein

Term Expiring 5/25

Rachel Brecher*
Jonathan Danoff
Elad Dror*
Robert Herman*
Jonathan Kroll*
Marla Lemonik*
Jason Mayer
Stacy Rapp*
Dov Sturm*
Jackie Soleimani*
Lisa Weinstein
Glenn Zuckerman*

Term Expiring 5/23

Michelle Berman
Arnold Breitbart
Debbie Chadow
Ariella Gilad
Chris Hackel
Eliot Heisler
Robert Knepper
Josh Marmer
Grant Reichlin
David Rein
Ellen Siegel
Lauren Silberstein

* Denotes new nominee or position



TUESDAY JUNE 21

Bat Mitzvah BANQUET

In honor of 6th & 7th grade girls, their mothers & grandmothers.

Becoming a Bat Mitzvah

Mrs. Amit Yaghoubi
6:30 pm Braun Youth Center

Dinner will be served followed by a Beary Special Chesed



Project for the children of Shaare Zedek Medical Center



Members \$18 per person
Non Members \$25 per person

RSVP by June 16th ZehavaAtlas18@gmail.com

GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE
MEN'S CLUB



DEFENSIVE DRIVING COURSE



MON & TUE, JUNE 13-14
7:00-10:00 PM
GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE
\$35/PERSON

- DISCOUNT ON INSURANCE UP TO 15%
- VERY LIMITED CLASS SIZE
- REGISTRATION & PAYMENT BY JUNE 6TH
- PAYMENT VIA ZELLE USING GNSMENSCLUB@GMAIL.COM OR CHECK
- CONTACT MARK FRIEDMAN 516.384.5491 OR MFRIEDMAN1957@GMAIL.COM

CHAVERIM CENTER AT GNS

DATE JUNE 1 11:30-1:30

ACTIVITY TO BE ANNOUNCED

CINDY, ERICA MICHELLE & NAEEMA

High School Seniors Appreciation Shabbat

.....
Please join us Shabbat morning in the main sanctuary at the conclusion of tefillah as we show appreciation for our senior youth leaders for their years of dedication to the youth of GNS.



JUNE 11th



— SHAVUOT — Sundaes on Sunday

Children of all ages
Torah Trivia, Tickets, Ice Cream

Sunday June 5

4:45-5:45pm

40 Old Pond Road-Atlas Home

INCREDIBLE PRIZES!

YOUTH BASH

Grades 1-7

SHABBAT JUNE 18

TICKET HUNT GRAND RAFFLE LUNCH
BINGO CANDY JAR GAME

**12:00 BEIT MIDRASH
4:00 PICKUP**

PRIZES CAN BE PICKED UP FROM GNS RIGHT AFTER SHABBAT

GNS YOUTH & GNS BIKUR CHOLIM

BS'D

Let's Bake someone's Day

THIS SHAVUOT



HERE'S HOW:

- *SIGN UP BY EMAILING ZEHAYAATLAS18@GMAIL.COM BY MAY 25.
- *YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED A PERSON FROM GNS BIKUR CHOLIM TO DELIVER TO.
- *BAKE OR BUY A DAIRY DESSERT
- * DELIVER IT BY EREV SHAVUOT, JUNE 3.



ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022
8:30 PM
ALL MEMBERS INVITED

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE MONDAY, MAY 30, 2022



JOIN GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE AT 9:15 AM
AND MARCH WITH US
PARADE CHAIR STILL NEEDED
CALL THE SHUL OFFICE TO VOLUNTEER

CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2022



Kiddush
**Celebrating
our
Graduates**

June 25, 2022

Sign up at gns.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS MOVING INTO THE GREAT NECK AREA PLEASE LET THE OFFICE KNOW.

GREAT NECK MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

GNS will be marching proudly in the Great Neck Memorial Day Parade **on Monday, May 30th**. We will line up between 9:00 and 9:15 am at Middle Neck Road and Pont St. (north of the shopping center). After we pass by the reviewing stand on the Village Green, there will be a short and special ceremony to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for this country in their effort to safeguard our freedom. The parade begins at 9:30 am. T-shirts and American flags will be distributed.

