



Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Balak 5782

1 – Topic – A Thought on the Story of Bilam

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Balak. The story of Bilam in this week's Parsha seems like a very strange once upon a time, one time incident with a man named Bilam who was a very queer individual. Very strange, a mixture of good and bad mixed into the same person. As you read the Parsha you see him going back and forth, talking the talk as if he wants to do Hashem's will and at the end of the Parsha his true desire comes out, which is to be Machshil, to make Klal Yisrael fall.

Yet somebody who is sensitive and reads the story of Bilam, sees in it an everyday story with every human being. When you read even just from the beginning until Sheini, and you see Bilam struggle, on the one hand he desperately wants to go with the people who promised him riches, on the other hand he repeatedly says that I can't do anything without HKB"H, I can't do anything that G-d doesn't tell me to do. We see in this the struggle of every person, of every Fum Yid, who struggles with different Yeitzer Hora's. Who struggles with being careful to get up every morning to say Krias Shema with the Zman Krias Shema as he knows he should. Or to get up from the table and go to the sink and wash Mayim Achronim as he knows he should. Or to shut off the computer at a time that he is wasting his time as he knows he should. On the one hand he is a Frum Yid and he knows to say to himself that I can't do anything as it says in 22:8 (כְּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי), whatever Hashem tells me to do I will do, and on the other hand he has the Yeitzer Hora to go with Balak, to go with his laziness, or to go with the desire with his Taivos, the desires that he has. If you read the Parsha with sensitivity you see in the Parsha the story of every man.

In Leket Sichos Mussar, Rav Isaac Sher points out that HKB"H gave 10 opportunities to Bilam to stop. 10 times that He said don't go, don't do it, what are these people doing here, and every time Bilam found some excuse in what Hashem told him. He said this but He didn't say that, and it led him ultimately to his downfall. The story of every person. You have to hear the word of HKB"H, the Ratzon of HKB"H and be able to do it.

I would like to share with you the idea of the Mesilas Yesharim in the 10th Perek. The Perek of (מדת הנקייות). Now of course the Mesilas Yesharim talks about the fact that a person has to be a Zariz, he has the Middah of Zerizus, the Middah of Zehirus. Zehirus is the Middah to stay away from an Aveira. Zerizus is to do it promptly and quickly. He has another Middah called the (מדת הנקייות) cleanliness. What is cleanliness, what does it mean to be clean?

Mesilas Yesharim refers to (נקיי הדעת שבירושלים). What does it mean (נקייות)? The Mesilas Yesharim says (נקייות) of staying clean is the Avodah to keep our minds clean. Not to paint sin as something permissible. (כל מה שהוא חטא, אפילו שיהיה קל שבקלי החטאים, תכירוהו שהוא רע). Whatever is wrong even

if it is not the most terrible Aveira, you can rely on the Kuladika Shittas with Zman Krias Shema, you can rely on those who say there is no Mayim Achronim Biz'man Hazeh. You can take a minute or two to avoid and relax and take a look at things perhaps that are Muttar but a waste of time. (נקיות) is to be honest with yourself and to be able to tell yourself that the Chataim that people paint as non-Chataim are (הוראת ההיתר מכסה על החטא) (מכסה על החטא) hides Aveiros. These are the Aveiros that are not Mefursomim, that are not known by everybody and that are not always warned about, but that a person has to take away excuses and recognize what they are.

In the Orchos Tzadikkim in the Shaar Shlishi, the Orchos Tzadikkim explains it a little more. Listen to his words. (אמרו חכמים) Chazal have taught us, (השכל הוא הבושה, והבושה הוא השכל). Meaning to say, that a person has to be able to be embarrassed from doing an Aveira and that takes Seichel, that takes intelligence. Because the gut feeling is to have excuses, to have reasons why this is not so terrible. (בושה הוא השכל). To be able to say that what I did was wrong that means to follow the Seichel, the intelligence that a person has and not the emotions that make people give themselves excuses.

Bilam was not Misbayeish. Bilam had a donkey talking to him and he wasn't embarrassed that the donkey bested him in his argument. You would think he would be embarrassed and crawl up and roll into a hole somewhere and hide. Nothing doing. The Midah of (נקיות) is the Busha.

As Ezra says in 9:6 (אֲלֵכֶי בְּשִׁמְתִי וְנִכְלַמְתִּי--לְהַרִים אֲלֵכֶי פָּנִי, אֲלֵיךְ) HKB"Y I am ashamed. I recognize that there are things I do that are not right. We use this Lashon in Selichos, the idea of (בְּשִׁמְתִי). We learn from Bilam that a person could have excuses and hold his head up high and continue on his way.

The Maharal also in Nesivas Olam has a section called Netziv Habusha. He says (סימן טוב באדם) (שהוא ביישן). It is a good sign about a person that he knows when to be embarrassed.

The point of the Mesilas Yesharim, the Orchos Tzaddikim, and the Maharal is the point of grabbing on to this Middah which is the opposite of western civilization, western culture, western morality which is to say that it is not bad, it is the way I am, it is good. You have to tolerate people and what they are doing is bad, we have to rephrase it as good.

Our Middah is the Middah of Busha. With that we understand why before we start Tachanun we begin by saying to HKB"Y (אֲשָׁאֵן אֶנּוּ עֵינֵי פָּנִים וְקָשִׁי עֵרַף לִוְמַר לְפָנֶיךָ ר' אֲלֵרִינוּ וְאֵלֵרִי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ צְדִיקִים אֲנֵחֲנוּ) (אֲשָׁמְנוּ), when we say (אֲשָׁמְנוּ) it is not so much the confession that we do Aveiros, it is more the recognition that we do things that are not right and that we have what to work on. We have to go forward. We have to hear HKB"Y's messages.

And so, the message of Bilam is the message of the (נקיי הדעת שבירושלים), the people who kept their minds clean from the filth of excuses that these things are not so bad. That these things are not so terrible. If I look at the internet it is not pornography, it is not so bad. Stop with the excuses and recognize what it is before Zehirus, before you start separating from it. First have that (נקיי הדעת) to recognize what it is.

When we begin Selichos, how to we start Selichos? Lecha Hashem Hatzedaka, V'lanu Boshes Panim. The idea of Busha is this Middah of (נקיטת). Very much a message from the story of Bilam.

2 – Topic – A Thought from Rav Pam

Rav Pam was fond of saying the following. When Bilam was traveling and the Malach stands in his way (לְשָׁטֵן לוֹ) and the Malach is making trouble for him, Rashi says 22:22 (מלאך של רחמים היה). It was a Malach of mercy. He wanted to stop him from sinning. Rav Pam would say that sometimes in your life you want to do something and something goes in your way and you think it is the Satan, (מלאך של רחמים היה) is what is trying to hold you back.

Rav Pam recounted that during what he called the most difficult years of his life, after Rav Pam got Semicha in the 1930's there were no Kollelim then. After he got Semicha he looked for a Shtete, he looked for a job and it took him two years until he was offered in the same year a job by Rav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz in Torah Vodaath and from Rav Hutner, however, those two years after Semicha were difficult years. At one point he thought that for Parnasa he will need a job and he went and applied for a job as a translator in the court system.

Rav Pam was fluent in many languages. He told me once that he taught himself Spanish. He came from Lita, of course he spoke English fluently and he said I taught myself Spanish. He said to me I read Don Quixote in the original Spanish. He went to be a translator. There was a written test in a classroom and Rav Pam looked around at the other people applying for the job and he knew that he was better than all of them in the languages and he would do better than them on the test. Ultimately someone else got the job. Rav Pam told me that when he thought about it he realized that the proctor (the one who was walking around during the test), was actually helping this person. He cheated and got the job ahead of Rav Pam. So Rav Pam said to me I felt so enraged, I felt so angry at this person. He cheated. He helped someone else get the job. Rav Pam was laughing and he said (מלאך של רחמים היה). Imagine if I had taken that job. (מלאך של רחמים היה). At the time I was furious at him. I was indignant, it wasn't right. (מלאך של רחמים היה).

Stop in your life and think for a minute if maybe some of those who are preventing you from going on to doing “bigger and better” things in your life, preventing you from moving up the ladder. Maybe they are really giving you the time to focus on your Avodas Hashem, maybe not all your ambitions are really ambitions that you should have. Some you should and some you shouldn't. Think about it. (מלאך של רחמים היה).

The message for today is that the story of Bilam is a onetime story with a strange and weird individual who was a tremendous mixture of good and bad, of greatness and evil. No! It is an example of the inner struggles that many people have. Many people have to recognize the right and the wrong, recognize what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. To recognize and admit to oneself that certain things even though I am maybe stuck doing it, but to recognize what they are. To take away the excuses. (הוראת ההיתר מכסה על החטא). Hopefully we can learn from the story of Bilam to our own lives and IY”H to be better, slowly and incrementally. But to recognize the truth of the work we still have ahead of us.

With that, I want to wish everybody an absolutely wonderful Shabbos Kodesh as we begin now the Bein Hametzarim, the weeks of introspection on what we are missing by not having the Beis Hamikdash and an appreciation of the Batei Kenisios and Batei Medrashos, the Mikdash M'at that we do have. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!

Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Balak 5781

1 – Topic – A Thought for the Three Weeks.

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Balak, the 16th day of Tammuz Erev Shiva Asar B'tammuz. Let me therefore begin with a thought for the three weeks and Shiva Asar B'tammuz. It says in Zecharia and it would be wonderful to learn Perek Zayin and Perek Ches which are really beautiful. The whole Zecharia is really beautiful but let me tell you what happens in Perek Zayin and Perek Ches.

In the beginning of Perek Zayin we find Jews and Rashi says they are Tzaddikim from Bavel who send a message to Zecharia in Eretz Yisrael. The message is that they have a Shaila. The Shaila is as is found in 7:3 (הַאֲבָקָה, בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַחֲמִישִׁי--הַזֶּזֶר). Should I continue to weep on Tisha B'av and Rashi says that the Shaila was not just for Tisha B'av but the Shaila was for all of the Tannaisim. They were asking should we fast on all of these Tannaisim (הַזֶּזֶר) should I separate from wine now that the Bayis Sheini is built? That was the Shaila that they sent from Bavel to Zecharia, should I continue to observe the Tannaisim.

In Perek Ches about 19 Pesukim in but finally Zecharia gets to the answer. He says to them (צוֹם יְהִיָּה לְבֵית-יְהוָה) the fast of the 4th month Shiva Asar B'tammuz, the 5th month Tisha B'av, the 7th month Tzom Gedalya, the 10th month Asara B'teves (לְשִׁשֹּׁן וּלְשִׁמְחָה, וּלְמַעֲדִים, טוֹבִים) will be for you days of happiness and rejoicing and happy holiday. So that the Navi says no more fasting.

There are three difficulties (Kashas) with this Nevua:

1) Why is the Shaila being addressed to the Navi, this is a Shaila that should go to a Beis Din, it should go to the Sanhedrin. There were Gedolei Yisrael, the members of the Anshei K'neses Hagedola were then in Eretz Yisrael. Ezra, Nechemia, Mordechai, why is he asking the Navi?

2) The Bayis Sheini was still missing five major things, not just Chamisha Devarim but Chamisha Ikrim. There was no Gilui Shechina, Aron, Urim V'tumim, Ruach Hakodesh or Aish Min Hashamayim. So therefore, it would seem that the Bayis Sheini is not quite yet the day of rejoicing that it should be?

3) Even if it is, the Gemara says if you buy something for a dollar and sell it for a dollar are you a businessman, you are back where you were. I ask the same Kasha here. You had a Bayis Rishon and it was destroyed, you have a Bayis Sheini. I understand that you don't fast, as that is what they asked if they should fast. The Navi says hold on a second, don't fast? Guess what, there are going

לְשׁוֹן וְלִשְׁמֹחָה, וְלִמְצָדִים,) what is the grounds for (לְשׁוֹן וְלִשְׁמֹחָה, וְלִמְצָדִים, טוֹבִים) to be Yomim Tovim (טוֹבִים)?

The answer to this lies in a Yesod that has a Makom in a number of places. In Nach most prominently by Yechezkel Hanavi. Yechezkel Hanavi became a Navi shortly before the Churban and was a Navi during the Churban. By what merit?

Rav Tzaddok writes in his Pri Tzaddik on Sukkos that the Maila of Yechezkel that he became a Navi during the Churban was and his Lashon is incredible, as Jews went to Galus broken and bitter during the Churban Bayis, Yechezkel went B'simcha Rabbah. What do you mean that he went B'simcha Rabbah with great joy? Yechezkel with the Koach of Nevua understood that Klal Yisrael with the Churban were in a mode of "reset", of starting again. There was a reset button. They had Shlepped along not listening to Mussar, and in the Tzura of Avoda Zorah for so many years and bang with the destruction Yechezkel understood there would be a new rebirth, a new energy, a new beginning, a new start, starting clean, starting anew. That is what happened in Bavel. Yechezkel Hanavi understood that.

It is something similar to after the Holocaust. People came to America and everything was destroyed, people were broken, people were Marei Nefesh. There were a few special special individuals, Gedolim who had Ruach Hakodesh, that understood that in America we are going to rebuild, there will be a rebirth and they built B'sasson Ub'simcha. That was what was special about Yechezkel Bish'as Hagalus.

Returning here. Is this a Shaila for a Beis Din? Of course the Beis Din would say there is still room for sadness. After all, we don't yet have a return to the real Bayis Rishon. Eretz Yisrael is still in the hands of our enemies, Jews didn't control the land in the Bayis Sheini. Most of the Jews didn't return. The 10 Shevatim disappeared. Most of the Yidden in Bavel didn't come back.

Halacha would say keep on fasting, but they went to the Navi. This is because the Neviim had taught them as Yechezkel did, that it is a time for new energy, a new beginning, a new start. Every end is a new beginning. Every divorce is an end but then there is a new beginning. Every time Rachmana Litzlon a relative dies it is an end, but then a person picks himself up and has a new beginning. The Koach Hanevua tells us the Tzom Harevii, the Tzom Hachamishi, the Tzom Hashevii and the Tzom Ha'asiri (יְהִיָּה לְבֵית-יְהוּדָה לְשׁוֹן וְלִשְׁמֹחָה, וְלִמְצָדִים, טוֹבִים), times of rebirth, of new energy and that is a reason to rejoice.

We are back now after the Churban Bayis Sheini, but the words of the Navi ring in our ears. It is a time to rebuild, to make things happen. As we come to a summer after a Covid period, a period that was just not normal, we should not be going back and saying okay we are back to where we were two summers ago. Most people will be doing that. Yechidim will say no, it is a time to start again, a time for a new energy, a time to make things happen in a better way.

2 – Topic – A Thought on Parshas Balak.

Let us turn to Parshas Balak and I will share with you an incredible GR"A on Parshas Balak which I would not understand except that Rav Issac Sher explains it in Leket Sichos Mussar. The GR"A

says, we know that Bilam is compared to Moshe in Nevuah, but we find that Bilam is compared to Avraham Avinu in Pirkei Avos 5:19. There are Talmidov Shel Avraham Avinu (תלמידיו של) (אברהם--עין טובה, ונפש שפלה, ורוח נמוכה) and Talmidov Shel Bilam Harasha (עין רעה, ונפש רחבה, ורוח) (גבוהה). What is the comparison between Avraham and Bilam?

Says the GR”A in Aderes Eliyahu. Just like Avraham Avinu had 10 tests in which he succeeded, Bilam also had 10 tests. Where are the 10 tests? We have this one Parsha with the story of Bilam. Where are the 10 tests? Says Rav Issac Sher incredibly it is all in the Parsha, except as follows.

Avraham Avinu wanted to serve the Ribbono Shel Olam. He had 10 Nisyonos, 10 things that would pull him away from serving Hashem and he withstood them all. Bilam Harasha was a different type of Asara Nisyonos. Bilam had a hatred for Kedusha, a hatred for the Jewish people. He wanted to do damage to Klal Yisrael. Hashem sent him 10 opportunities, 10 messages to not go. The initial message of don't go, then Vayichar Af Hashem B'bilam, and then the incident with the donkey, then seeing a Malach, then three times when he wants to curse a Beracha comes into his mouth, then Balak screams at him. Balak says go home. Repeatedly there are Nisyonos. I counted eight in my list that I just said. There is another one or two that Hashem put roadblocks to stop him. Nothing happened. He fell in all of them.

Rashi tells us that when the Malach stood in front of Bilam in 22:22 (מלאך של רחמים היה). These were the Nisyonos of Bilam. The Malach said don't go. If he had succeeded in listening to the Malach and not going, it would have been wonderful. He thinks the Malach is his enemy? (מלאך) (של רחמים היה). Sometimes Hashem sends us Nisyonos to stop us from learning and Davening and we have to withstand it and sometimes Hashem tries to save us from bad ideas and we have to accept it.

In Atara L'melech Rav Pam writes in his piece on Shidduchim that sometimes someone wants a Shidduch and something happens that ruins it. Somebody says Lashon Hora about the boy and the girl is not interested. Sometimes the girl is just not interested and the young man is upset.

Rav Pam says (מלאך של רחמים היה). If the Shidduch would have had to be, then it would have been bad so (מלאך של רחמים היה). HKB”H sometimes sends you a Malach (וְחָרְבוּ שְׁלוֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ) and stops you from doing things. Do you know what is good and what is not good when clearly HKB”H is stopping something, then (מלאך של רחמים היה). So the Nisayon of Bilam is that sometimes when you have an idea and it is not such a good idea and HKB”H in his kindness stops you from doing it and puts roadblocks in your way from doing it, get the message.

