Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev באר היטב

פרש״י בשבעים לשון. דברי תורה וחיזוק.

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בס״ד פרשת בלק תשע״ט

וַיַּרְא בָּלָק בֶּן צִפּוֹר אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לָאֱמֹרִי: במדבר פכ״ב פ״ב

***And** Bolok the son of Tzippor saw all that Klall Yisroel had done to the Amorites {22:2}.*

Why should this weekly Torah portion, Bolok, be named after a man who was a heathen and an enemy of the Jewish people at that? It is true that all the heathens hate the Jews, as it is written: "It is a known rule that Esov hates Yakov," but they usually cloak their hatred in honeyed words so that the Jews will not be aware of the need to protect themselves. Bolok, however, was quite outspoken in his hostility, and there certainly can be no objection to naming a weekly portion of the Torah after a heathen who is actually honest. – Reb Meir of Przemysl

וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹקִים אֶל בִּלְעָם לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם לִקְרֹא לְךָ בָּאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים קוּם לֵךְ אִתָּם וְאַךְ אֶת הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ אֹתוֹ תַּעֲשֶׂה: במדבר פכ״ב פ״כ

***And** Hashem came to Balaam at night, and said to him, If the men come to call you, rise up, and go with them; but only that word which I shall say to you, that shall you do.{22:20}*

The question arises: if Hashem told Bilom to go with the officers of Mo'av, why was He angry when Bilom did? The answer is that the words אתו and עמו have two different connotations. אתו denotes when one accompanies another physically but does not necessarily have the same goals and purposes. עמו carries the meaning not only of physical accompaniment but also of sharing the same goals and purposes. Hashem said to Bilom: Go with them / אתם -- just accompany them. But Bilom went with / עם them wholeheartedly. This is why ויחר אף אלקים - why Hashem was angry with Bilom. – The Vilna Goan

Rabboh the son of Rabbi Hunoh said: From the Torah, the Nevi'im {Prophets} and the Kesuvim {Writings} it can be shown that one is lead along the path that he chooses for himself. From the Torah, as it is written: "And Hashem said to Bilom, you shall not go with them", and then it is written: "If the men came to call you, rise up and go with them." – Talmud Bavli, Makos 10:

וַיִּפְתַּח ה׳ אֶת פִּי הָאָתוֹן וַתֹּאמֶר לְבִלְעָם מֶה עָשִׂיתִי לְךָ כִּי הִכִּיתָנִי זֶה שָׁלֹשׁ רְגָלִים: במדבר פרק כב פכ״ח

***And** Hashem opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Bilom, What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times? {22:28}*

In the Tractate Avos, (5:6), we are told that the "mouth of Bilom's donkey" was created on Friday before the Sabbath during the 7 Days of Creation. This is explained to mean that it was decreed that the donkey that was created at that time would speak to Bilom. It is difficult to say, though, that the donkey created at that time was still alive at the time of Bilom! **It** is possible to explain this as being similar to the explanation given in Bamidbar Rabbah about the splitting of the Yam Suf {Red Sea}. There, Hashem made a condition with Creation that, when it would be necessary, the sea would split, and it would subsequently return to its usual strength and position. Something similar would be true about the mouth of the donkey. At the time when the species of ordinary, non-speaking donkeys were created, Hashem made a condition that, when necessary, one of them would have the power of speech, and this was fulfilled with the donkey of Bilom. – Tosefes Brochoh

Hashem allowed the donkey to speak in order to prove to Bilom that he had no reason to consider himself great on account of "prophetic vision". Even the donkey, which certainly would not be considered fit to look upon an angel or to speak was enabled to do both, because it was for the Klal Yisroels' benefit. Bilom was no more fit to be a prophet than the donkey, and was given the gift of prophecy only in order that the Klall Yisroel would benefit thereby. – Kli Yokor

וַיִּשָּׂא מְשָׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמַר נְאֻם בִּלְעָם בְּנוֹ בְעֹר וּנְאֻם הַגֶּבֶר שְׁתֻם הָעָיִן: פכ״ד פ״ג

***And** he took up his discourse, and said, The speech of Bilom, the son of Be'or; the speech of a man whose eyes are open. {24:3}*

בלעם סומא באחת מעיניו היה (סנהדרין קה.)

Bilom was blind in one eye. (Sanhedrin, 105.)

Every human being needs two eyes: one to perceive the greatness of the Hashem and the other to behold his own humility and insignificance. Bilom knew of the greatness of Hashem ("and he knows the knowledge of the Most High" – Bamidbor, 24:16), but he could not see his own insignificance and therefore was arrogant. It was therefore clear to the Chachomim {Sages} that Bilom must have been "blind in one eye". – Rishpei Aish

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Ah Guttin Shabbos - Rabbi Naftali H. Ganzweig