

LEADERSHIP DURING CRISIS

Should a leader reveal the magnitude of an enemy threat or project confidence and strength?

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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The Rebbe explains that this arrangement was known only to a select few, and therefore only Balak himself and a few others should have been concerned. However, Balak revealed this to his entire people and caused mass panic.
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This is a lesson for any leader: Even when facing seemingly insurmountable challenges, keep any doubts to yourself. This is exactly what the Rebbe Rayatz did in the summer of 1927. He displayed remarkable courage and strength because he knew that fear would affect all Jews of the USSR.
The Rebbe Rayatz describes in his diary how at the beginning of his imprisonment he decided to stand strong (Source 5).
When undertaking a spiritual task, it must be approached with full faith in its success, without doubt nor fear of failure. Like soldiers who se out to the battlefield with a march of victory. As the Tzemach Tzadek was told by a Jewish soldier in the Czar's army, a city is conquered not by tears, but with an upbeat song of victory. (Source 6)

Introduction

Two leaders feared the enemy standing before them, but each took a different approach. One acted out of pressure and distress, while the other acted out of strength and power.

A lesson in genuine and responsible leadership.

השיעור לפרשת בלק

משיחת ש"פ בלק ה'תשכ"ה לקוטי שיחות (המתורגם ללה"ק) חלק ח', ע' 152 ואילך

ומשיחת יום ב', פרשת בלק, י"ב תמוז ה'תשכ"ה, בלתי מוגה תורת מנחם חלק מ"ד, עמוד 81 ואילך לשמיעת השיחה (3:25 והלאה)



A. A Leader Who Frightens His Nation

After leaving Egypt and defeating various nations, the Jewish people approached the border of Moab. The king of Moab, Balak, feared the Jews and decided to retain the services of Balaam to curse them, with the hope that this would weaken them and enable Moab to drive them out.

Source 1 Numbers 22:2-6

Student's

Balak the son of Tzippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. Moab became terrified of the people, for they were numerous, and Moab became disgusted because of the children of Israel. Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this assembly will eat up everything around us, as the ox eats up the greens of the field." Balak the son of Tzippor was king of Moab at that time.

He sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, to Petor, which is by the river of the land of his people, to call for him, saying, "A people has come out of Egypt, and behold, they have covered the "eye" of the land, and they are stationed opposite me. So now, please come and curse this people for me, for they are too powerful for me. Perhaps I will be able to strike them and drive them out of the land, for I know that whoever you bless is blessed and whoever you curse is cursed."

וַיַּרָא בָּלָק בֵּן צְפּוֹר את כל אשר עשה יִשַּׂרַאֶל לַאֱמֹרִי. וַיַּגָר הַעַם מוֹאַב מָאֹד כִּי רַב הוּא, מוֹאָב וַיָּקֶץ בָּנֵי יִשְׂרַאֵל. וַיֹּאמֶר מוֹאַב אֵל זְקְנֵי מִדְיַן: "עַתָּה יִלַחֲכוּ הַקָּהָל סביבתינו אָת כָּל כָּלָחֹרָ הַשׁוֹר אֵת יֵרַק הַשָּׂדָה", וּבָלָק בֶּן צַפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ לִמוֹאָב בַּעֵת הַהִיא.

וִיּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אֶל בִּלְעָם בֶּן בְּעֹר, פְּתוֹרָה בְּלְעָם בֶּן בְּעֹר, פְּתוֹרָה בְּנִי עַמּוֹ, לְקְרֹא לוֹ לֵּאמֹר: "הָנָה עַם יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם הָנָה כִסְּה אֶת עֵין הָאָרֶץ וְהוּא ישֵׁב מִמֻּלִי. וְעַתָּה לְכָה נָּא אָרָה לִּי אֶת הָעָם הַנָּה, כִּי עָצוּם הָאָרֶץ.כִּי יָדַעְתִּי, אִת נַבֶּה כִּוּ, וַאֲצְרְשֶׁנִּי מִן הַאָּשֶׁר תְּבָרֵךְ - מְבֹרֶךְ, וַאֲשֶׁר תְּבָרַךְ - יוֹאֶר".

What was Balak's fear?

Rashi

Student's pq. 1

Student's pg. 2

Balak the son Tzippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. These kings, whom two we relied on, didn't withstand the Jews; so we certainly won't. Therefore, "Moab

became terrified."

וַיַּרָא בָּלָק בֵּן צְפּוֹר אָת כָּל אֲשֵׁר עֲשַׂה לאמרי. לטבי "אלוּ - בטוחים עַלֵיהֵם לא עַמִדוּ בַּפִנֵיהֵם, אנוּ - על אחת כמה וְכַמַּה". לְפִיכַךְ "וַיַּגַר מוֹאב".

If these mighty kings - Sichon and Oq - fell, Moab would certainly not be able to survive.

Why was Moab so reliant on Sichon and Og to hold back the enemy? Rashi tells us elsewhere: When the Jews asked Sichon for permission to pass through their land, in order to continue on to Israel, they refused, because they were being paid to guard those lands; should they now allow the Jews through in order to conquer them?

Source 2 Rashi, Numbers 21:23

Student's All the Canaanite rulers paid a tax to Sichon to protect their borders from conquest. When the Jews asked to pass through, they replied, "We are here only to protect these lands, and you are asking to be allowed through?"

