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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

### Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 6:58 - פלג המנחה
- 8:14 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:32 - שקיעה
- 8:37 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:13 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:28 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:33 - שקיעה
- 9:15 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:45 - צאת 72

### אגוטען שבת!

#### Did You Know?

When Balak heard that the Jews had destroyed Sichon, he knew he was in trouble. Rashi explains that the nations of the area had paid Sichon to protect their borders as he was the strongest in the region. If he couldn't protect them, nobody could. R' Menachem Mendel Schneerson, z"l the Lubavitcher Rebbe says in his Likutei Sichos that it was obviously a secret arrangement, or else Klal Yisrael would not have bothered making the futile request to pass through. He then reasons further that the people of Moav didn't know about it either except that Balak was unable to control himself and had to share his fears with the populace, thus initiating panic among them. Finally, the Rebbe contrasts Balak with Moshe. Balak couldn't control himself and scared his people by sharing his fears. Moshe Rabbeinu, on the other hand, when he feared Og because of the merits he accrued in helping to save Sarah, kept his fears to himself to avoid burdening the people with doubt. This is the mark of a true leader; that he can bear the burdens of his nation, AND his own, alone, between just himself and the Al-mighty.

#### Thought of the week:

**It is strange indeed that we love ourselves more than we love others, yet we set less value to our opinions of ourselves than to the opinions of others.**

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"וירא בלק בן צפור את כל אשר עשה ישראל לאמרי... וישלח מלאכים אל בלעם" (במדבר כ"ב:)

**"And Balak the son of Tzipor saw all that Yisrael had done to the Emori...And he sent emissaries to Bilaam..."**

Balak hoped hiring Bilaam to curse the Jewish people would be a means of weakening them and allowing him to fight them and be victorious. The question is why he did what he did. The Ramban says that Balak knew his land was not to be taken, and that the Jewish people would not harm him as there was a warning not to wage war against Moav (Devarim 2:9) as the land of Lot's children was a gift to them that Yisrael would not inherit. Rather, says the Ramban, he was afraid their sheer numbers would trample his land to the point of making it barren.

What has this to do with Sichon and the Emori? Even if they had not decimated Sichon, Balak had reason to fear them trampling his land. While Sichon was militarily much stronger, there was no Divine command against battling Sichon.

Rabbeinu Bachya quotes the Midrash that whenever the word "he saw" is used in reference to a wicked person it represents suffering and punishment. In this case, when it says Balak saw, it did indeed show an intention to cause suffering, as witnessed by his hiring Bilaam to curse the Jews. For a deeper understanding, we can look at the previous comment of Rabbeinu Bachya.

He asks why it just calls him Balak ben Tzipor and only later tells us he was the king of Moav, instead of saying, "Balak ben Tzipor, King of Moav, saw." He answers that once Balak saw that Sichon, on whom he depended for protection, was utterly destroyed, he did not feel secure in his reign and did not feel like a king.

If so, it makes more sense that he would be looking for a way to curse the Jews, instead of trying to negotiate with them. The situation caused Balak to feel insecure and worthless. The only way he saw to remedy that was to put down the people who were superior to him. That is why he hired Bilaam.

Such is the case with all people who feel worthless and low. They perceive things negatively and often act negatively upon them. It is a wicked trait to behave that way for one is seeing the suffering, not the good or the possible. Now we can better understand the Ramban. Even though there was a promise that his land would not be taken, and that the Jews would not fight with him, he didn't feel secure enough to be comforted by that. He felt humbled and insignificant and decided he would never be able to stop the Jews from crossing his land, so he didn't even try.

The wicked man looks and sees suffering, but the righteous man sees the word of G-d and the promise of the future. The foolish man tries to topple those superior to him, while the wise man attempts to reach their heights. Even Bilaam, with one eye, was able to see better than Balak, who saw through two jaundiced ones.

*When Samuel Johnson published his monumental work, "A Dictionary of the English Language" in 1755, it was hailed as a marvelous achievement. Indeed, it was the first dictionary to truly and comprehensively document the English lexicon.*

*At a party shortly after its release, a woman of some stature and ostensibly noble breeding looked disapprovingly at him and said, "Mr. Johnson, I am shocked and distressed that your dictionary contains so many vulgar and uncouth words."*

*Looking back and meeting her gaze without flinching, he replied, "Madam, I am shocked and distressed that you looked for them."*