



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATES

שבעה עשר בתמוז

The times of the Taanis and Davening are in the box on the right.

Shabbos Shiur

The Rov's Shiur this week after the second Mincha will be on the topic of the Halachos of the three weeks.

Rov's Gemora Shiur

The Rov's Gemora Shiur is starting the second Perek of מסכת

פסחים. All new and old members are welcome to attend.

Nearly Volume 8

Next weejk we start volume 8 of the Shul newsletter. Divrei Torah from members are actively encouraged and welcomed.

Mr Danny Dresner ~~was~~ has volunteered to coordinate the schedule hence members are asked to contact Danny to book a slot.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATES

שבעה עשר בתמוז - Sunday

Taanis Starts	1.14am
Shacharis	7.00 / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.30pm
Taanis Ends	10.43pm

No Late Maariv Minyan

an hour already enveloped in Tallis and Tefillin and prayerful contemplation, before a morsel of food touches his lips or the work day commences.

That alone is a powerful testimony to the devotion of the Jewish People and it's worth marveling at the endurance and consistency of this practice and its practitioners.

Here's a small but obvious question! Bilaam speaks firstly about the aggressive rising like a lioness to pursue Mitzvos, and then about the last moments before sleep. The order should logically be the other way around. "When you lie down and when you rise up!" First one experiences a good night's sleep and then the hearty awakening. Why is it in the reverse sequence?

This same question jumps out when one begins to learn the Shulchan Aruch- the Code of Jewish Law: "A person should strengthen himself like a lion to arise in the morning to serve his Creator!" The problem I have is that the Shulchan Aruch, which is understandably going through the order of the day, is talking to a sleeping man. Get up like a lion? Napoleon himself admitted, "When I am awake I am Napoleon! When I am asleep, I am a horse!" This requirement begs the question, "How do you get up like a lion?"

I remember the look of shock on the students' faces and my own sense of confusion. Had the Rabbi misspoken? I went to pick up my boys

The Week Ahead

פרשת בלק

Mincha	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.55 - 8.00pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.59am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.51pm
Rov's Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	10.56pm
Sunday	See above
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv (excl. Sunday)	10.45pm

Another Productive Day!

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

"Behold, a people that rises like a lioness and raises itself like a lion. It does not lie down until it eats its prey and drinks the blood of the slain." (Bamidbar 23:24)

Behold, a people that rises like a lioness: When they awaken from their sleep in the morning they show the vigor of a lioness and a lion in grasping mitzvoth, to don a 'tallith' [prayer shawl], recite the shema and put on 'tefillin' [phylacteries]. — [Mid. Tanchuma Balak 14, Num. Rabbah 20:20]

When Bilaam stood to curse the Jewish Nation and his prophetic eye opened, he perceived and uttered a most truthful and flattering portrait of our people. One of his observations seems at first like a characterization of a ferociously over aggressive people. With Rashi's help from the Midrash we end up with quite a different picture of Bilaam's insight into Israel's uniquely powerful formula for success.

Behold, a people that rises like a lioness: When they awaken from their sleep in the morning they show the vigor of a lioness and a lion in grasping Mitzvos, to don a 'Tallis, recite the Shema and put on 'Tefillin' - (Rashi)

It does not lie down: (A Jew does not lie down)... on his bed at night until he consumes and destroys any harmful thing that comes to tear him. How so? He recites the Shema on his bed and surrenders his spirit to the hand of the Omnipresent. Should an army or a troop come to harm them, the Holy One, blessed is He, protects them, fights their battles and strikes them (their attackers) down dead.

It seems that according to Rashi, what Bilaam had noticed was that the Jewish People get up and get busy with Mitzvos from the crack of dawn and they go to sleep with the recitation of the Unity of HASHEM and a yielding of their soul at the end of the day. That's it! That's the secret revealed.

Therefore when you see a fellow with a Yarmulka arriving at the office in the morning, you know this was not his first stop. He has invested up to

from high school one evening, and we had all Davened Maariv together. Right afterwards, an announcement was made! The Rabbi said, "Shacharis, (morning prayers) are at 11:00 PM tonight!" What? Shacharis at night!? What can he be saying? Then the explanation followed, "If you go to bed by 11:00 tonight, then you will make it for Shacharis at 7:30 tomorrow morning!"

If you go to bed with a sense of purpose, you'll wake up with energy and direction! Go to bed like a lion! Wake up like a lion! Go to bed like a slug! Wake up like a slug! Contemplating HASHEM's Oneness prepares one for a day of fresh dedication, and sleep becomes a Mitzvah too. Maybe that's what Bilaam had in mind.

Maybe it is the right order! How can one put his head down at the day's end and sleep with peace? Live a day of devotion and having done all that you can, you can entrust your soul to HASHEM. It's the secret to a sweet sleep and the preparation for another productive day.

Forever a Donkey

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

How is it possible for a pompous fool to have the gift of prophecy, to communicate directly with Hashem? This question immediately springs to mind as we read the amazing story of Bilaam in this week's parshah. Bilaam had immense powers. He could marshal awesome cosmic forces to serve his designs. He could foresee the future all the way to Messianic times. And yet he seems to have been an evil, moneygrubbing buffoon ridiculed by his own donkey. How could this be?

