

12th Tammus 5769/4th July 2009

Minister: Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld

Emeritus Chazan: Rev. Moshe Dubiner

Parshat Chukat-Balak

	Hertz	Cohen	Stone	Gutnick		Shabbat Begins	9.06pm
Sedra	652	898	838	988		Shabbat ends	10.24pm
Haftarah	682	929	1189	1458			

MA TOVU

When opening our mouth to speak, we never know whether the words we are about to say will one day become famous (or whether we may be forced to say "I was misquoted"). This was the case for Balaam, son of Beor who was sent by Balak, the King of Moab, to curse the Israelites - as we read in the second portion of a double sidra this week. But God intervenes and tells Balaam he must say only what He commands. On three occasions, King Balak asks Balaam to curse the Israelites, but each time the seer blesses them instead.

The blessings of Balaam contain some beautiful poetry, especially his third poem of praise for the Israelites: "*Ma tovu ohalecha Ya'akov, mishkenotecha Yisrael...*" - *How goodly are your tents, Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel. They spread out like streams, like gardens by the river, like spices which God planted, like cedars beside the water*" (Num. 24:5-6). Commentators have wondered what Balaam saw as he gazed upon the Israelites' tents. Rashi says that Balaam noticed that their tents were not directly facing each other, indicating a degree of privacy for each home. Nechama Leibowitz explains the term "*Tovu*" - 'good' or 'fair' to mean "*perfection in all respects — beauty and charm, simplicity and purity.*" And the Talmud understands "*tents*" to mean schools and synagogues (Sanhedrin 105b).

It is this view that turned Balaam's words into a sentiment that we recite every day as the opening prayer of every morning service. "*Ma Tovu*" is an entrance prayer to the synagogue, and Balaam's words capture the magnitude of blessing that one feels entering a holy place. But '*Ma Tovu*' is not just an entrance prayer urging us to take notice of our sacred surroundings. It is also a *prelude* to prayer. The sages of old understood that prayer does not always come easily, especially in the morning after waking, with the worries of the day unfolding over us. Not only the body, but also the mind and emotions have to be attuned to prayer. '*Ma Tovu*' the opening prayer of the morning liturgy, serves as a psychological introduction to prayer; it reminds us that we should feel good about entering the synagogue. Balaam's blessing should also prompt us to strive today to make our tents — our synagogues and all Jewish institutions — like the tents of the Israelites in the wilderness. Yes, we gather to pray, study and connect with others and with God, but our tents also need to provide shelter, comfort and protection.

Here at WMA we have been trying to do just that; over the past few months our congregation has been offering help to those who need it: to assist with membership fees; in increased visitation to the elderly and the lonely; using members' skills within the congregation in our "Market Place" innovation. Just as Balaam's words in the Torah portion are a declaration of praise for the tents he saw before him from the mountaintop, so also in the context of prayer they are an expression of hope for what our experience in our Jewish tents of today ought to be. *Ma Tovu Ohalecha* — our tents are made good by our voices, our presence - and especially by our actions. Shabbat Shalom.

From Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld, inspired by a Dvar Torah by Rabbi K S Citrin

Next Shabbat Pinchas

10th — 11th July 2009

Commences 9.02pm Mincha & Maariv 7.15pm

Announcements

Mazal Tov to Joseph Simon on his Bar Mitzvah and to parents Samantha Simon and Nick Simon

Kiddush Sponsor

You are all invited to Kiddush after the service to celebrate Joseph's Bar Mitzvah

Breakfast Sponsor

Breakfasts this week are kindly sponsored by Faanya Rose to celebrate: Nicole Goldin visiting London; the birth of a grandson, Jacob Goldin; the marriage of her granddaughter Lauren Goldin to Samuel David Glover; and Faanya's birthday. Mazal Tov!

