

בס"ד

דברי תורה ד' צבי אליהו
DIVREI TORAH

חקת - בלק

Chukas - Balak

July 4, 2009 - 12 Tammuz 5769

Dedication Page

In Appreciation to All Who

Baked, Cooked, Davened, and
Leant so Many Helping Hands

to Make Our

Shalom Zachor, Bris, and First
Weeks Together as a Family
So Special

Thank You and We Love Y'All

Rabbi Adam, Inbal, and
Yisroel Dovid Singer

What You Become

Rabbi Adam Singer

The tools, disposition, wealth, health, and family are all means to allow you to become more than who you were when you came into this world. From a Jewish perspective, your livelihood, your income, your beauty, your achievements all pale in their worth when compared to the good character and morality you develop in yourself. Dedicate time in your life for personal growth. Life is a challenge to become a better person through all the challenges and pleasures your particular circumstances will bring. The parshas this week describes Bilaam, a man whose talents and abilities were comparable to Moses himself. But where Moses used his particular talents and life predicaments to grow closer to G-d and to develop himself, Bilaam remained coarse and unrefined despite his tremendous gifts.

The Torah records that G-d did speak to Bilaam and that Bilaam was a person who had incredible wisdom about G-d (see Bamidbar 24:16). Yet Bilaam was so low so unrefined that he was known to commit acts of bestiality with his donkey (see Avodah Zarah 4b). His greed was so immense that he would accept money to bless and curse people. How can a person can have such wisdom and experience such closeness with G-d and still be so base?

Rav Chayim Shmuelevitz, zt"l (19th - 20th cent. Europe) explains that Bilaam teaches

us the importance of taking ownership of our character development. Two people can witness the same event, and even experience identical levels of inspiration, but react so very differently. Bilaam and Moses both experienced prophecy, but their choice of how to use it was dramatically different. To Bilaam, prophecy was a tool. It was an enabler to allow him to curse or to bless. To Moses prophecy was an avenue of service of G-d, a connection to a higher purpose and a way to deliver his people to a better life. Each person experienced inspiration on a cosmic level, but each one used it to a dramatically different end.

We all experience moments of inspiration. These can be events in our lives, stories from other people's lives, or even fictional accounts in books and movies. Inspirations is powerful. It can energize us and drive us to become more than what we were before. With clarity from the Torah and its teachers about what we are supposed to become and appropriate reflection and guidance there is no limit to what we can achieve. But without reflection, without clarity from the Torah about how to use our inspiration and how to grow, inspiration is little more than another way to pass the time.

May we all be blessed to experience true inspiration and to use it to become greater every day. GOOD SHABBOS!!!