



Shabbat Announcements

Parshat Balak

July 8, 2017 14 Tammuz, 5777

TORAH		Rabbi Jonathan Sacks on Balak		
ARTSCROLL 856		<p>There is an old saying that what makes God laugh is seeing our plans for the future. However, if Tanakh is our guide, what makes God laugh is human delusions of grandeur. From the vantage point of heaven, the ultimate absurdity is when humans start thinking of themselves as godlike. There are several pointed examples in the Torah. One whose full import has only recently become clear occurs in the story of the Tower of Babel. Men gather together in the plain of Shinar and decide to build a city and a tower "that will reach to heaven." As it happens, we have archeological confirmation of this fact. Several Mesopotamian ziggurats, including the temple of Marduk in Babylon, have been found with inscriptions saying that they reach heaven. The idea was that tall buildings – man-made mountains – allowed humans to climb to the dwelling place of the gods and thus communicate with them. The Mesopotamian city states were among the first places of civilization, itself one of the turning points in the history of human life on earth. Before the birth of agriculture, the ancients lived in fear of nature: of predators, of other tribes</p>	<p>and bands, and of the vicissitudes of heat and cold, drought and flood. Their fate depended on matters beyond their control. Only with the spread of domesticated animals and agriculture did people gather in towns, then cities, then empires. A tipping point occurred in the balance of power between nature and culture. For the first time humans were not confined to adapting to their environment. They could adapt their environment to suit them. At this point they – especially the rulers – began to see themselves as gods, demigods, or people with the power to influence the gods.</p> <p>The most conspicuous symbol of this was buildings on a monumental scale: the ziggurats of Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities, and the pyramids of Egypt. Built on the flat land of the Tigris-Euphrates valley and the Nile delta, they towered over their surroundings. The great pyramid of Giza, built even before the birth of Abraham, was so monumental that it remained the tallest man-made structure on earth for four thousand years. The fact that these were artificial mountains built by human hands suggested to their builders that humans had acquired godlike powers. They had constructed a stairway to heaven. Hence the significance of the phrase in the Torah's account of the tower, "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built." This is God laughing.</p>	<p>On earth, humans thought they had reached the sky, but to God the building was so infinitesimal, so microscopic that he had to come down even to see it. Only with the invention of flight do we now know how small the tallest building looks when you are looking down from a mere 30,000 feet. To end their hubris God simply "confused their language". They no longer understood one another. The entire project was turned into French farce. We can visualize the scene. A foreman calls for a brick and is handed a hammer. He tells a worker to go right and he turns left. The project foundered in a welter of incomprehension. Men thought they could climb to heaven but in the end they could not even understand what the person next to them was saying. The unfinished tower became a symbol of the inevitable failure of vaunting ambition. The builders achieved what they sought but not in the way they intended. They wanted to "make a name for themselves" and they succeeded, but instead of becoming a byword for man's ability to reach the sky, Babel became babble, an emblem of confusion. Hubris became nemesis.</p> <p>The second example was Egypt during the early plagues. Moses and Aaron</p>
HERTZ 669				
HAFTORAH		<p style="text-align: center;">KIDDUSH IS SPONSORED BY SYLVIA & NORMAN FISHER IN HONOR OF THE CELEBRATION OF THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.</p>		
ARTSCROLL 1189				
HERTZ 682				
Times				
Candle Lighting	8:10 pm			
Mincha	7:00 pm			
Hashkama	8:00 am			
Youth Minyan	8:30 am			
Parsha Shiur	8:30 am			
Main	9:00 am			
Beit Midrash	9:15 am			
Gemara Shiur	7:05 pm			
Mincha	8:05 pm			
Shabbos Ends	9:18 pm			
Sun. July 9	7:30/8:30 am			
Mon. & Thurs.	6:35/7:45 am			
Tues. July 11	6:20/7:45 am			
Fast of Tammuz				
Wed. & Fri.	6:45/7:45 am			
Mincha	8:10 pm			
Latest Times for Shema/Shemoneh Esrei				
July 8	9:15/10:30 am			
July 15	9:18/10:32 am			
Next Shabbat Pinchas				
Candle Lighting	8:07 pm			
Mincha	7:00 pm			

