



**PARK  
SLOPE  
JEWISH  
CENTER**

July 19-27, 2019 | 16 - 24 Tammuz 5779  
Parashat Balak

Friday, July 19   16 Tammuz				Parashat Balak Saturday, July 20   17 Tammuz		
Kabbalat Shabbat with <b>Elizabeth Schnur</b>   7:00PM Candle Lighting   8:05PM				Shacharit   10:00AM Difduf/Kishkush Reading Group   1:00PM Shabbat Shmooze   1:30PM		
Sunday July 21 18 Tammuz	Monday July 22 19 Tammuz	Tuesday July 23 20 Tammuz	Wednesday July 24 21 Tammuz	Thursday July 25 22 Tammuz	Friday July 26 23 Tammuz	Saturday July 27 24 Tammuz
			Morning Minyan 7:15AM  Hebrew Reading for Adult beginners 7:00PM		Kabbalat Shabbat with <b>Freddie Brooks</b> 7:00PM  Candle Lighting 8:00PM	<i>Shabbat Pinechas</i>  Shacharit   10:00AM  Advanced Talmud 1:00PM
<b>Park Slope Jewish Center</b> 1320 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215 (718) 768-1453 Office hours: M-Th 9:00AM-5PM, F 9AM-2PM www.psjc.org   email: office@psjc.org				Rabbi Carie Carter, Rabbi (rabbicarie@psjc.org) Ellen Brickman, President (president@psjc.org) Aileen Heiman, Director of Youth Education (aileen.heiman@psjc.org) For questions about Accessibility (inclusion@psjc.org)		

**Yahrzeits observed 17-23 Tammuz:**

**Abraham Barry Zaretsky**, husband of Joan Glatman; **Carol Brahm**, mother of Laura Brahm; **David Michalovitz**, grandfather of Diana Duchowny; **Florence Thomases**, mother of Matt Thomases; **Hananiah Harari**, stepfather of Roland Lewis; **Irwin Septimus**, father of Matthew Septimus; **Jeffrey Sherman**, father of Elisabeth Sherman; **Joseph Blustein**, father of Jeffrey Blustein; **Marge Palmer**, mother of Alan Palmer; **Mildred Cantor**, aunt of Samuel Hornick; **Paul Gundersheim**, father of Ellen Briefel; **Roberta Weiner**, friend of June Zeitlin.

*May their memories be for a blessing.*

**Our Annual Honey Sale**

Once again, PSJC will be participating with ORT so you can send Honey to your friends and family in time for Rosh HaShanah.

This is a lovely gift and a PSJC fundraiser.

Order now [www.psjc.org/honey](http://www.psjc.org/honey).

Get your orders in before Monday, August 5 so you can get free shipping



G'mach, Hevra Kadisha welcome new members If you are able to cook, deliver meals, visit, attend shiva minyanim, do shmira or tahara for those who have died, and support our members in good and bad times - please contact G'mach and Hevra Kadisha to add your name to the distribution list: gmach@psjc.org or hevra kadisha@psjc.org

Hebrew Free Burial Society is in need of tallitot to use for peoples' burial. If you have old tallitot you would like to donate, please consider bringing them to PSJC. We will collect them in the kiddush room this summer and send them to HFBS before Rosh Hashanah.



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### **Annual Membership Renewal 2019-2020**

That means we have already begun planning for 5780! We hope you will join us for another great year at PSJC! We would love to get to 100% participation. No amount is too big or too small. Renew your membership today! It's easy and can all be done online. Visit [www.psjc.org](http://www.psjc.org) and log in to your account.

Please contact Peter by email [treasurer@psjc.org](mailto:treasurer@psjc.org) if you have to arrange payments or limited income.

### **Hebrew School Registration is Live!**

Registration for 2019-2020 Hebrew School is OPEN!  
Join us for another year of Jewish learning!

[https://www.psjc.org/hebrew\\_school\\_registration](https://www.psjc.org/hebrew_school_registration)

Saturday, July 20 | 1:00PM

#### **Difduf/Kishkush Reading Group**

Read and discuss short stories in Hebrew. Contact Michal: [Kishkush.at.PSJC@gmail.com](mailto:Kishkush.at.PSJC@gmail.com) for more details.