כנען מַלְכֵי לו (לסיחון) מַס, שַהַיַה שומרם שַלֹּא יַעַבָרוּ עַבֵּיהֶם גִּיָסוֹת, כֵּיוָן שַאַמְרוּ לוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל "אֵעְכָּרָה בָאַרָצֵדְ", אַמַר לַהֵם: "כַּל עַצָּמִי אֵינִי יוֹשֶׁב כַּאן אָלַא לְשַׁמְרַם מִפּנִיכֵם, וְאַתֵּם אוֹמַרִים

In the following address, the Rebbe explains that from the sequence of the verses "Balak the son of Tzippor saw" followed by "Moab became terrified" it is apparent that Balak first observed something, which then caused Moab to fear. What did the king see that the nation did not see? Everyone knew that the Jews are a great nation, who had defeated their enemies and experienced awesome miracles!

>> The Rebbe

A Government Secret

Student's

It was not publicly known that the Cannanite kings paid tribute to Kings Sichon and Og in exchange for protection from attacks by foreign armies. Therefore, the people of Moab would not have been affected by seeing that the Jews defeated Sichon and Og, and it would not have caused them any special fright, as they had no idea that with the fall of those kings they had lost their defenses. They were already aware of the strength and power of the Jews, so seeing what the Jews did to the Amorites didn't give them any new information.

Student's pg. 3

However, when Balak learned of what the Jews did to Sichon and Og, he did see something new. He understood that the Jews had destroyed Moab's defenses, and there was no one left to protect them.

At that point Balak was frightened, and was no longer able to keep this secret from his countrymen. He revealed to them the true implications of the fall of Sichon and Og, and as a result "Moab was frightened." ענין זה, שמלכי כנען שילמו מיסים לסיחון ולעוג כדי שיגנו עליהם לסיחון ולעוג כדי שיגנו עליהם "שלא יעברו עליהם גייסות" לא היה מפורסם, ולכן ניצחונם של בני ישראל על סיחון ועוג לא השפיע על בני מואב והגביר בהם את פחדם בי כיון שהם לא ידעו שבמפלת סיחון ועוג הם איבדו את מי שהם היו "בטוחים עליהם". (והרי את גודלם ועוצמתם של בני ישראל הם כבר הכירו, ומשום כך לא התחדש אצלם דבר בראותם "את כל אשר עשה ישראל לאמורי").

אך כאשר בלק שמע את אשר עשו ישראל לסיחון ולעוג, הוא "ראה" בכך דברים נוספים: הוא הבין שבכך נשמדו מי ש"היינו בטוחים עליהם" ומעתה איז להם על מי לסמוך עוד³.

ומרוב פחדו העצום, לא יכול היה בלק להעלים סודו מאנשי המדינה, והוא גילה אף להם מהי משמעות מפלת סיחון ועוג עבורם, ו"לפיכך: ויגר מואב"⁴.

The nation was unaware that their king was paying the giants Og and Sichon to protect them, so they didn't understand the ramifications of their fall. Only Balak saw the consequences. Balak revealed this to the people, causing them and their army to panic.

Freaking Out

Student's pq. 3

Why did Balak have to reveal this secret to everyone? The common folk would anyway be unable to do anything about the problem, so why frighten them?

The answer is that once Balak saw what the Jews did to the Amorites, he became completely disoriented. He was unable to control himself and hold back from speaking about this secret, because "the wicked are under the control of their hearts."

Here we see the difference between Balak and Moses:

Balak immediately publicized his fears, resulting in mass panic. Contrast that with Moses: Even as he worried that Og wouldn't be defeated, he didn't share his concerns publicly. Moreover, he didn't exhibit any fear externally, confining all of his worries to his heart.

ולכאורה, מדוע היה עליו לספר זאת לכולם, והרי בין כך ובין כך לא היה באפשרותם לסייע בכך, ומדוע הוא היה צריך לגרום לעמו ל"ויגר"?

התשובה לכך היא, שכאשר "וירא בלק את כל אשר עשה ישראל לאמורי", הוא איבד את עשתונותיו ולא הצליח להתאפק ולא לספר על כך, כי "הרשעים⁵ הן ברשות לבם".

וכאן ניכר ההבדל בין בלק לבין, להבדיל, משה רבינו:

בלק פרסם מיד את פחדו, עד שגרם למורא לכל עמו. לעומת זאת משה רבינו, אף כאשר ירא מפני עוג, הרי לא זו בלבד שהוא לא סיפר על כך לאיש, אלא יותר מכך: אפילו עליו עצמו לא היה ניכר שום פחד, כפי שנאמר בגמרא³, שהפחד היה רק "בלבבו".

משיחת ש"פ בלק תשכ"ה לקוטי שיחות (המתורגם ללה"ק) חלק ח", ע' 152 ואילך

In the following section of the Rebbe's address, we'll dissect the incident where Moses was afraid. Unlike Balak, Moses did not share his fears with his nation.

B. A Strong Leader

Do Not Fear

Source 3 Numbers 21:33-34

The Jewish people have vanquished Sichon, the Amorite king, and are now advancing on to the land of Bashan, Og's territory.

Student's

Then they turned and headed north toward the Bashan. Og, the king of Bashan, came out toward them with all his people, to wage war at Edrei.

G-d said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him, his people, and his land into your hand. You shall do to him as you did to Sichon the king of the Amorites who dwells in Cheshbon."

וַיִּפְנוּ וַיַּצֵלוּ דֶּרֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן, וַיֵּצֵא עוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן לָקְרַאתַם, הוּא וְכָל עַמּוֹ, לַמִּלְחָמָה אֵדְרֵעִי.

