



Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Balak 5785

1 – Topic – A Thought on the Parsha

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Balak. The summer months are well underway. A time where many of us have the ability to spend more time learning. We're not doing homework with the little ones and have somewhat less responsibility as far as the children are concerned, and b'ezras Hashem can increase our limud haTorah.

A yedid reminded me of a unique thing that we find in Parshas Balak. A unique posuk. It's more of a question of just knowing that something exists more than any dvar Torah. There was a Rebbe in the mesivta in my days, who was a lomzher. He had a hard time pronouncing a lamed. So a bachur once went over to him and asked if he could please read him the posuk, 22:37 of this week's parsha (וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל-בִּלְעָם, הֲלֹא שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלָיְךָ לְקַרְא-לְךָ-). The posuk has 13 straight words with a lamed. Of course, the rebbe saw the posuk, understood it, and the boy got thrown out of yeshiva, at least temporarily. Kach heim hadevarim. But anyway, the idea that such a posuk exists in this parsha is interesting.

There's another nekudah here in the parsha. It relates to something I mentioned to you in the past, and that is that the word shin lamed ches for sending, appears sometimes without a dagesh and sometimes with a dagesh in the lamed, depending on the binyan, how the word is conjugated. And as I've mentioned, I'm sure those of you who've heard this it's the type of thing you remember, is that shin lamed ches without a dagesh in the lamed, is a softer sending. It's when you send someone and he's going to come back. He's going somewhere and he's going to return. Shin lamed ches with a dagesh is a one-way trip, when you send things in one direction. That's called binyan kaved, a stronger sending. Whereas with a soft lamed it's called binyan kal, a lighter sending.

There are many words like that. Lamed mem daled, lamad is to learn when there's no dagesh in the mem. When there is a dagesh in the mem, lamad is a binyan kaved. It's something that's a more difficult thing and that is teaching, where you're learning plus teaching. Now this, as I mentioned, is a Rashi in Parshas Noach, when Noach sends away the yonah, Rashi says this rule. It's a Rashi in Parshas Shemos, by the meyardos, Rashi says that the shrosh yud lamed daled can mean to give birth, that's binyan kal. It can mean to help others give birth, that's binyan kaved with a dagesh in the lamed, etc. And this is a sort of old klal to our chaverim. If you don't remember it, pretend you do, because you should. It's something that I mentioned in the past. Every parsha, I believe, every parsha in the Torah has a word with shin lamed ches and is an example of this.

I mention it here in Balak because in the beginning of Balak there are many psukim that mention the messengers that were sent. The posuk I just mentioned, for example, (וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָק אֶל-בִּלְעָם, הֲלֹא שְׁלַחְתִּי אֵלָיְךָ). These are messengers, so of course they're without a lamed. If you start from in the beginning of the parsha, and the messengers are constantly without a dagesh in the lamed. This is until 22:40. (וַיִּזְבַּח בָּלָק, בָּקָר וְצֹאן). Balak brings karbanos. (וַיִּשְׁלַח לְבִלְעָם), and he sent the meat of the karbanos to Bilam, and there of course it's a one way trip. When you send somebody something to eat, you don't expect to get it in return. And (וַיִּשְׁלַח לְבִלְעָם) has a dagesh in the lamed, and it's just another thing, as I was mavir sedra, that I noticed, an old friend, an old klal that we have mentioned in the past.

2 – Topic – The Brachos of Bilam

I'd like to talk about the middle set of the brachos of Bilam. Chazal say in Masseches Sanhedrin that from the brachos of Bilam, you can see a little of what he had in mind in a negative way to Klal Yisroel. So there are two parts of the middle that I would like to discuss. One is 23:21. (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב, וְלֹא-רָאָה עֵמֶל בִּישְׁרָאֵל). Amal, Rashi says here means an aveirah. (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב), Hashem didn't see the sins of Yaakov. (וְלֹא-רָאָה עֵמֶל בִּישְׁרָאֵל). Now if it means that Klal Yisroel are tzaddikim, so of course G-d didn't see any of the aveiros of Klal Yisroel. However, Rashi says not that way. Rashi says on (בְּשֶׁהָן עוֹבְרִין עַל דְּבָרָיו אֵינוֹ מִדְּקָדֵק אַחֲרֵיהֶם לְהַתְּבוּנָה) (לֹא-הָבִיט). That Hakadosh Baruch Hu, kaviyachol, doesn't look at the aveiros. He doesn't notice the aveiros. So (לֹא-הָבִיט) means when Klal Yisroel does do aveiros, Hashem doesn't notice the aveiros that Klal Yisroel does. That's what Bilam said.

It's a pela. Just two psukim earlier, Bilam said, (לֹא אִישׁ קֵל וִיכֹזֵב), G-d is not like a person, He doesn't do things that are not true. So if G-d doesn't do things that are not true, so what does it mean (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב)? Hashem didn't look at the aveiros of Yaakov. Halo davar hu, it definitely needs a biur. Lechora it's a falseness.

The answer is a klal gadol in the life of a person, in the life of a married man, (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב), that's a middah a husband and wife should have about each other. You don't have to notice all of the failings of each other. And what is the idea? How is that not sheker?

And the answer is that there's a certain emes. The emes is that when people are committed to each other, in their lives, they have commitments to each other, and they're loyal and faithful one to the other, and then they make mistakes, they do things that are wrong. It has to be seen in context. It's not like you meet someone the first time and he says, I'll be there at four o'clock. He doesn't show up. You don't know the man from ever, and he doesn't show up. He's not there when he's supposed to be there. Of course it is normal to have taanos on him.

However, when you have somebody who's committed to you your whole life, who does things, who shares a life with you, and then the person doesn't show up at four o'clock, so big deal, how does that affect the relationship? It has nothing to do with the relationship. People make mistakes, people do things that they should not be doing. (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב), farkert, Bilam is saying that it's emes. (לֹא אִישׁ קֵל וִיכֹזֵב), Hashem doesn't do things that are sheker. And since he doesn't do sheker, (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב). Therefore he doesn't notice the sins of Yaakov.

Now m'toch birchosav shel Bilam harasha nikar mah kavanoso, his kavanah was to be m'katreg al Klal Yisroel. However, that Klal Yisroel does do aveiros and G-d is ignoring them. However, the amitas hadvarim is, that that's a proper middah. That's the middah a person has to have. The happiness of a home depends on having this middah. (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב), it's a middah of bracha, it's a middah of hatzlacha, it's a middah where a person can just have a happy life if he just stops noticing everything.

You have to know, sometimes people complain that when they learn, they forget. Forgetting is a painful thing for somebody who learns. He forgets things. And it's indeed a painful thing that a person forgets things. However, if you're blessed with the middah of forgetting, use it the right way. When a friend does something that he shouldn't be doing to you, he shouldn't do it. So forget it. Don't remember it. He comes to apologize, say, what? I don't remember that. You try to say that, ah, the middah of forgetting, I use it for the right thing. So the Ribono shel Olam won't have taanos when it's used, chas v'shalom, for something that's incorrect. So this is a yesodos dika posuk in the life of a yid, (לֹא-הָבִיט אֶנּוֹן בִּינְעֻקָּב), should be halachta b'drachav, you should do like the Ribono shel Olam. Don't notice everything that someone does that's incorrect.

Later, in the same set of brachos, the posuk says, and apparently Bilam sees this as significant enough to mention, (לֹא יִשְׁכַּב עַד-יֵאָכֵל טָרֶף). What does it mean (לֹא יִשְׁכַּב עַד-יֵאָכֵל טָרֶף) in posuk chaf daled? It means, says Rashi, amazing. Rashi says this means (קוֹרֵא אֶת שְׁמֵעַ עַל מְטָחוֹ). Krias Shema al hamitah has a remez in the posuk? Wow. Rashi says, when you go to sleep, (כָּל מְזִיק הַבֵּא לְטָרְפוֹ). So b'lailah when Klal Yisroel goes to sleep, they don't go to sleep (עַד-יֵאָכֵל טָרֶף), until they destroy those who are out to destroy them. And what is that? Rashi says, to say Krias Shema.

The person who is (קורא את שמע על מטתו) before he goes to sleep, and in that way, he's mekabel ol malchus shamayim. It's not just the Krias Shema, it's the kabbalas ol malchus shamayim that goes with it, and he's mevatel all of the mazikin.

People say, they don't see these mazikin. Who are these mazikin? I never met them. And the answer is, the mazikin are there. I've noticed in yeshiva over the years, as a mechanech, there are some people who can't get up in the morning. And a bachur says he's in pain, he can't get up in the morning, he oversleeps davening, he oversleeps seder. In the beginning, I used to think he has to work on getting up in the morning. He has to work, find some trick on how to get up in the morning.

There was a wise woman who had an advice column, who wrote, the best way to make sure you get up in the morning is to drink half a gallon of water before you go to sleep. And it works. But I discovered later that it's not true. People don't have a hard time getting up. Some people have sleep disorders, rachmana litzlan. But when a young man says, I can't get up in the morning, correct him. You can't get to sleep at night. At night, when it's time to go to sleep, you dray around, you shmues, you do things, and before you know it, half hour passes, an hour passes. You're wasting major amounts of time at night. And you figure, what's the difference? I finished learning for the day, I finished davening for the day. The answer is a very big difference. The difference is that if you go to sleep late, you're going to have a hard time getting up. And you're going to have a hard time concentrating in the next day.

So the yeitzer hara shtells, you want to know who the mazikin are? You want to know who are these mazikin? I can show them to you. You come to a camp by day and the whole camp is davening. I'll walk you into the bunks, you'll see the mazikim. They knocked out a handful of boys. They're still sleeping in bed. Why are they sleeping in bed? Some of them don't care about getting up for davening, but most of them do. Why are they sleeping in bed? Because of the mazikim, because they weren't mekabel ol malchus shamayim before they went to sleep.

Kabbalas ol malchus shamayim means you go to sleep the way you're supposed to go to sleep. You go to sleep the way a ben Torah, the way a frum yid goes to sleep. You go to sleep in a way that's going to make you have hatzlacha in the coming day. And that is the (לא ישכב עד-יאכל טרף). That is this middah, this idea that a person before he goes to sleep, yochal teref, that he has to destroy the mazikin that are around him. A person before he goes to sleep should be sure to say Krias Shema. The Mishnah Berurah says it's tov to say the whole three parshiyos of Krias Shema. That way if chas v'shalom you ever forget to daven Maariv, at least you won't miss the mitzvas asech of Krias Shema. And besides, the Mishnah Berurah says it's a shmira for the ramach eivarim for a person to say the three parshiyos of Krias Shema. And that's the ikkur, to say the three parshiyos, say hamapil, and go to sleep and you'll be able, I"Y Hashem, to wake up in the morning in a proper way.

Someone told me that there was someone who once came to Rav Shach with his little three year old boy, and he showed Rav Shach the heilige neshama that this boy has. What does the boy do when he plays around? He has Tzitzis and he wraps the Tzitzis around his arm like tefillin. That is what he liked to do for playing, he would pretend that he was putting on tefillin. So he showed Rav Shach, look at my little Yankele that this is what he does for play.

Rav Shach turned to the father and he said Reb Yid, you have to start Davening with a Minyan. He understood that if a boy sees a father putting on tefillin, it could only happen if the father puts on tefillin because he is Davening at home. In an ideal world a child should never see you putting on tefillin until he gets old enough to come to Shul with you. When you put on tefillin you put it on in a beis medrash. We don't have the minhag in America to put on at home and go to shul that way. And mimeila, it is all part of this hisbonenus that we need the understanding. Bilam hated klal yisrael, he knew their weaknesses, he knew about the mazikim at bed time.

Tonight, fight off the mazikim. When it is time to go to sleep don't dray around. Don't look at the paper, don't look at your emails. Go to sleep, have a good night's sleep and wake up refreshed in the morning on time to make it to davening the way it's supposed to be, which is before davening with enough time. If there's an eight

o'clock minyan, it means you're supposed to come five or ten to eight so you can put on your talis and tefillin before the start of the minyan. IY"H we shall bli neder. And with that, I want to wish everybody an absolutely wonderful and heilige Shabbos kodesh!

Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Balak 5784

1 – Topic – The Chronology of the Parsha

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Balak. In Parshas Behaloscha I had pointed out the chronology of the Chumash. It is something that not many people realize but from when Klal Yisrael came to Har Sinai in Parshas Yisro until Chamishi of Behaloscha, they are all in one place, at Sinai for almost a year and so much of the Torah is said there.

What I would like to point out this week, is that the last Posuk of last week's Parsha, Parshas Chukas which talks about as is found in 22:1 (וַיִּהְיוּ בְּעַרְבוֹת מוֹאָב) (ערבות מואב), which talks about Klal Yisrael arriving at (ערבות מואב) and of course the whole Parshas Balak takes place by (ערבות מואב) in the area of Moav, that is the final stop of Klal Yisrael. From the last Posuk of Chukas until the end of Zos Hab'racha is again Klal Yisrael all in one place. In Zos Hab'racha it says Devarim 34:1 (וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה מֵעַרְבֹת מוֹאָב, אֶל-הַר נָבו, רֹאשׁ הַפָּסְגָה, אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי יְרֵחוֹ) (ויילך משה מערבות מואב, אל-הר נבו, ראש הפסגה, אשר על-פני ירחו). It says there in 34:5 (וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד-יְיָ, בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב) (וימת שם משה עבד-י"ה, בארץ מואב). So that, really all of this took place in one stop. So that, until Chamishi of Behaloscha is one stop, then all the way until the story of the Meraglim is all in that same time span until Tisha B'av of the second year, and then from the last Posuk of Chukas until the end is all again in one stop in (ערבות מואב). The whole 39 years in between, is sort of swallowed up in the second part of Chukas and in the story of Korach. It is a Shaila when Korach took place, but it is all swallowed up there, and there is an important lesson here. The important lesson is to know that Torah, Neviim and Kesuvim is not a history book. It is not there to tell the history of the Jewish people. As a matter of fact, for most of the 40 years in the Midbar Klal Yisrael were learning B'hasmada, were doing Ratzon Hashem, it was a Dor Dai'a. If you learn Chumash without noticing, you would think that they are a bunch of troublemakers because it goes from one problem to another. The answer is no. Most of what took place is not recorded. What we can learn from is recorded.

The same thing is true about Neviim and Kesuvim, especially Neviim. Somebody would think that it is about the history of Klal Yisrael. Many times it says about a king, it says you want to know about this king the Posuk says look in Sefer Divrei Hayamim about the Malchei Yisrael. Or Sefer Divrei Hayamim about Malchei Yehuda. It is not a history book, it is a series of lessons that it is teaching Klal Yisrael. It is an important lesson to know.

Point # 2 about these Pesukim. The Posuk keeps on saying that it was B'erezt Moav, B'arvos Moav. When Moshe Rabbeinu died (וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד-יְיָ, בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב) (וימת שם משה עבד-י"ה, בארץ מואב). An important point. Klal Yisrael did not conquer the land of Moav. Klal Yisrael went around Moav. They didn't conquer Moav. The Posuk says that they were commanded not to conquer the land of Edom and they were Mesoveiv. It is interesting that the Posuk doesn't say clearly about Moav.

If you look in last week's Haftorah with Yiftach Hagiladi, it says clearly that they went around Moav as well. They didn't actually enter into the land of Moav because they were not allowed to conquer. This is actually brought in Rashi. Rashi says in Chukas 21:13 that the land of Moav was captured by Sichon. Then Klal Yisrael captured from Sichon so they were able to capture half of the land of Moav. The land of Moav is in two parts, a part to the south and a part to the north. The northern part of Moav was captured by Sichon and Klal Yisrael took it away. What is interesting and maybe needs explanation, is why the Torah keeps on referring to it as (אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב) (ארץ מואב). If you call it (ערבות מואב) the plains of Moav, I can understand it is the name of the plains of Moav. But (אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב) that is interesting. That the Torah calls it in Ha'azinu also in 32:49 (אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַר הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה הַר-נָבו, אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב, עַל-פְּנֵי יְרֵחוֹ) (אשר על-הר העברים הזה הר-נבו, אשר בארץ מואב, על-פני ירחו). It refers to it as the land of Moav. In beginning of Devarim, 1:5 (בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב, הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה, בָּאֵר אֶת-הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לֵאמֹר) (בארץ מואב, הואיל משה, באר א-ת-התורה הזאת לאמר). Because it is the land of Moav which is fascinating because it was Ti'haru B'sichon and I guess that needs some sort of an explanation.

