

Candles (earliest)	BALAK	Havdala	next week
7:13 (6:20)	Yerushalayim	8:30	7:10 / 8:27
7:29 (6:22)	S'derot	8:31	7:27 / 8:29
7:27 (6:20)	Gush Etzion	8:30	7:25 / 8:27
7:30 (6:22)	Raanana	8:33	7:28 / 8:30
7:28 (6:21)	Beit Shemesh\RBS	8:31	7:26 / 8:28
7:30 (6:22)	Netanya	8:33	7:28 / 8:30
7:29 (6:22)	Rehovot	8:32	7:27 / 8:29
7:26 (6:21)	Be'erSheva\Otniel	8:30	7:24 / 8:27
7:28 (6:21)	Modi'in\Chashmona'im	8:31	7:26 / 8:28
7:13 (6:22)	Petach Tikva	8:32	7:10 / 8:29
7:13 (6:20)	Maale Adumim	8:30	7:10 / 8:27
7:29 (6:21)	Ginot Shomron	8:32	7:27 / 8:29
7:28 (6:20)	Gush Shiloh	8:30	7:26 / 8:28
7:27 (6:20)	K4 & Hevron	8:30	7:25 / 8:27
7:28 (6:20)	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:30	7:26 / 8:28
7:29 (6:21)	Yad Binyamin	8:32	7:27 / 8:29
7:30 (6:22)	Ashkelon	8:32	7:28 / 8:29
7:19 (6:21)	Tzfat	8:32	7:17 / 8:30

Rabbeinu Tam Havdala - BALAK - 9:14pm

Ranges are 10 days. WED-FRI
4-13 Tamuz • July 6-15

Earliest Talit & T'filin	4:40-4:46am
Sunrise	5:40-5:45am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:28-8:32am)	9:11-9:14am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:45-9:48am)	10:22-10:24am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	12:44pm-12:45am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	1:20-1:21pm
Plag Mincha	6:19¼-6:18pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 7:48-7:45pm)	7:53-7:51pm

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How is Balak like Chasidim?

Middle-standing's ending

Smiley = פְּרָצוּפוֹן

Yaakov, Moshe, Yisrael, and Balak

BxKN... RxQN

VAYAGOR MO'AV...
Balak m'facheid. How so?

In the heart of a light nation

Midyan's extra connection to the sedra

LEAD TIDBIT continued from FRONT page

We've said this before and even in this issue in the Sedra Summary, but it needs to be emphasized.

The first threat to us as a fledgling nation was from Par'o, who changed his mind about letting the People go (as if it was his decision in the first place) and pursued the people towards the Sea. When the people cried out, G-d told Moshe to tell the people that He would take care of things and they shown stand by silently and watch the events unfold.

The story of Balak & Bil'am vs. the People of Israel is the only episode of the Torah since the beginning of the book of Sh'mot that has no other witnesses besides G-d. A few million people witnessed and experienced the Exodus from Egypt, the first battle against Amalek, the Manna, revelation at Sinai, the golden calf episode, the spies fiasco, Korach's rebellion, and many other events that occurred to the people in the Midbar.

Subsequently, when Amalek attacked the people, Yehoshua was instructed to form an army and fight - side-by-side with G-d, so to speak.

Not the Balak and Bil'am business. The people were totally unaware that Balak sent a delegation to hire Bil'am to act against the People of Israel. We did not witness the building of the altars and the offering of the sacrifices. We did not hear Bil'am's words nor did we witness Balak's frustrations with Bil'am.

All other battles were to be fought by the people, with the promise of G-d's help, obvious or behind the scenes.

The accounts of the Exodus were not only included in the Torah; they were told from parent to child throughout the generations.

The Torah tells of one battle that the people were warned that G-d would not be joining them - so to speak. The went ahead anyway and were defeated.

We know of what Balak and Bil'am tried to do, what was said, etc. because G-d told Moshe and included it in the Torah. There are probably other things that we don't know about and will never know about. But this, G-d wanted us to know about. He wanted us to hear Bil'am's words - even though we weren't there to hear them straight from Bil'am's mouth. And He told us these things for a reason.

This time, G-d takes care of the whole thing without our even standing by silently. We did whatever we did in the day to day living in the Wilderness, unaware of this particular plot, and G-d protected us completely. (Until we turned from Him towards the worship of Baal Peor.)

This has to tell us something over the course of Jewish History until this very day. How many times have enemies of the Jewish people plotted and planned to harm us (or worse) only to be thwarted by G-d watching over us? "Behold, He Who watches Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Balak stats

40th of 54 sedras;

7th of 10 in Bamidbar

Written on 177.8 lines in a Torah (ranks 35)

2 Parshiyot; 1 closed, 1 open

104 p'sukim - ranks 34th (8th Bamidbar)

1455 words - ranks 33rd (8th Bamidbar)

5357 letters - ranks 35th (8th Bamidbar)

Balak is close to average for the Torah's sedras but is on the small side for Bamidbar

MITZVOT

Balak is one of 17 (of 54) sedras with no mitzvot. Only one of two no-mitzva sedras in the book of Bamidbar. Here's the no-mitzva sedra count per book: 9/12, 3/11, 0/10, 2/10, 3/11

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Kohen - First Aliya 11 p'sukim - 22:2-12

[S> 22:2 (95!)] Balak was a weaker king than his neighbors in the region. The defeat of the others (OG and SICHON) instilled fear in Balak's heart, and he

realized that waging a "conventional" war against Israel would be futile. His plan (following research of the matter) was to enlist Bil'am to curse the People of Israel. To this end, Balak sends a delegation to Bil'am in Midyan. Bil'am invites the envoys to spend the night so that he (Bil'am) can be spoken to by G-d. G-d does "appear" to Bil'am and asks him who these people are. Bil'am tells G-d and He warns Bil'am not to go with the delegation, nor to curse the people, because "they are blessed".

SDT: How come Balak, a sworn enemy of Israel, rates having a sedra named after him? Commentaries suggest that Balak was an "honest enemy" of Israel. His antagonism was based on his fear of Israel; his intentions and actions were clear-cut. We have been plagued by many enemies throughout history who have hidden behind a smile, a mask of friendship, or a hand-shake and photo-op only to try to stab us in the back (or worse). It's "nice" when an enemy is "up front" about it.

SDT: Commentaries point out that Moav and Midyan were bitter enemies. Nonetheless, they put their differences aside and united to fight against Israel. This shows the power of anti-Semitism in this world. See what our enemies are ready to do because they hate us so much.

But it also must teach us another lesson. We too must be prepared to

set aside that which divides the Jewish People into fragments, so that we can fight our common enemy with greater strength. This is not to suggest that we must ignore, overlook, or forgive these differences. But we have to know when we should put our religious-secular battles "on hold", in order to be united against the enemies of the Jewish People. We must all work together - Ashkenazim & S'faradim, National Religious and Haredi, left and right, religious and secular, to strengthen our position against those who would harm us, take parts of Eretz Yisrael from us, or divide our capital.

SDT: Rashi quotes a Midrash that explains why G-d asked Bil'am "who are these men with you?", when He first appeared to him at night. This, says Rashi, was to give Bil'am the false impression that there are times when G-d doesn't know something and needs to ask. Bil'am would then be hopeful that during one of those Divine "lapses", he would be able to "bless" the Jews, even though G-d told him that he shouldn't.

Levi - Second Aliya 8 p'sukim - 22:13-20

In the morning, Bil'am (reluctantly) dispatches Balak's messengers with his message of refusal. Balak sends a larger and more prestigious delegation to Bil'am, with offers of great honor and wealth if Bil'am would only agree to Balak's request. Bil'am

again refuses, but does invite the new delegation to spend the night. This time G-d permits Bil'am to accompany the Moabites, but warns him not to do anything other than what G-d tells him. (Commentaries draw from this the notion: "In the direction a person is inclined, there he is lead" Also like, "giving him enough rope to hang himself with".)

SDT: Why was Bil'am to be punished for going with Balak's delegation, when G-d permitted him to go? Sort of told him to go. Certainly, a person is held accountable for violations of G-d's commands, but are we also responsible for things which are not specifically prohibited, although it is reasonable to assume that G-d does not want us to do them?