So two wonderful ideas of Chizzuk. The idea of Zechariah Hanavi. The idea of starting again. Every end is a beginning. And the idea of the GR”A and the way Rav Issac Sher explains it beautifully, extraordinarily. Geshmak! Sometimes something is blocking you, stop a minute. Maybe it is not a good idea. Maybe this Malach is a (מלאך של רחמים). Don't be like Bilam. Accept what comes from Shamayim.

With that I want to wish everyone an absolutely meaningful Shabbos Kodesh and an absolutely meaningful upcoming fast on Shiva Asar B'tammuz. May HKB”H turn it into true (לְשִׁשֹּׁן וּלְשִׁמְחָה), (וּלְמַעֲדִים, טוֹבִים) for all of us. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas - Balak 5780

1 - Topic - A Vort on Bil'am from the Ohr Gedalyahu

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas - Balak. I would like to talk a little bit about Parshas Balak. For us in Chutz L'aretz it is Parshas Chukas - Balak. I know that there are some who are listening from Eretz Yisrael where it is Parshas Balak. So if Balak is Shava La'kol let's talk about Parshas Balak.

In the Ohr Gedalyahu (page 147) there is an extraordinary piece based on the writings of Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin on the concept of Nevuah. How Nevuah works. Anybody who studies Navi should learn the piece. I would like to quote one segment of that extraordinary Shtickel Torah.

What is the Hava Amina that Bil'am had that he would somehow be able to curse Klal Yisrael. Bil'am knew the score, Bil'am knew that we are the Am Hashem, Bil'am knew that it was a time of Rachamei Shamayim. What in the world was Bil'am thinking?

The Klal that is used there to explain this is a Klal that is really a Klal in life. The Klal in life is that most things in life are not black or white. Most things in life depend. Depend on how they are received, depend on how they are used, depend on how they are taken advantage of. Most things in life depend on the recipient.

For example, we know that Chol Hachalomos Holchin Acher Ha'peh. We are told about the interpretation of dreams which are of course related to Nevuah. Chalom Echad Mei'Shishim B'nevuah depends on the interpretation. However you understand that exactly, but it means that there is no absolute value to Chalomos, it depends. Everything depends.

The example here would be the Beracha of Bil'am, Ma Tovv Ohalecha Yaakov. How beautiful are your tents Yaakov (Klal Yisrael). It is a Beracha. But it depends as there will be Jews who will say Ma Tovv Ohalecha Yaakov and say why am I going to the Beis Medrash at night. Jewish homes are an attraction, they are a place to serve HKB"H. So you see that the blessing of Ma Tovv Ohalecha Yaakov depends on the recipient. It depends on what someone takes from that Beracha.

It could also be twisted, it could be turned. Since Bil'am was the Poser Chalomos, just like somebody who has dreams, we say dreams go according to the Pison, the one giving the words of Beracha could see it one way, another way and many places in between.

So this was Bil'am's idea. Bil'am's thought was that he was going to give Klal Yisrael a Beracha, but the Beracha through his prism, through his vision, through his eyeglasses. Therefore, it will depend on the recipient. It is not only true in that case, it is true until today. When we say Ma Tovv Ohalecha Yaakov, we take pride in a Jewish home. There are many who will take that and use it improperly and stay home and not go out to the Beis Medrash at night. That is a mistake. That is, those are the two sides of every Beracha that anybody has in this world.

The Gemara in Megillah says on Daf Yud Daled (Amud Beis) that Yoshiyahu Hamelech went to Chuldah to ask for an interpretation of something that had happened. Chuldah Haneviah. Chuldah was a Neviah. The Gemara asks why didn't he go to Yirmiya and the answer is that Nashim

Rachmanios Heim. The question is what do you mean that Nashim Rachmanios Heim? A Nevuah is a Nevuah. Says Reb Yehoshua Leib Diskin, it is this idea. The same words can come in many different ways to people. What did HKB"H do? He gave Bil'am the ability to get Nevuah B'aspaklaria Hami'ira, like Moshe Rabbeinu, with absolute clarity. The Nevuah could not be interpreted in two ways.

But the message of Reb Yehoshua Leib is that in life there are moments that are opportunities. There are moments that are opportunities for growth, there are moments that could be a Beracha, that could be a person's biggest Beracha. Or they could be a Klala. Or they could be anything in between. It is all in what you make of it.

With this very unique summer upon us, it is very much that way. It is a summer for the Tinokos Shel Beis Rabbon, for the youngsters, for the elementary school children, Mesivta children, many who have been out of a schedule, out of sorts, out of a sense of security and continuity for so many months.

What are we doing this summer? What are we doing to make it work for them? A person could say Shalom Alai Nasfshi, things are better, they are easier. It could be a Klala. It could be a time where the regimen, the routine, does not resume. Where people are busy on vacation, after a March, April, May and June of no schedule. Chas V'shalom. We need to get back to the schedule.

The Beracha of the break in the seriousness of the Matzav of the situation here on the east coast, is that if used properly there could be a regular schedule for youngsters and for everybody in the morning. People who are learning the Daf get back to the Daf. People with Sedorim that never missed a Seder, a Minyan or learning, get back to that routine. There is a fact that things are lighter and easier in our area a Beracha or G-d forbid a Klala? It depends on how it is received.

This year, July and August are not months to let up, they are months to buckle down. They are months to buckle down not in a strictness, but in a sense of responsibility, of Achrayos. That is Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin's explanation of Bilam's idea.

2 - Topic - The unique person Bil'am Harasha from Rav Ahron Leib Shteinman.

Let's move on to another Machshava regarding this very unique person Bilam Harasha. Reb Ahron Leib Shteinman asks a Kasha. Rashi tells us that HKB"H didn't want the Umos Ha'olam, the nations of the world to have a complaint. That look at this, Nevuah comes to the Jewish people and the nations of the world do not have Nevuah. So therefore, HKB"H chose one of them to be a prophet as well and that was Bil'am.

The Kasha is the Umos Ha'olam can complain. Ribbono Shel Olam, you chose one of us to be a prophet, to be a Navi? To be a Navi with a clarity of Aspaklaria Hami'ira, a clear Nevua? Why did you choose Bil'am? Bil'am is a Rasha. Bil'am was a Rasha in so many different ways. Many aspects of his life where he was a pervert. He was a person who was not to be respected. He was a person who had Nevuah and was only interested in gold and silver. Ribbono Shel Olam, a Rasha like this is the one chosen to be a Navi?

The answer again is a Klal Gadol in the way HKB"H runs our world. Zeh L'umas Zeh Asa Elokim. HKB"H creates a world where the potential for positive, Tzidkus, the potential for greatness, is mirrored on the flipside with a potential for a person to pervert his job in this world. A person who is wealthier, who is brighter, who is more influential, has a greater potential to achieve, and he also has a greater potential to destroy. Just like in one direction there are great possibilities, so too in the direction of destruction there are unfortunate possibilities.

Zeh L'umas Zeh Asa Elokim. Therefore, it is inherent in creating an opportunity for someone to be great that he has a potential to fall also in an extraordinary way. Zeh L'umas Zeh, if someone has extraordinary Kochos, extraordinary potential for greatness, he also has extraordinary potential to fall, to do things that are improper.

The Tiferes Yisrael at the end of Kiddushin writes, how Moshe Rabbeinu achieved greatness and he personally had the Nisyonos, the challenges, to fall in an extraordinary way. We don't meet Moshe Rabbeinu until he is 80 years old. Who knows how many challenges he went through until he reached his great level of Kedusha. That is something that we have to see going forward as well. Every moment of Nisayon, every moment of opportunity, as great as the opportunity is in front of you, so great is also the opportunity for failure.

And the reverse. When a person feels that HKB"H is giving him a great Nisayon, a great challenge, he should know that success makes it a moment where he can achieve a greater and greater level, something that will stick with him for the rest of his life.

Once again, this message of Bil'am is a message for these times that are so uncertain. They are times which we all understand are of great Nisayon. They are times where people have become Rachmana Litzlan addicted to different things that take place when a person is locked up at home all alone and searches for pleasures that he shouldn't have. When someone touches on that type of a challenge, it is a moment for a potential of great failure. But it is also a moment of potential for great achievement. For turning it around and making it wonderful. And so, as we face what is in our lifetime the most uncertain period ahead of us, we take energy, we take strength from the belief, that wherever there is a potential for failure there is a potential for greatness. We are going to make it a time of greatness. These are two thoughts regarding Bil'am.

3 - Topic - My favorite Vertel on Parshas Balak.

My favorite Vertel regarding Parshas Balak comes from the great Oheiv Yisrael. The Oheiv Yisrael was a lover of the Jewish people, and he said every Parsha has a message of Ahavas Yisrael. Someone asked him, what about Parshas Balak? There is barely a mention of any Jew in the entire Parsha from the beginning to end. Where do you see Ahavas Yisrael?

He said easily. In Balak. It is an abbreviation for V'ahavta L'rei'acha Kamocha. It is a Remez in the name Balak. Someone said Rebbe, V'ahavta starts with a Vav. Balak is a Beis or Veis. Kamocha starts with a Caf and Balak is spelled with a Kuf.

The Rebbe replied, when it comes to Ahavas Yisrael we don't ask Kashas, we just move forward. Let us move forward in a meaningful way. Have a meaningful summer. A summer of greatness, a

summer of achievement for you, for me, for all of us and certainly for those of us courageous enough to make this incredibly long trip out to New Hampshire. For what reason?

To be Mechaneich Yaldei Yisrael. To help young men be part of a system, be part of a schedule, be part of a place that is devoted to Ahavas Hashem to Ahavas Yisrael. Being Ovdei Hashem. IY"H we should be Zoche to come to a regular Yeshiva Zman with great Hatzlacha. A Gutten and meaningful Shabbos to all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Balak 5778

1 - Topic - A thought regarding Bilam and how Rav Wolbe defines "A Mentch".

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Balak. Also the first Shabbos out in the mountains for many of us on our so called vacation. Perhaps we can find something in the Parsha which has a connection to our experience here in the United States in the summer months.

Rav Moshe used to very often say regarding the Posuk that is found in 24:5 (מֵה-טָבוֹ אֶהְיֶה, יַעֲקֹב;) (משקנותיך, ישראל) certainly the best known of all of the words of the Parsha. The Gemara says in Masseches Sanhedrin in Perek Cheilek on 105b (10 lines from the bottom) (א"ר יוחנן מברכתו של (אותו רשע אתה למד מה היה בלבו ביקש לומר what his Kavana was to curse.

The Gemara says the following. That when he said (מֵה-טָבוֹ אֶהְיֶה, יַעֲקֹב) how beautiful are your homes Klal Yisrael, what he really meant deep inside was Klal Yisrael look how beautiful your homes are. Stay home, don't go to Batei Kinisiyos and Batei Midrashos. Be home in the evenings.

Rav Moshe used to say very often speaking at an affair for the benefit of his Yeshiva, that HKB"H therefore, was Mehapeich the Klala to Beracha and Boruch Hashem in Klal Yisrael today we have many Yeshivos, many Mosdos, many Batei Medrashim. The point of the Klala was stay home at night. The house is comfortable, it is warm, it is a Yiddishe Shtub. The message is no, that is a Klala. The Beracha is that a Yiddishe Shtub is of course a blessing, but the Beracha is that you know when to pick yourself up from your home and head to the Batei Medrashim which is the place that you belong.

Therefore, in the summer months when you don't have the Achrayos of doing homework with the children, you should really be headed primarily at night to the Beis Medrash. You should go directly from work to the Beis Medrash. Why do you need to be home? You need a place to sleep. Looking through the mail doesn't take so long. That is the message of Rav Moshe from this Parsha.

An interesting thing about the Parsha is that when you read the Chumash without Rishonim, without Torah She'baal Peh, Bilam doesn't sound like such a bad fellow. It is something that I believe that I have pointed out in previous years. He keeps on saying that I am only going to do what the Ribbono Shel Olam tells me to do and I will only bless what I am supposed to bless and curse what I am supposed to curse and then he wasn't going to go and then the Ribbono Shel Olam

lets him go. Read the Chumash and you will see that he smells good. Torah She'baal Peh of course tells us what was really going on inside of him.

I would like to share with you a thought regarding this idea. In Alei Shor, Cheilek Bais, page Chaf Aleph there is a Maimar where Rav Wolbe looks to define Adam, a Mentch. Gadlus Ha'adam, the ability of a person, what exactly it is about a human being that makes him Adam, that makes him stand out. Atem K'ruim Adam. A special level of Adam that we say about Frum Yidden. In Yiddish we say "A Mentch." Vas iz a Mentch?

Says Rav Wolbe, the place to learn it from is from Yechezkel. Why the Navi Yechezkel? He is called (בן-אָדָם). Constantly throughout the entire Sefer Yechezkel starting from Perek Beis and on, Yechezkel is referred to as (בן-אָדָם). The only Navi with that title. Why? Rashi in the beginning of Perel Beis of Yechezkel gives us two Peshatim. One is that (בן-אָדָם) is referring to Gadlus that you are a human being and you were able to walk among Angels when you saw the Maiseh Merkava. The other is that it is a title of Shiflus (it denotes a lower level). As if to say, don't think that you are a Malach that you were among Angels. You are a Ben Adam, you are an ordinary creature. You are a creature made out of Adama (earth). The point being that a Ben Adam can be a title of Gadlus or a title of Shiflus. How so?

Rav Wolbe explains as follows. He says that within a human being there are two conflicting parts. There is the Cheilek Min Ho'adama, the part made from earth, the part that includes the Taivos Haguf, the desires that we have. Then there is a part of the human being that is Gadlus Ha'adam which is the Hasagos Haruach, the fact that a person can dream of being on a higher level. Each one of us lives with both. There are moments when we are inspired for greatness and there are moments that we feel a Shiflus of a person.

An Adam is a person who can connect the two together, who can connect his Taivos and his Hasagos to be one person who tries to raise his expectations of Ruchniyos and at the same time control his Taivos Haguf.

The Gemara says in Chullin 89a (20 lines from the top), (אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל חושקני) (בכם) I love the Jewish people. (שאפילו בשעה שאני משפיע לכם גדולה), even at a time that I give you greatness, (אתם ממעטין עצמכם לפני), you realize that you are at a low level before me. (נתתי גדולה) (לאברהם) I gave Avraham greatness, (אמר לפני ואנכי עפר ואפר), he said what am I. (למשה ואהרן) I gave greatness to Moshe and Aaron, (אמר ונתנו מה), I gave greatness to Dovid, (ואנכי תולעת ולא) (איש). So that when a Yid has his Gadlus whether the greatest Jews, Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon and Dovid or any Jew. At the same time that we are Mashpia Gadlus we don't let it get to our heads. We realize that we have to control our Taivos Haguf.

The Gemara goes on (אבל עובדי כוכבים אינן כן נתתי גדולה לנמרוד), Nimrod had the ability to have greatness. (לסנחריב אמר מי בכל אלהי הארצות). (אמר הבה נבנה לנו עיר). The Gemara says that the Midda of a Yid is that when the Gadlus of his Seichel, the Gadlus of his Ruach, the inspiration that he gets to be bigger and better. When that comes, he doesn't let it make him feel that in his physical Taivos are something that he has to take and live with the Taivos and live with the Gadlus.

No! We control our Taivos at the same time that we have the Gadlus. We control the desires at the same time as our Gadlus. That is Adam. The Shiflus Ha'adam and Gadlus Ha'adam together.

How can Moshe Rabbeinu be so great and still be an Anav? Because he realized that a human being is two parts, Ruach the Cheilek that is G-d and our Taivos Haguf. That is the energy that a human being has, that is the ability that a person has.

Bilam lived two lives. He lived the life of a Navi and then when he came home at night he lived the life of a Baal Taiva. Whether with his donkey or his other Taivos Haguf. The two parts didn't mesh, they didn't combine. Atem K'ruim Adam, Klal Yisrael is called Adam. This is because at the same time that we have inspiration for greatness, we try to control our Taivos Haguf, we control it.

We eat, but we eat Kosher. We have desires but we do them in a Kosher way. It is the combination that makes greatness. The point is this. You read about Bilam and you read in the Torah She'bichsav about his greatness and it is true. He was given a great level of Nevuah. You recognize HKB"H, but you have to know there is Penimios. On the inside if you are out of control, you are a nobody. You have to be able to control on the inside. Atem K'ruim Adam.

We have moments of inspiration, moments where we want to accomplish. I had mentioned to a group of young men that one summer which is 9 weeks and I took Maseches Nazir which is 9 Perakim and I decided to do a Perek a week. I see that some of the young men were inspired by it to do exactly the same thing. It is a level, it is a Darga. But you can only do it if you control the desires that a person has. It comes a night which is a time to come to the Beis medrash, head out to the Bais Medrash. Don't sit in the easy chair with the daily newspaper. Throw away the paper. If your wife is not home for the summer cancel the subscription. You don't need it. Make your way to the Bais Medrash.

This is the idea, the message of the Torah She'bichsav of Bilam and the Torah She'baal Peh of Bilam both of them together. The message is very appropriate as we come to the summer months.

2 - Topic - Some Halachos to be aware of during the summer.

