

11-20-2007

# Balak

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## Recommended Citation

Sawilowsky, S. S. (2007). Balak. *Yalkut Shoshanim* (1), 41-47.  
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# *Yeshivas Pirchei Shoshanim S'micha & Yarchei Kallah*

November 20 – December 2, 2007 • Reistertown, New Jersey USA • Volume 2

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### Balak

1. Attributes of G-dliness are revealed in different names.<sup>1</sup> The name *Elokim* is the source of plurality and diversity of existence, as it is written, “In the beginning, *Elokim* created.”<sup>2</sup> In describing creation, the *Torah* invokes the name *Elokim*, the *Gematria*<sup>3</sup> of nature (*HaTeva*)<sup>4</sup>, 32 times.<sup>5</sup> In contradistinction, the name *HaShem* refers to past, present, and future united,<sup>6,7</sup> which is infinitely above nature’s time and space.

There also are levels of revelation in terms of prophecy.<sup>8</sup> There is prophecy that appears at night in a dream, which is the lowest level,<sup>9</sup> and prophecy that comes during daylight “face to face,”<sup>10,11</sup> which is the highest level. The former is a revelation from the name *Elokim*,<sup>12</sup> and the latter is a revelation from the name *HaShem*. Understanding this distinction permits a deeper understanding of this *Torah* portion.<sup>13</sup>

Balak, a wayward descendent of *Yisro*<sup>14</sup> (the father-in-law of *Moshe*), was King to<sup>15</sup> Moav. He sent emissaries to Bilaam,<sup>16</sup> the great prophet of the Gentile world,<sup>17</sup> to entreat him to curse,<sup>18</sup> *Ch”V’Sh*, the *B’nai Yisrael*. Bilaam replied to the emissaries, “Lodge here this night, and I will bring you back word, as *HaShem* shall speak to me.”<sup>19</sup> Why did Bilaam require they stay the night? The reason is because, as a Gentile prophet, Bilaam’s prophecy came to him only in a dream at night.<sup>20</sup> Thus explains *Rashi*, “The Holy Spirit rested on him only at night, as it is with all Gentile prophets.”<sup>21</sup>

The question arises as to what difference it would make to the emissaries that Bilaam intended to receive prophecy from the name *HaShem* instead of the name *Elokim*? The answer is Bilaam sought to demand higher remuneration for his services, because revelation from the name *HaShem* is a higher source than from the name *Elokim*. Thus, Bilaam specifically replied, “as *HaShem* shall speak to me.”

Nevertheless, it is written, “*Elokim*<sup>22</sup> came to Bilaam,”<sup>23</sup> “Bilaam said to *Elokim*,”<sup>24</sup> and “Said *Elokim* to Bilaam.”<sup>25</sup> From these verses it is clear that the prophecy of Bilaam was received only from the name *Elokim*. Yet, Bilaam reported to the emissaries “*HaShem* refused to give me leave to go with you.”<sup>26</sup> Even though the conversation the pervious night was in the context of a revelation from the name *Elokim*, Bilaam proceeded to convince the emissaries the following morning that the directive to decline their meager offer was from the name *HaShem*.

The unspoken message was received, and Balak sent a second entourage of greater wealth and honor than the previous company. They appealed to Bilaam, with their increased line of credit,<sup>27</sup> to accept the nefarious task from Balak. His response had the same purpose as before, saying that even if Balak were to pay his entire house of gold and silver,<sup>28</sup> Bilaam would not be able to surpass the word of *HaShem*.<sup>29</sup> Once again, Bilaam requested the emissaries remain the night: “In order that I might know what else *HaShem* will say to me.”<sup>30</sup> It is written, however, that “*Elokim* came to Bilaam.”<sup>31</sup>

The well-publicized event with his she-donkey occurred when Bilaam accompanied the emissaries.<sup>32</sup> The *Torah* states the donkey perceived the presence of an obstacle<sup>33</sup> blocking the path, but Bilaam did not see it. She left the path and went into a field. Bilaam struck her three times, but it was to no avail.<sup>34</sup> The donkey asked, “What have I done that you would strike me these three times?”<sup>35</sup> *Rashi* explains this was an embarrassment to Bilaam.<sup>36</sup> He commanded the

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highest price for his prowess in prophecy, yet the donkey could perceive the invisible obstacle while he could not.