The answer is **YES**. This is one of the concepts we actually derive from the episode of Bil'am. The Torah gives us a very good idea of what HaShem wants of us. Many sins are spelled out very clearly - in fact, there is a notion of "one will not be punished unless expressly warned"; yet we are warned that G-d will be angry, so to speak, if we do things that we (should) know are contrary to His wishes.

This is something that exists in human relationships too. Parents, for example, expect children to behave a certain way, even without being specifically told. We are not programmed robots; we are human beings with the ability to reason. And

G-d (and our parents - remember the Gemara in Kiddushin that teaches us that there are three partners in the human being - G-d, his father and his mother) wants us to make the right decision in areas He left "open", so to speak.

In the straight reading of the Chumash, it seems that Bil'am is truly a man of G-d who only wants to do what G-d wants him to do. Tradition describes him differently, as one who knows that he is totally in G-d's control but tries to fight it at every step of the way. He is identified as Bil'am HaRasha. What a blow to Bil'am's ego to be thought of so highly among people, yet to know that G-d is in charge and he (Bil'am) cannot act independently.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 18 p'sukim - 22:21-38

Bil'am arises in the morning, saddles his donkey (by himself), and goes with the Moav officers. (The implication in the pasuk is that Bil'am went with a great deal of enthusiasm to "hopefully" curse the People of Israel. Contrast this with Avraham's enthusiasm on his way to fulfill G-d's command with the Akeida.) G-d is "angry" with Bil'am for going (even though He permitted it) and sends an angel in an attempt to dissuade him from continuing. The Torah recounts that on three separate occasions - symbolically, it happened in increasingly narrower passages -

the donkey sees the angel blocking the way, but Bil'am does not. Bil'am strikes the donkey each time, until G-d gives the power of speech to the donkey, who admonishes Bil'am for his deeds. Then G-d permits Bil'am to see the angel and Bil'am acknowledges his sin. He offers to return, but the angel allows him to proceed, with the warning not to say anything "unauthorized".

In Pirkei Avot we are taught that the "mouth of the donkey" was one of ten special items that G-d created in the instant before He rested from further creation on the very first Shabbat. One of the lessons from this concept is SOF MA'ASEH B'MACHSHAVA T'CHILA, what happens in the end was in G-d's thought and plan at the beginning. We should not think that the "mouth of the Earth" that swallowed Korach & Co. or the talking donkey, or No'ach's rainbow, et al, were "after-thoughts" of G-d. No such thing.)

Balak goes out to greet Bil'am, who "warns" Balak that he is powerless to act on his own and must say only what G-d "puts in his mouth". (This is the significance of the "mouth of the donkey" - viz. that it is G-d Who grants the gift of speech; one should not be arrogant about his ability to speak well. In the words of the beautiful prayer of the Shali'ach Tzibur on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, OCHILA LAKEIL, the human

being thinks thoughts in his heart, but from G-d comes the ability to express them with his mouth and lips... or the lack of the ability.)

SDT: The favored weapon of the nations of the world is the sword. The "weapon" of Israel is "the power of speech" (prayer, divrei Torah, kind words, etc.). Bil'am arrogantly lays "his weapon" aside and attempts to harm the People of Israel with their (our) weapon. G-d, so to speak, went against Bil'am with his abandoned weapon - the angel's drawn sword. And ultimately, the Torah tells us, Bil'am fell by the sword. - Rashi

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 15 p'sukim - 22:39-23:12

Balak makes sacrifices on the occasion, and Bil'am orders seven altars to be built for the special offerings. (All that is done is highly significant - e.g. the Torah records that our three Patriarchs offered seven korbanot at various times. Bil'am hoped to "neutralize" the effect of those sacrifices in G-d's eyes by repeatedly offering seven sacrifices of his own.)

After meditation, Bil'am "speaks" about the People of Israel. He does not curse them, but rather beautifully describes the uniqueness of Israel. Balak is upset, but Bil'am reminds him that he (Bil'am) can only transmit that which G-d wants him to.

If we are unique among the nations of

the world, it is because of the Torah and our commitment to it, not something genetic, nor a mere accident of birth. We must preserve that uniqueness by remaining true to Torah, faithful to HaShem, and distinct from the other nations. And, as Bil'am pointed out, our uniqueness depends upon being different from the other nations (not wanting to be just like everyone else.) We are different when we are different. And that is what we are supposed to be.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 14 p'sukim - 23:13-26

Balak takes Bil'am to a different vantage point, in the hopes that he will be able to curse the People this time. Once again, seven altars are built and sacrifices offered. Once again, Bil'am meditates and then utters magnificent descriptions of the Nation of Israel. Balak says his piece and Bil'am again explains his restrictions. (Difficult for someone who is considered the quintessence of arrogance.)

Rashi says that Balak chose Rosh HaPisga as a place from where Bil'am might succeed in cursing the people, because he foresaw that Moshe would die there. Rashi says that Balak knew this about the place but Bil'am didn't - that Balak was a more gifted prophet.

Twice we find, And Bil'am said to Balak, build for me "with this" seven altars and prepare for me "with this"

seven bulls and seven rams (23:1 and 29). With this, BA'ZEH. We are taught that all the prophets of Israel prophesy with KOH (as in KO AMAR HASHEM), except Moshe, who prophesies with ZEH. Bil'am felt that he was on Moshe's level and kept throwing around the ZEH. G-d says to Bil'am, go back to Balak, and thus - KOH - you shall speak. Enough with the pretension to ZEH; you say KOH. Bil'am gets the message and switches to KOH when he speaks to Balak.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 17 p'sukim - 23:27-24:13

Balak suggests yet a different vantage point from which to observe Israel; maybe G-d will permit them to be cursed. Bil'am again asks for seven altars to be built, and a bull and a ram to be offered on each. This time, Bil'am does not meditate in his usual manner, expecting similar results, namely that blessings will emerge from him - and he really wants to curse Israel.

SDT: *Balak takes Bil'am to Rosh HaP'or. Having seen in a vision that Israel will soon fall at P'or, Balak mistakingly assumes that the cursing from there would be successful (Rashi).*

Targum Onkeles indicates that Bil'am was "reminding" G-d of the Golden Calf, so that He would allow the People to be cursed. However, when he saw the multitude encamped in such a special manner, he was endowed

with "Ruach HaKodesh" and he blessed the People of Israel a third time. Balak had "had enough", spoke harshly to Bil'am, and "sent him packing".

We quote the words that emerged from Bil'am's mouth - MA TOVU... Sometimes it takes a non-Jew's observation for us to appreciate something we might not see.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 21 p'sukim - 24:14-25:9

Before Bil'am takes leave of Balak, Bil'am prophesies about the other nations in the region... which was, in different words, a prophecy that each nation shall eventually perish, as will those who will bring about the earlier nations' destruction.

[P> 25:1 (9)] Bil'am's final advice, his attempts to curse the People having failed, is to entice the People to idolatry and immoral behavior which will turn G-d Himself against them. This plan works, as 24,000 perish in a plague following the immoral and idolatrous worship of Baal Pe'or. Only the bold action of Pinchas b. Elazar b. Aharon HaKohen in defending G-d's honor, stops the devastating plague.

SDT: This final lesson of the sedra must be learned well by us today. What Balak and Bil'am discovered is that if Israel is in G-d's favor, it will be invincible from outside attack. No

nation can succeed against Israel, when we are "on good terms" with G-d. That includes attacks by the sword or by words... If we, however, incur G-d's anger, by being unfaithful to Him, by disregarding Torah and mitzvot, then we are extremely vulnerable to our enemies. And they might not even have to actually fight against us (as in terror attacks) - we can, G-d forbid, destroy ourselves (as with road accidents, and more). This was true more than 3000 years ago; it is no less true today.

On a certain level, Parshat Balak is extremely simple and straightforward, with an extremely powerful message - because of that simplicity. For 95 p'sukim, we feel the protection of G-d as Balak and Bil'am fail time and again in what almost looks like a comical farce. The Gemara says that Bil'am was in some ways superior to Moshe Rabeinu, that when he was around, G-d Himself was extra vigilant in protecting us. For those 95 p'sukim, we beam with pride at the grudging admiration of a unique nation as expressed by Bil'am.

