

הַזְרָעִים בְּדַמָּעָה בְּרִינָה יִקְצְרוּ

בנשיאות מו"ר הגאון ר' יעקב אדלשטיין זצ"ל



בַּלָּק

Newsletter Number 736 Year 15 This newsletter is dedicated for an Aliyah of the Neshamah of My grandmother Simchah bat Serach - 15 of Tammuz 5785

A word from the editor:

In this week's Parashah, Balak, the king of Moav, asks Bilam harasha (the wicked Bilam) to try and curse Bnai Yisrael. Bilam tries to acquire merits for cursing Bnai Yisrael by bringing sacrifices for Hashem as it says (23, 29) "And Bilam said to Balak, build for me seven altars here" and in the end Hashem turned their curses into blessings.

Balak built seven altars three times and on each altar he brought two sacrifices. In total, he brought 42 sacrifices. Our sages teach (Nazir 23): Rebbi Yehudah says, Rav says, a person should always toil in Torah and Mitzvot even if it is not for the sake of heaven because eventually he will come to do it for the sake of heaven. We see this by Balak. Balak did not bring the sacrifices for the sake of Heaven (he brought them so that Hashem would agree to curse Bnai Yisrael) and even so, he was rewarded by meriting Rut as a descendant. Who descended from Rut? **David HaMelech**.

Rav Moshe Feinstein Zt'l writes that for many years people would come to him and ask him to pray for them or ask him for a blessing for all different things - health, children, livelihood, finding a marriage partner, spiritual success and material success and Rav Feinstein would fulfill their requests and pray for them.

In his Sefer (Shoot Igrot Mosheh, volume 4, Siman 51), Rav Feinstein explains his actions, "Even though I am not worthy to bless anyone, but we see that Hashem listened to the other nations even though they were not on a high level. If so, then why would Hashem not listen to my prayers and blessings?

Our sages said, "Do not let the blessing of a regular person be light in your eyes". In Gemara Taanit (23 and 24), there are a few situations mentioned of righteous people who prayed and were not answered and on the other hand, simple people who prayed and were immediately answered. In this way, Rav Feinstein proves that anyone's blessings are able to be fulfilled.

Rav Mordechai Eliyahu Zt'l brings down the explanation of the Arizal on the verse of Tehillim: "Hashem is close to all who call Him, to all who call him with sincerity". It seems that the verse is repetitious. It says to those who call Him in the present tense and in the second part of the verse it says to those who call Him in the future tense. These questions can be answered according to another verse. In another verse, we are taught that there are two different levels of people. "And it will be that before they call out, I will answer them" - these are Hassidim who are answered by Hashem even before they call out to Him. There are people who are not on such a level, nevertheless their prayers are answered, but they have to put effort in their prayers and then they are answered. About them the verse says, "In the midst of them speaking, I hear".

This verse is referring to those in the first part of the Tehillim about whom it says, "Hashem is close to all who call him". These are the people who need to pray first and then they are answered even though they are not worthy. There is an added benefit for those who will call out in the future tense; even though they have not called out yet, Hashem is close to them.

This is the wording of the Arizal: "One who wants to be part of this group, there is a condition. He needs to be part of the Hassidim, those who always concentrate during their prayers and sincerely call out to Hashem, not just lip service. This is why the verse says "sincerely". One who wants to be part of the Hassidim and be answered, needs to be "sincere".

However, one who always prays to Hashem in his time of trouble, Hashem will not be stringent with them that it should be sincere and with complete concentration.

This teaches us that no prayer goes unanswered and our heartfelt prayer is that Hashem should say enough to our troubles and redeem us now.

Balak - A summary of the points in the Parashah

1. Balak, the king of Moav, is afraid of Bnai Yisrael who were victorious in war with Sichon and Og and who are living close to his border. Therefore, he calls Bilam to come and curse Bnai Yisrael.

2. Bilam asks permission from Hashem and Hashem tells him not to curse them and not to bless them. When Balak's messengers come to Bilam a second time, Hashem allows Bilam to go to Moav and speak only what Hashem allows him to speak (22, 8-20).