Then, according to the *Talmud*,<sup>37</sup> the emissaries wondered why the great prophet was relegated to inferior transportation. Bilaam explained that his horse was grazing in the marshlands. The donkey spoke again and said, “Am I not your she-donkey?” Bilaam, surprised to be contradicted by his animal, clarified that her usual role was a beast of burden to transport his wares. The donkey protested that in fact she was Bilaam’s main transportation. Bilaam allowed that perhaps he had ridden her occasionally. The donkey interrupted and retorted, to Bilaam’s chagrin, that she was ridden from the moment he acquired her. The *Zohar* states Bilaam was put to shame by losing this verbal sparring match with his donkey in the presence of the very emissaries he sought to impress.<sup>38</sup>

Bilaam recognized the folly of his ways and said “I have sinned.”<sup>39</sup> Although he later accompanied Balak, he was forced to admit he was powerless to utter curses against the *B'nai Yisrael*, telling Balak he could only say those words *Elokim* placed in his mouth.<sup>40</sup> Although he told Balak he might communicate with *HaShem*, he proffered it only as a possibility: “Perhaps *HaShem* will come to meet me.”<sup>41</sup>

This new sense of humility elevated him, as it is written, “*HaShem* placed a word in Bilaam’s mouth.”<sup>42</sup> This heightened stature, however, was short lived. Bilaam soon returned to his wicked ways, as the *Zohar*<sup>43</sup> observes that the verse states “Balak built”<sup>44</sup> and “Balak and Bilaam offered,”<sup>45</sup> but Bilaam said to *Elokim* “I have built”<sup>46</sup> and “I have offered.”<sup>47</sup>

2. From the preceding, it is apparent Bilaam was classified by the *Torah* as a prophet. The *Sifre* notes on the verse “And there arose not a prophet since in *Yisrael* like *Moshe*”<sup>48</sup> that “in *Yisrael*” there never arose such a prophet. However, among the Gentiles there indeed arose such a prophet, and his name was Bilaam.<sup>49</sup>

The *Ramban*<sup>50</sup> and the *Malbim*<sup>51</sup> demur, stating the *Torah* classified Bilaam as a soothsayer.<sup>52</sup> Up until the exchange with the *B'nai Yisrael*, Bilaam was not a prophet. He only acquired prophecy temporarily in conjunction with his role with the *B'nai Yisrael*. Afterwards, prophecy was removed from him, as it is written, “Bilaam also, of the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the *B'nai Yisrael* slay”<sup>53</sup> with the sword.”<sup>54</sup>

It is possible to support this view by interpreting the quotation from the *Sifre* based on a statement made in the *Talmud*.<sup>55</sup> During the plagues, and exodus by the *B'nai Yisrael* from Egypt, the kings of the nations of the world gathered themselves around Bilaam, asking many questions about the meaning of the unusual events that they had witnessed. Bilaam was highly sought for his sagacity,<sup>56</sup> not for prophecy, because he was wise in the dark arts (i. e., *Klipah*).