2 – Topic – A Machshava idea of Bilam

I would like to move on to a second important thought regarding the strange character called Bilam who appears in this week's Parsha. What is most famous are the words of Rashi. Rashi tells us at the beginning of Parshas Balak in Posuk Hei that HKB"H allowed his Shechina to rest on Bilam so the nations shouldn't say (כְּדִי שָׁלָא) (יְהִינָה פְתֻחוֹן פֶּה לְאַמּוֹת לֹמֶר, אֱלוֹ הֵיוּ לָנוּ נְבִיאִים, הֶזְרַנּוּ לְמוֹשֶׁה). So therefore, Bilam had a Nevua, somehow it was a Nevua that was equivalent to the Nevua of Moshe Rabbeinu. Ad Kan Rashi in Parshas Balak.

It is not entirely as it seems. First of all, the Ramban in Posuk Lamed Aleph in Parshas Balak says (כִּי בִלְעָם לֹא) (הָיָה נְבִיא, אֱלוֹ הֵיָה נְבִיא אֵיךְ יִצְטָרֵךְ לְגַלּוֹי הָעֵינִיִּים בְּרֹאֵיִת המלאך). If he would have been a Navi he would have seen the Malach the Ramban says. He wasn't a Navi. He was given one opportunity with one set of Nevuos here.

The Radak in Yehoshua 13:22 (וְאֵת-בִּלְעָם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר, הַקּוֹסֵם), Bilam Ben Beor the sorcerer, also says he wasn't a true Navi. (לְהוֹדִיעַ כִּי לֹא נְבִיא הִיָּה אֱלֹא קוֹסֵם וּנְבוּאָתוֹ הִיָּתָה לְשַׁעָה). That seems to be a Stira to our Rashi here in Parshas Balak. What makes it more difficult is that Rashi in Ki Sisa 33:17 on the Posuk (גַּם אֶת-הַדֶּבֶר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ אֲנִי), Rashi says (שָׁלָא תִשְׁרָה שְׂכִינָתִי עוֹד עַל אַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם). HKB"H told Moshe Rabbeinu and this is after the Cheit HaEigel in the beginning of the 40 years, that the Shechina would not rest upon an Akum. It says, (וְאִין דְּבִרְיוֹ שָׁל בִּלְעָם עַל) (נֹפֶל וְגִלּוֹי עֵינִים). It is not a regular Nevua, it is something called (נֹפֶל וְגִלּוֹי עֵינִים). It is not the same. This seems to contradict our Rashi and it is a very big problem between these two Rashis. Rashi by us says that he had a Nevua, somehow akin to Moshe Rabbeinu, and Rashi in Ki Sisa, the Radak and Ramban say that he was not a true Navi. Tzorech Iyun Gadol!

There are two possible answers. One answer appears in Baalei Machshava. They say the following. They say, HKB"H gave this (וְגִלּוֹי עֵינִים), this little bit of revelation to Bilam. That is the way the Ribbono Shel Olam starts with every Navi. It depends what you do with it. Moshe Rabbeinu also started with a lower level of Nevua. But he rose, he grew, he built himself up and Mimeila he became Moshe. So the Umos Ha'olam shouldn't say (אֱלוֹ) (הָיוּ לָנוּ נְבִיאִים), we don't have the opportunity. Hashem gave the same opportunity that he gave to Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe Rabbeinu also started with a small amount of Shru'as Hashechina and from that he built himself up and he grew. That is the lesson really of Bilam. He had the opportunity and what did he use it for? Gornish! He wanted to make money from Balak. That is a Navi? This is a Teretz from the Sifrei Hamachshava.

There is another technical answer and that comes from a Rashi in Iyov 4:12. Rashi in Iyov says (לִפִּי שֹׁאֵן רוּחַ) (הַקּוֹדֵשׁ נִגְלָה עַל נְבִיאֵי עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים בְּפִרְהִסָּא). That when Rashi said earlier in Ki Sisa that there is no Nevua – Shruyas Hashechina for the Umos Ha'olam, that is (בְּפִרְהִסָּא). That is openly. It says in Beraishis 20:3 (וַיֵּבֶא אֱלֹדִים אֵל-) (אֲבִימֶלֶךְ, בְּחֻלּוֹם הַלְיָלָה). Avimelech secretly had Nevua. Lavan had Nevua. Zagt Rashi, that the same thing is true about Bilam, (נֹפֶל וְגִלּוֹי עֵינִים). That it was done in an Ofen Tzina, not in an Ofen Galui. Therefore, it is not a Stira the two Rashis. Rashi says in Ki Sisa he didn't have Nevua, that the only Nevua he had was (נֹפֶל וְגִלּוֹי עֵינִים), whatever that means exactly, some type of falling and having an opening of Shechina. It is not a Stira. Because it is a level of Nevua.

Combining the two answers we can understand that everything begins. When HKB"H is giving a person a tease, a little bit of Ruchnios, gives someone a good Seder, a Geshmakeit in something that he hears or something that he learned. What does he do? I know people who heard a wonderful Dvar Torah from a Sefer and they went out and bought it and that year they looked every Shabbos at that Sefer. This is because they had a little (גִּלּוֹי עֵינִים), a little eye opening, and they made it into something very real. They built on it. They continued with it. Many people they shrug it off. A Geshmake Vort and they go on with life.

Seizing opportunities. The lesson of the difference between Bilam and Moshe, is a lesson of taking your opportunities, taking the opening. Everything in this world is Hester, HKB"H is hidden in this world. Everything is hidden. You take the moment of (גִּלּוֹי עֵינִים), when HKB"H gives you a little bit, a little bit of a peak, a little bit of a glance into Ruchnios and you seize on it, then you can build yourself up to the height of a Ruchnios that is a Geshmak that HKB"H shines on you but you have to be able to open the door and let it in.

And so, a technical idea, the chronology of the Parsha. A Machshava idea of Bilam Hakoseim, how Bilam lost opportunities. With these two thoughts I want to wish everybody an absolutely wonderful and extraordinary Shabbos Kodesh, a meaningful Shabbos Kodesh for one and all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas - Balak 5783

1 – Topic – Preparing to go to Eretz Yisrael and leaving behind Chutz L'aretz

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas – Balak catching up so to speak to Eretz Yisrael. Speaking of Eretz Yisrael, I was in Eretz Yisrael at the beginning of the week and I would like to share with you a brief thought. In the Aderes Eliyahu, the GR”A in Parshas Eikev 8:1, the Gaon writes (ולביאת הארץ צריך ג' דברים) that to come to Eretz Yisrael you need three things. 1) The first thing you need is that you have to prepare yourself to leave Chutz L'aretz. (2. 'א הכנה לצאת מח"ל). You have to know the road which you are traveling. (3. 'ב' הדרך אשר ילך). You have to come to Eretz Yisrael. (ג' הביאה לא"י). So you have leaving, traveling and coming.

It is not really so. All you need is 2 and 3. You need a road to go and you need to arrive in Eretz Yisrael. If you have a road to go Mimeila you are leaving Chutz L'aretz. What does it mean # 1 that you need a Hachana La'tzeis L'chutz L'aretz?

The GR”A here is Megaleh to us a Sod. He is telling us the secret of being Matzlaich in a trip to Eretz Yisrael. There are some who come to Eretz Yisrael and they never left Chutz L'aretz, they are taking Chutz L'aretz along with them. Do me a favor, leave it behind. You want to be able to come and be Nichnas L'eretz Yisrael, then you need # 1 Hachana Latzeis Chutz L'aretz. You got to understand that you are leaving Chutz L'aretz and you are going out of Chutz L'aretz.

I came to Ohr Sameach this week and I met somebody who I met for the first time last summer. Yoel from Norway. He had just come and I met him with his father and they had a Shabbos Seuda together with us. I asked his father to please tell us what brought him and his son here. He said essentially that he wants his son to know something about Judaism. Therefore, he came with him there. A wonderful young man.

Yoel was in the Mechina, the beginners program and made his first Siyum this week on Maseches Megillah and he is moving up to the Beis Medrash program. A one year jumping up to the regular Beis Medrash program. It is just absolutely incredible. Incredible what the Ruach of Eretz Yisrael could do. Why did he go to Eretz Yisrael? To know something about Judaism. We think we know all that there is to know about Yiddishkeit. We have much to learn. If we left Chutz L'aretz to go to Eretz Yisrael to know more about Yiddishkeit then we would do very well.

It is said that Rav Hutner once observed a Beis Medrash of Bochorim learning on Shavuot. He admired them. He commented to somebody, their faces are towards Har Sinai just like by Mattan Torah. I am just not sure if their backs are to the rest of the world. You need two things. You have to face Har Sinai and you have to have your back towards the rest of the world.

Yaakov when he left Lavan's house he said, as is found in Rashi to Beraishis 32:5 (עם לבן גרתי ותרתי"ג מצות שמרתי) that he kept (or at least learned about) all 613 Mitzvos. (ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים) I didn't learn from his evil deeds. Ribbono Shel Olam! Once you say (תרתי"ג מצות שמרתי) that he kept every single Mitzvah, what do you have to add (ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים)? You see from here that for some people it is not a contradiction. You can do everything good and still have yourself totally in Chutz L'aretz, totally in Beis Lavan. Get involved in the pleasures and the overindulgences of Chutz L'aretz.

When we go into a Sukkah we say a beautiful Tefillah. It says (ובזכות צאתי מביתי החוצה ודרך מצותיך ארוצה). We ask for a Zechus for the fact that we go out of the house. Really the Ikkur is the Zechus that we go into the Sukkah

and not so much that we go out of the house. No! Some people go into the Sukkah without leaving their normal homes. They don't leave it at all. They are sitting in their homes just now there is Schach on top of them.

It is the same thing with going to Eretz Yisrael. What a waste. People go to Eretz Yisrael and they bring Chutz L'aretz with them. They bring everything with them. They were once Bnei Torah and now they are working people. They go to Eretz Yisrael, you would think they would come to Eretz Yisrael that you should dress like Bnei Torah, you should talk and walk like Bnei Torah. Your interests should be in jeeping? That is why you go to Eretz Yisrael to go jeeping? Imagine, someone comes into a Beis Medrash and he is sitting in the Beis Medrash and what is he doing in the Beis Medrash? He has the ingredients and he is making himself some fancy desert sitting in middle of the Beis Medrash. Nothing Treif, it is a Kosher desert. In middle of the Beis Medrash? That is what you do, you go jeeping in middle of the Ribbono Shel Olam's Eretz Yisrael? Rachmana Litzlon! It is not what Eretz Yisrael is for.

2 – Topic – The Chida's message about Tumah

In Parshas Chukas we learn of course about the Parah Aduma. There is an incredible Chida in Nachal Kiddumim on Koheles Perek Zayin. The Chida says Si'ba, the reason, She'ainenu B'madreigas Hatorah, that we are not on the same Madreiga of Torah is because Ain Lanu Parah Adumah, it is because we are Tamei. Tamei is not just a ritual Tumah, something that is a side Halacha. It affects the person. A person who is Tamei is not the same as a person who is Tahor. His heart is not opened the same way for Limud Hatorah. He says that that is why the Posuk in Tehillim 12:7 says (אֲמִרוֹת יְרֹךְ, אֲמִרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת). (אֲמִרוֹת יְרֹךְ) when are the Imros Hashem fully Imros Hashem? It is when they are Tehoros. When people are saying it in a Tahor'dika Oifan. That is what it says in the Chida. We have to realize, that Inyanei Tumah are not just a side Halacha of Tumah, they are B'etzem Devarim that are Tamei because they are Tamei.

The Rambam writes in the end of Hilchos Mikvaos 11:12 that (הַטְבִּילָה תְּלוּי בְּכוּוֹנַת הַלֵּב). Tovelng to become Tahor is Talui in the Kavana of the heart. (וּלְפִיכֵךְ אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים טָבֵל וְלֹא הוֹחֵזֵק כְּאִילוּ לֹא טָבֵל). You have to be thinking when you are Tovelng. That means becoming Tahor is more than just a ritual thing. It is something which has to do with the person himself. Which has to do with the person who is Tovelng and he is doing it for a reason to be an Ish Tahor.

Now we understand why Ezra was Misakein that even though today we are not Tahor and we can't eat Terumah and we can't Challah even if we are Kohanim, we can't go in the Beis Hamikdash. So if you are a Baal Keri and you have a certain type of Tumah, why go to the Mikvah, you are Tamei Meis anyway so it is not going to help you for other things?

The answer is because Tumah is something that affects the person. Tumah is something that is B'etzem. It is a Shod that people are not careful in Tevillas Ezra. Many people are careful, more people should be. To be careful to Tovel Tevillas Ezra. When someone is a Baal Keri to go to the Mikvah.

Rav Pam did not go to the Mikvah necessarily on Erev Shabbos. He didn't have a Minhag to go. He was a Litvishe. But Tevillas Ezra he told me he was always Zahir in.

It is very similar, there was a Chashuve Yid who had the Zechus of driving Rav Moshe to Shul every morning. His son was learning in Torah Vodaath and somebody asked his son does Rav Moshe go to the Mikvah before Shacharis? It is a funny thing, he goes Sundays and he doesn't go Fridays. He couldn't understand why. This is because Onah of a Talmid Chochom is Erev Shabbos to Erev Shabbos so Tevillas Ezra came up to him on Sunday. That is the important idea that we need to understand.

3 – Topic – A beautiful Maharal at the end of Parshas Chukas

I want to mention to you the last Rashi in Chukas. He brings there the Medrash about Sichon Melech Og who picked up a mountain to throw it on Klal Yisrael and a worm made a hole in the mountain and it fell over his head and became like a necklace and he wanted to pull it off and his teeth grew long and it got stuck in the mountain and he couldn't pull it off. An incredible Medrash. It is a Gemara in Berachos Nun Daled and Rashi alludes to it and tells you to look it up in the last Rashi in the Parsha 21:35 (וַיִּכְנֶה אֹתוֹ).

I mention it because of the Maharal. There is a long Maharal on that last Rashi. That one Maharal is probably as long as all of the Maharals on the whole Parshas Chukas or nearly as long. I told you many times that there is a Machlokes Maharsha and Maharal. The Maharal Teitches Aggadata Gemaras B'derech Mashul and not literally. Maharsha says Ain Medrash Yotzei Midei Peshuto generally. There are some exceptions but generally. But the Maharal he Teitches it B'derech Remez.

There is a beautiful Maharal at the end of the Parsha and if you want to see it in the Gur Aryeh which just shows you the She'efes HaMaharal that I have mentioned on other occasions.

And so, three thoughts. 1) Preparing to go to Eretz Yisrael and leaving behind Chutz L'aretz. When you go into a Shul you have to leave behind Chutz L'aretz. I wish people would use the lockers and leave their phones and especially their smartphones behind. 2) The Chida's message about Tumah. Tumah Biz'man Haze is also M'akeiv a person's understanding of Torah. 3) This last Nekudah of the beautiful Maharal at the end of the Parsha. With that I want to wish everyone an absolutely wonderful Shabbos Kodesh!

Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Chukas 5782

1 – Topic – A Thought on Parah Adumah

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas. I would like today to suggest a possible explanation in Rashi back in Parshas Beshalach 15:25 on the Posuk (שָׁם שָׁם לוֹ חֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט) that (שְׁמֵהּ מִקְצֵת פְּרִשְׁיּוֹת שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שִׁתְּעִסְקוּ) במרה נתן להם מקצת פרשיות של תורה שיתעסקו (בהם, שבת ופרה אדומה ודינין) and the question is what Parah Adumah is doing in Parshas Beshalach at Marah and there are numerous questions.

Let's turn to Parshas Chukas which of course begins with the Parah Adumah. When was the very first Parah Adumah brought and who were the very first people made Tahor with the Parah Adumah? As a Levi I am proud to say that Leviim were the first and let me explain.

The Gemara says in Gittin on 60a (second to bottom line) (שמנה פרשיות נאמרו ביום שהוקם בו המשכן). There are eight Parshios told to the Jewish people on the day that the Mishkan was put up, meaning Rosh Chodesh Nissan, and one of them is the Parsha of Parah Adumah. Rashi there (Daf Samech Amud Beis) says (לפי שביום המחרת נשרפה) (הפרה). Rashi says that these eight Parshios were on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and on Beis Nissan the first Parah Adumah was burned (וקודם לכן לא יכלו לעשותה). Rashi says that the Parah could not have been earlier (דבעינן והוה) (אל נכה פני אהל מועד), because you have to be able to Shpritz and face towards the Ohel Moed and there was no Ohel Moed until the Mishkan was put up.

As an aside, I don't know why they could not do it in the previous days, in the days when Moshe Rabbeinu set up the Ohel Moed, but there must be a reason. Coming back to our discussion.

