



Carnegie Shul Chatter

June 28, 2023



Light candles 8:36pm

Shabbat Services 9:30am

Shabbat Services

Join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19, or attend virtually. Watch your email for a Zoom link or contact Rosalyn Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com. The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found at https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2495893/jewish/Chukat-Balak-Torah-Reading.htm

Something is Still Wrong

In the days of the ancient temples, the Jews, as commanded by Hashem, came to the temple to offer the prescribed sacrifices to God. And yet, despite the sacrifices, the Jewish people were conquered, their temples were destroyed, and they were exiled from their homeland. What went wrong?

And today, in modern times we do not have the temple as a place to perform sacrifices, so instead we use prayer as a way to connect to God. And although we now have a Jewish homeland to return to in the modern State of Israel, we are still not living in peace in that homeland, the temple has not been restored, and most of us still experience anti-Semitism in the Diaspora.

And despite our prayers, Moshiach has not arrived.

Something is still wrong.

What more does God want from us? Can it be as simple as what Micah tells us in this week's haftorah when he says, "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice, and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with God." (6:8)?

The recipe is there. All we have to

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do is to have each and every one of us follow it. We must follow it, and we must love God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our might. And, if we do, and if we sincerely have faith, then Moshiach will surely come, and we will be returned to live in peace in the Promised Land as God has promised us.



Chukat-Balak in a Nutshell

From Chabad.org

Numbers 19:1-25:9

The name of the Parshah, “Chukat,” means “Statute [of the Torah]” and it is found in Numbers 19:2. The name of the Parshah, “Balak,” refers to Balak, king of Moab, and it is found in Numbers 22:2.

Moses is taught the laws of the Red Heifer, whose ashes purify a person who has been contaminated by contact with a dead body.

After 40 years of journeying through the desert, the people of Israel arrive in the wilderness of Zin. Miriam dies and the people thirst for water. G-d tells Moses to speak to a rock and command it to give water. Moses gets angry at the rebellious Israelites and strikes the stone. Water issues forth, but Moses is told by G-d that neither he nor Aaron will enter the Promised Land.



Aaron dies at Hor Hahar and is succeeded in the High Priesthood by his son Elazar. Venomous snakes attack the Israelite camp after yet another eruption of discontent in which the people “speak against G-d and Moses”; G-d tells Moses to place a brass serpent upon a high pole, and all who will gaze heavenward will be healed. The people sing a song in honor of the miraculous well that provided the water in the desert. Moses leads the people in battles against the Emorite kings Sichon and Og (who seek to prevent Israel’s passage through their territory) and conquers their lands, which lie east of the Jordan.

Balak, the King of Moab, summons the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is berated by his donkey, who sees the angel that G-d sends to block their way before Balaam does. Three times, from three different vantage points, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses; each time, blessings issue instead. Balaam also prophesies on the end of days and the coming of Moshiach.

The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab and are enticed to worship the idol Peor. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into a tent, Pinchas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

Haftorah in a Nutshell

Micah 5:6-6:8

This week's haftorah makes mention of the incident of Balak the king of Moab hiring the sorcerer Balaam to curse the Jewish people — the main topic of this week's Torah reading.

The prophet Micah prophesies about what will occur after the war of Gog and Magog, the war which precedes the coming of the Messiah and the Final Redemption.

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples — like dew sent by G-d, like torrents of rain upon vegetation that does not hope for any man and does not wait for the sons of men.” The prophet describes how G-d will remove the idols and sorcerers and how He will destroy the Jews' enemies.

The prophet Micah then goes on to rebuke the Jewish people for not observing G-d's commandments, calling as witness the “mountains and hills” — a reference to the Patriarchs and Matriarchs — and reminding them of the great things G-d had done for them. He took them out of Egypt and replaced the curses that Balaam son of Beor wanted to utter against them with blessings.

The Jewish people respond by saying that they do not know how to serve G-d and ask for guidance. The prophet reminds them of the Torah, and that all they need to do is contained within it: “He has told you, O man, what is good, and what G-d demands of you: but to do justice, love kindness, and walk discreetly with your G-d.”



Haftarah Commentary

From myjewishlearning.com

In this week's haftarah Micah gives a series of short prophecies directed at the Israelites in exile, whom he refers to as the "remnant of Jacob." Though the people may feel like droplets of dew, hopelessly spread out upon other nations, their renewal will come from God. Ultimately, they will rise like a lion and trample their foes. This transformation, from a tiny drop of water to the king of all animals, symbolizes the changes that will come to the people of Israel. They will go from being very weak to very strong.

Even while Micah is encouraging the exiled nation, he warns them that on the very same day that they vanquish their foes, their own idols and false gods will be demolished. Soothsayers and sorcerers will be destroyed. While God gives His nation strength, he will wreak havoc on those who still believe in other gods.

Micah then speaks on God's behalf and invites mountains, hills, and the firm foundation of the world to bear witness as God recounts how poorly His own nation has treated Him. He brought them out of Egypt, and gave them strong leaders—Moses, Aaron and Miriam. God reminds His people about the prophecy of Balaam (an explicit reference to Parashat Balak) who was commissioned by Balak the King of Moab to curse the Israelites. But when Balaam opened his mouth, God changed Balaam's evil prophecy into one of strength and dignity. This is just one example of God's graciousness.

God laments that the people seem to think they can please Him with a steady stream of sacrifices, instead of by acting honorably. Finally, Micah closes with a famous summation of what God wants from His people: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice, and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with God."
(6:8)



Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Molvin Glantz
Dorothy Routman

Lawrence I. Miller
Pearl Shutzberg

May their memories be for a blessing.

