



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Much More Than Meets the Eye

Presented by Rabbi Moshe Sadwin, Kollel Scholar

Parshas Balak is very unique. All other incidents involving the Jewish nation in the desert are related from their perspective. Parshas Balak, however, is written from the perspective of Bilaam and Balak in their quest to bring harm to the Jews. The Torah details how Balak hires Bilaam to curse the Jewish people and Bilaam's numerous attempts to comply. Ultimately, Bilaam is unable to curse Israel and is forced to bless them instead.

This entire story occurs without the Jews knowing about the prospective danger from which they are saved. Only when Hashem instructs Moshe to record the episode in the Torah do we become aware of His salvation. As the prophet Micha says (Micha 6:5): *My people! Remember what Balak, king of Moav, conspired, and what Bilaam, son of Beor answered him...in order to know the righteous acts of Hashem.*

As mere humans, we are truly unaware of the magnitude of Hashem's salvation. We are only cognizant of our enemies' plans that were actualized and Hashem's subsequent intervention to save us. We do not know how many plans were foiled by Him even before they could be implemented. The story of Bilaam and Balak reminds us that the extent of Hashem's redemption is much deeper and greater than what meets the eye; we truly do not know how much Hashem protects us.

This concept is not limited to salvation and redemption but applies to all of the kindnesses bestowed upon us by Hashem. It is important not to take His beneficence for granted. Instead, let us thank Hashem for all He has done for us and try to recognize His benevolences — both the revealed and those that are hidden.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

How can I curse? - Hashem has not cursed. How can I anger? - Hashem is not angry. (23, 8)

My only power is that I know to discern the moment that Hashem gets angry, and He has not gotten angry these days.... (Rashi)

What could Bilam say to curse Bnei Yisroel in the brief moment that Hashem gets angry every day? He could say kulaim (destroy them). (Tosafos Avoda Zora 4b)

Since Bilam would not be able to add the name of the person/nation who he wished to curse because it would be longer than the allotted time, how would his words be detrimental?

Parsha Riddle

What was Zimri's real name?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How many Para Adumas have there been?

Answer: 9

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Balak, Balak becomes infuriated with Bilaam after the latter's thrice repeated failure to curse the Jewish people, declaring (24:21): "I said I would honor you, but - behold! Hashem has withheld you from honor." This can be construed as a legal argument: Balak is arguing that he is not obligated to compensate Bilaam since he had failed to perform the service for which he had been hired, even though he was ready and willing to do so but was prevented by a literal act of G-d.

Such an argument is seemingly correct from a halachic perspective: An employer is generally liable for renegeing on a promise of employment when he does so subsequent to the employee's traveling to the job site, unless circumstances arise that prevent the employee from doing his job or obviate the need for it. In such cases, the employee is generally not entitled to compensation, unless the employer was in a position to anticipate the development and the employee was not. For example, if an employer hires an employee to irrigate his field, but it rains before he does so, rendering further irrigation unnecessary, the employee is not entitled to his salary. If, however, a river floods and irrigates the field, the employee is entitled to compensation, since it is presumed that the employer was familiar with the flooding and irrigation patterns of his field, while the employee was not (Bava Metzia 76b-77a).

In light of the above, Balak was correct in refusing to compensate Bilaam, insofar as Bilaam had been in at least as much a position as Balak to anticipate Hashem's refusal to allow the cursing of the Jewish people. And despite Bilaam's retort that he had indeed mentioned this possibility: "Did I not speak to your emissaries ... saying ... I cannot transgress the word of Hashem ... Whatever Hashem speaks, that shall I speak", he does not seem to have actually stipulated that he was to be paid regardless (in which case he would indeed have been entitled to compensation).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I only needed a second.
2. I couldn't see the messenger.
3. Moshe's equal.
4. I was not for profit, yet for prophet.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I come from Kohen.
2. I was zealous.
3. I didn't spare the spear.
4. I lived long.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Para Adumah (Red Heifer) (I care for my child, I am unemployed, I am burnt, I have one tone.)

#2 The Copper Snake (I am a medical sign, The attacker healed, My end was powder, I made them look up.)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

Win a super prize

Congratulations to Yossi Namrow on winning a Great Wall of China Lego Set!



Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can.

Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!

THE NEXT
RAFFLE WILL BE
Sept 24.

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Greater Washington Community Kollel invites men and women to a

DC Lunch & Learn

with Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Monday, July 22, Noon – 12:45 pm at Morgan Lewis. Complimentary lunch served. RSVP required to info@gwckollel.org. Please see flyer at www.gwckollel.org for more info.