the Egyptian magicians did likewise to show that they had the same power. So concerned were they to show that they could do what the Hebrews could do, that they entirely failed to realize that they were making things worse, not better. The real skill would have been to turn blood back into water, and make frogs not appear but disappear. We hear the Divine laughter especially in the third plague: lice. For the first time, the magicians tried and failed to replicate the effect. Defeated, they turned to Pharaoh and said, "It is the finger of God." The humor comes when we remember that for the Egyptians the symbol of power was monumental architecture: pyramids, temples, palaces and statues on a massive scale. God showed them His power by way of the tiniest of insects, painful yet almost invisible to the eye. Again hubris became nemesis. When people think they are big, God shows them they are small and vice versa. It is those who think themselves small, supremely so Moses, the humblest of men, who are truly great.

This explains the otherwise curious episode of Bilam's talking donkey. This is not a fanciful tale, nor simply a miracle. It arose because of the way the people of Moab and Midian thought of Bilam – and perhaps, by extension, the way he thought of himself. Balak the Moabite king, together with the leaders of the Midianites, sent a delegation to Bilam asking him to curse the Israelites: "Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me...for I know that whom you bless is blessed, and whom you curse is cursed." This is a pagan understanding of the holy man: the shaman, the magus, the wonder-worker, the person with access to supernatural powers. The Torah's view is precisely the opposite. It is God who blesses and curses, not human beings. "I will bless those who bless you and those who curse you I will curse," God said to Abraham. "They shall place my name on the children of Israel and I will bless them," he said about the priests. The idea that you can hire a holy man to curse someone essentially presupposes that God can be bribed. The narrative is admittedly obscure. God tells Bilam not to go. Balak sends a

second delegation with a more tempting offer. This time God tells Bilam to go with them but say only what he instructs him to say. The next morning Bilam sets out to go with the Moabites, but the text now states that God was "angry" with him for going. That is when the episode of the donkey takes place. The donkey sees an angel barring the way. It turns aside into a field but Bilam hits it and forces it back to the path. The angel is still barring the way and the donkey veers into a wall, crushing Bilam's foot. Bilam hits it again, but finally it lies down and refuses to move. That is when the donkey begins to speak. Bilam then looks up and sees the angel, who had been hitherto invisible to him. Why did God first tell Bilam not to go, then that he should go, and then was angry when he went? Evidently God could read his mind and knew that Bilam did really want to curse the Israelites. We know this because later, after the attempt to curse the Israelites failed, Bilam succeeded in causing them harm, advising the Midianites to get their women to seduce the Israelite men, thus provoking the anger of God (Num. 31:16). Bilam was no friend of the Israelites.

But the story of the talking donkey is another instance of Divine laughter. Here was a man reputed to be a maestro of supernatural forces. People thought he had the power to bless or curse whomever he chose. God, the Torah tells us, is not like that at all. He had two messages, one for the Moabites and Midianites, another for Bilam himself. He showed the Moabites and Midianites that Israel is not cursed but blessed. The more you attempt to curse them the more they will be blessed and you yourself will be cursed. That is as true today as it was then. There are movements throughout the world to curse the state and people of Israel. The greater the malice of Israel's enemies, the stronger Israel becomes, and the more disasters its enemies bring upon their own people. God had a different message for Bilam himself, and it was very blunt. If you think you can control God, then, says God, I will show you that I can turn a donkey into a prophet and a prophet into a donkey. Your animal will see angels to which you yourself are blind. Bilam was forced to admit: How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the Lord has not denounced?

Hubris always eventually becomes nemesis. In a world in which rulers engaged in endless projects of self-aggrandizement, Israel alone produced a literature in which they attributed their successes to God and their failures to themselves. Far from making them weak, this made them extraordinarily strong. So it is with us as individuals. I have mentioned before a beloved friend, no longer alive, about whom it was said that "he took God so seriously that he didn't need to take himself seriously at all." Pagan prophets like Bilam had not yet learned the lesson we must all one day learn: that what matters is not that God does what we want, but that we do what He wants. God laughs at those who think they have godlike powers. The opposite is true. The smaller we see ourselves, the greater we become.