Mazal Tov

To Amanda Clore and Daniel Pinkerton on their forthcoming wedding and to parents Sheila & Charles Clore

Birth Announcement

Mazal Tov to Natalie & Dean Clifford on the birth of a son, and to grandmother Janice Serlin

Birthdays— Mazal Tov:

Amelia Rayden	Joshua Simon
Natasha Truman	Emanuelle Lee
Samuel Mintz	Deborah Eker
Gabrielle Lederman-Whyte	Buchler
Dean Clifford	Jeremy Wayne
Timothy Eppel	Graham Colover
Faanya Rose	Freda Kissin

Wedding Anniversaries—Mazal Tov:

Emma & Jeremy Derman
Jahnene & Jonathan Green
Patricia & Ronald Davis
Frank & Gloria Green
Frula & Ronald Shear

Refuah Shlemah

Seymour Freed	Shmuel Zeev ben Sara Rivka
Gala Colover	Chana bat Yehudit Asher Mordecai ben Shifra
Nat Winsor	Noach ben Miriam Chayah
	Shira bat Leah
	Rivka Bat Chava

Friday 3rd July

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast & Haftarah Shiur by Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld
7.15 pm Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat & D'var Torah by Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld

Shabbat 4th July

8.45 am Shiur with Stanley Simmonds
9.15 am Shacharit
9.15 pm Mincha, Seudah Shlishit & D'var Torah by Jonathan D Sarna, Professor of American Jewish History, Brandeis University
10.24 pm Maariv & Havdalah

Sunday 5th July

8.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast
Restarts Cheder Aged 4—12 years. Contact Batsheva September Burns for further information on 0796 88 555 96 or email cheder.marblearch@gmail.com.
Now is the time to register your child/grandchild for the new Cheder term.

Monday 6th July

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast and D'var Torah by Michael Milston
10.30 am Parsha Shiur for Ladies by Rabbi Rosenfeld

Tuesday 7th July

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast Shiur by Rabbi Yosef Vogel

Wednesday 8th

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast and Parsha Shiur by Ervin Landau

Thursday 9th July—Fast of Tammuz

1.12 am Fast begins
7.15 am Shacharit/Selichot
2.00 pm First Mincha
7.30 pm Mincha & Maariv
10.14pm Fast ends

Friday 10th July

7.30 am Shacharit followed by breakfast & Haftarah Shiur by Ervin Landau

Mincha & Ma'ariv this week:
Sun 5th—Thurs 9th July 7.30pm
Thursday 9th July First Mincha 2.00pm

Security Rota

Max Rayden, David Sorany

Kiddush Rota

Eve Brenner, Susan Rothman, Linda Sharpe

You can contact Rabbi Lionel & Natalie Rosenfeld at rabbilr@marblearch.org.uk
Tel: 020 7535 0458, mobile: 07811202244

Our Website: For details of times of services and events, go to www.marblearch.org.uk

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Rabbi Rosenfeld's Parsha Shiur for Ladies

Next Shiur Monday 6th July at 10.30am

Yizkor Book 2009/5770

Please remember to return your form to the Synagogue office before going on holiday. Closing date Monday 17th August 2009

Rosh Hashanah Magazine/Brochure

This year's Shanah Tova Magazine is being compiled, which with your help we hope will be an even bigger success than last year. Many members of the congregation use the Magazine to send New Year Greetings and as the brochure has become so important, please ensure that you are included in this worthwhile cause.

Please send or email your advert today to the Synagogue Office. Please send us your articles, photographs or letters that you wish to be considered for publication in the brochure.

Market Place at WMA—Exclusively for WMA Members

A great new addition to our website has been launched ... **Market Place**, an opportunity for our members to support each other in these economically challenging times. Whatever business you are in let us know by emailing marketplace@marblearch.org.uk so we can include your listing free on the web site. Whatever you need to buy from a fridge to a flight check the website first and support our members. Our web page can be found at www.marblearch.org.uk/marketplace.html



Sponsoring an Event

If you are celebrating a Simchah or commemorating a family Yahrzeit or if you are just feeling generous please consider contacting the office and sponsoring a Shabbat Morning Kiddush, the Morning Minyan breakfasts or the weekly Newsletter.

Haftarah

Would anyone wishing to read the Haftarah on Shabbat, eg on the anniversary of their Bar Mitzvah, to mark a special occasion or for any other reason, please contact the Honorary Officers as we wish to involve as many people as possible. Rabbi Rosenfeld will be happy to help you prepare the reading if you are a little rusty! Please call him.

Yadgaroff Library

The Yadgaroff Library is open every day for those wishing to study or browse the fine selection of books.