The *Sifre*, therefore, means that just as *Moshe Rabbeinu* was the great sage of the holy arts (i.e., *Kedushah*) of the Jewish people, and there arose again no sage in *Yisrael* as great as he,<sup>57</sup> so too, *l'Havdil*, Bilaam was the great sage of the Gentile world, and there arose again no sage of the dark arts as great as he. This dichotomous binary pair meets the Biblical requirement “G-d has made one opposite the other.”<sup>58</sup>

The *Torah* states that Bilaam “knew supernal knowledge.”<sup>59</sup> The *Talmud* explains “he knew the precise moment<sup>60</sup> when the Holy One, Blessed is He, exhibits the attribute of anger.”<sup>61,62</sup> The *Talmud* further explains that when *Micah HaNavi*<sup>63</sup> exhorted the *B'nai Yisrael* to remember the plot against them by Balak and Bilaam, he was referring to Bilaam’s plan to curse, G-d forbid, the *B'nai Yisrael* at the precise moment when the attribute of anger was exhibited.

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The *Talmud* states that the plot was thwarted by G-d not permitting the attribute of anger to be exhibited all those days<sup>64</sup> Bilaam sought to carry out his plan.

Despite this interpretation, the initial position that Bilaam was classified as a prophet remains viable.<sup>65</sup> Historically, prophecy was extended to Gentiles (e.g., Shem, Ever). It was not until *Moshe Rabeinu* asked G-d to reserve prophesy as a distinguishing feature of *Yisrael* that it was removed, when the *Miskhan* was built,<sup>66,67</sup> from Gentiles.<sup>68</sup> However, Bilaam's career began prior to that, and hence *Abarbanel* writes,

Bilaam in certain places is called a soothsayer by the Scriptures, as it says 'Bilaam the son of Beor the soothsayer was killed by the sword.' In other places, the Scriptures testify the Holy Spirit rested on him. Nevertheless, credence should not be given to the words that claim his ability to foretell the future was based on his prowess as a soothsayer, and the title of prophet was merely honorific. Behold! Without a doubt he merited the rank of prophet, and it is the consensus of *Chazal* that indeed he was a prophet of the most superior rank.<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, *Rashi*<sup>70</sup> supports this view:

And if you ask why the Holy One, Blessed is He, allowed the Divine Presence to dwell on this wicked Gentile, the answer is to rebuff the nations of the world should they complain that they, too, would have been righteous if they only had prophets.<sup>71</sup>

The proof from *Rashi* emerges from *Sifsei Chachamim* on why this explanation is provided for the exchange with the princes of Moav (the emissaries of Balak), instead of later when Bilaam actually confronts the *B'nai Yisrael* and the Divine Presence dwelt on him.

Why didn't *Rashi* wait to raise this point on the relevant verse, "the Spirit of G-d rested on him?"<sup>72</sup> The reason is because there is no difficulty that would prompt an explanation regarding the later verse. Surely it was due to the honor of *Yisrael* that the Divine Presence dwelt on him to enable him to bless them.

*Aznaim L'Torah* concludes:

It was a great dignity [bestowed] and truly wondrous that Bilaam apparently received prophecy from the name *HaShem*. In truth, he [generally] spoke with the name *Elokim*, a much lower level of prophecy. Only when Bilaam was blessing *Yisrael* did he receive prophecy from the name *HaShem*.<sup>73</sup>

3. A question arises to those who hold Bilaam was characterized as a prophet regarding the specificity of the names *Elokim* and *HaShem*. It is written "*Elokim* showed anger because he went [with the emissaries], and an angel of *HaShem* placed himself in the way to thwart him."<sup>74</sup> According to this view, the verse should have said an "angel of *Elokim*" to be congruent with Bilaam's level of prophecy.

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The answer follows from definitional distinctions provided by the *Ari Z"l* regarding the appearance of three names *Kel*, *Elokim*, and *HaShem* in a contiguous Torah section. The name *Kel* is the source of kindness and mercy, as it is written “*Ki Kel Rachum HaShem Elokecha*,”<sup>75</sup> and as it says “*Kel Malei Rachamim*”<sup>76</sup> and “*Ki Kel Melech Rofei Ne'ehmon v'Rachamon Atah*.”<sup>77</sup> The name *Elokim* refers to judgment and statute.<sup>78</sup> In this configuration, the name *HaShem* is the third which arbitrates between the other two names, because the name *HaShem* has united within it both the attributes of kindness and judgment.

