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Chicago	8:11	New York	8:13
Cleveland	8:46	Paris	9:40
Detroit	8:55	Philadelphia	8:15
Houston	8:08	Phoenix	7:24
Jerusalem	7:30	Pittsburgh	8:36
Johannesburg	5:09	Seattle	8:53
Los Angeles	7:50	Sydney	4:40
London	9:03	Tokyo	6:42
Miami	7:58	Toronto	8:45
Montreal	8:28	Washington DC	8:19

Weekly Parsha

Balak

RABBI BERNARD FOX

“And Bilaam arose in the morning. And he said to Balak’s ministers, “Go to your land for Hashem has refused to allow me to go with you.” (BeMidbar 22:13)

Hashem appears to Bilaam in a vision. He tells Bilaam that he

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the Perfect Pill

Illness: Priority of the body over the soul
Prescription: One dose of reality daily

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

Alfred visited his doctor’s office. Due to his lack of a healthy diet and exercise, his doctor tells him his internal organs are diseased, and that he has one month to live. However, the doctor says, if he follows his diet, his prescription, and exercise regimen exactly, he can live a full life. But Alfred says, “I don’t like the blue pill’s taste, or the shape of the yellow pill, and I won’t give myself injections. And exercise takes too much exertion.” Alfred died later that month.

Many times we hear fellow Jews echoing this sentiment, but endangering something more vital than their bodies: their souls. “God just wants me to be a nice person,” they feel. The obvious response is, “Where does God say this?” Furthermore, if this were so, the Torah could be a bit shorter.

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(Balak cont. from pg. 1)

Weekly Parsha

JewishTimes

Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought



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should not respond to Balak's summons. Bilaam cannot curse Bnai Yisrael. The nation is blessed.

Hashem's meaning was very clear. Bilaam could not affect destiny. He could merely foretell the future. This ability was the foundation of Bilaam's illusions. Hashem told Bilaam he could not succeed in this case. Bnai Yisrael was blessed. Bilaam would have no opportunity to curse the nation.

Bilaam told the messengers that he could not return with them to Balak. He did not explain the reason. He did not indicate that he could not help Balak or that Bnai Yisrael could not be cursed. Why did Bilaam conceal this information?

Rashi explains Bilaam's motivations. He comments that Bilaam told the ministers that he could not proceed with them. This implied that Balak should send a more worthy delegation. This delegation would earn Bilaam's cooperation. Clearly, Bilaam was attempting to conceal his limitations.[1]

The effect of Bilaam's response is predictable. Balak understood Bilaam's message. He sent a new delegation. This group was composed of ministers of higher rank. These ministers arrived at Bilaam's home.

They assured Bilaam he would be amply rewarded for his services. They assured him of Balak's complete cooperation.

Of course, Bilaam's situation remained unchanged. He knew that only the Almighty shaped destiny. Bilaam could not truly curse or bless anyone. He was forced to reveal this limitation.[2] He told the messengers they must wait with him. He must receive guidance from Hashem.

Bilaam's behavior seems bizarre. He knew that ultimately he must follow Hashem's command. Hashem had told him that Bnai Yisrael was blessed. Bilaam would not be able to satisfy Balak's request. Why did he mislead Balak?

Don Isaac Abarvanel explains that Bilaam was

involved in an immense internal conflict. He enjoyed the attention he was receiving from Balak – the king of Moav. Balak's entreaties appealed to Bilaam's vanity. He did not want this attention to end. He needed to provide Balak with encouragement. This required Bilaam to create the impression that he had volition. However, Bilaam had no freedom. He could not act without Hashem. This eventually was revealed.

Bilaam's situation was further complicated by his very claim. He presented himself as the true prophet of the Almighty. This implied that he was subject to the Almighty's authority. This created an absolute contradiction. Bilaam implied freedom and subjugation simultaneously.



Bilaam could not resolve this conflict. This is reflected in his actions. He attempted to continue his charade. But in the end was forced, by his own claims, to admit his limitations.