When you come to the summer months and you go out to the country, you have to remind yourself of Hilchos Techumim and Hilchos Eiruvim. I spent two hours yesterday going around the Eiruv in Camp Bnos. Two hours. Now I grant you that most bungalow colonies are not as big as Camp Bnos or as Camp Agudah I hope to do another two hours. But people who go around and just look at the string and make sure it is up are not doing an adequate job. You have to check the Lechi.

What happens to the Lechi is that sometimes it doesn't reach the ground. Sometimes the top of the piece of wood rots from the rain and the weather, and the nail that is holding the string pulls out and it gets pulled to the side and the string is not over the Lechi. Go around and make sure that things are still the way that it has to be.

Techumin we don't think about while we are in the city. But a 10 to 15 minute walk out of your camp or bungalow colony may take you Chutz L'techum. Be aware of Hilchos Techumim. The moral of the story is that if you stay in the Bais Medrash you won't have Techumim issues.

At any rate, as we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Balak, the three weeks are upon us. Shiva Asar B'tamuz is this Shabbos. We don't Prava sadness, but seriousness that we can. Good Shabbos! May it be a summer of growth of inspiration and meaning for all of us not a summer G-d forbid of changing into country people. People who are not connected to Batei Medrashim. Make it a summer of Aliyah. May it be a summer of growth for one and all. A Gutten Shabbos!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas 5777

1 - Topic - The benefit of toiling in Torah as opposed to being given clear Piskei Halacha

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas. And boy have I got an absolutely wonderful set of Machshavos for you today. The first one comes from the Satmar Rav in Divrei Yoel in Parshas Vayeishev. There, he is dealing with a question that many people ask. Nothing to do with Parshas Chukas. He asks a Kasha, why is it that the Dinei Hatorah, the Shulchan Aruch and certainly the Gemara are written like a rule book. It is written in a way that you have to figure out what the Halacha is and it is written in a way that we should argue what the Gemara means. Why is it written this way?

He brings a Yerushalmi in Sanhedrin, Amar Rabbi Yochanan, Ilu Haya Nitna Hatorah Chaticha Lo Haya B'regel Amida. If the Torah had been given as a piece, we couldn't stand. What does that mean?

Zagt the Pnei Moshe, in Sanhedrin Perek Daled Halacha Beis, that if the Torah had been given Piskei Halacha, a clear Psak Halacha without Machshavos in two directions, Lo Kiyum Hatorah Mai'olam, the Torah would not last. The Torah needs to be Darshuned Mem Tes Panim in one direction and Mem Tes Panim in the other direction. The idea of Eilu V'eilu Divrei Elokim Chaim is so that the Torah should have a Kiyum. It is a mystery.

Today everyone writes Likut Seforim and they try to be very clear in what the Halacha is. As a matter of fact, one young man asked me that he saw a Likut Sefer on the Halachos of Muktzeh and it is clearer to him than the Shulchan Aruch is. What is going on?

The answer is that there is a reason for the fact that the Torah was given in a way that everyone could try to understand it and to be Yorek L'yonka. The question is why is it that way? This is a common question. The Satmar Rav in Divrei Yoel uses the Klei Yakar in the beginning of Chukas to explain.

The Klei Yakar is dealing with the idea that the Parah Adumah is Metamei Tehorim and Metaheir Temaim. That is the nature. Everything in the world is stronger when it is contrasted by something that is the opposite. Everything in the world is strengthened by things that are the reverse. Let me explain what that means.

Colors; Black is more visible when it is on a white background. The contrast makes the black visible. Black ink on black is nothing you don't see anything. The contrast makes it strong. The same thing is true when someone wants to build up his muscles. You build up muscles by lifting something that is too heavy, the opposite. The fact that it is something that you can't lift is what creates in the person the muscles, the strength to be able to do it.

If you want to strike with a hammer very hard, you lift up in order to bang down. The nature of the world is such that opposites, contrast, make things appreciated, makes them visible, make them noticeable, make them stronger. Opposites make things noticeable. He explains that this is true in many Dinai Hatorah. A fruit, a food, is not Mekabeil Tumah unless it is Muchshar Mekabeil Tumah which means that it becomes wet. Water is Metaheir, a Mikvah is Metaheir things. Here when it comes into contact with water it first is able to become Tamei. The contrast, the opposite, is what makes it happen.

The Gemara says in Maseches Gittin 43a (11 lines from the bottom) (אין אדם עומד על דברי תורה) (אלא אם כן נכשל בהן) a person understands Torah when he makes mistakes. It is that way. When you ponder something, when you make an error in understanding it, when you do a mistake in Halacha and you see you made a mistake, then you remember the Halacha, you understand the Halacha, then everything goes in a smooth and straight way. Why does it go that way? The contrast, that is the nature of Olam Hazeh. When you make a mistake in something then you understand it better. When something confuses you and you understand it then you remember it. When you understand it right away then you don't remember it as well. That is the nature of the Briya.

The Gemara says regarding another Posuk in this week's Parsha. 21:14 (אֶת-נְהַב בְּסוּפָה). The Gemara in Maseches Kiddushin 30b (8 lines from the top) Darshuns that even a father and a son or a Rabbi and a Talmid who are learning Torah together (אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אפי' האב ובנו הרב ותלמידו) (שעוסקין בתורה בשער אחד נעשים אויבים זה את זה ואינם זזים משם עד שנעשים) (אויבים זה את זה) they become enemies. The Biur Hadavar is that in learning it is the argument, it is the fact that you say to someone what are you talking about, you don't know what you are saying, your Sevara is wrong. That is what makes the Emes of Torah come through. Amito Shel Torah is not when it is served on a platter, when it is given to you in a Kitzur Hilchos Muktzeh booklet, it is when you are Zoche to be Yored L'omko Shel Davar. When you understand it with depth, you get into arguments about it, you see two ways of looking at something, that is when you have a Kinyan in Divrei Torah. That is the way Divrei Torah are.

The Divrei Yoel in Vayeishev page 210 and 211 says that that gives understanding to the Mishna in Avos 5:17 (כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמיים, סופה להתקיים; ושאינה לשם שמיים, אין סופה להתקיים). Anytime you have an argument L'sheim Shamayim then the truth has a Kiyum, then Emes has a Kiyum. What a beautiful thought. Some other day I will tell you that that is the secret of marriage, how opposites make each side grow. One beautiful Machshava from a Chassidische Sefer, the Divrei Yoel.

2 - Topic - The Metzios of spiritual things are based on when the Torah is Kovei'a it

The second Machshava is from Rav Schwab in Sefer Mayan Beis Hashoeva (page # 240 and 241 on 19:2 (the second piece)). I had asked many times how the Mishkan was built if the Parah Adumah was not ready yet. Everyone was Tamei, all of the Keilim of the Bais Hamikdash were Tamei. A Temi'ya, an imponderable. In this week's Parsha Rav Schwab says an incredible answer.

He says just the opposite. B'davka the Parah Adumah was made on the second day of Nissan and the Mishkan was finished on the first day of Nissan. To teach a lesson. It is not the Tumah that is Metamei, it is the Gezairas Hakasuv that it is Metamei. When the Torah says that it is Metamei that is when it is Metamei, not before. Everything comes because the Torah says so.

He points out that in Behaloscha when Aharon and Miriam un-expectantly got Nevuah, they were screaming Mayim Mayim that they were Tamei and that they had to go to the Mikvah. Yet Moshe Rabbeinu killed a Mitzri, he buried him, he was Tamei because a Goy is Metamei B'maga and he went up to Har Sinai before there was a Parah Adumah. He was Tamei Meis, how did he go up to Har Sinai?

The answer is says Rav Schwab, the Torah wants to teach us that until the Torah is Koveia that something is Tamei it is not Tamei. Until the Torah is Koveia that something is Metamteim Es Haleiv it is not Metamteim Es Haleiv. All of the Metzios of the spiritual things are based on Divrei Torah.

Zagt Rav Schwab, that is why in Marah they were commanded in Parah Adumah. Why in Marah were they commanded in Parah Adumah? Rachmana Litzlon! Before Har Sinai? The Parah Adumah was not going to take place until a year later. The answer is that the Torah wanted to teach us this. Learn Hilchos Parah Adumah beforehand, learn Hilchos Tumah beforehand. Understand that there is a concept of Tumah. When? When the Torah is Kovei'a it. The Metzios of Tumah begins when the Torah is Kovei'a Parah Adumah. Before that there is no Tumah. Kach Heim Hadevarim.

If you are Medayeik in Rav Schwab's words you will notice that he says that the people from before did not need Zerikah from the Parah Adumah with the exception of us Leviim. Look in Rav Schwab and you will understand what he is saying.

Until next time I wish everybody a wonderful meaningful summer, a Gevaldige relaxation being able to learn Torah up in the country is great. In your bungalow colony start a Mishmar and make it be Matzliach. Kol Tuv.

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Balak 5776

1. The Shabbos we are preparing for is Shabbos Parshas Balak which is also Shiva Asar B'tammuz. Let me share with you a thought or two regarding the Parsha. There is an absolutely beautiful Vort from Rav Leibele Eiger, very few Vertlach of his have remained. There is a Sefer Toras Emes from Rav Leibele Eiger and there in Parshas Balak he has the following thought regarding the Galus of Klal Yisrael.

Rav Leibele points out that there are two types of Tzaros and Yeshuos which Klal Yisrael experiences. One type is the typical type, so to speak typical. That is that there is a Tzarah, a difficulty. Yidden get together and are Mispallel Klapei Maila. Yidden get together and hopefully do Teshuvah and the Yeshua comes. We find such a thing when Klal Yisrael is in Mitzrayim as is found in Shemos 2:23 (וַיִּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן-הָעֶבְרָה). They had a difficulty and HKB"H answered and Klal Yisrael was helped.

Similarly with Amaleik. Amaleik attacks, Moshe Aharon and Chur go to the top of the mountain, Klal Yisrael was Mistaklin Klapei Maila and a Yeshua comes. That is a so to speak typical experience of Tzar and Tzarah of Klal Yisrael in Tanach.

However, there is a second type of Tzarah and Yeshua. And that is K'ain Parshas Balak. That happens when the Tzar or Tzarah or threat comes and the Bnei Yisrael don't know anything about it. Klal Yisrael is totally oblivious to it and HKB"H helps Klal Yisrael without Klal Yisrael being aware of what has taken place. That is what happens in this week's Parsha. Klal Yisrael is traveling through the Midbar totally unaware of the Tzar or Tzarah and HKB"H is helping Klal Yisrael.

In the Haftorah we Lain from Michah. In 6:5 it says (עָמִי, זָכַר-נָא מֵה-יָעֵץ בָּלַק מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב, וּמֵה-עָנָה אֹתוֹ, (בְּלִעָם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר--מִן-הַשִּׁטִּים, עַד-הַגִּלְגָּל, לְמַעַן, דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יִרְוֶה (לְמַעַן, דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יִרְוֶה). Remember the story of Bilam and Balak (לְמַעַן, דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יִרְוֶה). So that you should know HKB"H's kindness.

The Gemara in Maseches Berachos Daf 7a (22 lines from the top) Darshuns (מאי למען דעת צדקות (ה' א"ר אלעזר אמר להם הקב"ה לישראל דעו כמה צדקות עשיתי עמכם שלא כעסתי בימי בלעם הרשע). The point is a recognition that HKB"H's Chesed comes in more than one form. It comes when the Tzarah and the Yeshua are clear and obvious, and it comes when the Tzarah and the Yeshua are not known to Klal Yisrael.

Every person's life has that type of experience. Has an experience where the Tzar and Tzarah he is Mispalleil for and Mi Yodea, who knows how many time there are things that could threaten a person and HKB"H helps anyway without the person's Tefillah and without anything happening Mitzad the individual himself.

The Gemara says in Maseches Berachos 12b (22 lines from the bottom) that (אמר רב יהודה בר זבידא (בקשו לקבוע פרשת בלק בקריאת שמע ומפני מה לא קבעוה משום טורח צבור). Parshas Balak almost made it into Kriyas Shema but because of Tircha D'tzibura it is too long of a Parsha to say every day.

The Pnei Yehoshua in Maseches Berachos 12 says that the Hava Amina to place Parshas Balak into Kriyas Shema comes from this Posuk in Michah. It seems to be a command (עָמִי, זָכַר-נָא) to remember. While it is not in Kriyas Shema, the Chida writes that still it is a Mitzvah to keep the commandment of the Navi and (זָכַר-נָא), remember that which HKB"H does for us is not always known.

The Nikuda to add to all of this is an important lesson. We are asked to emulate the ways of Hashem as it says in Devarim 28:9 (וְהִלַּכְתָּ, בְּדַרְכָיו). Very often, most Ragil, the Tzaros and Yeshuos that come your way, when you are not the Baal Tzarah (G-d forbid) but the Yeshua, is when someone has a problem he comes to you for help. Someone has a difficulty and says that he needs your help to make a Chasunah, I need help to feed my family and you go and you help the person. That is one type of Tzarah and Yeshua. But you are capable of doing something else and that is doing the Yeshua when the person is totally unaware, totally oblivious to what is happening. In that type of a situation, you are emulating HKB"H of Parshas Balak. You are helping Klal Yisrael without them being aware that they are being helped. Quietly, secretly, you go to grocery and you

pay the bill of someone who can't afford to pay his grocery bill. You go and you help somebody in a way that he is totally unaware of.

It happened to me in my years in the Kollel that it came time to prepare my tax returns at the end of the year and I looked through my checks from the year and I realized that I hadn't paid property taxes on my house the whole year. I asked someone to look into it. I was afraid that I would find myself subject to a seizure of my property. The person that I asked came back and said someone is paying your property taxes. Until today I don't know who did it. I would love to thank him. But someone did it without telling me, without anything. That is a Chessed M'ain the Chessed that we find HKB"H doing in Parshas Balak. Use your imagination, do Chessed in a wonderful way, in the best way possible. That is one lesson from Parshas Balak.

2. I would like to share with you a totally separate thought. Here in camp I am Zoche to be the go to person for many of the Shailos that the boys have. The most common Shaila that I have in camp has to do with food that is stored under a bed or water (drinks) that is stored under a bed. As many of you know, it says in Yor'e Dai'a not to store water under a bed because of Ruach Ra. Now what is the Din B'dieved if the food has been left under a bed? So there, the prevalent Minhag among Ashkenazim that Rabbi Akiva Eiger brings in Shulchan Aruch is that it is Muttar B'dieved. Sefardim who follow Rav Ovadia Yosef's Psak would hold that it is Assur and it should be thrown out B'dieved unless it is a Hefsed Meruba.

When we get up in the morning we wash Neigel Vasser as quickly as we can because if not there (potentially) is a Ruach Ra. What is this Ruach Ra? I can't define it precisely but I can explain. If you find that you don't have a Cheishek for learning, you don't have a Cheishek for Davening there is something called a Ruach Ra. A Ruach Ra has a negative spiritual impact on a person. If somebody finds that his Cheishek for Davening or his ability to have Kavana is inadequate, I would tell him try in the morning being more careful with washing Neigel Vasser. Not going Daled Amos without washing, wash quickly when you wake up, being careful with things that have to do with Ruach Ra. Ruach Ra make a person lack the feeling for Ruchniyos growth. That is what Ruach Ra is. This is something to work on as we come to this time of the year where the Kochos Hatumah are Lo Aleinu great. The three weeks, the nine days. It is the time to work on Taharah, it is time to work on things that Chazal consider to have to do with Taharas Haguf and a Taharas Haneshama.

3. I would like to end with a question. The question has to do with the end of the Parsha and maybe the beginning of next week's Parsha Parshas Pinchas where Pinchas is Zoche to the Kehuna not in the regular way. He is Zoche to Kehuna by earning it himself.

My question is this. The Kohanim of today are descendants of Aharon Hakohen and some are descendants of Pinchas. When you go to Duchan you make a Beracha Asher Kidishanu Bikdushaso Shel Aharon V'tzivanu L'vareich Es Yisrael B'avahavah. When the Kohanim ate Terumah and there were circumstances where they would eat Challah it says in Shulchan Aruch Yor'e Dai'a by Hilchos Challah that the Nussach of the Beracha would be Asher Kidishanu Bikdushaso Shel Aharon V'tzivanu Le'echal Terumah or Le'echal Chalah.

The question is there are some Kohanim who are descendants of Pinchas. Asher Kidishanu Bikdushaso Shel Aharon? That is not true. Some Kohanim have their Kehuna because they are

descendants of Aharon, not so with Pinchas. Pinchas is a person who was Zoche to Kehunah on his own. Why do they say a Nussach of Asher Kidishanu Bikdushaso Shel Aharon? This is the question for now.

I will ask you a second question that seems to have to go hand in hand. A young man in Ohr Sameach asked me this question. He said if Pinchas had not been a descendant of Aharon Hakohen. If he had been a Yisrael and he did what he did would he also have been Zoche to the crown of Kehunah? To the Bris Kehunas Olam? That is a thinking person's question. If I remember I will share the answer with you in the coming week B'ezras Hashem.

