

Balak 5786



Start 19:31 | End 20:34

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO TORAH, NOT TRUMP

RABBI DOVID HORWITZ

Balak, King of Moav, hired Bilaam of Midyan to come and curse the Jewish people, in the hopes that his words would turn Hashem against them, so that he may engage them in battle and remove them from his land.

Balak knew that as long as Hashem was on Israel's side, there was no stopping them from conquering land after land. But how does one get Hashem to turn His back on His people? It sounds like an exercise in futility! Rashi explains that Balak inquired of their leader, Moshe Rabbeinu. Where was he from? Where did he grow up? What were his strengths? He discovered that Moshe grew up in Midyan and his power was prayer! Balak then assumed that if he were to employ another man from Midyan, Bilaam, whose power also was in his speech, he would be able to neutralize Moshe's hold on Hashem and would be able to turn the tide away from the Jews.

Balak instructed Bilaam to curse the Jews, which he attempted to do on three separate occasions. Yet each time, as he was about to curse them, Hashem intervened and twisted Bilaam's words into blessings! Was this something supernatural, that Bilaam was unable to curse the Jews or was there a logic to it?

The medrash explains that curses on their own are insufficient to cause Hashem to turn away from His people. When Hashem is happy with us, curses have absolutely no effect. The medrash states however, that because we sin on a daily basis, there is one moment each day that Hashem grows angry and Bilaam possessed the knowledge of knowing when that was. He planned on cursing them during that fleeting moment when Hashem was angry, which could

have caused serious damage to the Jewish people.

When Balak asked him why he blessed the Jews instead of cursing them, Bilaam replied that Hashem had not gotten angry at the Jews at all during those days. He was therefore powerless to say anything negative about them.

At the end of the parsha, as Bilaam takes leave of Balak, he told him that although he had been powerless to harm the Jewish people with his speech, seeing as Hashem had not gotten angry all of that time, they could still harm them if they could get them to be promiscuous, as Hashem would certainly turn against them, since He despises promiscuity. Unfortunately the plan worked. The Jews were led astray by the Midyanite women and 24,000 from the tribe of Shimon perished.

The Torah is teaching us a frightening message. When we keep the Torah to the degree that Hashem is happy with us, we are untouchable. No power in the world can harm us! The only people that can harm us is ourselves! It is due to our sins that bad things happen to us as a nation.

The Rambam sums this up clearly in the beginning of the laws of Taanit, fasting. He writes that when calamity befalls the Jewish people, it is our duty to examine ourselves, in order to figure out which of our sins has caused Hashem to remove His supernatural protection from us. Where there is suffering, there must be sin.

Other world powers may analyze and govern the world based on politics, economics, oil prices and the stock market, but Hashem, the supreme world leader, runs this world on one thing only; the principles of reward and punishment brought upon us by our mitzvot and our aveirot, our good deeds and our bad deeds. By choosing good, we play our role in ensuring Hashem is on our side!



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Our Rabbis famously teach (Avos 4:1): "איזהו חכם? הלומד מכל אדם".

A Jew learns from everyone... even from our enemies. Balak and Bilaam wanted so very badly to destroy the Jewish people.

They carried on extreme measures, against all odds, to try to ruin us. (Of course, however, they failed... Hashem ALWAYS protects Am Yisrael; we will NEVER be destroyed.) To this very day, our enemies focus their entire lives on hurting us. They are relentless, displaying remarkable רצון – desire and willpower.

How do we respond? We defend with tefillah, with bravery... and with even more רצון – determination to win, both physically and spiritually! We must learn this trait from our enemies. The Alter Mi'Kelm (Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv, Kisvei HaSaba Mi'Kelm, vol. 1, p. 59) teaches: "ראשית דבר אשר יוביל את האדם להצלחה היא תשוקת החכמה".

In order to merit the wisdom of the Torah, we must WANT that wisdom! Once we WANT, we'll make it happen... and Hashem will help us get there.