When the name *HaShem* contributes kindness, it bonds with the name *Kel*, which nullifies the attribute of judgment, revealing only kindness and mercy. Such a binding appears in the verse “How can I curse when *Kel* has not cursed, what wrath can be evoked when *HaShem* has not been angry?”<sup>79</sup> The merging of the attributes of these two Divine names releases mercy and kindness without boundaries and limitations. Thus, the *Zohar*<sup>80</sup> and the *Midrash Rabbah*<sup>81</sup> state “an angel of *HaShem*” in this context denotes an “angel of mercy.” *Matanos Cahunah* explains that it was sent “in order to [give Bilaam the opportunity to] return to his home and save him from sinning.”<sup>82</sup> Hence, the angel of *HaShem* was not sent as evidence regarding the level of prophecy of Bilaam, but rather, as a testimony to the limitless mercy and kindness of the Holy One, Blessed is He.

4. Three questions arise to those who hold Bilaam was characterized as a soothsayer.

a. Balak hired Bilaam to curse, G-d forbid, the *B'nai Yisrael*, because they were too mighty for him. “Perhaps I shall prevail that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land. I know that who you bless is blessed,<sup>83</sup> and who you curse is cursed.”<sup>84</sup> Although the verse concludes with a certainty (“know”), it begins with a doubt (“perhaps”).<sup>85</sup> Why call upon Bilaam if soothsaying may not an appropriate methodology for the task?

The answer is provided via an analogy given in *Yalkut Meam Loez*<sup>86</sup> regarding Balak and Bilaam. “How are those two compared? One has in his hands a knife to cut, but does not know when to cut. The other knows this, but does not have a knife.”<sup>87</sup> Balak only possessed the knife (i. e., sorcery). He could attack the *B'nai Yisrael*, but it would likely be fruitless. Hence, initially the verse was couched in terms of doubt. However, if Bilaam would contribute his knowledge of when to cut, together they would certainly succeed, G-d forbid. Therefore, the conclusion of the verse was expressed in terms of a certainty.

b. Why did Balak send emissaries “with divinations in their hands?”<sup>88</sup> *Rashi* explains they had “magic charms in their hands so Bilaam could not decline with the excuse that ‘my tools are not with me.’”<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, according to the view that Bilaam was characterized as a soothsayer, he was selected because of his expertise, and presumably had the tools of a professional. How could the tools from a rank amateur be of any value?

The answer is that according to the *Zohar*,<sup>90</sup> Balak was the superior sorcerer. His accomplishments in the dark arts greatly exceeded that of Bilaam. Indeed, Bilaam was considered as a blind man as compared with Balak. Therefore, Balak sent emissaries with his magic charms, the most powerful on Earth.<sup>91,92</sup>

c. What is the specificity of the names *Elokim* and *HaShem*? Even if Bilaam should chance (*Va'Yikar*)<sup>93</sup> upon prophecy, obviously it must be from the lowest level, which is from the name *Elokim*. When Bilaam announced “as *HaShem* shall speak to me” this would be a lie obvious even to Balak and his emissaries.

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This can also be answered by the definitions provided by the *Ari Z"l*, mentioned above. Bilaam knew the moment when the name *Elokim* was aligned in purpose with the name *HaShem*, implying the name *Kel* was not. The precise moment to utter the curse, or in the analogy above, the exact time to make the cut, is when the name *Elokim* is connected with the name *HaShem*. Hence, when Bilaam claimed “as *HaShem* shall speak to me,” he meant when the name *Elokim*,<sup>94</sup> which he could perceive, was connected with the name *HaShem*.<sup>95</sup>

5. The *Talmud*<sup>96</sup> concludes:

From the blessings pronounced by that wicked person you can learn what was in his heart. He wanted to say they should not have synagogues or houses of study – instead he said, “How goodly are your tents, O Jacob.” He wanted to say the Divine Presence should not dwell on them – instead he said, “Your dwelling places O Israel.”