And then comes the last 9 p'sukim of the sedra. Bil'am went back home. So did Balak. No danger anymore. WHAM! We did it to ourselves. G-d protected us from Bil'am by giving him his words. By not letting him speak on his own. And then we turned around and betrayed G-d. 24,000 fatalities. And the toll would have been greater, except for the bold action of Pinchas. The sedra is shouting its message to

us. All we have to do is listen to it.

Last 3 p'sukim are reread for Maftir.

Note that the Pinchas episode is interrupted by the break between sedras. Zimri and Kozbi are not identified yet, G-d's reaction comes next week. Just for now - the plague stopped! The swiftness with which the plague struck is matched by the swift action of Pinchas. For now, that's the point. More next week.

Haftara 17 p'sukim Micha 5:6-6:8

Micha's prophecies include the state-of-affairs that finds Israel dispersed among the nations of the world, the promise of the end of war and restoration of Israel to its Land, and the "settling of accounts" between G-d and the other nations, and G-d and Israel. This portion contains a reference to the advice of Balak and Bil'am's response to it - thus the appropriate choice of this portion as the haftara for Parshat Balak.

Note the "credit" to Balak for the advice that caused the failing of Israel as opposed to the implication from the Torah that it was Bil'am's idea.

Note the reference to the leaders of the People as Moshe, Aharon, and MIRIAM.

The haftara ends with the famous encapsulation of our responsibil-

ities to G-d: "What does G-d demand of us, ONLY to behave justly, love chesed, and walk modestly (humbly) before G-d."

This is the formula for the greatest protection we can have from the Balaks and Bil'ams of the world. And its disregard makes us terribly vulnerable to them. What a contrast between the end of the sedra and the end of the haftara! Again, we have the simple but powerful point. This is how we are supposed to behave. This is how we behaved... and what happened to us. Lessons from the Torah and from the haftara.

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Over the years, we've presented many Gimatriya Matches or Gimatriya Twins, as we have named them. These are p'sukim or phrases (sometimes just words) that have the same numeric value as another pasuk, phrase or word - which leads to a point to make. These gimatriyas are not meant to "prove" anything or to "invent" a new idea. They are meant to point to a thought and often serve as the "cherry on the top of the ice cream sundae" or "the icing on the cake" or whatever other expression you choose. Parshat Balak has yielded more than its share of GMs (or GTs).

Here's an example from Parshat Balak:

Bil'am's plan included the offering of many sacrifices to G-d. These were meant to find favor in G-d's eyes so that Bil'am would be able to curse

Bnei Yisrael, and to weaken G-d's feelings for us, to further aid his plan.

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלָעָם אֶל-בָּלָק בְּנֵה-לִי בָזֵה לְעֹלֵה מִזְבְּחוֹת וְהִבֵּן לִי בָזֵה לְעֹלֵה פָרִים וְשִׁבְעָה אִילִים: בַּמִּדְבָּר כָּאֵל

"And Bil'am said to Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams."

Seven altars, seven bulls, seven rams.

They did that three times!

But we have protection from Bil'am in the form of korbanot that we would be bringing in the Beit HaMikdash. A vaccine against Bil'am's plot.

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת-אֶחָד מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹלֵת עֹזֶן: בַּמִּדְבָּר כַּחֲטוּ

"And one kid of the goats for a sin offering to G-d shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and its drink offering."

We will be offering in the Beit HaMikdash, daily T'midim and communal sin offerings on Rosh Chodesh and Chagim. That is our inoculation against Bil'am's sacrifices.

These two p'sukim are Gimatriya Twins.

[The term vaccine is appropriate here because the word is related to cow - or here, the animal sacrifices.]

Divrei Menachem

Parshat Balak describes the attempts of the wicked soothsayer Bil'am to curse the Jewish people on behalf of Balak, the King of Mo'av. Despite his seemingly righteous comments to Balak's messengers ("I will answer you as G-d instructs me" and then, "G-d will not let me go with you" [Bamidbar 22:8,12]), our rabbis tell us that all of Bil'am's initial positive references to G-d represented but manipulative posturing for his own benefit.

For the Talmud tells us that Bil'am truly lived up to his name - BLI AM - a person, "without a nation", loyal to none - not even to G-d. In contrast to Avraham who is described as having a, "good eye, a humble spirit, and a submissive soul", Bil'am is described as one with, "an evil eye, an arrogant spirit, and a greedy soul" (Avot 5:22).

Bil'am's evil eye corresponds to jealousy; his arrogance to the pursuit of glory; and his greedy soul to the gratification of base desires. So when Bil'am announced that he "would not go with you" [the original messengers], the important part was the insinuation that he would go with more prestigious messengers bearing more expensive presents - and not that he was forbidden (by G-d) to go on the mission at all.

So do our detractors defy us. And although, we live in the 21st century, beware! For the spirit of Bil'am lives on.

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *May one spray whipped cream from a canister on Shabbat?*

ANSWER: Answer: First, let us understand what happens. When gas goes into a fatty substance (like whipping cream), the fat traps much of it, causing it to fluff up and coalesce. Whipped cream canisters contain pressurized nitrous oxide. Pressing their button does two things more or less at the same instant: forces gas into the fatty liquid; forces the contents out of the canister. There are several possible grounds, some stronger than others, upon which to base a prohibition. After a quick review, we will present a practical answer.

Arguably, combining two substances so that they form a mixture that is different in texture than each one separately is lisha (kneading) (see Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 11: (124)). However, trapping a gas (even if in unnoticeably small pockets) inside a liquid so that it turns into foam is different enough from classic lisha for it to be difficult to forbid without classical sources.

Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (11:31) prohibits hand-whipping cream for a few reasons. One is related to the scrambling of eggs, which is forbidden because it is usually a step in the cooking process. While one can argue whether or not this applies to whipping cream, the process is totally different

when done by pressing the button on a canister.

Recent poskim discuss creating seltzer/soda on Shabbat, where a somewhat significant change occurs to a liquid by inserting a gas. While some poskim object to it for creating something new (see Maharsham I, 140), the most realistic problem is *uvdin d'chol* (weekday-like activities, in this case, of producing things). While this might apply to the process of inserting a gas canister and fastening a machine to make soda (or the similar device for cream), it is hard to apply it to using a pre-prepared canister, which the average user sees as simply dispensing.

The most serious issue is *molid*, creating a new reality by changing the phase of an object. The *baraita* (Shabbat 51b) forbids crushing ice and snow. Rashi explains that it is like a *melacha*, in that one creates something new, i.e., a liquid from a solid. Some say that, similarly, one may not turn a liquid into a solid, e.g., freeze water to make ice cubes (see *Doveiv Meisharim I*, 55). We dealt with this issue in *Hemdat Yamim* (Miketz 5767), and cited strong grounds for leniency. *Orchot Shabbat* (15:(45)) says that even those who forbid making ice cubes could permit spraying whipped cream from a canister because the only purpose of the cream in the canister is to be turned into whipped cream. On the other hand, here one actively and directly, with the press of the button, creates the foam, as opposed to putting

water in a freezer, which only provides a cold setting for the slow process of freezing to begin (see *Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata* 10:(14)). However, Rav Mordechai Willig told me another reason for leniency: the change, from a thick liquid to a foam, is not enough to be considered *molid*.

While one can make the argument that it is forbidden to spray whipped cream from its canister, common practice is to permit it. Since we have shown the halachic basis for the practice, we do not feel it is necessary to change it. (We have not dealt with the issue of using the cream to write words or make likenesses of specific objects.)

Rav Daniel Mann, Eretz Hemdah Institute

CHIZUK AND IDUD
*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

At times I hear it said or I read that Israel should pay no attention to what other nations think of us. A verse from our parsha is cited as "proof": HEN AM L'VADAD YISHKON UVAGOYIM LO YITCHASHAV, interpreted to mean that we should isolate ourselves from world-opinion and not take other nations into consideration. This interpretation cannot claim to be anything like the "official" view of Judaism. The mainstream interpretation of this verse has it referring to the continued existence of the Jewish people, while other nations can be destroyed.