I sat down this week with six beautiful 8th graders from our community and asked them: "Do you want to be a תלמיד חכם? Do you want to know Torah?" Most of them responded, honestly: "No, not really." (One said: "I'm not sure yet.") I explained to them that the Jewish neshamah certainly wants Torah... but it's up to us to realize that desire. It's up to us to learn from Balak, from Bilaam, and from all our enemies. It's up to us to teach ourselves and our children to WANT TO WANT.

Once we want, Hashem will certainly help us achieve our goal!



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Same thing with learning Torah. You can learn alone. You can read a Gemara. You can even understand the sugya. But Torah l'doros was built in a beit midrash. With a chavrusa, with back and forth, with the give and take of Torah, and with dibuk chaverim. The Mishnah lists dibuk chaverim among the things through which Torah is acquired (Avos 6:6). And this is exactly what Yaakov Avinu did. Before he took his family down to Mitzrayim, the very first thing he arranged was a beit midrash. On the pasuk יָאֵת יְהוּדָה שְׁלַח לִפְנֵי אֶל יוֹסֵף לְהוֹרִית לָפָנָיו –

"And Yehuda he sent before him to Yosef, to prepare before him in Goshen" (Bereishis 46:28), Rashi explains: to establish a place of learning from which halacha would go forth. Before houses. Before parnassah. Before anything else. First a beit midrash. Weekly Challenge: Think about what the most important thing in Ra'anana is.

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ASK THE RABBI

RABBI SHABTAI YOGEL, ROSH BEIT MEDRASH

Question: If the Fast of the 17th of Tammuz falls during a chassan and kallah's Sheva Brachos week, must they fast?

Answer: This question was already discussed by the Ritva at the end of Maseches Taanis, and his conclusion — which is accepted as the halacha — is that the chassan and kallah must fast.

One might have thought that they should be exempt. After all, if one of the seven close relatives of the chassan or kallah passes away during Sheva Brachos, they do not begin sitting shivah until after the Sheva Brachos ends. Since these days are considered a personal Yom Tov for the couple, the usual laws of mourning are postponed. Based on that, one could argue that mourning over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash should also be suspended during Sheva Brachos.

However, the Ritva gives two reasons why this is not the case: First, personal mourning is not the same as the national mourning of Klal Yisrael over the Churban. A private celebration cannot override the mourning of the entire Jewish people.

Second, the pasuk says, "If I do not place Yerushalayim above my greatest joy." Even during their happiest days, a chassan and kallah are obligated to remember Yerushalayim and participate in the fasts established over the Churban.

The Ritva understands that the 17th of Tammuz is fundamentally a fast of mourning. The Chasam Sofer, however, notes that the Rambam emphasizes a different aspect. According to the Rambam, these fasts are days of teshuvah — times to reflect on the tragedies that befell Klal Yisrael and strengthen our relationship with Hashem. Nevertheless, the practical halacha remains that a healthy chassan and kallah must fast on the 17th of Tammuz. (If the fast is postponed, there are differing opinions.)

May we merit the day when these fasts will be transformed into days of joy, celebration, and Yom Tov for all of Klal Yisrael.



SATAN OF MERCY

RABBI MOSHE ARIEL MARGI

Bilam was convinced he was on his way to greatness. Wealth, honor, and power were all within reach. His plan was simple: curse the Jewish people and become one of the richest men in the world. Everything was going perfectly — until it wasn't.

Suddenly, his donkey began acting strangely. It veered off the road, crushed his foot against a wall, and finally lay down altogether. Bilam was furious. To him, these were frustrating obstacles standing in the way of his success.

The Torah describes the scene: "An angel of Hashem stood in the road as an obstacle to him." At first glance, it sounds like an angel sent to punish Bilam. But Rashi reveals something remarkable. This was actually an angel of mercy, trying to save Bilam from sin and destruction. Notice the wording. The Torah does not say the angel was a satan. It says he was a satan lo — an obstacle to him.

Question: I gave birth to a baby girl a little over a month ago, baruch Hashem. Do I need to fast this week on the 17th of Tammuz? I am fully nursing.

Answer: First and foremost, we hope and pray that we will merit to see the fast transformed into a day of joy and celebration this very year.