“*HaShem Elokecha* transformed the curse<sup>97</sup> into a blessing because *HaShem Elokecha* loves you.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The names are actually one (*D'varim* 4:39), and “He and His name are one” (*Zohar* II:19b). G-d obviously transcends names (*Likkutei Amarim Sha'ar HaYichud V'HaEmunah* chapter 6, p. 80b). The intent is to describe attributes of G-dliness as they appear to the recipient.

<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., *Rambam Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 7:2.

<sup>2</sup>*B'rashis* 1:1

<sup>3</sup>Hebrew alphabet ciphered numeral system

<sup>4</sup>*Likkutei Amarim (Sha'ar HaYichud)* II:6

<sup>5</sup>*Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1 notes it is with 32 paths (comprised of 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and 10 digits) of Wisdom that the universe was created. See also *Kuzari* 4:25.

<sup>6</sup>Loc. cit.; *Ibid* :7

<sup>7</sup>*Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim* I:61) explains the name *Elokim* represents a specific characteristic of G-dliness, as do all other names of G-d except the name *HaShem*, which is above (and hence contains all) characteristics.

<sup>8</sup>*Rambam Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 7:1 notes that a fundamental tenet of Judaism is that G-d communicates to mankind via prophesy. 7:2 explicitly states there are multiple gradations of prophecy. The *Ari Zal* discusses these levels extensively in *Sh'ar Ruach HaKodesh D'rush* 1. See also *Derech HaShem* 3:4(5), *Zohar* I:183a, II:251b. Similarly, *Derech HaShem* 3:3(3) notes there are many levels of *Ruach N'vuah*, divine inspiration that is spiritually lower than prophecy.

<sup>9</sup>Beneath the level of prophecy is *Ruach N'vuah*, which is the Divine basis of the books of *K'suvim* in the *Tanach*. Lower than this was the *Urim V'Tuim* (*Talmud Yoma* 73b, *Moreh N'vuchim* 2:45), and beneath that was the *Bas Kol*, heard until the *Sanhedrin* ceased to function (*Radal to Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer* 8:53).

<sup>10</sup>*Shmos* 33:11; *Dvarim* 5:4, 34:10

<sup>11</sup>Or “mouth to mouth”, *BaMidbar* 12:8

<sup>12</sup>The name *Elokim* is also the *Gematria* of *BaChalom* (“In a dream”), which is how Avimelech (*B'rashis* 20:3) and Lavan (*Id* 31:24) received prophecy from the name *Elokim*.

<sup>13</sup>Terminology in this essay is based on the *Chassidic* paradigm. See *Zohar* 207a,b and elsewhere for a parallel explanation using terminology from the *Kabbalistic* paradigm, such as the left and right lower crown, etc.

<sup>14</sup>*Zohar* 196b; and also of Lavan, *Talmud Sanhedrin* 105a. Ruth was a descendent through Balak's grandson Eglon (loc cit; *Tosafos to Talmud Nazir* 23b).

<sup>15</sup>See *Rashi to BaMidbar* 22:5.

<sup>16</sup>According to *R' Simai* (*Talmud Sanhedrin* 106a), he was an advisor to Pharaoh, along with *Yisro* and *Eyov*.

