

Pulse OF Emunah

ANI
MAAMIN
Foundation

ISSUE # 375 | PARSHAS BALAK

FRIDAY JULY 19TH, 2024 | 14 TAMMUZ, 5784

life

LESSONS

A HOLY CROWD

On March 1, 2005, over 100,000 Jews came together to celebrate the eleventh Siyum Daf Yomi. In 80 years, it had become a global phenomenon. The Siyum HaShas filled convention centers and sports arenas in numerous locations. Participants flocked to the event across the United States. The Siyum left its mark on the hearts and minds of everyone there.

In an article for the Jewish Observer, Rabbi Aryeh Z. Ginzberg cited Rav Dessler: the degree of *kiddush Hashem* created on any given occasion can be gauged by the response to the occasion. The *kiddush Hashem* of the eleventh Siyum HaShas could be measured by the reactions that followed. The morning after the Siyum, enrollment in Daf Yomi *shiurim* grew exponentially. One *shiur* in Monsey jumped from 30 to 100 members. In Denver, two new *shiurim* opened. In Manalapan, NJ, thirteen men with no Gemara experience signed up for a Daf Yomi *shiur*. One man called Rabbi Ginzberg on his way to work the next day and said that he had experienced such elevation that it was impossible to return to his daily routine.

What was the secret that inspired, uplifted, and ignited the passions of so many Jews? The answer is simple: sheer numbers. A large gathering lends significance to its subject. When many people show up at court to support a defendant, it sends a message. Protests and rallies' success is determined by the turnout. And the massive number of Jews who gathered to celebrate the Siyum HaShas demonstrated the extraordinary significance of Torah learning for the Jewish people. 🕯

Reproduced from Living Kiddush Hashem by Rabbi Shraga Freedman with permission of the copyright holders, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications, Ltd.



gem

OF THE WEEK

BELIEF IS NOT ENOUGH

By Rabbi Moshe Pogrow

The Jewish people were not the only believers in monotheism. Already in Avraham's time, in the age of polytheism, there was Malki Tzedek, who was *kohen l'Kel Elyon*, a "priest of G-d the Most High." This G-d, of course, was the same G-d whom Avraham's descendants would later accept as the One and Only. We find that Iyov and his friends also served this one G-d, and in this week's *parsha*, we discover that Bilam, too, considers himself a servant of the one G-d.

Monotheism, important as it is, is not the quintessence and certainly not the whole essence of Judaism. Rather, Judaism teaches monotheism with all the ramifications that it has for human life: the unity of G-d with the unity of life through G-d's Torah.

However, the spiritual level of Bilam the monotheist was morally inferior, and in this respect, he was far below Malki Tzedek and far below Iyov and his friends. Bilam's spiritual aptitude to draw near to G-d was subordinated to his egoism; he placed himself at the service of unholy powers and their base

continued on reverse side

powerful
PRAYER

MODEH ANI:
GREAT TRUSTWORTHINESS



Every night, we entrust our *neshamos* to Hashem, and every morning He returns them refreshed for another day. This is what Yirmiyahu Hanavi meant by "[Your kindness is] renewed every morning—how great is Your trustworthiness!" If someone who owes you money leaves his belongings in your home, you might be tempted not to return them until he pays you back. We have lots of debt to Hashem—we fall short in serving Him properly, and we do *aveiros*. Hashem could withhold our *neshamos*, but He does not. Every morning, we get our *neshamos* back. *Rabba emunasecha!* 🕯

Adapted from Emunah in the Classroom

To sponsor a weekly newsletter for \$100,
please email amfmainoffice@gmail.com

OUR FATHER'S TABLE

By Rabbi Dovid Sapirman, Dean, Ani Maamin Foundation

Once the Beis Hamikdash was built, it was forever forbidden to bring a *korban* anywhere else, under penalty of *kares*. The main function of a *korban* was to create closeness between the bringer and his Creator. The person would be so inspired that he would want to fulfill the will of Hashem more than anything else.