If, however, the fast does take place, you are exempt from fasting. When Chazal instituted the fasts commemorating the Churban — the 17th of Tammuz, Tzom Gedaliah, Asarah B'Teves, and Tishah B'Av — they did not include those who are ill, even when there is no danger involved. Likewise, pregnant and nursing women were generally not included in the obligation of the minor fasts. (Tishah B'Av is more stringent, and hopefully we will not need to discuss it this year.)

For these purposes, a woman is considered pregnant from the beginning of pregnancy.

A nursing mother is generally defined as a woman who is actively nursing. Some poskim maintain that any woman within 24 months of giving birth is considered a nursing mother, even if she is no longer nursing, because Chazal teach that a woman's body does not fully recover from childbirth until that time has passed.

However, most poskim disagree and hold that only a woman who is actually nursing is exempt. They point out that most women today return to normal functioning after recovering from childbirth, going to work and carrying on their regular activities.

Even so, a woman who is nursing only partially, while also supplementing with formula, is still considered a nursing mother and is exempt from the fast.

Furthermore, a woman within 24 months of childbirth who is no longer nursing but is not feeling well may have additional grounds for leniency, and should consult her Rav.

From all this we learn that women are generally obligated in the fasts of the Churban just like men. The fact that the Shulchan Aruch specifically exempts pregnant and nursing women implies that healthy women who are neither pregnant nor nursing are obligated to fast.

Some communities developed a custom of broadly exempting women from these fasts, but this practice is not supported by the Shulchan Aruch. On the contrary, the Shulchan Aruch indicates that healthy women are obligated. Rav Shmuel Vosner zt"l spoke out on several occasions about this issue. Nevertheless, where a longstanding family custom exists, such customs carry significant weight.

In your case, since you are fully nursing a one-month-old baby, you are exempt from fasting on the 17th of Tammuz.

0584810910 לשאלות

Bilam saw an enemy. In reality, it was compassion.

The Gemara teaches a similar lesson. Two merchants set out on a business trip. One of them steps on a thorn and misses the ship. Furious, he curses his bad luck. Days later he learns that the ship sank at sea. Suddenly, what felt like a disaster becomes a source of gratitude.

Sometimes life works the same way. We miss an opportunity. A door closes. Plans fall apart. We see only the frustration and disappointment. But often we are seeing the story from Bilam's perspective, not from Hashem's.

The things that feel like setbacks may actually be protecting us. The delays, the detours, and the closed doors may be acts of mercy we simply do not understand yet.

Perhaps the next time life slams on the brakes, we can pause before becoming angry. It may just be that what feels like a roadblock is really a kiss from Hashem — an angel of mercy helping guide us exactly where we need to be.



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TORAH BYTES

IN MEMORY OF:

In memory of Israel Natan
Rosenfeld HY"D, a heroic soldier
who fell one year ago, defending
Am Yisrael



בלק תשפ"ו

20:34 יציאה | 19:31 כניסה



מהדורה עברית-אנגלית

גיליון: 141



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שאל את הרב

ראש בית המדרש: הרב שבתי יגל שליט"א

שאלה: חתן וכלה שצום י"ז בתמוז חל בתוך שבעת ימי המשתה שלהם, האם צריכים הם לצום?

תשובה: שאלה זו כבר נידונה בתורתם של ראשונים, הלא הוא הריטב"א שדן בזה בסוף מסכת תענית, ומסקנתו (וכך היא גם המסקנה להלכה) שצריכים הם לצום, ואבאר את דבריו.

הנה היה מקום לומר שחתן וכלה פטורים מצום זה, וכמו שמצינו שאם חס ושלום אחד משבעת הקרובים של החתן או הכלה נפטר לבית עולמו בתוך שבעת ימי המשתה, הם אינם צריכים להתחיל לשבת 'שבעה' בימי המשתה, מאחר וימי המשתה הרי הם כ'רגל' ו'יום טוב' לחתן ולכלה ואין אבלות חלה בהם (אלא רק לאחר סיום ימי המשתה יתחילו לנהוג אבלות).

ואם כן היה מקום לומר שגם אבלות על חורבן בית המקדש לא תחול בתוך ימי המשתה של החתן והכלה.