Here we are talking about what Rashi said and there is a similar Rashi in Parshas Naso 7:1 (וראש חדש ניסן היה,) (בשני נשרפה הפרה). On the second day of Nissan the Parah was burned. When were the first people made Tahor with it? (בשלישי) On the third day of Nissan. Rashi says (היו הויה ראשונה) was the first time that there were people made Tahor with the Parah Adumah and that is in being Metaheir Sheivet Levi. So that is the timeline of the Parah Adumah. Rosh Chodesh Nissan they were taught, Beis Nissan they actually went through the process of

burning the Parah Adumah, and on Gimmel Nissan the first people were made Tahor in preparation for the Avodah in the Mishkan.

The question is if on Rosh Chodesh Nissan they were taught the Parah Adumah what in the world happened in Marah which occurred in Nissan a year earlier. What is going on? So I would imagine the following might be the answer. The Parah Adumah is a Parah, a calf. A Parah Adumah you will find because you will find a red cow. HKB"Y will make it there. However, why would the owner of the cow not work with the Parah? As it says in 19:2 (אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עֲלָה עָלֶיהָ, על). Why would he never put a yoke on it, it is an animal? It may well be that it is true that the Parsha of Parah Adumah and all the details were said on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. It is not a contradiction that at Marah they had to be told that there are coming attractions. You are going to get a Mitzvah of Parah Adumah, to whoever in Klal Yisrael has the Zechus that he has a cow and its hairs are all red, he should make sure to treat it with the proper Kedusha that when the time comes you will have a Parah Adumah.

2 – Topic - A Thought about Mai Miriva

The second major event in the Parsha is the Mei Miriva and Meforshim discuss the idea of what Moshe Rabbeinu's Aveira was exactly, as it is very difficult to put your finger on it and different Meforshim have different explanations. I am not going into what the Aveira was but the whole Musag, the whole idea that there is a major difference if a stone gives water whether you talk to it or whether you hit it, Mai Nafka Mina? Is one really a bigger miracle than the other? You hit a rock, you talk to a rock, same miracle. It is just as miraculous. Therefore, it needs some sort of explanation what is the difference.

In the Pachad Yitzchok on Pesach, Maimar Mem (page Kuf Yud Ches), he has an explanation with a Biur Klali, with a general rule. He says the following. There are two types of Nissim, two types of miracles. Sometimes a miracle takes place because at that moment the result of the miracle is needed. For example, Rav Chanina Ben Dosa miraculously said (Taanis 25a) (מִי שֶׁאָמַר לִשְׁמֹן וְיִדְלוֹק הוּא יֹאמַר לְחֹיִמֶץ וְיִדְלוֹק). He said, that G-d can make that vinegar could burn just like oil could burn. It was a miracle for what was needed at that moment.

There are other types of miracles. There are some miracles that are in an Ofen Klali, that they are statements for the Briya Kula. For example, Makkas Bechoros which was not just the death of members of the enemy nation, no. It was a Havchana, it was a time that B'nei Bechori Yisrael, G-d calls the Jewish people His Bechor, and there was a clear separation forever, a clarity that Klal Yisrael and the nations of the world are different. That clarity came out with Makkas Bechoros. It was a Davar Klali, it was a miracle in a way of Hivdalti Eschem Li. It created the idea of a Havdala, of a separating of Klal Yisrael from the nations of the world.

Krias Yam Suf was also a miracle B'ofen Klali, it was a statement. All the waters of the world split. It was a statement of the individual status of Klal Yisrael. So we find Pinchas Ben Yair that the Gemara in Chulin 7a brings that he split water, but it is not Krias Yam Suf. That is a Neis in the first type, Nissim L'tzorech Ha'rega, but on a much higher level are the miracles that HKB"Y performed through Moshe Rabbeinu which were Nissim Ha'poalim B'briya Kula. The miracle of the water coming from the stone by speaking should have been a miracle B'ofen Ha'poalim B'briya Kula, should have been a Mussar that in the Briya there is a Koach Haddibur, there is a Koach of listening to the words of the Navi and having that influence and being Poel through that. There is a certain Koach, there is a certain influence that would have happened in the world. Moshe Rabbeinu hit the rock. There are things that happened because of Dibbur Hashem and things that happened because of Gevuras Hashem. This should have happened because of Dibbur Hashem. It would have been Poel in the Koach of G-d's word to influence the Jewish people. Instead it was Poel in a lesser way. In the power of the Gevura, in the hitting to influence. It is not the same. It was a major difference between the two and that major difference between the way HKB"Y said it should be done and the way that it actually took place, that major difference is the failing of the Mai Miriva, whatever it is that happened there.

3 – Topic – A Thought on the Siyum of Masechta Yevamos of the Daf Yomi

I would like to pause and comment about the fact that Daf Yomi is finishing Masheches Yevamos. Jews all over, hundreds, thousands of Jews are finishing a very difficult study of Mascheta Yevamos to which Jews have been devoted with I guess different levels of success and Mesiras Nefesh. It is not easy to make a Siyum on Yevamos.

My birthday just passed and I am a bit philosophical. If you will allow me a thought as an outsider, I am not learning Daf Yomi, as someone observing that which is taking place. When I was born just a decade or so after the Holocaust, the Yiddishe Velt, the Am Yisroel was in tatters, was destroyed. Baranovich didn't exist. Rav Elchonon went to the gas chambers. Telz didn't exist. Mir didn't exist. Salbodka didn't exist. There was nothing. Krakow and Bobove Chassidus was gone. The Yidden in Vilna were no more. Yidden in every one of the Jewish cities in Warsaw, Alexander Chassidim, Gerrers Chassidim was gone. Everything was gone.

My father went back to his hometown and turned around and left, there was nothing there. There was nothing Jewish there. All the places that were Jewish places were gone. Klal Yisrael is here. It is incredible. Here we are from the day I was born until today, and Klal Yisrael has rebuilt itself. It is incredible. I walk past the Yeshiva schoolyard, I see Yiddishe Kinder, children with their Tzitzis flying, with their Yarmulkas and they are Shomer Torah U'mitzvos as a Pashtus. They go and sit and learn for hours every day. Here we have working people devoted to learning Yevamos. It is a miracle, it is an incredible thing. The whole Yiddishe Folk whatever existed 100 years ago no longer existed. There was nothing there. Nothing from before still existed afterwards. There was nothing in America. Eretz Yisrael had just tens of thousands of Jews. Everything was destroyed and Klal Yisrael is celebrating a Siyum on Yevamos. The length and breadth of the Torah world, every Shul has people finishing Yevamos. It is an incredible accomplishment.

You have to stop and pause for a minute. Some learned Yevamos like someone who sees something without his glasses, without a good focus. Some learned Yevamos with a better focus. Some made it through every Blatt. Some struggled through many Blatt. But Yidden are Huruvung on Yevamos.

Here in camp I sit and I look out the window and I see Yiddishe Kinder, Jewish children. 1,000 Nefashos here all running to Shacharis. Some come late, some come early, some come on time, some oversleep. But there are hundreds in the Beis Medrash. There are a number of Batei Medrashim. They are Davening to the Ribbono Shel Olam. After such a Churban, that Klal Yisrael is here, we are here in full force. We have suffered a lot, we lost many. We lost millions in the Holocaust and we lost many millions more to assimilation. Klal Yisrael is here. (רעות רבות, וצרות). (וענתה השירה הזאת). (והיה כי-תמצאן אתו רעות רבות, וצרות). Devarim 31:21. That is the last century. (כי לא תשכח מפי ורעו). The Torah speaks up (כי לא תשכח מפי ורעו). The Posuk says at the end of Vayeilech. The Torah speaks up (כי לא תשכח מפי ורעו). It will not be forgotten. Just incredible that so many of you are finishing Masechtas Yevamos, getting ready to start Masechtas Kesubos with a devotion, with a dedication. People who work, people who are in businesses, people who spend many hours on Parnasa. Stop for a minute and think of where HKB"H has brought us. It is an absolutely incredible moment.

May HKB"H give us the strength we should be able to be Sovel. We have problems in America today, I don't know what is going to be. But one thing I know, Klal Yisrael will continue. The Nitzchios of Klal Yisrael, the Nitzchios of Lomdei Torah will continue. What will happen to those around us? They become lost, they are lost and they don't come back. The Habsburg empire who ever heard of it? The Ottoman empire who ever heard of it? Today's generation doesn't know that they ever existed. There were Czars and they are gone forever. Klal Yisrael pushes on. May we be Zoche to appreciate the wonderful opportunities that HKB"H gives us and the Beracha that Klal Yisrael has. (כי לא תשכח מפי ורעו). We should be Zoche to have children, grandchildren and great grandchildren learning Torah B'simcha Rabba. Let's celebrate with the Tefillah. (כי לא תשכח מפי ורעו). (והעבר נא ר' אליהינו את דברי תורתך בפנינו ובפניות עמך בית ישראל). Mazal Tov to all the Mesayemim of Masechtas Yevamos. May you continue with your strength be part of this beautiful rebirth of Klal Yisrael. A Gutten Shabbos one and all!

Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Chukas 5782

1 – Topic – A Thought on Parah Adumah

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas. I would like today to suggest a possible explanation in Rashi back in Parshas Beshalach 15:25 on the Posuk (שָׁם שָׁם לֹא חָק וּמִשְׁפָּט) that (בְּמֵרָה נָתַן לָהֶם מִקְצֵת פְּרִשְׁיּוֹת שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שִׁיתַּעֲסֻקוּ) (בהם, שבת ופרה אדומה ודינין) and the question is what Parah Adumah is doing in Parshas Beshalach at Marah and there are numerous questions.

Let's turn to Parshas Chukas which of course begins with the Parah Adumah. When was the very first Parah Adumah brought and who were the very first people made Tahor with the Parah Adumah? As a Levi I am proud to say that Leviim were the first and let me explain.

The Gemara says in Gittin on 60a (second to bottom line) (שמנה פרשיות נאמרו ביום שהוקם בו המשכן). There are eight Parshios told to the Jewish people on the day that the Mishkan was put up, meaning Rosh Chodesh Nissan, and one of them is the Parsha of Parah Adumah. Rashi there (Daf Samech Amud Beis) says (לפי שביום המחרת נשרפה) (הפרה). Rashi says that these eight Parshios were on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and on Beis Nissan the first Parah Adumah was burned (וקודם לכן לא יכלו לעשותה). Rashi says that the Parah could not have been earlier (דבעינן והוה), because you have to be able to Shpritz and face towards the Ohel Moed and there was no Ohel Moed until the Mishkan was put up.

As an aside, I don't know why they could not do it in the previous days, in the days when Moshe Rabbeinu set up the Ohel Moed, but there must be a reason. Coming back to our discussion.

Here we are talking about what Rashi said and there is a similar Rashi in Parshas Naso 7:1 (וראש חדש ניסן היה, (בשני נשרפה הפרה). On the second day of Nissan the Parah was burned. When were the first people made Tahor with it? (בשלישי) On the third day of Nissan. Rashi says (הזו הויה ראשונה) was the first time that there were people made Tahor with the Parah Adumah and that is in being Metaheir Sheivet Levi. So that is the timeline of the Parah Adumah. Rosh Chodesh Nissan they were taught, Beis Nissan they actually went through the process of burning the Parah Adumah, and on Gimmel Nissan the first people were made Tahor in preparation for the Avodah in the Mishkan.

The question is if on Rosh Chodesh Nissan they were taught the Parah Adumah what in the world happened in Marah which occurred in Nissan a year earlier. What is going on? So I would imagine the following might be the answer. The Parah Adumah is a Parah, a calf. A Parah Adumah you will find because you will find a red cow. HKB"Y will make it there. However, why would the owner of the cow not work with the Parah? As it says in 19:2 (אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עֲלָה עָלָיָהּ, עֹל). Why would he never put a yoke on it, it is an animal? It may well be that it is true that the Parsha of Parah Adumah and all the details were said on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. It is not a contradiction that at Marah they had to be told that there are coming attractions. You are going to get a Mitzvah of Parah Adumah, to whoever in Klal Yisrael has the Zechus that he has a cow and its hairs are all red, he should make sure to treat it with the proper Kedusha that when the time comes you will have a Parah Adumah.

2 – Topic - A Thought about Mai Miriva

The second major event in the Parsha is the Mei Miriva and Meforshim discuss the idea of what Moshe Rabbeinu's Aveira was exactly, as it is very difficult to put your finger on it and different Meforshim have different explanations. I am not going into what the Aveira was but the whole Musag, the whole idea that there is a major difference if a stone gives water whether you talk to it or whether you hit it, Mai Nafka Mina? Is one really a bigger miracle than the other? You hit a rock, you talk to a rock, same miracle. It is just as miraculous. Therefore, it needs some sort of explanation what is the difference.

In the Pachad Yitzchok on Pesach, Maimar Mem (page Kuf Yud Ches), he has an explanation with a Biur Klali, with a general rule. He says the following. There are two types of Nissim, two types of miracles. Sometimes a miracle takes place because at that moment the result of the miracle is needed. For example, Rav Chanina Ben Dosa miraculously said (Taanis 25a) (מי שאמר לשמן וידלוק הוא יאמר לחומץ וידלוק). He said, that G-d can make that vinegar could burn just like oil could burn. It was a miracle for what was needed at that moment.

There are other types of miracles. There are some miracles that are in an Ofen Klali, that they are statements for the Briya Kula. For example, Makkas Bechoros which was not just the death of members of the enemy nation, no. It was a Havchana, it was a time that B'ni Bechori Yisrael, G-d calls the Jewish people His Bechor, and there was a clear separation forever, a clarity that Klal Yisrael and the nations of the world are different. That clarity came out with Makkas Bechoros. It was a Davar Klali, it was a miracle in a way of Hivdalti Eschem Li. It created the idea of a Havdala, of a separating of Klal Yisrael from the nations of the world.

Krias Yam Suf was also a miracle B'ofen Klali, it was a statement. All the waters of the world split. It was a statement of the individual status of Klal Yisrael. So we find Pinchas Ben Yair that the Gemara in Chulin 7a brings that he split water, but it is not Krias Yam Suf. That is a Neis in the first type, Nissim L'tzorech Ha'rega, but on a much higher level are the miracles that HKB"H performed through Moshe Rabbeinu which were Nissim Ha'poalim B'briya Kula. The miracle of the water coming from the stone by speaking should have been a miracle B'ofen Ha'poalim B'briya Kula, should have been a Mussar that in the Briya there is a Koach Haddibur, there is a Koach of listening to the words of the Navi and having that influence and being Poel through that. There is a certain Koach, there is a certain influence that would have happened in the world. Moshe Rabbeinu hit the rock. There are things that happened because of Dibbur Hashem and things that happened because of Gevuras Hashem. This should have happened because of Dibbur Hashem. It would have been Poel in the Koach of G-d's word to influence the Jewish people. Instead it was Poel in a lesser way. In the power of the Gevura, in the hitting to influence. It is not the same. It was a major difference between the two and that major difference between the way HKB"H said it should be done and the way that it actually took place, that major difference is the failing of the Mai Miriva, whatever it is that happened there.

3 – Topic – A Thought on the Siyum of Masechta Yevamos of the Daf Yomi

I would like to pause and comment about the fact that Daf Yomi is finishing Masheches Yevamos. Jews all over, hundreds, thousands of Jews are finishing a very difficult study of Mascheta Yevamos to which Jews have been devoted with I guess different levels of success and Mesiras Nefesh. It is not easy to make a Siyum on Yevamos.

My birthday just passed and I am a bit philosophical. If you will allow me a thought as an outsider, I am not learning Daf Yomi, as someone observing that which is taking place. When I was born just a decade or so after the Holocaust, the Yiddishe Velt, the Am Yisroel was in tatters, was destroyed. Baranovich didn't exist. Rav Elchonon went to the gas chambers. Telz didn't exist. Mir didn't exist. Salbodka didn't exist. There was nothing. Krakow and Bobove Chassidus was gone. The Yidden in Vilna were no more. Yidden in every one of the Jewish cities in Warsaw, Alexander Chassidim, Gerrer Chassidim was gone. Everything was gone.

My father went back to his hometown and turned around and left, there was nothing there. There was nothing Jewish there. All the places that were Jewish places were gone. Klal Yisrael is here. It is incredible. Here we are from the day I was born until today, and Klal Yisrael has rebuilt itself. It is incredible. I walk past the Yeshiva schoolyard, I see Yiddishe Kinder, children with their Tzitzis flying, with their Yarmulkas and they are Shomer Torah U'mitzvos as a Pashtus. They go and sit and learn for hours every day. Here we have working people devoted to learning Yevamos. It is a miracle, it is an incredible thing. The whole Yiddishe Folk whatever existed 100 years ago no longer existed. There was nothing there. Nothing from before still existed afterwards. There was nothing in America. Eretz Yisrael had just tens of thousands of Jews. Everything was destroyed and Klal Yisrael is celebrating a Siyum on Yevamos. The length and breadth of the Torah world, every Shul has people finishing Yevamos. It is an incredible accomplishment.

