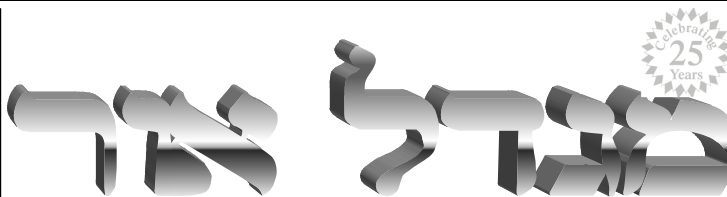


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I just trust you will  
want to.**

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*A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah*

**Mazel Tov! to  
Tzvi and Alexandra Cohen  
of Chicago, IL on  
Zalmy's Bar Mitzvah!**  
*May you have much Yiddishe  
nachas from him and the entire  
mishpacha!*

### **שבת Zmanim for**

Wesley Hills, NY

8:11 - הדלקת נרות  
8:29 - שקיעה  
8:25 - זק"ש מ"א  
9:18 - זק"ש גר"א  
10:32 - סוף זמן תפילה  
8:29 - שקיעה  
9:19\* - צאת הכוכבים  
9:42 - צאת 72

\* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

### **Now You Know!**

We are about to enter a period called "Bain HaMetzrim, between the straits." It is a three-week span from the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz to Tisha B'av, during which both of our holy Temples were destroyed.

The first Bais HaMikdash was destroyed by the Babylonians, and Chazal say that three sins led to its destruction: Idolatry, Bloodshed, and Immorality.

The second was destroyed because of Sinas Chinam, baseless hatred, name calling, and character assassination. While the first one was rebuilt after 70 years, the second one is still in ruins today, thousands of years later, proving that interpersonal hatred is worse than those three cardinal sins.

The Vilna Gaon explains that a person can be sucked into those sins, but they remain external to him. Hatred of others, though, comes from an internal flaw.

When the second Bais HaMikdash was destroyed, there was a group of ultra-nationalists who felt the Jews had to fight for themselves and defeat the Romans. These Beryonim burned the food supply and caused much suffering in their quest to be proven right, and this led to the destruction.

We must strengthen ourselves not militarily, but in our desire to serve Hashem and love our fellow Jew as He wants.

This is the only weapon we have in our arsenal to defeat our enemies and bring back the Bais HaMikdash.

### **Thought of the week:**

**It takes more power and  
strength to relinquish control  
than it does to seize it.**

**"וילכו זקני מואב וזקני מדין וקסמים בידם..." (במדבר כב:ז)**

**"And the elders of Moav and the elders of Midian went, with their charms in their hands..." (Bamidbar 22:7)**

When Balak ben Tzipur, a prince of Midian, saw how the Jews had conquered Sichon and Og, he was very afraid that his people didn't stand a chance. He therefore consulted with the elders of Moav and suggested bringing in a secret weapon – Bilaam, the sorcerer and prophet. They so appreciated Balak's foresight that they made him King of Moav, so he could act on their behalf and defend them.

Balak sent messengers to Bilaam to request that he come to Balak and curse the Jews on his behalf. Representatives of both Midian and Moav went, and, the Torah tells us, they took "charms" in their hands.

Rashi explains this in two ways. First of all, they brought all manner of sorcerous tools with them, lest Bilaam say, "I can't act right now because I don't have what I need to curse them." By bringing these various charms and talismans, they would be able to pigeonhole Bilaam to see if he was legitimately able to help them.

Then Rashi says, they had a "sign" for themselves that if Bilaam would come with them right away, he would be able to help, but if not, that was a sign that their efforts with him would come to naught, and they would turn aside. Indeed, when Bilaam did not immediately agree to help them and instead asked that they stay the night to see what Hashem would tell him, the elders of Midian turned and left.

What was this all about? Why did they bring magic to the magician, would he not have everything he needed at his home base? And what was the point of this omen of whether Bilaam would come with them straight away or not? He made a valid point that he had to hear what Hashem would say to him.

Perhaps there was something about the people of Midian that we can learn from this. Yes, Bilaam would likely have had the tools of his trade, but they didn't want to rely on him. They came prepared to refute any claims that he might come up with. More than that, if he gave them any pushback, they would take it as a sign that it was a fruitless endeavor.

Why? Because they were convinced that they had to be the masters of their own destiny. When they wanted to make the Jews sin, they even sent their own princess, Kozbi, to lure them to their destruction. When they came to Bilaam, they left nothing to chance. They would be the arbiters of their own fate. Therefore, when Bilaam asked them to wait and see what Hashem would say to him, they were out the door.

Moav was different. They waited, and when Balak worked with Bilaam, he kept trying to see if it would work out a different way. Why was Moav different? Perhaps because they came from Lot, who had been influenced by Avraham to see the hand of Hashem. Avraham, who declared, "I raise my hand to Hashem," was the ultimate champion of Hashgacha Pratis and recognizing that we are not in control. Moav's reward for being open to Hashem's guidance was a daughter named Rus, who would join Am Yisrael and be the ancestor of our royal lineage, including the king we are all waiting for, the Melech HaMoshiach.

*A man was sending his family on a journey and looked to hire a skilled driver for them. He had three candidates, and asked them the following question: "If you were driving along the edge of a cliff, how close could you get and still feel comfortable that you were in control?"*

*"I could be just a foot away from the edge and be confident," replied the first. The second countered, "I would be fine just six inches from the edge."*

*The third driver just shook his head. "I don't know about those two," he said, "but I wouldn't trust myself to go anywhere NEAR the edge." The third driver got the job.*