**Shabbat Shmooze** | 1:30PM

Shabbat Shmooze is a get-together at PSJC courtyard during the summer months. We will shmooze after the Kiddush. Bring a parve potluck dish to share. If anyone would like to host a Shabbat Shmooze in the coming year, please email [shabbatshmooze@psjc.org](mailto:shabbatshmooze@psjc.org), with the date they would like to host a Shabbat Shmooze (3rd Shabbat of the month).

#### **Hebrew Reading for Adult beginners @ Park Slope Jewish Center**

Wednesdays | 7:00PM-8:30PM | July 24, 31; Aug 7, 14, 21, 28

Instructor: Rabbi Sue Oren | Fee: \$275 (includes course materials)

For adults interested in learning to read Hebrew (or refreshing their rusty skills!) Learn to read the Hebrew "alefabet" (aka alphabet) on Wednesdays this summer! This course provides a systematic approach to recognizing and sounding out the Hebrew writing system. In class and at home, you'll reinforce this learning through practical exercises and introduction to basic vocabulary from Jewish prayer. For registration and questions, contact Rabbi Oren: [slopehebrew@earthlink.net](mailto:slopehebrew@earthlink.net) or 917.539.1334. Co-sponsors: East Midwood Jewish Center, Flatbush Jewish Center, Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, Park Slope Jewish Center, Union Temple

#### **Advanced Talmud**

Saturday, July 27 | 1:30PM

This class is an on-going self-study group appropriate for people who are proficient in Hebrew and have some prior experience in Gemara study. New students are welcome! Email [aronrhalb@gmail.com](mailto:aronrhalb@gmail.com).

#### **Kishkush Acharei Kiddush**

Saturday, August 3 | 1:00PM - Final for the Summer

Are you comfortable speaking Hebrew? Do you want a place to speak with other fluent Hebrew speakers? Join us after services and kiddush where we have a Shulchan Ivrit - a table to sit around, drink coffee and talk with one another in Hebrew. Those who aren't sure if they are "fluent" or not are all welcome! Contact Michal: [Kishkush.at.PSJC@gmail.com](mailto:Kishkush.at.PSJC@gmail.com) for more details.

### **Summer Shabbat Services**

Our Friday night service times move to 7:00PM for July and August.  
And Shabbat Services move to our air-conditioned downstairs for services in July and August.



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### **Erev Tisha B'Av Services**

Saturday, August 10 | 8:45PM

Help us observe this sad day in the Jewish calendar with the recitation of the haunting text of Eicha, The Book of Lamentations.

### **Host an Israeli Shinshin**

IsraelBKLYN is looking for host families for Israeli Shinshinim this year (especially beginning in the Fall). A "shinshin" is an 18-year-old Israeli emissary to communities abroad with the goal of educating people of all ages about Israel and Israeli culture. Shinshinim work with children at Jewish camps, schools and synagogues. Over the last five years, Shinshinim have added a lot to our PSJC community. If you are interested in hosting a shinshin, please contact Rabbi Carter: rabbicarie@psjc.org.

Help is needed to cook, share dinner or stay overnight with a dozen or so guests who are experiencing homelessness. PSJC is partners with the CAMBA Respite Bed Program. During the summer the program is at Old First Reformed Church in Park Slope and St. George's Episcopal in Bed Sty. It's a hard time to get volunteers. Can you help at any time this summer? It's a nice thing to do with friends or family. Kids of any age can help serve dinner. Post B'nai Mitzvah kids can stay overnight with an adult.

The guests are screened and part of a program helping them move forward towards permanent housing. Overnights sleep in a separate air conditioned room. Food could be dropped off or picked up. Please spread the word to your networks. Feel free to give me a call with any questions - Yehudit Moch 347-728-8247.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f044fa8af2eaafb6-volunteer44>

**All congregants and visitors** (of all genders) are requested to wear a head covering in the Sanctuary. Cell phones and photography are not permitted in the synagogue during Shabbat. Please also refrain from applause during services. **PSJC runs on community participation.** If you are interested in: **leading Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv Services**, email freddie.brooks@psjc.org; **leading Shabbat Morning Services**, email Elizabeth Schnur at davening@psjc.org; **chanting Haftarah**, email Alan Palmer at haftarah@psjc.org, **reading Torah**, email Rabbi Sue Oren at leyning@psjc.org. **To request an Aliyah or other honor**, email Rabbi Carter a week in advance (rabbicarie@psjc.org), or notify the usher if you arrive before the Torah Service begins; we honor requests whenever possible. **To usher services**, email Ira Drucker at ira.drucker@psjc.org.