Great Neck Yoetzet Halacha Lisa Septimus
 Welcomes your questions about mikvah, observance of taharat mishpacha (halacha relating to married life) and women's health, as it connects to Jewish law. Reach out to her at:
 Phone: 516.415.1111
 Email: greatneckyoetzet@gmail.com.
 All conversations and emails are kept confidential.



Great Neck Synagogue
 26 Old Mill Road, Great Neck, NY 11023
 516-487-6100

Rabbi Dale Polakoff, Rabbi
Rabbi Ian Lichter, Assistant Rabbi
Dr. Ephraim Wolf, z"l, Rabbi Emeritus
Zeev Kron, Cantor
Eleazer Schulman, z"l, Cantor Emeritus
Rabbi Sholom Jensen, Youth Director
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Harold Domnitch, Chairman of the Board
Lisa Septimus, Yoetzet Halacha 516-415-1111

Fast of 17th Tammuz - Tuesday July 11th
Fast Begins 4:21 am Fast Ends: 8:08 pm
Shacharit: 6:20/7:45 am
Mincha: 8:00 pm

**SALLY & SEYMOUR OLSHIN
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM
GNS SUMMER 2017
LEARNING PROGRAM**

Guest Speaker:

SANDRA E. RAPOPORT ESQ.

*"The Sons of Elohim and the Daughters
of Man: God Takes on Noah's World"*



Early in Genesis, following the stories of Adam and Eve and Kain and Abel, we read the brief and mysterious tale of B'nei Elohim [the sons of Elohim] "taking" B'not ha-Adam [the daughters of man]. 20th-century Torah scholar Umberto Cassuto has called this tiny eight-verse story in Chapter 6 of Genesis "one of the obscurest in the Torah."

We will unravel the verses of this exciting and essential story; consider its biblical context; and discover a pattern not only in mankind's escalating immorality, but also in God's response to mankind's behaviors. This time, though, God's reaction is complex; it is described in both human and divine terms, and it is extreme.

Join us as teacher and author Sandra E. Rapoport explores why God destroys the world He has just created, and who and what He saves from destruction.

**Tuesday, July 18
7:00 pm promptly
Mincha 8:05 pm**

**Series
Sponsorships - \$180**

**To dedicate a
lecture, contact the
synagogue office**

**516.487.6100
mtwersky@gns.org**



**26 Old Mill Road
Great Neck, NY 11023**

Meorot מאורות

at North Shore Hebrew Academy

"זהו למאורת ברקיע השמים להאיר על-הארץ ויהי-כן: בראשית, א"טו

Meorot Information Session



Rabbi Dr. Bradley Hercman
Program Director



Dr. Rebeka Gutkind
Program Advisor

Please join the Meorot Leadership Team
for a detailed information session.

This event is for prospective families only
RSVP requested by emailing info@meorotgn.org

Thursday, July 13 at 8pm

At the lovely home of:
Ruthie & David Goykadosh
83 Beach Road
Great Neck, NY 11023

Meorot is an innovative Judaic Studies Special Education program,
providing elementary aged students* who present with language or learning based difficulties
with an inspired Modern Orthodox Jewish education within a supportive environment.

Supporting
Yeshivot:



Visit us at www.meorotgn.org

**Recruiting students in grades K-3 for the initial year. Admission guidelines available on website.
All services in connection with Meorot are contingent and subject to the programs anticipated Fall 2017 opening*

GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

JULY CHESED COLLECTION



Who among us does not have old and unwanted shoes, eyeglasses or cell phones sitting in a closet or a drawer at home? Although enjoyed and treasured in their day, now these items sit awaiting their seemingly inevitable final reckoning with the Great Neck sanitation department. It doesn't have to be that way. You can give these items a new lease on life and, more importantly, help those in need when doing so.