וַיֹּאמֵר ה' אֵל משֵה: אַל תִּירָא אֹתוֹ, כִּי בִיָּדְדְּ" נַתַתִּי אֹתוֹ וָאָת כַּל עַמוֹ וְאָת אַרְצוֹ, וְעַשִּׁיתַ לּוֹ בַּאַשֵׁר עַשִּׂיתַ לְסִיחֹן מַלֶּךְ הַאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֶׁב בַּחַשָּׁבּוֹן".

Source 4 Talmud. Nidah 61a

Why is G-d suddenly telling Moses not to be afraid? The verses do not give any indication that Moses was afraid. The Talmud explains:

Student's "G-d told Moses 'Do not be afraid.' " Since Sichon and Og were brothers, why was Moses afraid of Og but not Sichon?

מַאַחַר וִסִיחוֹן וִעוֹג הָיוּ אַחִים, שֶׁכֵּן אָמַר הֶחָכָם: סיחון ועוג בַנֵי אַחַיַה שַׁמְחַזַאי, מַדּוּעַ פַחַד משה רַבֵּנוּ מַעוֹג, ומסיחון הוא לא פחד?

The Jewish people had just fought Sichon, and no fear is mentioned. Why would Moses now be afraid of his brother, Og?

Student's pg. 4

Rabbi Yonatan says, quoting Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: From G-d's answer to Moses we can know what was in his heart. In his heart, Moses said: Perhaps the merit of our forefather Abraham will stand for Og and save him. Og was the one who told Abraham that Lot had been taken captive by the four kings, enabling Abraham to rescue Lot.

Student's pg. 5 As it is stated: "And there came one who was saved, and told Abram the Hebrew." Rabbi Yochanan says, "The one who was saved' is Og, because he was a relic of the generation of the flood."

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנְן, אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחֵי: מִתּוֹך תְּשׁוּכְתוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְאוֹתוֹ צַדִּיק – משֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ – אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ מָה הָיָה בְּלְבּוֹ: שֶׁכָּךְ אָמַר משֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ בְּלְבּוֹ: שֶׁכָּךְ אָמַר משֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ זְכוּת שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ, שֶׁשְּׁמֵע לִדְבָּרִיוּ שֶׁל עֹג שָׁלְּט בֶּן אֲחִי אַבְרָהָם נִשְׁבָּה בְּמִלְחֶמֶת אַרְבַּעַת הַמְּלָכִים בְּמִלְחֶמֶת אַרְבַּעַת הַמְּלָכִים אָת הַחַמִשְׁשׁ לַהָם.

שָׁכֵּן נָאֶמַר "וַיָּבֹא הַפָּלִיט וַיַּגַּד לְאַבְרָם הָעָבְרִי", וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנְן: זֶה הַמְּכֻנָּה בַּכָּתוּב "הַפָּלִיט" הִנּוֹ עוֹג, מִשׁוּם שֶׁפָּלַט – שֶׁשָּׂרַד – מִדּוֹר המבּוּל.

Why is it noteworthy that Og and Sichon were brothers? Can't one brother be stronger than the other? Rashi explains something very interesting:

Rashi

Student's pq. 5

Brothers: They descended from Shemachazai and Azael, two kings from the generation of Enosh.

בְּנֵי אָחִיהָ - שֶׁבָּא מִשֶּׁמַחְזֵאי וְעַזָּאֵל שָׁנֵי מַלְאָכִים שֶׁיָּרְדוּ בְּדוֹר אָנוֹשׁ.

Where did these kings originate from?

Source 5 Bereshit Rabati, Bereshit p. 29

Student's

The angels noticed that G-d was upset that He created man. Two angels named Shemchazai and Azael told G-d: "Master of the Universe! We told You when You created the world not to make man ..."

רָאוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים שֶׁהָיָה הקב"ה מִתְעַצֵּב עַל שֶׁבָּרָא בְּנֵי אָדָם. מִיָּד עָמְדוּ שְׁנִי מַלְאָכִים לְפְנֵי הקב"ה שֶׁשְׁמִם שֶׁמַחְזַאי וְעַזָּאֵל וְאָמְרוּ לְפָנָיו: רְבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, הֲלֹא אָמַרְנוּ לְפָנֶיךְ בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁבָּרָאתָ עוֹלְמְךְ אַל הָבְרָא אָדָם... Student's

"What would be with the world?" G-d asked. "We will take care of it," the angels replied.

G-d said, "I know fully well that if you were in their world and had their evil inclination you'd be worse off."

Replied the angels: "Let us live among the humans and see how we sanctify Your name."

"I gave you permission," replied G-d.

They immediately descended and evil inclination the possessed them. They saw beautiful women and went after them, unable to control themselves ... They married women and had children.

Student's pg. 6

> Rabbi Tzadok said: These giants with corrupt hearts who take what they please and murder descend from them, as the verse says "We saw there the giants ..."

> We learned: Shemchazai had two sons, Haya and Haya, and they married women and bore Sichon and Og.

אָמַר לָהֶם הקב"ה: וִעוֹלַם מַה תָּהֵא עַלֵיו?

אַמָרוּ לוֹ: אַנוּ מִסְתַפָּקִים בּוֹ.