3. The donkey that Bilam is riding on sees an angel and strays off the path. Bilam hits the donkey and the donkey rebukes Bilam. Then Bilam's eyes are "opened" and he is able to see the angel as well. The angel warns him that he is only to say what Hashem tells him to say (22, 21-35).

4. The meeting between Balak and Bilam (22, 33-41).

5. Bilam teaches in three places about building seven altars and bringing sacrifices to Hashem (42 sacrifices in total) and he tries to curse Bnai Yisrael in each of the places that he builds the altars. Hashem changes his curses to blessings. Balak gets angry at Bilam for blessing Bnai Yisrael and Bilam continues on to give prophesy about the greatness of Bnai Yisrael in the future, that Bnai Yisrael will conquer the whole world and Mashiach will come (23, 1-30; 24, 1-25).

6. Bilam advises Balak to make Bnai Yisrael sin instead of cursing them and he is successful in making them sin with idolatry and illicit relations (25, 1-4).

7. Because Bnai Yisrael sin, a plague breaks out and 24,000 people die. Pinchas, the son Elazar HaCohen, kills the leader of the tribe of Shimon together with the daughter of Balak and the plague stops (25, 5-9).

"And Hashem opens the mouth of the donkey..." (22, 28)

Why was it necessary to do this miracle of the donkey opening its mouth and speaking like a human? We know the words of the Mishnah (Ethics of the Fathers, 5, 6), "Ten things were created on Erev Shabbat, at twilight and these are... and the mouth of the donkey". A lot of people try to explain the significance of the fact that the mouth of the donkey was created specifically at this time. We know that a person is greater than an animal because he has

The gift of speech as Onkelus explains (Bereishit 2, 7) "And man became a living soul" - a speaking spirit.

From here we see that if a person sanctifies his speech, he is better than the animal, but if he desecrates his speech, then he is not better than the animal. We learn this in Ethics of the Fathers (5, 9) "A wild animal came into the world because of false oaths". If a person desecrates his speech by making a false oath, then he drops down to the level of the wild animal; therefore, the people themselves became wild animals (Shabbat 121). Bilam wanted to desecrate his power of speech and curse Bnai Yisrael - Hashem opened the donkey's mouth to hint to Bilam that an animal can also speak and therefore there is no greatness to man.

All the days of the week are mundane; Shabbat is holy and twilight on Friday hangs between mundane and holy. So too, the mouth of an animal hangs and stands: If a person merits to make his speech holy, then only he will speak and not the animal, but if man desecrates his speech, then an animal is also worthy of speaking. This is why the mouth of the donkey was created at twilight on Friday. [Luach Erez]

"He sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of his people..." (22, 5)

Rashi asks, "Why did Hashem rest his Divine presence on a wicked non-Jew? Hashem did this so that the other nations would not have an excuse and say, "If we had prophets, we would repent and do good". Therefore, Hashem gave them a prophet.

Rebbi Gedaliah Eismann Zt'l, the Mashgiach of Kol Torah Yeshivah, said that this miracle of Hashem resting His presence on the wicked Bilam is greater than the miracle of the donkey speaking. There is only one level of difference between an animal and a person. However, the level of a prophet is much greater than that of a regular person. We have to understand, won't the nations of the world now have a greater excuse. Why did Hashem give them a prophet that made them sin. Why did He not give them a prophet who would bring them to do good?

Rebbi Eliezer Lopian Zt'l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Torat Emet in London, explains that the nations of the world will complain that they do not have the power to create a prophet who can give prophesy through his own power of fixing his character traits. Their advice was that Hashem should place the power of prophesy on one of the smart non-Jews and that he will bring them to do good. Hashem showed them that a person who does not work on his character traits, even if he is a prophet as great

as Mosheh Rabeinu, Lehavdil, will remain corrupt and not only will the prophesy not raise him up to be great, but it will cause

him only to become more haughty.

We learn from here that the main part of a person's growth is through fixing his character traits and there are no shortcuts to take. Without doing this, one cannot merit Torah. Like the Gra Zt'l says, "The main part of a person is breaking his bad character traits and if not, what is the point of him being alive". The only way one can succeed spiritually in his Torah learning is dependent on one fixing his character traits.

Rebbi Yechezkel Levenstein Zt'l asked one of his students what the source of Rebbi Shmuel Rozovski's success was in having so many students.

The student answered it was because he has such a vast Torah knowledge. Rebbi Yechezkel answered that it was not his Torah knowledge; it was the fact that he had such refined character traits that he was successful.

"Lodge here for the night, and I will give you an answer when the Lord speaks to me..." (22, 8)

Rashi explains, "Maybe it is beneath his dignity to allow me to go with anyone but higher ranking nobles than you".

Rebbi Mordechai Tzukerman Zt'l explains that Bilam was constantly running after his own honor and making the excuse that he was really trying to guard Hashem's honor. This mistake is often made by a lot of people who claim that they are not doing things for their own honor, but rather for the sake of Hashem's honor.

How does this happen? Rebbi Haim Shmulevitz Zt'l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Mir, says this shows the innate powers of the soul that a person has.

Bilam is going to fulfill Hashem's commandment, but he interprets the commandment according to his own desires, which is that Hashem wants him to be honored and not to go with people that are lower than himself; they should be great and important people that he is going with. This is a trait that people have. They hear what they want to hear.

In Yeshivat Slabodka in Lithuania on Shavuot morning, cheesecake was served and this was a delicacy that was not found in those days. The Saba of Slabodka Zt'l once mentioned to the boys that he doesn't know if the all-night learning was just for the sake of eating the cheesecake in the morning with a calm heart. In this way, he taught to boys to look into themselves and make sure their actions were not tainted with the wrong thoughts.

One day Rebbi Meltzer Zt'l met with the Saba of Slabodka and he mentioned what the Saba of Slabodka had said on Shavuot. Rebbi Meltzer then asked him, "The students of the Yeshivah are excellent students so how could you suspect them of such a thing"? The Saba of Slabodka answered that he learnt this from a story in the Gemara (Moed Katan 10) about Mar Ukva who was very stringent with the laws of mourning and he mourned his father-in-law's death even though he had no obligation to do so.

Rav Huna said to him, "Do you want the meal of mourning"? The Saba of Slabodka explained that Mar Ukva was very separated from the physical pleasures of this world, but he ate from the meal of mourning. Rav Huna asked him that maybe his stringency to eat from the meal was because he had a little bit of a desire to eat from the meal for the sake of the physical and he did not realize it. This shows us that even a great Torah scholar has to check himself and see if he is doing things for the right reasons... [Lev Mordechai, page 67]

"Behold (Hen) it is a nation that will dwell alone, and will not be reckoned among the nations". (23, 9)

The word Hen consists of the letters Hey and Nun. In the letters of the Aleph Bet there are letters that correspond with each other – Aleph with Tet (equals 10), Bet and Chet, Gimmel and Zayin, Daled and Vav and Yud and Tzadi, Caf and Pey, Lamed and Ayin, Mem and Samech. We see that Hey and Nun are alone.

Bnai Yisrael has no connection to the other nations either and this is the explanation for the extra word of "Hen". It is telling us that Yisrael is a nation that dwells alone and, therefore, "will not be reckoned among the nations".

"Balak the son of Tzippor saw all that Yisrael had done to the Emorites". (22, 2)

The most important thing is that Bnai Yisrael should have love, brotherhood, and friendship between them. This fact alone brings about great salvations and chases away the accusing angels as it says (Hoshea 4, 17), "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone".

The Admor Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk Zy'a was asked by his brother, "My brother please tell me how it is that you perform all these great miracles and deeds. Please teach me so that I can do the same". Rebbe Elimelech answered him that he is able to do so because he and all the righteous people are connected to one another and have great love between them.

It is known that at this time when Balak and Bilam were trying to come against Bnai Yisrael, Bnai Yisrael was one complete nation who was unified as the generation of the desert had died out. Now the nation was ready to enter Eretz Yisrael as one unified nation except for the 24,000 who died because of Bilam. Because of their unity, love, and peace that they had, the two kings, Sichon and Og, fell before them in war.

This is why the verse says "And Balak saw". The word see here means understand just as it says elsewhere in the Torah (Bereishit 18, 2), "And he saw and he ran to greet them". Here to the word see means understand.

Balak understood that Bnai Yisrael succeeded in killing these two great kings because of "Emori", which means love and friendship as we see elsewhere (Devarim 26, 17), "You have selected Hashem today" because of the strength of love that Bnai Yisrael had between them. Therefore, "Moav was very afraid of Bnai Yisrael....and Moav said to the elders of Midyan".

Even though these two nations hated each other, they made peace with one another as Rashi says, "They wanted to resemble Bnai Yisrael, the holy nation. However, all the effort they put in was in vain like our sages say (Sanhedrin 71) "The gatherings of the wicked are bad for themselves".

[Maor VaShemesh]

"May my soul die the death of the upright and let my end by like this". (23, 10)

In the Gemara (Sanhedrin 105) it is written, "From the blessing of this wicked person we see what curse was in his heart. He said how great are your tents Yaakov. Hashem changed the bad intentions of his curses to blessings."

There is a story of a Jew who came to the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh and said, "I want to repent, but the condition is that I die right away after I repent because I cannot live another fifty years without desecrating Shabbat or eating without a blessing. So the Ohr HaChaim replied to him, "You think you are being smart to die as a Jew. You need to be smart to *live* as a Jew. Live fifty years without desecrating Shabbat. Live fifty years saying blessings before and after you eat. Live fifty years putting on Tefillin every day. This is what it is to be a Jew. To die as a Jew does not prove anything. The same thing was with Bilam. He knew that the end of a Jew is great as he merits Gan Eden and one hour in Gan Eden is more beautiful than all of this world. Bilam wanted to be a Jew, but only at the end of his life right before he died (he wanted to die like the forefathers), but he was not ready to live a life without illicit relations or other sins. Therefore, he said, "And let my end be like his," specifically "my end;" however, because he was completely bad, he did not merit this and in the end Bilam was killed by a sword. (Kol Yehudah)

The Mishnah in Ethics of Our Fathers says "One who causes the community to be meritorious, no sin will come by his hand. One who causes the community to sin, is not given the opportunity to repent."

Rebbe Shalom Shwadron Zt'l tells a story that he heard from the one it happened to:

There was a Jew whose father was a Rabbi in the cities of Europe before World War II. In the city he lived, there were Jews who had assimilated and one of them was Mosheh Chayat. When Mosheh was sitting Shivah for his father, the Rabbi of the city came to him and convinced him to say Kaddish for his father. He also convinced him to come to Beit Knesset after the Shivah to say Kadish. It is a known thing that a Jew might be very far from Hashem, but when he is emotionally charged, especially after a parent passes away, he reconnects to Hashem.

Mosheh Chayat arrived at the Beit Knesset and the Rav greeted him very warmly and showed him great affection every time he came. Slowly, slowly, Mosheh repented and began to keep Torah and Mitzvot. He became very well known in the community. If someone spoke during Kadish, Mosheh would rebuke him. If someone would not pray properly, Mosheh would rebuke him. If someone did something inappropriate,

homes in the mountains above. He stayed at one of the homes in the resort. He felt horrible and was not interested at all in what was going on around him.

and the war was at its greatest height and the son of the Rabbi was saved from the war.

The ones who saved him took him to Switzerland where there was a city down below and resort Mosheh rebuked him either in a pleasant or harsh way depending on the person and situation.

Then the day came when the Nazis, Yimach Shemam, arrived To further understand what he was going through, we need to understand that those who went through the war had not seen Jews any Jews for years, not a Jewish congregation, not a Jewish place. The Jews who survived knew they had not place to return to and they knew that no country wanted them.