In the meantime I wish everybody a good Shabbos, a meaningful fast for Shiva Asar B'tammuz. A Tannis Tzibbur is a day where people traditionally fasted and then they came together in the afternoon as the Gemara says to talk about Takanos Shel Tzibbur. How to improve the Tzibbur, how to improve the life, the Frumma life of Klal Yisrael. Make the Taanis which falls on a Sunday this year and many of you will not be going to work, make it a meaningful day, a day in which your Davening is longer, in which your learning is longer, more meaningful. This is what a Taanis is supposed to be about. A Gutten Shabbos and a Leichter Tannis to one and all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Balak 5774

1. Of course, this week's Parsha is all about Bilam and therefore, our discussion today will center on Bilam. We will talk about Bilam as a person, Bilam's thinking, and Bilam's speaking. First the person Bilam. I think that you will be very surprised to hear that there are three Gedolei Harishonim that are in agreement that Bilam had really not been a Navi. The conventional thinking in the Mashmaos of Rashi is that Bilam was a Navi. He went around as a Navi and that is why Balak hired him. We find in Yehoshua 13:22 on the Posuk (וְאֶת-בִּלְעָם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר, הַקּוֹסֵם) Bilam Ben B'or the magician that the Radak comments (להודיע כי לא נביא היה אלא קוסם ונבואתו הייתה לשעה). He says that Bilam was not a Navi, he developed his career through magic, convincing people of things and it was only at this time that he was given Nevua for this one episode and that is the extent of it. This is a Chiddush to many people. But the Ramban is not alone in this.

The Rambam in Hilchos Yesodai Hatorah beginning of Perek 7 explains that in order for the Shechina to be Shore' on somebody, a person needs to be a Gibor, an Ashir etc. but it means a Gibor B'midosav. A person has to be a Somaiach B'chelko. The Rambam says (ואין הנבואה חלה אלא) (על חכם גדול בחכמה גבור במדותיו ולא יהא יצרו מתגבר עליו בדבר בעולם). Now, the fact that Bilam got Nevua during this episode we understand, but to say that Bilam had been a Navi all along and that is how he developed his career so to speak, is very difficult to understand.

The Ramban in 22:31 makes the case that Bilam was not truly a Navi. On the Posuk (וַיְגַלֵּי רִרָה, אֶת-) (עֵינֵי בִלְעָם) the Ramban says that that is not the language that is appropriate for a Navi. Therefore, the Ramban has as is the Mashmaois of the Rambam and B'feirush in the Radak, they all say that Bilam had not really been a Navi all along. In Maseches Nedarim 38, Rav Yaakov Emden in his Hagoas makes a similar Diyuk from the Rosh to say that Bilam's career was not at all a career of Nevua. Therefore, we have this Chidush from many that Bilam was not truly a Navi.

The question is the following. The Posuk in Devarim 34:10 says (וְלֹא-קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּמֹשֶׁה) and Chazal Darshun B'umos Haolam Kom, that among the nations of the world somebody was like Moshe. Rashi says in Bamidbar 22:5 (וְאִם תֹּאמַר מִפְּנֵי מַה הִשְׁרִה הַקֶּב"ה שְׂכִינְתּוֹ עַל גּוֹי רָשָׁע, כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה פִתְחוֹן פֶּה לְאוֹמוֹת לִוְמֵר אֵלָיו הֲיִינוּ לְנוֹ נְבִיאִים חוֹזְרֵנוּ לְמוֹטֵב כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה פִתְחוֹן פֶּה לְאוֹמוֹת לִוְמֵר אֵלָיו הֲיִינוּ לְנוֹ נְבִיאִים חוֹזְרֵנוּ לְמוֹטֵב) the nations shouldn't say that we didn't have a Navi like Moshe and that is why we didn't follow in HKB"H's ways. For that, Bilam was set up as a Navi K'moshe. Bishlomo if you learn that Bilam was truly a Navi, ok, then the Rashi makes sense (the Gemara I believe is in Maseches Sotah). However, if you are going to learn like the Radak, the Ramban, the Mashmaos of the Rambam, and the Yaaveitz says that it is a Shitta of the Rosh, then it is a Pele. What does it help having a onetime episode with Bilam to answer the Taanos of the Umos Haolam that we didn't have a Navi like Moshe. It is a strong Kasha.

The Ksav Sofer in Parshas Zos Habracha says an absolutely beautiful Teretz. He starts by saying does anybody really think that Bilam was like Moshe Rabbeinu. He says that Bilam was like Moshe at his beginning of being a Navi. Moshe started with a small Mattana from HKB"H, a small amount of special Hashpa'a. It is what you make of it. Bilam got that same gift, he got that gift, that Pesach, that opening. He was Mechavein and was able to understand the hours that certain things happen in heaven so he was able to predict things for people. Moshe Rabbeinu for the first 80 years of his life had no Nevua. Moshe Rabbeinu had an opening, a Pesach to the Ribbono Shel Olam. Bilam got the same Pesach. It is what you make of it. Moshe Rabbeinu made of it a Moshe Rabbeinu. Bilam made of it nothing, a magic business. There is a tremendous Mussar here. The Mussar is that when you ignore an opportunity, if you ignore a Pesach, when you are ignoring the ability to do something more and you push it aside, you are responsible for the outcome. You are responsible for what you miss. There are many opportunities in life. Things like Mishmar, things that are opportunities that can turn your life in a certain direction. Who knows where it will lead. That is the lesson of Bilam as brought by the Ksav Sofer.

2. Let's move on to Bilam's thinking. Bilam's thinking is the most incredible point in this whole Parsha. As a matter of fact it would be a comedy routine if someone were to act it out. The most incredible point is when Bilam is riding his donkey and the donkey misbehaves, Bilam whacks him and the donkey starts to talk. What is most amazing is that Bilam is not Nispoel. Here you have a donkey speaking, something that required a special moment in Maasei Beraishis (as brought in Pirkei Avos in the 5th Perek), a special moment of creation for it to happen and Bilam is not Nispoel and he says as can be found in 22:29 (כִּי הִתְעַלְלֶתָּ בִּי), it talks back. Amazing, how does he talk back to the donkey. Why doesn't he say hey what is going on here?

Rav Schwab (in his Sefer on Chumash Mayan Bais Hashoeva page # 355) says that this is an important lesson of Mussar. A person can come to opportunities of Hispailus in serving HKB"H. If he hardens his heart and doesn't let himself feel then that is what is going to happen. He is going to become a person with a hardened heart, he is going to become a person who doesn't have a Hispailus in the things that happen around him.

Look at Lavan, amazing. Lavan, has Yaakov his son in law and Yaakov says to him you tell me what type of sheep are mine as can be found in Beraishis 30 (נִקְדִּים) which means spotted sheep. (אִם-כֹּה יֹאמֶר, נִקְדִּים יִהְיֶה) means they are spotted only in their four legs and Lavan agrees 31:8 (שְׂכָרְךָ--וְיִלְדוּ כָל-הַצֹּאן, עֲקָדִים; וְאִם-כֹּה יֹאמֶר, עֲקָדִים יִהְיֶה שְׂכָרְךָ--וְיִלְדוּ כָל-הַצֹּאן, עֲקָדִים). Whatever Yaakov

says, happens. Lavan should have been wowed, that is incredible. What does Lavan say? 31:43 (וַיַּעַן לָבָן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-יַעֲקֹב, הַבְּנוֹת בְּנֹתַי וְהַבָּנִים בְּנֵי וְהַצֹּאֵן צֹאֲנִי, וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה רֹאֶה, לִי-הוּא) everything you see is mine. He is not Nispoel. There is a lesson here. The lesson is people see opportunities that come a person's way, if a person hardens his heart says Rav Schwab the Onesh from heaven is that your heart remains hard. You have that Leiv Ha'even.

Rav Schwab elsewhere in Peshas Shelach in the beginning of Perek 14 (on page # 324) says V'yitachein Shesh'nei Anashim Yistaklu Al Davar Echad (it is possible for two people to see the same thing), V'haechad Yir'e Oros Dik'dusha V'hasheini Yir'e Eitzim V'avanim (one sees the beautiful light of holiness and the other one see stones and wood), he sees things that have no meaning to him. If you harden your heart your heart will be hard. That itself is the Onesh to the person. A person has to be able to be Nispoel.

(Back to page # 355 bottom paragraph on the left) Says Rav Schwab, the Rambam says that the path to Ahavas Hashem and Yir'as Hashem is and the Rambam is in Perek Bais Halacha Bais of Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah (והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו). What is the path to love and fear of Hashem? (בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים הגדולים) when someone sees Hashem's amazing creation, his actions (ויראה מהן חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ) he sees the great wisdom in every small piece of the universe (מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאוה תאוה גדולה לידע השם הגדול) immediately he has a love, a praise, and a desire to know Hashem. Does it happen (מיד) to us? We harden our hearts. We are hardened to many things. The punishment is that we stay with a hard heart. Hard to things that happen in the world and the punishment is that we stay with a hard heart. It is painful not to feel where a person should feel.

I remember going once during the Aseres Yimai Teshuvah to Tashlich. We went to the bay. My wife, I and small children were there and we were saying Tashlich. The children were busy throwing bread to the fish. There was an old Yiddishe Babba there who was saying Tashlich, she was weeping, she was crying. I could hear her saying the words of Tashlich. She had no idea what she was saying, but she knew that she was talking to HKB"H about Klal Yisrael. She had real tears. It hurt. Where are my tears? Where are they? Rav Schwab quotes Rav Yeruchum (on page # 366) and says Al Ma She'ain Bochim B'tisha B'av (that which we don't weep on Tisha B'av), V'chol Zeh Totzaa Mimah Shena'aseh Haleiv L'leiv Even, (it is a Totzaa (outcome) from the fact that our hearts don't want to be moved, we don't want to be changed).

In Eretz Yisrael it is a great time of danger now. The events which transpired have moved us. But looking ahead it is a time of great Sakana on many fronts. Imminent Sakanas, long term Sakanas, we don't appreciate having Eretz Yisrael. We don't have the joy that Jews had 60 years ago, 70 years ago when Eretz Yisrael first became accessible to Yidden. We don't have the joy of almost 50 years ago when the Kosel became accessible. A Lev Ha'even has descended upon us. Our Shemoneh Esrei should be a tearful Shemoneh Esrei. G-d forbid there should be another war and there should be other soldiers that die, Chas V'shalom.

3. That leaves me to a third topic, the voice of Bilam. Bilam tried to use the Kol. The Kol is Kol Yaakov, it is our tool. Weapons, tanks, machine guns, those are weapons of Eisav. Our weapons are the weapons of Kol, of voice. Bilam came and tried to use Kol against Klal Yisrael. At the end HKB"H said let Klal Yisrael take the sword and kill Bilam. Today in Eretz Yisrael we are forced

into a position where Yidden have to use the Yadaim Yedai Eisav to defend themselves. We are forced into a position where we need the Hishtadlus of an army, the Hishtadlus of tanks, the Hishtadlus of airplanes. Are we so hardened as to forget Hakol Hol Yaakov. Tehillim 127:1 (-אָם-אָרן לֹא-יִשְׁמַר-עִיר, שְׁאֵל נִשְׁקָד שׁוֹמֵר Im Hashem Lo Yishmar Ir Shav Shakat Shomer. We know it, we need to feel it.

As the summer comes, a time of increased Laytzanus, flippant behavior, inappropriate behavior, let's try to have a Leiv Basar. That little Leiv Basar that we have seen over the last two and a half weeks as we were concerned for the plight of the three young Shevuim. Try to keep the Leiv Habasar. Let's try to have it within us. At least when we Daven Shemoneh Esrei, to feel.

4. Let me end with a question on the Parsha. The Morah Nevuchim in Cheilek Gimmel Perek 17 says the source for the Issur Tzar Baalei Chaim is this week's Parsha. In this week's Parsha 22:32 the Malach asks Bilam (עַל-מָה הַכִּיתָ אֶת-אֲתֹנֶה, זֶה שְׁלוֹשׁ רְגָלִים) why are you hitting your donkey three times. Says the Rambam, that is the source for the Issur of Tzar Baalei Chaim and as you may know, Rishonim scour the Torah and there are different Shittos to what the source of the Issur of Tzar Baalei Chaim is.

The question we have is that this seems to be an inadequate source because after all there is an Issur of Tzar Baalei Chaim but if you are riding a donkey and he starts taking you in the direction and he starts banging you against the wall you are entitled to hit the donkey and that is not an Issur of Tzar Baalei Chaim. Bilam didn't see the Malach. Based on what he knew, what Bilam did was correct. How can that be a source for Tzar Baalei Chaim? I mentioned this question to a few people. One person suggested that he should have been Melameid Zechus on the donkey. I don't recall a source for being Melameid Zechus on donkeys. Perhaps. The Kasha is still a Tzoreich Iyun and maybe someone has a better Teretz than that.

With that I want to wish everyone a wonderful summer. For those of you in bungalow colonies, it is likely the first Shabbos you are going to be there. Are Shabbasos going to be times that people learn and come to Davening on time and that the Davening is appropriately quiet? This week will set the tone for the weeks to come. Make it a good one. A Gutten Shabbos to all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Balak 5773

This week I would like to share with you a few thoughts. I will begin with something which I think is a new idea and you may not believe me on this and I can't prove it to you but I will make the following suggestion. How many people do we have in Tanach (or do we have in Torah Bichlal) named Bilam. I assume your answer would be 1 and that would seem to be the logical answer that there is only 1 Bilam. It seems to me in fact that there are 2 Bilam's. Not actually 2 Bilam's mentioned in Tanach, but 2 Bilam's mentioned in Chazal and I will explain.

There is Gemara in Maseches Sotah 11a (17 lines from the bottom) which is well known. It says א"ר חייא בר אבא א"ר סימאי שלשה היו באותה עצה בלעם ואיוב ויתרו בלעם שיעץ נהרג איוב ששתק נידון ביסורין (יתרו שברח זכו מבני בניו שישבו בלשכת הגזית שנאמר ומשפחות סופרים יושבי יעבץ תרעתים שמעתים סוכתים המה (הקנים הבאים מחמת אבי בית רכב וכתוב ובני קיני חתן משה וגו Yisrael in Mitzrayim there were 3 people whom Pharoh consulted to seek counsel. He asked them

if it is a good idea to oppress Klal Yisrael. They were Bilam, Yisro, and Iyov. Yisro who protested was Zoche to have Moshe Rabbeinu as a son in law, Iyov who was silent suffered the pains of Iyov, and Bilam who said do it was killed.

Was this Bilam the same Bilam as the Bilam in this week's Parsha? I believe that most people would say yes of course it is the same Bilam. That is the way that we have always understood. I have 3 difficulties with understanding that it is the same Bilam.

The obvious difficulty is that Bilam was not a Mitzri. What is he doing in Mitzrayim? All right that difficulty we can do away with. After all Yisro was also not a Mitzri. A more serious question is that the punishment to Bilam is that Bilam who gave an Eitza was killed (בלעם שיעץ נהרג). When was he killed? The killing of Bilam at the hands of Pinchas in Parshas Mattos 31:8 (וְאֶת-מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן (הָרְגוּ עַל-חַלְלֵיהֶם, אֶת-אָוִי וְאֶת-רְקֹם וְאֶת-צֹר וְאֶת-חוּר וְאֶת-רְבִיעֵ--חַמְשָׁת, מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן; וְאֶת בְּלַעַם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר, הָרְגוּ בְּחֶרֶב) takes place 126 years after Pharoh conferred with his advisors as to whether to oppress Klal Yisrael and that is because Pharoh oppressed Klal Yisrael for 86 years before they left Mitzrayim and there was almost 40 years until the story of Balak and Bilam so that is 125 or 126 years later that this week's Parsha takes place. That does not seem to be a proper punishment for a Rasha. (בלעם שיעץ later! How old was he at the time that he gave the Eitza to Pharoh. It would seem as his total age was 150. That is a long life.

More seriously, the Gemara in Maseches Sanhedrin 106b (3 lines from the top) says B'feirush (א"ל) ההוא מינא לר' חנינא מי שמיע לך בלעם בר כמה הוה א"ל מיכתב לא כתיב אלא מדכתיב אנשי דמים ומרמה לא יחצו ימיהם בר תלתין ותלת שנין או בר תלתין וארבע א"ל שפיר קאמרת לדידי חזי לי פנקסיה דבלעם והוה כתיב ביה בר (תלתין ותלת שנין בלעם חגירא כד קטיל יתיה פנחס ליסטאה). That the Bilam that was killed by Pinchas in Parshas Mattos was 33 years old. He was born after Yetzias Mitzrayim. It seems to be proof positive that the Bilam in Sotah 11 cannot be the same Bilam as in this week's Parsha. Surprise! If anyone can answer these Rayas particularly the last Raya, I would love to hear it.