**Have announcements?** Email by Monday 5:00PM (office@psjc.org)

## Parashat Balak

Triennial: Numbers 23:27-25:9 | Etz Hayim p. 903; Hertz p.677

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8 | Etz Hayim p.914; Hertz p.682

### D'var Torah: Trusting Your Gut

Afraid of the approaching Israelites, Balak, King of the Moabites, sends messengers to convince Bilaam, a Mesopotamian prophet, to curse them. Bilaam consults with God and is told not to go. But after King Balak sends a more impressive delegation, Bilaam asks again and God relents; he can go, but he must do whatever God commands.

In the morning, Bilaam saddles his donkey to ride to where he can look down upon the Israelite encampment. But as he travels, suddenly his donkey refuses to move forward. God has sent an angel with a flaming sword to stand in their path. But while Bilaam doesn't see it, the donkey does, and it turns to the side rather than proceeding forward. Bilaam is incensed and begins to beat the donkey to get it back on the path. But the donkey swerves again to avoid the angel. Bilaam beats it again, and the donkey gives up, laying down in the middle of the road. Now totally enraged, Bilaam beats the donkey to within an inch of its life.

But then, miraculously, God enables the donkey to speak. It calls out to Bilaam: "What have I done that you are beating me? Am I not the same donkey you have always ridden, who has never done this before? Is my odd behavior - my refusal to move forward - not a sign to you?" God uncovers Bilaam's eyes and he sees the angel, who explains how the donkey actually saved Bilaam's life. Bilaam says to the angel that he'll turn back if God still disapproves, but the angel lets him go, reiterating that he may ONLY speak what he is told.

So what is going on here? Despite recognizing his limits as a conduit for divine speech and will, it is apparent from Bilaam's multiple requests that he really wants to curse Israel. The text signals this when it tells us that "Bilaam got up in the morning and saddled his donkey." (21:1). This odd bit of information, Rashi notes, parallels a line in the story of the Binding of Isaac, where Avraham also woke up early and saddled HIS donkey for the journey to Mt. Moriah. In both cases, Rashi explains, it would have been normal to have their attendants saddle the donkey, but their strong motivations made them do it themselves.

But the Chassidic tradition delves deeper into the psychology of these "donkey-saddlers" by inviting us to see the donkey and rider as one being. The Baal Shem Tov taught that a donkey (רומח/*chamor*) is connected to both the word for clay (רמיח/*cheimar*) and material (רמוח/*chomer*), thus the donkey symbolizes the body and the rider the soul/intellect. When Bilaam and Avraham are described as saddling their donkeys, it was not just to RIDE their bodies but to OVERRIDE them. Avraham's love for God caused him to override his body's unwillingness to sacrifice his beloved son. But what was Bilaam's motivation to override his body's unwillingness to curse Israel? For Rashi, it was hatred for Israel, but it could also have been fear, jealousy, desire for profit, or ego.

In both cases, it would seem, the bodies got it right, as neither is ultimately allowed to do the deed. In the split second before he kills his son, Avraham hears the angel and looks up to see the ram he is to sacrifice instead. Bilaam, on the other hand, needs God to open the mouth of the donkey for him to hear anything and open his eyes for him to see anything.

Religion often asserts that the body - materiality and carnal desire - is the source of sin, and that the soul and intellect are pure and good. Our tradition sees the intellect as the seat of the *yetzer hatov* (good inclination) and the body as the seat of the *yetzer hara* (the evil inclination), and prescribes that the former should "saddle" and drive the latter. But this story flips that on its head and reminds us that goodness and morality can sometimes be natural instincts - something rooted in our gut. Sometimes things that we THINK are right can FEEL wrong, and our intellects can betray us through elaborate rationalizations. But if we habituate ourselves to doing good, our own bodies may keep us from taking the wrong path.

This weekly commentary on the Torah portion is by **Rabbi Andy Shapiro Katz**, Conservative Yeshiva Director of *Engagement* "Torah Sparks" series produced by the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. A Haftarah commentary by Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein found at <http://www.conservativeyeshiva.org/torahsparks>.