לַהֶם: גַּלוּי לָפָנֵי אָלוּ הָיִיתֶם בְּעוֹלְמָם וְיֵצֵר הָרַע שׁוֹלֵט בַּכֵם כִּשֵׁם שׁוֹלֵט בַּאַדַם הֵיִיתֵם קַשִּׁים

אַמִרוּ לוֹ: תֵּן לַנוּ רִשׁוּת וְנַדוּר עָם הַבָּרִיוֹת וִתְרָאֵה אֵיךְ אַנוּ מָקַדִּשִׁים שָׁמָךְ.

אַמַר לַהָם הקב"ה: כָּבַר נַתַתִּי לכם רשות.

מִיַּד יַרִדוּ וִהִשְׁלִיט בַּהֵם יֵצֵר הָרַע. כֵּיוָן שֵׁרָאוּ בִּנוֹת הָאָדַם שֶׁהֵם יָפּוֹת תָּעוּ אֲחֲרֵיהֶן וִלֹא יַכְלוּ לְכַבֵּשׁ בִּיִצְרַן.. עַמִדוּ וְנַשָּׂאוּ נַשִּׁים וְהוֹלִידוּ בַּנִים.

אָמַר רַכִּי צָדוֹק: מֵהֵם נוֹלְדוּ הָצֵנָקִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹלְכִים בִּזְדוֹן ובגבהן, ומשלחים בְּכָל גַזַל וְחָמָס וּשָׁפִיכוּת דַּמִים. שַׁנַאֲמַר שָׁם רַאִינוּ אֵת הַנִּפִּילִים'

שָׁנִינוּ: שֵׁמַחֲזַאי הוֹלִיד שָׁנֵי בָּנִים וּשָׁמוֹתָם - הַיָּא וְהַיָּא, וְנַשָּׂאוּ נַשִּׁים וְהוֹלִידוּ סִיחוֹן ועוג.

>> The Rebbe

What Was Moses Afraid Of?

Student's Moses was not afraid of Og's physical might. The Jews had already easily defeated Sichon who was his brother Og's equal in strength. משה לא התיירא מגבורתו הגשמית של עוג (שהרי עוג וסיחון היו אחים, גם בגבורה, ואילו את סיחון כבשו Student's pg. 6

Rather, he was worried because of Og's spiritual merit, "perhaps the merit of Abraham will protect him." By saving Lot and his family from the hostile kings, Og was credited as if he rescued Abraham personally. This is because Lot was Abraham's relative, and valued by Abraham like his own self. This is clear from the Torah's account of the story, considering that Og informed Abraham and Abraham listened and set out to rescue his relative, thereby endangering himself.

ללא קשיים), אלא היה ירא מהזכות הרוחנית שלו, "שמא תעמוד לו זכות של אברהם אבינו", והיינו, שפעולת עוג שהציל את לוט ובני ביתו מארבעת המלכים חשובה כמו הצלת אברהם³, כי, לוט הוא משפחתו וקרובו שמחשיבו אברהם כעצמו, שזהו פשוטם של הפסוקים מה שהגיד לאברהם ופעל בהגדתו - "וישמע אברם כי נשבה אחיו וגו", שסיכן אברהם את עצמו על זה.

Og had a great merit: He was the one that informed Abraham of the capture of Lot, thereby helping Abraham save him. Saving Abraham's nephew is considered like saving Abraham himself.

The Fear Remained Hidden

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On this issue there is a note to make on the phrasing of the Talmud, which adds a seemingly extra word. Every word in the Torah is part of Torah, which means it has something to teach us.

The wording of this piece in the Talmud is: "From [G-d's] answer to that righteous one [Moses], you can understand what was in his heart." Moses was afraid of Og's merit, a concern relevant to the entire Jewish people. Should Moses not have explained this issue to the people and warned them of the difficulty in battling Og compared to Sichon? How could he keep his concern concealed in his heart?

The answer is that Moses was appointed to be the leader of the Jewish people. He knew that if he showed any fear externally, and all the more so if he would say something about it, it would have a demoralizing effect on their ובענין זה יש דיוק בגמרא - הוספת מילה שלכאורה לא נוגעת לענין, אלא, שכל תיבה בתורה היא חלק מהתורה, מלשון הוראה⁹, כך, שגם בזה יש הוראה ולימוד:

לשון הגמרא הוא: "מתשובתו של אותו צדיק אתה יודע מה היה בלבו". ולכאורה: כיון שמשה היה ירא מהזכות של עוג - שזהו ענין עיקרי שנוגע לכללות היציאה של בני ישראל להילחם עם עוג - היה לו לספר זאת לבני ישראל ולומר להם שעוג אינו כמו סיחון, ואולי אי אפשר להלחם עמו, ואיד היה יכול לנצור זאת בלבו?!

אך הענין הוא: כיון שמשה נשלח להיות נשיא בישראל־ ידע, שאם יהיה ניכר עליו ענין של מורא (אפילו לא בדיבורו, אלא בפניו בלבד), הרי זה עלול להחליש חס ושלום את כל בני Student's pq. 7

battle-readiness, and a display of fear would embolden the enemies of the Jewish people.

Therefore, even though there was a logical argument to be made that Og had the merit of the service he did for Lot and Abraham, Moses was careful to keep this worry hidden in his heart, so as not to discourage the Jews. This was necessary to enable the Jews to defeat Og, as frightening the Jews would have a damaging effect on their ability to battle Og, as well as embolden Og once he noticed their fear.

