



## **BALAK REVIEW**

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Bnei Yisrael just conquered the Emorim and the Bashanim, the two strong neighbors of Moav. Balak, king of Moav, worried that his nation would be Bnei Yisrael's next victim. He sent messengers to Midian, to Balaam, a famous non-Jewish prophet and sorcerer, asking him to come and curse the Jewish people. Hashem came to Balaam that night and told him not to go to Moav and not to curse the Jews because they are blessed. Balaam sent word with Balak's messengers that Hashem doesn't let him to go with them. So Balak sent more prominent messengers to Balaam, promising him great riches in return for his services. Once again Hashem appeared to Balaam. This time Hashem let Balaam go – only if he only spoke the words that Hashem dictates to him. Balaam leaves together with Balak's messengers and Hashem sends an angel with a drawn sword to block Balaam's path. While Balaam couldn't see the angel, the she-donkey he was riding did, and refused to move forward, causing Balaam to hit her. The donkey miraculously spoke, reprimanding Balaam for hitting her. Eventually, Hashem "opens Balaam's eyes," and he sees the angel. A conversation between Balaam and the angel follows, where Balaam is disciplined for his behavior towards his donkey, and again he is reminded only to say what Hashem dictates to him. After this overwhelming episode, Balaam arrives in Moav where he is greeted by Balak.

According to Balaam's instructions, Balak builds seven *mizbeachs* and offers *korbant* to Hashem. Balaam blessed Bnei Yisrael with beautiful blessings and praises. When Balak responded angrily to the blessings, Balaam reminded him that he can only say what Hashem tells him to say. Balak takes Balaam to another location, hoping that this new place would be less promising for the Jews. They again build *mizbeachs* and offered *korbanot*, and again Hashem dictated blessing for the Jews which Balaam repeated. The entire process repeated itself again, Balak takes Balaam to another place, hoping that Balaam can curse the Jews from there. For a third time they built *mizbeachs* and gave *korbanot*, and for a third time, only blessings came from Balaam's mouth. At this point, Balak gave up accomplishing his goal, and sent Balaam on his way. Before leaving, Balaam prophesied about the end of days and the eventual destruction of Esav, Amalek and Assyria.

**LEADER TIP: The story of Bilam and his Donkey always remind me of Shrek. It's a great opportunity to act out the story with costumes and comedy!**

# *PARSHA QUESTIONS*

## Questions

1. Why did Balak hire Bilam the navi?
2. What did the donkey see on the road?
3. What did Bilam do to the donkey?
4. What nes happened with Bilam's donkey?
5. What did the donkey say?
6. Why couldn't Bilam curse the Bnei Yisrael?
7. What did HaShem make him do?
8. What was the famous berachah of Bilam that we say in the davening?
9. How did Bilaam die?
10. Bilaam told Balak that the Jews' G-d hates something. What is it?

## Answers

1. To curse the Bnei Yisrael
2. A malach with its sword stretched out
3. He hit the donkey
4. It spoke
5. What did I do that you hit me three times
6. Bilam could not go against what HaShem wanted
7. Give them berachot
8. Mah Tov
9. He was killed with a sword
10. The Jewish people misbehaving

**LEADER TIP:** Go around taking turns giving a blessing to everyone in the group.

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** To teach the kids the story of Bilam and his talking donkey.

**ACTIVITY: “Pin the Mouth on the Donkey”**

Print out a big picture of a donkey and put it onto the wall. Give each kid a mouth sticker. One at a time, blindfold the kid who's turn it is and have them make their way to try and place their mouth sticker as close to the mouth of the donkey as possible.

For a second time, now place small obstacles in the way in between the kid and the donkey once the kid is blindfolded. The group must help the kid out so that they can make their way safe and sound to the donkey and place the mouth as close as possible to the donkey's mouth.

**DISCUSSION:** In our Parsha, Balak the evil king of Moav wants to curse Bnei Yisrael. He calls upon Bilam, the prophet, to come and do the evil task. Bilam wakes up early, packs his donkey and goes on his way to go curse Bnei Yisrael. Hashem sends an angel to block Bilam's path. Bilam does not see the angel, but his donkey does and goes off the path and Bilam hits the donkey. A while later, the same thing happens again as the angel returns and Bilam hits the donkey as he goes off the path again. Later, for a third time the angel stands in the way of Bilam and the donkey lies down and refuses to move. This results in Bilam losing his temper and hitting the donkey again. Suddenly, the donkey miraculously starts to speak and reprimands Bilam for trying to curse Bnei Yisrael. Hashem then opens Bilam's eyes and he is able to see the angel who warns Bilam that his plan to curse Bnei Yisrael will never work. Bilam tries three different times in three different places to curse Bnei Yisrael but every time it comes out as a blessing. We learn from this story that no matter how hard our enemies try to curse us or bring us down, Hashem will always protect us.