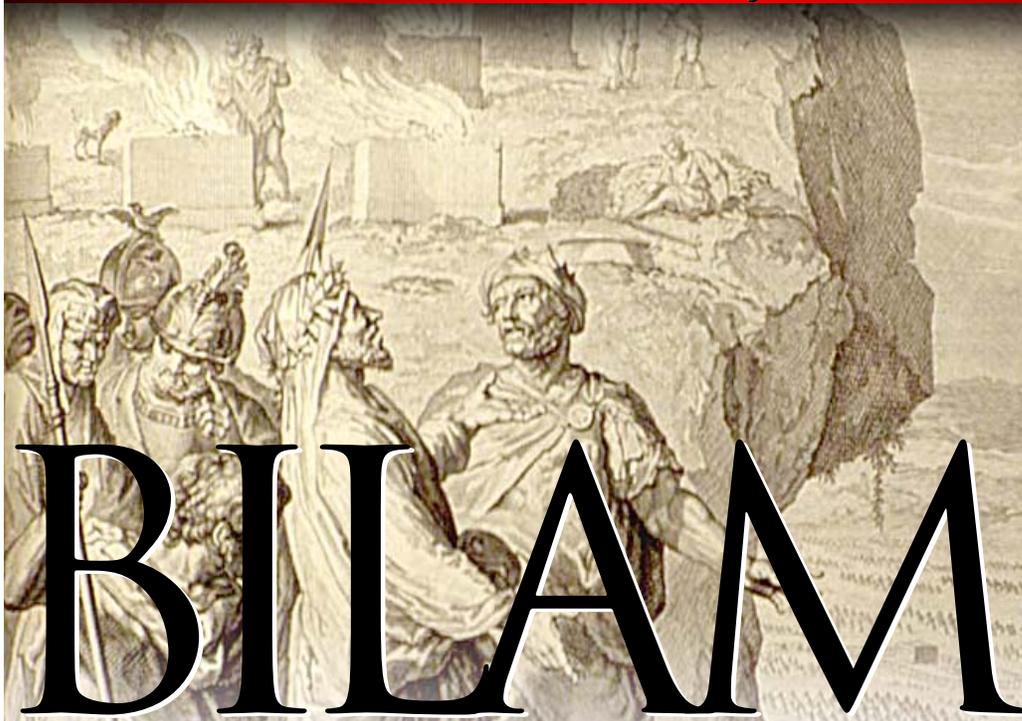
The most revealing aspect of this entire incident is Bilaam's immediate reaction to the second delegation. Essentially, the delegation asked Bilaam to name his price. This angered Bilaam. He responded that all of Balak's wealth could not force a prophet to violate Hashem's command. Why did Bilaam react so sharply? Bilaam had

implied that the proper delegation could enlist his support. Balak rightfully understood this to imply that Bilaam had the ability to make a decision. He challenged Bilaam to exercise his freewill. This angered Bilaam. Balak had implied that Bilaam was not a true prophet. Bilaam immediately responded that he must obey Hashem. He was forced to confess his limitations.[3] ■

[1] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 22:13.

[2] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 22:18.

[3] Don Yitzchak Abravanel, Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 22:7.



genius and excellent political acumen. He was the advisor that counseled Pharaoh that all Israelite male children should be thrown into the river. He had the political foresight to appreciate that every political movement requires a leader at its forefront.

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Written by student

Upon studying the events of Balak's hiring Bilam we reach the inescapable conclusion that Balak was truly awed by Bilam's powers. He relentlessly attempts to hire Bilam to curse the Children of Israel. It also seems apparent that God did not want Bilam to curse the Children of Israel as he placed many impediments in this attempted mission. God ultimately converts Bilam's curse into a blessing.

This entire incident raises many disturbing questions. Why is this story highlighted, throughout the generations many people have cursed us? Furthermore, why is God concerned with Bilam's curse? It seems that if Bilam uttered his curse it would have been dangerous, as though it could influence the rova olam?