All you need to do is drop off those items this week at one of the two convenient drop-off locations listed below. Here's how your items will help:

Shoes Your gently used shoes will go to Souls4Soles, a terrific charity dedicated to fighting poverty in the U.S. and around the world. First, the shoes are sorted by condition, including by a facility dedicated to employing workers with disabilities. Shoes in new or nearly-new condition are distributed to those in need, sometimes in response to natural disasters, or sometimes to those suffering chronic poverty, such as to orphanages in Third World countries. Shoes below that grade are provided to micro-enterprises in Third World countries, thereby helping some of the world's most poor people to start and sustain businesses to bring their families out of poverty. Read more about it at <http://soles4souls.org/>

Eyeglasses and Sunglasses Your glasses or sunglasses will go to New Eyes, an outstanding charity based in New Jersey dedicated to providing free prescription glasses for those in need. Your donations will be sorted by volunteers, who will measure the prescription strength of the lenses, and who will also remove any small amounts of precious metals that can be combined and sold to pay for glasses for the needy here in the U.S. After sorting, the glasses will then be shipped to medical missions and other distribution networks across the Third World. The needy recipients will sometimes travel and wait in line for hours for what can be a life-changing restoration of vision. Read more at <http://www.new-eyes.org>

Cell phones Your used cell phone can help provide cost-free communications to the brave members of our military. Cell phones for Soldiers was founded in 2004 by a 12 and 13-year old brother and sister from Massachusetts and has since provided almost 200 million minutes of talk time allowing troops to have priceless conversations with their loved ones back home. Your old cell phone will be sold to a recycling company and the money raised is then used to pay for calling cards or other devices for members of the military. You can donate your old cell phones even if you don't have the charger, battery or other accessories. You can read more about the program at <http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/>

We hope that you will take a few moments in your day to go through your closets and drawers to find and donate these items. This is also a wonderful opportunity to teach your children the life-changing value of small acts of chessed. Please drop your items off any time Sunday through Friday.

1. **88 Old Pond Road** (Please leave by the garage.) Contact, if needed: **Steve Blumner 516-639-8941**
2. **11 William Penn** (Please leave by the garage.) Contact, if needed: **Jonny Ambalo 347-971-8178**

MEN'S CLUB BASEBALL GAME

GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE
MEN'S CLUB PRESENTS

BASEBALL



Mets vs. Yankees
RIVALRY RENEWED

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 16, 2017

7:10 PM | CITI FIELD | METS VS. YANKEES

TICKETS: \$65 FOR MENS CLUB MEMBERS \$80 FOR NON-MEMBERS
CALL SYNAGOGUE OFFICE TO PURCHASE 516.487.6100

MEN'S CLUB FISHING TRIP

Great Neck Synagogue Men's Club

7th Annual Fishing Trip

Sunday August 20th 4:15-8:30 PM

Dinner Included

Men's Club Members \$60 PP \$40 children 6-12

Non Members \$70 PP \$40 children 6-12

First 5 Children Free W/Adult one per Family



The Boat: Bigger Clean 65' Women's & Men's
Bathrooms, Dining Table, Sun Deck

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT BY AUGUST 14th

SOLD OUT EVERY YEAR

CONTACT Mark Friedman 516 384 5491

Hilly Milun 516 448 4890

GNS Office 516 487 6100

ADDRESS 540 GUY LOMBARDO AVE. FREEPORT NY 11520

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RABBI POLAKOFF'S SHABBOS DRASHA THROUGH 5777 IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF **PINCHAS BEN YOSEPH** FOR OTHER SUCH OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT HOWARD WOLF 516-643-3344

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

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

If you are interested in ordering a memorial plaque in time for Rosh Hashana, please contact the synagogue office by **July 10th**.

WOMEN'S TEFILA

Please join the Women's Tefila on Shabbat afternoon **July 15th at 7:00 pm** for Mincha.

SUMMER LEARNING LECTURES

Tuesday, July 18th at 7:00 pm Sandra E. Rapoport - "The Sons of Elohim and the Daughters of Man: God Takes on Noah's World."

Tuesday, July 25th at 8:30 pm Rabbi Baruch Simon - "The Simcha & Siyum of the Nine Days."

Those interested in sponsoring the Summer Program, please contact Rabbi Lichter - ilichter@gns.org.

CHESED CHAIRS NEEDED

Volunteers needed to chair the GNS August Chesed School Supply collection to benefit Oneg Shabbos.