Typical is the *Midrash Rabbah* which interprets the verse to refer to Jewish loyalty to God: HEN AM L'VADAD YISHKON - We alone are loyal to God: UVAGOYIM LO YITCHASHAV, interpreted to mean that therefore we are never under consideration when it comes to Divine judgments of destroying nations. The *Yalkut Shimoni* interprets UVAGOYIM LO YITCHASHAV to mean that God judges us differently than He does Gentile nations.

I have not found a classical source that interprets our verse as an endorsement of not taking other nations into account in our thinking. Even if there might be such a source, it would not be the Torah view by any means. Anyone who uses the verse in this way does so in his own name or in the name of Ben-Gurion, but not in the name of the Torah.

The fact that we cannot be destroyed does not remove our obligation to engage in international politics with wisdom, including taking the views of other nations into account, so that we inflict as little damage on ourselves as possible, short of destruction. We must act responsibly to do all we can for the continued flourishing of the *yishuv* in Eretz Yisrael. May God bless our best efforts with success.

Yehuda Gellman, BGU

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

BALAK

"Balaam and Dostoevsky"

Frustration. Disillusionment. But also insight and a lifelong intellectual perspective. That is how I would describe the experience I am about to share with you, dear reader.

It all started with Dostoevsky. That's right, Fyodor Dostoevsky, the famous 19th century Russian novelist, author of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*... and much more. His works were strangely not part of the curriculum of the high school I attended. I came to his writing on my own.

How impressed I was! Here was a writer who really plumbed the depths of the human psyche. He grappled, not only with profound moral issues, but with questions of existential religious significance.

I vividly remember reading *Notes from the Underground*, astounded by the fact that a gentile author, living in Czarist Russia, had so much to say to a Brooklyn yeshiva boy.

And then I learned a bit about Dostoevsky's background. I was stunned to discover that this perceptive, sensitive and gifted man was... a vicious anti-Semite. I had great difficulty in reconciling

the discrepancy between the art - sophisticated and empathic; and the author, full of primitive hatred, which I experienced as aimed at me. After all, my ancestors lived in the towns and villages he describes - and not long ago!

I experienced this disillusionment time and time again in subsequent years. In college, I became enamored with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, who was often acclaimed as the greatest thinker of the 20th century. Then I learned of his support for the Nazi regime, and I could no longer bring myself to even open his books.

This experience was repeated later in my education when I became familiar with the psychology of Carl Jung, only to discover his complicated relationship with Jews and Judaism, and his pro-Nazi sentiments. What an exhaustive list of gifted men who possessed such talent when it came to humanity, yet who were so absurdly tainted by their active aversion to our people. It extends back in time to Martin Luther, persists through the music of Wagner and the history of Toynbee, and is certainly not lacking for contemporary examples.

Truth be told, the list goes back even further, to this week's Torah portion, Parshat Balak, and the extraordinary and fascinating man named Balaam. If there is one lesson to learn from this week's

narrative of Balaam and his encounter with the Jewish people, it is this: A man can be a universally acclaimed spiritual leader, and a gifted poet and orator with prophetic powers almost identical to those of Moses, and simultaneously be a vile anti-Semite, capable of genocidal schemes.

Read this week's parsha very carefully, for there is an essential message in it. The message is that we dare not assume that we need only fear anti-Semitism at the hands of maniacs, fanatics, or ignoramuses. Quite the contrary! Sophisticated, educated and highly cultured individuals can also detest us and conspire to destroy us.

This is the lesson of the Holocaust. True, Hitler was hardly an intellectual or artistic giant. But his evil genius lay in his ability to realize that the most advanced civilization in the history of the world would eagerly abide by his murderous vision. He knew how this was just the veneer of German art, literature, philosophy and, yes, religion.

In terms of this week's Torah portion, he knew what Balak knew: That there are individuals with:

- Strong religious commitments: "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do anything small, or great." (Bamidbar 22:18);
- A direct spiritual channel to the Divine: "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto

him..." (22:20)

• Inventive skills sufficient to create a phrase which we ourselves adopted to preface our daily prayers: "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob..." (24:5).

But in actuality, they are no more than "hired guns", and beneath the façade of the "gentleman" lies the "agreement" to discriminate, persecute, murder and exterminate an entire people.

It is a difficult lesson to accept. But our history has long established its deep-rooted veracity and its urgency, clearly based upon the story we read this Shabbat.

Praying with Passion

Giving more meaning to our T'fillah •
One Week at a Time
Excerpted and reprinted with permission of the author

Hal'li Nafshi In G-d We Trust

אֵל תִּבְטְחוּ בַנְּדִיבִים, בְּכֵן אָדָם
שְׂאִין לוֹ תְּשׁוּעָה. תִּצַּא רוּחוֹ יֹשֵׁב
לְאֲדָמְתוֹ, כִּיּוֹם הֵהוּא אָבְדוֹ עֲשָׂתְנוֹתָיו.
אֲשֶׁרֵי שְׂאֵל יַעֲקֹב בְּעֶזְרוֹ, שִׁבְרוֹ עַל ה'
אֱלֹהֵיוֹ.

Meaning: translation...

**Do not rely on nobles,
nor on a human being,**

for he holds no salvation.

When his spirit departs he returns to his earth, on that day his plans all perish. Praiseworthy is one whose help is Yaakov's G-d, whose hope is in Hashem, his G-d.

Theme:

An essential concept of the prayer

One Salvation

The Jewish people cannot count on allies and rulers, but only on Hashem, for its protection.

Insight: Deeper meanings...

Who Is Fighting Our War?

There are two wars mentioned in Parshat B'shalach - the war against the Egyptians at Yam Suf and the war against Amalek. The Ibn Ezra observes that the war with Amalek demonstrates that G-d was prepared to allow the Jewish people to fight a real military battle on their own -- albeit with Divine Assistance. Why, then, in the war against Egypt, was the entire battle waged solely by the Hand of G-d? In fact, in all future wars, including the wars of Yehoshua and

📖 When we settle down into a plush easy chair and place our back against its back and our arms upon its arms, there is a danger of our coming to feel that its plush back is somehow our back, and its long, impressive arms, our arms, and, in general, all of its grand dignity, our dignity.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

the wars of King David, the Jews were obliged to participate in battle. Why was the war with Egypt different?

Rav Yosef Neiman suggests that the first time that something happens in the Torah it is the prototype for all future occurrences. G-d wanted the Jewish people to know that just as in the very first battle, when G-d waged war for them, His mercy would always be the determining factor in our victories, even when we are physically involved in the battle. If it is G-d's will, we will be victorious, regardless of our military performance. And if, Heaven forbid, as we find in numerous cases in Tanach, it is not G-d's will, we will lose regardless of our military prowess. The determinant of our fate is whether we possess the merit for G-d to make us successful.

We live in an ever-changing, frightening time in the Middle East. Although the Jewish nation currently has a top-notch army, the latest missiles and defense systems which will certainly be used to defend itself, we should never put our faith in the wizardry of military might - AL TIVT'CHU VINDIVIM, B'VEN ADAM SHE-EIN LO T'SHU'A. We must put our faith only in the Master of the World. Ultimately, it must be our prayers, our charity, our learning Torah - all our merits which determine our success. (Adapted from Rabbi Frand on B'shalach, 5761)

Visualize:

Images that bring the prayer to life

The Bumper Lane

A group of five-year-olds went bowling as part of their friend's birthday celebration. To enable them to enjoy some success, the birthday boy's father requested that a set of automated bumpers be raised on the alley his group was to use. The bumpers were metal barriers which ran along the each side of the lane, preventing the bowling balls from falling into the gutters, and thus guaranteeing that each child would score.

The children were ecstatic at their incredible performance. Bowling pins were dropping left and right. The scores were mounting higher and higher. "I really know how to bowl now!" one boy told his mother when she came to pick him up from the party.