In order to resolve this difficulty we must analyze the personality of Bilam to appreciate the threat that he posed. Chazal tell us that Bilam possessed great

The Gemara states that Bilam possessed great powers of perception. However, he was also very devious. When he saw a person was in a precarious situation, albeit political or economical, he would curse that person. The individual's ultimate downfall was attributed to Bilam's ostensible supernatural powers. Bilam was a machiavellian type of personality, a great political genius and adviser to kings. He counseled his clients by exposing their enemy's political weakness. We can therefore appreciate the Gemara in Brachos 7a, which tells us that Bilam knew the time when God was angry with Klal Yisroel. He was capable of determining what Bnai Yisroel's weakness was and when was the proper time to exploit that weakness. A student of history can appreciate that certain critical events trigger many different phenomena, which in turn have very severe ramifications. History is replete with specific turning points, which shape the course of mankind. There are two factors, which play a role and permit the exploitation of a political vulnerability. One is the ability to know the nature of your antagonist. Secondly, you must be cognizant of an event that can occur which would allow this weakness in his nature to present itself. This event would afford one the opportunity to take advantage of that vulnerability. Bilam as a political genius had this ability. He perceived a weakness in Klal Yisroel, which would cause their divisiveness and self destruction. There-

fore, Chazal inform us that God was not angry with Bnai Yisroel, throughout this entire event. This has added significance since God did not allow an event to occur that would have afforded Israel's enemies the opportunity to take advantage of them.

Bilam's plan was to expose the weakness of the Israelites. He recognized that God relates to the Children of Israel as evidenced by their exodus from Israel. He could not just wage war with these chosen people but rather he had to curse them. The curse essentially was to expose the weakness of Israel for all generations. This weakness, if exposed would have allowed Israel's enemies to exploit it and ultimately cause the self-destruction of the Jews.

We can now appreciate why Balak pursued Bilam to curse the Children of Israel. However, Bilam utilized his talents as a means of enriching himself. Although he had great intellectual gifts, he used them merely to cater to his materialistic desires. Balak thereby offered Bilam exorbitant amounts of money to undertake this task of cursing the Israelites. Bilam due to his materialistic nature really desired to accept Balak's task. However, as part of his mystique and to profess some supernatural talents, Bilam, told Balak's emissaries to stay the night. He had no qualms about going on a mission to destroy the Israelites. He previously had advised Pharaoh concerning their destruction. However, his hesitancy was merely a clever guise to bolster his persona as a God like figure. He professed that he was communicating with God at night and therefore requested them to stay. Bilam was the ultimate rationalist. He was a calculating character that used his genius to exploit people's insecurities and quest for the supernatural. However, contrary to his plan, God appeared to him in a prophetic vision and warned him about his attempted mission. God instructed him not to go curse these people because they are blessed. This vision was startling for Bilam, the ultimate rationalist. He manipulated peoples' fears and merely professed supernatural powers. Thus God's appearance to him was shocking. He therefore, as a rationalist, was incredulous as to the revelation. Hence, he did not advise Balak's messengers to leave, but rather wanted them to wait another night to determine if this was merely an illusion.

The second night when God appeared, he advised Bilam you can get up and go with these people, but you can only do what I tell you. This second vision raises difficulties. Originally God advised Bilam not to go, but seemingly changes his mind and tells him to go, but obey what I command you. This would seem to support the inane proposition that God changed his mind. Furthermore, after Bilam goes, God expressed anger that he went, even though God consented to his journey, provided Bilam did not

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Weekly Parsha

violate his command. Upon closer analysis we can appreciate that God relates to man on two different levels.

God relates to man in the absolute. The best and most rational course of action is the conduct most desired. In this instance this was set out in his first vision. Do not go and curse the nation. God also relates to man in terms of the individuals own emotional framework.

The ideal is not to even go on the mission. However, emotionally Bilam wanted to go. His ego and materialism propelled him on the mission. Perhaps this vision was really just an illusion and he could still salvage his self image and enrich himself. Therefore, God also relates to man in terms of the subjective. If you feel compelled to go, then go, but do not disobey my command. The objective remains constant. However, God expressed his anger because Bilam fell prey to his emotions and was incapable of acting in terms of the objective.