Email mtwersky@gns.org or contact Sharon Goldwyn sgdesignermom@aol.com or [917.287.7334](tel:917.287.7334).

MEN'S CLUB UPCOMING EVENTS

August 16th - Mets vs. Yankees @ Citi Field: 7:10 pm
Purchase tickets at the GNS office.

August 20th - 7th Annual Fishing Trip: 4:15-8:30 pm with dinner included. Tickets for members are \$60 per person and \$70 for non-members. Children ages 6-12 are \$40. Contact Mark Friedman or synagogue office.

MEMBERS ONLINE PHOTO DIRECTORY

We have designed an online membership photo directory where members can access a picture, address and contact numbers in a secure manner. You can access the directory at gns.org under the members tab.

Email mtwersky@gns.org for any questions.

DO A MITZVAH AND GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE

My sister is at Stage 5 Chronic Kidney Disease and in need of a kidney donor with Type O blood. If you are a willing donor, please contact Karenwydra@gmail.com or Karen Wydra at 917-299-5107.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT GREAT NECK SYNAGOGUE

July 18: Summer Series: Sandra Rapoport
July 19: Chaverim Center
July 25: Summer Series: Rabbi Baruch Simon

MAZAL TOVS & COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Sue & Arthur Talansky** on the birth of a granddaughter born to their children **Michael & Pammy Talansky** in Los Angeles.

Mazal Tov to **Moselle & Dani Berkowitz** on the birth of a son. **Mazal Tov** to grandparents **Ada & Dov Berkowitz**.

CHOLIM FOR REFUAH SHELEIMAH

If you would like to regularly receive email blasts listing names of people in the community who are ill and in need of our prayers for a refuah shelaimah, please send your name and email to Randa Pittell (randai@optonline.net). You can also send names as needed to include on the Tehillim lists. Please include them in your daily prayers, when you light Shabbat candles and bake challah so they may merit a complete and speedy recovery.

MEOROT INFORMATION SESSION

Please join the Meorot Leadership Team of Rabbi Bradley Hercman and Dr. Rebeka Gutkind for a detailed information session. The event will take place on **Thursday, July 13 at 8pm** at the lovely home of Ruthie & David Goykadosh, 83 Beach Rd., Great Neck NY 11023. This event is for prospective families only and a RSVP is requested by emailing info@meorotqn.org.

PASS IT FORWARD

Pass it forward needs driver for the summer. Two deliveries in Great Neck. Pick up between time flexible. It takes about 30 minutes. These families rely on our food for Shabbat! Contact Cindy 516.317.9632 or KosherCooking@gmail.com.

Y A H R Z E I T

Saturday, 14 Tammuz

Hyman Katz for Israel Katz
Edward Mazur for Phil Mazur
Rabbi Dale Polakoff for William Rosenzweig
Phyllis Safdieh for Aaron Shampam

Sunday, 15 Tammuz

Payman Rabiei for Gohar bat Binyamin
Harry Lumerman for Beila Kantor
Tina Machnikoff for Philip Machnikoff
Daniella Muller for Philip Machnikoff
Zehava Atlas for Philip Machnikoff
Ken Magida for Bessie Magida

Tuesday, 17 Tammuz

Payman Rabiei for Pari bat Meyer
Elena Berkowitz for David Fridman
Leslie Kahn for Nathan Kahn
Michelle Heisler for Gilbert Louzoun
Gitty Louzoun for Gilbert Louzoun
Malka Louzoun for Gilbert Louzoun
Arthur Pomerantz for Ruth Pomerantz

Wednesday, 18 Tammuz

Marc Gottlieb for Herman Gottlieb
Morris Nasser for Rafael Nasser

Thursday, 19 Tammuz

Charlene Milun for Sarah Israelite
Asher Pirouzian for Ayoub Pirouzian
Susan Goldman for Oscar Ring

Friday, 20 Tammuz

Dorothy Reiser for Mitsu Cohen
Rose Weiss for Sabina Feig
Felix Glaubach for Baruch Glaubach
Leo Mindick for Sam Rubinstein
Myra Honig for Joan Scheiner