



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives.

The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L, in 2010

In this week's Torah portion of Balak, we read of the great miracle that G-d performs: Bilaam's donkey converses with his master. The Torah relates (Chapter 22:28): "G-d opened the mouth of the donkey and it said to Bilaam, 'What have I done to you that you struck me these three times?' "

The great commentator Sforno asks: For what purpose did the Almighty create such a wonder as an animal engaging a human in discourse? The Sforno explains that G-d's intent was to inspire Bilaam to repent from his evil ways. Bilaam's key strength was his power of speech. He had the ability to divine the future and thus commanded fear in all. By empowering the donkey with the ability to speak - the very gift that Bilaam possessed was now given even to a donkey - G-d demonstrated to Bilaam that all speech is the province and domain of G-d Himself. As G-d bestows speech at His will, so too can He remove it at will.

This entire narrative and miracle is an eternal teaching moment. We observe here the esteem and affection with which G-d values all human life, even that of the wicked Bilaam. G-d will create unprecedented wonders to inspire even Bilaam to reconsider his evil ways and repent.

All human life is precious and dear, with potential and nobility abounding. How G-d laments a life unfulfilled is evident from His response at the splitting of the Red Sea. As the angels begin to sing in adoration upon the demise of the Egyptians, G-d declares, "My handiwork is drowning at sea and you desire to sing My praise?!"

Let us take this opportunity to cast our eyes inward and ask ourselves: Have we fulfilled our own great potential, utilizing the precious gifts that G-d has bestowed upon us? The donkey of Bilaam calls out to each of us, down through the ages.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Rabbi Menachem Winter

TABLE TALK

POINTS TO PONDER

Who has counted the dust of Yakov...? (23:10)

The numerous mitzvos that they fulfill on the dust, as not plowing with an ox and donkey, not planting klayim, the ash of the pora aduma... (Rashi)

What is unique about the mitzvos that are related to dust and ash, that Bilaam made reference to them?

PARSHA RIDDLE

Bilaam arose in the morning and saddled his she-donkey... (22:21)

Hashem said, "Wicked one, Avrohom preceded you, as it says "And Avrohom got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey" (Vayeira 22:3) (Rashi).

Who else got his animals ready for riding, even though it should have been done by his servants?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle: Which three mountains were not flattened by the Ananei HaKovod?

Answer: Har Sinai, Har Ha'har and Har Nevo.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *Parshas Balak*, Bilaam twice describes himself as "shesum ha'ayin" (*Bamidbar* 24:3,15). Rav Yehoshua ibn Shu'aib understands this to mean that Bilaam's malevolent power operated via the gaze of his evil eye. In support of the idea of the danger of an evil gaze, he cites, *inter alia*, the prohibition against constructing an entrance to a building facing another building's entrance, which is derived from another phrase in the *parshah*:

"And Bilam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Yisrael abiding in his tents according to their tribes" (*Bamidbar* 24:2) - What did he see? He saw that the openings of their tents did not correspond to each other. He said: "These are worthy that the Divine presence shall rest upon them" (*Bava Basra* 60a).

The main problem raised by the Talmud in its discussion of the problem of gazing into another's domain is articulated as "hezek re'iyah" - "the injury of sight"; the exact sense of this is unclear. Some explain that the problem is the constraint that the lack of privacy will impose on the ability of the victim to freely utilize his property (*Sema siman* 378 s.k. 4; *Pis'chei Choshen, hilchos nezikin*, chapter 14 n. 1); other interpretations include the "evil eye," "evil speech," and modesty (*Chidushei Ha'Ramban to Bava Basra* 59a., *Yad Remah to Bava Basra* 60a).

The common denominator of all the variations of *hezek re'iyah* discussed in the classic literature is that it is the object of the gaze that is somehow harmed or inconvenienced by the gaze. A modern variation involves the reverse scenario, where a claimant objects to being exposed to a view that may be spiritually or religiously harmful to him. Although there is no direct precedent for this claim, some contemporary authorities nevertheless accept it, but their position is not entirely compelling.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

WHO AM I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I died in the 18th century
2. I am known as holy
3. My student was a riddle
4. I am in the Mikraos Gedolos
5. I gave you a Light and Beautiful Fruit

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I will be when I will not be
2. Delayed this year
3. I am referred to as "... of the fourth"
4. I am the beginning of the end

Last Issue's Answers:

#1 Rav Elchonon Wasserman hy"d, was murdered by the Nazis after returning from America to be with his students. His Rebbe was the Chofetz Chaim. He wrote many seforim that have titles beginning with the word "Koveitz" as in the Koveitz Shiurim and Koveitz Ma'amorim. Rav Elchonon addressed the group that was with him, as they were being rounded up to be killed, and told them, "Let us have the proper intentions that we should be proper korbanos, and hopefully we will be able to save our brethren in America." (I was murdered, My Rebbe taught us how to speak, I am known for the Koveitz, I returned to my students, My death saved American Jewry).

#2 Ma'aser rishon (I am named for matzo, I saved the nephew, I was the fugitive, "Fallen ones").

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to

Win a pair of Spy Spec. Video Glasses!



The next raffle will be August 4th.

Visit www.gwckollel.org to submit your answers. Answer as many as you can because each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning.

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