Bilam's emotional makeup was unique. He was a brilliant thinker capable of great powers of perception. He was not subject to the irrational insecurities of his contemporary man. On the contrary, he rose above his peers and his genius was unique. However, Bilam the consummate rationalist was incapable of perceiving the ultimate reality. He utilized his abilities merely to satisfy his ego and his materialistic tendencies. He was totally blind to the philosophy of Judaism. Judaism maintains that the world of chachma is the essence. It is a reflection of the creator, the ultimate reality. However success and the accumulation of material goods all extraneous concerns for the talmid chacham, were the motivating factors for Bilam.

Bilam's only philosophy was that the intellect was merely a means for satisfying his desires. He rejected the concept of an objective good. This notion ran counter to his basic philosophy. That is why the Torah tells us that he initiated the mission by harnessing his own donkey. He was demonstrating that his visions were merely aberrations. There is no objective reality. Therefore, God expressed his anger at Bilam for he failed to comprehend true reality. He was guided by his emotions and had to demonstrate that he Bilam, the rationalist, was the ultimate master of his own destiny.

Despite Bilam's recalcitrance in pursuing this mission, God utilized his donkey as the means for thwarting his desires. Irrespective of whether the donkey actually talked or if the entire incident was a prophetic vision, it demands our analysis. The donkey prevented Bilam's progress on three separate occasions. The first detour the donkey went into the

field when it saw an angel of God standing in its way with a sword drawn in his hand. Despite Bilam's smiting the donkey and prodding it to proceed, it was again blocked by the angel of God. This time the donkey did not move and engaged Bilam in a dialogue. It was only after this dialogue that God opened Bilam's eyes and permitted him to see the angel of God blocking the road. Rashi comments that at the outset only the donkey was capable of seeing the angel because God gave it permission. Had Bilam seen the angel, since he was a man of intelligence, his mind would have been damaged upon beholding this sight. Bilam was blinded to the philosophy of Judaism and incapable of perceiving an objective reality. The previous night's prophetic visions were startling to him and threatened his convictions as the master logician. However, due to the strength of his belief he discounted them and proceeded upon his mission. Therefore, Rashi tells us, had God permitted him to see the angel immediately, he would have been devastated. To suddenly be confronted with the phenomenon of a greater metaphysical reality, would have destroyed him. Therefore, the perception of this metaphysical reality was only comprehended by his donkey. The donkey represented his stubborn desire to proceed, which was thwarted. At this point, he was only capable of perceiving the truth in a distorted manner. Emotionally Bilam desired to proceed, to continue through life with his distorted vision of reality. However, the donkey that he rode on since his youth, did not budge. He hit the donkey three times, but to no avail. He did not investigate the situation to determine if anything was bothering his normally faithful donkey. He hit the donkey repeatedly, which reflected his irrational desire to accomplish his goal. However, the donkey spoke to him and questioned his determination and asked Bilam whether it ever prevented his movement in the past. At this point the Torah tells us that God opened Bilam's eyes and he saw the angel of God

standing in the roadway. This vision was possible only after Bilam contemplated the situation and examined his irrational behavior. He realized that his donkey would not proceed despite being hit three times. He slowly started to realize that there was some metaphysical force behind these abnormal events. The previous prophetic visions and the current events, led him to realize there was a force at work that did not want him to proceed. He was beginning to appreciate that these were not just physical obstacles but rather a manifestation of a metaphysical reality. Three times the donkey was hit but did not proceed. Bilam started to realize that this symbolized that he was dealing with a unique nation that had three forefathers guided by God. The Israelites were a special nation that celebrate three festivals whereby they acknowledge their unique relationship with God. He slowly started to appreciate that he was dealing with not just another political entity, but rather a unique nation under God's special providence. God allowed Bilam to perceive these concepts by placing him into circumstances, whereby his genius and power of perception enabled him to perceive this metaphysical reality.

