



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

True Leadership

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

"...and Balak ben Tzipor was the king of Moav at that time." (22:4)

As our Parsha begins, Balak, the king of Moav observes the seemingly impossible defeat of Sichon and Og at the hands of the Jewish people who subsequently encamp at the Plains of Moav. He summons the elders of Midyan to discuss the situation and come up with a plan to address the apparent threat to his people. The verse then tells us "And Balak ben Tzipor was the king of Moav at that time." The phrase "at that time" appears to be superfluous, adding nothing to the narrative.

I once heard Rabbi Yissocher Frand explain that the Torah is teaching here what it means to be a true leader. Balak was no tzaddik; quite the opposite. Nevertheless, *at that time*, and in his own way, he demonstrated true leadership, what it really means to be a king. He was concerned for his people, and he took it upon himself to look out for their safety.

We are all leaders in our own way. Whether it's a child, a spouse, a family member, a friend, or a community member, there is someone who depends on us in some way. But being a leader does not mean that we get to demand honor, exert power, or take advantage. To be a leader is to care for those around us, for those who need us and to seek their wellbeing. That is true leadership.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Bilaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "If Balak will give me his houseful of silver and gold, I cannot transgress the Word of Hashem, my G-d, to do anything small or great" (22:18).

Whoever has the following three traits is among the disciples of our forefather Avraham. Whoever has three other traits is among the disciples of the wicked Bilaam. Those who have a good eye, a humble spirit, and a meek soul are from the disciples of our forefather Avraham. Those who have an evil eye, an arrogant spirit, and a greedy soul are from the disciples of the wicked Bilaam. (Avos 5, 22)

Are these three traits the only difference between the disciples of Avraham and Bilaam? Furthermore, the title 'students' is difficult to understand. One who was never taught by a specific teacher cannot be considered their student.

Parsha Riddle

What is the connection between Bilaam and Korach?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What various meanings do words with the root "nun" and "samech" have?

Answer: Neis as a miracle, or neis as a pole on which they put the copper snake, or nos as to run away.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Balak* (25:4-5), the Torah relates:

Hashem said to Moshe, "Take all the leaders of the people (to judge those who worshiped Peor - Rashi). Hang them (the sinners - Rashi) before Hashem against the sun - and the flaring wrath of Hashem will withdraw from Israel." Moshe said to the judges of Israel, "Let each man kill his men who were attached to Baal-peor."

The Yerushalmi (*Sanhedrin* 10:2 - 52a), cited by Rashi, understands the phrase "let each man kill his men" to mean that each individual judge was to kill two men. The judges of Israel numbered 78,600 (based on the Sages' interpretation of *Shemos* 18:21), so it follows that the number of killed was 157,200!

The Ramban finds this approach difficult:

But I cannot understand this, that [we should say that] those *who joined themselves [to Baal-peor]* who were judged [liable to death] were more than a hundred and fifty thousand - a quarter [of the total population] of Israel! Heaven forbid! [Moreover], cases punishable by death [cannot be decided] by [only] one judge, but [require] a court of twenty-three judges. ...

Elsewhere, the Ramban explains that both the execution of the worshipers of the Golden Calf as well as that of the worshipers of Peor were actually extralegal proceedings:

Now this procedure was a decision only for an emergency (*hora'as sha'ah*), in order to sanctify G-d's Name, since those who worshiped [the calf] had not been forewarned [of the death penalty], for who had warned them beforehand? ...

The Ramban adds that according to the Talmudic assertion (*Yoma* 66b) that "those who embraced and kissed (the Calf), were punished with death [by the hand of Heaven],"

It was all a decision under circumstances of emergency, because embracing or kissing an idol does not make one liable to death [by the hand of Heaven] in all future generations.

(This is) similar to that which is said, *Take all the leaders of the people. Hang them before Hashem against the sun - and the flaring wrath of Hashem will withdraw from Israel.* This commandment is thus similar to the one in connection with the manna, where it is said (*Shemos* 16:32), *This is the thing that Hashem has commanded: A full omer of it shall be a safekeeping etc.* I have already mentioned similar instances.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was the opposite.
2. I praised openings.
3. You begin with me.
4. I caused anger.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was the response to Moshe.
2. I only had one eye.
3. I knew the moment.
4. My words are your prayer.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Nechash Hanechoshes (Copper Snake) ((Some say) I am a medical sign, The attacker healed, My end was powder, I made them look up.)

#2 Parah Adumah (Red Heifer) (I am similar to Esav, I confused King Shlomo, There have been 9, There will be a 10th.)

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