

# The Jewish Weekly 200<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

## Your Son Will Live

### By Rabbi Bentzion Yaacov Orimland

## It Once Happened...



Rabbi Bentzion Yaacov Orimland

The story I want to tell begins on September 17th, 1963, when I was three and a half years old. At the time, we were living in McKee City, in Southern New Jersey, where my father had a poultry farm and where he served as the rabbi of the local Orthodox synagogue.

Incidentally, my father, Rabbi Gimpel Orimland, had been educated in Bnei Brak, Israel, where the famed Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky was his Torah study partner, and where his teachers were the Chazon Ish and the Steipler Gaon. In other words, he had a Lithuanian yeshivah background, which is as far away from Chassidism as you can get. And this makes this entire story all the more remarkable.

That particular day I had been with my grandmother and step-grandfather and was being driven back home. It was raining hard, visibility was poor, and we were in a car accident. It was a multiple car collision, as the Atlantic City Press reported later, and I went flying out of the windshield together with my grandmother. I landed with my face submerged in a puddle of water and I was drowning. My step-grandfather was killed instantly, but my grandmother managed to crawl over and pull my face out of the water.

I was rushed to the hospital, where they found that my brain was hemorrhaging, and they couldn't stop it. When my father arrived, he found me unable to see or hear, and unfortunately, the doctors offered little hope for my survival. In fact, they thought I wouldn't last much longer, and one of them actually told my father to hold off scheduling my step-grandfather's funeral as he would likely be burying both of us at the same time.

You can just imagine the shock that my parents were in at that moment. Fortunately, the president of my father's synagogue, a Mr. Gellman, had a brilliant idea, to contact the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing. At first my father demurred – it went against his grain to ask a chassidic rabbi for help – but he was desperate and he had nowhere else to turn.

Later, my father would tell the story of what happened next with a great deal of drama. He said he would never forget it. It was four o'clock in the morning when he placed the call to 770 and was instructed to call back in an hour. It was the longest hour of my father's life, but then he got to speak with the Rebbe who said to him: "The decree in heaven is over. Your son will live."

My father was stunned. As he would later say, "This statement lifted my spirits. But I couldn't stop wondering: how could a person just declare like that: 'The decree in heaven is over.' How did he know?" As someone raised in Lithuanian yeshivahs, he couldn't fathom that a chassidic Rebbe had this knowledge and power.

Then the Rebbe asked him to do three things: First to donate \$1,800 to charity – to any cause or organization other than Chabad-Lubavitch. It could not be Chabad-Lubavitch, the Rebbe was very specific about that. This was a lot of money in 1963, and my father had to borrow it, but he did as the Rebbe instructed. The second thing was to add "Bentzion" to my name – again the Rebbe was very specific about that. (This turned out to be the name of my great-grandfather who had no one named after him.) And the third thing: the Rebbe wanted the doctor to call him.

After much begging, my father got the doctor to call the Rebbe. And when he did, the Rebbe told him to administer a particular injection into the exact location of the bleeding in my brain to prevent further deterioration. The doctor was shocked that the Rebbe knew about this injection – this was something brand new on the market – and he didn't want to do it, because this injection was known to sometimes cause instant death.

In the end the doctor gave the shot, and I survived. But my recovery was not a simple matter. I was still in a coma for many months. I was like a vegetable. During this time, my father came to a couple of the Rebbe's farbrengens. At the most memorable one, the Rebbe urged my father, "Now is an et ratzon [an auspicious time on high] and you can ask anything you want, so I don't understand why you're not asking!"

Upon hearing this declaration from the Rebbe, my father did ask – obviously, he asked for my recovery, which eventually was granted.

One day, my mother was sitting by my bedside, when a new nurse who was unfamiliar with my condition came over and asked me, "What would you like to drink tonight sweetie, milk or soda?" And I mumbled, "Soda." My mother fainted on the spot.