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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 Pisron, 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 Ohev Yisrael. The Ohev 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 Chukas 5779

1 - Topic - A thought on the Parah Adumah.

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas, a Parsha that has many episodes of Klal Yisrael in the Midbar. It jumps 38 years from the beginning of the Parsha by the Parah Aduma to the rest of the Parsha which is 38 years later, the rest of the Sippur of Klal Yisrael in the Midbar.

Let's start from the beginning of the Parsha and the Parah Aduma where it says as is found in 19:3 (וַיִּתְּנֵם אֱתָהּ, אֶל-אֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן; וְהוֹצִיא אֹתָהּ אֶל-מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה, וְשָׁחַט אֹתָהּ לְפָנָיו). Where he is told to Shecht the Parah Aduma and there is a Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel who says (ויבדקינה בתמניסרי טריפן), that he had to do a Bedika for the different types of Treifos that might be found in an animal. It is a Pliya as the Gemara in Chullin 11a (9 lines from the bottom) says that we go Basar Rov and we don't check the Parah Aduma because we assume that most B'heimos are not Treifos.

Yonasan Ben Uziel is a Tanna and he can conceivably argue and say that we do check. However, the Gemara says that there is a Drasha of (וּשְׁחַט וְשָׂרֵף מִה שְׁחִיטָתָהּ כְּשֶׁהִיא שְׁלֵמָה אֶף שְׂרִיפָתָהּ כְּשֶׁהִיא שְׁלֵמָה). That just like the Shechita of the Parah Aduma is when it is whole, the same thing that the S'reifa is when it is whole and it is not Muttar to cut it up. It needs something of an explanation.

The Har Tzvi in the Teshuvos of Yor'e Dai'a Teshuva Mem Hei says that this can be understood along the lines of the Darkei Moshe in Yor'e Dai'a Siman Lamed Hei which I mentioned in a previous Shiur. The Darkei Moshe there brings from Rav Yehuda Hachasid, a Siman to test an animal for Treifos is to put your hands on the head of the animal and press down on the animal. The Siman is that if when you push down on the animal it lowers its head and it succumbs to your pressure, that is a sign that the B'heima is Kosher. If the animal stiffens up and pushes back, that is a sign that the animal is Treif. The Siman the Rama brings is as is found in Tehillim 51:19 (לֵב-נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְפָּה-- אֲלֵרִים, לֹא תִבְזֶה). That a broken heart Hashem is not Mevazeh. In other words, someone who lowers himself is a Kosher.

Therefore, it may well be that they Takeh did not cut up the animal and what Yonasan Ben Uziel says is that they did this type of a Bedika that they pressed down on the animal to see if it resisted the pressure or succumbed to the pressure to know if the animal was Treif or not. A beautiful idea, a beautiful Yesod.

But one minute, you are going to ask me if so let's get back to the Gemara that says that you know that you go Basar Rov because we have a right to assume that a Parah Aduma is Kosher. But according to the Darkei Moshe how can you learn Rov, maybe they did this Bedikah by pressing their hand down on the head of the animal?

The answer would be that it is not a Kasha. The world of Halacha works with Halacha and does not work with Inyanei Seguli, it does not work with these types of tricks. The world of Halacha is built on the physical world. It is not a Kasha because it could be that the Kohen Gadol did this type of a Bedika to ascertain, to know whether the animal was a Treifa, but it has nothing to do with Halacha.

I remember that I once asked Rav Pam a Kasha. It says in Shulchan Aruch that a person should not give more than a fifth of his income for Tzedaka because maybe he will become poor and he will have to rely on the Tzibbur.

I asked Rav Pam, but the Gemara says in Bava Basra 10a (23 lines from the top) that (דרש ר"י ברבי שלום כשם) (שמזונותיו של אדם קצובין לו מראש השנה כך חסרונותיו של אדם קצובין לו מראש השנה). Just like your income is set from Rosh Hashana to Rosh Hashana so too your expenses and when you spend money on Tzedaka you won't have to spend it on other financial losses. If so, how would a person become poor if he gave more than a Chomesh of his Nechasim to Tzedaka if it will come off of his expenses?

Rav Pam answered that Halacha doesn't work with Devarim Seguli. Halacha works with physical facts. Mimeila everything is good. In the Bais Hamikdash the Kohen Gadol who was a Kadosh V'tahor did a Davar Seguli, however, Halacha relies on Rov.

2 - Topic - The importance of having a connection with HKB"H and the end of your days.

Let us move now to the end of the Parsha. Towards the end of the Parsha in 20:3 Klal Yisrael complains and says (ולו גִּוְעַנּוּ בְּגֹנֶעַ אֶחָיו). Halevai we would have died together with our brothers Lifnei Hashem. A Davar Pele!

Rashi says (במיתת אחינו בדבר, למד שמיתת צמא מגונה ממנה). What do you mean that they should have died earlier, they lived all of these extra years. Rashi says no. They said dying from thirst is the worst. It would have been Kedai to die years earlier and not to die from this terrible thirst.

The Gemara says in Bava Basra 8b (14 lines from the top) (טובים היו חללי חרב מחללי רעב). That it is better to die normally than to die at the end of a sword. It is better to die at the end of a sword than from hunger.

The Gemara in Berachos 8a (28 lines from the top) goes through different types of deaths which are better and which are worse. All of these Gemaras disturb me. What is the message? A person doesn't choose how to die. What is the message in these ideas?

Rav Schwab in Parshas Beshalach 16:3 (page 173) says a wonderful and an important insight. Rav Schwab says that the ideal would be if a person when it is time for him to leave this world should have the presence of mind, the calmness to connect to HKB"H. After all, this world is a Prozdor, it is a preparation room, the Traklin to prepare for the Yeshiva Shel Maila. How a person goes out of the world is extremely important.

Zagt Rav Schwab, (שמיתת צמא מגונה ממנה). When a person dies because he didn't have what to drink, it is a painful death. It is a death that doesn't allow a person the presence of mind to connect to HKB"H at the time that he dies. The point here being, that the idea of something being a better death or a worse death has to do with at the time of death being able to connect to HKB"H. It is an important message. The message is that you should know that everything depends on how well you connect to HKB"H.

The Gemara says in Berachos 8a (23 lines from the top) (על זאת יתפלל כל חסיד אליך לעת מצא) which is found in Tehillim 32:6. A Chossid should Daven for this (לְעֵת מָצָא). (רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר לעת מצא זו מיתה). A person should Daven that when the Yom Hamisa comes that it should be as Rashi says (שימות במיתה יפה ונחה). How a person leaves the world is so important.

Rav Schwab says that this is the message of this. I was thinking, that we say in our Tefilla when we enter the Sukkah, we have a strange Bakasha. (ותתן לי זכות לשבת ולחסות בסתר צל כנפך - בעת פטירתי מן העולם). Give me the Zechus to be sitting and resting under your protective wings when I leave the world.

The Kasha is that when you Daven, you should Daven that when you die you should be Zoche to this? You should Daven that when you live you should be Zoche to this! The answer is no, we Daven that at the time when we leave the world we should have the Zechus, the presence of mind to connect to HKB"H.

It is fascinating that right before that part of (ותתן לי זכות), it says (ולרעבים גם צמאים תן לחמם ומימם הנאמנים). We Daven that Hashem should give food and drink to people that are starving and are thirsty. According to Rav Schwab there is an important connection.

The importance of all this is that sometimes we are connected to people, people that we love that are dying, they are on the way out. It is very painful to watch. What we need to do as those who are well is to help them and be able to help them put on Tefillin those last days if they have presence of mind. (Putting Tefillin on someone in a coma is not a Mitzvah at all). But if someone has some presence of mind, to put on Tefillin on the person. Or to say Shema, to make a Beracha with the person or talk to the person about Emunah. So that when a person is Zoche to leave this world, he should leave the world in a way that (לשבת ולחסות בסתר צל כנפיד - בעת פטירתו מן) (העולם). A very important message.

3 - Topic - A question for the week.

I want to leave you with a Kasha that I have asked many people and certainly needs an explanation. We say as is found in the Gemara in Masseches Chullin 7b (18 lines from the bottom) (גדולים צדיקים במיתתן יותר מבהייתן). That Tzadikim when they die are greater than when they live. You hear sometimes at Levayas that people say a Tzaddik is greater when he dies, let him be Po'el Zechusim in heaven on our behalf. Yet when Miriam dies, the B'air ends. It seems to be the influence of her Zechusim wanes, it doesn't increase. When Aharon dies the Ananei Hakavod leaves. When Moshe dies the Man comes to an end.

It seems on the contrary that when they are here in this world, the Zechusim carry. Like we know that when a Tzaddik leaves a city the Zechusim are less. So maybe a Tzaddik for himself has more Zechusim, but to say that he is Po'el Yeshuos more does not seem to be accurate. A question which certainly needs an explanation. Nu! It is good to have Kashas once in a while, it makes for an interesting Seuda.

Wishing one and all a wonderful, meaningful summer vacation. A vacation from many of the other Tir'dos, and working harder on your learning and a meaningful Shabbos Parshas Chukas. A Guttan Shabbos to all!

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas 5778

1 - Topic - A New Havana in the Cheit Mei Miriva from the Netziv.

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Chukas an extraordinary Parsha with many Mitzvos and the Petira of both Aharon Hakohen and Miriam. I would like to share with you today a new Havana in the Cheit Mei Miriva. As you know, Rishonim bring many Peshatim in what Moshe Rabbeinu did wrong in the Maisheh Mei Miriva and the basic Pshat that the Velt knows is the Pshat of Rashi. Rashi says that Moshe Rabbeinu struck the stone instead of speaking to the stone. It seems at face value to be a very elementary mistake and the Onesh of the Cheit is not very understood.

The Netziv says a Gevaldige Pshat here in the Hameik Davar (on page Reish Lamed). He ties it in to what he calls a Hakdama in an Ikkur Gadol B'tefilla, of a big rule when it comes to Davening and he says the following Klal Gadol. We will get back to Mei Miriva after we understand this Klal.

Zagt the Netziv (אפילו בזמן שרוצה הקב"ה תפילה גורמת). Even when HKB"H plans to give you something, Tefilla expedites that it will take place. Kach Nitveh B'briya. This is what HKB"H put into the world. He put into the Teva of the Briya that even if you are supposed to get something and Hashem wants to give it to you, there are times that it will only come your way if you Daven. The Raya is a beautiful Raya from Eliyahu Hanavi.

When Eliyahu Hanavi declared a drought on the ten Shevatim, the drought continued for a while and then the Ribbono Shel Olam came and said to him (הראה אל אחאב ואתנה מטר). Genukt, the drought is over. I am going to make it rain. You go to Achav and do whatever you can to help give Mussar to Klal Yisrael because the Ribbono Shel Olam said I had enough, no more drought. Eliyahu goes to Har Hacarmel and does what he does at Har Hacarmel to show that the Aish came from Shamayim and then at the end he Davens and rain comes. The question is why does he have to Daven as HKB"H said that it is time to give rain?

Zagt the Netziv, there are two types of Davening. Bish'as Tzara, when in Shamayim we have no Zechusim, that is one type of Davening. Davening can turn it around. There is a second type of Davening and that is when the Ribbono Shel Olam is ready to give to you, but HKB"H says come pick it up, come here and ask for it, I am ready. Tefilla then makes it happen.

Zagt the Netziv, in a case when the Ribbono Shel Olam is ready to give, there is no difference between the Tefilla of the Gadol Hador and the Tefilla of an ordinary person. When Hashem is ready to give it, all you have to do is come pick it up. Bish'as Tzarah, then you need the Tefilla of an Adam Gadol to be Mehapeich.

The Yesod is that Hashem put into the Briya that Davening makes things happen. Zagt the Netziv, look what I wrote in Beraishis in 2:5. So I looked. (וְכָל שֵׂיט הַשָּׂדֶה) the things that grow in the field are referred to as (שֵׂיט) (אֵין שִׂיחָה אֵלָא תַפְלָה). Literally, it means the things that grow in the field. But (שֵׂיט) also means Davening. (אֵין שִׂיחָה אֵלָא תַפְלָה) it says in Maseches Avoda Zorah 7b (9 lines from the bottom). A field is Parnasa. What grows in a field is called (שֵׂיט הַשָּׂדֶה). It comes because of Tefilla. It comes because of Davening. Kach Nitveh HKB"H. Hashem put it that way into the Briya.

He says more. Davening is called Avodah. Korbanos are called Avodah. Working in a field is called Avodah. Making Parnasa happen comes through Avodah. B'derech Hateva working in a field, but Min Hashamayim if you put in your Davening and your Kavanos you can make it come, you can make it happen. That is why it is called Avodah. The same exact thing.

Elsewhere I remember the Netziv says that even when Klal Yisrael behaved in Eretz Yisrael there were Bamos. How can it be that a king like Chizkiya can make everybody do Teshuva but he couldn't get rid of the Bamos? Zagt the Netziv, because that is Avodah. A Segula for Parnasa he couldn't get the people to stop.

At any rate, this is the Yesod Gadol. The Yesod Gadol is that Tefilla is Po'el Parnasa, it brings Beracha. When you deserve it, you will find out someday that all you have to do is ask for it. You have Tzar that you don't have a Shidduch, you have Tzar that you don't have Parnasa, you have Tzar that you don't have something else that you want, why didn't you ask? Just ask. That is Tefilla. Ad Kan the Yesod of the Netziv.

Zagt the Netziv, what was the Aveira of the Mei Miriva, you hit the stone, you talk to the stone, ok. No! The Ribbono Shel Olam said Klal Yisrael lived B'derech Neis. The first time that water had to come from the stone, Moshe hit the stone and the water came. No more. Klal Yisrael is going into Eretz Yisrael the Ananei Hakavod are no more. Klal Yisrael has to learn that they are going into a world of Teva. In this world Davening is Po'el. They may think that Davening is only Po'el B'derech Neis. No! Davening is Po'el B'derech Teva.

Moshe Rabbeinu, it is a new Tekufa in Klal Yisrael. Talk to the stone. What do you mean talk to the stone? Daven that the water should come from the stone and then it will come. Moshe Rabbeinu made a mistake. He didn't teach Klal Yisrael. There was a P'gam in his Avodah as the Rebbe of Klal Yisrael and for that reason he lost his Shtella so to speak as the Rebbe of Klal Yisrael. What a beautiful Pshat in the Cheit Mei Miriva. Not a new Cheit, not a new explanation, but a Pshat in Rashi about the difference between talking to the stone and hitting the stone.

2 - Topic - A thought from Rav Matisyahu Salomon on how to deal with feeling stressed out and overwhelmed.

Let's move on to a second thought on the Parshas in 21:4 & 21:5. The Posuk that Klal Yisrael in the Midbar after Aharon's Histalkus and the terrible experience of the Ananei Hakavod going away, they came to a point of (וַתִּקְצַר) (נֶפֶשׁ-הָעָם, בְּדֶרֶךְ). There is an extraordinary Rashi that I want to speak out. Rashi says what does it mean (וַתִּקְצַר) (נֶפֶשׁ)? There is a certain time when people are overwhelmed and it is called (וַתִּקְצַר נֶפֶשׁ). What does that mean? Klal Yisrael was overwhelmed. (וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, מִקְצַר רוּחַ, וּמַעֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה) which is a Posuk in Va'era 6:9. What is (קָצַר רוּחַ)? (וּנְפֹשׁוֹ קָצָה, בְּלֶחֶם הַקֶּלֶקֶל) What does it mean?

Rashi has an unusual Arichus and says a Pshat that given the limited time I have, I will go straight to the Po'el Yotzei. This is a Yesod that I saw B'sheim Rav Matisyahu Salomon who should be Gezunt in the journal Kol Torah volume Samech. This is from 2004 I believe but an extraordinary Pshat. Halacha L'mayseh, very often people are overwhelmed, people are stressed out, people come to a situation which is very hard and it causes them pain. There are two possible reasons for that.

L'mashal, if someone takes a heavy burden, a heavy package and can't carry it. Er Ken Nisht. Why can't he? It may be that the package is just too heavy and he undertook too much. It is too Shver for him and he has to put it down. Sometimes it is not because the package is too heavy, it is because he is not holding it right, it is because he is not walking right. He doesn't have the right equipment for moving it. Sometimes the Chisaron is in the package, it is too big. Sometimes the Chisaron is in the carrier. You are just not doing it right.

