

J.L.C. Connections

The Jewish Learning Connection's Weekly Newsletter



Parshas Balak

July 15, 2022 / 16 Tammuz 5782

Volume 27, Issue 41

Candlelighting: 8:41 pm

Waxman Torah Center · 2195 S. Green Road · University Heights, OH 44121 · (216) 691-3837 · www.clevelandjlc.com

Friday, July 15

7:00am Shacharis

7:15pm Mincha / Maariv (Early)

8:41pm Candlelighting

8:45pm Mincha / Maariv

Shabbos, July 16

8:45am Shacharis

7:35pm Pirke Avos

8:35pm Mincha / Shalosh Seudos /
Maariv

Sunday, July 17

8:00am Shacharis

9:15am **Parsha Class**
(R. Nisenbaum)

10:00am **"The 613 Mitzvos"**
(R. Stoll)

Monday, July 18

7:00am Shacharis

8:00pm **Climbing the Rainbow:
Anger: In and Out of
Control** (R. Nisenbaum)

Tuesday, July 19

7:00am Shacharis

8:00pm **Pirkei d'Rebbi Elazar**
(R. Stoll)

Wednesday, July 20

7:00am Shacharis

8:00pm **Nach Still Speaks –
Tehillim** (R. Stoll)

Thursday, July 21

7:00am Shacharis

8:00pm **The 12 Jewish Months**
(R. Stoll)

10:15pm **Parsha Class**
(R. Nisenbaum)

Class Connection

R. Nisenbaum:

425-436-6200 #352171

"The Torah Podcast" weekly
at all podcast locations

R. Stoll:

Zoom: 876-619-3551

Audio: 669-900-9128

Parsha: Balak

Balaam was a gentile prophet. The Talmud mentions that in some ways his prophecy was actually comparable to that of Moshe's. Yet, the contrast could hardly be greater. Whereas Balaam's greatness actually contributed to his corruption, Moshe's greatness only enhanced his character.

The Talmud contrasts Balaam's character to that of Abraham. Balaam was the prototype of the three primary negative traits; jealousy, lust and arrogance. Abraham personified the exact opposite; satisfaction with his lot—both materially and physically, and he was the paradigm of humility.

Balak, the king of Moab, asked Balaam to curse the Jewish nation. In return, he offered him large sums of money and honor. Balaam conferred with G-d who refused to let him go. Balaam, however, told Balak's messengers that he would not go with them because it was beneath his dignity to follow lowly servants. Here we see an example of Balaam's arrogance. Balak sent higher officials with even greater promises of wealth to entice Balaam.

Although G-d had already told Balaam that he should not go, his desire for wealth and honor drove him to make the request a second time, perhaps G-d would change his mind. G-d agreed that Balaam could

go, but he could only say whatever G-d would allow him. The Talmud sees in this change that a person is led in the way he desires to go, both positively and negatively.

When Balaam finally realized that he would not be able to curse the Jewish people, he advised Balak to entice the nation to act immorally. Knowing that the G-d of Israel does not tolerate immorality, and that the foundation of the Jewish people's holiness is based upon their high standards of morality, Balaam understood that this would incur G-d's wrath against the people. Balak followed this advice and sent young women to entice the Jewish soldiers. As a result of this, G-d's anger was indeed aroused and many Jews lost their lives in a plague. The Rabbis see in Balaam's

advice a reflection of his own licentious character.

Although Balaam may have been granted great spiritual gifts, his evil character earned him a place in infamy rather than recognition. A person who does not develop his character properly lacks the ability to use his spiritual gifts, and they can become a source for spiritual destructiveness rather than an asset. The Torah relates how Balaam's donkey miraculously chastised him. The significance of this miracle was to show Balaam that if one does not use his G-d-given gifts, he is no different than a gifted animal.

JLC \$36,000 Raffle

BUY TICKETS TODAY!

Women's Nine Days Seminar

STARTING AUG 1 10AM

Insights: Balak

... Hashem opened the mouth of the donkey... (Numbers 22:28) The Mishnah In Avos (5:6) lists ten miracles that were created during twilight of the sixth day of Creation. One of the ten was the mouth of Balaam's donkey. Rav Moshe Soloveitchik of Switzerland points out that there were actually two miracles with the donkey; one that it was able to vocalize words, and the second that it was able to speak intelligently. Why does the Mishnah only cite the fact that it could speak and not the fact of its intelligence? Rav Soloveitchik answered that not speaking intelligently is not considered speaking at all, and thus both miracles are included in the donkey being able to speak. Rav Chaim Kanievisky relates a story of an itinerant preacher who once spoke in a town's shul. After he finished speaking, he asked the rabbi if he had enjoyed the speech. The rabbi told the man, "I thank you for your words! They have helped me with something I could never understand. Koheles (3) lists many times for different activities. A time to love and a time to hate, a time to plant and a time to reap, etc. In each of these activities there is a middle level, where neither extreme is called for. For example, there is a time that is neither for love or for hate, for planting or for reaping. However, there is one set of times that this does not seem possible. Koheles describes a time to speak and a time to be silent. Now, how is it possible to neither speak nor remain silent? But with your speech I can now understand. For you were certainly not quiet, but you said nothing!"

Did You Know?

The Seventeenth of Tamuz begins the three-week period of mourning for the loss of the Temple. One may not listen to either live or recorded music. Incidental music, such as background music to a commercial, is not prohibited. Similarly, it is permitted to take music lessons. One may not take a haircut or shave during the three weeks. If there is concern about a loss of money, such as losing employment, one may shave. If possible, one should be more stringent during the last nine days preceding Tisha B'Av. One may not purchase or wear any new expensive clothing during the Three Weeks. Simple clothing, such as a new shirt or pajamas, etc, are permissible to wear or purchase until the Nine Days.

Thought for the Week: And what if crime did pay? (A Candle By Day)