This was not the end of the story, however. I went through a year and a half of intensive therapy. Although, after all that, I was speaking and eating and even feeding myself, my legs were barely moving. I could stand up only with the aid of two metal braces, and I could not walk at all.

And that's when my father took me to the Rebbe. He carried me into the Rebbe's office, and left me there, at the Rebbe's request. I have no recollection of what happened there, but I do know that after twenty minutes I walked out of that office on my own.

After that, I continued to limp, and I was also weak on the right side. But the worst of it was that I had trouble learning. When I was six, my father took me to see the Rebbe, who asked me questions about the Torah portion, and to each question I was forced to answer, "I don't know." So the Rebbe then asked me, "Why don't you know?" and I responded, "It must be because of the accident ... I have brain damage." At that the Rebbe smiled and took out a prayer book and said, "Pray from this siddur – especially the bedtime Shema – and you won't have anything to worry about."

It worked.


I saw the Rebbe again on the occasion of my fourteenth birthday. At that time, I asked him for many blessings for different areas of my life, but especially for the healing of the right side of my body – I asked to have more strength in my right hand.

The Rebbe responded to all my requests except for that last one. And when I asked again, he changed the subject and started talking about my Torah studies, so then I knew that this is the way it would be. My right side was not going to get any better.

But this hasn't stopped me from leading a full life. And is anyone surprised that I became a chassid of the Rebbe? Even my father became a chassid!

And today, as a rabbi, I do everything in my power to spread the message of Judaism as the Rebbe wants me to. When people ask me why I do what I do, I simply tell them that G-d gave me a second chance at life through the Rebbe's blessing, and I want to do the same for others.

*Reprinted from an email of Good Shabbos Everyone*



**Shabbat Times – Parshat Balak**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	7:13	8:31	9:06
Tel Aviv	7:28	8:34	
Haifa	7:21	8:35	
Be'er Sheva	7:29	8:32	



## Summoned by a Soul

By Hillel Baron

A strong, healthy and successful butcher lived in the city of Kozhnitz. He owned and ran a successful shop, until, out of the blue, his luck began to fail. More than half of the animals he bought and had slaughtered were deemed non-kosher, and he started to incur substantial losses.

To try to offset them, he worked harder and longer, often remaining at work late at night, doing tasks he would have once paid others to do. Eventually, the stress affected his health, and he died prematurely, broken-hearted and physically exhausted.

His widow and children were left burdened by debt. At first, the creditors were polite, but before long they began to pressure the widow to pay up. The odd jobs she managed to find were barely enough to feed her children, leaving nothing with which to pay her late husband's debts. Sad and bitter, she went to his grave and begged him to plead with G d for help.

Soon, she was summoned to the town rabbi, Rabbi Yisrael Hopsztajn, known as the Kozhnitzer Maggid.

She feared that her husband's creditors had summoned her to a court case before the rabbi, but the rabbi simply took out a sizeable sum of money and said, "This is for you. Take it and use it. You will receive more each week." He told her that whenever a creditor asked for money, she should refer them to him, and he would pay off the debts.

The woman could not understand how the rabbi, who was not known to be wealthy, had the money to help her, but she did not ponder the matter too deeply.

It was only after the shochet (ritual slaughterer) of the town passed away that she found out where the money had come from.

After the butcher's tragic death, the shochet started experiencing disturbing dreams in which the butcher would come to him and tell him that he was summoning him to a Din Torah (court case) in heaven. The dream happened once, twice, and then a third time, and the shochet feared he may soon pass on so he could face the butcher before the Heavenly Court. Worried, he went to consult with the Kozhnitzer Maggid.

The Maggid told him: "Next time he comes to you in a dream, tell him that according to Jewish law, a plaintiff must appear before the court in the location of the defendant, and your case must therefore be heard here in Kozhnitz. After this happens, come to me and we will arrange the court date."

It was not long before the shochet had another such dream, and he passed on the Maggid's message.

And so a court date was set.