Student's pg. 8 This is why the Talmud emphasizes that Moses's fear was in his heart. This demonstrates that even when he had a logical and true argument, a fear backed up by the Torah, he kept it in his heart. Considering that he didn't know for certain that Og would be protected by his merit—it was only a legitimate concern—he was able to control that worry and keep it to himself.

And since G-d, unlike man, can see one's heart, it was only G-d who knew his worry, and therefore encouraged him not to worry.

ישראל בענייניהם, וליתן תוקף לצד המנגד.

ולכן, אף שהיה מקום בשכלו, שכל של קדושה, שיש לעוג זכות של הצלת לוט, אברהם (ושרה) - נזהר לנצור זאת בלבו, ובלבד שלא יהיה ניכר מלבו והלאה, כדי שלא להחליש את ישראל, שמזה עצמו יוכל לבוא נצחונו של עוג - אם יהיה ניכר ענין של יראה בפניו, ועל-אחת-כמה-וכמה באמירה בדיבור, שאז ישפיע הדבר על אופן הנהלת המלחמה של בני ישראל, ואופן הנהלת המלחמה של עוג, כשיראה את "האיש הירא ורך הלבב"0.

וזוהי הדגשת הגמרא "מה היה בלבו" - שאפילו כאשר היה ירא להלחם שמא תעמוד לו זכותו של אברהם (יראה שיש לה מקום בתורה), היה זה רק בלבו, שכן, מצד שני, הרי לא ידע בבירור, ורק חשש שמא תעמוד לו זכותו של אברהם, ולכן היה יכול לשלוט בעצמו (ואף על הספק), שרק בלבו כו'.

וכיון ש"האדם יראה לעינים וה' יראה לבב"¹¹ - הנה רק הקב"ה ראה "מה היה בלבו", ולכן אמר לו "אל תירא אותו וגו"".

The Talmud stresses that Moses' fear was only in his heart. Although he had grounds to fear Og's spiritual merit, Moses chose not to share those fears with his people. As a leader, Moses understood that projecting fear or weakness can demoralize the nation and strengthen the enemy. Only G-d, the Knower of hearts, knew Moses' inner fears, so G-d calmed him privately.

C. Do Not Show Fear

>> The Rebbe

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There is an eternal lesson here for every leader: A leader may see difficulties ahead, and may not even know how they will withstand them. However, knowing that their leadership position is divinely orchestrated, they should keep these concerns in their heart, not allowing them to be seen publicly. They should understand that their fears cannot be allowed to influence their actions or speech, and not exhibited in their demeanor.

וזוהי הוראה לכל נשיא בימיו: אפילו בשעה שרואה שישנם קשיים, ובעצמו אינו מבין כיצד יעמדו בהם, הנה בידעו שאותו הועידה ההשגחה העליונה להיות נשיא ומנהיג, הרי הוא נוצר זאת בלבו, באופן שלא יצא חוץ מלבו, ולא זו בלבד שאסור שתהיה לזה השפעה בהנהגתו במעשה או בדיבור, אלא אפילו בפניו לא צריך להיות ניכר דבר.

The Rebbe Rayatz Was Fearless

Such was the conduct of the Rebbe Rayatz, whose deliverance we are celebrating.

His arrest occurred in the midst of a national crisis, just after the assassination of the Soviet ambassador to Poland, so there were plans for a crackdown on citizens of the USSR.

Nevertheless, the Rebbe Rayatz entered this ordeal with the resolve to act confidently and freely, even as he recognized the state of affairs around him at the time, and even as he recognized the Talmudic dictum "do not provoke the wicked one while fortune is smiling on him." As he wrote in a letter, knowing that he was accompanied "by all those who value the Torah, all those who keep the mitzvos, and also

ובאופן הזה היתה הנהגת הנשיא, בעל השמחה והגאולה:

המאסר היה באותו לילה שבו היתה שעת חירום ביותר, בגלל שהרגו אז את השגריר הרוסי בפולין, ולכן החליטו שצריך להרוג כמה וכמה מאלו שנמצאים במדינתו¹².

ואף-על-פי-כן, היתה כניסתו הראשונה למאסר מתוך החלטה שהנהגתו תהיה בהרחבה (לא רק לאחרי שיצא מהמאסר...), בידעו בלבו המצב בעולם, ושאין להתגרות ברשע כשהשעה משחקת לו¹³ - כיון שהולכים עמו (כלשונו במכתבו¹³) "כל מחבבי תורתנו הק', שומרי מצוה, וגם את Student's pq. 10

those who are referred to as 'Israel," he could not evince any fear, not only in his actions or speech, but even in his demeanor.

This conduct did, in fact, succeed, and everyone was able to see the great miracle that G-d did for us. The Soviet officials were forced to give in and release him to freely return home.

את אשר בשם ישראל יכונה" (שלבו ער להקב"ה ולתורתו¹⁴), ולכן, אסור שיהיה ניכר ענין של מורא, לא רק במעשה או בדיבור, אלא אפילו במראה פניו.

ואכן הנהגה זו הצליחה, והביאה לידי כך שראו כל עמי הארץ כי הפלה ה' לעשות עמנו, שגם הם הוצרכו להודות כו', ולשחרר אותו שיוכל לנסוע ולחזור למקומו במצב של חירות.

A week after the Russian ambassador to Poland was assassinated, the GPU (forerunner of the KGB) burst into the home of the Rebbe Rayatz and arrested him. They took him to the Spalerno prison, whose very name instilled fear in the hearts of Russians. They led him through a narrow hallway designed to induce more fear and break the prisoner right away.

