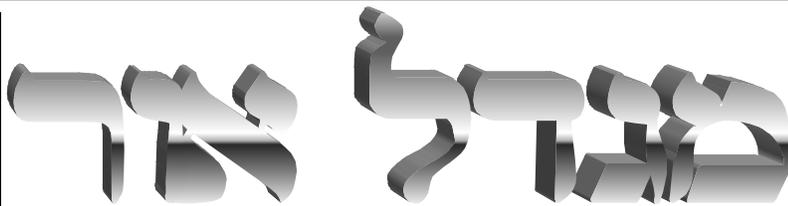


Distributors Wanted

Weekly Torah publication looking for people to receive e-mail, print and share Migdal Ohr with friends and family.

info@JewishSpeechWriter.com

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A publication dedicated to Harbotzas Torah

This issue sponsored by

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Zmanim for שבת

Wesley Hills, NY

- 8:12 - הדלקת נרות
- 8:30 - שקיעה
- 8:40 - זק"ש מ"א
- 9:16 - זק"ש גר"א
- 10:31 - סוף זמן תפילה
- 8:31 - שקיעה
- 9:21* - צאת הכוכבים
- 9:43 - צאת 72

*Based on Emergence of 3 stars

Times Courtesy of MyZmanim.com

A Bit of Bitachon - A weekly infusion of security from Chovos HaLevavos written by R' Bachya ibn Pakuda over a thousand years ago.

He's Good for it

We continue explaining the group who "seek collateral from G-d," by saying they first need to amass sufficient wealth to support themselves and their families in this world for the rest of their lives, and then they can calmly focus on serving G-d.

The sixth problem with this concept is that if one would know for certain that the borrower would pay the loan back even before it falls due, and would pay him double what he lent, simply for waiting for the repayment until the time it is due, he would never take collateral from him under any circumstances.

If that is so, how much more so is it repulsive to demand security from the Creator, Whom we constantly see behaves with goodness to us in the past and the present, and Who rewards us for mitzvos between Man and G-d and Man and Man, reward beyond comprehension, and surely beyond description, as it is written, "No eye has seen it, but Yours, HaShem, what You have prepared and will do for those who trust in You."

- To be continued

Thought of the week:

Scientists should always state the opinions upon which their facts are based.

(It's deep - think about it.)

"וירא בלק בן צפור את כל עשה ישראל לאמרי... וישלח מלאכים אל בלעם..."

"And Balak, son of Tzipor, saw all that Israel had done to the Emorites... and he sent messengers to Bilaam..."

The B'nai Yisrael left Egypt amid miracles and wonders. The Torah was given with thunder and lightning, and the silence that filled the rest of the world enabled everyone to hear what was happening. At the time, the kings of the surrounding nations thought the apocalypse was coming but Bilaam calmed them by saying, "G-d is merely giving the Torah to His people."

As they traveled, the Jewish People encountered opposition, and when Sichon stood up to them, he and his people were vanquished and their land taken. Balak saw this, and took action.

Unlike Yisro, who heard of all the miracles and came to join the Jewish camp, Balak watched events unfold and took a different approach. He sought the secret of the Jews' success. He asked the Midianites, in whose midst Moshe had grown up. They told him Moshe's strength lay in his mouth. Balak therefore called upon Bilaam whose mouth had the power to curse, as a means of counteracting Moshe's strength.

Why did he attempt this when it was clear that G-d was on the side of the Israelites and was the source of their uncanny victories? Should Balak not have sought to make peace with them and spared the lives of his people? At the very least he could have tried to keep a low profile and hope to avoid a conflict with the Jews.

The question is deepened by the Kli Yakar's observation that as a king, Balak had access to the chronicles and history books and saw in them tales of Yaakov's capture of Shechem from the Emorites, which he conquered with his "sword and bow." Chazal say these are euphemisms for prayer and thus the Jews power lay in their mouths even earlier, and therefore he hired Bilaam.

Balak saw countless proofs of G-d's protection of Israel, yet he thought he could outwit them. What was he thinking?

The answer is that though he saw evidence, he looked at it from a scientific perspective. He saw a nation having uncanny success. It was attributed to their powers of speech. He therefore determined that by utilizing opposing powers of speech, he could counteract them.

He only saw the mechanics of the Jewish triumph, but not the underlying force which granted them victory, HaShem's will. He took empirical evidence gathered from what he saw, and interpreted it according to his whim. He knew HOW the Jews succeeded, but didn't think deeply into it or reflect further upon WHY they did.

Scientists look at the world around us and tell us HOW things work. They discover laws of nature and base their opinions on experiments they perform. However, this scientific approach fails to identify the hidden force behind everything, which is the Creator. To Yisro, it was clear, and he praised G-d for the kindness He bestowed upon the Jews. Balak stopped short of seeing beyond the physical realities and set himself up for failure.

If we look around us and view things superficially, we are just as short-sighted as Balak. Instead, we should see the natural world around us as hints and clues to what lies beneath it all, and is the real life-force of the world – the will of G-d.

Dr. Andrew Goldfinger is a scientist who was part of the team which earned numerous patents for developing workable methods of fiber-optic data transmission. He agreed to be interviewed by a respected scientific magazine on the condition that they would print whatever he told them. They laughingly agreed and the interview began. "Where did you get the idea for the method you devised," they asked. "From G-d," he answered.

"We're a scientific magazine!" they cried, "We can't print that 'G-d' gave you the idea!"

"I told you from the outset you wouldn't like my answers," said Dr. Goldfinger. "As a scientist, I observe the world, and it is clear to me that G-d's fingerprint is on everything. The idea for fiber-optics was put in my head by G-d. You can print the story or not, but it won't change the fact that that's where it came from."