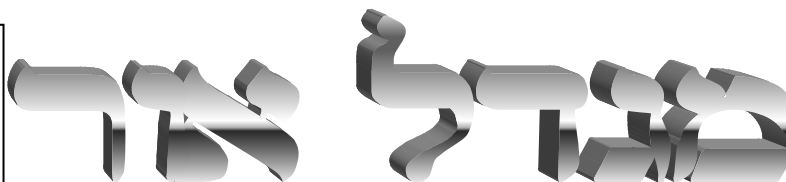


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May the learning of this week's issue be a zechus for a *Refuah Shelaima* For Hind'l bas Leiba Basha. May HaShem grant her a speedy recovery amongst all the other ill members of Klal Yisrael.

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

**Zmanim for שבת**

Wesley Hills, NY

- 8:14 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:32 - שקיעה
- 8:36 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:12 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:27 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:33 - שקיעה
- 9:15 - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:45 - צאת 72

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

*A Bit of Bitachon - A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda.*

**Oh, That Explains It!**

While there is no one reason for why a tzaddik is experiencing troubles, R' Bachya feels that some explanation would be beneficial. He therefore offers several possibilities, with pesukim to back them up, for why a tzaddik might experience hardship. It is possible that a tzaddik must toil for his parnasa because of some past sin, for which HaShem is punishing him. (HaShem prefers to punish the righteous in this temporal world rather than in the eternal one. This way their Olam HaBa is greater.)

It may also be that HaShem chooses to give the tzaddik suffering in this world in order to increase his reward in the World to Come. If he was righteous despite his hardships, his reward will be exponentially increased.

Sometimes, explains the Chovos HaLevavos, HaShem will visit suffering upon a tzaddik to highlight that he serves HaShem with joy and a cheerful acceptance, even when things are challenging, so that others might learn from him, as with the suffering of Iyov.

Sometime HaShem tests the tzaddik with poverty, illness, or loss because his generation is wicked and this shows that he serves HaShem even when he is pummeled by suffering, and accentuates the difference between him and those around him, so that at the Day of Judgment, they will be forced to agree that he deserves reward while they deserve punishment.

Finally, R' Bachya suggests that a tzaddik might suffer for failing to reprimand the evildoers of his generation and defend the honor of HaShem.

- To be continued

**Thought of the week:**

Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you.

**"ועתה לכה נא ארה לי... כי ידעתי את אשר תברך מברך ואשר תאר יואר." (במדבר כ"ב:)**

**"And now, please curse this nation for me... for I know that those you bless are blessed and those that you curse are cursed."**

Chazal (Avoda Zara 4a-b) tell us that Bilam's power emanated from his ability to correspond his curses with the precise moment of G-d's anger (which lasts roughly 6/100s of a second each day.) If so, that explains how we was able to curse. From where do we know that he had any ability to bless, as Balak's message to Bilam stated?

The Ohr HaChaim suggests that Bilam used his ability to foretell the future to fool people for his own benefit. When he saw in the stars that someone was destined for greatness, Bilam would make a great show of blessing him, so that when he became great, it was thought to be the result of Bilam's blessing.

The Sipurno, though, says that Bilam was known to have no ability to bless. That is why Balak asked Bilam to curse the Jews, rather than bless Moav to win a battle against them. Instead, these words were only said by King Balak as a show of honor to Bilam, that he didn't only think of him as one who caused damage.

This is a tremendous lesson. Even among the wicked, to whom the ability to be evil and cruel is a matter of pride, the idea that they are totally bad is hurtful. [For example, it is known that the Nazis *ym"v*, who reveled in torture, would take in suffering dogs and nurse them back to health or feed them, even while their owners were murdered in cold blood.] Balak knew that to categorize Bilam as totally wicked, even though it was true, would be an insult. He therefore said, "I know that those you bless are blessed," even if Bilam had never done this in his life.

How much more so must we be aware, then, in dealing with others, especially children or loved ones, not to categorically denounce them as "bad" or "awful"? Even while highlighting their mistakes in an effort to correct them, we must be encouraging at the same time, reminding them of the good of which they are capable. To do otherwise would be to insult and cause harm.

What is even more remarkable is the thought that when this statement was made, Bilam had never done anything truly good for others, such as blessing them out of the desire to wish goodness upon them. And yet, after this, when HaShem told Bilam not to curse the Jews, Bilam expressed his personal desire to bless them!

Perhaps the seeds Balak planted out of mere courtesy had sprouted into a change even in the wicked Bilam. If that is the case, then when we plant seeds of encouragement and praise in the hearts of others, they may sprout and blossom into effecting the very behavior the person previously felt incapable of. It is possible that even if they were truly incapable of it before, those words can work miracles, just as they did on Bilam, of all people.

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*Seymour was a hard-working young man in the 1930's. He had studied in a Yeshiva, taken some college courses, and was prepared for a career in Physical Education, a job which at the time paid \$3,000 a year, a decent wage.*

*One evening, his college professor asked to meet him for a cup of coffee. They chatted, and the professor planted seeds of doubt in the young man's mind. He never really doubted HaShem or Judaism, but he felt he had questions. If he allowed them to fester they might take over. Instead, he headed straight for the home of R' Dovid Leibowitz z"l, great-nephew of the Chofetz Chaim and founder of Yeshivas R' Yisrael Meir HaKohen (known today as Chofetz Chaim.)*

*Though it was late in the evening, perhaps 10 o'clock, R' Dovid welcomed the youth in and they spoke for several hours. When he left, Seymour felt energized, like he could conquer the world.*

*He never did become a P.E. teacher. Instead, he continued his studies at the Yeshiva, became a Rav and served Klal Yisrael in numerous capacities for over seventy years. All because someone felt him worth the effort to encourage.*