While I am telling you things that are hard to believe let me give you somebody else. Someone else with an unusual name and it seems to me that there are 2 of them. I am referring to now Unkelos Hager. Unkelos is not a common name and certainly it is not a common name among Jews. We have 2 stories about Unkelos. Although our Rabbeim in Yeshiva taught them as being the same individual, it seems to me to be 2 people named Unkelos that were Geirim. One the Gemara in Maseches Avoda Zora 11a (top line) tells us (אונקלוס בר קלונימוס איגייר שדר קיסר גונדא) דרומאי אבתריה משכינהו בקראי איגיור הדר שדר גונדא דרומאי [אחרינא] אבתריה אמר להו לא תימרו ליה ולא מידי כי הוו שקלו ואזלו אמר להו אימא לכו מילתא בעלמא ניפירא נקט נורא קמי פיפירא לדוכסא דוכסא להגמונא הגמונא לקומא קומא מי נקט נורא מקמי אינשי אמרי ליה לא אמר להו הקב"ה נקט נורא קמי ישראל דכתיב וה' הולך לפניו יום ויום וגו' איגיור [כולהו] הדר שדר גונדא אחרינא אבתריה אמר להו לא תשתעו מידי בהדיה כי נקטי ליה ואזלי חזא מזוזתא [דמנחא אפתחא] אותיב ידיה עלה ואמר להו מאי האי אמרו ליה אימא לן את אמר להו מנהגו של עולם מלך בשר ודם יושב מבפנים ועבדיו משמרים אותו מבחוץ ואילו הקב"ה עבדיו מבפנים והוא משמרן מבחוץ שנאמר ה' ישמר about Unkelos Bar Kelonimus who was Migayeir. (צאתך ובואך מעתה ועד עולם איגיור תו לא שדר בתריה) The Caesar sent soldiers to seize him and as the Gemara relates, Unkelos kissed the Mezuzah. The soldiers asked about the Mezuzah and as a result of their inquiry in his response they too were Migayeir. An incredible story about Unkelos. That story took place as the Gemara relates it during the lifetime of Rabban Gamliel Hazakein.

There is another Gemara that is also well known in Maseches Gittin 56b (5 lines from the bottom). The Gemara says (אונקלוס בר קלוניקוס בר אחתיה דטיטוס הוה בעי לאיגורוי) that there was another person named Unkelos who was a nephew of Titus and he wanted to be Migayeir. The Gemara relates this story. Hold on a second. That Unkelos was a generation later than Titus. Titus as you know destroyed the Bais Hamikdash. Rabban Gamliel Hazakein lived a couple of generations before the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. It would seem that there were 2 people named Unkelos. I know people won't believe this but that is the way it seems to me.

Another unusual name with 2 people with the same name. Amasloi. Who was Amasloi you will ask me? Well when I was in Pirchei they would ask a riddle. What was the name of the mother of Avraham Avinu? A few of us lucky enough to know the answer would get a free soda or perhaps in those days it was a free ices (freeze pop). The Gemara in Maseches Bava Basra 91a (8 lines from the bottom) says (ואמר רב חנן בר רבא אמר רב אמיה דאברהם אמתלאי בת כרנבו אמיה דהמן אמתלאי בת) (עורבתי וסימניך טמא טמא טהור טהור) that Avraham Avinu's mother was Amasloi Bas Karnivo. That is a Gemara you can't argue with it. Guess what? Haman Harasha also had a mother. Her name was Amasloi Bas Orvasi. Now you may disagree with my first 2 offerings with the 2 Bilam's and the 2 Unkelos. But 2 Amasloi. It says so in the Gemara in Maseches Bava Basra 91a. The Gemara gives a Siman that Avraham Avinu's mother was Amasloi the daughter of Karnivo. Karnivo sounds like a name given to sheep which is a Kosher Min. Haman's mother was Amasloi Bas Orvasi. An Oreiv is a name of a raven which is a not kosher bird. (טמא טמא) Haman's mother was Amasloi Bas Orvasi.

Here I have for you 3 offerings of people with double names and as I said the third you can't disagree with but the first 2 you could, but you would have to answer my questions.

This all comes to mind because this summer I was being driven in Eretz Yisrael and we passed Rechov Elifaz and the driver mentioned to me isn't it strange that they would name a city in Eretz Yisrael after Elifaz a son of Eisav Harasha the father of Amaleik? Wow! I said to him no there are 2 people named Elifaz.

Were there 2 people named Elifaz? It appears so. We know that Elifaz was the father of Amaleik son of Eisav. Elifaz was also one of the 7 Niviai Umos Ha'olam. There are 7 people who said Nevua who were not Jewish. 4 of them in total were friends of Iyov and are mentioned in Sefer Iyov. Elifaz is the most prominent among them. So it appears that there was Elifaz the Navi who was a great man and the street is presumably named after him and not Elifaz the father of Amaleik. Given today's political climate, they may soon pass a law that the Elifaz must be the Elifaz the father of Amaleik.

With this one I would like to tell you there is some disagreement among the Rishonim as to whether Elifaz father of Amaleik son of Eisav was in fact a Rasha or perhaps the same Elifaz as in Sefer Iyov. If anyone has any more double names to offer me I would be happy to take you up on it and would love to hear about it.

I will tell you the name of a city which is a country. It seems that there are 2 places called Tzorfas. Tzorfas is France. We have at the end of the book of Ovadya 1:20 where it says (וְגֵלַת הַחֵל-הַנָּה לְבָנִי) (יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-כָּנְעָנִים, עַד-צָרְפַת, וְגֵלַת יְרוּשָׁלַם, אֲשֶׁר בְּסִפְרֵד--יִרְשׁוּ, אֵת עַרְי הַנְּגָב) that the Galus will reach Ad Tzorfas and Rashi says this is the Malchus that is France. France is called Tzorfas. I believe this

is in Modern Hebrew as well. However, in Melachim I 17:9 it says that Eliyahu Hanavi is told (קום לך צרפתה). Did Eliyahu Hanavi go to France? It says (קום לך צרפתה אשר לצידו, וישבת שם). Apparently a part of Eretz Yisrael is a place called Tzorfas. Wow! That is interesting. 2 places named Tzorfas. So I have a bundle of two's for you and I would love you to answer for it. If I get an hours worth then maybe someday we can make a Navi Shiur out of it.

2. Let's move on to a more traditional Vort on the Parsha. We have in this week's Parsha, Balak and Bilam bringing Korbanos. Can a Goy offer a Korban? The answer is yes. Goyim are permitted to offer Korbanos, a Korban Olah and it does have the Din of a Korban.

The Rama in Hilchos Tzedaka says that we are allowed to be Mikabeil money for a Beis Hakneses from a non Jew. This is mentioned in Yoreh Dai'a 254:2 and also in Orach Chaim 154:11. That we can take from Goyim Tzedaka for a Shul (Beis Hakneses) for the oil and lights of a Beis Hakneses because Goyim offered Korbanos and a Shul has Dinim similar to a Mikdash M'at. However, says the Rama not a Yehudi Mishumad. A Jew who doesn't believe in the Ribbono Shel Olam the Magen Avraham says Hu Hadin if it is a Michaleil Shabbos is not eligible to donate to a Beis Hakneses. He is not eligible to give oil (lights) of the Beis Hakneses. Thus we have an unusual Halacha. A riddle! Where do you have something that a Goy is allowed to do and a non Frum Yid is prohibited from doing? That is donating to a Beis Hakneses.

What is interesting is that there is a Machlokes as it appears from the Magen Avraham there in 154 and according to the explanation of the Machatzis Hashekel, the Magen Avraham is saying that there is a dispute if the prohibition from taking money from non Frum Jews for Tzorchei Beis Hakneses is limited to them bringing oil or Seforim for the Shul which would be similar to a Korban or even taking money from them. It is interesting that the Tchebiner Rav (Rabbi **Dov Berish Weidenfeld** (1881-1965)) in Dovev Meisharim Cheilek 3 Teshuva 95 says that this depends on the degree to which a Shul today is a Mikdash M'at. If a Shul today is called a small Bais Hamikdash only B'lashon Mashul (it is an expression of honor) and we call it a Mikdash. If that is the case then it is enough to say well in the Mikdash you can't bring a Korban so then in a Shul he should not bring offerings of oil for the lighting of the Shul or let him not write Seforim for the use of the Shul. However says the Tchebiner Rav it is possible that the reference to a Beis Hakneses as a Mikdash M'at has full meaning, full understanding.

As a matter of fact, the Yirai'im (one of the Rishonim) writes that people who behave disrespectfully in a Shul are Over on the Issur D'oraisa of Yir'as Hamikdash (Viyiraisam Elokecha). Although the Chumash is talking about a Beis Hamikdash it applies as well to a Shul because a Shul is a Mikdash M'at. We know that in the Shul we refer to the various parts of the Shul in expressions that are reminiscent of the Bais Hamikdash. We call the Bimah in the middle a Shulchan because of the Shulchan in the Bais Hamikdash. Most Shuls have a Menorah because there was a Menorah in the Bais Hamikdash. The place where the Sefer Torah is kept we call an Aron because there was an Aron in the Bais Hamikdash. The velvet hanging in front of the Aron we call a Paroches because there was a Paroches in the Bais Hamikdash. Traditionally, the Paroches or the Aron Kodosh itself was decorated by an image of the Luchos that Moshe Rabbeinu brought down from Har Sinai. Today in our world of increased sophistication regarding decorations, most Shuls don't have the Luchos there anymore. However, the Luchos were there for a reason because the Aron in the Bais Hamikdash held the Luchos. Therefore, the Luchos were

used to decorate the Aron. A Shul has a Ner Tamid. There is an Ezras Nashim for the Azara. These are all references which point out similarities between a Shul and the Bais Hamikdash. Says the Dovev Meisharim, the question, the Machlokes that the Magen Avraham is bringing as to whether one may accept even cash for use in a Beis Hakneses from a non Frum Yid, that Machlokes depends on how strongly we adhere to the similarity, the idea of the Mishkan.

This week I have only gotten in 2 ideas in my 15 minutes and I think there is what to think about. Certainly I would appreciate if someone could show me that it is the same Bilam to answer my questions I would be very much obliged. If you can't, please contact all elementary and high school Rabbeim and inform them that they have been teaching it what appears to be incorrectly.

With that, I wish everyone an absolutely wonderful Shabbos. As summer begins, I beg you once again those of you who are in the city to put in the extra time. Chap Arein extra Sedorim and extra learning. If during the time that your family is away you use that extra time for learning then when your family is here and you have family obligations that take you away then you have a Din of an Ones. You are somebody who had a Machshava to Learn V'nenas Nosen Lo Schar K'ilu Asa. But if even when they are not here you are not learning what does that say??

Have a wonderful and meaningful summer. A Good Shabbos to all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Balak 5772

Let's begin by sharing a Yesodosdika Ramban with you regarding Bilam. The Ramban himself refers to an error that people have with the understanding the level (Darga) on which Bilam was. As the Ramban says in 24:1 there is a Chazal that can easily be misunderstood. Chazal say on the Posuk that is found in Devarim 34:10 (וְלֹא-קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּמֹשֶׁה) that for Klal Yisrael there was never another Navi like Moshe Rabbeinu, however, for the Umos Haolam there was (אבל באומות) (העולם קם, ואיזה זה בלעם). Chazal somehow compare Bilam to Moshe Rabbeinu in Nevua and they add that the reason for this was that the nations of the world should not say that had we had a Navi we would have also been Mikabeil the Torah as Klal Yisrael did from Moshe Rabbeinu.

Based on this many understand that Bilam somehow had a career as a Navi, he had been a Navi for many years. Says the Ramban, it is not true. Bilam was a magician who came with magic (כי בפעמים הראשונים היה מנחש ורוצה לקלל אותם בנחש), he had the ability to perform Kishuf and the Gemara says (Ed note. There is a long discussion on this topic on Daf Zayin Amud Aleph of Maseches Berachos) he knew to be Mechavein to the hour that HKB"H gets angry and at that time to curse. Now this does not make him a Navi. There is a Gemara in Maseches Berachos that says that there was an Amora who knew Michavein Es Hasha'a that he wanted to know when HKB"H gets angry Kavayochel. Bilam was not a Navi previously and it was only here that he became a Navi Bichvodon Shel Yisrael, these few times.

As a matter of fact the Ramban mentions this throughout the Parsha whenever it says Vayakar Elokim L'bilam, that HKB"H appeared to Bilam, the Ramban says Bichvodon Shel Yisrael (לכבוד) like in 23:4 for example. So that Bilam was not an ongoing Navi. Here in this episode he was Zoche to Nevua for a first and only time. He was Zoche a few times to Nevua but these times that he was Zoche to Nevua (וַתְּהִי עֵלְיוֹ, רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) as it says in 24:2 were the only times in his life

נאם--שמע, אמרי-קל: אֲשֶׁר מִחוּזָה שְׂקִי יִחַזְּקֵהוּ, נִפְלַל וְגַלְוִי (24:4). He himself said as it says in 24:4 (נאם--שמע, אמרי-קל: אֲשֶׁר מִחוּזָה שְׂקִי יִחַזְּקֵהוּ, נִפְלַל וְגַלְוִי). He says as a Chiddush that he was Zoche here to Nevua. So that Bilam was Zoche to Nevua only in this Parsha. These are the words of the Ramban.

The question you may ask is if so how does that answer the Taina (complaint) of the Umos Haolam. How does that answer their complaint that Klal Yisrael has Moshe Rabbeinu and if they would have had a Navi they would have also become greater? The answer to that seems to be that Bilam got Nevua, had he made something positive out of it then he may have been a Navi for a very long time. Moshe Rabbeinu was given Nevua the first time at the Sneh as it says in Shemos 3:3 (וַיֹּאמֶר (מִלִּשָׁה--אֶסְרֶה-נָּא וְנֹאדְרָאָהּ, אֶת-הַמֶּרְאָה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה: מִדּוּעַ, לֹא-יִבְעַר הַסִּינָיִת) and he went to see what was taking place at this thing. It was an opportunity. When a person has an opportunity he has to seize that opportunity and do something with it. Moshe Rabbeinu had the opportunity and he made himself into a Moshe Rabbeinu. Bilam had the opportunity and he made nothing out of it. It could be that that is why the Parsha ends with the Eitza of Bilam to entrap Klal Yisrael with the Znus. That is to say look what Bilam did with his opportunity.

Rav Pam used to say that just as the Gemara says that Hillel is Michayeiv Es Ho'aniyim, some people whose actions obligate others, so too every human being has a time be it an hour in his life that is Michayeiv him forever. When he has an opportunity that touches greatness. He has to seize and build on it and grow from it and not let it fall. The difference between Moshe and Bilam, they both had the opportunity. The difference is that Moshe took the opportunity to become Moshe Rabbeinu and Bilam did not. This is the Yesod of the Ramban which can be found in 24:1. Although as I said it is a theme that he mentions briefly throughout the Parsha.

There is something else in the Parsha which is a great Limud which I would like to point out to you. As you undoubtedly noted right before the Aliyah of Revii, right before the Aliyah of Chamishi, right before the Aliyah of Shishi, and right before the Aliyah of Shevii we have a break right after Bilam makes a statement that I can only do that which HKB"H tells me. As it says in 24:13 (לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲבֹר אֶת-פִּי יְרוּר, לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹבָה אוּ רָעָה מִלְּבִי: אֲשֶׁר-יְדַבֵּר יְרוּר, אֹתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר). This is the theme that Bilam complains.

In the Sefer Haksav V'hakabala (Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg 1785-1865) on page # 292 on 24:13 he brings from the GRA who explains this idea this theme that keeps on taking place. Bilam was a Baal Gaiva (a haughty person) as it says in the Mishna of Avos he was the opposite of a Ruach Nimucha. Bilam's Gaiva was brought down in this Parsha. As he has to slowly admit to Balak that there is nothing he can do on his own. If you look at the 4 statements that he makes at the end of each of those Aliyos that I mentioned, you see a progression. Zugt the GRA, at the end of the Shlishi Aliyah it says in 22:38 (הִדְבַּר, אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים אֱלֹקִים בְּפִי--אֹתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר). He is forced to admit to Balak that he can't say anything on his own. His words have no power, it is only based on Ratzon Hashem. Bilam later complains and says ok you can't curse them if Hashem doesn't let so don't curse them, but don't bless them either. Why are you giving them a Beracha? So at the end of the Aliyah of Revii is the second step, Bilam says to Balak you are complaining as it says in 23:12 (וַיִּנְעוּ, וַיֹּאמְרוּ: הֲלֹא, אֵת אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים יְרוּר בְּפִי--אֹתוֹ אֲשַׁמֵּר, לְדַבֵּר)? Not only as I said earlier that I can't curse on my own without the Ribbono Shel Olam's Ratzon but I can't even speak on my own without HKB"H Ratzon. Whatever Hashem says I must say. (אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים יְרוּר בְּפִי--אֹתוֹ אֲשַׁמֵּר, לְדַבֵּר). He is

slowly admitting that he can't say things on his own and he can't even be silent on his own. But that is not enough.

At the end of the Chamishi Aliyah he says as is found in 23:26 (וַיֵּעַן בַּלְעָם, וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-בָּלָק: הֲלֹא, דִּבַּרְתִּי) (אֲלֵיךָ לֵאמֹר, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-יִדְבַּר יְרֹנָה, אֲתוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה). Not only am I forced to say that which HKB"H says but I am also compelled to do the act according to the way that HKB"H tells me to act. Finally at the end of the Shevii Aliya is the final step of humility when Balak gets good and angry and chases him away and says in 24:13 (אִם-יִתֵּן-לִי בָלָק מְלֵא בֵיתוֹ, כְּסָף וְזָהָב--לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲבֹר אֶת-פִּי יְרֹנָה, לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹבָה אוֹ) (רַעְיָה מִלְּבָי: אֲשֶׁר-יִדְבַּר יְרֹנָה, אֲתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר). There is nothing that I can do on my own. This is a slow progression from the attitude that if it is up to me the realization that everything is the Koach Hashem. Here too it is a lesson for every person. When things are going well and a person is successful every human being has the feeling of Kochi V'osem Yadi, that I can do anything. As life goes on a person slowly realizes that HKB"H controls and there is very little that we do truly on our own. This progression is a progression of a realization that Halevai we should realize it and appreciate it. These are two very general themes in the Parsha. The idea of the Koach of Bilam who Bilam was and his Gaiva which is brought down in the Parsha.

