



# Congregation Etz Chaim

Rabbi Yonatan Gorin

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President: Joshua Maeir  
Treasurer: Susan Cable  
Secretary: Leonard Gerber, Ph.D.

Director: Michael Ferber  
Director: Janis B. Monat  
Director: Tzila Pass

Synagogue  
Member



**Parshas Balak**  
Tamuz 16, 5781  
June 26, 2021

## Friday Night

Candle Lighting 6:49-8:06 PM

## Shabbos Day

Latest Shema 8:59 AM  
Latest Shacharis 10:15 AM  
Sunset 8:24 PM  
Shabbos Ends 9:18 PM

## Erev Shabbos July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Candle Lighting 8:06 PM

## Davening Times

~ 6/25- 6/27/21 ~

**\*\*Minyan Signup\*\***

## Shabbos

Friday Night Mincha **6:49 PM**  
Shacharis 9:00 AM  
Mincha 8:00 PM  
Maariv 9:18 PM

## Sunday

Shacharis: 8:00 AM  
Mincha/Maariv Su-Th 8:06 PM  
Shacharit Mon/Thu: 6:05 AM  
Shaharit Tue/Wed/Fri: 6:15 AM

## Torah Learning

**Women's Shmiras HaLashon**  
Daily 9:05AM

<https://zoom.us/j/8709646716>

Password: bjn6R3  
TEMPORARILY ON HIATUS.  
WILL RESUME THURSDAY, JULY 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Rabbi Hartman's Class**

(Topic Pirkei Avot)  
Sunday 9:30 AM  
Zoom ID: 903 917 16156  
Password: 170smain

## ~ Announcements ~

### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Please consider an \$18.00 donation on our website to **"honor this Shabbos"** with a birthday, an anniversary, a graduation, an engagement, a wedding, a new baby, a yartzeit, or an inspiring thought!

### SHABBOS SPONSORSHIP

**This Shabbos is sponsored** in honor of Chana Rivka Dana's birthday from her Etz Chaim family. We wish you the very best today and every day, until 120!

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022

Etz Chaim is delighted to announce the approval of the new board of directors.

President: Joshua Maeir  
Treasurer: George Monat  
Secretary: Len Gerber  
Board Member: Tzila Pass  
Board Member: Susan Cable  
Board Member: Esther Dell

"A huge yasher koach to our recent treasurer Mike Ferber and at-large board member Janis Monat for their dedication and hard work in the challenging year we are wrapping up!" President Josh Maeir

**BOARD MEETING** is July 21, Wednesday, at 5:00 p.m.

### **SHMIRAS HALASHON STUDY GROUP**

The Shmiras Halashon Study group is on hiatus until Thursday morning, July 1.

**RABBI HARTMAN'S CLASS** will meet this Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, at 9:30 a.m. We will be studying Pirkei Avot.

Zoom ID: 903 917 16156

Password: 170smain

**REFUAH SHELAIMA** Please daven for Tzila Pass' brother, Avram Yeshayahu ben Rachel; Yonatan Arieh ben Yona Shoshana; a dear friend's husband, Yitzchak ben Freda, and for all those who need our prayers for a complete and speedy recovery.

### **ETZ CHAIM MEDITATION PATH**

Please visit the Etz Chaim meditation path located in the rear of the shul's backyard. It features five benches, socially distanced, in the shade for your relaxation pleasure!

### **PARASHA NOTE: Balak** by Janis Monat

Balak, the king of Moav, is concerned the with column of Israelites approaching his border. He sends messengers to bring Bila'am, son of Beor, a well-known diviner, to ask him to curse the Jews.

King Balak tells him, "I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed." (Numbers 22:6).

Agreeing to do so, Bila'am on his path, experiences his donkey seeing what he could not, G-d's angel barring the way. After striking the donkey and Hashem giving the animal the ability to speak Bila'am realizes his lack of loyalty to this animal. The latter was always by his side doing what was asked of him. This humbled Bila'am and he atoned for his behavior.

Arriving at Mt. Moav Bila'am blessed the Jewish people three times.

**The first time he said, "As I see them from the mountain tops, Gaze on them from the heights, There is a people that dwells apart, Not reckoned among the nations." (Numbers 23:9).**

Bila'am saw the Jews as a people who dwells alone, "They are a different people". We will discuss this later.

Rashi suggests that Bila'am is predicting a secure future. "The Jewish people are distinguished (dwell apart) by their Torah traditions and because of this they will not suffer the fate (be reckoned) of extinction but will survive and prosper."

**Bila'am's second poem of blessings includes:**

**"No harm is in sight for Jacob, No woe in view for Israel. Adomye their God is with them...."**

Nachmanides perceives that Bila'am is making a judgment about the character of the Israelites. Because they do not engage in falsehood, cheating, or deliberate harm to others, God is with them.

The third blessing of Bila'am's is praise for the Israelites:

*"How goodly are your tents, Jacob,*

*Your dwelling places, Israel.*

*Like palm groves that stretch out,*

*Like gardens beside a river,*

*Like aloes planted by G-d,*

*Like cedars beside the water,*

*Their boughs dripping with moisture,*

*Their roots have abundant water. (Numbers 24:5-7)*

“Ma Tovu ohalecha Yaakov, mishkenotecha Yisrael.” (Numbers 24:5) How goodly are your tents, Jacob, (one who was a dweller in tents), the mishkan spot (where Jacob fought with Esav’s angel and became Yisrael).

Rashi interprets Bila’am’s blessing that since the Jewish people’s tents, “ohalecha”, had openings situated diagonally from each other, not directly across this allowed for modest privacy. Jews were people with the God given Torah of values and rules.

“Ma Tov” is the famous verse that opens our *siddur*. The sages understood that the purpose of communal prayer was to refresh our spirit, to be drawn into an oasis of water and shade in dealing with our “desert” challenges. The picture that Bala’am’s words paint help us remember that, with all its challenges, life can be “tov” good.

Getting back to the first blessing,....”**This is a people who dwell alone, not reckoning themselves on of the nations.**“ (Numbers 23:9) What does “dwelling alone” mean?

By living with Torah our identity survives within us and around us. People know who we are. More importantly we know who we are. When we have tried assimilating we have “blended in” for a period of time. Ultimately anti-semitism’s sickness has spread in the society we have been a part of. According to Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z”l,, “Jews have always been the irritant of empires because of our insistence on the **dignity of the individual** and his or her liberty. Anti-semitism is either the last gasp of a declining culture or the first warning sign of a new totalitarianism. God commanded our ancestors **to be different**, not because they were better than others, “It is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your G-d is giving you this good land”, (Deuteronomy. 9:6), but because by **being different** we teach the world **the dignity of difference**.

Our distinctiveness makes us who we are. It is this we contribute to humanity.”

On this shabbos let us remember there is one fundamental difference between anti-Semitism today and in the past. Today we have a State of Israel. We have a home. Throughout history we have faced opposition and persecution from some of the greatest superpowers the world has ever known. We have outlived them all.

May we stay strong in our love for each other, viahavta lareicha kamocho, as we love Hashem, our Torah and its values we emulate.

L’chaim!

A wonderfully “refreshing” shabbos!