Bilam's ultimate blessing of the Children of Israel was a testimony to his powers of perception. However, Bilam's prophecy was different that other prophets. Bilam was only capable of this higher level of perception when aided by external circumstances. The true prophet obtains his prophecy by constantly changing and improving himself guided by his intellect. The true prophet's prophecy is inherent to the person and emerges as a result of the state of his intellectual perfection. Bilam only obtained his prophecy when aided by external circumstances. Therefore, Chazal tell us that Bilam eventually became a diviner. In the absence of external phenomena, he fell prey to his materialistic tendencies. His prophecy was not inherent and thus when the external circumstances were not present he was doomed to failure. ■



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Perfection

(continued from page 1)

the Perfect Pill



Of course, their sentiment is merely a justification for taking the “easy” way out, and ignoring what they truthfully know is binding. But their laziness is not based on any analysis of fact, facts that if learned, they would treasure. No, their path in life is fueled by the desire to cater to emotional gratifications, and commands get in their way. Had they studied that wise man’s work “Koheles” (Ecclesiastes) they would learn that the gratifications they seek are empty...explaining why they constantly need new ‘toys’, travels, wives, and parties. They won’t dare act as Alfred above, and ignore a doctor’s advice regarding life-threatening circumstances. But they do ignore God...who knows more than the doctor. Why is this? The answer lies in the origins of the Conservative and Reform movements:

“In response to Haskalah (late 18th century) and Jewish emancipation, elements within German Jewry sought to reform Jewish belief and practice. They denied divine authorship of the Torah, declared only those biblical laws that are easily understood to be binding, and stated that the rest of Halakhah (Jewish law) need no longer be viewed as normative. Circumcision was abandoned, rabbis wore vestments modeled after Protestant ministers, and instrumental accompaniment -- banned by current Orthodox and most Conservative interpretations of Halakhah (and by traditionalists of the time) in Jewish Sabbath worship -- appeared in Reform synagogues, most often in the form of a pipe organ to model what appeared in churches. Early Reform Judaism, in order to assimilate more into European culture, held that Judaism was no more a peoplehood, but was only a religion. This was because holding Judaism as a culture and peoplehood prevented Reform Jews from being ordinary citizens in their host nation.

Positive-Historical Judaism, the intellectual forerunner to Conservative Judaism, was developed as a school of thought in the 1840s and 1850s in Germany. Its principal founder was Rabbi Zecharias Frankel, who had broken with the German Reform Judaism in 1845 over its rejection of the primacy of the Hebrew language in Jewish prayer. In 1854, Frankel became the head of the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, Germany. At the seminary, Frankel taught that Jewish law was not static, but rather has always developed in response to changing conditions.”

The Original: the True Form

What comes into existence for the first time – never before having existed – defines it as the “original”. Conservative and Reformed Judaism admit with their very names, that they “conserved” and “reformed” something. That something, being the original form of Judaism. This is a very salient point, so think about it.

Would anyone accept that someone who claimed to have created a Ford – after Henry Ford – created the true Ford? Or, must we say, that Henry Ford was in fact the originator, and that Henry’s first Ford defines what “Ford” is? What would we say to someone who painted a

copy of the Mona Lisa? Do we say the second painting is the original? That is equally absurd.

Similarly, the unanimous acceptance by our most brilliant minds, and the every history of Sinai, the Rabbis words, and Talmud with the Shulchan Aruch, together teach what true Judaism is.

Transparent Lies

The histories above of Conservative and Reformed also unveil how superficial these two movements are: “They denied divine authorship of the Torah”, “rabbis wore vestments modeled after Protestant ministers”, and “Jewish law was not static, but rather has always developed in response to changing conditions.”

First, the Reformed movement denies the Divine nature of Torah...but offers no basis. Clearly, they wish to escape from God, as did the Jews in the desert on so many occasions. (Had they studied the book of Numbers, what they declared not to be Divine, they might have saved their souls.) They also sought to assimilate, and dressed like Protestant ministers. Is this what religion is to be: a means to assimilate, or is it to draw close to reality and God? Do we decide religion based on human foibles, or by objective truths?