**LEADER TIP: If you were a donkey and you were given one day to talk as much as you want, what kinds of things you think you would say? Don't waste your words!**

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** We always lose when we lose our temper. In this week's Torah portion, Bilaam makes a fool of himself when he loses his temper at his donkey. If we can stay calm and in control, even in frustrating situations, we'll be glad that we did.

## PUNCH LINES

Brad and Greg happily jumped off their bikes and jogged to the local playground baseball diamond for their weekly Sunday morning neighborhood league game. But when they got there they were met with a surprise; even though it was several minutes before the game was supposed to start, their teams had already taken to the field and standing in their two usual positions, were a couple of kids they didn't recognize.

"Hey, what's going on?" Brad called out to Mike, the pitcher and captain of their team.

The older boy gave a shrug, "My two cousins are visiting for the weekend, so I decided to let them play."

"But what about us?" Brad protested. "We're part of the starting lineup every week - it's not fair!"

"Tough," Mike snorted. "You guys can go change into your uniforms, and maybe later in the game you'll get to come off the bench and play." With that, Mike turned his back on them and the game continued to play.

"I can't believe this!" Brad said to Greg as the two of them moped their way down the locker-room stairs.

Greg nodded his head. "Yeah, it's really frustrating," he agreed, "and after we biked all the way out here. But there's nothing we can really do about it - except either wait or leave. Since I'm here already, I guess I'll stay." Greg sat down on a bench to start changing into his uniform but soon jumped up, as a tremendous 'BOOM!' rang through the tiny room.

"Whoa!" Greg said, looking at Brad, whose face was as red as their team's baseball caps. "What are you doing?"

"I'm doing what I want to do to that idiot, Mike!" he yelled as he punched the locker a second time.

"Cut it out," Greg said to his wild-eyed friend, as his ears rang from the noise. "What's the point of doing that?"

"The point is - I'm *mad*!" With that, Brad, drew his clenched fist back and took a third mighty swing at the locker door in front of him. "Owwww!!!" he yelled out in pain, so loud that neither kid heard the footsteps coming down behind them.

"Good news guys," said the grinning Mike. "My cousins just got a phone call saying they've gotta go home early. So you guys can play after all. Greg, you can take over at first base ... and Brad, since I have to take my cousins home - guess what? - you get to take my place as pitcher."

"Great!" Greg said, quickly changing into his uniform as Mike walked back up the locker room stairs. "See Brad," he smiled, "things worked out after all. We're back in the lineup and you even get to pitch!"

He expected Brad to smile back, but the kid looked even unhappier than before.

"Uh, uh." Brad shook his head, holding his swollen, limp-looking hand in front of him. "I just creamed my pitching hand on the locker. I can't even *hold* a baseball now. Have a good game. I'm going home ... maybe to a doctor for x-rays. Who knew how much I'd be losing - when I lost my temper..."

## Discussion Questions

Q. How did Brad feel at first, when he found out he couldn't play?

A. He was so frustrated and angry that he lost his temper.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. He regretted losing his temper when he saw how much it had cost him.

**LEADER TIP:** What are some ways you can catch yourself before your temper gets out of hand? How can you keep control and stay calm?

# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Ori Sasson

Ori Sasson, born on August 18, 1990, is an Israeli Olympic judoka-which is someone who competes in judo. He won the bronze medal in the +100 kg (+220 pounds) competition at the 2016 Summer Olympics. He started training in judo when he was eight years old. Sasson was born in Yerushalayim.



At the 2016 Summer Olympics, Ori beat Egyptian judoka Islam El Shahaby in the first round. When the match was over, Ori tried to shake his opponent's hand, but El Shahaby refused. The packed crowd all booed El Shahaby for his poor sportsmanship and behavior. Ori came over to El Shahaby with his hand extended after beating him, but the Egyptian judoka backed away before leaving the floor without bowing to Sasson, which is a violation of judo's rules. Ori still politely bowed and walked off. A referee called El Shahaby back and forced him to bow, but by then Sasson had already left. Ori also beat Polish judoka Maciej Sarnacki, Dutch judoka Roy Meyer, and Cuban judoka Alex Garcia Mendoza. His only loss was in the semi-finals against the eventual gold medal winner French judoka Teddy Riner.

