



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

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TORAT

Parashat Balak

HAMELECH

Get Up And Go

At first, Hashem told Bilaam not to go with Balak's emissaries. Then, when Balak sent a more dignified group, Hashem told him, "If you think you will gain from going with them, get up and go." Of this apparent "change of heart" on Hashem's part, Chazal say (Makkot 10b), "The way a person wants to go, he is led." Bilaam really wanted to go with Balak's men, so Hashem let him.

Petroleum and Perfume

Yoma (38b) teaches: One who wants to get more impure is given permission to do so. One who wishes to become more pure, is given assistance. Rabbi Yishmael explains with a parable. There was a man who sold foul-smelling petroleum and sweet-smelling perfumes. [In those days, the customer brought his own container and the seller would pour off from a large barrel.] When a customer would enter the store and ask for some petroleum, the owner would say, "It's over there in the corner, sir. Help yourself! If you don't mind, I'll step outside for some fresh air until you're done pouring and ready to pay!"

When a customer would come and ask for perfume, the seller would say, "Come, I'll pour for you. That way, both of us will enjoy the pleasant aroma."

Rain and Pain

In Avodah Zarah (55a) we find Ben Zumin asking R' Akiva, "I know that idolatry is nonsense. So why does it sometimes happen that a sick man goes to pray to his idol and comes home healthy?"

R' Akiva responded with a parable. There was a trustworthy man in town. Everyone would entrust articles to him without witnesses. Along came a man and made a point of having witnesses present as he handed over his article. He did this a number of times. One time, he gave over the article and forgot to bring along witnesses. The wife of the trustee told her husband, "Let's sting him! He never trusts us! Now let's deny!"

The husband responded, "What?! Just because he does not act cordially towards us, shall we lose our trust?!"

Explained R' Akiva, "Suffering works the same way. When Hashem sends suffering to a person,



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the suffering takes an oath to leave its victim on a set day, at a set time, via a certain person and a certain medicine. Now, if a person suffering just happens to visit his idol at that moment when the suffering was meant to leave anyway, the suffering says to itself, 'We ought not leave (so as not to make a Chillul Hashem).' Then it reconsiders, 'What?! Because this fool acted improperly (and visited an idol just now) will we violate our oath?!'

Rava bar Rav Yitzchok said to Rav Yehuda: Sometimes there is a drought and the idolaters visit their idol and pray. Then the worshippers dream that the idol requests a human sacrifice and promises to deliver rain. So they wake up, do manslaughter and it rains. [How do you explain this?]

Rav Yehuda replied: It's good that I'm still alive so I can explain it to you! That's what Hashem does. The verse says, "With the scoffers, He scoffs, and the humble, He grants grace." Meaning, one who wants to get impure, Hashem opens the door for him. One who wants to get pure is assisted.

From this Gemara we see that those who choose the path of impurity are led to believe that the

forces of impurity actually help them. All the much more so for a person who seeks purity. The assistance granted him will be supernatural.

Lighting up the Darkness

Here's an example of "Ba litaher" who was granted supernatural assistance.

R' Shlomo Luria (known as Maharshal) was once learning late at night, delving into a deep sugya. Suddenly he noticed that his candle was at its end, about to go out. He had no more candles. He fervently wanted to continue learning, so he prayed earnestly for Divine assistance. Miraculously, that candle stayed lit much longer than it should have naturally.

Do You See What I Mean?

When Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer was in Slutsk, a blind Talmid Chochom shared with him what he called his "last chiddush." Reb Isser Zalman asked him why it was his last chiddush. He answered that he used to learn Torah diligently with great exertion. As he aged, he decided, at one point, "That's it, enough of this exertion. From now on, I'll learn, but with less effort."



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At that, his eyes dimmed. He went to the eye doctor and was told, "There is nothing I can do to remove your blindness. You should just know, that from a medical perspective, you should have been blind ten years ago! Your last ten years of vision were a miracle!"

The man told Rav Isser Zalman, "I now understand that the miracle was done for me in response to my exertion for Torah. Once I decided to stop working so hard on understanding Torah, my eyes stopped working."

Lesson of the Elongated Arm

Chovot HaLevavot (Cheshbon Hanefesh #21) says: If a person does his utmost to do what he must, then Hashem grants him abilities beyond his natural abilities and helps him accomplish things way beyond.

Rav Meir Shapiro (Rosh Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin) said: Chazal teach that Batya stretched out her arm and miraculously, Hashem extended it more than 5 meters to enable her to save baby Moshe. Now, she must have realized that she never could have reached him. So why did she even try? Because the rule is: You give it your all, and Hashem will do the rest!

Someone asked the Alter of Novardock how he managed to accomplish so much. He answered: I never think of what I am able to do, only of what I am obligated to do.

He continued: the efforts which a father puts in to save his son's life are enough to build 100 yeshivot! If saving the Olam Hatorah would be as dear to you as saving your child, many yeshivot would find solid support.

Just Do Your Best

People get married and have wonderful aspirations for building their home to bring honor to the Shechinah. Then they are presented with all sorts of challenges. Some are tempted to just give up. They are to know that challenges is what life is all about, and all you have to do is give your best try. Never give up. Keep on trying. You do your best and Hashem will do the rest! Tried and tested! It works! So should you! Keep on working, putting in the effort, and Hashem will help you surmount all of the obstacles and see success!

The way you want to go is where you'll be taken!

Shabbat Shalom!

Mordechai Malka