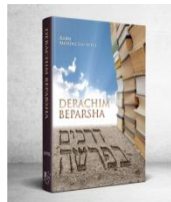


דרכים בפרשה בלק

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הנה עם יצא ממצרים וגו'. ועתה לכה נא ארה לי את העם הזה כי עצום הוא ממני אולי אוכל נכה בו ואגרשנו מן הארץ כי ידעתי Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt... Come now therefore, curse this people; for they are too mighty for me (22:5-6)

In this week's parsha, the Torah informs us of all that went on between Bilaam and Balak, King of Moav. Aside from the six days of creation, this is the only event in the Torah that is known to us solely because HaShem chose to reveal it. It was not witnessed firsthand and not passed down the chain of our mesorah. The entire story happened behind the scenes. Had HaShem not told us about the danger Klal Yisroel faced and how He protected them, we likely never would have known about it (Chasam Sofer Y"D — final teshuvah).

This idea — that so much of what HaShem does for us happens behind the scenes, without us ever being aware — is what the Vilna Gaon highlights in his explanation of the passuk in Hallel: **“הללו את ה' כל גוים שבחוהו כל האמים כי”** — All the nations will praise HaShem... because of the chessed He did for Klal Yisroel.

Why are the nations praising HaShem for what He did for us? Shouldn't we be the ones thanking Him? The Gaon explains that the nations will end up giving praise because they know what they had planned for us — and yet HaShem protected us without our ever realizing we were in danger.

A perfect example of this is the entire episode with Balak and Bilaam. The Torah tells us that Balak came to Bilaam with three points: 1) A nation has left Mitzrayim; 2) They're a threat to us; 3) Please curse them, because your curse is effective and we can't defeat them on our own.

The second and third points are logical — describe the danger, then explain the need for help. But why mention that they left Mitzrayim? Was there anyone in the world who didn't know that? (Rashi hints to this as well, when Bilaam asks: what difference does it make?)

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh sheds light on this. Earlier, Bilaam had served as an advisor to Pharaoh, tasked specifically with ensuring the Yidden would never leave Mitzrayim. And when Balak later consulted with him about what to expect from the Yidden, Bilaam assured him they would remain stuck — they'd never get out.

So Balak comes back and points a finger: “They left Mitzrayim. This is on you. Now fix it.”

But the pesukim seem to highlight something deeper. Bilaam later says that HaShem took Bnei Yisroel out of Mitzrayim, while Balak insists they left on their own. Why the difference?

I heard from Rav Binyamin Eisenberger shlita a critical yesod, which every Yid should know and internalize:

Balak turned to Bilaam because of his ability to curse at the moment of HaShem's daily anger. Normally, this brief moment allows a curse to take effect. But here, Chazal tell us HaShem withheld His anger completely, out of His unconditional love for Klal Yisroel. Bilaam's plan relied on that moment, but HaShem wouldn't allow it.

Balak's logic made sense, but he ignored a crucial fact: HaShem's love for Klal Yisroel — *ahavah she'eino teluyah b'davar* — is constant and unshakeable, even in the darkest times. While HaShem judges the world with *midas hadin*, with Klal Yisroel He allows His love to override justice, showing favor and *rachamim*. Bilaam understood this, which is why his curses failed and he was forced to utter the bracha of *Mah Tov*, despite his wishes.

The Zohar tells us that when the malachim resisted splitting the sea for Klal Yisroel — arguing that they sinned just like the Mitzriyim — HaShem responded that His deep bond with His children overrides those calculations. The kesher itself is the answer.

Balak refused to admit this. So instead of saying HaShem took us out, he claimed we left on our own — because he couldn't bring himself to acknowledge that kind of relationship.

It's an incredible feeling to know that such love exists. But how can we live with that knowledge?

The truth is, many people relate to HaShem on a quid-pro-quo basis. When life is good, they love Him. But when things go wrong, they question. They feel disappointed, hurt, even abandoned. And instead of using the challenge as a means of coming closer, they drift.

If we're honest, those reactions don't come from a place of unconditional love. If it were unconditional, the love would stay even when we're struggling. Even when we fall.

Our job is to mirror the same love that HaShem shows us. To trust that He loves us more than we can understand. That everything He does — even the hard things — comes from that love.

This is the limud of our parsha. HaShem loves us and continues to see us with favor. If we internalize that — not just as a concept, but as something real — we will live with more joy and with deeper love for Him. Even in hard times. Because no matter how far we've fallen, no matter how dark things look, HaShem's love is still there.

May we be zocheh to a full giluy of that ahavah between HaShem and Klal Yisroel.

מרדכי אפפֿעל, Good Shabbos,