

The Daily Portion

- Sivan Rahav Meir

Deif, Trump - Making Sense of What Happened

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Who would have thought that the targeted assassination of Muhammad Deif would have been eclipsed by the assassination attempt against Donald Trump?

It is our hope that Deif has, indeed, been eliminated and the world has now been cleansed of this evil. Trump has only been lightly injured, thank God, but this attempt has thrown American politics into turmoil.

The following are some reflections on these historic events:

When you feel that the world is going mad, it is important to return to our sources. Our Torah portion this week reminds us that what we are experiencing today has occurred before.

Parshat Balak describes how Balak, king of Moav, seeks to curse Bnei Yisrael and hires the prophet Bilaam to carry out this mission. Bilaam is unsuccessful in his attempts to curse the people; again and again, he tries to curse them but only blessings emerge from his mouth. This parsha contains many profound insights, but here are some thoughts both about our parsha and current events:

- There is a never-ending battle between good and evil. Sometimes this battle takes place in the open, but often it is a concealed, spiritual struggle.

- Our enemies have always tried to destroy us instead of attempting to better their own situation, their main objective is to harm us and to use violence against us. Our current reality demonstrates a continuation of this trend.

- Our prayers, blessings, speech, and words carry weight. The king of Moav is practically pleading with Bilaam to pronounce evil words against us; he knows that words are impactful.

- What is amazing is that this entire drama takes place without Bnei Yisrael's awareness of it. We are often unaware of the harm from which God rescues us in our day-to-day lives. This parsha reminds us that we have no idea what is taking place behind the scenes - what was planned, what was destroyed, what could have happened, and what almost happened. And this is also an opportunity for us to acknowledge the efforts of those who work, unbeknownst to us, to eradicate our enemies.

May Bilaam's beautiful brachot for our people come to fruition: "Those who curse you will be cursed, and those who bless you will be blessed" -

in other words, those who support us and stand on the side of good, they will be blessed. And those who choose the dark side - they will be cursed. Our world is divided between light and darkness; we are on the side of the light.

And finally, may Bilaam's famous bracha regarding our own communities: MA TOVU OHALECHA YAAKOV, MISHK'NOTECHA YISRAEL - "How goodly are your tents, Yaakov, your dwelling places, Yisrael" - be realized: that our homes, families, synagogues, Torah study, and daily lives be blessed, especially during this summer of political unrest and world instability.

May we hear good news.

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