

# Dvar Torah for Parshat Balak

written by breslov.org

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Based on Likutey Halakhot, Melamdin 4:6

Remember what Amalek did to you b'derekh, on the road, when you left Egypt (Deuteronomy 25:17).

One of the leaders of Breslover chassidim today, Rebbe Yaakov Meir Schechter (may he live and be well), once pointed out that Rebbe Nachman's two major works open in a similar vein. The very first lesson in Likutey Moharan begins with the verse (Psalms 119:1), "Fortunate are those whose derekh, road, is faultless." Sippurey Maasiot (Rabbi Nachman's Stories) is prefaced by Rebbe Nachman's terse comment, "On the road I told a story..."\*

What has this to do with Parshat Balak? The holy Zohar (3:199b) notes that the Hebrew letters which spell the names of the villains in this week's parsha, BaLAaM and BaLaK, spell the words BiLBuL (confusion) and AMaLeK. Confusion of values and misunderstanding Torah ideas play into Amalek's hands. That being the case, he wants us to be unclear in every situation and every position in which we may find ourselves. That way we will live in illusion, lose our faith and, God forbid, adopt his values.

The inoculation and remedy for this? To bear in mind the words of the Shema Yisrael: "and you will speak [these words] when you are home and when you go b'derekh, on the road" (Deuteronomy 6:7). The Talmud (Berakhot 11a) teaches that the word b'derekh indicates that no matter what position one finds oneself in—standing, sitting, walking—one may read the Shema. Reb Noson writes that it's obvious that what we can do to serve Hashem varies from situation to situation. After all, Shabbat is not Wednesday, morning is not night and being on the road is not being at home. But no matter where and no

matter what, there is always some way to connect with God.

Our job is to believe that and then—figure out what it is! Is it prayer or Torah study? giving charity\*\* or doing a favor? yearning to be a better Jew? raising your awareness of God's presence? believing in Him, the Torah, tzaddikim or yourself? As Udel, Rebbe Nachman's daughter, would often be heard saying, "God—what pleasure can I give you now?"

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

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\*To not leave you in suspense, the remainder of the comment is: "and everyone who heard it had a thought of repentance."

\*\*Many worthwhile causes (and individuals) can receive donations via PayPal.