Like these children, we are deluded with our own strength and savvy. In reality, if we merit Hashem's help, He erects the "bumpers" and lets us score. Without the "bumpers", we become the devastated witnesses to what we can accomplish on our own, without His help, which is in effect, nothing at all. Our diplomacy, military strategies, political moves and alliances are worth nothing unless Hashem puts up the "bumpers" for us and enables us to savor the sweet taste of victory.

The Puah Institute

for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

Who is a Peti?

Last week we compared the shoteh with the peti. The shoteh is a psychotic individual, one who acts consistently in a strange manner and is irresponsible. He or she is, therefore, exempt from observing the commandments. We have already seen a difference of opinion as to whether he is permitted to perform mitzvot and if he does so, he receives a Divine reward.

The peti is a different case, he, or she, is obliged in the performance of mitzvot. The peti is an individual with limited intelligence. The Rambam writes that a complete peti is considered on an equal halachic level with the shoteh. The complete peti is one who has no comprehension at all and is like a small child who cannot be relied upon to show any sort of responsibility or understanding. However a peti who has a limited understanding is obliged in mitzvot.

While the Talmud gives no exact level of intelligence required to be obliged in the mitzvot, the Gemara (Gittin 59a) does speak about the level of intelligence of a child. A child can be relied upon to buy and sell in the marketplace and the Gemara asks from what age is this the case? Several answers are given; six or seven, seven or eight, nine or ten. The Gemara concludes that there is no actual argument between these different ages but each case is judged according to his own sharpness. One child may be very mature and intelligent at the age of six or seven, while another only exhibits these same qualities at the age of nine or ten.

This source can guide us when asking the question of the intelligence level of the peti. A person with limited intelligence who has the intelligence level of a child of ten is obliged in the mitzvot and is obligated to procreate as well. This was the opinion of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l.

However, the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rav Eliyahu Bakshi Doron wrote that intelligence alone cannot be sufficient to oblige him in the observance of the commandments. In addition he must show a level of responsibility. It is not only a question of IQ but also how dependable he or she is. This is the possible meaning behind the Talmud's explanation that each child must be judged by his sharpness, i.e. not only how well he does on a comprehension test, but how he holds himself in the marketplace and how sharp he is in business, how accountable and responsible he is.

According to this opinion, the peti must show both intelligence and responsibility in order to be obliged in the mitzvot.

Is this the same for all the commandments? What about their ability to have children?

We will discuss this next week.

Excerpted with permission from **Gold from the Land of Israel**

Tents and Dwelling Places

Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. 1, pp. 42-43

The evil prophet Balaam wanted to curse the people of Israel, but instead found himself blessing them, "How goodly are your tents, Jacob; your dwelling places, Israel" (Bamidbar 24:5). Is the repetition in Balaam's blessing only poetic? Or is there a deeper significance to these two forms of shelter, the ohel (tent) and the mishkan (dwelling place)?

The Journey of the Soul

As we strive for spiritual growth, we make use of two contradictory yet complementary methods. The first method is our aspiration to constantly improve ourselves. We strive to attain greater wisdom and enlightenment. We seek to continually refine the emotions and ennoble the spirit.

The second method is the necessity to restrain our striving for spiritual growth, in order to assimilate changes and guard against spiritual lapses. We want to internalize our spiritual and ethical gains, and maintain our current level. This means that we must curb the desire for growth, so that our ambitions do not overextend the soul's natural capacity for change.

The ohel and the mishkan are both forms of temporary shelter.

Both relate to the soul's upwards

journey. However, they differ in a significant aspect. The ohel is inherently connected to the state of traveling. It corresponds to the aspiration for constant change and growth.

The mishkan is also part of the journey, but it is associated with the rests between travels. It is the soul's sense of calm, its rest from the constant movement, for the sake of the overall mission.

Surprisingly, it is the second method that is the loftier of the two.

The desire to change reflects a lower-level fear, lest we stagnate and deteriorate. Therefore, the blessing mentions tents first, together with the name Jacob, the first and embryonic name of the Jewish people. The need to stop and rest, on the other hand, stems from a higher-level fear, lest we over-shoot the appropriate level for the soul. For this reason, the blessing mentions mishkan together with the name Israel, Jacob's second and holier name.

In any case, both aspects are required in order to achieve stable spiritual growth. Balaam's prophetic blessing praises the balanced union of "How goodly are your tents, Jacob", the soul's longing for change, together with the more restful state of "your dwelling places, Israel", restricting growth in order to avoid unchecked advancement, thus enabling the soul to properly absorb all spiritual attainments.

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WISDOM & WIT
by Shmuel Himelstein

The Alter of Slobodka, R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel, had a highly developed sense of what each student of his needed, as the following story illustrates.

At one time, two friends were studying in Slobodka, one a great masmid - a person who is very diligent in his Torah learning - with the other the exact opposite, given to being easily distracted and only with great difficulty being coerced into learning.

R' Nosson Tzvi treated them entirely differently: He almost demonstratively ignored the Masmid, while lavishing a great deal of attention on the other student. The first student found this very disturbing, but did not say a word. He bided his time, and waited for an opportunity to let the Rosh Yeshiva know his feelings.

The opportunity came when the first student lost his father. R' Nosson Tzvi came to visit the student, and the student, in his great grief, complained bitterly of the way R' Nosson Tzvi had treated him throughout, especially in light of how he had treated his friend.

"What I did," said R' Nosson Tzvi, "was to give each of you the treatment you needed. I knew that you were growing into a fine Torah scholar, and if you ever came to me to tell me of a new Torah thought you had come up with, it was to receive praise from me

for that thought. Had I praised you, you would have become conceited. By ignoring you, I enabled you to become a Torah scholar without totally inappropriate conceit.

"Your friend, on the other hand, was always looking for a way to avoid learning Torah. I needed to use every wile and stratagem to keep him interested in learning, and that meant praising every single Torah thought he told me, inviting him to my house, etc."

A look at BALAK from OzTorah

Lonely or alone?

The dialogue between Balak and Bilam is one of the great stories of Biblical literature. The ruler wants to hire the prophet; the prophet plays hard to get. The bargaining process is similar to the business or political negotiations with which our own age is familiar. You refuse point blank to discuss the matter. You bang on the table. You walk out. You let yourself be persuaded to come back into the room. Eventually you strike a deal. Both sides get less than their first demands, both grumble, but both know they are not likely to do any better. Balak and Bilam are not the founders of Biblical negotiation - that distinction is probably reserved for Abraham and the Hittites (B'reishit 23) - but their dialogue is still highly instructive.

What do we make of Bilam's action at one point, where VAYELECH SHEFI -

“he went to a bare height” (Bamidbar 23:3)? This is the translation of the lexicographers, but the general Jewish view is, as the Targum puts it, “he went off alone”; as Rashi says, “nothing was with him except silence”. Nathan Marcus Adler, author of the Netina LaGer, a commentary on Targum Onkelos, explains, “He went off in solitude to think with a clear mind”. People involved in decision-making need to get away to think things through, and this is what Bilam must have done. But yet there is a Biblical verse that seems to give diametrically opposite advice, when God declares, “It is not good for a person to be alone” (B'reishit 2:18). How then are we to react to Bilam's apparently deliberate choice of aloneness?

The answer is, of course, that there are some kinds of aloneness which are not good, and some which are. Most people would say there are two kinds of aloneness, voluntary and involuntary, but in fact there is a third type, existential aloneness. The Swiss philosopher Henri Frederic Amiel said, “In all the chief matters of life we are alone: we dream alone, we suffer alone, we die alone”. Others may be with us at all these moments, but each of these existential experiences is ours alone.

Bilam's aloneness is voluntary. Like him, sometimes we all need to choose to withdraw in order to think. And there are other times also to choose to be alone. As Pirkei Avot says, “In a

place where there are no men, you be a man” (Avot 2:5). In a situation in which no-one has the courage to stand up and speak up, to be a mensch, to be worthy of the name human, I have to be that person... even if I stand alone and if, like Abraham our father, all the world is on one side and I am on the other.

THERE'S NOWHERE I'D RATHER BE!

Shabbat Cola

There are two opinions as to the bracha for lighting Chanuka candles - L'HADLIK NER SHEL CHANUKA and L'HADLIK NER CHANUKA. The former wording is similar to the brachot for Shabbat and Yom Tov candles. The latter wording is missing the word SHEL.