And the Conservative movement decided after millennia of “static” Orthodox, Talmudic Judaism, that the great Rabbis had it all wrong. Both polluted forms of “Judaism” do not go back to the sources attempting to prove God’s intent. Rather, they succumb to recent, emotional needs, and from that starting point, somehow transpose their needs onto original, Talmudic Judaism, and change it to meet those wishes.

This is identical to someone claiming a pill to be useless, since many people don’t like its flavor. Had he displayed how those who ingested that pill remained sick, he would have a case. But he didn’t. He resorted to ‘external’ and unrelated critiques. Same story here: Conservative and Reformed have not examined each law. They have not proven how Tzitzit or the 39 forms of Sabbatical labor are detrimental. Both movements condemn themselves based on their corrupt foundations, and they are destined to crumble.

On a simple level, we can also reject Conservatism since one would agree to follow a more learned doctor, than a novice. The same should apply to whom we follow in Judaism: shall we follow masters like Maimonides whose writings are beyond our depth, and comparison

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to anyone on the Reformed or Conservative camps...or shall we follow lesser individuals?

And on a more piercingly true point, we can study history, and the works of the Talmud to truly appreciate the depth and precision of all these "restrictions". No one I have met who studied Talmud and Torah for its required decades denies the Divine nature Torah reveals. No man could have written it. But we also know historically of God's endorsement of Moses subsequent to Sinai, as his face miraculously literally shone with light, teaching that God was with him. Had Moses fabricated God's Torah...even a single word, God would not endorse Moses with any miracle.

Wisdom Sides with Orthodoxy

One must ask why the greatest minds ז"ל from Saadia Gaon, Rashi, Maimonides, Nachmanides, Ibn Ezra, Radak, Sforno...to Rabbi Sampson Raphael Hirsch, The Rabbis Soloveitchik, Rav Moshe Feinstein and so many others, never once suggested what the Conservative and Reformed movements suggest. Additionally, these two movements are fairly recent, only a few hundred years old. Even more of a question is this: if these two movements are in fact wiser than the forenamed Rabbis, where is the Maimonidean level of brilliance or voluminous intellects in these two new forms of "Judaism"? The fact is, both camps are bereft of such minds.

My Judaism

These arguments apply equally to the act of picking and choosing which laws we observe today. We reject the notion that God only wants us to be good. There is much greater detail to Torah, since the human being is so complex. We are fortunate to have such a detailed system. As Rabbi Tarfon said, "The work is not upon us to complete, but we are also not free to abandon it". (Ethics, 2:19) God is not seeking that we "cover ground". Rather, He desires – for our own good – that we regularly work to improve, and recognize the Torah as a means to this grand goal. God desires our intellects to be at work, not taking the easy way out. His ideas are so profound; it takes years to elevate our minds to appreciate. God designed us in a way that with greater involvement in study, comes greater treasures, and happiness.

Remember Alfred

Alfred will probably never exist. He will remain a mere metaphor. The reason he won't exist, is because of a few, predominant fallacies: man values physical life over eternal life; man can't see past the here and now; man yearns for immortality.

We must first recognize our mortality, so visiting gravesites is wise. This will loosen the grip on the here and now. And this will help shift our focus – just a bit – towards the reality that physical life is temporary; but spiritual life is eternal life. We should value that which lasts.

With this backdrop, if we are truthful with ourselves, we will detect when we are lazy, and have no excuse for our failure to comply with the Torah. And if we truly desire the good for ourselves, we must know that God did not give the Torah to benefit Himself...He needs nothing from our performance.

If we investigate each command, each Rabbinic injunction, we can derive pleasing truths, and a happier life.

But if we reject God's medicine, aren't we as foolish as Alfred? ■

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How (Not) to Argue with a

Fool

MATT SCHNEEWEISS

“Do not answer a ksil (fool) according to his foolishness, lest you also be like him. Answer a ksil according to his foolishness, lest he view himself as a chacham (wise person).”

(Mishlei 26:4-5)

The major problem with these two verses is that they explicitly contradict each other. King Solomon leaves us in a quandary: are we supposed to answer the fool or not?

The Targum (Aramaic translation) helps us resolve the contradiction with a few clever interpretive maneuvers: inserting the word “rather” between the two verses and replacing “lest” with “such that.” The verses now read: “Do not answer a fool according to his foolishness SUCH THAT you also be like him. RATHER, answer the fool according to his foolishness SUCH THAT he doesn’t view himself as a chacham.”

The Targum may have helped us out of the contradiction, but we still have to understand: what advice is King Solomon giving us?

The first step is to define the term “ksil.” There are numerous descriptions of the ksil throughout Mishlei: “ksilim hate knowledge” (1:22), “licentiousness is a sport for the ksil” (10:23), “turning away from evil is an abomination to the ksil” (13:19). In short, a ksil is a person who shuns the life of the mind and embraces the life of the instincts and emotions.

The key phrase here is “in accordance with his foolishness.” The fundamental principle of arguing with a ksil is to recognize that he is a ksil. King Solomon warns us not to respond to the ksil in the same way we would respond to someone who is ignorant or mistaken. The ksil’s problem runs so deep, that he requires an answer tailored to his distorted personality. [1]

A ksil, like a chacham, has a lot of conviction in

his ideas, as King Solomon says, “a ksil is bold and self-assured” (14:16). The difference is that the chacham’s conviction stems from his intellect, whereas the ksil’s conviction stems from his emotions. As such, no amount of reasoning will convince him that he is wrong. Any attempt to present rational arguments to the a ksil is a waste of time, as King Solomon says, “Do not speak in the ears of the fool, lest he mock the intelligence of your words” (23:9), “a ksil does not desire understanding, but only the inner desires of his heart” (18:2). Close-minded, self-confident, and hostile to knowledge - the standard dialectical approach is wasted on the ksil.

The ksil knows little, but perceives himself as a genius, as King Solomon says, “a ksil broadcasts his foolishness” (13:16). Ordinarily, the goal of a discussion is to arrive at the truth through reasoning. But the mind of a ksil is closed to truth. Thus, we must aim for a more basic goal: to open his mind to knowledge. How do we do this? By shattering his self-image that he is a chacham. So long as he thinks he is a chacham, he will never learn. The only way we can help him is by disabusing him of that notion.

How do we accomplish this? King Solomon doesn’t tell us. The answer will depend on the person and the subject matter. Of course, there a handful of universal methods as well: show him that he contradicts himself, that he utilizes fallacious reasoning, that he doesn’t define his terms, that he flip-flops whenever proven wrong, that he is making up facts, etc.

However, King Solomon warns us of a potential pitfall: do not, at any point in the argument, conduct yourself like a ksil. When arguing with an aggressive, self-confident ksil, it is all too easy to slip into employing the same tactics as the ksil: ad hominem attacks, setting up a straw man, appealing to author-



ity, etc. [2] Your goal is to show him that you and he have fundamentally different approaches. Once he catches a glimmer of ksil in you, he’ll be able to write you off as just another idiot.

The bottom line: don’t argue with a ksil, but if you do, recognize that he is a ksil and make him recognize it too. ■

[1] This point may seem obvious, but I have seen many intelligent people get sucked into arguments with ksilim and attempting to refute them in the same manner they would attempt to refute anyone else. They don’t seem to realize that a ksil is a different animal, and must be dealt with accordingly. Perhaps this is the simple meaning of the statement, “eeveles ksilim eeveles” – “the foolishness of the ksil is foolishness.” On the surface, this statement is a tautology. Mai hava amina - why would we think otherwise? But the point is that people do think otherwise. Although they recognize that the ksil is wrong, they fail to recognize the nature of his wrongness. They treat his position like a legitimately incorrect position, failing to recognize that it is an illegitimately incorrect position, since it stems from a distorted approach to knowledge.

[2] Perhaps this is alluded to by King Solomon in the verse: “Go far away from a man who is a ksil, for you will ultimately lose your wisdom” (14:7) - not that you will suffer permanent intellectual damage, but that in the course of arguing with the ksil, his foolishness will rub off on you, and you will suddenly find yourself conducting yourself like a ksil.

*Matt Schneeweiss authors the blog:
<http://kankanchadash.blogspot.com>*



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