



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Untitled

I haven't figured out what to call this PTDT, so we'll go with this for the moment.

Most everything that occurred from the beginning of Sh'mot - the enslavement and oppression in Egypt - all the way through the Torah until the very end, was witnessed by millions of people. Adult males were counted at 603,550. Add women and children and we're talking of 2 to 3 million people of B'nei Yisrael.

The people were enslaved. They saw the miraculous Makot and participated in the first Korban Pesach. They witnessed the whole episode of the splitting of the sea. They stood at Har Sinai and experienced Divine Revelation. They ate the manna and drank the miraculous water. And so on and so on and so on.

Except for what we read in the 95-pasuk parsha of the Balak and Bil'am story. While that was happening, the people went about their daily routine in the Midbar, oblivious to the drama occurring on hilltops around their encampment.

The only reason we know what happened is that HaShem included it in the Torah. When Balak-Bil'am was

taking place, we had no clue. It is as if HaShem said to Himself (and later told us), "Big threat - I'll take care of this one on My own (and tell them about it later.)"

Immediately after Bil'am and Balak parted ways, we have the last nine p'sukim of Parshat Balak dealing with the immoral and idolatrous behavior with Moavite and Midyanite women and the worship of Baal Pe'or. This, of course, was witnessed by the masses.

I would imagine that the people found out about B&B sometime soon after it happened. We are talking about events that occurred in the last year of the Wandering.

In next week's sedra, we have G-d's command to fight against Midyan, assumedly they knew the whole story by then.

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What intrigues me is a question that came to mind via a question one of my Zoom-shiur participants asked.

In Parshat Ki Teitzei, among its 74 mitzvot is the prohibition of allowing a male Moavite to marry into K'hal HaShem - LO YAVO AMONI UMOAVI BIK-HAL HASHEM...

A main school of thought among our commentaries is that G-d taught Moshe Rabeinu all the mitzvot of the Torah during the 40 days and 40 nights he spent on Har Sinai following

the day of Matan Torah. The question about this particular mitzva - LO YAVO, is that it contains the reason for the command.

AL D'VAR... Because they did not greet you with bread and water on the way when you left Egypt, and because he [the people of Moav] hired Bilaam the son of B'or from P'tora in Aram Naharayim against you, to curse you. (D'varim 23:5)

There are probably differing opinions on this issue, but what sits best with me is that the mitzva was part of the 40 days and 40 nights - but not the reason from the pasuk above.

In my imagination, I can here Moshe asking "Why" when HaShem taught him LO YAVO, and HaShem answering something like - I can't tell you now but you'll know by the time you will teach this mitzva to the People.

This has been less a D'var Torah than the wandering of my mind... **PTDT**