Commentaries offer an explanation for the second opinion. (The first opinion probably doesn't need a reason, since it conforms to the standard wording.)

Candles for Shabbat are candles that one lights in honor of Shabbat. But they are “regular” candles, nonetheless. They give light and warmth, just like candles do. Yom Tov candles can be used to light one's stove. Or other candles.

Not so Chanuka candles. We have no permission to use them as candles; they are exclusively to be seen. They

really aren't regular candles - they are Chanuka candles, NER CHANUKA. Shabbat candles are candles for Shabbat - NER SHEL SHABBAT.

Jews all over the world buy flowers for Shabbat. They go into a florist shop and buy flowers, which they use in honor of Shabbat. But in Israel, we buy Shabbat flowers. Shops sell Shabbat flowers. Sidewalk and roadside stands spring up every Friday and Erev Chag to sell flowers just for Shabbat. Many of the sellers will hand you your flowers and say: LICHVOD SHABBAT KODESH. There is a qualitative difference between flowers for Shabbat and Shabbat flowers.

And now there is Shabbat Coca Cola. For a long time, Jews have been buying Coca Cola and other soft drinks to enhance their Shabbat and Yom Tov meals. That involved going to a store or placing an order for delivery of soda - with the intention of serving and drinking it on Shabbat.

But here's the difference. Coca Cola Israel has recently put onto the market, Shabbat Coke. The cardboard carton that holds a sextuplet of bottles is imprinted with the words, “Packaging that is completely for Oneg Shabbat”. The labels on the bottles have a picture of Lechem Mishna covered by a Challa cover, a pair of candlesticks, a Kiddush cup, and the legend, “Coca Cola is happy to be a part in your Oneg Shabbat each week anew. Shabbat Shalom”.

As an added bonus, part of the carton

is the gameboard for a special Shabbat game that comes with a 6-pack.

Does the drink inside the bottle taste the same as other samples of Coca Cola? Physically, probably yes.

But does cholent on Shabbat taste the same as the same dish made on a Wednesday? No way. The spirit of Shabbat is the secret spice that makes cholent the unique Shabbat dish. And now, Coca Cola in Israel has another secret ingredient to its famous secret formula.

Is Shabbat Coke reason enough to make Aliya? Not by itself. But it serves as a reminder of what this country is. It is a Jewish state with Shabbat as the national day of rest. It is a Jewish state which opens its arms to Jews from all over the world to return to where Jews were meant to live.

When you see the sign across the top of an approaching bus alternate between its route number and destination on one the one hand, and greetings for a Shana Tova, G'mar Chatima Tova, Chag Samei'ach - as the case may be, as the other message, then you smile and realize that there is no place you'd rather live.

When those same buses request that you offer a seat to the elderly with the words from Parshat K'doshim: MIPNEI SEIVA TAKUM, then you know you are where you are supposed to be.

And when a bottle of soda wishes you Shabbat Shalom... you know that you are home.

A FENCE ON EITHER SIDE

Balaam got up early in the morning, saddled his female donkey and went with the Moabite dignitaries in order to curse Israel. G-d displayed anger because Balaam was so anxious to go, and an angel of G-d planted himself in the road, on Balaam's way, to oppose him.

When the donkey saw G-d's angel standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, the donkey went aside from the road into the field. Balaam beat the donkey to get it back on the road. G-d's angel then stood in a narrow path through the vineyards, where there was a fence on either side. When the donkey saw G-d's angel, it edged over to the side, crushing Balaam's foot against the wall and making him lame. (Bamidbar 22:21-25)

Rashi on verse 24, GADER MIZEH V'GADER MIZEH - "a fence on either side" states that this was a simple stone wall. Why is it so important for us to know that this wall that Balaam's leg was crushed up against was actually a stone wall? Why would Rashi, who is very succinct, find it necessary to tell us this bit of information?

In TOLDOT YITCHAK it explains that when Yaakov left Laban's house he made a covenant with

Laban. He took a boulder and raised it as a pillar - GAL ED - witness mound (B'reishit 31:47). Laban said "The mound shall be a witness, and the pillar shall be a witness. I am not to go beyond the mound with bad intentions..."

Balaam was the great-grandson of Laban the Aramean. He was the first one to break this covenant by going on his way to do evil to Israel. Therefore, the rocks were going to take revenge against him - as the verse says in (D'varim 17:7), YAD HA-EIDIM TIHYEH BO VARI-SHONA... - "the hand of the witness shall be against him first...". The rocks which had been a witness to the covenant between Yaakov and Laban were the first ones to punish Balaam. The donkey pushed Balaam's foot up against the rocks of the fence and they broke his leg.

This simple line of Rashi teaches us so much about Divine retribution.

Potato, potahto... Muffin, mahfin, mufin...

Last week's MicroUlpan

was the new Hebrew word for muffin. We did not have the space to explain it, and people were left with the impression that it was simply a Hebrewized pronunciation of the English word.

It's more than that.

We start with a pasuk in Vayikra, 6:14 to be specific.

לֶלֶךְ מִזֵּיֶמֶת בְּשֶׁמֶן תִּלְשֶׁה מִרְבֵּקֶת
תִּבְיָאֵה תִפְיָו מִזֵּיֶמֶת פְּתִים תִּקְרִיב
רִישׁ-זֵיזוֹ כֹּה׃

"In a pan it shall be made with oil; and when it is baked, you shall bring it in; and the **BAKED PIECES** of the meal offering shall you offer for a sweet savor to HaShem.

TUFINEI means the baked pieces of...

TUFIN is a baked item; TUFINIM are baked items.

[There is a bake shop on Emek Refa'im called TUFINEI and it has the above pasuk on its sign. (Informational; no endorsement implied.)]

From TUFIN(IM) the Academiya L'Lashon Halvrit made a play on words and "created" the Hebrew word MUFIN (that's MOO as in cow-talk, and FIN, which rhymes with keen - with the accent on the FIN) for muffin. People will probably continue to say MAH-FIN, but it's nice to know that the Academiya has a Biblical attitude towards words, as well as a light-hearted play on words.

The Jerusalem Institute of Jewish Law

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 566 (part one)

Partnerships

Many years ago we had a few lessons that discussed the formation and running a business as a partnership. The question has by coincidence come up a few times among the member of our kolel and among some of the men in our synagogue. I told one of the men to go to his rabbi and consult with him. He went and the rabbi called me to get some of the details of forming a partnership according to halacha. The parties are best advised to organize a partnership by complying with the laws of the land and also halachically by making a kinyan. The parties can generally agree to almost any terms that comply with the laws of the land with the only exception being when it contravenes certain halachot. The agreement can specifically state that it shall be governed by the halacha or any other set of laws that the parties agree upon, such as the laws of the State of Israel. Their agreement may be oral or in writing. It may contain all of the terms or only some of the terms. Even if the partnership agreement is in writing it may be amended orally. The parties can terminate the agreement even before the date set forth in the agreement. Assume that both Reuven and Shimon live in Arizona and wish

to form a partnership that is to be in the business of selling merchandise in a fair in China. The goods are supplied by Reuven in California and taken by a ship to China to be sold there. They are to divide the profits evenly. While the goods are on the ship the price of the merchandise falls. The entire loss in value is to be borne by Reuven since the partnership will commence when the goods arrive in China. That is, unless the parties agree otherwise in advance. If the price rises before the goods arrive in China, the gain will be Reuven's. If the partnership agreement provides that the partners will invest certain sums or will invest the money as required, and Reuven fails to so invest, Shimon may bring an action in Beit Din to compel Reuven to so invest or terminate the partnership. The investment of the partners may be in money or in a thing that the parties consider to be the equivalent of money. The parties may stipulate any division of profits and losses as they please. For example, they may agree that Reuven who has invested 100 shekels should receive 80% of the profits and bear 15% of the losses, while Shimon who has invested 200 shekels should receive 20% of the profits and bear 85% of the losses. If they do so agree, there is a presumption they did so to take into account their respective business talents and other factors. In the foregoing example Reuven obviously has more to offer the partnership than Shimon in the way of talent. This assumes that both Reuven and Shimon will work the same hours for the partnership.

ParshaPix explanations

- Upper-left is part of one of the very first ParshaPixPuzzles of years ago. There is a BLOCK (sounds like BALAK) in a nest, which makes it BLOCK BEN TZIPOR
- Globe wearing an eye patch. Balak said that Israel was so numerous that we covered EIN HAARETZ, the eye of the Earth (as does the patch in that graphic)
- Messengers from Moav came to Bil'am with K'SAMIM B'YADAM, represented by the magic trick in the hand
- Bil'am's donkey saw the sword drawn in the angel's hand; Bil'am did not see it at first (or second or third)
- When the donkey talks to Bil'am, she asks him why he has hit her these three REGALIM, three times. Commentaries point out that it doesn't say P'AMIM, three times, but rather uses the word that refers to our cycle of holidays and to the People who observe them. The angel repeats the reference to SHALOSH REGALIM. The speech-bubble for the donkey contains the question (mark) about the three festivals, represented by the Lulav, Matza, and Torah
- Chicago basketball player, one of the BULLS and a St. Louis football

player, one of the RAMS. Bulls and rams, 7 of each, (hence their jersey numbers) were repeatedly offered as sacrifices by Bil'am and Balak

- Clapping hands - a representation of Balak striking his hands together in disgust at Bil'am's repeated failure to do as requested. VAYISPOK. A unique word in Tanach (appearing nowhere else)
- The Xed out snake is also from Bil'am's words, that there is no NACHASH in Yaakov. His meaning is that we do not rely on omens
- A "house filled with money" - sort of what Balak told Bil'am that he missed out on by not uttering one teeny weeny curse
- The shul in the lower-left corner reminds us of the famous MA TOVU OHALECHA YAAKOV...
- Lying across the bottom of the ParshaPix is the ROMACH, the spear that Pinchas used to protect G-d's honor
- The river of oil from the pitcher is mentioned in the haftara
- On the reverse side of a US dollar bill is a picture of the Great Seal: A pyramid with an all-seeing eye on top. Sometimes called the enlightened eye. Bil'am calls himself the man with SH'TUM HA-AYIN. Living Torah offers these translations: enlightened, future-seeing, seeing, open, true-sighted, sleepless, evil, dislocated, blinded.

- In the upper-right corner of the ParshaPix is a MEM, representing the MEM that is at the upper-right corner of the column in the Torah that starts with MA TOVU OHALECHA YAAKOV... What is remarkable about this MEM is that there is a Scribal Tradition that six specific columns in the Torah (out of 245 or so) need to start at a specific point in the text. All other columns are flexible, in a sense, and the exact beginning of each column will vary from Sofer to Sofer. (Actually, today's Sifrei Torah are written by copying from photocopies of a small number of existing Sifrei Torah whose writing is considered particularly good. So there is more uniformity from Torah to Torah - more than would be expected from the Tradition we're talking about.) This Tradition clashes a bit with another Tradition that each column begin with a VAV. This is a standard feature of most Sifrei Torah today, although it is only six specific columns that "must" begin the same way. Of the six, one starts with a VAV anyway, leaving 5 of about 245 columns that do not start with a VAV. One is the first column, which starts with the big BET of B'REISHIT. The MEM in Balak is another. The mnemonic device is B'KAH SH'MO
- The lion cub is mentioned in Bil'am's description of the people of Israel - "Behold, the people will arise like a lion cub and raise itself like a lion..." (Bamidbar 23:24) and "He crouched

and lay down like a lion, and, like a lion cub - who can stand up to him?" (24:9)

- ET is for ITI, with me. The occurs 52 times in Tanach and brings to mind the extraterrestrial who wanted to phone home. Balak asks Bil'am to go with him to another vantage point and see the Israelite camp.
- The Shofar and crown go together and represent the pasuk, Bamidbar 23:21, in which Bil'am proclaims, "He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen perverseness in Israel; HaShem his God is with him, and the TRUMPET BLAST OF A KING (UTRU'AT MELECH) is among them."
- Below the crown on the right side is CHEF-E, as in SHEFI, from 23:3. It has the meaning of He went alone
- In the lower right is another BALAK, a ben TZIPOR, that is. A baby bird is a BEN TZIPOR; so was BALAK.
- The name of the ZIM shipping company comes from Parshat Balak (Bamidbar 24:24): "V'TZIM, large ships shall come from the ports of the Kittim, and they will lay waste Assyria and Eber..."
- The dragon is the girlfriend and then wife of Donkey... rival of the ATON
- SHE'EIRIS, mentioned in the haftara

THE CHALLENGE OF MONEY: "Your brother shall live with you" [5] by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

All our sources, halacha, aggada, philosophy and Torah commentators alike, clearly recognize that society has an obligation to protect and support its poor and weak members, a recognition that throughout the ages was expressed in the enactments of the Kehilot in all the countries. At the same time, they provide guidelines as to what constitutes the Torah's commandment of providing all the needs of the poor, 'dei machsoro', and also who is eligible to receive these benefits. This recognizes that societies, like individuals, have limited resources and, what is no less important, that perpetuating a 'welfare mentality' creates spiritual and material evils. The egoism of S'dom merited that society's destruction but the policy of 'bread and circuses' led just as inevitably to the downfall of Imperial Rome. Justice demands that individual Jews and the community meet their holy obligations but justice also demands that these holy funds not be abused.

We do not find in the Jewish charitable system anything approaching the incomes policy of modern welfare thinking that considers tzedaka as an egalitarian device intended to transfer wealth. Rather, "it is not the obligation of the householder to enrich the poor, only to support him" (Mishneh Torah, Matnot Aniyim 7: 3). The Rambam continues to limit recourse to the communal funds to those who do not

have 14 meals for the week and the tamchui [daily food funds] to those not having 2 meals for that day. Likewise, peah-leket-shikhacha, the agricultural gifts were permitted only to those with idle equity less than 200 zuz or active capital of 50 zuz [assumed to provide income sufficient for basic necessities]. These means tests require the poor, like any other creditor, to prove their eligibility. In real life, there is a ranking of needs so there has to be a ranking of the tests; for example, claims for clothing need proof whereas one who says 'I need food', we give him immediately without questioning". It is true that modern authorities like the Orech HaShulchan rule that these limitations, as well as others like those, defining basic necessities as half a loaf twice a day or providing a rug to sleep on, related to those early times, whereas today charitable needs have to be defined at a higher level. However, this does not negate the fundamental idea that charity is meant only to grant necessities, nor does it refute the validity of a means test in Judaism. To rule otherwise would be unjust even though it would save the poor from the shame of convincing others of his needs.

Proponents of universal welfare argue that in order to spare the feelings of the poor recipients, benefits should be available equally to all. In other words, food, education, health or transport when subsidized by the public purse should benefit both the poor who need to be assisted and the wealthy people who can quite easily fend for themselves. Means tests mean that the poor

and needy are helped in those area that they need it; people are supported - not services or products. Removing shame from receiving charity through universal benefits, makes living off welfare normal and an entitlement of the recipient instead of an obligatory mitzva of the giver; "shame is the price the poor pay for receiving charity" (Chatam Sofer). Not only can no society provide everyone with everything they need or want, but such norms make universal welfare grow until it becomes too large for society to fund out of its tax revenues. Social discord or tax revolt occur breaking down the welfare system, if not the society itself.

Irrespective of who receives tzedaka, how much they receive and how it is funded, care must always be taken to remember the spiritual and religious nature and significance which it has in a Torah ideology. This will do much to prevent welfare and tzedaka both from being mere bureaucratic soullessness of the giver and from fraud or exploitation by the recipients. Rambam links giving charity to the objects offered to Bet HaMikdash: "All the things that one consecrates to G-d should be of the best and most beautiful. If one builds a shul for prayer, it should be more dignified and beautiful than the house in which he lives; when he feeds the hungry, he must give them the best and sweetest food which he serves at his own table; and when he clothes the naked, it should be with the finest of his own clothes" (Issurei Mizbei'ach 1:11).