Our Sages tell us that Bilaam did not earn his gift of prophecy through any merit of his own. Rather, it was because Hashem did not want the gentiles to have any excuses for their rejection of the Torah. He did not want them to say, "We are not to blame. The Jewish people had Moses as their prophet, but we had no one." Therefore, Hashem gave them a prophet of comparable power in the corrupt person of Bilaam.

But the question still remains: True, Bilaam did not attain prophecy because of his fine character and spiritual qualities. Nonetheless, shouldn't the very experience of communicating with Hashem have wrought fundamental changes in his character? How could he remain such a silly fool after perceiving the grandest prophetic visions?

Furthermore, when Hashem sent the angel to dissuade him from his sinister plans, why was it necessary for the angel to address him through the mouth of his donkey? Why didn't the angel speak to him directly?

The commentators point out that the word used to describe the initiation of contact between Hashem and Bilaam is almost identical to the word describing the initiation of contact between Hashem and Moses, and yet they are worlds apart. "Vayekar Elokim el Bilaam," the Torah (23:3) states. "And the Lord chanced upon Bilaam." It was like a chance encounter, brusque, businesslike, distasteful. Not so with Moses. "Vayikra el Moshe," the Torah (Leviticus 1:1) declares. "And He called to Moses." Hashem calls out to him with excitement and awaits him with anticipation, so to speak.

The difference in spelling between the words vayekar and vayikra is one aleph, and in the Torah that aleph appears in reduced size. Here lies the key to the difference between Moses and Bilaam.

It is possible for two people to have the same experience, and yet, one will be deeply affected while the other remains indifferent. Everything depends on the mindset. Moses was the quintessential humble man. The tiny aleph symbolizes the insignificance of his ani, his ego, and this humility and submission to the Creator gave him the receptiveness and clarity of vision to attain true greatness.

Bilaam, on the other hand, was a pompous, arrogant and selfish fool, and this overwhelming self-absorption clouded his vision and stunted his spiritual growth. For all his wondrous prophetic powers, he remained forever a fool. This was the message of the talking donkey. "Do not think your prophetic ability makes you exalted," Hashem was saying to him. "Behold, your donkey is also speaking, yet he remains forever a donkey."

A country bumpkin once asked a great sage how to go about meeting Eliyahu Hanavi.

"According to a Kabbalistic teaching," said the sage, "if you remain silent

for forty days you merit meeting the prophet."

The man clamped his mouth shut, and for the next forty days, to the immense frustration of his family, he went about his everyday business without uttering a word. The forty days passed, however, without any supernatural visitations, and the man complained to the sage.

"And what did you do during these forty days besides being silent?" asked the sage. "Did you study Torah? Did you devote time to prayer and introspection?"

The man squinted at the sage and shook his head. "I did what I always do," he said.

"Look out there," said the sage, pointing to the window. "Do you see that donkey? He hasn't spoken a word for forty days either."

In our own lives, we all experience moments of unusual transcendence from time to time, moments of intense inspiration that have the power to uplift our souls and effect in us lasting spiritual changes. But it does not happen by itself. If we can find within ourselves the spiritual strength to be receptive, if we can rise above the distractions of our mundane existence and connect with the vast eternal truths of the universe, we can discover a joy and serenity we never thought existed.

If It Can Happen To Bilaam, It Can Happen to Any of Us

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Parshas Balak contains an incident which teaches us a tremendous ethical lesson. For me personally, it is one of the scariest mussar teachings in the Torah.

This incident involves a person named Bilaam, who had a tremendous power of speech. Whomever he blessed was blessed; whomever he cursed was cursed. He was a very powerful man -- a person who did not command divisions of armies; but he had an almost magical power of speech.

Bilaam is asked to employ this power against the Jews. He knows that G-d does not want him to go, but he decides to go nevertheless. While on the way, what happens to him? His donkey stops, refuses to move, then all of a sudden the donkey opens up his mouth and starts talking to him. Since the history of the world began, such a thing never happened -- and never again will happen -- that a donkey should talk to a man.

If someone doubts whether what he is doing is right or wrong and suddenly his car stops and tells him "Don't go" (and not just one of those recorded voices saying "Your seatbelt isn't buckled...") -- would that not cause the person to at least stop and wonder whether he is doing the right thing?

We may ask this question even about a person who was not perceptive. However, Bilaam was a wise person. He was a perceptive person. How does a perceptive person view his donkey talking to him? Bilaam should have said to himself, "My strength is my speech. Who gave me that power? G-d. The proof is that the same G-d who gave me the power of speech, just gave my donkey the power of speech! "Who gives a mouth to man or Who makes one dumb..." [Shmos 4:11] From where is my strength? Me talking is not any bigger miracle than my donkey talking. It's the same strength of G-d."

What should Bilaam have concluded? He should have concluded that he was not using his power of speech correctly, and that he should turn back. Is this not as clear as day? Is the message not clear? Shouldn't that make an impression? Yet it did not.

This is the lesson we need to learn -- how blind people can be! When a person has some type of personal motive -- whether it is money or power or anything -- a person can literally become completely blind. G-d can almost spell it out to him... G-d CAN actually spell it out to him, but he will not see it!

That is what is so frightening. It can be as clear as day to the objective observer, but the person on his way to sin cannot see what is in front of his own eyes! This is terribly frightening, because if it can happen to Bilaam, it can happen to any one of us! If Bilaam can be blinded, we can be blinded.

This is the tremendous mussar to be derived from the incident of Bilaam: There are none so blind, as those who will not see.