They were at an all time low as far as having motivation to go on with life. This is a generation that is impossible to judge.

Behold, one Shabbat, the son of the Rav began to feel much better. Since he felt better, he had a great desire to smoke a cigarette on Shabbat morning.

We are talking about Shabbat without Kiddush; who knows if he was even wearing a Kippah.

The Yetzer Hara (evil inclination) overcame him and he began to smoke. One sin brings about another and he continued on to smoke another cigarette. In between this resort area and the city, there were aerial trams that people would ride on to get down to the city to go shopping. Because the Yetzer Hara had taken over him, he decided to get onto one of these trams on Shabbat and ride down to the city. When he arrived down below in the marketplace, he looked out of the window and behold who does he see standing before him? Lo and behold, it is Mosheh Chayat...

"Mosheh Chayat is standing and looking at me. In a moment's time, he is going to see me and he is going to understand that the son of the Rav is sitting in an aerial tram on Shabbat smoking a cigarette! He became frozen from fear.

Mosheh Chayat does not compromise on anything. He is going to yell at me"! Immediately he threw his cigarette on the floor and ran out of the tram as soon as he could. He walked back up to the resort and he never desecrated Shabbat again.

Years passed by and the son of the Rav was sitting next to Rabbi Shalom Shwadron in England.

Rebbi Shalom Shwadron asked him, "Tell me my friend, have you seen Mosheh Chayat since that time"? The Jew answered him, "No I haven't".

Rebbi Shalom asked him, "According to what you saw during the war, do you think it is possible that Mosheh Chayat survived the war"? The Jew replied, "You know what? I never thought about it. Truthfully, I do not think it is possible that he survived. Mosheh Chayat was my father's age and the old people were taken first. Even if he was not killed right away, it is impossible that he survived the war".

Rebbi Shalom said to him, "Then explain to me what he would be doing in the marketplace on Shabbat". The Jew began to tremble and said, "I don't know. I never really thought about it".

Rebbi Shalom answered him, "I will explain it to you. It says that one who causes the community to be meritorious, no sin will come by his hand. Your father got Mosheh Chayat to repent and suddenly in Heaven they see that you are going lower and lower and not keeping the Torah and Mitzvot. Therefore, they sent Mosheh Chayat down from Gan Eden to save the son of the Rav who caused Mosheh to repent.

[As told over by Rabbi Shalom Schwartz Shlita; the source for the story is Kol HaLashon]



WITH BLESSINGS OF TORAH RON BARINA

Rav Ron Barina is a 30 year veteran of the air-force. Since he retired, he has served as a consultant who travels from Israel to USA to also meet with USA air force representatives in the area of engineering/technology. He now dedicates most of his time to learning, teaching and spreading the sweet Torah. He learns with the Gaonim Rav Meir Mazuz Shlita, Rav Yaakov Edelstein, and Rav Avraham Yosef Shlita. He resides with his lovely wife and children in Ramat Hasharon. If you travel to Israel, you are welcome to visit his house and drop in on a class at Hashomer Street, #8, Ramat Hasharon.

"The preparation of the heart are man's, but the answer of the tongue is from Hashem" (Mishlei 16, 1)

L'Huy Nishmat:

My teacher, my father: Yaakov ben Rahel and Tzadok

My beloved mother: Sarah-Serach bat Simchah and Yosef

My father-in-law: Marchus Mordechai ben Rivkah and Yosef

My grandmother Simchah bat Serach - 14 th of Tammuz

Mosheh Aharon ben Meir Yitzchak : Meir Ben Simchah

Naftali ben Roza : Yaakov Yisrael ben Galit: Rav Meir ben Kamsana

Menachem Mendel ben Avraham and Tziporrah

The Rabanit Mina bat Mordechai Shemuel Yaffa Nidra bat Neima

Miriam bat Aziza : Rahel Bulur bat Miriam : Katun bat Chaviva

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Due to this newsletter containing the name of Hashem, it Genizah (proper burial). Please do not throw away.