<sup>17</sup>*Talmud Bava Basra* 15b states the other primary prophets of the Gentile world were Bilaam's father (see *Sanhedrin* 105a), *Eyov*, Eliphaz the Taimonite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zopher the Naamasite, and Elihu ben B'rachel

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the Buzite. (According to the *Ari Zal*, *Sefer HaLikutim to Parashos VaYeira*, *Yitzchak Avinu* and Elihu ben B'rachel HaBuzi (Eyob 32:2), one of the three comforters of Eyov, are one and the same.) They either lived prior to, or during the completion of the *Mishkan*, and hence the prophecy they received was not necessarily for the sake of *Yisrael*. (See also *Talmud Yerushalmi Sotah* 26b, *Talmud Sanhedrin* 105a, *Seder Olam Rabbah* 21, *Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah* 20:6, *Midrash Koheles Rabbah* 7:2, *Tanchuma* to Balak 12, and *Zohar* I:166b. There is an opinion that Elihu (a descendent of *Avraham Avinu*, *Targum* to Eyov 32:2) was in fact Jewish, *Tosafos* s.v. Elihu to *Talmud Bava Basra* 15b, *Zohar* II:166a, *Talmud Yerushalmi Sotah* 26b.)

<sup>18</sup>*BaMidbar* 22:6 states “*Arah*”, or to curse via herbs, snake heads, etc. *BaMidbar* 22:17 states “*Kapoh*”, or verbal imprecation. *Zohar* 198b and *Alshech HaKadosh to Parashios Balak* explain the former is a mild, whereas the latter is a very severe curse.

<sup>19</sup>*BaMidbar* 22:8

<sup>20</sup>This is the lower than prophecy occurring while awake, *Pirkei Rabi Eliezer* 28.

<sup>21</sup>To *BaMidbar* 22:8. So too *Midrash BaMidbar Rabbah* 20:12. The *Midrash Tanchuma* to Balak Chapter 8 and *Rabbeinu Bachya* bring various proof-texts.

<sup>22</sup>“How can it be that the Holy One, Blessed is He, comes to the wicked?...it was only a heavenly messenger... assuming the name *Elokim* as an emissary of justice” *Zohar* I:111b. Similarly, “Of Bilam it is said that he saw “the vision of *Shagai*” (*BaMidbar* 24:4)...[meaning he] only saw below G-d [e.g., angels], *Zohar* I:91a.

<sup>23</sup>*BaMidbar* 22:9

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid* :10

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid* :12

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid* :13

<sup>27</sup>*Rashi* to *BaMidbar* 22:17

<sup>28</sup>This was an obvious hint of Bilaam's price, meaning he also wanted a share of the spoils.

<sup>29</sup>*BaMidbar* 22:18

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid* :19

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid* :20

<sup>32</sup>*Saadia Gaon (Emunos v'De'os IX)* states it was not a contradiction to prohibit Bilaam to go with the emissaries (*BaMidbar* 22:12) and then permit it (*BaMidbar* 22:20), as the latter were different people. Being greater dignitaries, it enhanced Bilaam's esteem, heightening the message that G-d saved the *B'nai Yisrael* from such powerful enemies. However, see *Avraham Ibn Ezra*.

<sup>33</sup>It was an angel with a drawn sword, *BaMidbar* 22:22.

<sup>34</sup>*BaMidbar* 22:23-27

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid* :28

<sup>36</sup>To *BaMidbar* 22:29

<sup>37</sup>*Sanhedrin* 105b

<sup>38</sup>209b. *Ramban* to *BaMidbar* 22:33 demonstrates the emissaries witnessed the entire incident.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid* :34.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid* :38

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid* 23:3

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid* :5

<sup>43</sup>200a

<sup>44</sup>*BaMidbar* 23:2

<sup>45</sup>loc. cit.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid* :3

<sup>47</sup>loc. cit. *Alshech (B'rashis* 24:3) notes that Bilaam's level of prophecy ascended a second time after this incident, but clearly it was solely for the benefit of the blessings to *B'nai Yisrael*.

<sup>48</sup>*Dvarim* 34:10; see also *Midrash BaMidbar Rabbah* 14:20.

<sup>49</sup>To *Dvarim* 34:10. See *Rashi* to *BaMidbar* 22:8.

<sup>50</sup>To *BaMidbar* 22:31, 23:4, 23:16, 24:1

<sup>51</sup>To *BaMidbar* 22:7

<sup>52</sup>*Talmud Sanhedrin* 106a explains Bilaam initially was a prophet, lost his prophecy when he sought to curse the *B'nai Yisrael*, and from then on was a soothsayer.