Not only was Ori an incredible role model and inspiration at the Olympics, but he also auctioned off his Olympic team jacket for \$100,000 at a fundraiser for Shalva, an organization in Israel for children with disabilities. He also announced, during the organization's annual dinner, that he will be heading a new judo program for children with disabilities at the new Shalva National Center in Jerusalem. "A minute before I handed over the jacket, when it was still in my hands, I thought about whether I would miss having it," Sasson said. "But then I thought about all of the good it would do and realized that it has reached its ultimate purpose."

**LEADER TIP:** What do you think you would do if you were Ori Sasson? Would you be able to keep your cool and stay composed and be the bigger man?



# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei: Retzeh

We ask Hashem to look at us and our *tefillot* kindly so that He can see that we deserve the third Beit HaMikdash and the services we did there. The davening we say every day is only a substitute for the *korbanot* we used to give and wait to give again just like the way Hashem intended us to before he sent his into *galut*. When Hashem does give us the Third Beit HaMikdash, we hope that He will accept our *korbanot* with kindness, in addition to the prayers that we will say as well. Whether we serve Hashem with *korbanot* or our simple prayers, we hope that Hashem will always find it acceptable.

This bracha is also where the prayer *Yaaleh V'Yavo* is said on holidays and Rosh Chodesh, times when a Musaf *korban* was given in the Beit HaMikdash. In *Yaaleh V'Yavo*, we ask Hashem to remember the qualities of our Forefathers, His promises to bring Moshiach and to rebuild Yerushalayim, and whatever good qualities we have so that we can enjoy Hashem's gifts- *chessed* and *rachamim*. *Chessed*—kindness—means giving us good things even though we may not deserve them. *Rachamim*—mercy—means not punishing us, even though we may deserve it.

The more we try to talk to Hashem, the more He will help us with everything in life.

**LEADER TIP:** This is one of the more difficult brachot to connect to since we've never had a Beit Hamikdash. Try to think about your parents being away from home for a really long time and how special it is when they return

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According to Balaam's instructions, Balak builds seven *mizbeachs* and offers *korbant* to Hashem. Balaam blessed Bnei Yisrael with beautiful blessings and praises. When Balak responded angrily to the blessings, Balaam reminded him that he can only say what Hashem tells him to say. Balak takes Balaam to another location, hoping that this new place would be less promising for the Jews. They again build *mizbeachs* and offered *korbanot*, and again Hashem dictated blessing for the Jews which Balaam repeated. The entire process repeated itself again, Balak takes Balaam to another place, hoping that Balaam can curse the Jews from there. For a third time they built *mizbeachs* and gave *korbanot*, and for a third time, only blessings came from Balaam's mouth. At this point, Balak gave up accomplishing his goal, and sent Balaam on his way. Before leaving, Balaam prophesied about the end of days and the eventual destruction of Esav, Amalek and Assyria.

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# PARSHA QUESTIONS

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1. Who was the king of Moav?
2. Why did Balak hire Bilam the navi?
3. Why did HaShem give nevuah to a rasha like Bilam?
4. Who got Bilam's donkey ready?
5. What did the donkey see on the road?
6. What did Bilam do to the donkey?
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9. Why couldn't Bilam curse the Bnei Yisrael?
10. What did HaShem make him do?
11. What did Bilam compare the Bnei Yisrael to and what does that represent?
12. What was the famous berachah of Bilam that we say in the davening?
13. What was special about the tents of the Bnei Yisrael?
14. How did Bilaam die?
15. Bilaam told Balak that the Jews' G-d hates something. What is it?

**LEADER TIP:** Go around taking turns giving a blessing to everyone in the group

## ANSWERS

1. Balak
2. To curse the Bnei Yisrael
3. So that the Goyim can't say that they would have been better if HaShem had given them a Navi
4. Bilam himself woke up early to get it ready
5. A malach with it's sword stretched out
6. He hit the donkey
7. It spoke
8. What did I do that you hit me three times
9. Bilam could not go against what HaShem wanted
10. Give them berachot
11. Bilam compared the Bnei Yisrael to the dust of the earth, hinting to the fact that the Bnei Yisrael are too numerous to count
12. Mah Tov
13. Their Tziniut (their openings did not face each other)
14. He was killed with a sword
15. The Jewish people misbehaving

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** To teach the kids about the journey of Balaam and his donkey.

## **ACTIVITY: “Running Bases”**

Set up three bases with group leaders on each one. All of the kids will start on a base and must keep switching bases as the group leaders throw a ball to each other. The goal is to reach the bases without getting caught. If you get tagged by the ball three times then you are out. The last person standing wins!

The second time you play, place different small obstacles in between the bases so that the kids must avoid them as they run from base to base.

