

## דברי בלעם אל ה' המשגיח ר' בערל ויסברד

This *shiur* is *I'iluy nishmos* both Roshei HaYeshiva, הרב יעקב יצחק בן הרב יהודה ליב הלוי, Ruderman zt"l and מרת פייגע גולדא בת הרב שבתי, Weinberg zt"l, as well as the Rebbetzin, הרב שמואל יעקב בן יצחק מתתיהו שפפטל. The Rebbetzin's *yahrtzeit* was תמוז י', the בעל עבודת לוי's is תמוז י"ד, and R' Weinberg zt"l's is תמוז י"ז.

The בעל עבודת לוי used to ask the two following questions on *Parshas Balak*.

Firstly, when Bilam came to ask the Ribono Shel Olam whether he should go along with the *shluchim* of Moav to curse Klal Yisroel, why did the Ribono Shel Olam tell him not to go the first time He spoke to him but then told him to go when He spoke to him the second time?

The second question is on how Bilam described himself. He told Hashem that Balak *ben* Tzipor, the King of Moav, had sent for him. Rashi cites the *Medrash* which explains that Bilam was saying, "even though that I [Bilam] am not *choshuv* in Your [Hashem's] eyes, I am *choshuv* in the eyes of kings." Why is he being a *bal gayvuh* in front of the Ribono Shel Olam? The Ribono Shel Olam knows exactly who he is, why does he feel the need to give himself *kavod*?

The בעל עבודת לוי used to answer the first question as follows. The first time Bilam asked, the Ribono Shel Olam told him not to go because Bilam seemed to want to curse Bnei Yisroel because he felt that was the right thing to do. He wasn't going to do it out of personal interests or ulterior motives. Therefore, the Ribono Shel Olam said he cannot go because if Bilam was doing it *lishma*, then that is something to be worried about. When someone does something, even harmful, *lishma* then it can very well have an impact.

The second time the Ribono Shel Olam spoke to Bilam, it was clear that Bilam was only doing it out of greed. He wanted the riches and reward which Balak promised him as payment. At that point, it was no longer *lishma* and the Ribono Shel Olam need not stop him. Klal Yisroel didn't need to be worried anymore over Bilam's mission. Any *klala* wouldn't be able to have an effect because it wasn't being done from pure motives.

To the second question, the בעל עבודת לוי used to answer the following. Bilam wasn't actually being *misga'eh* in front of the Ribono Shel Olam. On the contrary, Bilam was coming to be מקטרג on Klal Yisroel. He was saying that he who is truly an unexceptional person was still being honored by kings, whereas Moshe Rabbeinu who is rightfully *choshuv b'einecha* gets so much *agmas nefesh* from Klal Yisroel. Bilam was trying to be מקטרג on Klal Yisroel that they were not *mechabed* Moshe Rabbeinu the way that the *Umos haOlam* were *mechabed* Bilam.

To this accusation, the Ribono Shel Olam told Bilam to go with the *Sarei Moav* and that Bilam would only be able to say that which the Ribono Shel Olam allowed. Bilam's קטרוג held no weight because Balak was only being *mechabed* him and offering so much reward because he wanted Bilam to do what he wanted him to say. That is why he offered to give Bilam so much payment. Moshe Rabbeinu, on the other hand, cannot do anything other than what the Ribono Shel Olam tells him and that is all he is interested in doing. That is why he gets so much *kavod* from Klal Yisroel. It is not so easy to be the *madrish* for an entire nation and guide them and prevent them from swaying "אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם". Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu is the one bestowed with real *kavod* whereas Bilam was being shown *kavod* merely to get him to do something.

The Gemara in פב סנהדרין דף discusses the story of Pinchas killing Zimri and Kuzbi. The Gemara relates that people from *Shevet Shimon* approached Zimri and demanded why he was sitting quietly while the *shevet* was being sentenced to death. So, Zimri got up and went to Zimri to convince her to live with him. He brought her, along with 24,000 people, in front of Moshe Rabbeinu and asked, “is she *muttar* to me or not? If not, then who allowed you to marry the daughter of Yisro?” The Gemara says that he forgot the *halacha* from Har Sinai that it is *assur* to marry a כותית. Then, all of those present started to cry.

Rav says that Pinchas came along and saw what Zimri was doing and asked Moshe Rabbeinu, “didn’t you teach us at Har Sinai the *halacha* of ה'בוועל את הכותית קנאין פוגעין בו?” Moshe Rabbeinu told him that since he remembered the *din* he should be the one to carry it out. Shmuel explains otherwise, that Pinchas saw that whenever there is חילול ה' we are not concerned over *kavod haRav* because of the *posuk*, ואין חכמה ואין תבונה “אין חכמה ואין תבונה” נגד ה' . Therefore, he did not wait to ask Moshe Rabbeinu for a *psak*, rather he carried it out himself unilaterally. R. Yitzchok says that Pinchas saw the *Malach Hamoves* destroying Klal Yisroel with a *mageifa*. So, Pinchas stood up, took a spear, and killed Zimri and Kuzbi.

The question is, what did *Shevet Shimon* want from Zimri and what was his response? How did his response speak to their demand?

I was thinking that possibly we could say the following explanation. In the whole *ma'aseh* with the Moavim, they influenced Bnei Yisroel to bow to Pe'or before being *mezaneh* with them. Zimri thought that *denay nefashos* which were happening to *Shevet Shimon* were for being עובד ע"י. (Many Rishonim learn that this is indeed the reason why they were being killed.) When the people came to Zimri about it, he told them that he would show that they cannot be getting killed because of ה'בוועל את הכותית and he would prove it. That is why he went to be *mezaneh* with Kuzbi in front of ועדה כל עם ועדה. The only reason that it is *assur* is because of חילול ה', which only in extenuating circumstances can lead to קנאיו פוגעין בו. Even still, אין רוח חכמים נוחה because you never know if the קנאות is from pure motives. Zimri wanted to be *melamed z'chus* on Klal Yisroel that they shouldn't be *chayiv mesa* for the *zenus*. That is what he was trying to accomplish with Kuzbi in front of everyone.

Zimri did not know that the real reason they were getting killed was because of the חילול ה'. This is how the Sforno explains in *Parshas Pinchas*. Hashem describes Pinchas as, “...בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי.” If Bnei Yisroel all died either from the *mageifa* or from *cherev*, why is Pinchas described as saving them all from Hashem's wrath? As well, the Sforno asks why בתוכם is necessary? Therefore, Sforno learns that had it not been for the קנאות of Pinchas, all of Klal Yisroel would have been destroyed. Why? Because when people stand by the side when a חילול ה' is taking place, they are considered as enabling it and are equally included in the punishment for it as those actively perpetrating it.

The Sforno says this *yesod* in a number of places. When one witnesses a חילול ה' without trying to fight it, he gets the *aveira* of doing it. We see from Pinchas that watching a קידוש ה' also brings equal reward as actively making it, and can therefore be *mechaper* for idly watching a חילול ה'.

This shiur should be a *zechus* for their *neshamos*. The בעל עבודת לוי said at the Rebbetzin's *levaya*, “שלי ושלכם שלה היא.” Everything going on in Yeshiva today, the learning and the *ma'asim tovim*, should also be a *zechus*. The בעל עבודת לוי used to say that on Rosh Hashana the ספרי מתים are open even though they no longer alive because every year they are also judged. They are judged on their Torah and everything they made and put forth. All the טוב which came out from the Roshei HaYeshiva and the Rebbetzin should be a *zechus* and we should see ביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו.