



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

July 23, 2016 ■ 17 Tammuz, 5776 ■ Shabbos Balak
Candlelighting: 8:14P ■ Shabbos Ends 9:22P

Kiddush this Shabbos is sponsored by the members of the Guarantee Kiddush Club: Wes & Tricia Sutkin, Yaakov & Susan Rich, Ben & Lauren Nise, Chana Esther Day, Ari & Naomi Goldberg & Eli Goldberg. Shalosh Seudos this Shabbos is sponsored by the shul.

Please contact Rabbi Yaakov Rich at 972-835-6016 if you are interested in sponsoring kiddush or shalosh seudos in the future.

■ SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Friday Night, July 22nd

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv-7:00P
- » Candlelighting-8:14P (Preferably light by 7:25P)

Shabbos Day, July 23rd

- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush-8:30A
- » Pirkei Avos for M&W-6:30P
- » Chumash Shiur for M&W-7:15P
- » Mincha/Shalosh Seudos for men in shul-8:00P
- » Shalosh Seudos for women & young children at the Rich home - 8:00P
- » Maariv/Shabbos Ends-9:22P

■ FAST OF SHIVA ASSUR B'TAMMUZ (NIDCHEH)

Sunday, July 24th (See Laws Below)

- » Fast Begin-5:23A
- » Shacharis with Selichos-8:00A
- » Mincha/Maariv-8:00P
- » Fast Ends-9:13P

■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Weekday Shacharis-6:40A
- » Mincha/Maariv followed by NQ Daf HaYomi (Kesuvos)-8:15P

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

MEN

- » Zoosav ben Leeba (Father of Suzanne Luftig)
- » Yisroel ben Malka (Friend of Suzanne Luftig)
- » R' Moshe ben Chana Sara Leah (Rebbi of Ari Goldberg)
- » Yechiel Mordechai ben Devorah (Brother of Ken Jarmel)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)
- » Mattisyahu Chaim ben Ettl (HaRav Mattisyahu Solomon)

WOMEN

- » Leah Esther bas Yenta Leah (Lori Jarmel)
- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)

■ WHAT'S NU AT CTC

- » **SEED begins August 9, 2016.**
- » **Chuck Back Ribs Available for Purchase:** Congregation Toras Chaim has a huge supply of the best quality Chuck Back Ribs. Mouth watering, fall-off-the-bone tender meat. We need to sell everything. We are offering these ribs to the community at the steeply discounted prices of \$7.50 / lb or \$6.00 / lb / case. Contact Rabbi Rich at (972) 835-6016 or yrich@toraschaimdallas.org

■ BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE: RABBI LABEL LAM

G-d's wrath flared because he was going, and an angel of HASHEM stationed himself on the road to thwart him, and he was riding on his she-donkey, and his two servants were with him. The she-donkey saw the angel of the Lord stationed on the road with his sword drawn in his hand; so the she-donkey turned aside from the road and went into a field. Balaam beat the she-donkey to get it back onto the road. The angel of HASHEM stood in a path of the vineyards, with a fence on this side and a fence on that side. The she-donkey saw the angel of HASHEM, and she was pressed against

the wall. She pressed Balaam's leg against the wall, and he beat her again. The angel of HASHEM continued going ahead, and he stood in a narrow place, where there was no room to turn right or left. The she-donkey saw the angel of HASHEM, and it crouched down under Balaam. Balaam's anger flared, and he beat the she-donkey with a stick. HASHEM opened the mouth of the she-donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times?" Balaam said to the she-donkey, "For you have humiliated me; if I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now." (Bamidbar 22-29)

What a bizarre episode! Bilaam defies explicit instructions from the Almighty not to go and curse the blessed Nation of Israel. Meeting with continual frustration by his blundering beast of burden, he remains undeterred, and even gets into a fight with his donkey. If at any early point he would have gotten the "hint" and turned back this chapter might never have been recorded and he may have saved himself from the ugly title "wicked". Those bumps and bruises on the road should have given him pause to arrest himself and reverse directions. His overpowering desires blinded him to the obvious warning signs, as he drove recklessly into the abyss of human history.

Cogitating on Bilaam's condition awakens an incident from more than 34 years ago when I was yet an unmarried Yeshiva student. (I have often shared this story in the quiet of my office when counseling boys who felt compelled to hit someone when provoked by not more than an unkind word.) I was spending a summer in Lakewood New Jersey. I pulled into a gas station and rolled up to the second pump politely leaving room for the next customer. When my car was parked and I was about to open my door, I felt a jolt. The car pulling in had bumped my car. I turned around and there was the car that hit mine backing up slowly.

I was about to get out when suddenly I experienced another jolt. He did it again. The first time I was willing to believe was an accident but the second time was certainly intentional. I quickly measured and weighed my response options. I was ready to go back there to confront him!

I thought to myself, "If he's crazy enough to do this then maybe he's crazy enough to do something worse. Perhaps he's got something concealed in his pocket or under the seat that gives him wild confidence. Maybe he doesn't have anything and I can readily handle him. Either way I'll bring a mountain of legal or physical trouble on myself. If I win I lose and if I lose I can really lose." All this thinking happened in a nano-second. I look back with pride years later. I am happy to be alive to tell the tale. I did not step out of the vehicle. I put my car in gear and drove away. "Discretion is the better part of valor." "Don't be right! Be smart!" I was not married then. I did not have a family yet. Had I confronted him who knows what the result would have been?! I could have hurt him or been hurt.

It wasn't easy at the time. My ego was raging but my intellect was advising me to get the message before it's too late.