When you feel overwhelmed and stressed. Take a good look. Sometimes it is Gadol, it is too big. But sometimes it is (תקצר נפשו) Tiktzar Nafsho. The Chisaron is in you. You are too short, you are too incomplete. Fix yourself and you will see that you will get fixed. There are times that you are challenged and you think that you just can't. Tiktzar Nafsho. There are times that you are just unrealistic in the way that you approach something, you have to step back and see if it is too hard.

The language Rashi uses in describing the Middah of Tiktzar Nafsho. An incredible Lashon. He says (וכל דבר ואין דעתו רחבה) (הקשה על אדם נופל בו לשון קצור נפש, כאדם שהטורח בא עליו). Someone who finds himself overwhelmed (ואין לו מקום בתוך לבו לגור שם אותו). The Chisaron is in his own mind. His mind is not open to it. (לקבל אותו הדבר). His heart is not prepared for the challenge, for the difficulty. Sometimes you have to look inward, don't look at others to fix it. Look at yourself. Get the right equipment for the challenge. What is the equipment? Zagt Rav Matisyahu, Moshe Rabbeinu made a (נחש נחשט), he taught the people as it says in Rashi to 21:8 (וכי נחש (ממית או מחיה, אלא בזמן ישראל מסתכלין כלפי מעלה). When life gets overwhelming and you are stressed, be Mistakeil Klapei Mai'la. Put G-d into the equation.

If you are stuck in a traffic jam and you have to be somewhere and who knows what will happen if you are not there, stop for a moment and take a deep breath and think about the Ribbono Shel Olam. HKB"H is there and he is taking care of you. How it will work, where it will work, when it will work, we will see. Stop for a moment in the many different traffic jams of life and be Mistakeil Klapei Mai'la. You will see the Tiktzar Nafsho will become a Rachov Nefesh. The Katzor Leiv will become a wider heart. R'uin Hadevarim Mimi'she'amram, Rav Mattisyahu who understands a Ben Torah, who understands Yungelicht. Understand that sometimes you have to stop and broaden your heart, open your horizons and put the Ribbono Shel Olam into the equation. Gevaldig! With this I want to wish everyone an absolutely wonderful Shabbos Kodesh!

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 (מִה־טֹבוֹ אֶהְיֶה, יְעֻקֵּב; מִשְׁכְּנֵיהֶם, יִשְׂרָאֵל) certainly the best known of all of the words of the Parsha. The Gemara says in Maseches 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). From the blessing that the Rasha gave it is noticeable what his Kavana was to curse.

The Gemara says the following. That when he said (מִה־טֹבוֹ אֶהְיֶה, יְעֻקֵּב) 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-אֶדָם). Constantly throughout the entire Sefer Yechezkel starting from Perek Beis and on, Yechezkel is referred to as (בן-אֶדָם). The only Navi with that title. Why? Rashi in the beginning of Perel Beis of Yechezkel gives us two Peshatim. One is that (בן-אֶדָם) 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 בכמ) I love the Jewish people. (שאפילו בשעה שאני משפיע לכם גדולה), even at a time that I give you greatness, (אתם ממעטין עצמכם), you realize that you are at a low level before me. (נתי גדולה לאברהם) I gave Avraham greatness, (אמר לפני), (אמר ונחנו מה), I gave greatness to Moshe and Aaron, (ואנכי עפר ואפר) he said what am I. (למשה ואהרן) I gave greatness to Moshe and Aaron, (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 נתי גדולה לנמרוד), Nimrod had the ability to have greatness. (אמר), (לסנחריב אמר מי בכל אלהי הארצות). (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 Eiruv. 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) (בהק) 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-נֹהֵב בְּסוּפָה). The Gemara in Maseches Kiddushin 30b (8 lines from the top) Darshuns that even a father and a son or a Rebbe and a Talmid who are learning Torah together (אָמַר רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבָא אֲפִי' הָאֵב וּבְנֵי הָרַב וּתְלִמִּידוֹ שְׁעוֹסְקִין בַּתּוֹרָה בְּשַׁעַר אֶחָד נַעֲשִׂים אוֹיְבִים זֶה זֶה) they become enemies. (וְאֵינָם זֵדִים מִשָּׁם עַד שֶׁנַּעֲשִׂים אוֹהֲבִים זֶה אֶת זֶה) and at the end they become friends, they love each other. 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 (כָּל מַחְלֻקַּת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם, סוּפָה לְהַתְקִיִּים; וְשֶׁאִינָהּ לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם, אֵין סוּפָה לְהַתְקִיִּים). 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 Chassidishe 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 Chukas 5776

1. Let me begin first with the first words of the Parsha. In the beginning of the Parsha we have an expression which we find in only one other place in the Chamisha Chumshei Torah. That is the expression that can be found in 19:2 (זאת חקת התורה, אשר-צנה ירנר). The words (זאת חקת התורה, אשר-צנה ירנר) we will find soon in Parshas Mattos 31:21 as well. So it is found twice, once here and once there. There it is talking about Kashering Keilim. Taking Keilim that were from a Treife kitchen, from Midyon and Kashering it. Here we are talking about Taharah, going into a Mikvah and becoming Tahor.

What is the similarity? Rav Shamshon Refael Hirsch says in his Pirush here on the Chumash, that they are very similar. Just like you know that when you have Treifos in your Keilim you would never want to have from that Keili, a Yid would certainly not want to have any connection to it, of Treifos in his food, never. So a person wants to get rid of it. The same thing is true about Ruchniyos as well. When there is Tumah, when there is something Tamei involved, a person has got to try to get rid of it. (זאת חקת התורה, אשר-צנה ירנר) in this week's Parsha it refers to getting rid of Tumah. We have to think of it just like something that is physically dangerous. Well Treifos is dangerous spiritually but it is a physical thing, the same thing is the way you should think about Tumah, something which is actually very dangerous and a person has to go to the Mikvah even though he doesn't taste it and he doesn't see it.

We have a similar idea in Parshas Ki Seitzei. In Parshas Ki Seitzei 22:8 we are told to build a (מעקה) Ma'keh. To build a wall against a high roof (כי-יפל הנפל ממנו). Because of the danger of (יפל הנפל ממנו) somebody will fall if you don't have a (מעקה). Immediately thereafter we have the Mitzvah of (כלאים). That a person should not plant seeds in the same place that he plants a vineyard. 22:9 (פן-תקדש, המלאה הנרע אשר תורע). It says the word (פן) because maybe a danger will happen and the seeds that grow will become Treif. The same exact Lashon one after the other. Why? Because just like you know that if you have a roof it is very dangerous to leave a roof where G-d forbid a person could fall, the same thing with Kilayim that you have to think about it as something very dangerous even though it is not something that you can see.

If you look at Parshas Ki Seitzei it says many Mitzvos, there is a separate Parsha separation between every Mitzvah. Except right after Shlishi where it has the Mitzvah of (מעקה) and then the Mitzvah Kilayim of the Kerem (פן-תקדש, המלאה הנרע אשר תורע). One follows the other to tell you compare them. That is the lesson that Rav Shamshon Refael Hirsch is making here in the Parsha, compare them and be afraid of Tumah.

Now why did I start by saying that there is some L'mayseh in it as today we don't have Parah Adumah? Still the right thing is that when a person is Tamei, when a man has a Tumah of Baal Keri, he should be careful to go to the Mikvah preferably before Davening the next day, certainly before putting on Tefillin the next day. In our world it has become something that Chassidim do, they go to the Mikvah. In the Yeshiva world it is not adequately something that we are careful about. We should be afraid of Tumah. We should be afraid of it. It is something that inhibits our growth in Ruchniyos and a person should be Zahir in it. Gedolei Yisroel even in the Litvishe world, Rav Moshe, Rav Pam they were very careful being Tovel Tevilas Ezra and it is something which a person should try to do. Be Mekabeil it with a Bli Neder, but be Mekabeil it.

2. I said that my first Vort will be on the beginning of the Parsha but it really wasn't. The Vort that I told you now was on (זאת חקת התורה) which is the second Posuk in the Parsha. Let me tell you a Vort on the first Posuk in the Parsha. That is 19:1 (וידבר ירנר, אל-משה ואל-אהרן לאמר). We find in the Toras Kohanim that there are 13 places in the Torah where it says (וידבר) or (ויאמר) - (ירנר, אל-משה ואל-אהרן) - (ויאמר). Three are in this week's Parsha. The first Posuk, which is 19:1, 20:12, 20:23. Says the Toras Kohanim there are also 13 Mi'utim to tell you that Aharon did not actually receive these Nevuos from the Ribbono Shel Olam. Aharon heard it from Moshe Rabbeinu. But Meshum Kevodo, the Mitzvos were given to Moshe and Aharon in these 13 places as if to say Moshe tell it directly to Aharon, he should receive it directly. So 13 Nevuos but in the 13 they weren't really said to Aharon from Hashem.

In the Haksav V'hakabala (Harav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg 1785 - 1865) at the beginning of this week's Parsha he has another Kasha. He says 13 places, there are 18 places where it says that Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon. Three are in this week's Parsha 19:1, 20:12, 20:23. The others are Shemos 6:13, 7:8, 9:8, 12:1, 12:43. Vayikra 11:1, 13:1, 13:33 (Ed. Note - I couldn't find this reference), 15:1. Bamidbar 2:1, 4:1, 4:17, 12:4, 14:26, 16:20. So there are 18. What in the world is going on, the Medrash says that there are 13?

3. As you know, we have the Mei Meriva, there is no water for the people as it says in 20:2 (וְלֹא-הָיָה מַיִם, לָעֵדָה). They come and they complain to Moshe and Aharon as it says in 20:4 (וְלָמָּה הִבַּאתֶם אֶת-קִהְלִי יִרְרֹן, אֶל-הַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה,) (לָמוֹת שָׁם, אֲנַחְנוּ וּבְעִירָנוּ). Why did you bring us here that we should die, us and our animals.

In the Sefer Kehillas Yitzchok he brings from Rav Yisrael Salanter, beautiful. He brings a Maiseh from the Medrash Rabbah which is also in Maseches Tamid but it is a little longer in the Medrash. A beautiful story.

Alexander the great was astounded by what was taking place. He said to this king, do you know what would happen in Greece if these two people would come in front of the king, the king would have them both killed and take the treasure for himself. That is what he said. That part is in the Gemara.

26

The Medrash goes on to say this is the meaning of the Posuk in Tehillim 36:7 (אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה תִּוְשִׁיעַ יְיָ). Sometimes Hashem helps people because of the Zechus of the animals.

Rav Yisrael Salanter brings this Medrash. He says now we understand the Posuk here. They were coming to complain to Moshe. They say Moshe Rabbeinu there is no water. Maybe you will say it is because of our Aveiros there is no water and we have no right to complain. They said there is no water (אָנְקֵנוּ וּבְעִירָנוּ) our animals are going to die too. Obviously the reason there is no water is because (הִבְאֵתָם אֶת-קֶהֱל יִרְדָּן, אֶל-הַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה). We are in a place where B'etzem there is no water and it is not because of our sins. Therefore, they had a Taina and they had a Tevia. What a beautiful UpTeitch of the Posuk. But more importantly, the lesson of how to be honest and integrity how important it is. The king said the sun comes up in your country? Rain comes down in your country? How could it be if you are not honest? It must be in the Zechus of the animals. What a Mussar. A Gevaldige Mussar. I wish everyone an absolutely wonderful Shabbos, a meaningful Shabbos, a Shabbos of Kedusha V'tahara.

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 Mispalleil 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 (וַיֹּאנְחוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן-הָעֲבֹדָה). 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 (וְמָה-עָנָה אֹתוֹ, בְּלִעָם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר--). Remember the story of Bilam and Balak (לְמַעַן, דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יִרְדָּן). So that you should know HKB"H's kindness.

The Gemara in Masseches Berachos Daf 7a (22 lines from the top) Darshuns (מֵאִי לְמַעַן דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת 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 Masseches 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 Kryias Shema but because of Tircha D'tzibura it is too long of a Parsha to say every day.

The Pnei Yehoshua in Masseches 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 (זָכֹר, זָכַר) 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 (זָכֹר, זָכַר), 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 (וְהָלַכְתָּ בְּדֶרֶכָיו). 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 Haneshamah.

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'ahavah. 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 Chukas (Shabbos Rosh Chodesh) 5774

1. Let me start with the beginning of the Parsha. The beginning of the Parsha of course is the Aifer of the Parah Adumah. I bet you didn't know how long the ashes of the Parah Aduma lasted? Most people assume that the ashes of the Parah Adumah lasted until the Churban Bais Hamikdash. That I think is the assumption of most people. In fact it is not so. The Mishna L'melech in Hilchos Aveil 1:3 brings from what he calls a Mekor Kadmon that the Aifer Parah actually lasted until the time of Rava and Abaya, until the time of the Amoraim. There was still Aifer Parah, there were people who despite there not being a Bais Hamikdash continued to be careful to remain Tahor.

This Mishna L'melech is often quoted. I was in a Bais Medrash in Williamsburg last night and between the Chupa and the Seuda of a wedding I went to learn. There I pulled out a Sefer on the Parsha that quoted the Mishna L'melech and someone had written in by hand that this Mishna L'melech is actually a Rosh in Chullin Perek Kol Habasar Siman 4 and in fact it is there that the Rosh says that until the time of the Amoraim there was Eifer Parah Adumah. It is a historical fact.

With this the Maharitz Chiyus in Maseches Chagigah Daf 25 answers the Kasha of the Bach. The Bach asks a Gevaldige Kasha on a totally different topic. We all have heard of the idea of Mitzvah L'taheir B'regel (Ed. Note: Maseches Rosh Hashono 16b (חייב אדם לטהר את עצמו ברגל)). It is a Mitzvah to go to the Mikva and become Tahor before a Yom Tov. The question is does that apply only in the time that we had Aifer Parah Adumah and therefore, we can truly become Tahor in time for the Yom Tov. What about Biz'man Hazeh when we don't have Aifer Parah, even if we go the Mikva on Erev Yom Tov we are still not Tahor. What is the Din?

There is a contradiction in the Tur as the Bach asks. First the Tur in Hilchos Yom Hakkipurim Siman Taf Reish Vav brings from Rav Sadya Gaon that when one goes to the Mikva on Erev Yom Kippur he should make a Beracha on the Tevila. Even though today no man has ever made a Beracha on Tevila unless he is a Ger. Nevertheless, Rav Sadya Gaon holds that on Erev Yom Kippur you should make a Beracha. The Tur himself after bringing Rav Sadya Gaon rejects it. He says that Chayuv Adam L'taheir Atzmo B'regel is only when Aifer Parah exists and not Bizman Hazeh. Here we have a Machlokes between Rav Sadya Gaon and the Tur. The Tur says nowadays there is no Mitzvah of L'taheir Atzmo B'regel. Freikt the Bach, just a few Simanim earlier in Hilchos Rosh Hashono Siman Taf Reish Gimmel, the Tur himself brought a Yerushalmi that says (Amar Rav Chiya L'rav At Yachol Kula Shaita B'tihara, V'i Lo Achol Shiva Yamim B'shato) to be careful to eat things B'tahara at least for 7 days. The Tur says which 7 days are these? The 7 days of Aseres Y'mai Teshuvah. The

Aseres Y'mai Teshuvah are 10 days, 2 days are Rosh Hashono, 1 is Yom Kippur, and 7 days in between. The Tur says that on those 7 days in between be careful to eat B'tahaira. The Tur asks on himself why 7 days. It is true that on Yom Kippur we don't eat but what about Rosh Hashono? The Tur answers that on Rosh Hashono Chayuv Adam L'taheir Atzmo B'regel, that on Rosh Hashono you have to eat B'tahaira anyway. Therefore, there are only 7 days which we add 7 days as a Chumra to eat food B'tahaira.

Freikt the Bach what is the Tur saying. The Tur is saying we have days that we eat B'tahaira anyway? What do you mean that we eat B'tahaira anyway, Chayuv Adam L'taheir Atzmo B'regel doesn't apply when we don't have a Parah Adumah? The answer says the Maharitz Chiyus is that Bizman Hazez indeed there is no Mitzvah of Chayuv Adam L'taheir Atzmo B'regel because we don't have Parah Adumah according to the Tur. However, the Yerushalmi is talking about the time of Rav which indeed was after the Churban but even though it was after the Churban it was before Rava and Abaya, it was Rav Chiya and Rav. At that time the Eifer Parah still existed. This is my first thought on the Parsha, a Yedia, something that people are totally not aware of that the Aifer Parah Adumah lasted until that time. As a matter of fact if you take a look at the Mishna L'melech he says that with this we can explain many Gemaras where Tannaim and Amoraim were careful in Tahara.

