

"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold I cannot go beyond the word of Hashem." (22:18)

Bilaam offers a noble response to Balak which indicates a deep reverence for Hashem's imperative. On a superficial level, there is no difference between Bilaam's statement and our Patriarchs refusal to transgress Hashem's command.

Based on Bilaam's actual words, the *Alter of Kelm Z"l* distinguishes between Bilaam's intent and the approach of the *Avos*. Bilaam said, *"I cannot go beyond the word of Hashem."* He refused to challenge Hashem's literal words, but he nonetheless sought every opportunity to convince Hashem to grant him permission to go. Hashem's perception that it was Bilaam's desire to go, enabled him to leave. This is consistent with the dictum of *"In the path which one chooses to go, he is led."* The Patriarchs, on the other hand, surrendered their own will to the will of Hashem; they identified totally with Hashem's will, believing it to be coincidental with their own.

We should strive to emulate this admirable spiritual trait, so that we joyously perform that which is pleasing to Hashem. When we perceive Hashem's will to be fully in accord with our own, we will have achieved the first crucial step towards realizing our deepest wishes.