Rav Elchanan in Kuntros Divrei Sofrim Siman 1 talks about the thing that Bilam did wrong. What did Bilam do wrong? If you read the Parsha without Rashi he is really a pretty good guy (אם-יתן-). (לי בלק מלא ביתו, כסף וזהב--לא אוכל לעבר את-פי ירנר). Constantly he is saying that I can't do anything against Hashem. He seems to be pretty ok. If you learn the Parsha with Rashi the Torah Shebal Peh speaks for itself. Where did he go wrong?

Rav Elchanan in Kuntros Divrei Sofrim Siman 1 asks a different Kasha. He asks we know that the Bais Din of Sheim the son of Noach made certain types of Takanos. Asks Rav Elchonon what compelled people to listen to the Takanos of the Bais Din of Sheim. The Mitzvah of (לא תסור, מן-) (הדבר אשר-נגידו לך--ימין ושמאל) the Mitzvah to listen to Takanos that is brought down in Devarim 17:11 is part of the Torah and is not given to the Bnei Noach. Why would the Bnei Noach have to listen to anything outside of the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach?

Rav Elchanan says an important Yesod. In front of HKB"H there are three things. 1) (אשר צויתי) meaning what HKB"H commanded in the Torah, 2) (אשר דברתי) meaning the things that come to us from the Neviim or through the Rabbanan, and 3) Asher Olso Al Libi which is paraphrasing a Posuk in Yirmiya that is found in 19:5. Yirmiya said that the Yidden of his generation did things (אשר לא-צויתי ולא דברתי, ולא עלתה על-לבי) that they did things that didn't fit into any one of these 3 categories. What are the 3 categories? 1) What was commanded in the Torah, 2) what the Neviim said and there is a third level, things that are Ratzon Hashem. Besides the idea that we have to keep the Mitzvos there is a concept of keeping the Ratzon Hashem. To do what HKB"H desires. That concept of doing the Ratzon Hashem is something that Bilam failed in. Bilam said I am going to be a good boy and I am going to follow the laws and I will not do anything that Hashem doesn't say. But it was clear that the Ribbono Shel Olam didn't want Klal Yisrael to be cursed. It was clear that going with Balak and the Sarei Moav was not doing the Ratzon Hashem. Bilam went by the letter of the law there was no Lifnei Mishuras Hadin by him, there was no Ratzon Hashem by him, there was no Hiddur Mitzvah by him. If I have to do I will do. Sadly many people have that attitude that which I have to do you do. And more than you have to do if you are not Michuyav than I am not Michuyav. There is a concept of following the Ratzon Hashem.

When Yaakov comes back from Lavan's house he says as is brought down by Rashi in Beraishis 32:5 (דבר אחר גרתי בגימטריא תרי"ג, כלומר עם לבן הרשע גרתי ותרי"ג מצות שמרתי ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים). I kept the technical laws, the Mitzvos Shamarti + I did not learn from his evil deeds. What is + he already kept the 613 Mitzvos what else is there? The Teretz is there is more. The Maisos and the Middos of a person the things that we know are the Ratzon of Hashem whatever Hashem wants us to do.

Every day in Kriyas Shema we have two Parshios that we say. In the first Parsha we are Mikabeil Ol Malchus Shamayim, the yoke of heaven. In the second Parsha we are Mikabeil Ol Mitzvos of the Torah. The question is once we are Mikabeil one why do we need the other? The Ol Mitzvos Hatorah include everything that is already included in the Torah, Torah She'bicsav and Torah She'bal Peh. What is there that would be called Ol Malchus Shamayim that is not already included in the Ol Taryag Mitzvos. Or the reverse, when someone is Mikabeil Ol Malchus Shamayim what is there in Ol Hamitzvos? The answer would seem to be what we are saying. There is (ותרי"ג מצות) (שמרתי) and there is (ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים). There is keeping the letter of the law and then there is the idea of Ol Malchus Shamayim of satisfying HKB"H, of keeping the Ratzon Hashem. To make things clear we accept each one separately. We keep the Taryag Mitzvos (Ol Mitzvos) but also to keep Ol Malchus Shamayim to do the Ratzon Hashem. Even after Ol Malchus Shamayim we know that the Taryag Mitzvos are unique, they have a special Chiyuv, they are not waived for any reason. Nevertheless we have to keep more than that to make the statement that there is Ol Malchus Shamayim and Ol Mitzvos. Ol Malchus Shamayim is more than Ol Mitzvos. Sometimes there are good excuses but the excuses are for when a person doesn't really want to do something. When a person wants, he gets up and does what he has to do and makes it to Minyan. He adds time to his Sedorim. That is all part of Ol Malchus Shamayim. These are 3 basic themes of the story of Bilam.

The question of the week is: at the beginning of the Parsha Bilam says in 22:18 (אם-יתן-לי בלק מלא) (ביתו, כסף וזהב--לא אוכל, לעבר את-פי ירן (למדנו שנפשו רחבה ומחמד ממון אחרים: מלא ביתו כסף וזהב)). Rashi says (למדנו שנפשו רחבה ומחמד ממון אחרים: מלא ביתו כסף וזהב). We learn from here that Bilam had a desire for other people's money. Why? Because he used this language of (אם-יתן-לי בלק מלא ביתו, כסף וזהב).

In Pirkei Avos Perek 6:9 we find that Rav Yose Ben Kisma uses almost the exact Lashon. He says Im Ata Nosen Li Kol Kesef V'zahav V'avanim Tovos Umargolios She'baolam. If you will give me Kol Kesef V'zahav She'baolam Eini Dor Ela B'makom Torah. He too uses the Lashon of Im Yiten Li Kol Kesef V'zahav V'avanim Tovos. If that Lashon shows that Bilam was (ומחמד ממון אחרים) which is an inappropriate Lashon, Rav Yose Ben Kisma is using the language of Bilam, which is strange. Food for thought.

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas 5771

Of course the Sod of the Parah Aduma has to do with the fact that it is somehow Metamei Tehorim Umitaheir Temai'im. The Parah Aduma has the unique ability to make a Tamei Meis be Tahor but at the same time a Tahor person who touches it becomes Tamei. This is a secret which Chazal say that even Shlomo Hamelech could not understand. He could not figure it out.

Naturally, when an Acharon comes and figures it out we are quite suspicious because if Shlomo Hamelech couldn't understand it and you are coming up with an explanation then obviously there is something wrong with your explanation.

The Klei Yakar in this week's Parsha explains Metamei Tehorim Umitaheir Temai'im in a way that explains the mystery of this unique idea regarding the Parah Aduma. The Klei Yakar writes that there is something totally unique about the Parah Aduma, but it touches on one of the secrets of the Briya, something that is consistent in the nature of Hashem's world.

That in the words of the Klei Yakar is that in the world, things are moved by their opposites. ("שכל דבר אינו מתפעל כ"א מהפכו ולא ממה שהוא ממינו") Shekol Davar Aino Mispal Ki Im Mai'hafcho V'lo Mimah Shehu Mimino. Things are moved by their opposites and not by similarities. What does that mean? On a simple level we would say that opposites attract. What he is saying is that for example, the Yeitzer Horah does not look to deal primarily with Reshaim.

The Yeitzer Horah looks to mislead primarily Tzaddikim, so that the Yeitzer Hora works more on Klal Yisrael than the Umos Haolam and more on Tamidei Chachamim than on anyone else.

We too are that way, Ein Adam Omeid Al Dvar Halacha Ela Im Kain Nichshal Bo. A person who is Nichshal in an Aveira and realizes it will then be able to remember the Dvar Halacha. You might forget a Halacha, however, if you make a mistake and subsequently you correct your mistake, you will be stronger than if you hadn't made the mistake in the first place.

So too in many of the areas of nature, Shekol Davar Aino Mispal Ki Im Mai'hafcho V'lo Mimah Shehu Mimino. Things are moved to action from things that are the reverse of it rather than things that are similar in and of themselves.

The Klei Yakar refers to something that he says at the end of Parshas Shemos, that before something disappears it has its greatest strength. In other words, before a flame of a candle goes out, you will notice that it sparks up and it has a very bright light at the last minute. It is said that before the morning is the darkest part of the night. Somehow darkness is Misgabair right before it disappears. Why, Shekol Davar Aino Mispal Ki Im Mai'hafcho V'lo Mimah Shehu Mimino Dafka. It is the nature of things to be moved by their opposites. If something is bent in one direction and you want to straighten it out you have to bend it in the opposite direction. That is a secret of the Teva Habriya.

The Parah Aduma is therefore Metamei Tehorim, when it touches something it becomes the opposite (Mispal). A Tahor becomes Tamei and a Tamei becomes Tahor. This is all part of the mystery of Shlomo Hamelech. It is not the way we would logically think the world would work. It is however the way the world does work.

A parent is often closest to a child who when growing up gave him a hard time, gave him Agmas Nefesh growing up rather than to a child that was easy. Shekol Davar Aino Mispal Ki Im Mai'hafcho V'lo Mimah Shehu Mimino.

What is interesting in Bain Adam L'chaveiro, perhaps in Bain Adam L'ishto, is that human beings, human nature, interaction with other human beings is the same way. If you are tough with someone that person may back down temporarily for a moment, but in fact the person really doesn't back down. The person is really distanced from you. In the long run, being soft to people is more successful than being tough. That is the nature of a person. If you insist on doing things a certain way and it is a debatable topic, things might be able to be done in a reverse way, the person listening will think maybe the other way. Or let us say for example that you have a child who slept through Shacharis, if you say to him you always oversleep Shacharis, his reaction to the tough talk will be "I always" how can you say that? The fact that he did indeed sleep through Shacharis 10 days in a row isn't the point. He doesn't always do it. The tough talks evokes a reverse reaction.

This is a very important lesson from this Kli Yakar. Shekol Davar, everything, is Misp'al, moved to action, Mai'hafocho V'lo Mimah Shehu Mimino., from its reverse not necessarily from which you would expect.

The lesson that I am taking out is from this Nikuda. That a person should be soft and not tough.

Later on in this week's Parsha we find the Cheit of Moshe. Moshe Rabbeinu at Mei Miriva does some sort of an Aveira. It is very hotly debated. What is the Aveira? Rishonim bring numerous Peshatim and reject them. Certainly Moshe Rabbeinu's sin is not something that is easily understood by people on our level.

The Cheit of Moshe Rabbeinu according to Rashi is that Moshe hit the stone. To this the Ramban says that he doesn't understand. What is the difference to a stone if you hit it or you talk to it? He also asks that Moshe Rabbeinu was told Kach Es Hamate, take the stick.

That should be understood to mean to take as hit the stone just as we found during the Makkos when Moshe Rabbeinu was told Kach Es Hamate, he did a physical act with the Mate. Therefore, this Rashi needs a Hesber.

I saw an incredible Vort from Rav Yonasan Eibishutz who explains as follows. He says the idea that Moshe Rabbeinu should have spoken before he hit has nothing to do with the rock itself. It has to do with Moshe Rabbeinu's own Middos as a Manhig Yisroel as a leader of Klal Yisrael. It is a rule in life, before you hit, speak. Before you are tough be soft. Before you do things with a tremendous push, do them with a gentle push. This is very much the lesson of the Mei Miriva according to this Pshat and therefore, there is no difference to the stone if you hit it or talk to it, however, to Moshe Rabbeinu the Manhig Yisroel should have understood to talk and only later to hit.

Again, a lesson, in life when you have choices, be soft and don't be tough. When you are tough you alienate the people close to you. When you are soft you might lose the battle but at the end of the day you will win the war. An important lesson in dealing with other people.

The summer months are upon us and it is a time of great Nisayon in many many areas. Vacation time should be a time of Aliya, no work, yet it is a time of Nisayon, of test.

I would like to mention two areas that are important. Number one, Shaylos that have to do with Yichud. This time of year people are in bungalow colonies living in close proximity one to the other. Errors in Hilchos Yichud take place. If someone in an attached bungalow is going shopping, it would be normal to say to the neighbor keep an eye on my children, my children may be sleeping, maybe they are going to sleep, maybe they are playing, please keep an eye on them.

Keep in mind that there is an Issur for a man to be Miyacheid with a girl over the age of 3 years old. So if there is a 4 year old girl sleeping in the bungalow and someone asks you to just step in and be there, and if the girl will cry you would pick up the girl, that is an Issur Yichud.

An Issur Yichud is an Issur onto itself, it is not because something may happen. Even if nothing will happen the Issur Yichud is an Issur. In the case of a girl who is a bit older it is an Issur D'oraisa, by somebody who has reached the age of Niddah. For a younger girl it is still an Issur P'nuya, which is still an Issur Yichud.

The reverse is also true. For a boy over 9 years old is an Issur Yichud for a woman and that Issur is an Issur D'oraisa. For a woman to be Miyacheid with a 9 year old. During the year, a married woman has the Heter of Bai'la B'ir. In the bungalow colonies there is no Heter of Bai'la B'ir because the husband is not in town. Certainly a single girl should not go babysitting for a 9 year old boy, even for 2 boys, because in the case of 2 boys even though 2 men and one woman is not an Issur Yichud, however, B'layla (by night) at the time people go to sleep an extra Shomer is required. These are things that I am bringing to your attention. Issurei Yichud which are more Noge'a in a bungalow colony setting.

One more point. Unfortunately not everyone goes dressed properly at this time of the year. Be careful, it is Assur to recite a Beracha or Dvar Torah facing a Tefach B'isha Erva, facing a woman who is not properly covered. This is even if the woman is a Tinuk Shenishba and it is no fault. I am not condemning any person. I am talking about what we the Bnei Torah have to know. That making a Beracha facing (even if you are not looking) either a married woman whose hair is uncovered. Many women wear snoods that leave the hair in the front uncovered. The most Kuladicka Shitta allows 2 fingerwidths to be uncovered. Actually, this Shitta is a bit less than 2 fingerwidths, more than that is considered to be uncovered. Making a Beracha facing that even if it is a relative, be it a wife or daughter, is Assur. So be careful.

Similarly when you are on the street, if you want to make a Shehakol on something, be careful if you are facing an Ervah even if you are not looking there is a problem making a Beracha, you can look to the side and make the Beracha that way.

If you are travelling in the trains it is certainly a problem this time of year. Rav Moshe writes in a Teshuva that Bishas Hadchak a person can rely on the Shittos Harishonim that doesn't require looking to the side and that allows looking down or looking away. That is certainly a Heter. You are better off looking in a Sefer on the train instead of anywhere else.

I heard an incredible story about Rabbi Avigdor Miller which I had never heard before. Somebody wanted to speak to him and Rabbi Miller told him that he didn't have any time. So the person said that I know that you go on a walk everyday so let me accompany you on the walk and I will discuss

my issue with you then. Rabbi Miller replied fine, however, when I go for my walk I pick up rubber bands. The mailmen here in NY have their mail in bundles with rubber bands and they drop the rubber bands on the sidewalk. I don't want them to be wasted. So I pick up the rubber bands as I walk. You will have to help me. The young man said fine. So they went for their walk and as they were walking they picked up 4 or 5 rubber bands. When they got to Rabbi Miller's home at the end of the walk this man thanked him and offered him the rubber bands. Rabbi Miller said I don't need rubber bands. The young man said I thought that you collect these rubber bands?

Rabbi Miller said I don't need rubber bands, however, it is July and you asked me to go for a walk. Am I going to take a young man for a walk down Coney Island Avenue? You know what is going on in the street? So I told you to look at the floor for rubber bands and this way I was sure that your eyes were trained on the floor and not all over the place. What an interesting story. What a Mussar Haskeil.

The first question of the week is: we are always taught that Tzaddikim B'misasan K'dolim Mai'B'chayehem, the Zechusim of a Tzaddik after death are greater than the Zechusim of his lifetime. He can be Poel, he can do more in death than when he was alive. Certainly we see that by Eliyahu Hanavi and his influence on Elisha. I have a problem with the Parsha, we are told that for 40 years in the Midbar the Zechus of Miriam kept the B'eir flowing. Water kept flowing from the B'eir Bizchus Miriam. As soon as Miriyam dies in this week's Parsha, the B'eir ceases to give water and it is necessary for Moshe Rabbeinu to have the incident with the Mei Miriva.

I don't understand, Tzaddikim B'misasan K'dolim Mai'B'chayehem. Why couldn't Miriyam continue to be the Zechus for the B'eir at that time? Tzorech Iyun Gadol M'od.

The second question of the week is: Klal Yisrael in the Midbar are carrying the bones of the Shevaim to be buried in Eretz Yisrael. Aharon and Miriyam two of their three greatest leaders pass away. Why do they bury them in the Midbar? Why don't they carry their bones into Eretz Yisrael to bury them there as well?

