

Shabbat Parashat Chukat/Balak

July 2, 2009

Weekly Teaching by Rabbi Mitchell M. Hurvitz

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The First Selectman of Greenwich, Peter Tesei, recently accepted my invitation to speak at a Greenwich Fellowship of Clergy meeting.

His presentation was an honest assessment of present local affairs. However, what was especially striking was his honest evaluation of how complex it is to work your way through the entangled difficulties of local government.

After listening to the first selectman, I felt for one of the first times in my life that Temple politics isn't so bad after all.

On Shabbat morning, we will be collectively celebrating our American day of independence; our 4th of July.

An old joke tells how a "real patriot is the person who gets a parking ticket, and rejoices that the system works."

We spend a lot of time reaping the benefits of being an American, but often spend too much time complaining about America.

While no nation is perfect, our country continues to be a shining beacon within our world. As Jewish Americans, we know better than most, how great of a country we really possess.

So, as we celebrate the birth of our nation, let us pray that our country; our government; our leaders; continue to conduct themselves with honor, justice and fairness.

As we recall the genius of America's founding fathers, let us pray that we continue to seek every opportunity to protect the ideals of our nation, and that we will seek every opportunity to be agents by which we can help bring God's light to our world.

And, as we celebrate our independence, let us never forget the young men and women; our defenders of liberty; who risk their lives to protect our own. Let us pray that God watches over them, and keeps them out of harm's way.

May God continue to bless our nation, and may we be more appreciative of the blessings our country brings to us each day.

Happy 4th of July and Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Mitch