אולם הריטב"א דחה זאת מכח שתי סיבות:

(א) אינה דומה אבלות של יחיד, לאבלות של רבים - כלל ישראל - על חורבן בית המקדש, ואין כוח ל'רגל' של יחיד (חג פרטי של החתן והכלה) לגבור על אבלות של רבים (מה שאין כן באבלות של יחיד).

(ב) הרי יש פסוק מפורש: 'אם לא אעלה את ירושלים על ראש שמחתי', ואם כן מחויבים החתן והכלה להעלות את ירושלים בעת שמחתם, ולצום בתעניות החורבן.

והנה בדברי הריטב"א הללו מבואר שהוא למד שגדר צום י"ז בתמוז, הוא צום של 'אבלות', אך החתם סופר למד מדברי הרמב"ם שגדר הצום הוא צום של 'תשובה' שבימים שאירעו מאורעות רעות לעם ישראל, צריכים אנו לפשפש במעשינו ולשוב בתשובה, ומשום כך צמים, שלא מצינו בהלכות אבלות, שהאבלות מחייבת 'צום'.

על כל פנים מסקנת ההלכה היא שחתן וכלה בריאים חייבים לצום את צום י"ז בתמוז (אמנם אם מדובר בצום י"ז בתמוז נדחה יש בזה דעות שונות) ויהי רצון שהצום הרביעי ייהפך לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים טובים.



שטן של רחמים

רב משה אריאל מרגי

רכוב על אתונו, מתבוסס בדמיונות על עושר אגדי וכבוד, הולך בלעם למואב. העסקה די פשוטה: הוא יקלל את עם ישראל, ובתמורה הוא יהפוך לאחד האנשים העשירים ביותר בעולם! חלום חיוו הולך להתגשם. רק שהכל ילך כמתוכנן.

אבל אז דברים מתחילים להשתבש. קורה משהו לאתון שלו. היא דוחקת לו את הרגל לקיר, יורדת מהשביל, ובסוף פשוט רובצת על מקומה. בלעם רותח - ומכה בה בחמת זעם.

ככה זה מתואר בתורה: "ויתיצב מלאך ה' בדרך לשטן לו". מלאך שנשלח בחרון אף עם חרב שלופה, שתפקידו להיות 'שטן' - במילים פשוטות מדובר במלאך של דין ועונש.

אבל רש"י מפרש דבר מדהים: 'לשטן לו' - מלאך של רחמים היה, והיה רוצה למונעו מלחטו, שלא יחטא ויאבד.

רש"י מדקדק את מה שהתורה כתבה, לא כתוב שהמלאך היה 'שטן'. כתוב שהמלאך היה 'שטן לו' - בלעם חווה וראה את זה כ'שטן'. אבל באמת? זה היה מלאך של רחמים!!!

שאלה: ילדתי בת בשעה טובה ומוצלחת לפני קצת יותר מחודש, האם אני צריכה לצום השבוע את צום י"ז בתמוז? אני מניקה הנקה מלאה.

תשובה: ראשית מקווים אנו כי נתבשר בבשורות טובות, והצום הרביעי ייהפך עוד השנה לששון ולשמחה.

במידה ולא נזכה, הרי שאת פטורה מהצום.

הטעם הוא שכאשר חכמים גזרו את צומות החורבן (י"ז בתמוז, ט' באב, צום גדליה, ו' בטבת) הם לא הכלילו את החולים בתוך החיוב של צום זה, גם אם מדובר בחולים שאין בהם סכנה.

גם מעוברות ומניקות לא נכללו בתוך החיוב של צומות אלו (יוצא מן הכלל הוא צום ט' באב שהוא חמור יותר ובתקווה שלא ניזקק לכך השנה).

הגדרת מעוברת לעניין זה הוא כבר מתחילת ההיריון.

הגדרת מינקת לעניין זה:

הנה יש מהפוסקים שנקטו שכל אישה בתוך 24 חודשים ללידתה מוגדרת כמינקת גם אם היא לא מניקה בפועל כלל וכלל, וטעם הדבר הוא שבגמרא מבואר שבשעת הלידה אבריה של האישה מתפרקים ואינם חוזרים לתיקונם עד לאחר כ"ד חודש.