When the day arrived, a partition was set up in the study hall. One side was empty, and on the other side sat the Kozhnitzer Maggid, the shochet, and the Kozhnitzer Maggid's assistant.

The Maggid handed his walking stick to his assistant, and instructed him: "Go to the cemetery, knock three times with my stick on the gravestone of the butcher, and tell him that he's being called for the Din Torah held by the Kozhnitzer Maggid in the town study hall."

A short while after the assistant returned, human wailing was heard from behind the partition.

The Kozhnitzer Maggid turned to the source of the noise and said: "Tell me, what is your claim against the shochet?"

The butcher explained the chain of events which had led to his mountainous debts, and eventually, his untimely death. "When I arrived on high," he continued, "I found out that when the shochet was pronouncing my cows non-kosher, he was being overly stringent. Many of my cows were, in fact, kosher, according to a straightforward reading of the law. But because he chose to needlessly declare the animals unfit, my business was destroyed and I left this world with a miserable trail of debt. Since it was his wrongful judgment that brought about my family's sorry state, I demand that the shochet pay off my debts and support my wife."

"And what do you have to say?" the Maggid asked the shochet. The shochet, being a G-d-fearing Jew, readily agreed to pay the butcher's debts and support his widow and orphans.

In order to protect the dignity of the shochet, who had meant no harm, the story was kept quiet for the remainder of his life.

Are we sometimes overly zealous at the expense of others? Have we caused financial distress to another? If the answer is in the affirmative, let us ensure we work to correct this.

Reprinted from an email of Chabad.Org Magazine.



There are six Parshiot which have the names of people. They are Noach, Chayei Sara, Yitro, Korach, Balak and Pinchas. Four of these individuals were truly outstanding people: Noach, Sara, Yitro and Pinchas.

One can also understand the choice of Korach to be a title for a Parsha. Thanks to this Parsha, throughout all ages we remember the dangers of machloket; what divisiveness within communities and within our nation can cause.

But what can be said about Balak, the title of this week's Parsha? Balak was a רשע, an outright, evil individual who sought to destroy the Jewish people, so why did he merit having a Parsha named after him?

Our sages differentiate between Bilam and Balak. With regard to Bilam we read how when visitors came to him he presented himself to them as a worthy, outstanding, upright, dignified, G-d-fearing individual. But when you read the text with closer scrutiny, when you see what he said and what he did, you will quickly conclude that the real Bilam actually was a very different person.

Not so Balak. With regard to Balak, what you saw was what you got. He was a bad person and he didn't hide that from others.

In the laws of kashrut, the archetypal food which we associate with non-kosher is swine. And that's actually very interesting, because according to Torah law, there are two requirements for an animal to be kosher: it needs to have cloven hooves and it needs to chew the cud.

The pig actually ticks one of these two boxes. It scores fifty percent because it does have cloven hooves. And then there are animals who tick neither of the boxes, so why is the pig, more than any other animal, associated with that which is not kosher?

Our sages explain, the pig lies on its back, it dangles its feet, it pronounces to the world 'look I've got cloven hooves, I am kosher!' But internally, there's a very different story there. That is the type of person Bilam was; he deceived people, he was totally insincere.

Balak however was different; his saving grace was the fact that at least he was a sincere person. You know, even a broken clock tells the right time twice a day. With all of Balak's evil, nonetheless we can identify one characteristic of his which was good, and that was his sincerity. And that is why our Parsha carries his name.

On a side note, Moshiach comes from King David and Ruth who are direct descendants of Balak.

So let us learn from Balak of this week's Parsha, remember how important it is for us to always be genuine and sincere, and let's pray for the soldiers, police and medical professionals protecting us and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet and happy Shabbat.

Yossi

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 0

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 104

NUMBER OF WORDS: 1455

NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5357

HAFTORA: Micah 5:6 - 6:8

Sunday, June 27, is Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, 17 Tammuz, a Public Fast Day, the beginning of the Three Weeks.

This week we study Chapter 6 of Pirkei Avot

**The Jewish Weekly**

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