

## BALAK 5771

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“*ASEI R'TZONO KIR'TZONECHA*” –Treat His (G-d’s) will as if it were your own. [Avot 2:4]. Knowing what HaShem wants us to do is an important aspect of Judaism.

In this Parsha when Bil’am asks HaShem if he could go with the representatives of Balak to curse Bnei Yisrael, HaShem appears to Bil’am at night and tells him in no uncertain words, “You shall **not** go with them! You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed”. (22:12). A few pesukim further after Bil’am again request permission to go on this mission, HaShem again appears at night, but this time He says, “If the men come to summon you, arise **and go with them**, but only the things that I shall speak to you—that you shall do.”(ibid: 20). Then in pasuk 22 we read, “G-ds wrath flared because he was going”. Why would G-d be angry if He gave Bil’am permission to go?

Different answers are given, by Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Midrash HaGadol and many others. My favorite answer is the one given by the Vilna Gaon. He distinguishes between “*LEICH IMAM*” and “*LEICH ITAM*”, both mean “go with them”, but with different connotations. Leich Itam means go with them physically, let your presence be with them. A group of people walking towards the bus stop and I join them, for I too am going to take that bus. We are all walking, going together, but we have nothing in common with each other. We don’t know each other but we are all heading for the bus. Not so with *LECH IMAM*. That means we are all going to a common place for a common purpose. We may all be going together for a demonstration for, or against something. We’re part of a group that believe in the same thing, that stands for something or represent a certain position, and we can identify with each other.

At first HaShem gives Bi’am permission saying “*LEICH ITAM*”, you may go with them but only on a physical level, do not identify with the purpose of their mission- to curse My people. The next morning when Bil’am goes it says “*vayeilech Bil’am IM sarei Mo’av.*” He went with the expressed purpose of cursing Bnei Yisrael and that’s why “*VA-YICHA AF ELOKIM KI HALACH HU*”, G-d’s wrath flared because he was going. Taking this one step further, I would say, that Bil’am knew very well what the *RATZON* of HaShem was on this matter. That HaShem absolutely did not want Bil’am to curse Am Yisrael, for they are a Blessed nation. Bil’am went against the *R”TZON* HaShem. For the act of physically going with them was sanctioned, the intent of cursing was not.

In our lives too, for example, there are times and situations when on Shabbat we are confronted with different activities. The Torah or Halacha does not specifically prohibit doing either one yet our gut feeling is telling us, “That’s not what HaShem would want

us to do on Shabbat. It may not be written as *ASSUR B'SHABBAT*", however, my intuitive feeling is that this would not be the R'TZON of HaShem for a Shabbat activity. In that case, even if its not specifically written anywhere that its ASSUR to do, we should refrain from doing it..*ASEI RETZONO- KIR'TZONECHA*.