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<sup>53</sup>Zohar 193b-194a states Bilaam was slain with his own sword by *Pinchas*, after *Zilya* from the tribe of *Dan* cornered him. According to *R' Chanina (Talmud Sanhedrin 106b)* Bilaam was between 30 to 34 when killed. Footnote <14>, however, indicates he would have been at least 100.

<sup>54</sup>*Yehoshua* 13:22

<sup>55</sup>*Zvachim* 116a

<sup>56</sup>*Likkutei Moharan* II:57, p. 28a

<sup>57</sup>It is written in *M'lachim* I 5:11 that *Shlomo HaMelech* was “wiser than all men,” and the *Ari Zal (Sefer HaLikutim to Parashos Yisro)* states this even includes *Moshe Rabeinu*. However, the *Ari Zal* explains that *Moshe Rabeinu* brought up and rectified the depths of evil and exile, leaving *Shlomo HaMelech* only the task of rotating the newly sanctified *Partzufim* face to face. In simpler terms, *Shlomo HaMelech* is dependent upon and merely completes the wisdom that *Moshe Rabeinu* fathoms.

<sup>58</sup>*Koheles* 7:14

<sup>59</sup>*BaMidbar* 24:16

<sup>60</sup>*Tehillim* 30:6, *Yeshayahu* 26:20. *Talmud Sanhedrin* 105b states it lasts as long as it takes to say “*Rega*” (“moment”), slightly more than  $6.11 \times 10^{-2}$  seconds in a 60 minute hour ( $1/58,888 \times 3,600$  seconds) according to *Talmud B'rachos* 7a and *Avodah Zorah* 4b. It occurs during the first three hours of the day, specifically when the rooster stands on one foot and its' comb pales from red to white.

<sup>61</sup>*Sanhedrin* 105b, *B'rachos* 7a

<sup>62</sup>*Malachi* 3:6 states “I am G-d and there is no change in Me.” Attributes such as anger are revealed or concealed only from the perspective of the recipient, but does not constitute a change in G-d, *Chas v'Shalom. Tikunei Zohar* 3b, *Rambam Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 1:12, *Likutei Amarim (Sha'ar HaYichud)* II:7. For a comprehensive discussion, see *Ma'amar Tanu Rabbanan Neir Chanukah* 5643 in *Kobetz HaTamim*, 278-289.

<sup>63</sup>*Micah* 6:5, recited in *Haftorah Parshios Chukas-Balak* and *Parashos Balak*.

<sup>64</sup>*Torah T'mimah* points out “all those days” commenced after Bilaam left his house and the path, as the verse states, “*Elokim* showed anger because he went” (*BaMidbar* 22:1).

<sup>65</sup>The *Zohar* 207b entertains a debate without resolution between *R' Yose* and *R' Yitzchak* on whether he was a prophet or a soothsayer. *R' Shimon*, however, concludes Billam was but a soothsayer.

<sup>66</sup>*Sh'mos* 25-28, 40:17

<sup>67</sup>After the *Miskhan* was built, Gentiles receive prophesy for the sake of *Yisrael (Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:12. Bilaam's career began prior to this.

<sup>68</sup>*Sh'mos* 33:16, 17. See also *Talmud B'rachos* 7b, *Bava Basra* 15b, *Midrash Sh'mos Rabbah* 32:3, *Seder Olam Rabbah* 21

<sup>69</sup>To Balak. However, see further his comments.

<sup>70</sup>See also *Rashi* to *Talmud Sanhedrin* 106a.

