



Kinder Torah®

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Balak



He Overlooks Our Mistakes

“Oh no. I got called down to the principal’s office. I wonder what I did wrong this time?”

“Where are you going Dovid?”

“To the principal’s office.”

“Good luck.”

“Shalom, Dovid. Thank you for coming down so quickly. I have a report from your teacher that you were talking during a test. Now you know that is against school rules. By rights, I should punish you. However, you are one of the best students in the school and one of my personal favorites. Therefore, I will overlook it this time. But don’t let it happen again.”

“Thank you so much Mr. Friedman.”

“How did it go Dovid?”

“Great! Mr. Friedman is a great guy! He was willing to overlook my mistakes.”

The second time that Bilaam tried to curse the Jewish nation, he blessed them with the following words, “He saw no wrong in Yaakov, no sins in Israel. Hashem his G-d is with him, the friendship of the King is in him” (Bamidbar 23:21). Rashi quotes a Medrash, which explains that Hashem overlooks our mistakes, due to His great love for us. The Chofetz Chaim explains in his book, “Shmiras HaLoshon” that the Jewish people are like children to Hashem. A father will always overlook the mistakes of his child.

Kinderlach . . .

Whenever you feel a little down, try to remember this Medrash.

Remember that Hashem is our father, and we are His favorite children. He loves us so much that He is willing to overlook our mistakes. I’m sure you will perk up and feel better in no time.

The Way You Want to Go

Bilaam wanted to curse the Jewish people. Balak offered him honor and wealth if he would only go and curse them. Bilaam asked Hashem for permission. Hashem replied, “Do not go with them, do not curse the nation, for they are blessed” (Bamidbar

22:12). Balak was not happy with this so he sent more officers to give more honor and offer more money to Bilaam. What was Bilaam’s response? “Stay here tonight, and I will know if Hashem wants to say anything more to me” (Bamidbar 22:19). Bilaam should have answered that Hashem did not allow him to go. Finished. Instead, he waited to see if Hashem would change His mind. The Medrash Rabba (20:12) comments that we learn an important principle from Bilaam’s behavior. “Hashem leads a person in the direction that the person wants to go” (Makkos 10a). Hashem told him not to go. Bilaam wanted to go anyway. Hashem became angry. He said to him, “Evil one! I do not like to destroy wicked people. However, since you want to go and remove yourself from this world, get up and go!”

This is an example of a person wanting to go in the wrong direction. We all know that Hashem wants only good for us. Still, if a person insists on doing evil, then Hashem will follow along with him in that direction. This is called “free will”. The same is true in the positive direction. If a person wants to do the right thing, Hashem will lead him along in the proper direction.

Kinderlach . . .

We all want to do the right thing. We all want to become big talmidei chachomim, tsaddikim, and tsidkonios. But it’s such a big job. It takes such hard work. Them Medrash is telling us not to worry. Hashem will help us. He will lead us in the direction that we want to go. We just need to do two things. We have to REALLY want to be tsaddikim. And we have to try our hardest. Leave it up to Him to guide us in the right direction.

Many Facets of Modesty

One of the blessings that Bilaam gave the Jewish people was, “How good are your tents, Jacob, your dwellings, Israel” (Bamidbar 24:5). Rashi writes that Bilaam saw that the openings of their tents were not facing each other. The Gemora (Bava

Basra 80a) comments that he saw the Shechinah (Divine Presence) upon them. The Torah Temima adds that their tents were arranged in such a way that they could not see into each other’s homes. This is the character trait of tznius (modesty). Tznius is so important that it caused the Divine Presence to shine upon them. Modesty is the source of the kedusha (holiness) of the Jewish People. The last line of this week’s Haftorah (Micah 5:8) speaks of modesty. “He has told you, O man, what is good! What does Hashem require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk modestly with your God.” We also see in Megillas Ruth that Ruth’s modesty was evidenced by way that she bent down to pick up grain from the floor. Tznius is much more than the way we dress. It is a whole attitude of a Jew, not to boast, be loud, or flamboyant. We do not attract attention to ourselves; rather we try to draw honor to Hashem and the Torah.

Kinderlach . . .

Who can think of different ways to be tznuah? We usually think tznius refers to the way we dress. What about the way we speak? A tznuah person converses in a soft tone of voice. Similarly, we do not need to boast about our accomplishments, let them speak for themselves. What about the way we walk? Ruth was tznuah even when she picked up grain from the floor. We do not look into other people’s homes, or ask prying questions about their private matters.”

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