The third time, you can add another rule that every time you get to a base, you have to bless the group leader. Each base you get to you must say a different blessing than you did at the other bases.

**DISCUSSION:** In our Parsha, Balak the evil king of Moav wants to curse Bnei Yisrael. He calls upon Bilam, the prophet, to come and do the evil task. Bilam wakes up early, packs his donkey and goes on his way to go curse Bnei Yisrael. Hashem sends an angel to block Bilam’s path. Bilam does not see the angel, but his donkey does and goes off the path and Bilam hits the donkey. A while later, the same thing happens again as the angel returns and Bilam hits the donkey as he goes off the path again. Later, for a third time the angel stands in the way of Bilam and the donkey lies down and refuses to move. This results in Bilam losing his temper and hitting the donkey again. Suddenly, the donkey miraculously starts to speak and reprimands Bilam for trying to curse Bnei Yisrael. Hashem then opens Bilam’s eyes and he is able to see the angel who warns Bilam that his plan to curse Bnei Yisrael will never work. Bilam tries three different times in three different places to curse Bnei Yisrael but every time it comes out as a blessing. Balak yelled at Bilam for blessing Bnei Yisrael and Bilam told him that it was Hashem putting blessings into his mouth and he couldn’t help it! We learn from this story that no matter how hard our enemies try to curse us or bring us down, Hashem will always protect us. The reason we played this game was to remind ourselves that wherever we are, no matter what we’re doing, we can always find the good in others and bless them and shouldn’t say anything bad.

**LEADER TIP: If you were a donkey and you were given one day to talk as much as you want, what kinds of things you think you would say?  
Don’t waste your words!**

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The older boy gave a shrug, "My two cousins are visiting for the weekend, so I decided to let them play."

"But what about us?" Brad protested. "We're part of the starting lineup every week - it's not fair!"

"Tough," Mike snorted. "You guys can go change into your uniforms, and maybe later in the game you'll get to come off the bench and play." With that, Mike turned his back on them and the game continued to play.

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## Discussion Questions

Q. What life-lesson do you think Brad learned that day?

A. When something happened he didn't like, he'd let his temper take control of him and ended up causing himself even more grief. It's always worth it to try to stay calm even in the face of frustration.

Q. Is there anything a person can do to prevent himself from losing his temper?

A. It's not easy, but if we combine trying to stay calm and trying to keep things in perspective, we can often succeed.

**LEADER TIP:** What are some ways you can catch yourself before your temper gets out of hand? How can you keep control and stay calm?

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Ori won the Israeli judo championship in 2007–09 and 2011, and 2012. He has also competed and won many other different judo competitions all over the world.

At the 2016 Summer Olympics, Ori beat Egyptian judoka Islam El Shahaby in the first round. When the match was over, Ori tried to shake his opponent's hand, but El Shahaby refused. The packed crowd all booed El Shahaby for his poor sportsmanship and behavior. Ori came over to El Shahaby with his hand extended after beating him, but the Egyptian judoka backed away before leaving the floor without bowing to Sasson, which is a violation of judo's rules. Ori still politely bowed and walked off. A referee called El Shahaby back and forced him to bow, but by then Sasson had already left.

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# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei: Retzeh

We ask Hashem to look at us and our *tefillot* kindly so that He can see that we deserve the third Beit HaMikdash and the services we did there. The davening we say every day is only a substitute for the *korbanot* we used to give and wait to give again just like the way Hashem intended us to before he sent his into *galut*. When Hashem does give us the Third Beit HaMikdash, we hope that He will accept our *korbanot* with kindness, in addition to the prayers that we will say as well. Whether we serve Hashem with *korbanot* or our simple prayers, we hope that Hashem will always find it acceptable.

The *bracha* ends with a desire to witness Hashem's return to Zion, meaning the Beit HaMikdash. The root of the word "to see" used here (*v'techezenah*) is not the usual *re'eh*, but *chazan*, a word usually used for a prophetic vision (as in "Chazon Yeshayahu," "the vision of Isaiah" in Isaiah 1:1). To completely visualize and appreciate the meaning of Hashem's return to the place of His Beit HaMikdash requires the insight of a prophet!

This *bracha* is also where the prayer *Yaaleh V'Yavo* is said on holidays and Rosh Chodesh, times when a Musaf *korban* was given in the Beit HaMikdash. In *Yaaleh V'Yavo*, we ask Hashem to remember the qualities of our Forefathers, His promises to bring Moshiach and to rebuild Yerushalayim, and whatever good qualities we have so that we can enjoy Hashem's gifts- *chessed* and *rachamim*. *Chessed*—kindness—means giving us good things even though we may not deserve them. *Rachamim*—mercy—means not punishing us, even though we may deserve it.

