

### Don't Need It

What we have has been given to us by Hashem, because He knows what the best possible situation for us is right now. It is not important that we do not understand His calculations, and it is permitted for us to try and improve our lot – so long as we do so in ways permitted by Torah guidelines. However, as long as we are where we are, we need to acknowledge that “This is where Hashem put me and He has given me all that I need for now.”

Foolish people think that success is a function of what and how much they possess.

Ironically, ultimate success is when individuals are no longer burdened with “things.” An expensive, designer briefcase is a status symbol; but the CEO doesn’t carry any briefcase at all. His worth is valued not by the papers he carries in a briefcase, but by the ideas he stores in his mind.

They not only wear out – their novelty and excitement fade quickly. When you see a beautiful home, garden, or automobile, enjoy the view. The owners have already become used to it, and whatever “thing” it is, it probably no longer brings them much pleasure. But you can revel in the concept that Hashem created the whole of Creation for you to enjoy. That garden and that home are “yours” to enjoy even though you did not have to pay for them! When you are down and feel the lack of material possession in your life, consider that He gave you all that you need – and that is enough! (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

## *The Humble Pit*

“The hardened case of a peach pit is too strong for the powerful teeth of animals to crack and yet when we put it into soil it opens automatically. It is clearly designed to protect the seed for the future, so that there will be more trees.”

To become a tree, even a pit from a piece of fruit must humble itself into the soil. We can learn from a pit to humble ourselves before Hashem and others. Gravitare to humble people, willing to admit fault and accept Hashem's Divine Providence. (Norman D. Levy, Based on Rabbi Miller's Duties of the mind)

## From the Beginnings

When Michael Silverman proposed to Gittel Fass, she said, “I’m so lucky - you’re the very first boy I met - for *shidduch* purposes, I mean.”

He answered, "You want to know something? You're the first girl I ever met."

“What? Didn’t you tell me you’ve been going out for almost a year?”

“That’s right,” Michael smiled. “It’s just about a year ago that I started. But you’re still the first one, and now, *baruch Hashem*, the last one. The first date I ever had was with a girl from out-of-town who was studying in Seminary. And, like a lot of those girls, she was a boarder in this very house, on the top floor. So when I rang the bell downstairs, who answered the door? It was you, Gittel!”

She blushed with embarrassment. “That boy was you?”

She remembered the incident because she had been wearing scruffy slippers and her mother's oldest robe, just right for cleaning house, with her hair in curls.

Mrs. Fass, upset, said, "That's how a girl of marriageable age answers the door?"

"Okay, okay, I'll be careful from now on, Ma. Anyway, it makes no difference -

that boy asked for one of the Seminary girls upstairs. He's not interested in me."

“Funny you should have said that.” Michael’s smile spread from ear to ear. “When the *shadchan* called to ask about the outcome of that date, I said she was not for me. But there was this nice girl who answered the door downstairs...” (Chance Encounters)

*The Lorraine Gammat A "H Edition*  
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SHABBATBALAK ☆ ε□k□X,□X♥↑

*Haftarah: Michah 5:6-6:8*

**JUNE 29-30, 2018    17 TAMUZ 5778**

**Friday Shir Hashirim/ Minhah: 6:58, 8:02    Shahrarit: 4:31, 6:40, 8:10, 9:00, 9:10 am**

Candlelighting: **8:12 pm**

Evening Shema after: **9:10 pm**

Morning Shema by: **8:17 am**

**Shabbat Classes: 6:50 pm**

**Shabbat Minhah: 7:50 pm**

**Shabbat Ends: 9:10 pm (R"Y 9:42 pm)**

**These times are applicable only for the Deal area. Sunday Minhah: 7:05 pm**

**The fast of the Seventeenth of Tamuz will be on Sunday, July 1.**

**Fast begins at 4:00 a.m. and ends at 9:00 p.m. Minhah with tefillin 8:00 p.m.**

**The period of the Three Weeks begins on this day. During this time, no weddings or parties with music are permitted.**

**Mabrook to Morris & Leah Gindi on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, Michael & Stacey Gindi and to the great-grandparents, Morris & Stella Sitt and Mrs. Sylvia Gindi.**

**Mabrook to Moshe & Carolene Sivan on the birth of a baby boy. Mabrook to the grandparents, David & Miriam Kassin and to the great-grandparents, Armando & Luisa Behar.**

### *A Message from our Rabbi*

(*Bemidbar* 24:5)

"מֵה־טֹבוֹ אֶהְיֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכַּנְתִּיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל"

“How goodly are your tents, Ya’akob, your dwelling places, Yisrael.”

In his third and final attempt to curse the Jewish People, Bilaam sought to place *ayin hara*, an evil eye, on them. However, looking at the nation from a nearby mountain, he saw that the entrance of each of their tents faced a different direction, so that no one could gaze into the tent of his neighbor. Because of this level of modesty among the Jewish People, Bilaam received Divine inspiration to bless them instead of cursing them.

On this, we can ask two simple questions. Why did Bilaam specifically attempt to place *ayin hara* on the Jewish People now, and how did the modesty of the Jewish People prevent him from succeeding?

The *Taz* answers that until the Jewish People sinned with the Golden Calf, no nation was able to see them, because they were completely covered by the Clouds of Glory, as they traveled through the desert. However, following their sin, the Clouds of Glory were removed from them and for the first time, the Jewish People were exposed to the eyes of the other nations.

Therefore, since Bilaam saw that they were no longer concealed, he decided that the time was right to place an *ayin hara* on them, which specifically rests on things which are not hidden (*Berachot* 20a).