For this reason, the *nevi'im* tell us that those who brought *korbanos* but did not live according to Torah had missed the point. "Listening to Hashem and obeying His mitzvos is better than a sacrifice." However, the Beis Hamikdash was much more than just a permissible site for a *korban*. The Sefer Hachinuch tells us that Hashem created Har Habayis as the purest and holiest place on earth, the place best suited for connecting with Hashem.

When the Torah speaks about being *oleh regel* on Sukkos, it says, "When all Yisrael come *lir'os* (to see) Hashem." In a Sefer Torah, there are no *nekudos*. Chazal tell us that the word can be understood as *lir'os*, to see, or *leira'os*, to be seen. In the Beis Hamikdash, the Shechina was palpable in a way that could not be equaled anywhere else. It seemed as if we could actually feel the presence of Hashem, His looking down upon us and scrutinizing our actions. The presence of the Shechina is so exhilarating that it brings a level of *simcha* found nowhere else.

The Gemara tells us that the Tanna Rabbi Yosi was once on the road and needed a place to daven. He entered one of the ruins of Yerushalayim. Eliyahu Hanavi waited outside until he had finished, then asked him if he had heard anything inside. Rabbi Yosi said, "I heard a voice that sounded like the cooing of a dove, saying 'Woe, that I destroyed My House, burned my halls, and exiled my children!'" Eliyahu told him that this voice cried out three times a day, for a king should be praised in His own house. He added, "What does a father who sent his children into exile have? And woe to the children, who have been exiled from their father's table."

In this story, the Beis Hamikdash is seen in a new light. *Aliyah l'regel* was the equivalent of going home to our parents for Yom Tov. It was Hashem's table, a place of intimate family connection with our Father. This is the loss that we mourn during the Three Weeks. May Hashem soon bring us home. 🕯

desires.

Chazal tell us: Look at what a difference there is between the prophets of *klal Yisrael* and the prophets of the nations! Compare a *navi* like Bilam with a Yeshayahu, a Yirmiyahu, a Yechezkel.

The *nevi'im* of *klal Yisrael* served as G-d's watchmen, warning the nations against sin. Bilam advised the nations to use moral seduction as a tool of war, so that people would lose their place in the World to Come.

Klal Yisrael's prophets were full of compassion for the Jewish people as well as for the nations of the world. Yeshayahu writes, "My heart throbs like a harp over Moav's woes," while Yechezkel says, "Wail lamentations over the fall of Tzor!" The prophets of the nation, on the other hand, were heartless. Far from sharing the pain of another nation, Bilam rose up to uproot an entire people, without cause, for nothing.

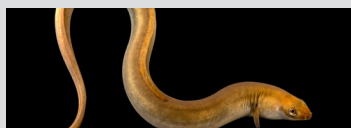
Therefore, the entire story of Bilam was written to reveal why G-d removed *ruach hakodesh* from the nations of the world. Bilam was one of those who received it—and see how he misused his spiritual gift. 🕯

Based on the commentary of Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l on Chumash, with permission from the publisher.



wonder WORLD

SOMETHING'S FISHY



Can fish get sunburned?

The sea is home to some of the most unusual and fascinating life forms on Earth, which Hashem has given the ability to survive in their habitats. There are more than 34,000 known species of fish, each unique. Some, like the lungfish, can live out of water for years by secreting a mucus cocoon and breathing through a built-in tube. Electric eels and rays can generate enough power to kill a horse. Many fish have taste buds all over their bodies, allowing them to taste their environment. Fish do not have vocal cords, yet they can still use sounds to communicate, including grunts, croaks, and whistles. Interestingly, fish can get sunburned! They protect themselves by seeking shelter in the shadows or by moving to deeper waters where there is less sun exposure. 🕯

Please feel free to take newsletter home to share with your family.

For more information please call (845) 418 2122 or email info@animaamin.org • To subscribe to this newsletter send an email to subscribe@animaamin.org