2. Let us move on to the middle of the Parsha and a thought regarding the Mai Miriva. As you know, Moshe Rabbeinu strikes the rock and causes water to flow. That takes place because Klal Yisrael came and complained that they had nothing to drink. The language that is used there is very strange. The Yidden come to Moshe Rabbeinu and say as it says in 20:5 (וְתֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו וְיֹאמַרְוּ אֵלָיו לָמָּה הֵעָלִיתָנוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם, לְהַבְיִיא אֶת־נוֹ, אֶל-הַמִּקְוֶה הַזֶּה לֵּאמֹר, לֹא מָקוֹם זֶרַע, וְתֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו) (וְרַמְזוֹ, וַיְמִין אֵין, לִשְׁתּוֹת). Why did you take us out of Egypt and bring us to this place it is not a place where the fruits grow and there is no water to drink. Now when the Jews who left Mitzrayim talk this way we understand. This is 40 years later, these are Jews who grew up in the Midbar. They are accustomed to the fact that living in the Midbar does not prevent one from having what to eat and drink. What is this (וְלָמָּה הֵעָלִיתָנוּ, מִמִּצְרָיִם) what is (וְרַמְזוֹ) (לֹא מָקוֹם זֶרַע, וְתֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו) (וְרַמְזוֹ), Moshe Rabbeinu told them that they are going to go to Eretz Yisrael that is the place of (וְתֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו וְיֹאמַרְוּ אֵלָיו)? Very strange expression!

The Netziv says an absolutely beautiful Pshat in his Hameik Davar. The Netziv says in 20:5 that as Klal Yisrael was getting ready to enter Eretz Yisrael HKB"H wanted to prepare Jews who grew up in the Midbar for the culture shock of suddenly being in a land where things work Al Pi Teva, where things are not provided to you miraculously but you have to put effort into getting them. Here, the Ribbono Shel Olam therefore, didn't have water ready for them, they were in Kadeish, they could go around and try to find water, try to purchase water. The Teva of going out to get water is something the Ribbono Shel Olam wanted to get Klal Yisrael accustomed to. Klal Yisrael didn't understand this so they said we understand that when we get to a place that runs Al Pi Teva that we are going to have to get our own water but now we are still in the Midbar (וְתֹאמְרוּ אֵלָיו) (וְרַמְזוֹ). This is not a place where things grow (וַיְמִין אֵין, לִשְׁתּוֹת) even though we were in Kadeish that is not the place. Now suddenly the way they talk makes so much more sense.

Actually, this concept of the Netziv that it was a preparation is something that he already wrote about in Parshas Beshalach. Because in Parshas Beshalach we find the same thing. After Klal Yisrael crosses the Midbar there is no water to drink 15:23 (כִּי מָרִים הָיָה) the water is bitter. There, he says the same thing. At that point they thought they were going into Eretz Yisrael, then had they not sinned, and the Ribbono Shel Olam wanted to prepare Klal Yisrael for a life of Teva. But there he adds a point. Because what happens there in Parshas Beshalach 15:23 - 15:25. Klal Yisrael doesn't have water to drink and what do they do (וַיִּצְעַק אֶל-יְרֹחָם). Klal Yisrael calls out to the Ribbono Shel Olam. (וַיִּזְכְּרוּ יְרֹחָם עֵץ, וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶל-הַמַּיִם, וַיִּמְתְּקוּ הַמַּיִם). There the Netziv says in a world of Teva what do you do. What do you do in a world of Teva in order to be able to have water to drink? You know what you do? (וַיִּצְעַק אֶל-יְרֹחָם) Davening is part of the HKB"H's world of Teva. Therefore, the Netziv in both places explains the mysterious idea that the Ribbono Shel Olam left them somewhere without water which is very difficult to understand. With this understanding we have an insight.

3. Let me move to my third lesson of the Parsha. At the end of the Parsha we have the episode of the Milchemes Sichon and Og, we have the battle, the killing of Sichon and Og. We know that Moshe Rabbeinu himself did this as Rashi brings. Moshe was 10 Amos, he jumped 10 Amos, with a stick of 10 Amos, whatever that Aggadeta

means precisely, but it was Moshe Rabbeinu personally who killed Sichon. This needs an explanation. Against Amaleik Moshe Rabbeinu did not go personally to do battle. Against Midyon Moshe Rabbeinu did not go personally to do battle. So why here did Moshe Rabbeinu go to do battle to kill Sichon personally? There are other things that need an explanation. That is that Sichon and Og seems to be a major event. In the beginning of Sefer Devarim Moshe Rabbeinu sits down to teach Klal Yisrael and the time is described as it says in 1:4 (אָרֵרִי) (הַפֶּתוֹ, אֶת סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי, אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב, בְּחֶשְׁבֹּן--וְאֶת, עֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן, אֲשֶׁר-יוֹשֵׁב בְּעֶשְׂתָּרֶת, בְּאֶרְצֵי). It's time lined to the killing of Sichon and Og. Why? So much has happened.

In addition, in the Hallel Hagadol, Hallel Hagadol is (הוֹדוּ לִירֵנָה כִּי-טוֹב: כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ) that can be found in Tehillim 136. The Hallel that we say on Rosh Chodesh is called Hallel Mitzra'i, the Hallel of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Hallel Hagadol are the 26 (כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ) Ki L'olam Chasdo that we say on Shabbos. In those 26 there is a separate one for Sichon (לְסִיחֹן, מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי: כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ) and Og (וְלִעֹג, מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן: כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ). The other 31 kings that were killed in conquering Eretz Yisrael are given short shrift. We talk about HKB"H destroying the Melachim in a general way. Sichon and Og get their own billing. Why?

In order to answer this I would like to review a Vort that we said on Parshas Noach 5774. At that time we had a Kasha. The difficulty was that HKB"H promises there won't be a Mabul ever again. We had a Kasha. What is HKB"H's promise? We understand that if the Ribbono Shel Olam brings a Mabul that that is what the world needed. The world needed the Mabul. Of course it came because of people's Aveiros but at that point that is what is best for the world. HKB"H does that which is best for the Briya. So now the Ribbono Shel Olam says I will never bring a Mabul again. I don't understand. If the Mabul is not proper for the Briya, if the people don't deserve a Mabul, of course HKB"H will not bring a Mabul. If a Mabul is what is best for the Briya so who wants this promise of HKB"H that I won't bring a Mabul. Why are you promising you won't bring a Mabul, if the Mabul is what is best for the Briya then by all means it should happen.

It is similar to a doctor that tells a sick man I promise you I won't amputate your leg. What kind of promise is that? If his leg doesn't need amputation of course he won't amputate his leg. If to save his life an amputation is necessary so why are you making a promise? The same thing here. What does it mean that HKB"H says I won't bring a Mabul. We answered then in the name of an Adom Gadol (a Talmid of Rav Yitchok Hutner) that HKB"H said before the Mabul all human beings lived on a level L'mayla Min Hateva, they had power to affect nature. The actions they did could improve nature or can be Mazik or Mashchis. The actions of human beings destroyed the nature of the world, even animals misbehaved because of the Hashpa'a the influence of sinners. After the Mabul Hashem said no more. Human beings will no longer have the power to be Mashchis, to destroy the nature around them. They will be Tachas Hateva and no longer will it be possible for the world to come to a state that will require a Mabul. So that, before the Mabul, human beings had an extraordinary ability which they lost afterwards.

We know that Sichon and Og survived the Mabul. The Gemara in Sotah says that Sichon hung on to the Taiva and survived the Mabul (Ed. Note: I could not find the source. Please email me if you can find it - There is a Tosafos in Niddah 61a (זֶה עוֹג שְׁפֵלֵט מְדוּרָה הַמְּבִייל)). The Pirkei D'rabbi Elazar says the same thing about Og. So Sichon and Og survived the Mabul. They were the only two human beings in the entire world that were not descendants of Noach. They were the only two human beings in the entire world that still had the power of Hashchasa of the Briya. The power to destroy the Briya. For that, Moshe Rabbeinu was necessary. Moshe Rabbeinu came and with the Koach Hatorah which is L'mayla Min Habriya. Lo Nitna Torah Ela L'ochlai Hamon. Moshe Rabbeinu was able to kill Sichon and Og and it is a major event in world history. Now for the first time there was no human being in the world who had the power of Hashchasa in the entire world. (כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ), the power of Hashchasa of destruction was now gone.

The lesson of course is that Moshe Rabbeinu and what he represents is the power of L'mayla Min Hateva, the Tzad Hakedusha. Although the power to influence all of nature is gone, the ability to withstand the Teva around us, the ability to withstand the Shmutzadik world around us. B'Teva someone who would grow up today, with all kinds of sick ideas, with all kinds of strange distractions, we have the ability if we connect to Limud Hatorah.

We have the ability to live above that, to live L'mayla Min Hateva. To destroy the Kochos Hashchasa in the world around us. It is our job. That is the death of Sichon and Og.

I refer you to the Ohr Gedalyahu at the beginning of Sefer Devarim (pg. 173) where he makes the point that destroying Sichon and Og was the key to entering Eretz Yisrael. You want to go into Eretz Yisrael that world Hashchasa has to be gone. With that, a person who is a Lomed Torah could live L'mayla Min Hateva on the Tzad Hakedusha.

With these three thoughts I bid everyone an absolutely wonderful Shabbos. If you are going up to the country please I beg you don't get dragged down by others in your bungalow colony, in your Seviva. If you dress as a Ben Torah, dress as a Ben Torah there too. Don't let the influence of the people around you drag you to a lower level. If people are sitting and speaking Lashon Hora walk away and don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed to walk away. There are bungalow colonies where there is a sense of pride in the learning, in the Davening, be part of that. It is a big Shas Nisayon, be Omed the Nisayon. A Gutten Shabbos 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 ,) (להודיע כי לא נביא היה אלא קוסם ונבואתו הייתה לשעה) Bilam Ben B'or the magician that the Radak comments (הקוסם). 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 Somaich B'chelko. The Rambam says (ואין הנבואה חלה אלא על חכם גדול בחכמה גבור במדותיו ולא יהא יצור) (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 (וַיִּגַּל יְרֵד , 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 Mashmaos 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 Hagoos 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 הִשְׁרָה הַקֶּב"ה שְׂכִינָתוֹ עַל גֵּי רָשָׁע , כִּי שָׁלָא יִהְיֶה פֶתַח חוֹן פֶּה לְאוֹמוֹת לֹמֵר אֵלָיו הֵיוּ לָנוּ נְבִיאִים) (חזרנו למוטב ואם תאמר מפני מה השרה הקב"ה שכינתו על גוי רשע, כדי שלא יהא פתחון פה לאומות לומר אלו היו לנו נביאים חזרנו למוטב) 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 הִתְעַלְלָה 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. (עֲקָדִים) means they are spotted only in their four legs and Lavan agrees 31:8 (אִם-כֹּה יֵאמָר, נִקְדִּים יִהְיֶה שְׁכָרְךָ--וְיִלְדוּ כָל-הַצֹּאן, נִקְדִּים; וְאִם-כֹּה יֵאמָר, עֲקָדִים (יִהְיֶה שְׁכָרְךָ--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 וְהַצֹּאן צֹאנִי, 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 (וְהַיָּאֵר) בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים (What is the path to love and fear of Hashem?) (היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו) when someone sees Hashem's amazing creation, his actions (ויראה מהן חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ) (הגדולים) (מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאָר ומתאווה 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 (אם-יִרְוֹךְ לֹא-יִשְׁמַר-עִיר, שָׁן שֶׁקֵּד 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-אַתְנָה, זֶה שְׁלוֹשׁ רַגְלָיִם) 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 Chukas 5773

1. This week I have some really wonderful thoughts to share with you. The first has to do with the Cheit Mei Miriva, with the Cheit of Moshe Rabbeinu which involved his hitting the stone and bringing forth water. Rashi's Shittah which is the best known of the different opinions brought in 20:12 on the word (לְהַקְדִּישָׁנִי) is (שִׁאִלּוֹ דְּבִרְתָּם) אל הסלע והוציא הייתי מקודש לעיני העדה ואומרים מה סלע זה שאינו מדבר ואינו שומע ואינו צריך לפרנסה מקיים דבורו של מקום, קל (וחומר אנו) that the sin of Moshe Rabbeinu was that he had been commanded to speak to the stone and it would give forth water and erroneously he thought that he had been commanded to hit the stone and by hitting the stone and bringing forth the water that somehow diminished the Aveira. The Ramban in Posuk 8 wonders whether Rashi's Pshat makes any sense at all. The Ramban says that there is no difference in the level of miracle whether one hits a stone and it gives water or whether one speaks to a stone and it gives water. The miracle is a miracle which is identical. What is the difference? Stones don't give water if you talk to them they don't give water if you hit them. Why was one greater than the other?

I would like to offer you a few answers for the Ramban's Kasha. The Kasha of why it would have been a greater miracle to speak to the stone rather than to hit the stone.

In the Ayeles Hashachar (page # 139), Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman says the following Yesod. He says that Mofsim (amazing acts) don't by themselves convince people of Kiddush Hashem because it is the nature of the Yeitzer Hora to bring Teirutzim (to say possible answers). The Rambam says Maiolam Lahem Yahaminu B'koach Hamofsim. Klal Yisrael's Emunah in Hashem is not because of Kriyas Yam Suf, not because of the miracles of Mitzrayim. Our Emunah comes from Har Sinai, it is from Gilui Hashem. Mofsim themselves do not produce Emunah. However, a Mofes that comes from the Koach of a Mitzvah, that Koach of the Mitzvah is Matmia the Yeitzer Hora and gives Kedusha. The Neshamah takes note of a Mofes (an amazing thing that happens) as part of a Mitzvah. Someone Davens for something and feels the Gilui Shechina that he was answered, that lifts him up, because when it is part of a Mitzvah it influences the person.

So Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman's rule is that a Mofes influences the Neshama only when it is part of a Mitzvah. Therefore, had Moshe Rabbeinu done what HKB"H commanded him speaking to the stone, that would have influenced Klal Yisrael in a great way. It would have been a Mofes that had been part of the Mitzvah (what he had been commanded). Since he pulled off a Mofes but it was not what had been commanded, that did not have the Hashpa'a on Klal Yisrael.

I want to point out that last week I mentioned to you from Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman that a Segulah has no power unless the Segulah is connected to a Mitzvah. He is saying a similar idea this week. That a Mofes doesn't influence a person unless it is connected to a Mitzvah.

Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman has a Sefer entitled Yimalai Pi Tehilasecha. There in the second volume page (Taf Reish Mem Vav) he offers a totally different Teretz to the Ramban's Kasha as to what is the difference in the miracle if Moshe Rabbeinu had spoken to the stone or hit the stone. There he offers a more technical Teretz. He says that Kishuf (magic) exists in the world and when Moshe Rabbeinu caused water to come from the stone, maybe that is because he is a great magician. Says Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, magic as it appears in Chazal whether in Tanach or Gemara is always influenced by an act (by a Maiseh) that is done. Magic doesn't work with Dibbur (speech) alone. Speech is a spiritual thing and therefore, magicians had to do acts in order to bring about magic. Therefore, had Moshe Rabbeinu spoken to the stone it would have been clear that this is not through the Koach Hakishuf. Since Moshe Rabbeinu hit the stone it left place for doubters and skeptics to say it was a magic trick and Moshe Rabbeinu was a great sorcerer. Therefore, it caused a (Yerida) lesser Kiddush Hashem when the water came from hitting as opposed to when it came from speaking. These are two Teirutzim of Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman to the Ramban's Kasha.

I will add that in Taima Dikra, Rav Chaim Kanievsky offers a third Teretz which is very typical of his style. He brings a Medrash. When Moshe Rabbeinu was to speak to the stone what was he to say to it? Rav Chaim Kanievsky brings a Medrash that he would have said a Dvar Torah to the stone and with that Klal Yisrael would

have learned that sustenance comes from Divrei Torah. Sustenance comes from learning Torah as opposed to from the Hishtadlus of hitting the stone. That was the failing of Moshe in not bringing about the water through Divrei Torah. So 3 Teirutzim from Gedolei Hadar Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman's 2 Teirutzim and Rav Chaim Kanievsky's one.

2. Let us move on to a different thought. At the end of the Parsha barely noticed because Parshas Chukas has as the most famous part of it being the Parah Adumah of course and the Mei Miriva. Hardly noticed is that the last 15 Pesukim in the Parsha are the story of the war against Sichon and against Og. The fact that Klal Yisrael conquered these two kingdoms and vanquished these two kings. The battle against Sichon and Og is mentioned in Hallel Hagadol. Hallel Hagadol is the Hallel of 26 lines which we say on Shabbos before Baruch She'amar (Nussach Sfard). The Hallel that has (פי לעולם חסדו). It is interesting. There we say (Tehillim 136:17) (למכה, מלכים) (ונהרג, מלכים אדירים: פי לעולם חסדו) 136:18 and (גדלים: פי לעולם חסדו) (לסיחון, מלך) 136:19. Two lines that refer in general to the great kings that HKB"H allowed us to destroy in conquering Eretz Yisrael. Then we add two more 136:20 (ולעוג, מלך הבשן: פי לעולם חסדו) & 136:20 (האמרי: פי לעולם חסדו). Sichon and Og are mentioned specifically even though there were 31 kings that were vanquished by Yehoshua and even though Moshe Rabbeinu also vanquished Midyan but Sichon and Og the battles of this week's Parsha are mentioned specifically and that needs an explanation.

Also in the beginning of Parshas Devarim we read as it says in 1:5 (הואיל משה, באר את-התורה הזאת לאמר). Moshe Rabbeinu explained Mishna Torah, when? 1:4 (אשר יושב, בקשבון--ואת, עוג מלך הבשן, (אשר-יושב בעשתרת, באדריעי). After he vanquished Sichon and Og then he explained Mishna Torah to Klal Yisrael. What is going on? What is that? Why is Sichon and Og mentioned specifically? It should have said Acharei Hakoso Es Midyan, after he destroyed Midyan then of course Moshe Rabbeinu knew that he would not live any longer. So it should say (הואיל משה, באר את-התורה הזאת לאמר) Acharei Hakoso Es Midyan. Yet it specifically mentioned Sichon and Og. It needs an explanation.

Also it is also interesting to note that Moshe Rabbeinu personally killed Og as Rashi brings on the Posuk 21:35 (ויכח אתו ואת בניו ואת כל עמו עד בלתי השאיר לו שריד ויירשו את ארצו). That (משה הרגו). This is something that didn't happen in the other battles. Therefore we need some sort of explanation as to what is so special about the conquering of Sichon and Og.

People say Kol Hascholos Kashos, when you start something it is hard. We wonder, to us it looks like a beginning of a Zman is easy. The beginning of a Machzor of Daf Yomi, you start Berachos it is easy. Hascholos are Kashos? Hascholos are easy. The answer is it depends what you are starting. If you are starting something you want to do and you like to do then it is easy. But if you are looking to change your nature, and you are looking to improve, if you are looking to do things differently than Kol Hascholos Kashos, change is difficult. Change does not come easy.

Klal Yisrael here had gone through 40 years in the Midbar. This generation hadn't sinned. This generation sat and learned for 39 years. Now a change was taking place. Suddenly they had to become warriors and they had to go do battles. They had to go fight the war that HKB"H had commanded them to do. Kol Hascholos Kashos, it is very hard to change. It is very hard to change from what you are doing. Change comes with difficulty. A person has to celebrate the first step of successful change. When a person is not Matzliach in Davening with Minyan, in getting up in the morning and then he does it, he has to celebrate the Haschala, he has to remember the Haschala. That will give him Chizuk to move forward. The battles of Sichon and Og were the first battles this generation. (פי לעולם חסדו). Therefore, it had a very special meaning. So one thought regarding Mei Miriva and one regarding Sichon and Og.

3. The third thought is something related to contemporary news. As you may know, this week something unprecedented happened. The Kosel was declared off bounds to Orthodox Jews. It was declared off bounds so that the women of the wall could go and have their prayer services there. What a Busha, what a shame! What a Kitrug on Klal Yisrael that the Kosel is declared off bounds on a Rosh Chodesh. Unfortunately, we suffer from a lack of appreciation of the Kosel in general. It is something that we need to be Mechazeik. We go there and it

becomes a place of Shmuzzing, a place of joking, even a place of laughing and dancing. It is a remnant of the Churban Bais Hamikdash.

I would like to share with you a thought that I had regarding visiting the Kosel Hamaravi. To explain this I would like to be Makdim (I would like to preface) with a thought regarding human nature. We have often noted that it is difficult for a human being L'kabeil Maros. It is difficult for a human being in general and Jews specifically to accept and to listen to things that other people command a person to do. It is not easy. Not in relation to other people and not in relation to Hashem. It is hard to just take orders and do something. The way to succeed in that is that HKB"H created in the human being a capacity for love, a capacity to connect to others. If someone bosses you around and says do this and that it is very hard to get yourself to want to do it. However, when a human being has love for another person, when a human being feels connected to another person, when a human being feels a special relationship for that person. When the person says do something that makes it easy to do what the person wants. When there is Ahavah then it is easy to follow the other person's wishes.

So too in our relationship with Hashem. The Bais Hamikdash is called the Cheder Hamittos, the place of intimate love. It is a place of His'achdus with HKB"H, a place where Keruvim hugged each other. The Bais Hamikdash is a place of Ahavah. For us, we have the Kosel Hamaravi. It is a remnant of the Bais Hamikdash. It is a place to feel the Ahavah of Hashem with tears in our eyes the longing for HKB"H. The Remez to the Kosel is a Posuk in Shir Hashirim, the song of love. That is because the Kosel is supposed to remind us of our longing for HKB"H our desire to get back, to connect ourselves once again the whole Klal Yisrael, a Hiskarvus to HKB"H. That is what a visit to the Kosel is supposed to evoke. A desire to feel close to Hashem. When a person feels close to the Ribbono Shel Olam it is not difficult to listen to his command and to do his Mitzvos. Perhaps when we visit, we can try to have that feeling. When you look at the Kosel, look at the Kosel as the Luz bone of the Bais Hamikdash. We are taught that every human being has a Luz bone which is a tiny bone from which he will once again get up at Techias Hamaism, from which his body will be reconstructed. The Kosel Hamaravi look at it as the Luz bone of the Bais Hamikdash. The remnant from which Binyan Habayis Hashlishis will come. Look at it with longing with an Ahavas Hashem and visiting the Kosel will not be a place of levity, it will not be a place for Shmuzzing. Let us honor the Kosel. If we don't give honor to the Kosel how can you expect a secular government to give honor to the Kosel?

4. I would like to end with a great Kasha. This Kasha is Rav Chaim Kanievsky's Kasha. What an imagination. Listen to this Kasha. We have in this week's Parsha the Halacha of Cherev Harei Hu K'chalal as is found in 19:16 (וְכָל אֶשֶׁר-יִגַּע עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה, בַּחֲלָל-חֶרֶב אוֹ בְּמַת, אוֹ בְּעֵצִים אֲדָם, אוֹ בְּקֶבֶר--יִטְמָא, שְׂבַעֵת יָמִים). This is a Halacha which is a metal utensil that touches a dead body gets the Din of the dead body itself. Rashi holds that this only refers to a metal utensil such as a sword. The Rambam and Tosafos say that this applies to all metal Keilim. A metal Keili which comes in contact with a Meis is itself like a Meis, it is Tamei for 7 days. Not only that but if a human being were to touch this metal utensil, he too would have the Tumah of touching the Meis and would be Tamei for 7 days. Freigt Rav Chaim Kanievsky in Taima Dikra, how is it ever possible to Tovel (to put into a Mikva) this metal utensil. You have to wait until the 7th day. This metal utensil doesn't need Parah Adumah to become Tahor only (מִי נָדָה) (Toveled in a Mikva). But when you Tovel it in a Mikva the person Toveled it touches this utensil and then he himself becomes Tamei for 7 days. Ok he is Tamei for 7 days. Once he is Tamei for 7 days and he touches the utensil the utensil now gets a fresh Tumah for 7 days and you can't Tovel it that day. So when you grab onto the Keili in order to Tovel it the Keili is Mitamei you for 7 days, you are in turn Mitamei the Keili for a new 7 days and this should go on forever. How is one ever Tovel a metal Keili which is under the rule of Cherev Harei Hu K'chalal? Tzorech Iyun. Have a wonderful Shabbos Kodesh.

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 שברה 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) that when Pharaoh began to oppress Klal Yisrael in Mitzrayim there were 3 people whom Pharaoh 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 (ואת-מלכי מדין הרגו על-סלליהם, את-אוי ואת-רקם ואת-צור ואת-חור ואת-רב-ע) takes place 126 years after Pharaoh conferred with his advisors as to whether to oppress Klal Yisrael and that is because Pharaoh 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. 126 (בלעם שיעץ נהרג) later! How old was he at the time that he gave the Eitza to Pharaoh. 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 היה א"ל מיכתב לא כתיב אלא מדכתיב אנשי דמים ומרמה לא יחצו ימיהם בר תלתין ותלת שנים או בר תלתין וארבע א"ל שפיר קאמרת לדידי חזי לי פנקסיה דבלעם והוה כתיב ביה בר תלתין ותלת שנים בלעם חגירא כד קטיל יתיה פנחס (ליסטא). 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 איגיר שדר) קיסר גונדא דרומא אבתריה משכינהו בקראי איגור הדר שדר גונדא דרומא [אחרנא] אבתריה אמר להו לא תימרו ליה ולא מידי כי הו שיקלו ואזלו אמר להו אימא לכו מילתא בעלמא נפיורא נקט נורא קמי פפיורא פפיורא 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 וגו' איגור [כולהו] הדר שדר גונדא אחרנא 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 about Unkelos Bar Kelonimus who was a Migayeir. 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 היה בעי לאיגור) 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 Masseches Bava Basra 91a (8 lines from the bottom) says (ואמר רב חנן בר רבא אמר רב אמי) (דאברהם אמתלאי בת כרנבו אמיא 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 Masseches 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 (וגלת החל-הנה לבני ישראל אשר-בנענים, עד-) (צ'רפת, וגלת ירושלים, אשר בספרד--ירשו, את ערי הנגב) 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 צ'רפתה). Did Eliyahu Hanavi go to France? It says (קום לך צ'רפתה אשר לצידון, 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 Tzorchai 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'oraiisa 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 Kodesh 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 Chukas 5772

In the beginning of the Parsha we read in 19:4 (וְלָקַח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן, מִדָּמָה--בְּאֵצְבָּעוֹ). The Kohen in dealing with the Parah Adumah takes from the blood with his finger. There is a Drasha and I am not sure of the source of the Drasha but it is brought in the Rambam. The Rambam in Hilchas Parah Adumah 4:4 brings (קִיבַל דָּמָה בְּכָלִי פִסּוּלָהּ (שְׁנֵאמַר וְלָקַח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּמָה בְּאֵצְבָּעוֹ מִצּוּתָהּ מִצּוּת יָד וְלֹא מִצּוּת כָּלִי). Someone who caught the blood of the Parah Adumah in a utensil which is the way that it is normally done when a person brings any other Korban, Posul. Here it would Pasul the blood of the Parah Adumah. As it says in the Posuk that I just quoted (וְלָקַח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן (מִדָּמָה בְּאֵצְבָּעוֹ מִצּוּתָהּ מִצּוּת יָד וְלֹא מִצּוּת כָּלִי). The Mitzvah is to catch the blood with the hand and not with a Kli. So that is something we learn out from this Posuk.

In the Sefer Haksav V'hakabbalah (Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg 1785-1865 on page # 268) he brings a nice technical Vort that as you will see will be connected to something that we discussed earlier in the year and we end up with something absolutely incredible. Let's start with the technicality. Here is the Kasha. An Etzba is a finger. Does a person catch blood with his finger? (ולקח אלעזר הכהן מדמה באצבעו), I would understand that a person would take some of the blood with his finger. Normally people don't catch things in their finger.

Because of this difficulty he writes that the word Etzba in Hebrew actually refers to a part of the body that is used to grab things with. The Torah uses the word Etzba to refer to the part of the body which one uses to hold onto things or grab things. Normally the finger is used for that. But it is not just the finger. It is the finger and the palm right under the finger. The palm and the fingers together are used to hold onto things. Therefore, he writes that technically the word Etzba can refer not just to the finger but to the part of the palm directly under the finger that is also used for grabbing. So that the word Kaf which means palm is used for a reference to the palm excluding the fingers. But when one is referring to the fingers and the palm together the word Etzba is appropriate. With that he says (ולקח אלעזר הכהן מדמה באצבעו) refers to the hand, to the palm with the fingers. The way you would hold the Kli in your hand you cup your hand in a way that the fingers and the palm together would hold the liquid. Again it is a technical answer but it is a Chiddush that the word Etzba refers not to the finger alone but to the palm under the finger as well.

Earlier in the year we mentioned a Kasha of the Chasam Sofer in regard to the Haggada Shel Pesach. In the Haggada we read what is actually a Braissa that (מִצְרַיִם שֶׁלְקוּ הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם עֶשְׂרֵי מֵאוֹת וְעַל הַיָּם לָקוּ חֲמִשִּׁים) (מכות). We are taught that in Mitzrayim there were 10 Makkos and at Yam Suf there 5 times as many Makkos. So that if there were 10 in Mitzrayim there were 50 at the Yam Suf. We learn this from the fact that in Mitzrayim it says (אֶצְבַּע אֱלֹדִים הָיָה) Etzba Elokim Hu. We refer to the miracles of Mitzrayim as the finger and on the Yam it says (הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה). It says that HKB"H caused the Makkos with the Yad. The Yad is 5 times the Etzba. Therefore, if in Mitzrayim it was the equivalent of an Etzba or 1 then in the Yam it was equivalent to a Yad or 5 times as much. This is what it says in the Haggada.

The Chasam Sofer in a Teshuva asks that it is not so. A finger is not a 5th of the hand. A finger is a 5th of 5 fingers. There is also the palm. The finger is about a 10th of a hand. So that if the Makkos of Mitzrayim were an Etzba or a finger and on the Yam it was a Yad it should be more than 5 times as much. This is a Gevaldige Kasha.

According to the Ksav V'hakabbala this will be answered because he is saying that it is a reference to the finger down including the palm and indeed the Etzba is a 5th of the hand. So this would answer this Kasha in a very nice way. What makes this even more striking is when we compare this Teretz to the words of the Chasam Sofer. The Chasam Sofer in the Teshuva writes that perhaps the word Yad as in Yado Hachazaka on the Yam Suf refers only to the fingers as the word Yad refers only to the fingers as in Netillas Yadaim which according to many Rishonim is the obligation to wash your hands until the knuckles. It is a Machlokes the Rif and the Rosh whether the palm is included and we hold that it is just the fingers meaning to say that Yad refers to the finger alone. Of course this would answer the Chasam Sofer's Kasha because the Yad is the 5 fingers. It turns out that we have an incredible set of opposites. The Chasam Sofer although he writes it B'derech Efsheer writes that the word Yad may refer to the finger alone. The Ksav V'hakabbala writes that even though even the word Etzba may refer to the finger and all the way down to the wrist. Two opposite understandings of a word in the Torah. As I said this is a technical issue but something that when taken together with the Chasam Sofer actually is a beautiful Vort.

19:2 (זאת חקת התורה) Many of the Rishonim including the Klei Yakar, Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh and later Rav Moshe and Rav Yaakov in this week's Parsha say that (זאת חקת התורה) Zos Chukas Hatorah is to tell us that really all Mitzvos of the Torah have some aspect of Chok to them. We keep the Mitzvos as if they are a Chok even when we can really understand a reason. We keep it because it is Hashem's will.

The Rambam writes regarding the Mitzvos that are Sheaino Sichlios, as he writes regarding the Mitzvos of Kashrus for example. A person should say I really would want to eat Treif, I want to eat Chazeir, however,

וישלח מלאך, ויצאנו (That HKB"H took us out himself. Why does Moshe Rabbeinu say (ממצרים)?

This is a difficult Kasha and I was going to leave it at that. Then I had a thought. HKB"H did send a Malach to take us out of Egypt. The Malach's name was Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe Rabbeinu was HKB"H agent to take us out. Moshe Rabbeinu wasn't going to say HKB"H sent me. He wasn't going to speak in a haughty way. So he said (וישלח מלאך) that Hashem sent his messenger. Really it was him himself. If you are going to wonder could it be that a human being is called a Malach?

I would like to share with you a Vort that Rav Schwab says in his Mayan Beis Hashoeva pg # 347 on Posuk 20:16. At a Bris the Minhag is that the Mohel says that Eliyahu Malach Habris Amod Al Yimini L'samcheini. Eliyahu the angel of the Bris stand on my right side and help me. The Kasha Rav Schwab asks is that we know that it is Assur to Daven to a Malach for help. How could the Mohel Daven to a Malach?

