

# J.L.C. Connections

The Jewish Learning Connection's Weekly Newsletter



Parshas Balak

July 11, 2025 / 15 Tammuz 5785

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Candlelighting: 8:43 pm

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

## Friday, July 11

7:15pm Early mincha  
8:43pm Candlelighting  
8:45pm Mincha

## Shabbos, July 12

8:45am Shacharis  
*Kiddush is available for sponsorship*

7:35pm Pirke Avos  
8:35pm Mincha / Shalosh Seudos  
9:51pm Maariv

## Sunday, July 13 Fast of Tammuz

4:52am Fast Begins

9:15am Parsha Class  
(R. Nisenbaum)  
10:00am "The 613 Mitzvos"  
(R. Stoll)

8:25pm Mincha / Maariv  
9:50pm Fast Ends (50 min)

## Monday, July 14

*Lessons of the Fathers  
will resume July 21<sup>st</sup>*

## Tuesday, July 15

8:00pm Tanna d'vei Eliyahu  
(R. Stoll)

## Wednesday, July 16

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

## Thursday, July 17

8:00pm Sefer HaChinuch: R. Stoll  
10:15pm Parsha Class  
(R. Nisenbaum)

## Torah Podcast

Listen to Rabbi Nisenbaum's  
"Torah Podcast" at Spotify, Apple  
Podcasts, iHeartRadio, and more,  
or download at  
[www.maverickpodcasting.com](http://www.maverickpodcasting.com)

## Weekday Minyanim

7:00am Shacharis (M-F)  
8:00am Shacharis (Sun)  
10:00pm Maariv (Sun-Th)

## 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.

The Three Weeks  
begin this Sunday

## Insights: Balak

### How goodly are your tents, Yaakov, your dwelling places, Yisrael ... (Num 24:5)

Sometimes we can gain a deeper appreciation of our homes and lifestyles from the outside perspective of others. In her book, *Strangers and Neighbors*, Maria Poggi Johnson, a non-Jewish professor of theology at the University of Scranton, writes about her experiences with her Orthodox Jewish neighbors: *I assumed that Shabbat observance was a big nuisance—some sort of penitential thing that Jews had to make the best of and pretend to like for the benefit of outsiders... I had always thought of Shabbat as a twenty-five-hour prison of petty regulation. Suddenly I saw why my friends spoke of it with such love, why they thought of the day not as a prison but as a queen. It's not that [she] was getting a break from her hectic life, but that she was at the epicenter of a place where restfulness was absolutely palpable; not just an absence of activity but a real presence..*

## Did You Know?

Some opinions hold that the prohibition of causing pain to an animal only applies to animals capable of work but not to small animals or insects. Other opinions hold that the prohibition applies to all animals, even insects. If an insect is bothering someone, it is permitted to kill it, but this should preferably not be done directly with one's hands which can lead to behaving cruelly.. Human need overrides causing pain to animals, and animal experimentation is thus permitted for human benefit.

**Thought for the Week: We make-believe—and believe it.** (A Candle By Day)