However, the reason why his *ayin hara* did not work on the Jewish People was because of their modesty, which, by its very nature, involves keeping something concealed. So, when Bilaam saw that the Jewish People, despite losing the Clouds of Glory, were still very much concealed, due to their extreme modesty, he was unable to cast upon them any *ayin hara*. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## *For A Good Cause*

*Parashat Balak* contains the well-known story of Balak the King of Moab worrying about the imminent approach of the Jewish people. Moab correctly surmised that, given the fate of the other kings and nations that had challenged *Bnei Yisrael* with conventional military tactics, Moab would not stand a chance confronting them in traditional battle.

Therefore, Balak devised a “secret weapon.” Bilaam had the ability to curse someone. When he did so, the curse would in fact take effect on its intended victim. Therefore, Balak requested that Bilaam curse the “nation that has gone out from Egypt and covered the face of the land.”

Bilaam asked the messengers to stay overnight, so that he could answer Balak’s request the next morning based upon what G-d would tell him. G-d told Bilaam, “Do not go with them; do not curse the people, for they are Blessed” [22:12]. Bilaam relayed that message to Balak’s messengers.

When Balak heard that Bilaam would not come, he assumed that the reason was because the proposed compensation was inadequate — that he had tried to get away too cheap. Therefore, Balak sent a more prestigious delegation promising Bilaam a great reward and granting his every request.

Bilaam, not being anyone’s fool, casually mentioned to the messengers, “Even if Balak will give me his entire treasury filled with silver and gold, my hands are tied — I can only do that which G-d permits me to do.” Again, they proceeded through the whole process of waiting overnight.

This time, G-d told Bilaam, “If these people are coming for your advantage (*likra lecha*), then go with them — just only speak that which I tell you.” If we can even use such terminology, it appears as if G-d changed his mind! The first time that Bilaam asked for permission, G-d said “No. You cannot go!” Then, G-d suddenly appeared to change His mind. What changed?

*Rashi* comments on the words “*Im Likra Lecha*,” that if these people are coming for your benefit — to give you payment, go with them. In other words, if you stand to make profit out of this venture, then I have no objection to your going.

That was the difference! The first time, when they asked Bilaam to come, they did not offer him anything — neither money nor honor. In that situation, G-d told Bilaam, “Do not go.” The second time, Balak offered Bilaam wealth and honor. In that situation, G-d told him, “If you stand to gain from this, then you can go.” Is G-d worried about Bilaam’s livelihood? Is He acting as Bilaam’s agent?

I heard a fantastic insight regarding this concept from Rav Shimon Schwab. The difference, says Rav Schwab, is that one of the most potent forces in the universe is doing something “*Lishma*” — for its own sake, without ulterior motives. Doing something altruistically, for the sake of what one believes to be right, is extremely powerful. However, when people do things because they stand to make a dollar, rather than for the sake of a cause, it loses its potency.

Rav Schwab related this insight in the context of explaining the rise and fall of the Communist system during the previous century. Communism was a very successful movement. Until very recently, over a billion and a half people lived under Communist domination — and yet in recent times we have seen Communism disintegrate.

What made Communism so successful? Rav Schwab argued that Communism became so successful because there were “*Lishma-niks*.” People like Lenin, Trotsky and Marx wanted to give the world a better order. They wanted to give the world a new system to replace the “bankruptcy of capitalism,” in which some are fantastically wealthy and some beg on the street. In a sense, Communism was based on very noble ideals. These people were — for lack of a better word — *L’shem Shamayim* [for the sake of Heaven]! They did it for the sake of Communism. They were *Lishma*!

When people are willing to give up their lives and souls for the sake of a cause, that is a very potent force. We can look back now, over 70 years later, and try to discover what happened to the movement that caused it to collapse. We can suggest that to a large extent, the system failed because it lost this element of ‘*Lishma*’. When we saw that all the leaders of the various “Iron Curtain” countries had stashed away Swiss bank accounts and when we saw all the corruption and graft, we quickly recognized that they had abandoned the *Lishma*. Once they lost the element of *Lishma*, the potency of the force was gone.

This is what G-d was telling Bilaam: When Balak came and said, “Curse the Jews,” without offering honor or money, the reason why Bilaam was going was because he hated Jews. “We need to curse Jews! I want to eradicate Jews.” This is a philosophy. In that case, “You may not go.” G-d knows that a sincere cause is a lethal and potent force.

However, when Balak said, “I will give you Honor and Money,” then G-d told Bilaam: If this is for your own benefit — if you are doing it for the money, then go. That is a different story. If you are “in it” for the money and honor, rather than *Lishma* — then your ability will not be nearly as potent. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

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## *I Never Knew That!*

“I have sinned for I did not know.” (*Bemidbar* 22:34) חָטָאתִי כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי”

When Bil’am was confronted by the angel of Hashem, he admitted that he had sinned since he hadn’t known that the angel was there. The *Shelah* asks: If Bil’am didn’t know that the angel was there in order to prevent him from cursing *B’nei Yisrael*, then what was his sin? How was he to know that Hashem didn’t want him to go?

We can see from here that if a person has the ability to know and understand something, and he chooses not to know, he is still guilty. Since Hashem gave him the capacity to perceive what was wanted from him, he cannot claim ignorance of the law. This is why Bil’am was considered a sinner. He saw that his donkey was constantly veering from the path, something which it had never done before. He should have seen that something was wrong and realized that maybe Hashem was intervening in order to stop him from going to curse His nation. He was therefore held accountable for the knowledge which he had the ability to acquire.

This is something we must always keep in mind. If we have the ability to learn

more *halachot* we must not take the attitude that we are better off not knowing so that we will not transgress. If we have the ability to know what is required of us, we will be held accountable even if we don't take the time to learn the *halachah*. (*Yalkut Hamishai*)