<sup>71</sup>To *BaMidbar* 22:8

<sup>72</sup>*BaMidbar* 24:2

<sup>73</sup>To *BaMidbar* 22:9

<sup>74</sup>*BaMidbar* 22:22

<sup>75</sup>*D'varim* 4:31. *Kel* is also used in conjunction with other attributes: *Kel Elyon (B'raishis* 14:20, *T'hilim* 9:2), *Kel Ra'ee (B'rashis* 16:13), *Kel Olam (B'rashis* 21:33 & cf.), *Kel Shagai (B'rashis* 28:3 & cf.), *Kel Kahno (Sh'mos* 20:5 & cf.), *Kel HaNe'eman (D'varim* 7:9), *Kel HaGadol (D'varim* 10:17), *Kel Y'shurun (D'varim* 32:15, 33:5; *Yeshiahu* 44:2), *Kel Day'os (I Shmuel* 2:3), *Kel HaKadosh (Yeshiahu* 5:16), *Emanu Kel (Yeshuahu* 7:14), *Kel Gibor (Yeshiahu* 9:6), *Kel Y'shuasi (Yeshuahu* 12:2), *Kel Tzadik (Yeshiahu* 45:21), *Kel Chanun (Yonah* 4:2), *Kel Echad (Malachi* 2:10), *Kel HaCavod (T'hilim* 29:3), *Kel Emes (T'hilim* 31:5), *Kel Chai'ya'e (T'hilim* 42:8), *Kel Sali (T'hilim* 42:9), *Kel Yeshuasaynu (T'hilim* 68:19), *Kel Yisrael (T'hilim* 68:36), *Kel HaShamayim (T'hilim* 136:26), *Kel HaNora (Nechemia* 9:32).

<sup>76</sup>Liturgical memorial prayer

<sup>77</sup>*Amidah* prayer

<sup>78</sup>See *Rashi* to *Shmos* 6:2. It also refers to severity (*Gevura*) and concealment (*Tzimtzum*).

<sup>79</sup>*BaMidbar* 23:8

<sup>80</sup>207b

<sup>81</sup>To *Parashos Balak*

<sup>82</sup>To *Midrash Rabbah Parashos Balak*

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<sup>83</sup>*Sforno* to this verse states Balak knew Bilaam really only had the power to curse, but not to bless. Otherwise, he would have requested Bilaam to bless him with success.

<sup>84</sup>*Bamidbar* 22:6

<sup>85</sup>This question is raised by many *M'Forshim*.

<sup>86</sup>Based on *Zohar* 210a, *Zohar Chadash* 54a

<sup>87</sup>To *Bamidbar* 22:6

<sup>88</sup>*Bamidbar* 22:7

<sup>89</sup>To *Bamidbar* 22:7

<sup>90</sup>210a

<sup>91</sup>The *Zohar* 207b states Bilaam loaded his donkey with his enchantments, but they were nullified by the angel of *HaShem*. Were it not for the divinations provided by Balak, the plot would have ended prematurely, instead of concluding with the blessings given to the *B'nai Yisrael*.

<sup>92</sup>Many *M'Forshim* explain “divinations in their hands” to be a euphemism for the gold and silver reward for soothsaying, not the actual tools themselves, obviating the question altogether.

<sup>93</sup>*Midrash Vayikra Rabbah* 1:13, *Ramban to Bamidbar* 24:1

<sup>94</sup>*Elokim* is also the *Gematria* of *Ha'Ahf* (“the anger”), *Dvarim* 9:19.

<sup>95</sup>It was a self-defeating act, as Bilaam inadvertently invoked the name *Kel* instead of the name *Elokim* in the cited verse, because G-d prevented a display of anger throughout his tenure in the employment of Balak.

<sup>96</sup>*Sanhedrin* 105b

<sup>97</sup>“*K'lalah*” is singular. Synagogues and study halls are an eternally transformed blessing, whereas the other curses Bilaam intended to utter (*Bamidbar* 24:5-9), *Rachmanah Litzlon*, eventually came to pass, *Talmud Sanhedrin* 105b.

<sup>98</sup>*Dvarim* 23:6