

# RED ALERT!

## BALAK

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)  
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -  
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

*Ed. note: Rabbi Davis submitted his RED ALERT for Chukat-Balak; I put here the Balak parts.*

## DIVREI TORAH

- A side incident occurs in the Bilaam story when Bilaam's donkey speaks to his master. The Torah gives play to a minor occurrence. In Pirkei Avot, our Sages give the story more attention when it states that this donkey was created right before Shabbat during the first week of Creation. Is it such a big deal, especially when seemingly no one witnessed the event? The Rambam wrote that it never happened. It was a dream that Bilaam had while traveling. What's wrong with a minor miracle to spice up the story. More important is to note the message that we see here. Hashem was telling Bilaam that your power was in your mouth, whether it is in the form of a blessing or a curse. Big deal. Hashem can place words in anybody's mouth, both a human or an animal. Back in B'reishit, Rashi's states that Hashem created the human with the power of speech and reason. He can put that ability anywhere. Hashem was saying to Bilaam: You are not special!

- The Abravanel asked the question: If Hashem blesses Bnei Yisrael and then Bilaam curses them, whose words are mightier, Hashem or Bilaam? Bilaam's words are meaningless in the eyes of the world. So who really cares what Bilaam has to say! But Bilaam's words are not meaningless. They would impress the non-Jewish world. They would impress the entire world. By Hashem forcing Bilaam to bless the Jewish people, that will influence the world to pay attention to Bnei Yisrael. This was the intention in Hashem's plan as they now were on the eve of conquering Canaan and turning it into a true productive, and magnificent country. Look at what the State of Israel has been able to accomplish with an ancient piece of swampland. This is Hashem's work in our day!

- MIDRASH. Bilaam stated that Israel will dwell alone. Balak said to Bilaam: If you cannot curse them when they are by themselves, maybe we can mix them up with other nations, you will be able to curse them. That's when Bilaam said that they will not mix with other people.

## Questions by RED

### From the text

4. How many sacrifices to Hashem did Balak ultimately offer?
5. What part of Bilaam's blessing of Bnei Yisrael do we say in our prayers? (24:5)

## From Rashi

8. Balak was the king of Moav, but he wasn't a Moabite. Where was he from? (22:4)

9. Why did Hashem give Bilaam, a non-Jew, prophecy? (22:5)

10. Who hated the Jews more, Bilaam or Balak? (22:11)

## From the Rabbis

12. What verse of Bilaam's is recited as one of the verses in the Shofarot section of Musaf on Rosh HaShana? (23:21)

13. The Moabite and Midianite women involved the Jewish men in immoral acts. How did they differ in their approach? (Alshich)

## Midrash

14. Balak offered many animals as sacrifices to Hashem. What reward did he receive for this?

## Haftara - Micha

15. What three leaders did Hashem supply Bnei Yisrael during their journey in the desert?

## Relationships

- a) Avraham- Nachor
- b) Eisav - Ada
- c) Yaakov - Yehudit
- d) No'ach - Aram
- e) Amram - Yitzhar

## ANSWERS

4. Forty-two (3x14)

5. MAH TOVU... How goodly are your tents, O Yaakov...

8. He was from Midyan.

9. In order not to give the non-Jewish world the opportunity to proclaim: Had we be given prophets from Hashem, we would have been loyal and good people.

10. Bilaam.

12. LO HIBIT AVEN B'YAAKOV... UTRU'AT MELECH BO.

13. The Moabites women approached the regular Jewish men. The Midianite women went after the national leaders.

14. He was an ancestor (through Ruth) of King David and the Mashiach.

15. Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam.

16.

## Relationships

a) Brothers

b) Husband & Wife

c) Brother-in-Law & Sister-in-Law

d) Grandfather & Grandson

e) Brothers