**Miller’s Musings בָּלָק פרשת**

When making an expensive purchase you would do well to read the warnings that come with it.  If you are lax in this area, you surely only have yourself to blame if things go awry. So when Bilom fails to curse the Jewish people, it seems rather iniquitous for Bolok, his employer, to react with the furious anger he exhibits, when Bilom had from the onset forewarned him of his inability to go against the will of G-d.  Why then did Bolok react with such indignation to something he was made aware of when he instigated this assignment?

I’m sure we’ve all heard the assertion, “There’s no such thing as can’t”. In actuality, as explained by the Beis Halevi zt’l there are two types of ‘can’ts’. If someone is offered some money to go to their Rabbi and pull his beard, one hopes their response would be “I can’t”.   A similar response would be evoked if the goal would this time be to jump a twenty foot high wall, yet the difference between them is stark and critical.  In the first instance, it is indeed possible for him to perform this act, and perhaps a large enough wager could induce him to do so, it is just that given the effects that such an action would produce, he feels he cannot do it.  In the second case, no matter what incentives would be offered, he is simply unable to achieve that feat.  When Bilom declared that he can’t curse the Jews if G-d did not desire it should be so, Bolok understood it to be the first kind of ‘can’t’, which led to his ire after supplying sufficient funds to outweigh any personal inconvenience, when in actuality the ‘can’t’ was the second type.

Life is full of challenges.  It is why we are here.  Our response to those trials is more often than not hinged not on our ability to overcome them, but our attitude to doing so.  So often we tell ourselves that we ‘can’t’ prevail over such overwhelming desires or influences, when in essence ‘I can’t’ is in actuality a case of ‘I won’t’.  Are we really unable to resist this temptation or is the thought of the pleasure to irresistible?  Can we really not say no or are we just scared of the social consequences of our non-compliance?  These are questions we must ask ourselves and require personal integrity and an introspective look for inner truth.  Ultimately we must question whether ‘I can’t’ is really ‘I won’t’.

May Shabbos infuse us with the desire to strive forward.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם