



# OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI  
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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## ***Thoughts on Parashat***

### **BALAK**

**Year 23**

***by Dayan Abraham David***

Balak sends a message to Bilam to come and curse them so he should strike them and drive them away. Balak says there is a great multitude of people covering the land on my borders, a people who have come out of Egypt. Balak uses the word 'yatza' they have left Egypt. But when Bilaam relays the message to G-d, he changes the word 'yatza' to say Heneh Haam Hayotze mimitzrayim means coming out of Egypt not in the past tense 'yatza' why did he change (Or Hachaim asks this question). We could say that Bilaam who hated the Jewish people spoke derogatively about them, that even after 40 years they have not come out of the bad influence of Egypt and they are still in the process, they are 'yotze' and not 'yatza' which means they have come out from the influence of Egypt.

Bilaam tells Hashem about Balak's messengers and asks Hashem if he can go with them to curse the Bnei Yisrael. Hashem tells him 'Lo telech emahem lo ta-or et haham ki baruchue: Do not go with them and do not curse the people for they are blessed.

Bilaam wakes up in the morning and tells the messengers that G-d does not allow me to go with you, but does not say the second part of G-ds message for he does not allow me to curse them for they are blessed. He misleads the messenger to think that they are not important enough for Bilaam to go with

them, so Balak sends more important ones with bigger promises. His lust for kavod and money does not allow him to admit that he is not allowed to curse and end the matter. The new messengers of more importance and greater promises come from Balak. Bilaam again approaches Hashem and says his request, Hashem tells him if they come to call you go with them but you will only be able to say only what I tell you. The Ibn Ezra asks a question it seems Hashem had retracted from what he said before. He had told Bilaam not to go and now he allows him to go. He gives an answer with the words of our chachamim, Baderech she adam rotze lalechet molichim oto. That G-d does retract if a person persists, as a policy in the Becherah G-d gives man. The person who has pushed for it will have to bear the consequences of his action against the good G-d had planned for him. He brings a support from the story of the meraglim that Hashem had told them to go and inherit the land (that they could walk in as one gets an inheritance) and miraculously succeed against the canaanites. But the Bnei Yisrael insisted on sending the spies, Hashem did not stop them and said shelach lecha if you so wish send them but they would have to bear the consequences of not following Hashem's command to just walk into Eretz Yisrael.

The Ramban argues with the comparison of the meraglim and says the rule of Baderech adam rotze l'lecheet does not apply when Hashem says explicitly not to go, he does not retract whereas by the meraglim Hashem did not tell them explicitly not to send spies.

The Ramban explains that Hashem did not in fact forbid Bilaam to go but told him there is no point in going if you wish to curse them for they are blessed and you may not curse them. But when Bilaam came back and asked again wanting very much to go Hashem did not want to deprive him of any honour or benefit he might be allowed him to go but with a condition as before do these not go with an intention to curse was no retraction. Bilaam went with the bad intention to curse them and Hashem became angry. We could also explain with the following changes we notice in the words of the Pasukim. When Hashem told him the first time not to go the word *emahem* is used, *lo telech emahem* 'Emahem means as one with them with the same thought and intentions the messengers had ie to curse them. The second time, Hashem tells him he may go. It uses the word 'etam' *kum lecha etam*. Etam means in their company not as one as the word *emanhem* means. The targum Yonatan Ben Uzziel explains the word *etam le tayel etam*, to stroll with them. So there was really no retraction for G-d had never allowed Balaam to go with the intentions of the messengers to be at one with them. So why was Hashem angry when he went, the answer is in the words of the pasuk 'Vayelech im sare moab'. Im depicts together with them as one. Vayichar af Hashem for he had disobeyed.

### TORAH GEMS

The Parasha tells us of Bilaam, the greatest prophet of the nations, our Rabbis add that in some aspects of prophecy he was even greater than Moshe Rabenu. On one hand his beautiful words of praise of Am Yisrael are much quoted and used by our Rabbis. They even suggest that the Parasha of Bilaam should be said with the *Kiryat Shema* everyday because of a *Pasuk* in it '*Karah, Shachav Ke ari, vu che lavi; Mi Yekimenu*'. Yet we are told in *Sanhedrin* that in fact his *Berachot* turned back to *Kellalot* except for one. Amar Rebi Aba Bar

Cahanah 'Ve kulam chazru likellalah chutz mi Batei Kenessiyot vu Batei Midrashot'. The one in praise of our *Batei Kenessiyot* etc. How do we understand this? The Pasuk seems to say at the end that Bilaam who had set out to curse the Bnei Yisrael but had been stopped twice by Hashem, Who had put words in his mouth 'Vayasem Hashem *dabar be phi Bilaam*. He then seems to have regretted his attempt to curse them and agrees to bless them 'Vayar Bilaam ki tov be ene Hashem *lebarech et Yisrael velo halach kepaam be paam*'. And Bilaam saw it was good in the eyes of Hashem to bless Yisrael and he did not go as he had done before. And this time they were his words 'vayisa meshalo *vayomar neum Bilaam ben Beor*'. And he raised his parable and said this is the speech of Bilaam, the son of Beor, and not what Hashem had put in his mouth as before. And yet the Talmud calls it a *kellalah* 'vaYafoch Hashem *Elokecha et hakellalah lebracha*'? The Talmud earlier on tells us that Rebi Yochanan said that from the *berachot* of this *rasha* we see what was in his heart when he said '*ma tovu Ohalecha Yaakov*'. He had intended to say they should not have *Batei Kenessiyot* and *Batei Midrashot* all the blessings he had uttered he had really meant in a bad way. But how did it become a *kellalah* since he said praises of the Bnei Yisrael? The answer must be as Rashi says on the Pasuk 'Vayisa *Bilaam et enav*' that he attempted to put *Ayin Harah* on them. That while Bilaam noticed the *Maalot*, the good points, of the Bnei Yisrael and mentioned them, his heart was filled with hate and envy wishing to bring them down. He questioned their right to all this, making a *kitrug* that as long as they were on a high level they deserved it, but once they came down lower they would be deprived and receive the opposite. That is why Rebi Aba says they all changed back to a *kellalah* (curse) for when the Bnei

Yisrael came down in level, Bilaam's *kitrug* took hold, all except the praise '*ma tovu Ohalecha Yaakov mishkenotecha Yisrael*'. G-d changed. This *kitrug* from a *kellalah* to a *beracha*, for the *Beracha* of having Torah in Yisrael '*she lo tishachach mipi zaro*', the promise will always be there and G-d will guarantee that there will always be *Batei Kenessiyot* and *Batei Midrashot* since there must always be Torah in the World, no *kitrug* must affect this. The *Pasuk* '*karah, shachav ke Ari, vu che lavi; mi yekimenu*' which the Rabbis wanted to put with the *Shema* was recognition of the power of *Kiryat Shema* which is '*Kabalat Ol Mulchut Shamayim*' accepting the yoke of Heaven. That is why, unlike the nations, when Am Yisrael go to bed they go without fear of *mazikim* etc for with the *Shema* of night they have accepted the Kingship of G-d and placed themselves in His care, fearless as a lion. And so in the morning when they wake up with the *Shema* they have accepted the Kingship of G-d and placed their faith in Him, so they are fearless of the World. His ability to recognise and put into words the praise of Am Yisrael and their acceptance of *Kabalat Ol Malchut Shamayim* and its effect on them were worthy of mention in the *Kiryat Shema* even though his intentions were bad.

### **STORIES OF TZADDIKIM**

***"Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given. The world is judged with goodness, and all is according to the majority of deeds."***

The middle phrase in this mishna ("*The world is judged with goodness*") can also be translated as "*the world is judged for the sake of good*". If Hashem has to punish a person, He does so for the person's own good and benefit.