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# PARSHA QUESTIONS

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1. Who was the king of Moav?
2. Why did Balak hire Bilam the navi?
3. What did Balak offer Bilam as a reward for cursing Bnei Yisrael?
4. Why did Balak want to call a bad navi?
5. Why did HaShem give nevuah to a rasha like Bilam?
6. When did Bilaam receive his prophecies?
7. Who got Bilam's donkey ready?
8. What did the donkey see on the road?
9. What did Bilam do to the donkey?
10. What nes happened with Bilam's donkey?
11. What did the donkey say?
12. Was Bilam able to curse the Bnei Yisrael?
13. Why couldn't Bilam curse the Bnei Yisrael?
14. What did HaShem make him do?
15. What did Bilam compare the Bnei Yisrael to?
16. What does that represent?
17. What was the famous berachah of Bilam that we say in the davening?
18. What was special about the tents of the Bnei Yisrael?
19. How did Bilaam die?
20. Bilaam told Balak that the Jews' G-d hates something. What is it?

## ANSWERS

1. Balak
2. To curse the Bnei Yisrael
3. Great honor and anything that he asked for
4. He heard that the Bnei Yisrael's power is in their speech, so he wanted to curse them and cursing is done with speech
5. So that the Goyim can't say that they would have been better if HaShem had given them a Navi
6. At night
7. Bilam himself woke up early to get it ready
8. A Malach holding his sword
9. He hit the donkey
10. It spoke
11. What did I do that you hit me three times
12. NO
13. Bilam could not go against what HaShem wanted
14. Give them berachot
15. Bilam compared the Bnei Yisrael to the dust of the earth
16. That Bnei Yisrael are too numerous to count
17. Mah Tovu
18. Their Tziniut (their openings did not face each other)
19. He was killed with a sword
20. The Jewish people misbehaving

**LEADER TIP:** Go around taking turns giving a blessing to everyone in the group.

# PARSHA ACTIVITY

**GOAL:** To teach the kids about how Balaam blessed Bnei Yisrael three times.

## **ACTIVITY: “Three Headed Rabbi”**

Pick three people to come up and stand in front of the whole group and be the “Three Headed Rabbi”. Take turns picking someone from the crowd to ask them for advice. What the “Three Headed Rabbi” must do is give the person advice by saying one word each at a time. They must answer the person’s question, give them advice, and end with giving them a nice bracha. Give everyone a chance to be a part of the “Three Headed Rabbi”.

If you see that it starts getting repetitive, step in and add extra challenges (make them rhyme their sentences, use different accents, do it to the tune of a song, etc.).

**DISCUSSION:** In our Parsha, Balak the evil king of Moav wants to curse Bnei Yisrael. He calls upon Bilam, the prophet, to come and do the evil task. Bilam wakes up early, packs his donkey and goes on his way to go curse Bnei Yisrael. Hashem sends an angel to block Bilam’s path. Bilam does not see the angel, but his donkey does and goes off the path and Bilam hits the donkey. A while later, the same thing happens again as the angel returns and Bilam hits the donkey as he goes off the path again. Later, for a third time the angel stands in the way of Bilam and the donkey lies down and refuses to move. This results in Bilam losing his temper and hitting the donkey again. Suddenly, the donkey miraculously starts to speak and reprimands Bilam for trying to curse Bnei Yisrael. Hashem then opens Bilam’s eyes and he is able to see the angel who warns Bilam that his plan to curse Bnei Yisrael will never work. Bilam tries three different times in three different places to curse Bnei Yisrael but every time it comes out as a blessing. Balak yelled at Bilam for blessing Bnei Yisrael and Bilam told him that it was Hashem putting blessings into his mouth and he couldn’t help it! We learn from this story that no matter how hard our enemies try to curse us or bring us down, Hashem will always protect us. The reason we played this game was to remind ourselves that even one word can make a person feel good. We don’t have to say so much, or even say it all at once, but when we speak nicely and patiently and think about each word that we say, then everything that comes out of our mouth can be positive.

**LEADER TIP: If you were a donkey and you were given one day to talk as much as you want, what kinds of things you think you would say? Don’t waste your words!**

# PARSHA STORY

**Before you read:** We always lose when we lose our temper. In this week's Torah portion, Bilaam makes a fool of himself when he loses his temper at his donkey. If we can stay calm and in control, even in frustrating situations, we'll be glad that we did.

## PUNCH LINES

Brad and Greg happily jumped off their bikes and jogged to the local playground baseball diamond for their weekly Sunday morning neighborhood league game. But when they got there they were met with a surprise; even though it was several minutes before the game was supposed to start, their teams had already taken to the field and standing in their two usual positions, were a couple of kids they didn't recognize.

"Hey, what's going on?" Brad called out to Mike, the pitcher and captain of their team.

The older boy gave a shrug, "My two cousins are visiting for the weekend, so I decided to let them play."

"But what about us?" Brad protested. "We're part of the starting lineup every week - it's not fair!"

"Tough," Mike snorted. "You guys can go change into your uniforms, and maybe later in the game you'll get to come off the bench and play." With that, Mike turned his back on them and the game continued to play.

"I can't believe this!" Brad said to Greg as the two of them moped their way down the locker-room stairs.

Greg nodded his head. "Yeah, it's really frustrating," he agreed, "and after we biked all the way out here. But there's nothing we can really do about it - except either wait or leave. Since I'm here already, I guess I'll stay." Greg sat down on a bench to start changing into his uniform but soon jumped up, as a tremendous 'BOOM!' rang through the tiny room.

"Whoa!" Greg said, looking at Brad, whose face was as red as their team's baseball caps. "What are you doing?"

"I'm doing what I want to do to that idiot, Mike!" he yelled as he punched the locker a second time.

"Cut it out," Greg said to his wild-eyed friend, as his ears rang from the noise. "What's the point of doing that?"

"The point is - I'm *mad*!" With that, Brad, drew his clenched fist back and took a third mighty swing at the locker door in front of him. "Owwww!!!" he yelled out in pain, so loud that neither kid heard the footsteps coming down behind them.

"Good news guys," said the grinning Mike. "My cousins just got a phone call saying they've gotta go home early. So you guys can play after all. Greg, you can take over at first base ... and Brad, since I have to take my cousins home - guess what? - you get to take my place as pitcher."

"Great!" Greg said, quickly changing into his uniform as Mike walked back up the locker room stairs. "See Brad," he smiled, "things worked out after all. We're back in the lineup and you even get to pitch!"

He expected Brad to smile back, but the kid looked even unhappier than before.

"Uh, uh." Brad shook his head, holding his swollen, limp-looking hand in front of him. "I just creamed my pitching hand on the locker. I can't even *hold* a baseball now. Have a good game. I'm going home ... maybe to a doctor for x-rays. Who knew how much I'd be losing - when I lost my temper..."

## Discussion Questions

Q. Our sages say that losing one's temper is equivalent to forgetting about God. What's the connection?

A. God is very involved with all of our lives. He constantly sends us the situations we need in order to reach the maximum spiritual and personal growth, which is for our ultimate good. If we can remember that - and Him - even in the midst of life's challenges, while we may at times feel frustrated, angry, or hurt, we are very unlikely to 'lose it.'

Q. Is it healthy for a person to 'blow off steam' by losing his or her temper?

A. It might sometimes provide a feeling of temporary relief, but in the long run it always ends up damaging our health, character and the people around us.

**LEADER TIP:** What are some ways you can catch yourself before your temper gets out of hand? How can you keep control and stay calm?



# JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

## Ori Sasson

Ori Sasson, born on August 18, 1990, is an Israeli Olympic judoka-which is someone who competes in judo. He won the bronze medal in the +100 kg (+220 pounds) competition at the 2016 Summer Olympics. He started training in judo when he was eight years old. Sasson was born in Yerushalayim and he is the younger brother of former judoka and Israel national team captain Alon Sasson, who, when they were children, would hit him to show him who was boss. He now lives in Netanya and studies Business Administration at Ruppin College.



Ori won the Israeli judo championship in 2007–09 and 2011, and 2012. He has also competed and won many other different judo competitions all over the world.

At the 2016 Summer Olympics, Ori beat Egyptian judoka Islam El Shahaby in the first round. When the match was over, Ori tried to shake his opponent's hand, but El Shahaby refused. The packed crowd all booed El Shahaby for his poor sportsmanship and behavior. Ori came over to El Shahaby with his hand extended after beating him, but the Egyptian judoka backed away before leaving the floor without bowing to Sasson, which is a violation of judo's rules. Ori still politely bowed and walked off. A referee called El Shahaby back and forced him to bow, but by then Sasson had already left.

Ori also beat Polish judoka Maciej Sarnacki, Dutch judoka Roy Meyer, and Cuban judoka Alex Garcia Mendoza. His only loss was in the semi-finals against the eventual gold medal winner French judoka Teddy Riner.