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Balak 5771

I would like to begin with a Gemara in Maseches Berachos 12b (4th wide line) (אמר ר' אבהו בן זוטרתאי (אמר רבי יהודה בר זבידא בקשו לקבוע פרישת בלק בקריאת שמע ומפני מה לא קבעוה משום טורח צבור). It is a Gemara that is not well known and it will probably come as a surprise even to Bnei Torah. The Gemara there says when the Seder Hatefilla (Davening) was set up, the Anshei Kneses Hagedola desired to setup Parshas Balak as part of Kriyas Shema. That would make Davening quite a bit longer. So why didn't they do this? Because of Tircha D'tzibura of making the Davening quite a bit longer it was not setup as part of Davening.

Why did Chazal originally want to set this up as part of Kriyas Shema. I might add that the Satmar Rebbe (Divrei Yoel) suggests that the Kriyas Shema of the generation of the Midbar at least at the time of the story of Balak and on, was Parshas Balak because after all the paragraphs that are Kriyas Shema were not said until Sefer Devarim, until Moshe Rabbeinu's last month of his life. Why should Parshas Balak be said? This is something of a mystery.

The Pnei Yehoshua there in Berachos explains that it is based on a Nevua that we find in Sefer Micha **6:5** a Nevua that said please remember that Eitza which Balak had against you. (עמי, זכר-נא) (מה-יפעץ בלק מלך מואב, ומה-ענה אתו, בלעם בן-בעור--מן-השטים, עד-הגלגל, למען, דעת צדקות ירר) Since the Posuk says (זכר-נא) it is a commandment that Klal Yisrael should recognize the Tzidkus of Hashem of the way he treated Klal Yisrael with kindness. Since we find in Navi a command to remember the story of Balak, there is a fundamental idea that whatever the Navi said as a matter of practice actually was Halacha L'moshe Misinai and only put into words of Tanach through the Navi, therefore we would conclude that there is some sort of a Mitzvah, an Inyan, maybe someday they will publish some sort of Segulos and charge money for big Tzaddikim to say it someplace in Eretz Yisrael. There seems to be some Maila in remembering and to reading the Parsha of Balak. Therefore, there was a desire initially to set it up as Kriyas Shema.

It still needs an explanation. It explains a source for it in Tanach, however, it does not give a Hesber why Parshas Balak should be part of Kriyas Shema. (למען, דעת צדקות ירר) we should know the Tzidkus of Hashem which is one thing, but why is it important to reread this week's Parsha.

The Divrei Menachem says a beautiful thought. There is a Yesod that when a Beracha is given, that Beracha has power based on the Ahava, on the Kavanna, on the understanding of the person giving the Beracha. This is why a father gives his son a Beracha. A father is an ordinary Jew. Why not call in a Rosh Yeshiva to give the son the Beracha? Berachos have power based on the level of Ahava, on the love of the person giving the Beracha.

We find by Birchas Kohanim where the Kohanim give a Beracha to Klal Yisrael. They precede giving the Beracha by making a Beracha of Asher Kidishanu B'mitzvosav V'tzivanu L'voreich Es Amo Yisroel B'ahava. To Bentch Klal Yisrael with love. Love is a requirement of a Beracha to make the Beracha be Chal.

The Divrei Menachem says that the Berachos given by Bilam to Klal Yisrael were not given with Ahava, they were given Bal Korcho, he was stuck and he had to give the Berachos. Since they were not given B'ahava we read it for generations. We say (יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכַּנְתִּיהָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִה טָבוּ אֵהְיֶיהָ) Ma Tovu Oholecha Yaakov every morning. We say those words of the Torah with an Ahava for Klal Yisrael. Therefore, we give extra power to these Berachos which are Pesukim in the Torah and we are Mekayeim with that the words from Micha that were quoted above from **6:5**. This is a thought which is sort of a Hakdama and is also an important idea that the Koach and Chiyuv of a Beracha depends on the love of the person giving the Beracha.

Let me share with you a couple of Diyukim in the language of the Parsha. Then we will come to a Yesodosdika idea.

This morning when we were reading the beginning of the Parsha until Sheini, I noticed something and I was reminded of something that Rav Moshe says in a Diyuk, a careful Diyuk in the words of the Parsha. We read that when Balak is speaking, Balak says in **22:5** (הִנֵּה עַם יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם) that the nation Klal Yisrael has gone out of Mitzrayim. That makes a lot of sense. Then right before Sheini when Bilam relates to the Ribbono Shel Olam Balak's message, he says, **22:11** (הִנֵּה הָעַם הַיֵּצֵא (מִמִּצְרַיִם)). He says it is a nation that is going out of Mitzrayim which is in the present tense and not

in the past tense as Balak had said it. Obviously if there is such a change there must be a reason for it.

Rav Moshe explains that Balak saw things on a simple level. (הַגֵּה עַם יִצְאָ מִמִּצְרַיִם) it is history almost 40 years ago a nation left Egypt. Bilam, however, said things with the power of Nevua and his understanding. So when he spoke to Hashem he had to say the truth. (הַגֵּה הָעָם הַיִּצְאָ מִמִּצְרַיִם), is going out of Mitzrayim. This is a people that doesn't just have the history of the past but it is constantly in that state of Yotzei Mimitzrayim. Even 40 years later as Klal Yisrael is heading to Eretz Yisrael they still have the mentality of Yotzei Mimitzrayim, of fleeing the Tumah of the land which they left.

There is a concept that we have that B'chol Yom Yihyu B'ainecha K'chadashos. That every day the giving of the Torah should be new. It should be new in the sense that when you have something new it has a freshness and a sense of liveliness to it, the felling which inspires and motivates. That is our goal. B'chol Yom Yihyu B'ainecha K'chadashos. Klal Yisrael, Bilam correctly said, is an (הָעָם הַיִּצְאָ מִמִּצְרַיִם). A nation that is going out of Mitzrayim.

We find a similar thing in the first Posuk of Chumash Shemos, (וְאֵלֶּה, שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַבָּאִים, מִצְרַיִם). These are the names of the Jews who were coming to Mitzrayim. They actually had come from Mitzrayim already but they were constantly in a state and mentality of strangers in the land of Mitzrayim. They didn't let the Hisyashvus, that it should start to feel old and be taken for granted that they belonged in Mitzrayim. They kept that mentality, that freshness, that newness. That was a big challenge that Klal Yisrael had, to always have a Hischadshus in their Avodas Hashem.

I would add that when it comes to Hakaros Hatov for thanking the Ribbono Shel Olam, it is that way as well. It is that way that we get used to the things we have. It would be nice if we always had a fresh appreciation of what Hashem has given us. Of all the goodness that we have. We get used to the good things we have and when things go wrong we complain about the things that caused us pain. It would be much healthier for us to constantly be reminded of the goodness that we have. Those are the Berachos we say in the morning, Hakadosh Baruch Hu is Zokeif Kefufim and Malbish Arumim. All the things that Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives us that we get used to. It should constantly be fresh, (הָעָם הַיִּצְאָ מִמִּצְרַיִם) constantly fresh and appreciated.

We can add that it is that way with our friends as well. Many people have friends who have been kind to them in the past but years go by and maybe 10 or 20 years later that friend does something which offends a person. The friend who is offended then distances himself from his friend.

It is a thought and an attitude of what have you done for me lately. The Hakaras Hatov to be grateful for things that happened even many years ago is something that should have a Hischadshus. So this is the idea of (הָעָם הַיִּצְאָ מִמִּצְרַיִם). A Hischadshus in Avodas Hashem of fleeing from Tumah. A Hischadshus and Hakaras Hatov to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The idea of B'chol Yom Yihyu B'ainecha K'chadashos. It should always be something which is new.

Moving on to another idea in this week's Parsha. When Bilam wanted to curse Klal Yisrael it seems to be very important that Bilam had to see Klal Yisrael. Why didn't Balak just tell Bilam to curse the Jewish people from his home? He took him as it says in the Posuk **23:13** (וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בָּלָק, לֶךְ-נָא)

אתי אל-מקום אחר אשר תראנו משם--אפס קצהו תראה, וכלו לא תראה; וקבנו-לי, משם. This is when Bilam saw all of Klal Yisrael and couldn't curse he said (קצהו תראה) look at a small portion of them and curse them. It seems that the looking at them was of extraordinary importance. Why so?

There are 2 Teirutzim, one a technical Teretz and one is a Hashkafa Teretz. To be Makdim there is a Tosafos in Maseches Berachos **7a**. The Gemara there says (18 lines from the top) (וקל זעם) (בכל יום וכמה זעמו רגע). That Hakadosh Baruch Hu has Kaveyachol a moment of anger every day, and how long is that moment? The moment is very brief. Bilam's power was to be able to precisely calculate that moment of Hashem's anger and to curse at that time.

Tosafos asks a Kasha. (ואם תאמר מה היה יכול לומר בשעת רגע. יש לומר כלם.). If the whole anger is a Rega, meaning the amount of time to say the word Rega, what can one say as a curse in that amount of time? It doesn't give you a whole lot of time to curse Klal Yisrael?

Tosafos says in his first answer says that Bilam could have say Kaleim, destroy them. The word Kaleim is about as long as the word Rega, and therefore, there is enough time to say it. L'fi Zeh, he had to be standing in front of Klal Yisrael. If he had been at home and said Kaleim it would not be clear who he is talking about. By going to Klal Yisrael and seeing them and saying Kaleim it is obvious that he was talking about them, and then the curse can be said in that instant. This is the technical Teretz.

There is a second Teretz which is a Hashkafik idea which is found in numerous places. The power of Bilam was in Ayin Hora, the bad eye. The way he looked at things with a bad eye. Therefore, he had to see Klal Yisrael in order to be able to have that Koach and power of seeing them and cursing them.

Ayin Hora to most people is just something of a supernatural nature. You have to see them and then cause destruction. In fact we find that the eye and the heart are connected. That what a person feels is connected to what he sees. A person can walk into a room with oily hair, ripped clothing, and an earring on one ear and a very strange expression on his face. If you and I saw him we would be repulsed. There are other human beings who would see him and think that he is cool. The eye is connected to the heart. What you see, what you appreciate, and what you like has to do with the heart. Even though technically what you see is a physical fact, you see something, however, the way you look at it, the way you see it, is something which affects your attitude. In order for Bilam to be able to have a Sinah (hatred) for Klal Yisrael and be able to curse them properly, he had to see them and be repulsed.

On the contrary when we see people who are Bnei Torah and we feel good about seeing them, it creates appositve atmosphere. That is the Koach Har'iyah.

Rav Michel Lefkowitz who was just Niftar wrote in a Sefer about something he regretted that he had done in his life. What is the sin of such a Gadol of Yisrael? He wrote that when he was a Bochur the Chofetz Chaim came to the town in which he was Learning. All the Bochorim left the Yeshiva to see the Chofetz Chaim and he decided to stay and learn instead of going to see the Chofetz Chaim. He writes that later he regretted that. This is what he had to do Teshuva for, staying

in the Beis Medrash and not going to see the Chofetz Chaim. The point is that seeing an Adom Gadol has an effect. Seeing something with your eyes, having a Ahavah, an appreciation, respect. The eyes are connected to the heart. Bamidbar **15:39** (וְלֹא-תִתְּוֹרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם, וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם). The eyes are connected to the heart. (Or as we say in Maariv) (וְיָרְאוּ עֵינֵינוּ וְיִשְׂמַח לִבֵּנוּ), what we see has to do with the joy of our heart. Therefore, Bilam had to see them in order to be able to curse Klal Yisrael.

It is interesting. What happens later? Hashem says don't curse them, the Malach on the road says don't curse them, even the donkey admonishes Bilam, and he still goes forward. When does he stop? **24:2** (וַיֵּשֶׂא בַלְעָם אֶת-עֵינָיו, וַיַּרְא אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׂכֵן, לִשְׂבָטָיו; וַתְּהִי עָלָיו, רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים). Bilam looked at Klal Yisrael and he saw the way Klal Yisrael camped, the Tzinus with which they camped. He saw something that was beautiful and he couldn't curse Klal Yisrael. It had been all based on seeing them with a bad eye. Here the beauty of the way Klal Yisrael lived was something that didn't allow for the curse to take place. Look at how beautiful and what a lesson in seeing things in a positive light.

The question of the week is: We read that Bilam sets out with the Sarei Balak. Subsequently we have the episode of the talking donkey where Bilam is stuck **22:24** (גִּדְרַר מִזְהָ, וְגִדְרַר מִזְהָ) Gadeir Mizeh and Gadeir Mizeh in the narrow passage. The Malach stands in front of him and the entire episode happens. What confused me is where are the Sarei Balak that were accompanying him, he wasn't travelling alone, he was travelling with others? How did the others get past this narrow passageway? Was it that Bilam was first, was that the way an Adom Choshuv travelled? Perhaps the others went first and then Bilam was in middle and it is not a Kasha.

However, the Pesukim seem to indicate that Bilam went alone. The Pesukim during the episode of the donkey **22:22** (וְהוּא רֹכֵב עַל-אֲתוֹנוֹ, וּשְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו עִמּוֹ) It seems to say that he was riding the donkey and 2 youths were with him. Meaning it seemed that there were not others there. Ok, perhaps they were not with him Mamush. When the episode ends the Malach tells Bilam that he can go on but he can't curse Klal Yisrael and it says **22:35** (וַיֵּלֶךְ בַּלְעָם, עִם-שָׂרֵי בָלָק) that he went with them. As if he was not going with them until now. I don't know, maybe somebody comments on the Mashmaos Haposuk that Bilam was alone at this time. Or maybe I was wrong and he wasn't alone. Just something I was thinking about in the Parsha.

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22:22 וַיֵּסֶר-אִף אֱלֹהִים, כִּי-הוֹלִךְ הוּא, וַיִּתְּנָצַב מִלְּאֲךָ יְקוֹק בְּדַרְךְוּ, לְשֹׁטֵן לוֹ; וְהוּא רֹכֵב עַל-אֲתוֹנוֹ, וּשְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו עִמּוֹ Bilam goes with the Sarei Balak only after he gets permission to go and yet the Posuk says that the Ribboinoi Shel Oilam was upset with him because he went. It seems to be inconsistent as the Ribboinoi Shel Oilam gave him permission to go.

The GRA says there are two Hebrew words that are usually translated to mean "with". Imoi or Imcha which means with or with you (Ayin Mem). The other word is Es which is also used to mean with. There is a difference in meaning between the two. The word Im denotes a solid connection that has depth to it as we find in Tehillim **91:15** וְיִקְרְאוּנִי, וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ--עִמּוֹ-אֲנֹכִי טו The word Imoi means that there is depth to the connection. Or as is found in Koheles **9:9** וְרָאָה חַיִּים עִם-אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-אֶהְבֶּתָּ ט The word Imoi means that there is depth to the connection. Or as is found in

Beraishis **33:1** א וַיֵּשֶׁב עִיבּוֹן, וַיִּרְא וְהִגִּיד עֲשׂוֹ בָּא, וְעַמּוֹ, אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ א This is regarding Eisav and his henchman, and the Posuk says Imoi which Chazal Darshen K'amoi they were like his people. As a matter of fact the word Im and Amoi are similar because Am denotes a deep relationship.

The word Es, Itcha, and Itchem, is used to denote a superficial relationship when things just happen to be together. For example as is found in Vayikra **19:23** כֹּג מִן-הַפְּרִי וְנִטְעַתֶּם כָּל-עֵץ מֵאֵל-הָאֶרֶץ, וְנִטְעַתֶּם כָּל-עֵץ מֵאֵל-הָאֶרֶץ-- כֹּג This is by the Parsha of Orloh and refers to the fruit Es Piryoi which Chazal interpret as that which accompanies the fruit which is the peel of the fruit that is included in the Din of Orloh. The peel of the fruit is connected to the fruit; however, there is no depth to it. It is a very superficial connection as the peel just happens to be on it and around it, but it is in a very superficial way.

Once we know this Yesoid and we read the Pesukim it is really beautiful. Originally when Bilam requested permission to accompany the Sarei Balak, the Posuk says **22:12** יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל-בִּלְעָם, יב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים אֶל-בִּלְעָם, לֵאמֹר לוֹ אִם-נָא אֶת-הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-אָדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ--אֲתוּ תַעֲשֶׂה I give you permission to go with them, however, it should be alongside them, to accompany them, but not to have a relationship with them and a partnership with them in the plans that they have. The Ribboinoi Shel Oilam said don't go Imahem go Itam. The next Posuk **22:21** then says, כא וַיֵּלֶךְ, כא וַיֵּלֶךְ, וַיִּחַבֵּשׂ אֶת-אַתְנֹו; וַיִּלְךְ, כא וַיֵּלֶךְ, וַיִּחַבֵּשׂ אֶת-אַתְנֹו; וַיִּלְךְ, כא When Bilam went with them it was Im, he accompanied them with a connection and as one who has a deep relationship to them. Then comes the Posuk that we started with **22:22** כב וַיִּהְיֶה מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹקִים, כב וַיִּהְיֶה מַלְאָךְ אֱלֹקִים, כְּפִי-הוֹלֵךְ הוּא This is a beautiful explanation of Im and Itam and the two different meanings.

The Hagaois Maimani in Hilchos Talmud Torah Perek Gimmel Ois Bais (3:2) adds a different Nikuda. He says the word Im is used when A accompanies B. You say A is Hoilech Im B when B (the second one mentioned) is the Ikkur because he is the one that is leading. He brings numerous examples of this idea. That Im implies that the second one is leading.

