

- 1) Why do you think Bilaam was so keen to curse the Jewish people?
- 2) Imagine you were one of the Jewish people and you spotted Bilaam and King Balak at the top of the mountain, looking at the Jewish camp, what would you think was happening and how would you feel?
- 3) How does the word, stop, link to the Parasha?

Key Parasha Information

Summary

Five nations were concerned that the Jewish people were gaining strength and power and they didn't want the Jewish people to beat them in war, so they joined together and appointed a new king, Balak. His mission was to find out how the Jewish people were continuously successful in battle. He found out that they use the name of Hashem in a special way, to protect them so they decided the way to harm the Jewish people, would be to use the name of Hashem to curse them.

There was a non-Jewish prophet called Bilaam and Balak decided to employ him, to curse the Jews. Bilaam was so keen to do this, that he woke up early and saddled his own donkey. On the journey, the donkey saw an angel of Hashem (G-d) holding a sword, blocking her way and so she stopped. Bilaam couldn't see the angel and thought the donkey was being disobedient. He hit the donkey and the donkey carried on. This happened again. The third time the donkey stopped, Bilaam hit her mercilessly and miraculously, the donkey started to speak, "Why did I deserve to be hit three times? I have been your donkey for a long time and you know I don't stop unless there is a reason." At that moment, Hashem allowed Bilaam to see the angel.

The angel said, "You may continue but you won't be able to curse the Jewish people – you'll only be able to say the words that Hashem wants you to say."

King Balak took Bilaam to the mountains that overlooked the Jewish camp. Bilaam opened his mouth to curse the people and Hashem made him say good words – Ma tovu ohalecha ya'akov, mishkenotecha yisrael – How good are your tents, Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel. This compliment was because the way the tents were set up, ensuring everyone had privacy. He continued, saying that the avot (forefathers) are like rocks and the imahot (matriarchs) are like hills, both of which will support the world forever. The king was enraged that Bilaam hadn't cursed the Jewish people and took him to a different vantage point. The same thing happened twice more. Bilaam then had a prophesy about Mashiach (the messiah) coming.

A plague came upon the Jewish people when they became too close to the Moabite daughters and Pinchas (Phineas) saved them.*

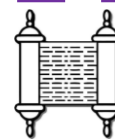
*this is a summarised paragraph as the content is not suitable for primary school level.

Discovery

Did you know that the way they found out the Jewish people's secret of success in battle, was through Moshe's father in law, Yitro.

Did you know that according to the commentaries, Bilaam was offered a feast, new magic equipment and money to come and curse the Jewish people but he was so eager to do it that he actually said that he'd come there for free.

Did you know that when Bilaam uttered words of praise for the Jewish people's tents, he was acknowledging their respect for each other's privacy, as their entrances did not face anyone else's entrance, so no one could look into anyone else's home?





Gratitude

THANK
YOU!

Who has done something special for you this week and what did they do? (If they are present, go up to them and say thank you!)

Games



1) Quiz

Ask questions about the Parasha Summary on sheet 1. Alternate between team A and team B. Children stand back to back and jump forwards if they know the answer. Whoever jumps forward (and lands) first, gets to answer.

2) Would You Rather...?

Link: Bilaam should have gone home but rather, he carried on, hoping to curse the Jewish people.

All children sit in a circle and one stands up and asks the group, "Would you rather..." and include two challenging situations, (e.g. "Would you rather wear gloves forever or a swimming cap forever?") Each person gives a response (but does not share their reasoning). Continue until they can't think of any more scenarios.

3) Humming Game

Children are divided into two teams and stand in a long line holding hands with their teammates, opposite the other team. Player 1 on both teams takes a deep breath and starts to hum one note, and does so until they're out of breath and they squeeze the hand of the next child in line, who takes over. Whichever team manages to hum for the longest, wins.

Story (One of the children can read this out loud – encourage them to use expression.)



"The next prize goes to someone who is so neat and tidy – they clean up the classroom when everyone has gone out to break – please put your hands together for Parker Cohen!"

Parker puffed out his chest as he came to collect his prize.

The head teacher, Mrs Ezekiel, carried on with the graduation ceremony at Choshen Primary. "Now we have a prize for someone who has shown they really care about others. Any time someone in the class is unwell, they call them to check how they're feeling when they get home from school. What a caring young lady she is. Please give a round of applause to Rosie Levy."

Rosie smiled as she was handed her prize. She didn't quite know how the school knew that she phoned people to check in but she was so happy to be recognised.

"Now we have a prize for a child who helps others whenever she can. She has been seen giving 1:1 tutorials on basketball techniques, maths catch-up and even flute lessons. She's so talented. No one deserves this prize more than ... Chana Solomon."

Chana Solomon was so proud of herself and her family cheered so loudly for her.

The head teacher continued through all the children in the class and each child in Year 6 was delighted that the school saw the very best in them. When it came to the last child, Asher Samuels, everyone, including staff, smiled before his good middot (character traits) were even mentioned. "And last but not least, a prize for a child who compliments everyone and makes them feel so good about themselves – Asher Samuels."

Asher was given the biggest cheer of all when he went up on stage to receive his prize. "If I may, I'd like to say something, please!" requested Asher. Mrs Ezekiel nodded and handed the mic to him. "I would like to thank Mrs Ezekiel and all the staff for taking the time to think about the good things we do. We really appreciate the way you have given us such a boost, not just this evening but all the way through our primary school journey. This is the best school and we are so lucky to have been pupils here. Thank you Mrs Ezekiel and to everyone at Choshen Primary."

1) What can we learn from this story and how does it connect to the Parasha?

2) Have you ever been given a prize or certificate and what was it for?

3) Why should we make an effort to compliment people?

Seventeenth of Tammuz

The Seventeenth of Tammuz, known in Hebrew as Shiva Asar b'Tammuz is a daylight fast day that starts the period in the Jewish calendar known as the Three Weeks. The walls of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) were broken many years ago on this day, ahead of the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash (Temple), around three weeks later.