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin called Ori on Saturday night after Shabbat ended in Israel to congratulate him on his win. "Every boy and girl [in Israel] saw not only a great athlete but a man with values," said Netanyahu during the call, talking about Ori's great sportsmanship when El Shahaby refused to shake his hand after losing to him in a match.

Netanyahu congratulated Sasson on his calm reaction, saying that the way he acted so friendly and peaceful were representative of Israel. "You showed the true face of Israel, its beautiful face," he said, telling Sasson that he had made "an entire nation happy." Rivlin called Sasson "Ori the Jerusalemite, my champion." "We are all so proud of you," Rivlin told Ori, the first person from Yerushalayim to ever win an Olympic medal. "You've brought honor to the country in such a clear and gentlemanly way. To go and shake the hand of your Egyptian opponent is something all of Israel and all of Egypt is talking about, and here too you've won."

Not only was Ori an incredible role model and inspiration at the Olympics, but he also auctioned off his Olympic team jacket for \$100,000 at a fundraiser for Shalva, an organization in Israel for children with disabilities. He also announced, during the organization's annual dinner, that he will be heading a new judo program for children with disabilities at the new Shalva National Center in Jerusalem. "A minute before I handed over the jacket, when it was still in my hands, I thought about whether I would miss having it," Sasson said. "But then I thought about all of the good it would do and realized that it has reached its ultimate purpose."

**LEADER TIP:** What do you think you would do if you were Ori Sasson? Would you be able to keep your cool and stay composed and be the bigger man?



# TEFILLAH TREASURES

## Shemoneh Esrei: Retzeh

We ask Hashem to look at us and our *tefillot* kindly so that He can see that we deserve the third Beit HaMikdash and the services we did there. The davening we say every day is only a substitute for the *korbanot* we used to give and wait to give again just like the way Hashem intended us to before he sent his into *galut*. When Hashem does give us the Third Beit HaMikdash, we hope that He will accept our *korbanot* with kindness, in addition to the prayers that we will say as well. Whether we serve Hashem with *korbanot* or our simple prayers, we hope that Hashem will always find it acceptable.

The *bracha* ends with a desire to witness Hashem's return to Zion, meaning the Beit HaMikdash. The root of the word "to see" used here (v'techezenah) is not the usual *re'eh*, but *chazan*, a word usually used for a prophetic vision (as in "Chazon Yeshayahu," "the vision of Isaiah" in Isaiah 1:1). To completely visualize and appreciate the meaning of Hashem's return to the place of His Beit HaMikdash requires the insight of a prophet!

This bracha is also where the prayer *Yaaleh V'Yavo* is said on holidays and Rosh Chodesh, times when a Musaf *korban* was given in the Beit HaMikdash. In *Yaaleh V'Yavo*, we ask Hashem to remember the qualities of our Forefathers, His promises to bring Moshiach and to rebuild Yerushalayim, and whatever good qualities we have so that we can enjoy Hashem's gifts- *chessed* and *rachamim*. *Chessed*—kindness—means giving us good things even though we may not deserve them. *Rachamim*—mercy—means not punishing us, even though we may deserve it.

What are we praying for when we ask Hashem to restore His Shechinah (Presence) to Zion? For most people, the Shechinah remains an mystery. The effectiveness of our prayers, therefore, depends on our willingness to try to understand how Hashem exists in our physical world. The Gemara (Berachot 6a) teaches that the Shechinah lives in places of holiness: the Beit HaMikdash, Yerushalayim, and in a shul with a *minyan*. The Shechinah is also present when three people sit on a *beit din*, and when even one person studies Torah. A basic question comes up though: If Hashem is everywhere, why do we say that the Shechinah exists only in specific holy places like as a shul during davening? What is the significance of the Shechinah being in these holy places if Hashem is everywhere? Rav Chaim Friedlander says that the Shechinah represents our relationship with Hashem. That being said, even though His Presence is everywhere, our consciousness of the Shechinah is stronger when we are inspired by a special event or a place of holiness. The more we are aware of the Shechinah, the more we can understand it and feel connected to Hashem.

**LEADER TIP:** This is one of the more difficult brachot to connect to since we've never had a Beit Hamikdash. Try to think about your parents being away from home for a really long time and how special it is when they return.

