

THE CHEVRA

3'02



Young Israel of Fair Lawn
The Morris J. Kraut z'l Torah Center
www.yifl.org

Rabbi Eli Belizon
Avi Zanjirian
President

**Shabbos Parshas
Balak**
שבת פרשת בלק

July 19, 2019

טז תמוז תשע"ט

Shacharis 7:00 AM
Mincha 6:40 PM
Candle Lighting 6:53/8:06 PM
Repeat Shema 8:48 PM

July 20, 2019

יז תמוז תשע"ט

Chevra Mishnayos 8:00 AM
Shacharis 8:45 AM
Sof Zman K"SS 9:22 AM

Kiddush following davening
*(Everyone is reminded to help
out and clean up after your
children.)*

Avos U'Banim 4:45 PM
Seder 7:25 PM
Mincha 7:55 PM

Seudah Shlishis

**Sponsored by the Blumenthal
family l'ilui nishmas Joe's
grandmother, Esther Mayta
bas R' Chaim**

Maariv following the Rabbi's
shiur

Shabbos Ends 9:14 PM

Sunday – Shiva Asar B'Tamuz

Fast Begins 3:59 AM
Shacharis I 7:20 AM
Shacharis II 8:30 AM
Fast Ends 9:03 PM

Monday-Friday

Shacharis (M-F) 7:00 AM
Night Seder 8:45 PM
No Sanhedrin Chabura (W)
Maariv (M-Th) 10:00 PM

Brachos Party

There will be a Brachos party for boys, ages 5-6, at the Shteingart home, 13-28 Jerome Place, from 3:30-4:15.

Halacha Chabura

Ari Pruzansky will be giving the chabura this week, 20 minutes before Mincha. This coming week's limud is 202:1-202:6.

Children's Shaila of the Week

This week's shaila was asked by Ella Schwarz, if you could cook something non-kosher for a non-Jew.

Parshas Ha'Shavua

**Parashat Balak –
Harnessing the Power of
Idealism**

Rabbi Eli Mansour

The Torah in Parashat Balak tells the fascinating story of Bilam, who was invited by Balak, the king of Moab, to place a curse on Beneh Yisrael. When Balak's first group of messengers came to Bilam to convey Balak's message, G-d spoke to Bilam and told him that he may not go: "Do not curse the nation, for they are blessed" (22:12).

Balak did not despair, and he proceeded to send a second delegation, comprised of more distinguished figures. This time, G-d spoke to Bilam and said, "If the people have come to call for you – then arise and go with them..." (22:20). Bilam went, but G-d compelled him to bless Beneh Yisrael, instead of cursing them.

We must ask, why did G-d forbid Bilam from going to Moab the first time, but not the second time? And what did G-d mean when He said, "If the people have come to call for you"? Was it not obvious that Balak's men had come to bring Bilam to Moab?

Rashi explains this to mean that G-d was telling Bilam, "If you are going

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to get paid a large price, then go." Somehow, the fact that Bilam was going to receive a large sum of money for cursing Beneh Yisrael made it possible for him to go. Why?

Rav Shimon Schwab (Germany-New York, 1908-1995) answered by establishing an important principle regarding human nature. When people are sincerely and idealistically driven, they are capable of so much more than when they are driven by lesser motives, such as fame or wealth. We have significantly greater power to achieve and succeed when our motives are "Le'Shem Shamayim" – sincerely "for the sake of Heaven," for idealistic goals. Sincere idealism generates passion which provides us with "fuel" that can carry us much further than we could otherwise go.

Rav Schwab pointed to the unfortunate story of Communism as an example. The Communists were at first very successful, because the movement's leaders were driven by altruism. They were not correct in what they were trying to achieve, but their motivation was pure – to eliminate injustice, to ensure equality, to create a system where everybody is the same and nobody is taken advantage of. The early Communists made immense sacrifices for their ideology – sacrifices that they could have made only due to their altruism. But the Iron Curtain collapsed when Communism became just another means of asserting power, of taking advantage of the weak, and of filling one's own pockets through corruption. The movement succeeded when it was fueled by idealism, and collapsed when it fell into the hands of corrupt, self-serving oligarchs.

On this basis, Rav Schwab suggested explaining G-d's response to Bilam.

When Bilam was first asked to go to Moab and place a curse on Beneh Yisrael, G-d did not let him go – because his hatred for Beneh Yisrael was fueled by "idealism," by the warped but sincere conviction that Beneh Yisrael were a dangerous threat that needed to be eliminated. If Bilam's motivations were sincere and altruistic, he was very powerful. But the second time, Balak sent messengers who offered Bilam an exorbitant amount of money for his service. G-d therefore told Bilam, "If the people have come to call for you" – meaning, they have come "for you," for your benefit, offering a handsome price – then he should go with them. Now that his motivation was self-serving, and not idealistic, he was far less capable of inflicting real harm.

When we look at great Sadikim and see what they've accomplished – their incredible knowledge of Torah, their diligence, their piety, their generosity, their kindness – we might wonder how all this was possible. Rav Schwab's insight teaches us that the answer is sincere idealism. Sadikim achieve greatness because they truly want greatness. If we are motivated by a desire to have a good reputation, or for any other selfish goal, we are very limited in what we can accomplish. But if we are truly sincere, and genuinely seek to serve Hashem to the best of our ability, to understand His Torah, to fulfill His will, and to live the way He wants us to will, then the sky is the limit. If our motives are sincere, then we can achieve greatness that would otherwise be unimaginable.

Shabbat Shalom!