Last issue's (CHUKAT) TTTriddles:

[1] **oil:cow = 2:1**

V'YIKCHU EILECHA... and you shall take to yourself... occurs in all of Tanach only three times. In Parshat Chukat, the command is to take a PARA ADUMA. Previously in the Torah - in Parshat T'zaveh and in Parshat Emor - the command is to take olive oil for the Menora. The ratio of oil to cow is two to one.

[2] **Can Har HaZeitim be Maale Adumim?**

The PARA ADUMA was brought to the hilltop opposite Har HaBayit across the Kidron valley to part of Har HaZeitim, the Mount of Olives. That's where it was slaughtered, prepared and burned. In bringing the RED cow to the HEIGHT of Har HaZeitim, might we nickname it MAALE ADUMIM?

[3] **Shortest Rosh Chodesh roll**

A TTtriddle that will lead to a bigger thing. First, the Rosh Chodesh roll. No, it isn't a LACHMANIYA in honor of Rosh Chodesh. Here's the story. When there are readings from two different places in the Torah, there are two ways to handle the situation. We can take out two Torahs - preferably each prepared with the proper location of the reading, or we can use one Torah, read the first reading and then roll the Torah scroll to the

second reading's location. If a shul has more than one Torah, the standard practice is to use one Torah for each reading (two or three, as the case may be). This was the decision made a long time ago, with the official reason being the avoidance of TIRCHA D'TZIBURA, burdening the congregation. When a minyan has only one scroll, the rolling solution is all that there is.

For our purposes, we will define the length of a roll by the number of columns skipped over to get from the first to the second reading, not counting the column in which the first reading ends or the second reading begins. We are using the TIKUN of SIMANIM for the counting - numbers might vary very slightly from Torah to Torah. The SIMANIM TIKUN has 245 columns. The Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Maftir is in column 189. Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan can fall on Shabbat Parshat No'ach. No'ach ends in column 12 of the Torah. A roll to Pinchas will need to skip over 176 columns of the Torah scroll. That would be the longest Rosh Chodesh roll. In looking for the shortest Rosh Chodesh roll, the candidates are two. When Rosh Chodesh Tammuz is Shabbat, it can be either on Korach or Chukat. Chukat is closer to the Maftir than Korach is. Aside from CHukat, the only other serious contender is Matot-Mas'ei or Mas'ei alone, which can host Rosh Chodesh Av. Even though the beginning of Matot is very close to the Maftir for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, we must count skipped

columns from the end of Mas'ei rolling back to Pinchas. Mas'ei ends in column 200 and requires skipping over 10 columns to get to UUYOM HASHABBAT. Chukat ends in column 180, requiring a forward roll over 8 columns. We have found the shortest Rosh Chodesh roll: Chukat - Rosh Chodesh Tamuz. Balak. Pinchas, and Matot would all require shorter rolls, but none of those sedras coincide with Rosh Chodesh.

Well, a 176 column-skipping roll certainly takes a while and would produce fidgeting among the congregants. But a short roll like Chukat's would certainly not burden the Tzibur. The answer to the implied question is LO P'LUG. Once the rule is two Torahs for two readings, we do not distinguish from one case to the other.

The bigger picture is to include all Maftir rolls, not just Rosh Chodesh. What's the range from shortest to longest? We'll work on it and IY"H report it in an upcoming issue (or even elsewhere in this issue).

More on Maftir Rolls

The absolute longest Torah Roll is on Simchat Torah between the first and second readings. We conclude the whole Torah (column 245) and would have to skip over 243 columns as we roll to the very beginning of the Torah. This is, in fact, what a minyan with a single Torah scroll has to do on Simchat Torah. And then for Maftir, there is another roll of 188 columns.

Total roll - 431.

[4] **How is Para Aduma like meringue?**

This TTtriddle is a salute to MP. It's corny (but so is he). Main ingredient in meringue is egg whites - and definitely NO YOLK. PARA ADUMA must never have been under a YOKE. Answer: NO YOLK/YOKE.

[5] **Utah instead of Oregon, and mix well**

Parshat Chukat follows Parshat Korach. Take the Oregon (OR) out of KORACH, put Utah (UT) in its place and scramble the letters to get CHUKAT.

[6] **The common lynx without a NY moon**

The common lynx, a.k.a. Eurasian lynx, is the largest of the four extant species of this medium-sized wild cat. Its American cousin is the bobcat. Lynxes have relatively short tails and tufts of black hair on the tips of their ears. But enough about them. We're interested in the words "common lynx". Cross out the letters N, Y, M, O, O, and N and you are left with CMLX. That's Roman numerals for 960, as in TT #960.

[7] **High-four for TT issue #1700**

Remember ALF? The neighbor's nephew Jake once put out his hand and said, "slap me five". ALF's response was, "here's four, I owe you one". ALF had only four fingers on each of his hands. We've got five (as

you well know). It is most probable that our common use of the decimal system of numbers (base ten) is a result of our having 10 fingers and counting on them. Chances are, if we have only four fingers per hand (eight all together), that we would have developed a counting system in base eight. High-four is the congratulatory gesture among eight-fingered people, corresponding to our high-five. In base 8, the number 1700 means one group of 512 and 7 groups of 64, no groups of eights and no units. That's $512+448$ which brings us to issue 960 again.

[8] He did something that his great-great-grandfather had done

He is Moshe Rabeinu. He sent MALACHIM to Edom (to request passage through their territory). His great-great-grandfather was Yaakov Avinu, who sent MALACHIM to his brother Eisav (who is Edom).

[9] Kol HaKavod to Shimon's b'chor

Shimon's firstborn was Y'MU'EIL. He is the "siman" of Chukat because the gimatriya of Y'MU'EIL is $10+40+6+1+30 = 87$, the number of p'sukim in Chukat. Kol HaKavod = $20+30 + 5+20+2+6+4 = 87$.

[10] Three Unexplaineds, all from the haftara of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh

Right below the waterless faucet is a footstool, HADOM in Hebrew. In the opening pasuk of the haftara, Hashem declares the heavens as his chair (throne?) and the earth to be His footstool.

Under the footstool is a computer mouse. The word ACHBAR occurs in the haftara.

Lower-right is a photo of a French One Franc coin. At the recent exchange rate, the value of a French Franc is \$0.216, which is 21.6¢ - which gives us L'VONA (mentioned in the haftara), frankincense (a.k.a. olibanum).

Water boatman

This one cm long insect just took over the title of the loudest animal in the world (relative to body size).

At close to 100dB, it is louder than the NYC subway.

The Blue whale is the loudest animal on an absolute basis

Parsha Points to Ponder BALAK

by Rabbi Dov Lipman

- 1) Why does Moav invoke the imagery of an ox eating up all the crops of the field to describe what will happen when the Jews eat their crops (22:4)?
- 2) Why did Bilaam refer to the Jewish people as THE NATION WHICH IS LEAVING EGYPT in the present tense (22:11) while the people of Moav referred to them as THE NATION WHICH LEFT EGYPT, in the past tense?
- 3) Why does the Torah describe Bilam as RAISING UP HIS EYES to see the Jewish people before blessing them (24:2)? Why wasn't it enough to say AND HE SAW them?

Suggested answers

- 1) Da'at Zekainim Mi Baalei Hatsofot explain that the people of Moav were not simply concerned with the Jews eating their crops. Rather, they knew that the Jews were prohibited from killing them directly per G-D's command. So, they figured the Jews would seek to hurt them through the destruction of their crops - not because they needed them for food but because this would indirectly destroy Moav. This concept was captured through the imagery of the ox walking through and simply destroying the field - not necessarily through eating its food.
- 2) The Kli Yakar teaches that Bilam was trying to bring G-D's wrath upon the Jewish people and he was telling G-D that the way the Jews complain about their desire to return to Egypt and their rebellions against G-D make it as if they are really still there and just about to leave and, therefore, G-D should enable Bilam to curse them.
- 3) The Ohr HaChayim answers that since the Jewish camp was surrounded by the clouds of glory, it was impossible for Bilam to see how the Jews were camped. The only way he could see them was through his prophetic powers as captured by the words RAISED UP HIS EYES.