תשפ"ה Balak

#### •Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos•

# 350 שליון

## אמרות שמשון

#### ilaam's Ability to Determine Two Moments of Divine Stringency

וְעַתָּה לְכָה נָא אָרָה לִּי אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי עָצוּם הוּא מִמֶנִי אוּלֵי אוּכַל נַכֶּה בּוֹ וַאֲנָרְשָׁנוּ מִן הָאָרֶץ כִּי יָדְעְתִּי אֵת אֲשֶׁר תִּבָרָדְּ מִבֹרָדְ וַאֲשֶׁר תַּאֹר יוּאָר (כב, ו):

So now, please come and curse this people for me for it is too powerful for me, perhaps I will be able to strike it and drive it away from the land, for I know that whomever you bless is blessed and whomever you curse is accursed.

We need to understand why Balak mentioned Bilaam's

power of blessing as well, when all he was asking of Bilaam was to curse the Jewish people. Furthermore, if Balak knew of Bilaam's innate power to curse, why did he only request of him to curse the Jews that 'he be able to strike them and drive them away from the land', and not that 'he be able to completely destroy them'?

+ + +

The Gemara in Brachos (1879) tells us what it was that occurred when Bilaam wanted to curse the Jews; The Passuk says, 'Hashem is angered every day', this anger lasts no longer than just one moment, and no being, other than the wicked Bilaam, can determine precisely when this moment occurs. The Gemara continues; What is the meaning of the Passuk that says, 'So that you may realize the benevolences of Hashem'? Hashem said to the Jews, 'Realize how much benevolence I bestowed upon you that I did not become angry during those days that Bilaam was seeking to curse you, for had I

become angry, no remnant whatsoever would have remained from the enemies of the Jews". [This phrase 'the enemies of the Jews', is actually a reference to the Jewish people themselves.]

From this Gemara we learn that what lay behind Bilaam's power to have his curses fulfilled, was that he knew the exact moment when Hashem, so to speak, is angered by the misconduct of people, and he would thus curse at that precise moment, and due to the intensity of 'Hashem's anger' at that

instant, the curse would come to fruition. The Gemara also tells us that during those days that Bilaam was attempting to curse the Jews, Hashem didn't let the people's misconduct cause Him any anger, and therefore Bilaam did not have any power to curse.

Balak was a great sorcerer himself, even greater than Bilaam, and he understood that Bilaam's only power of cursing was by utilizing the exact moment of 'Hashem's anger'. Balak also knew that out of Hashem's love to His people, it was very possible that He wouldn't allow Himself to get angered during the time that Bilaam would attempt to curse the Jews, so that Bilaam wouldn't be able to curse the Jewish people. Therefore,

Divine Stringency, which can be utilized to bring about a curse.

Because Balak recognized that a curse which is placed in a moment of Divine Stringency is not as powerful as a curse which is placed in the precise moment of anger, and Balak knew very well that the moment of anger might not occur during those days, he therefore didn't ask Bilaam to curse them that he be able to completely annihilate them. Rather, he asked Bilaam to curse the Jewish people by utilizing a moment of stringency, which will at least give him the power 'to strike







them and drive them away from the land'.

We can now understand the message that Balak sent to Bilaam. Because 'I know that whomever you bless is blessed', which you must accomplish by making use of a moment of Divine Favor, therefore I can presume

## AVOT SHIMSHON

#### -• PIRKEI AVOT

# --- <<< Chapter 6 >>> ---



# Mishna 5

A life of measured simplicity is the path to the greatest acquisition of Torah

"This is the way of the Torah: you shall eat bread with salt, drink water in measured amounts, you shall sleep on the ground, live a life of hardship, and in Torah you toil."