NORTH SHORE MIKVAH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Our annual fundraiser is an opportunity to celebrate the strength of this community who support the traditions surrounding family purity. A community mikvah depends on community support. Your support goes directly to maintaining and enhancing the mikvah facility. Whether or not you currently use our Mikvah, we urge you to please give generously to our campaign to maintain this essential cornerstone of our vibrant Orthodox Jewish community by making a donation today. Our campaign runs through May 29. As a token of appreciation, you will receive a hand crafted cheesecake from The Choco Shoppe for Shavuot for all donations of \$360 and above.

GNS BIKUR CHOLIM AND GNS CONNECTIONS - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO MAKE DELIVERIES

For Shavuot, GNS Bikur Cholim and GNS Connections are planning to distribute beautiful orchids (purchased to support the Meorot program) to members of our shul that could benefit from our outreach. If you would like to volunteer to make deliveries (could be used for high school chesed hours), please contact Diane Rein at drein@verizon.net. There are about 60 recipients.

WOMEN'S TEFILA

Join Women's Tefila this Shabbat afternoon to celebrate the Bat Mitzvah of **Jillian Brisman**, daughter of **Stacey Brisman** and **Jonathan Brisman**. The **Brisman family** will be sponsoring the collation after the service.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 28: Women's Tefila**
- June 1: Chaverim**
- June 1: Annual Congregation Meeting**
- June 4: Tikun Layl Shavout**
- June 5: Shavout Sundaes**
- June 11: Senior Leader Appreciation Day**
- June 11: Jackie Bitton**
- June 13-14: Defensive Driving**
- June 15: Chaverim**
- June 18: End of Year Youth Bash**
- June 19: Summer learning with Rabbi Simon**
- June 21: Bat Mitzvah Banquet**
- June 25: Graduation Kiddush**

MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Lillian & Gary Chubak** on the birth of a grandson, born to their children **Ellen & Steven Chubak**.

Mazal Tov to **Helen & Harvey Ishofsky** on the birth of a grandson, born to their children **Rachel & Mathew Axelrod**.

Mazal Tov to **Cindy & Jeffrey Liebmann** on the upcoming marriage of their son **Craig** to **Brittany Bober** daughter of **Sheryl & Stewart Bober**.

Mazal Tov to **Ilana Wallenstein** on being honored by Emunah Women.

Mazal Tov to **Lital & Josh Amini** on being honored by the North Shore Hebrew Academy.

NSHA CELEBRATES 67 YEARS

Please join the NSHA as they celebrate their 67th Annual Dinner Celebration on Wed., May 25th at Citi Field. This year, they recognize the dedicated leadership of GNS members **Lital and Josh Amini** as the Guests of Honor, **Susan and Bruce Decter**, our Dor L'Dor Honorees and **Rabbi Yechezkel Lehrer** the Distinguished Faculty Award. To register for or support the Annual Dinner, or for more information, please visit www.nshadinner.org or contact the NSHA Business Office at (516) 487-8687 Ext.133.

Y A H R Z E I T S

Monday, 22 Iyar

Valdimir Zyskind for Chaim ben Mordechai Zyskind
Ebrahim Gabbazadeh for Yoseph Gabbazadeh

Tuesday, 23 Iyar

Paul Wein for Melvin Wein
Ebrahim Gabbazadeh for Auma bat Elazar
Anida Rosman for Marvin Rossman

Wednesday, 24 Iyar

Drora Cassel for Bezalel Bezalel
Phil Hanfling for Isaac Lazar
Judy Lillien for Ellen Haimsoh Lebovits
Morris Nasser for Helena Olga bat Farha

Thursday, 25 Iyar

Karen Wydra for Deborah Geller
Irvin Spira for Lilly Spira

Friday, 26 Iyar

Philip Berman for Lina Durra

Saturday, 27 Iyar

Roselin Wagner for Joseph Wagner
Ken Magida for Emma Greenberg
Vicki Maher for Lila Rothman
Sharon Mazur for Irene Wald

Sunday, 28 Iyar

Rhonda Lipsky for Irving Forman

Monday, 29 Iyar

Abraham Soleimani for Yasher Soleimani
Moussa Soleimani for Yashar Soleimani
Ebrahim Gabbazadeh for Tala bat Yosef
Seymour Cooper for Isaac Cooper
Jack Lipsky for Rose Mayer
Ellie Werber for Rosa Preiss
Michal Rosenzweig for Simcha Khazzam
Lauren Hyman for Carolyn Hyman
Jerrald Weinstein for Mae Rubin