אולם לא כך דעת רוב הפוסקים, ומינקת נחשבת רק מי שמניקה בפועל, ורואים אנו בחוש כי נשים בזמננו לאחר תקופת ההחלמה מהלידה, חוזרות לתפקוד מלא, יוצאות לעבודה, ומתהלכות כאחד האדם, ולכן אין להקל אלא רק למי שאכן מניקה בפועל.

אולם גם מי שלא מניקה הנקה מלאה, ונותנת לתינוקה תחליפי חלב - גם היא בכלל מניקה תיחשב, על אף שההנקה היא הנקה חלקית.

על אף האמור לעיל - אישה שהיא בתוך 24 חודש ללידה, ואינה מניקה כלל, אך אינה חשה בטוב, יש מקום להקל לה יותר ולצרף את דעת מיעוט הפוסקים שהזכרה לעיל, ותעשה שאלת חכם.

והנה מכל זה אנו למדים שבעיקרון גם נשים חייבות בצומות החורבן, כמו גברים, ואם השולחן ערוך כתב שנשים מניקות ומעוברות פטורות מהצום - מכלל לאו אתה שומע הן - שנשים שהן לא מינקות ולא מעוברות - חייבות בצומות הללו (אם הן בריאות).

וזה לא כמו שנהגו בכמה בקהילות החסידים לתת פטור גורף לנשים מצומות הללו, ואין למנהג זה סמך בשולחן ערוך, ואדרבה מבואר בשולחן ערוך ההפך ממש, והגר"ש וואזנר זצ"ל היה מתבטא כמה וכמה פעמים בכאב אודות מנהג זה (אך על כל פנים מי שכך נהגו במשפחתה כבר כמה דורות - גדול כח המנהג).

לשאלות 0584810910

RA'ANANA COMMUNITY KOLLEL

Shacharit

7:00 8:15

Ahuza 198 Raanana

Mincha

13:19 18:00

19:40

Maariv

20:09

Join us

הגמרא במסכת נידה (לא). דורשת את הפסוק מישעיהו: "אוֹדֶךָ ה' כִּי אֶנְפַּתְּ בִּי יֵשֶׁב אֶפְרַיִם וְתִנְחַמְנִי". כשהקב"ה כועס [אנפת ב'] זה רגע של הודאה, ושואל רב יוסף מה הפירוש של הפסוק?

ומסבירה הגמרא: "במה הכתוב מדבר? בשני בני אדם שיצאו לסחורה, ישב לו קוץ לאחד מהן, התחיל מחרף ומגדף. לימים שמע שטבעה ספינתו של חברו בים, התחיל מודה ומשבח. זאת נאמר 'ישב אפר' ותנחמני".

הוא שומע את הצופר הראשון והוא מתחיל לרוץ, הוא יודע שבנסיעה הזאת תלויה עסקת חיוו. אבל פתאום - איי! הוא מסתכל למטה ופרץ של דם מתחיל לקלח מרגלו, הוא מנסה להתעלם ומנסה להמשיך לרוץ, אבל הקוץ כואב, הוא מדדה ומגיע טרף נשימה לחוף רק בשביל לראות את הספינה שכבר הרימה עוגן נע באופק. זה הרגע הכי שחור בחיים שלו, והוא יושב על הרציף מחרף ומגדף.

אבל באמת זה הרגע הכי מתוק של החיים שלו. רק שבאותו רגע אין לו מושג. ואת הנחמה שלו הוא יבין רק אחר כך אוֹדֶךָ ה' כִּי אֶנְפַּתְּ בִּי יֵשֶׁב אֶפְרַיִם וְתִנְחַמְנִי. והלוואי שבפעם הבאה שהדברים ישתבשו בחריקת בלמים, שנצליח לנשום עמוק. ולקחת בחשבון שיש מצב שה'ברקס' הזה - הוא בעצם נשיקה.

מלאך של רחמים שבא לדייק אותך.