The word the *Mishnah* uses for "bread" is *pat* ((195)) rather than the usual *lechem* ((1911)) The term *pat* refers to a small piece, as in the verse (*Vayikra* 2:6): "You shall break it into pieces" ("*Patot otah pitim*"). This teaches us that even if a person does not have a whole loaf of bread, but only small pieces — meaning, his sustenance is minimal — he should still not be distressed, for that is the way of the Torah: "you shall eat bread with salt." Similarly, "drink water in measured amounts," meaning he afflicts himself by drinking from a small vessel that does not quench his thirst all at once, and he thus drinks with some difficulty.

Now, the hardship of bread is understandable, as it comes from poverty. But why must one also afflict himself in the way he drinks water, when even the poor have access to water? And why must he "sleep on the ground," when even the poorest person has a bit of straw to lie on? Therefore, the Tanna adds, "live a life of hardship," teaching that this is truly the path of Torah — not only lack and poverty, but hardship as well. Thus, even when one can obtain more water, it is preferable to drink only a little, to experience some discomfort.

## A grammatical note

One may wonder why the Tanna changes the verb form and says, "and in Torah you toil (ata amel)" — in the present tense — rather than "you shall toil" (taamel) in the future, as he said before: "you shall sleep on the ground."

This can be explained by saying that "and in Torah you toil" is a kind of promise — one that is fulfilled immediately. If a person adopts the lifestyle of Torah described by the Tanna — bread with salt, etc. — he is assured of heavenly assistance, and all his effort will be

devoted solely to Torah; Torah will be present for him at all times. As we learn (*Avot* 3:5): "Whoever accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and worldly burdens are removed from him."

## Mishna 7

The Torah gives life to those who teach it or bring innovation to it

"Great is the Torah, for it gives life to those who do it — both in this world and in the World to Come, as it says (Mishlei 4:22): 'For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.""

This requires precision: if Torah study is greater than all other *mitzvot* (as stated in the *Mishnah*, *Pe'ah* 1:1), why does the Tanna say "to those who *do it*" (*oseha*) and not "to those who *learn it*" (*lomdeha*)? Furthermore, how does the verse "For they are life to those who find them" imply that Torah gives life specifically to those who do it?

It can be answered based on the *Midrash* (*Devarim Rabbah* 8:4) on the verse "For they are life to *lemotzehem* (למוצאיהם: 'those who find them')": some interpret the term *lemotzehem* (למוצאיהם) as *lemotzi leacherim* (למוצאי לאחרים: 'those who bring them out for others'), that is, those who teach them to others. Others interpret it as *lemamtzi otam* (לממציא אותם: 'those who invent them'), that is, those who innovate and produce new and original ideas in the concepts of the Torah.

This clarifies that the life that Torah gives is acquired only when a person reaches one of these levels: either he teaches Torah to others, or he creates new insights in Torah — in which case the Torah becomes known as his Torah due to his toil.

That is why the Tanna said specifically: "It gives life to those who do it." The Torah gives life when one does something active with it—either by teaching it to others (thereby creating another Torah scholar), or by innovating within it through one's own ideas. This also explains the proof from the verse "For they are life to those who find them," which refers precisely to doers—those who teach or bring innovation, expanding Torah and creating more wisdom in the world.

Published and distributed by The International Organization to Disseminate the Works of The Zera Shimshon Translated and written by Rabbi Moshe Spira - yomospira@gmail.com

To receive the Seforim of the Zera Shimshon or for sponsorships and donations please contact:

USA - Rabbi Menachem Binyomin Paskesz 347-496-5657 <a href="mbpaskesz@gmail.com">mbpaskesz@gmail.com</a>
Zera Shimshon c/o Rabbi B Paskesz 1645 48th Street, Brooklyn NY 11204

Eretz Yisroet - Rabbi Yisroet Sitberberg 052-716-6450 <u>zera277@gmail.com</u>



וזכות הצדיק ודברי תורתו הקדושים יגן מכל צרה וצוקה, ויושפע על הלומדים ועל המסייעים בני חיי ומזוני וכל טוב סלה כהבטחתו בהקדמת ספריו