Let's read some excerpts from the Rebbe Rayatz's diary about his imprisonment and the decision he made at the beginning:

Source 6 The Imprisonment of 1927 - Diary of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch

Student's

My escort indicated that I should continue to the open door at the end of the corridor. "Speak to one of the secretaries there," he said, "and she will give you a questionnaire to complete."

The corridor, twenty-five meters long and two meters wide, was lined with closed doors on both sides, and illuminated by small ceiling lamps at intervals of five meters. Ten or twelve sentinels were stationed along its length. Each of them was armed with a

הַשׁוֹמֵר מוֹלִיכֵנִי, וּמַרְאָה בְּאָצְבָּעוֹ לָלֶכֶת יָשָׁר בְּאֹרֶךְ הַמְּבוֹא עַד קְצֵהוּ אֶל הַדֶּלֶת הַפְּתוּחָה לְרְוְחָה. שָׁמָה תִּפְנוּ אֶל אַחַת הַכּוֹתְבוֹת, וְתִתֵּן לָכֶם גִּלְיוֹן שָׁאַלוֹת אֲשֶׁר תַּצְנוּ בִּכְתָב עַל בָּל הַשְּׁאֵלוֹת הָאֲמוּרוֹת בוֹ.

הַמָּבוֹא הֲלָזֶה הוּא חֶדֶר אָרֹךְ בְּיוֹתֵר עַל חֲמִשִׁים אַמָּה, רָחָב כְּאַרְכָּעָה אַמָּה וּבִשְׁנֵי צְדָדִיו פְּתָחִים וְדַלְתוֹתֵיהֶם סְגוּרוֹת, וְעַל כָּל עֶשֶׁר אַמּוֹת דּוֹלֵק בַּתְּקְרָה נֵר קְטָן וּבְכָל אֹרֶךְ הַחֶדֶר עוֹמִדִים כַּעֲשַׂרָה אוֹ הַחֶדֶר עוֹמִדִים כַּעֲשַׂרָה אוֹ

pq. 10

Student's Cossack pike that hung over his back, a polished sword in his left hand, and a revolver in his right hand. They all stood motionless, like marble statues, except for their constantly roving eyes.

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This strange and awesome sight must fill any normal person with dread. I walked the length of that corridor between those rows of Russians, in dismal darkness and deathly silence. I asked myself: Where am I going? Why am I going there? What should I do? How will all of this end?

שָׁנֵים עֲשַׂר אִישׁ מִזְיַנִים. כַּל אָחַד מֵהַשׁוֹמִרִים הַלַּלוּ, בָּכִידוֹן מְזָיַנִים קווקי מֵאֲחוֹרָיו, בָּיָדוֹ הַשִּׂמַאלִית וּבידוֹ מִלְטֵשׁת, הַיָּמָנִית קְנָה רוֹבֵה, וְעוֹמֵד כאבן שיש כפסיל אבן מָבָּלִי אֲשֶׁר יַזוּז מִמְקוֹמוֹ, רַק עֵינָיו צוֹפוֹת עַל כּל צְדָדָיו.

הַמַּרְאָה הַנּוֹרַא הַמּוּזַר הַלַזָה הָנָּה בָּהַכְרֵחַ יַפִּיל אֵימָה עַל אָדַם יָשָׁר. בַּחשׁךְ הַאַים וּבַדּוּמִיַה הַמֵּתַה הלזו הלכתי אל קצה הַמַּבוֹא, וּבָמוֹחִי מִתְעוֹרֵרֵת שָׁאֶלָה: אַנַה הָנָנִי הוֹלֶךָ, וּלְאֵיזֵה צֹרֶךְ הָנָנִי הוֹלֶךְ. מַה עַלַי לַעֲשׂוֹת וּמַה יִהְיֵה אַחַרִית דַּבַר זֵה...

By Divine Providence, the Rebbe Rayatz made a wrong turn, finding a normal hallway with bright colors and a bench to sit down on. He took a seat and rested, trying to calm himself.

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Seeing a long bench a few steps ahead I sat down to rest ... The present moment I must exploit in order to consider my current situation, and to prepare myself for the manner in which I shall conduct myself in the room behind "the door which is wide open to every prisoner."

My mind lit up as with a lightning flash: Enough of those thoughts! What about G-d? Who brought all this about? After all, everything proceeds from Him.

I organized my general responses. I came to a

צעדים איזה מַרַחוֹק ראיתי ספסל ארך. הלכתי אַל סַפְּסַל זָה וְיָשַׁבָתִּי לַנוּחַ מִעַט... בִּשַּׁעַה זוֹ עַלַי לִהִשָּׁתַּמֵשׁ לִהִתְבּוֹנֵן בָּמַצַּבִי הַהוֹוֶה, וּלְהַכִין אֵת עַצָּמִי אֵיךְ לְהָתְנַהֵג כַּחֲדַר הַדֵּלֵת הַפָּתוּחַה לְרוּחַה לַכַל אַסִיר...

דם מִלְהַרָהֵר – הָבָרִיק בַּמוֹחִי – וּכָאוֹר בַּרָק זָרַח בָּרַעִיוֹנִי: וְהַאֵּלֹקִים מַה? מִי עַשָּׂה כָּזֹאת? מִי פַּעַל פזאת? הלא הכל מאת הַאֱלֹקִים!...