Rav Schwab answers that it is Assur to ask a Malach to help you but you are allowed to ask a human being to help you. Since Eliyahu never died Amod Al Yimini L'samcheini. This was an appropriate request. We see then that the word Malach does apply to a human being (to Eliyahu). So perhaps here as well the Malach referred to is a reference to Moshe Rabbeinu and that would answer this question.

The second question of the week is: This question is on Rashi in Shemos 15:25 (שם שם לו) במרה נתן להם מקצת (פרשיות של תורה שיתעסקו בהם, שבת ופרה אדומה ודינין) which tells us that the Mitzvah of Parah Adumah was already commanded in Marah. It is known that there is some question as to the source of this Rashi as the Gemara doesn't mention Parah Adumah. Rashi says it and the Ramban brings it in the name of Rashi which indicates that it is not a mistake. Rashi holds that Parah Adumah was commanded in Marah. That would seem to contradict a Rashi in our Parsha. Rashi in 19:22 says (פרה אדמה) כן תבא אמרו תבא אמו ותקנה הצואה, (פרה ותכפר על העגל) that the Parah Adumah is a Kapparah to the sin of the Eigel. What is going on? The Mitzvah of Parah Adumah was commanded in Marah which is prior to the Cheit Ha'eigel. These two Rashi's appear to be a contradiction.

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 (ולא-) there is a Chazal that can easily be misunderstood. Chazal say on the Posuk that is found in Devarim 34:10 (קם נביא עוד בישׂראל, כמשה) 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 ישראל) 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 (ונתתי עליי, רוח אֱלֹדִים) as it says in 24:2 were the only times in his life that he was Zoche. He himself said as it says in 24:4 (אֶמְרִי-קל:)

(אֲשֶׁר מִחֻזָּה שָׁקִי יִחְזָה, נִפְל וְגִלְוֵי עֵינָיו). 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 מֹשֶׁה--אֶסְכֶּה-נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה, אֶת-הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: מִדּוּעַ, לֹא-יָבֵעַ הַסֵּנֶה) 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 Eitzah 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 יְרֹנֶר, לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹבָה אוֹ רָעָה מִלִּבִּי: אֲשֶׁר-) (יְדַבֵּר יְרֹנֶר, 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 (הַדִּבֵּר, 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 (וַיֵּעַן, וַיֹּאמֶר: הֲלֹא, אֵת אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים יְרֹנֶר בְּפִי--אֹתוֹ אֲשַׁמֵּר,) (לִדְבֹר)? 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 יְרֹנֶר בְּפִי--אֹתוֹ אֲשַׁמֵּר,) (לִדְבֹר). 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 אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר, כֹּל) (אֲשֶׁר-יְדַבֵּר יְרֹנֶר, אֹתוֹ אֲעֲשֶׂה). 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-יִתֶּן-לִי בָלָק מְלֶאכֶת, כִּסֶּף) (וְזָהָב--לֹא אוּכַל לַעֲבֹר אֶת-פִּי יְרֹנֶר, לַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹבָה אוֹ רָעָה מִלִּבִּי: אֲשֶׁר-יְדַבֵּר יְרֹנֶר, אֹתוֹ 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 ירן). 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--מין 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 Mekabeil Ol Malchus Shamayim what is there in Ol Hamitzvos? The answer would seem to be what we are saying. There is (ולא למדתי ממעשיו הרעים) (ותרי"ג מצות שמרתי) and 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). If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold I can't violate the Ratzon Hashem. 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 (ומהמד 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") Shekol Davar Aino Misp'al 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 Misp'al 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 Misgabei right before it disappears. Why, Shekol Davar Aino Misp'al 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 (Misp'al). 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 Mispa'al 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 Mispa'al, moved to action, Mai'hafcho 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'chayeiheim. 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 זוטרת אמר רבי יהודה) (בר זבידא בקשו לקבוע פרשת 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-יעז בלק מלך מואב, ומה-) (זכר-נא) (זכר-נא) Since the Posuk says (ענה אתו, בלעם בן-בעור--מן-השטים, עד-הגלגל, למען, דעת צדקות ירנר) 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 Ma'ila 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 ירנר) 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 מִשְׁכַּנְתִּיד יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵה טֹבו אֶהְיֶה) Ma Tov 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 הָעָם 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. (הִנֵּה עַם יֵצֵא 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. (הִנֵּה הָעָם הַיֵּצֵא 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 Yihiy 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 Yihiy B'ainecha K'chadashos. Klal Yisrael, Bilam correctly said, is an (הָעָם הַיֵּצֵא 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, מִצְרָיִם). 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 הַיֵּצֵא 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 הַיֵּצֵא 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 Yihiy 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, לֵךְ-נָא אִתִּי אֶל-מְקוֹם אֲחֵר אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶנּוּ מִשָּׁם--אֶפְסָּ (קִצְּצֵהוּ תִרְאֶה, וְכָלוּ לֹא תִרְאֶה; וְקִבְּנוּ-לִי, מִשָּׁם (קִצְּצֵהוּ תִרְאֶה) 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) (וְקֵל זֹעֵם בְּכָל יוֹם וְכֹמָה זַעֲמוּ רִגְעַ) 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. (אי נמי מאחר. יש לומר כלם. אי נמי מאחר. שאלמלי כעסתי לא נשתייר וכו'. ואם תאמר מה היה יכול לומר בשעת רגע. יש לומר כלם. אי נמי מאחר. (שהיה מתחיל קללתו באותה שעה היה מזיק אפילו לאחר כן). 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 appositive 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** (וְיָרְאוּ עֵינֵיכֶם, וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם) (ולא-תתורו אַחֲרֵי לִבְכֶּם, וְאַחֲרֵי 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** (וַיִּשָּׂא בָלָעָם אֶת-)

(עיניו, וירא את-ישראל, שכן, לשבטיו; ונתהי עליו, רוח אלקים). 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 (גִּדְרֵי מִזֶּה, וְגִדְרֵי מִזֶּה) 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 (וְהָיוּ רֹכֵב עַל-אַתְנָו, 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 בְּלֶעָם, עִם-שְׂרָי 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.

Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Chukas 5770

20:5 Why did you bring us up from Mitzrayim to this terrible place, it is not a place of planting, nor of figs, grapes, or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink. The idea that it is not a place of planting is brought in Shulchan Aruch in Hilchos Kisui Hadam Siman 28, where it says that earth of the desert is not acceptable to be used for Kisui Hadam because you need Afar Haraui Litzmoiach, earth from which things can grow and since in the Midbar things can't grow, it is not good earth.

We have a difficulty from Parshas Shelach 15:32 where we learned the story of the Mekoishesh Eitzim. וַיְהִי לֵב This is the story of the person who according to the Gemara in Masseches Bava Basra 119a2 (note 19 in the Artscroll Gemara) cut something that was growing from the ground on Shabbos which is the Issur of Toilesh and Koitzer. According to others he was Me'ameir, which is gathering things in the place that it grew. Either way, wood did grow in the Midbar. This would seem to contradict the Posuk here in Parshas Chukas that says that the Midbar is not a Makoim Zera, meaning that things can't grow in the Midbar.

A second question. They complain that it is not a place of planting and that they do not have water. For the last 39 ½ years they had water however, now after Miriam's death they do not have water. However, the complaint that they can't plant anything is not something new, they had already lived like this in the Midbar for the last 39 ½ years. Why all of a sudden are they complaining now that it is not a place that things can grow?

A third question. It is not the nature of a person, who has never experienced something to complain about the lack of it, so since most of this generation had grown up in the Midbar why did they have this complaint about things not growing in the first place?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadoish (page # 56 on 15:32) on the story of the Mekoishesh Eitzim in Parshas Shelach asks why did the Posuk say וַיְהִי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּמִדְבָּר if throughout the whole Sefer Bamidbar the Yidden were in the Midbar? The Posuk is telling us that when Klal Yisrael was in the Midbar the Midbar was different. Normally nothing grew in the Midbar, however, when Klal Yisrael was in the Midbar the Be'ir Shel Miriam not only gave Klal Yisrael water to drink but also provided nutrients for the Midbar for things to grow like orchards and

gardens. So the Posuk is really coming to answer our question. The Bnei Yisrael were in the Midbar and then there was a Mekoishesh Eitzim, because it was possible to find things growing in the Midbar at this time because of the Be'ir Shel Miriam. Mimeila all the questions are answered. This is why they were missing things that grew because Miriam had been Nifteres and there was no water to give nutrients to the earth in order that things should grow.

21:18 - 19 ומתנה, נחליאל; ומנחליאל, יט באר הפרוה שרים, פרוה נדיבי העם, במחלק, במשענתם; וממדבר, מתנה יח **19 - 21:18** Chazal interpret the word Matana to mean the Toirah. The Gemara in Eiruvim says that if a person behaves humbly like a Midbar that everyone treads upon, then he is Zoiche that Toirah is given to him as a gift. This idea that Toirah is given as a gift to someone who behaves with humility is one of the 48 things that you are Koine Toirah with.

In the Sefer Yikar Tiferes he explains that this is the way we begin Eloikai Nitzar at the end of Shemone Esrei when we say V'nafshi K'afar Lakol Ti'ye. This is the concept of a person who treats his own honor and Nefesh as like the dust upon which everyone treads. We follow that with a Bakasha that P'sach Libi B'soirasecha that Hashem should open our hearts to Toirah.

There is a Teshuva in the Netziv's Maishiv Davar, that a Talmid Chochom was Niftar and he left in his will that his Chidushai Toirah that he learned while learning a Sugya can be published, however, his Teshuvos to people can't be published because he was not into the Sugya and he didn't trust himself that the Teshuvos were reliable to print. The children wanted to know if they were Mechuyav to follow the father's command of not publishing the Teshuvos or is the Toirah not his and he is not in control of the concepts he came up with.

The Netziv bases his answer on our Posuk of מתנה וממדבר, The Psak he gives is that Toirah can't belong to a person. Someone can choose where to disseminate his Chidushim and who to teach it to, that is his right. However, a person can't say he doesn't want anyone to have it, as that is not his right.

On the topic of the Parah Aduma we have to understand a little bit about Tumah. When Moshiach will come Bim'heira B'yamainu, we will once again be Noiheg Tumah and Taharah and everything will be divided between things that are Tamei and things that are Tahor. We will have to have a separate set of dishes for the days of Tumah and Taharah unless you want to use plastic. We will have to have a separate car for Tumah and Taharah.

וזאת לפנים בישראל על-הגאולה ועל-התמורה, לקיים כל-דבר, שלף איש נעלו, ז At the end of Megillas Rus in **4:7** we learn ונתן לרעהו; וזאת התעודה, בישראל בישראל The custom was to do a Kinyan Chalipin which today we do with a handkerchief that is used when you sell your Chameitz or by the Kesubah and that exchange creates a Kinyan. The custom in those days was to use a Na'al as is used in the Posuk which some want to say means a shoe, however, others like the Even Ezer here and Rabbeinu Bachye in Parshas Shemos want to say it means a glove. If it meant a shoe it would have said Na'aloi Mei'al Ragloi so here it means a glove. The question is why was everyone wearing gloves? The Teretz is that in a world of Tumah and Taharah you want to wear gloves.

Let's say you have a friend who went to a Levaya, he is now an Av Hatumah. The Meis is an Avi Avois Hatumah and he became an Av Hatumah. If you shake his hand you become a Rishoin L'tumah. A person can't become a Sheini, however, as just illustrated; it can happen that a person becomes a Rishoin. For that reason it was common to wear gloves. If a person who was at a Levaya shakes your hand and you are wearing a glove than the glove becomes a Rishoin and the Tumah is not transmitted to the person wearing the glove. So it was a wise practice in those days to always wear a glove.

We read in the Haftoirah to Parshas Zachar that Shmuel kills Agag. Shmuel **1 15:33** לג כאשר שקלה ניאמר שמואל--כאשר שקלה If Shmuel was a Nazir how could he become Tamei by killing Agag? The answer may be the same that he wore perhaps 2 gloves and the outside glove became the Av Hatumah and the inside glove became the Rishoin L'tumah and the Tumah is not transmitted then to a human being as a Sheini.

the Malach came and was ready to destroy Bilam because of that which he done. 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 Ribbainoi 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 וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר: נֹאֵם בְּלִעָם בְּנֹו כְעֹר, וְנֹאֵם הַכֹּהֵן שְׁתֵּם הָעֵין טו As we know, Bilam did really want to curse Klal Yisrael. He knew that he couldn't do something that the Ribbainoi 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** וַיֹּאֶר, וְאִשָּׁר תֹּאֶר, יִוֹאֶר כִּי יִדְעָתִי, אֶת אִשָּׁר-תִּבְרָךְ מְבָרָךְ, וְאִשָּׁר תֹּאֶר, יִוֹאֶר 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 וַיֹּאֶר, וְאִשָּׁר תֹּאֶר, יִוֹאֶר כִּי יִדְעָתִי, אֶת אִשָּׁר-תִּבְרָךְ מְבָרָךְ, וְאִשָּׁר תֹּאֶר, יִוֹאֶר 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 אִשָּׁר-תִּבְרָךְ מְבָרָךְ 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 Ribbainoi 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** **ח** וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם, לִינוּ פֹה הַלַּיְלָה, meaning, stay the night and I will see what Hashem responds. In the morning he says to them, **22:13** **יג** וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-שָׂרֵי בָלָק, לִכּוּ אֶל-אַרְצְכֶם: כִּי מָאֵן יִקְנֶה, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל-שָׂרֵי מוֹאָב, עִם-בָּלָעַם וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם, בַּבֹּקֶר, לִלְלָה, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֶם-לִקְרָא לְךָ בָּאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים, קוּם לֶךְ אִתָּם; וְאָדָּה, אֶת-הַדֹּבֶר אֲשֶׁר-אָדָּבֶר אֵלֶיךָ--אֹתוֹ תַעֲשֶׂה So the next day we see in **22:21** **כא** וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם, בַּבֹּקֶר, וַיַּחְבֹּשׁ אֶת-אַתְנָנוֹ; וַיִּלְךָ, עִם-שָׂרֵי מוֹאָב **כא** He is doing exactly what Hashem says. Later when the Malach blocks his way and asks him why is he going, he responds **22:34** **לד** וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם אֶל-מַלְאָךְ לֵאמֹר, הִטָּאתִי--כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, כִּי אִתָּה נִצַּב לִקְרָאתִי בַדֶּרֶךְ; וְעַתָּה אֵם-רָעָה בְּעֵינַי, אֲשׁוּבָה לִי I sinned and I will even turn to go home. A total Tzaddik. Then it says, **22:38** **לח** וַיֹּאמֶר בָּלָעַם אֶל-בָּלָק, הִנֵּה-בִאתִי אֵלֶיךָ--עַתָּה, הִנֵּל אֹכֵל דָּבָר מֵאוֹמָה: הַדֹּבֶר, לֵאמֹר, כִּי אֲשֶׁר יֵשִׁים אֵלַיִם בְּפִי--אֹתוֹ אֲדַבֵּר 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 תֹאדָר בְּעֵמֶךָ, 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 **ה 6:5-6** זָכַר-נָא מֶה- יַעֲזִיבְלָק מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב, וּמֶה-עָנָה אֹתוֹ, בְּלָעָם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר--מִן-הַשָּׁטִיִּים, עַד-הַגִּלְגָּל, לְמַעַן, דַּעַת צְדָקוֹת יְיָ. Remember what happened with Balak and Bilam that you should know the righteous acts of Hashem with how he protected us and בְּמֶה וְכִי הוּא אֵלֹהֵינוּ 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 (זאת חקת) (וַיְדַבֵּר יְרֵד, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר). 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) (משל לבן שפחה שטינף פלטיין של מלך. אמרו תבא אמו ותקנה הצואה, כך תבא פרה ותכפר על העגל: **אדמה** 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, (זאת חקת התורה), (לפי שהשטן ואומות העולם מונין את ישראל לומר מה המצוה הזאת ומה טעם יש בה: **זאת חקת התורה**), 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 (וַתָּמָת שָׁם מִרְיָם, וַתִּקָּבֶר שָׁם), a Gizairas Shava, Sham Sham to Egla Arufa. That just like by Egla 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 Golias, Shaul had promised that whoever kills Golias 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 Golias 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 (וְתָמַךְ שָׁם מִרְיָם) 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 (בַּעַת הַהוּא) וכיון שמת סיחון מנוהו, לא היה 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 Moiavis but a Midyanis. If so, then the whole Lomdus that Dovid is Muttar Bikh'al because of Moiavi V'loi Moiavis shouldn't start because she was actually a Midyanis?