

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ד RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS BALAK

## HASHEM'S CALLING THROUGH NATURE

The *parsha* relates the episode of Billam hitting his donkey for refusing to go forwards. Unbeknown to him, the donkey saw what he did not see, a *malach* blocking the path and holding an outstretched sword in his hand. The *Malach* reveals himself and starts chastising Billam for hitting his donkey for its refusal to move because it was frightened from what it saw. The Kedushas Levi asks that it seems unfair to reprimand Bilaam for his actions when he did not see the *Malach* at all? He answers that Bilam was witness to an extraordinary event. His donkey never acted in this fashion manifesting lack of loyalty to its master. Bilam was also a *Navi* who communicated with Hashem who already told him that He was not in favor of his endeavor to curse Klal Yisrael. Billam should have realized that this very unusual episode is Hashem's sign and red alert to him not to continue with his plan but rather to return home immediately.

When a person who believes in Hashem sees an obvious and out of the ordinary blockage in executing his plan, he must first stop and think maybe Hashem is communicating with me not to proceed further with what I intended. The Rambam writes in Moreh Nevuchim 2,48 a person is **obligated** to view the events that surround him as a product of Hashem's *hashgacha* towards him and not just a mere happenstance. It is therefore incumbent upon him to decipher the message which Hashem is sending him. The Rambam brings an example of Lavan saying to Eliezer **מה' יצא הדבר לא נוכל דבר אליך רע או טוב הנה רבקה לפניך קח ולך ותהי אשה** לכן אדוניך אשר דבר ה'. How can he say we are going to do the *Shidduch* the way that Hashem **spoke**. Nowhere is there any mentioning of Hashem speaking to Lavan or Besuail? The answer is that they put their minds and ears to the pulse of the events unfolding in front of them and understood that they are not by chance, but rather they are a product of Hashem who is orchestrating them to occur in order to send them a heavenly message validating the marriage.

Interesting that the word for happening **מאורע** is the *gematriah* of **ויקרא**. This teaches that one must examine that events that happen to him for they are not merely episodes of nature but rather a **ויקרא** a calling from Hashem.

Another example of the above is the story of Yosef who lost his way in searching for his brothers and he just happens to "meet" a **איש** who directs him to the location of his brothers. If one analyzes the conversation between them both it is not understandable. Yosef is addressed by this man "what are you looking for"? He answers "my brothers. Tell me where are they? The man replied "I heard them say something about Doston". How did Yosef know that this stranger knew his brothers and ask out of the blue where did they go? We see from this that Yosef didn't merely see a man next to him but rather a *sheliach* from Hashem to

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guide him to find his brothers. Rashi writes that in truth the man was Gavreail the *Malach*. He demanded from this *Sheliach* straightforwardly "Tell me where are my brothers!"

With our interpretation above we can explain the *passuk* (45,1) ולא עמד איש אתו בהתוודע 'יוסף אל אחיו'. No one stood with Yosef when he revealed his identity to his brothers. We can interpret this to allude to the episode when Yosef got lost and couldn't find his brothers. He met a man who told him about their whereabouts which ended with Yosef being sold down to *Mitzrayim*. Someone who is a non believer would have said if he wouldn't have seen this man then it never would have happened. However Yosef did not see a man but rather a *sheliach* of Hashem who pushed him in the direction towards his brother because this was Hashem's will that he too should be a *sheliach* of Hashem (45,5). This is what the *passuk* means when it says there wasn't a "happenstance man" that he encountered searching for his brothers but rather a messenger and Malach of Hashem.

The Rambam writes in Hilchos Taanis 1:2,3 one of the ways of *teshuvah* that when a *tzarah* comes upon *Yisrael* and they scream and call out to Hashem for salvation they should know that it was caused because of their *aveiros*. But if the *tzarah* comes and they think it is just a natural phenomenon or a political coup then this apathy and complacency will unfortunately cause more *tzaros* to come in order to spur them on to do teshuva for their *aveiros*.

Billam did not realize that the stubbornness of his mule was heavenly sent as a **אות** a sign of instructions - "reverse and go home". In the letters of **אתון** are the letters of **אות**. **אות** means a sign and the letter **ן** means the kingdom as *Chazal* say that the name of King *Moshiach* is **ינון** Tehillim 72,17 Rashi. It is a sign of the *Melech Haolam* Hashem. The purpose of this **אתון** was only to show Billam that natural things that happen to an individuals is also a heavenly sign. One just has to take the time and go behind the scene in order to read the message of Hashem's calling.

Gut Shabbos,

Rav Brazil