סַדַרָתִּי לִי דָבָרֵי כַלליִים. וּבאתי הַחָלַטַה גִּמוּרֵה לִהִיוֹת עַז וְתַקִּיף, בְּלִי חַת, לְדַבֵּר

Student's

decision to remain bold and strong, without fear, to speak clearly and not to take into account my surroundings ... This firm and unconditional decision raised my spirits and gave me a sense of personal worth. As the rising sun lit up the white wall in front of me, I felt as if I were sitting in a garden or taking a midday stroll.

Student's

pg. 12

What a lofty thing is the simple inner faith that every Jew inherits from our Patriarchs, the fathers of the world! How great is the power of complete trust! They are not only the foundations of our faith but also the foundations of every Jew's ordinary material life.

בְּשֶּׁפֶה בָּרָה, וְלֹא לְהַתְחַשֵּׁב בְּלֶל עִם הַמַּצְב וְהַסְּכִיכָּה אֲשֶׁר יְסוֹבְבוּנִי. הַחְלָטָתִי הַתְּקִיפָּה וְהַמָּחְלֶטֶת הַלְּזוֹ נְתְנָה לִי הַגְּכָּהַת רוּחַ, וְהָרְגִּשׁ יְחוּס עַצְמִי. וּבָה בְּשָׁעָה יְשַׁבְתִּי כְּיוֹשֵׁב בַּגַּוּ, אוֹ מְטַיֵּל לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם. כִּי אוֹר זְרִיחַת הַשֶּׁעֶשׁ הַאִּירָה אֶת פְּנֵי הַכֹּתֶל הַלְּכָן אֲשֶׁר לְמוּלִי...

מָה רַבָּה הִיא הָאֱמוּנָה הַפְּנִימִית, הָאֱמוּנָה הַפְּנִימִית, הָאֱמוּנָה הַפְּנִימִית, הַבְּּאָמוּנָה הַפְּנִימִית, הַבְּאָמוּנָה הַבְּּאָה בִּירְשָׁה לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֲבוֹת עוֹלָם. מַאֲבוֹת עוֹלָם. וּמָה בָּדוֹל הוּא כּוֹחוֹ שֶׁל הַבְּּפְיחוֹן הַבְּּמוּר. הֵם לֹא רַק יְסוֹדֵי הַדְּת, דְּת קַדְשׁנוּ, כִּי יִסוֹדֵי הַדְּת, דְת קַדְשׁנוּ, כִּי אִם נְסוֹדֵי חַיִּים, הַחַיִּים הַבִּשְׁמִיִים הַבְּשְׁמִיִם הַבְּשְׁמִיִם הַבְּשְׁמִיִם שָׁל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Indeed, during his entire imprisonment, the Rebbe Rayatz displayed remarkable courage and Jewish pride. He showed his Soviet captors that he did not fear them and would continue in his ways. He won; they were forced to free him. He acted this way because he knew he was representing the Jews all across Soviet Russia. If he displayed fear, that would affect Jews across the USSR.

>> The Rebbe

Weakness Is Not An Option

Student's pq. 12

This concept was referenced many times by the Rebbe Rayatz. We all are messengers of G-d with the constant mission of making this world better, nicer, more refined, and holier than it was until now. When we start working on a specific task in this regard, we shouldn't allow ourselves to think that it may not

וזוהי גם הנקודה שאודותה דיבר בעל השמחה כמה פעמים, שכאשר יוצאים למלא שליחותו של הקב"ה בענין של תורה ומצוות "שלוחי השזהו תוכן כל חיי ימי ישראל, שהם "שלוחי דרחמנא"¹³ שליח של הקב"ה בעולם כדי לעשותו טוב ויפה נעלה ומזוכך ומקודש יותר מאשר ברגע שלפני זה - אין להעלות Student's pq. 12

succeed, G-d forbid, and we definitely cannot allow any such thoughts to influence how we go about fulfilling that task.

A classic example that the Rebbes noted many times is the fact that when an army heads out to war, even before any battles, the troops sing a victory march.

The rationale is that this practice is part and parcel of the strategies of war. The same way that to be victorious in battle one must bring along a rifle and cannon or the like, so too one must bring along a strong conviction that they will be victorious. With this mindset, victory becomes easier and quicker to achieve. על הדעת את המחשבה שמא לא יצליחו חס ושלום, ועל-אחת-כמה-וכמה שאסור להניח שמחשבה כזו תפעל על אופן ההליכה למילוי השליחות.

וכידוע הדוגמא שהביא רבינו נשיאנו לענין זה, שרואים בהנהגת העולם שכאשר אנשי צבא יוצאים לחזית, הנה כבר בעת הליכתם אל החזית, עוד קודם התחלת הקרב, קודם שהתחילה המלחמה, מנגנים כבר "מאַרש" (שיר לכת) של נצחון 14.

וטעם הדבר - לפי שהנהגה זו נכללת בתכסיסי המלחמה: כשם שבשביל הניצחון יש צורך בכלי זיין, רובה, תותח וכיוצא בזה, כמו כן יש צורך בהחלטה ומצב רוח של ניצחון ודאי ללא כל ספק, שעל ידי זה נעשה הניצחון במהירות ובקלות יותר.

Student's pg. 13

In 1843, while the Tzemach Tzedek was living in S. Petersburg, the Jewish soldiers in the Czar's army, known as Cantonists, based in Kronstadt, applied for permission to have the Tzemach Tzedek visit them, and the generals approved the request.