Here the Ribboinoi Shel Oilam said don't go Imam, this means don't let them lead you on the path that they want you to go, rather Leich Itam let them go on your path. However, we find that they led the way and Bilam followed them.

It is a beautiful explanation of the mistake that was made and the whole Vayichar Af and Derech Agav we gain this understanding of the difference in the Hebrew language of Im and Es (Itam) which seem to be synonymous but are used in different ways.

24:15 טו וַיֵּשֶׁא מְשֻׁלוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר: נֹאֵם בִּלְעָם בְּנֹו בְעֹר, וַיִּנְאֵם הַגִּבֹּר שְׂתֵם הָעֵינִן טו וַיֵּשֶׁא מְשֻׁלוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר: נֹאֵם בִּלְעָם בְּנֹו בְעֹר, וַיִּנְאֵם הַגִּבֹּר שְׂתֵם הָעֵינִן As we know, Bilam did really want to curse Klal Yisrael. He knew that he couldn't do something that the Ribboinoi Shel Oilam didn't want and each of the three times that he tried to curse Klal Yisrael a Beracha came out instead. This we understand.

However, the fourth Beracha that is found starting with the Posuk quoted above after Shevii, Bilam voluntarily blesses Klal Yisrael. Bilam is not prompted, no one asked him to say anything and Bilam just starts giving a Beracha to Klal Yisrael. It is a mystery as to why Bilam is doing this.

Now we will bring an explanation from the Chidah who doesn't come to answer this question. However, the Chidah explains the method of how Bilam worked and in that way can give us an insight that we can apply here.

As you know, Bilam was a Navi. A Navi is someone who knows the future and has prophecy. Yet what was Bilam's reputation? Balak says in **22:6** וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק יְדַעְתִּי, אֵת אֲשֶׁר-תְּבָרֵךְ מִבְּרָךְ, וְאֲשֶׁר תְּאָר, יוֹאֵר those who you bless are blessed and those who you curse are cursed. In what way did Bilam have this power to bless people? What does this have to do with being a Navi? A Tzaddik is a person that can bless people; however, what is the Koiach of the blessing of Bilam?

The Posuk says וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק יְדַעְתִּי, אֵת אֲשֶׁר-תְּבָרֵךְ מִבְּרָךְ, וְאֲשֶׁר תְּאָר, יוֹאֵר those who you bless are blessed and those who you curse are cursed. Mevoirach is past tense, meaning those that you bless are already blessed. It doesn't say that those that you bless will be blessed.

The Chidah says that Bilam had an elaborate scheme. His blessing was meaningless; however, as a prophet he knew the future. When people came to him for a blessing, he knew which people would be Matzliach in the future and he chose them to bless. So this means that אֲשֶׁר-תְּבָרֵךְ מִבְּרָךְ the people that he chose to bless were people who he knew were blessed. Of course he fooled everyone. They thought it was his blessing that created the Hatzlacha. He gained because people would come and pay him for his blessing. So he chose who to bless to gain this type of reputation. This is the method by which Bilam fooled people.

So Bilam really wanted to curse Klal Yisrael, however, the Ribboinoi Shel Oilam turned it into a Beracha. Bilam had no power to bless, however, he realized prophetically that Klal Yisrael would be blessed. Once he realized this and to keep his reputation going, he gave them a further Beracha. This is why he voluntarily offered the fourth Beracha, in order to keep his reputation.

A third thought on the Parsha which is Rebbi's thought. When you review the Parsha, when you are either being Mavir Sedrah or are listening during the Laining, try to be objective and make believe you have never heard of Bilam and read the words of Torah Shebich'sav. Then try to come up with an impression of what type of person Bilam was. Actually if you read the Torah Shebich'sav about Bilam he is a wonderful person. He does only the right thing. He is really a Tzaddik.

Balak sends messengers to him asking him to curse Klal Yisrael and he says **22:8** וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם, הַלַּיְלָה לִינּוּ פֹה הַלַּיְלָה, וְנִשְׁבַּתִּי אִתְּכֶם דְּבַר, כִּי אֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹר יִקְנֶה אֵלַי; וְנִשְׁבַּתוּ שָׁרֵי-מוֹאָב, עִם-בְּלָעָם וַיִּקְרָא בְּלָעָם, בְּבֹקֶר, **22:13** וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם, לְמַעַן אֲדַבֵּר אֲלֵיכֶם: כִּי מֵאֵן יִקְנֶה, לְתַתִּי לְהִלָּךְ עִמָּכֶם וַיִּבֶא אֱלֹקִים אֶל-בְּלָעָם, לַיְלָה, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם-לִקְרָא לְךָ **22:20** וַיִּבֶא הָאֱנָשִׁים, קוֹם לֵךְ אִתָּם; וְאָדָּה, אֶת-הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-אָדַבֵּר אֲלֵיךְ--אֵתוּ תַעֲשֶׂה in **22:21** וַיִּקְרָא בְּלָעָם בְּבֹקֶר, וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת-אֲתוֹנוֹ; וַיִּלָּךְ, עִם-שָׁרֵי מוֹאָב **כֹּא** **22:34** וַיֹּאמֶר לֵד

I sinned אֶל-מִלְאֵךְ יְקוּק, הִטָּאתִי--כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, כִּי אַתָּה נֹצֵב לְקַרְאֲתִי בְדַרְבָּךְ; וְעַתָּה אִם-רַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ, אָשׁוּבָה לִי and I will even turn to go home. A total Tzaddik. Then it says, **22:38** לֹא-הִגֵּד אֶל-בְּלִק, הִגֵּד-לֵךְ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלָעָם אֶל-בְּלִק, הִגֵּד-לֵךְ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלָעָם אֶל-בְּלִק, הִגֵּד-לֵךְ basically Bilam is using the same words as Yosef Hatzaddik said to Pharoh, that whatever Hashem puts into my mouth I will speak and then he proceeds to bless Klal Yisrael. From the Pesukim it appears that Bilam is a Tzaddik Gamur. Now of course Torah Shebich'sav without Torah She'bal Peh is meaningless and we follow the interpretation of Chazal and we know that it was not so.

Yet isn't it strange that the Torah should present Bilam in such a way and to teach us how his words were always the right words that portray Bilam as a Tzaddik? What is the lesson here?

Rav Elchanan in Koivetz Shiurim writes regarding a concept that we find in Shas of Al Yiftach Adam Pif L'satan. When a person speaks he has to be careful. When he says words that imply bad fortune, his words may have an effect. Or Kil'las Chochom Al Tinahi Hu Ba, words are real and can cause things to happen just like the Gemara says.

Rav Elchanan explains that it is really not that way for most people. Most people who say things don't automatically cause an effect. However, Rav Elchanan explains, a mouth is like a sharp blade. If you are careful like a Mohel or Shoichet is with his blade, by keeping it sharp, clean, and keeps it from rusting, then he has a blade which can cut. However, if one doesn't take care of his blade, it becomes rusty and dull and it doesn't cut.

So too with the mouth, lips, and tongue. The ability to speak and to affect the world through his speech. If his mouth is kept clean by speaking properly, than it has an effect in Oilam Hazeh. If he sullies his mouth by saying words of Sheker, Lashoin Horah, or being an unreliable person by saying the wrong thing than his mouth doesn't have the effect that it should. This is what Rav Elchanan says.

Bilam knew this secret. His power was in his mouth and speech. Where did he get this power of speech? He knew the secret that no matter what bad Mach'shava or diabolical plan he might have, he kept his mouth clean. He said the right things.

An example of this is a business man who is crooked who is always scared that the FBI is listening to his phone conversations will always make certain not to say anything to incriminate himself. He will always say, I will do it in a legal way because I never do anything that is illegal. So too with Bilam, he kept his mouth pure. The blade remained a blade despite the fact that he was a Rasha. This is the lesson of the Parsha, because the Parsha tells us how Bilam kept his mouth clean. Therefore, he did have the power of speech.

The lesson of course is to us who don't have bad or diabolical Machshavas, that if want our mouth to have Koiach Hadibar and Koiach Hatefilla, to be able to have an effect, than we have to keep our mouth clean and keep it the right way.

The question of the week is: The Issur of לֹא תֹאֵר, לֹא תִשָּׂא בְעֵמֶךָ, that is found in Shemos **22:27** which is the Issur of cursing, the Chinuch brings a Machloikes. Do curses really have an effect in this world or don't they? The Chinuch says that to him it is more logical that the spoken word does

have an effect. However, according to the Shitta of the Rambam, it is all in a person's imagination and that a curse really doesn't do anything. The Chinuch humbly writes that he accepts the opinion of the Rambam that a Klala does nothing.

The problem with this is that this entire Parsha is based on that the curse that Bilam wanted to give Klal Yisrael could have an effect. As a matter of fact we read in the Haftora how thankful we must be that Hakadoish Baruch Hu didn't Kavayachil become angry on those days that Bilam wanted to curse Klal Yisrael and protected us from the curses of Bilam. So it seems to be telling us that there is such a thing as a curse. It is very difficult to understand how the Rambam would explain this. The Haftora reads and is from Michah **6:5-6** הַמִּי, וְזָכַר-נָא מֵהַיְעִץ בְּלֶקַח מְלֶכֶת מוֹאָב, וּמָה-הָ עָנָה אֹתוֹ, בְּלִעָם בֶּן-בְּעֹר--מִן-הַשְּׂטִיִּים, עַד-הַגְּלִגְלִי, לְמַעַן, דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יְקֹנֵךְ Remember what happened with Balak and Bilam that you should know the righteous acts of Hashem with how he protected us and וְיִקְנֵךְ וְיִקְנֵךְ how can I thank Hashem. This idea that a Klala has an effect seems to be a lesson of the Parsha. Yet the Rambam seems to hold it is not so.

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas/Balak 5769

At the beginning of Parshas Chukas in 19:1 - 2 the Posuk says וַיְדַבֵּר יְרֵנֹר, אֶל-מִשְׁפַּח וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן (זאת חקת התורה, אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְרֵנֹר לְאָמֹר דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיִּקְחֻ אֵלָיֶךָ פְּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין-בָּהּ לְאִמֹר). (זאת חקת התורה, אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְרֵנֹר לְאָמֹר דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיִּקְחֻ אֵלָיֶךָ פְּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין-בָּהּ לְאִמֹר). מוֹם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָלָה עֲלֶיךָ, עַל) The word Leimor is mentioned an extra time. The first Leimor is typical. Why is the second Leimor there? The Ksav Soifer explains something else about the beginning of the Parshah. Rashi in 19:22 in D"H Parah Aduma says (פרה אדמה) משל לבן שפחה שטינף פלטין של (פרה אדמה) the connection between Parah Aduma and the Eigel is that the Inyan of the Parah Aduma is that the same way a child's mother comes and wipes away the filth so to let the cow come and atone for the Eigel. The connection between the Parah Aduma and the Eigel is vague as to exactly what it is. The Ksav Soifer gives us a nice connection. We have a Kabalah that the Choitim by the Eigel were the Eiruv Rav. They were the ones who wanted to make the Avoida Zarah. Klal Yisrael who had Kashas as to where Moshe Rabbeinu was since the time was up, just followed along. Klal Yisroel's history especially in Galus is always a challenge. The Goy asks questions and puts a Yid on the defensive and then he feels uncomfortable and is in Sakana. By the Parah Aduma, Rashi brings that idea when he says, in Posuk Bais, לפי שהשטן ואומות העולם מונין את ישראל לומר מה המצוה הזאת ומה טעם יש (זאת חקת התורה, בה). Dafka here we say, (זאת חקת התורה), that there is no reason. This is supposed to be our Chizuk against our association with the Eiruv Rav to be strong in what is correct even without knowing the reason. That is the Kaparah. The second Leimor is Hashem telling Moshe to tell Klal Yisroel that Dafka here is where it is (זאת חקת התורה) without a reason.

In Perek 20:1 we have the death of Miriam. We learn from (וּתְמַת שָׁם מְרִיָּם, וַתִּקְבֹּר שָׁם), a Gizairas Shava, Sham Sham to Eglar Arufa. That just like by Eglar Arufa we find that it is Asur B'hana, so to we learn from here that the body of a Mais is Asur B'hana. That Limud is the subject of a Machloikes between the Mechaber and the GRA in Yoire Dai'a. They argue as to whether the Mais if it was a Goy is Asur or Mutar B'hana. The Mechaber writes that the Goy's body is also Asur B'hana, because Sham Sham applies to all Maisim. The GRA argues and Paskens like Toisafos that only the body of a Yid is subject to the Limud of Sham Sham and would be Asur B'hana. Toisafos brings a Raya from Navi.

After Dovid killed Goliath, Shaul had promised that whoever kills Goliath can marry his daughter. Shaul at this time became jealous of Dovid. So Shaul said to Dovid, you can marry her, however, you must bring 100 Orlois of Pilishtim. The Gemara in Kiddushin says that they are Royi to feed animals and are worth a Shava Peruta and with that you can be Mekadeish her. Shaul's Kavana was to put Dovid in Sakana by having him kill 100 Pelishtim. What did Dovid do? He brought 200 Orlois and was Mekadeish with that. The GRA learns B'sheim Toisafos from here that you see that a Mais of a Goy is Mutar B'hana.

The Mishne L'melech has a nice Teretz to this Raya. He says it is not a Raya at all and on the contrary it is a Raya Farkert. Why? Dovid killing the Pelishtim is not unusual. He had just killed Goliath and he was a Gibor. He could have gone with others for the Pelishtim, he didn't even have to go himself. To kill 100 Pelishtim was not a big thing. So Farkert, Dafka Orlois of Pelishtim. Because, Orlois of Maisai Pelishtim is Assur B'hana. Here Dovid was really challenged. He had to injure 100 Pelishtim in a way to get the Orlois when they were still alive, and use it. That was Shaul's Kavana, to put Dovid in great Sakana.

This Shaila of whether a Mais is Muttar or Assur B'hana came as a Halacha L'maiseh to Rebbi. In 1995 Rebbi had surgery to replace a bone in his leg. At that time Rebbi was given a choice of putting in a metal rod in place of the bone or a cadaver bone as a replacement bone. Rav Pam was consulted because medically each way had benefits. The reason for this consultation was to discuss if this Machloikes between the Mechaber and the GRA should be Machria whether or not to use a cadaver bone. Rav Pam said there is a Teshuvah Igrois Moshe which is talking to medical students, and says for purposes of medicine, one can be Soimech on the GRA. Rav Pam said make the best medical decision and Rebbi used a cadaver bone at that time. That only lasted for about a year and Rebbi had another surgery in 1996 where it was replaced and there is no longer a cadaver bone in Rebbi.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger asks, how is it Muttar for a Shoimer of a Mais to be paid. If the Mais is Assur B'hana and we learn from Pesachim Daf Chaf Bais that even secondary Hanaois are Assur by Isurai Hana'a. So how can a Shoimer be paid?

In the Moiadim Lizmanim Cheilek Gimmel, Siman (Ois) Raish Aleph. There are 2 different types of Issurai Hana in the Toirah. There are some Issurai Hana that the Toirah is Meracheik like Avoida Zora and Basar V'Chalav because they are Ma'us. Here even a secondary Hana'a would be Assur. There are other things that are Assur B'hana because of their great Kedusha like the Bais Hamikdash and Kodshim for example. People who worked in the Bais Hamikdash got paid, it is a Bifairush in a Mishnah. If it is Issurai Hana'a why should they get paid? The Teretz is, the Issur is only deriving benefit from the thing itself meaning the Guf of the Bais Hamikdash. Mimaila, a Mais is Assur why? Because the Guf is a container for the Neshama and it has a level of Kedusha, that is why it is Assur B'hana. Im Kain, you can get paid for being a Shoimer the same way people got paid for working in the Bais Hamikdash. Ulai, the Machloikes between the Mechaber and Gra maybe Talui in this. Maybe if you hold that the reason (וְהָיָה שֶׁמִּן הַיָּם) brings it to a higher level of Kedusha, then we only know it by Klal Yisroel and we have no reason to think that it applies to a Goy. Because we don't know to say that a Goy's Guf has Kedusha like a Yids Guf. On the other hand, the Mechaber might hold that a Guf without a Neshama is Assur B'hana because it is a Davar Ma'us and then it would include the Guf of a Goy in this Issur as well.

Both Miriam and Aharon die in Parshas Chukas and are buried. If at this time, Klal Yisroel was carrying the bodies of Yosef and the rest of the Shevatim for burial in Eretz Yisroel, and here it is already at the end of the 40 years, why didn't they take the bodies of Aharon and Miriam into Eretz Yisroel as well?

We know that Balak had a son Egloin. Egloin had a daughter or granddaughter Rus. Chazal tell us that the Schar for the Korbanois that Balak brought even though it was Sheloi Lishmah, he was Zoiche to have Rus come from him. The problem is Rashi in Perek 22:4 says (לא היה :בעת ההוא) (ראוי למלכות. מנסיכי מדין היה, וכיון שמת סיחון מנוהו עליהם לצורך שעה) Balak was actually from Midian. In Kiddushin in the 4th Perek it says that Goyim's Yichus go after the father. That would mean that Rus who came from Egloin who came from Balak was not a Moivavis but a Midyanis. If so, then the whole Lomdus that Dovid is Muttar Bikhhal because of Moivavi V'loi Moivavis shouldn't start because she was actually a Midyanis?