## This Week in Jewish History

**July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1976**

### Operation Entebbe

On June 27, 1976, four terrorists hijacked and forced an Air France plane to land in Uganda, Africa. They quickly demanded that Israel release 53 convicted terrorists. The hijackers freed the French crew and non-Jewish passengers, while keeping 105 Jewish and Israeli hostages. A 48 hour deadline was set before executions would begin. Having little choice, the Israeli government announced that they would negotiate. This gave them the time they needed to come up with a seemingly impossible military mission. A new ultimatum was issued for 13:00 on Sunday, July 4. The only plane capable of a rescue operation was the C130 Hercules. On July 1, the mission's commander, Brig. General Dan Shomron (later to become the IDF Chief of Staff), presented his plan to the IDF Commander and Israel's Defense Minister. The next day they all watched a complete dress rehearsal. Shomron's plan was based on numerous advantages that the Israelis had over the terrorists. The Entebbe airport where the hostages were being held was built by an Israeli construction company that was able to give Shomron blueprints. Furthermore, the released, non-Jewish hostages were able to describe the terrorists, their weapons, and their positioning. As a result, the IDF decided to send in an overwhelmingly powerful force: over 200 of the best soldiers the army had to offer participated in the raid, all of them heavily armed. Finally, the element of surprise was probably the biggest edge that Israel held. According to Shomron: "You had more than 100 people sitting in a small room, surrounded by terrorists with their fingers on the trigger. They could fire in a fraction of a second. we had to fly seven hours, land safely, drive to the terminal area where the hostages were being held, get inside, and eliminate all the terrorists before any of them could fire." The fact that no one expected the Israelis to take such risks was precisely the reason that they took them. The aircraft took off at 13:20 on July 3 and headed south. Only then was the plan revealed to the Israeli Cabinet, which decided to let the operation continue. The lead Hercules carried the rescue force, led by Lt. Col. Yonatan Netanyahu. It also held two jeeps and the now famous black Mercedes, a perfect copy of Dictator Idi Amin's personal car. Two additional Hercules carried reinforcements and troops assigned to carry out special missions. A fourth Hercules was sent to evacuate the hostages. The air package also included two Boeing 707's. One acted as a forward command post. The second, outfitted as an airborne hospital, landed in nearby Nairobi, Kenya. Avoiding thunderstorms, the Hercules transports were getting ready to land and to their surprise the runway lights were on! Despite this, they landed undetected at 23:01, only one minute after their planned arrival time. The soldiers freed the hostages in a lightning attack, killing all eight terrorists in the process. Tragically, force commander Yoni Netanyahu was killed as he led the hostages toward the safety of the aircraft; additionally, two hostages were killed in the crossfire inside the airport. The other squads accomplished their missions in basically the same time as during their practice run." By 23:59 the planes were on their way home. The operation, which was predicted to last one hour took only 58 minutes. The mission was later renamed "Operation Yonatan" in honor of Yonatan Netanyahu.



### FIND...

- Balak
- Balaam
- Donkey
- Blessing
- Curses
- Midian
- Moav
- Baal Peor

### STAT LINE OF THE WEEK- BALAK

**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.**

## TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

### HOW LONG DID THE BRITISH RULE YERUSHALAYIM?

Email your answers to [YOUTH@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG](mailto:YOUTH@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG) along with your **NAME** and **AGE** for a chance to win **AWESOME PRIZES!** Each correct answer will enter your name into a raffle that will happen once a month. Behatzlacha!

#### THIS JUST IN!

- In 1923, jockey Frank Hayes won a race at Belmont Park in New York despite being dead — he suffered a heart attack mid-race, but his body stayed in the saddle until his horse crossed the line for a 20–1 outsider victory.
- Everyone has a unique tongue print, just like fingerprints.
- Most Muppets are left-handed. (Because most Muppeteers are right-handed, so they operate the head with their favored hand.)

**For more info please feel free to contact us  
at [youth@youngisrael.org](mailto:youth@youngisrael.org)**

F	V	B	Z	D	D	P	T	B	K
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#### Parsha Points to Ponder...

When Bnei Yisrael were approaching the land of Moav, the king Balak sent to Bilam to come and cast a spell over the approaching nation. This is a strange means of warfare. Why didn't he send out his army to fight them? The Midrash (Bereshit Rabah Balak 20) states that Balak recognized Moshe's victories were not normal. So he consulted with the leaders of Midyan, where Moshe had lived for many years, as to how to deal with him. They advised him that Moshe's strength is in his mouth. Hence Balak invited Bilam whose strength was also in his mouth, to come and cast a spell on the Israelites. The State of Israel in modern times has won all its wars since the establishment of the country. True, it has a strong military. That in itself may not be the answer. Others also have strong militaries. The difference is the same difference that Moshe had over the enemies of his day. He had the help of the Almighty. Israel today has the same support of the Almighty. There are people who may not want to recognize it but there is no other explanation that can be given why a little country like Israel can defend itself against overwhelming odds. Also, no rational reason can be given why a little country without the vast resources of other large and mighty nations, can be so innovative and offer the world so much in every field of endeavor.



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