■ LAWS OF THREE WEEKS

Background The 17th of Tammuz is mentioned in Nevi'im (Prophets) – as “the fast of the fourth month” (Zechariah 8:19). The Mishnah (Taanit 4:8) lists five calamities that befell the Jewish people on this date:

- Moses broke the two tablets of stone on Mount Sinai;
- The daily tamid offering ceased to be brought;
- The walls of Jerusalem were breached (proceeding to the destruction of the Temple);
- Prior to Bar Kokhba's revolt, Roman military leader Apostomus burned a Torah scroll;
- An idol was erected in the Temple.

The Babylonian Talmud (Taanit 28b) places the second and fifth tragedies in the First Temple, while dating the third tragedy (breach of Jerusalem) to the Second Temple period. Jerusalem of the First Temple, on the other hand, was breached on the 9th of Tammuz (cf. Jeremiah 52.6-7).

The Three Weeks or Bein ha-Metzarim “Between the Straits” or “In Dire Straits”) is a period of mourning commemorating the destruction of the first and second Jewish Temples. The Three Weeks start on the seventeenth day of the Jewish month of Tammuz – the fast of the Seventeenth of Tammuz – and end on the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av – the fast of Tisha B'Av, which occurs exactly three weeks later. Both of these fasts commemorate events surrounding the destruction of the Jewish Temples and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. According to conventional chronology, the destruction of the first Temple, by Nebuchadrezzar II, occurred in 586 BCE, and the second, by the Romans, in 70 CE. Jewish chronology, however, traditionally places the first destruction at about 421 BCE.

Observances Jewish law forbids during this time:

- taking a haircut
- shaving
- listening to music
- as well, no Jewish marriages are allowed during the Three Weeks, since the joy of such an event would conflict with the expected mood of mourning during this time.

■ PARSHA Q&A BALAK

1. Why did Moav consult specifically with Midian regarding their strategy against the Jews? 22:4 - Since Moshe grew up in Midian, the Moabites thought the Midianites might know wherein lay Moshe's power.
2. What was Balak's status before becoming Moav's king? 22:4 - He was a prince of Midian.
3. Why did G-d grant prophecy to the evil Bilaam? 22:5 - So the other nations couldn't say, “If we had had prophets, we also would have become righteous.”
4. Why did Balak think Bilaam's curse would work? 22:6 - Because

Bilaam's curse had helped Sichon defeat Moav.

5. When did Bilaam receive his prophecies? 22:8 - Only at night.
6. G-d asked Bilaam, “Who are these men with you?” What did Bilaam deduce from this question? 22:9 - He mistakenly reasoned that G-d isn't all-knowing.
7. How do we know Bilaam hated the Jews more than Balak did? 22:11 - Balak wanted only to drive the Jews from the land. Bilaam sought to exterminate them completely.
8. What is evidence of Bilaam's arrogance? 22:13 - He implied that G-d wouldn't let him go with the Moabite princes due to their lesser dignity.
9. In what way was the malach that opposed Bilaam an angel of mercy? 22:22 - It mercifully tried to stop Bilaam from sinning and destroying himself.
10. How did Bilaam die? 22:23 - He was killed with a sword.
11. Why did the malach kill Bilaam's donkey? 22:33 - So that people shouldn't see it and say, “Here's the donkey that silenced Bilaam.” G-d is concerned with human dignity.
12. Bilaam compared his meeting with an angel to someone else's meeting with an angel. Who was the other person and what was the comparison? 22:34 - Avraham. Bilaam said, “G-d told me to go but later sent an angel to stop me. The same thing happened to Avraham: G-d told Avraham to sacrifice Yitzchak but later canceled the command through an angel.”
13. Bilaam told Balak to build seven altars. Why specifically seven? 23:4 - Corresponding to the seven altars built by the Avot. Bilaam said to G-d, “The Jewish People's ancestors built seven altars, but I alone have built altars equal to all of them.”
14. Who in Jewish history seemed fit for a curse, but got a blessing instead? 23:8 - Yaakov, when Yitzchak blessed him.
15. Why are the Jewish People compared to lions? 23:24 - They rise each morning and “strengthen” themselves to do mitzvot.
16. On Bilaam's third attempt to curse the Jews, he changed his strategy. What was different? 24:1 - He began mentioning the Jewish People's sins, hoping thus to be able to curse them.
17. What were Bilaam's three main characteristics? 24:2 - An evil eye, pride and greed.
18. What did Bilaam see that made him decide not to curse the Jews? 24:2 - He saw each tribe dwelling without intermingling. He saw the tents arranged so no one could see into his neighbor's tent.
19. What phrase in Bilaam's self-description can be translated in two opposite ways, both of which come out meaning the same thing? 24:3 - “Shatum ha'ayin.” It means either “the poked-out eye,” implying blindness in one eye; or it means “the open eye,” which means vision but implies blindness in the other eye.
20. Bilaam told Balak that the Jews' G-d hates what? 24:14 - Promiscuity.

Good Shabbos

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Friday Night, July 22nd

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Shabbos Day, June 4th

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■ CLASSES

- » Before Shacharis Gemara Yevamos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:40A)
- » NQ Daf HaYomi Kesuvos for men (Sunday-Thursday following Maariv)
- » Pirkei Avos for men & women (Shabbos 90 mins before mincha)
- » Chumash for men & women (Shabbos 45 mins before mincha)
- » Supercharge Your Sundays for men (Sunday after Shacharis for 45 mins., with R' Noach Klug)
- » Marriage Chaburah for women (Tuesday 7:15-8:00P)
- » In-Depth Hilchos Shabbos for women (Time is Changing)