The Tzemach Tzedek traveled to Kronstadt, accompanied by 50 Chassidim, and they were met by Jewish naval troops, cavalry, and infantry. The Rebbe said a discourse before them in Yiddish, titled "I have erased your transgressions like a thick cloud" and quoted several passages from the Sages. They were very moved and many cried.

This event roused others to want the same, and before Rosh Hashana the Tzemach Tzadek spoke before 600 soldiers from all around S. Petersburg.

Source 7 Sefer Hasichot, 5705 (1945), p. 57

Student's pg. 13 When my great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, visited a group of Jewish soldiers in Kronstadt, a port city near Petersburg, one of them remarked that a battle is won not by tears but by a marching song.

On this, the Tzemach Tzedek later commented: "Now, that's a soldier. A soldier knows only one thing and no more: his job is to obey the general. If the general gives marching orders, the soldier marches forward, even facing danger. That's all he knows, and he marches not with tears but with a marching song."

הוֹד פְּבוֹד קְדְשַׁת אַדְמוֹ"ר הָרַב הַקָּדוֹשׁ הַאָּמֵח צֶדֶק, כְּשֶׁבִּקֵר אֶת הַחַיָּלִים הַיְּהוּדִיִּים בְּקָרְנְשְׁטָט – נְמֵל בְּעִיר הַבִּירָה פֵּטֶרְבּוּרְג שֶׁבְּרוּסְיָה, אָמֵר לוֹ אֶחָד הַחַיָּלִים, שֶׁמְלְחָמָה לֹא מְנַצְחִים בִּדְמָעוֹת, אֶלָּא בְּשִׁיר לֶכֶת (מַאִרשׁ).

אָמַר עַל כָּךְ הַאֶּמַח צֶדֶק: "זֶהוּ חַיָּל! חַיָּל יוֹדֵעַ רַק זֹאת, וְיוֹתֵר אֵין הוּא יוֹדַעַ. עָלָיו לְצַיֵּת לַגֶּנְרָל, הַגָּנֶרְל מְצַנֶּה לְלֶכֶּת הַחַיָּל הוֹלֵךְ, אֲפִלּוּ בִּמְקוֹם סַכְּנָה, וְהוּא הוֹלֵךְ עִם מַארְשׁ וִלֹא בִּדְמַעוֹת.

Since then, the Chabad rebbes repeated this saying many times, and always emphasized the importance of joy and faith, because only with them can we be victorious.

>> The Rebbe

Student's

This is the lesson from the conclusion of this week's Torah portion as practically expressed in the conduct of our Rebbe. It is a lesson for everyone, "all who are referred to as 'Israel". If we act like we know with 100% certainty that we will be successful in fulfilling G-d's mission, speak about this with full conviction, and even show on our faces the confidence of one who has already triumphed, then we will have G-d's blessing— "do not fear him." Even the fear in our hearts will dissipate and we will go ahead joyfully and gladly, to fulfill our Divine mission of kindness and justice.

יכונה") - שאם רק מתנהגים כמו שיודעים בוודאות, במאה אחוז, שימלאו את שליחותו של הקב"ה, ומדברים בכל התוקף והוודאות, ועד שגם במראה פניו ניכר שהולך כאן זה שכבר ניצח במלחמה, אזי ישנה ברכתו של הקב"ה: "אל תירא אותו", שגם מתוך פנימיות הלב תיעלם היראה, וילך בשמחה

ובטוב לבב למלא את שליחותו של הקב"ה,

לעשות צדקה וחסד.

וזוהי ההוראה שלמדים מסיום הפרשה.

שבאה לידי פועל באופן הנהגת רבינו

נשיאנו, בתור לימוד והוראה לכל אחד ואחד

(כלשונו במכתבו: "כל אשר בשם ישראל

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משיחת יום ב', פרשת בלק, י"ב תמוז, ה'תשכ"ה תורת מנחם חלק מ"ד, עמוד 81 ואילך הנחה בלתי מוגה

The Rebbe is teaching us that when we approach a mission, we must do so with complete faith in our success, without doubt or concern. He compares this to soldiers going to battle singing a victory song, as part of the military strategy. This approach—of complete faith and confidence in the success of the mission—helps achieve the objectives. The Rebbe emphasizes that when we approach a spiritual task with full confidence and faith—in both our speech and body language—G-d blesses us and removes our fears, enabling us to complete the task with joy.

Student's Key Points:

- Balak was privy to confidential information: Moab paid Sichon and Og to guard its borders, and now that they had fallen, the country was vulnerable.
- Balak revealed this to his nation and everyone panicked.
- Moses, by contrast, when he feared the enemy, did not betray his fears to his people, keeping it in his heart.
- Og and Sichon were descended from angels, which explains their extraordinary stature and might.
- Moses was only fearful of Og, not Sichon, because of Og's merit in saving Lot, Abraham's nephew, which was considered as though he saved Abraham himself.
- Unlike Balak, Moses feared only in his heart, without projecting it, knowing that showing it would demoralize the people.
- The lesson for every leader: Even in the face of great challenges, broadcast strength and confidence.
- This is what the Rebbe Rayatz did when arrested by the Soviet Secret Police. He displayed no fear and presented himself proudly. He knew that broadcasting fear would weaken the Jews across Russia.
- Soldiers go to battle with a victory march; only with such an attitude is a battle won.

Takeaway:

In challenging times, display joy and confidence, broadcast strength and a sense of victory and that will help overcome those challenges.