There was once a great chassidic rabbi whose gabai would always find fault with

the rabbi's students. He would constantly complain to the rabbi that some of the students would keep their shops open late of course before the start of Shabbat on Friday afternoon, or that some were guilty of tale bearing, or not having strict enough kosher food. The rabbi was angry at the gabai and told him off for his constant criticism. One of the students who overheard the conversation between the rabbi and the gabai asked the rabbi "why do you object to him giving his criticisms? After all, do you not also criticize and find fault in with us in your sermons! What does it matter if the gabai also criticize us?"

The rabbi replied "the difference between me and the gabai is the same as the difference between a home owner and his cat. Both the home owner and the cat strongly try to rid the house of mice. The difference however is that the owner is happy when there are no mice to catch but only the cat is happy when there are mice to catch. Similarly I am happy when there is no longer any sin amongst my students, my gabai however seems to be happy when he can catch my students sinning." Hashem judges the world for the sake of goodness, He is happy when there is no sin amongst His people. We have to remember that anything that happens to us is from Hashem and is for the good even when it appears otherwise.

### ***Shabbat Shalom***

### ***HALACHOT***

#### **Shiva Asar BeTamuz NIDCHA (Falls on Sunday 1st July)**

- 1) We are all obliged to fast on this Taanit, which is in remembrance of the calamities which befell our people. A pregnant or feeding mother, a very old or ill person (even if not dangerously ill) does not have to fast. Some pregnant mothers do begin the fast but when they feel weak they should break it.
- 2) A person who is permitted to break his fast does not need to eat, or drink

in small quantities unlike Yom Kippur, but of course he should not feast on food.

3) We are not obliged to train the under bar mitzvah to fast on this Taanit but since many do fast we should take care because it may be hot and it is a long fast. We should train the children to mourn our calamities by restricting giving them 'goodies'.

4) This Taanit begins from dawn (about 3:35am) and continues until nightfall (10:20pm).

5) One may not rinse his mouth with water or taste food, even when spitting it out, on a Taanit Tzibbur, unlike on a private Taanit.

6) If one intends to awake before dawn to eat or drink, he should make a condition that he wishes do so before he goes to sleep. According to the Mekubalim one should not eat at all before dawn after sleeping but one may drink.

7) If there are 6 people fasting in a minyan then the Shliach Tzibbur says 'Anenu' in a separate beracha and must be one of those fasting. The same would apply for Aliyoth in Keriat HaTorah.

8) A Chattan and Kallah in the seven days of Mishte should also fast.

9) If there is a Brit Milah on the Taanit, the minhag is to make the seudah at night.

10) We refrain from musical entertainment during the 3 weeks starting from Shiva Asar Be Tammuz.

### **TAANIT TIMES**

#### **Shiva Asar Be Tamuz nidche Sunday 1st July 2018**

Fast commences 3:35 am

Terminates 10:20 pm

Sunday 7:00 am

Mincha 8:45 pm

followed by Arbit

### **Mazal tov to**

**Abie & Alison Ezekiel**

**on the wedding of their daughter**

**Sara to Yoel Van Messel**

**and to all the families**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush  
Please contact*

*Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749*

*For Seuda Shlishit*

*or to rent the*

*Nancy Reuben Hall*

*for a Simcha*

*Please contact*

*Yanky David 07725 408724*

**We have a regular Youth  
Minyan organised by Jason  
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses  
followed by a kiddush**

### **SHABBAT TIMES**

Shabbat commences 9:06 pm

Shabbat terminates 10:36pm

Mincha Erev Shabbat

for the summer 7:15 pm

Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat

Shacharit 8:30 am

Shiur Pirke Avot 7:40 pm

Mincha on Shabbat followed

by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit 8:40 pm

Shacharit Sundays 7:00 am

Shacharit Weekdays 6:50 am

Mincha followed by Arbit

Arbit for the summer 7:30 pm

**DO NOT LIGHT YOUR SHABBAT  
CANDLES BEFORE PLAG HAMINCHA  
WHICH IS 7:37PM**