

## Hashem's wrath flowed because he was going. And an angel of Hashem stood on the road to impede him....The angel of Hashem stood in the path of the vineyards. (22:22,24)

The *Torah* does not consistently use Hashem's Name. In the beginning, when it states that Hashem's wrath flared, the *Torah* uses the Name Elokim, which implies the attribute of *din*, justice. Afterwards, it says that Hashem dispatched an angel to save Bilaam from sin. The *Torah* now employs the Name Hashem which implies the attribute of *rachamim*, compassion. Why is there a change in Hashem's relationship to the situation?

The **Chofetz Chaim, zl**, explains that Bilaam was ostensibly endowed with a special *neshama*, soul. He had the ability to attain very high levels of spiritual achievement. Alas, he used his G-d-given gift for the wrong purpose. Yet, Hashem attempted to reach him, to avail him of the opportunity to be saved from sin. Bilaam either did not see -- or did not care. At first Hashem was angry. This explains the use of the Name *Elokim*, referring to the attribute of justice. Due to His awareness of Bilaam's lofty spiritual potential, Hashem compassionately sent an angel to dissuade him from sin. Hashem even altered the course of nature in order to prevent Bilaam from sinning. Bilaam regrettably saw what he wanted to see, and he heard only what he chose to hear.

Hashem sends us "little" messages. If we are cognizant, if we open our eyes, we will take note and realize the purpose of these communiqués. The *Chofetz Chaim* claims that it was such a subtle message that motivated **Rav Chaim Volozhiner, zl**, to make his famous "yeshivah". The story goes that *Rav Chaim*, who was a businessman at the time, came to the city on the major market day to conduct business. Another merchant recognized *Rav Chaim* and came over to ask him, "Why are you here today, *Reb Chaim*? What business are you involved in here?" At the time, *Rav Chaim* responded that he was present as a money-changer. Later on, however, it dawned on him that perhaps there was a deeper meaning to the questions. The question's focus placed upon "you" -- "Why are you here today? What business are you involved in today?"--glared down at him. Really, what was he doing there? Sure, he was "exchanging." Was it only money or *Olam Habbah* -- the eternal world -- for *Olam Ha'zeh*, this temporary world? Was he right in devoting his life to business when he could be devoting himself to *Torah*? *Rav Chaim* heard; he took note--and he founded what became the great Volozhiner *Yeshivah*.

How did it all begin? It started with a simple question--but it was one directed to a person who did not take anything for granted. He felt that this question carried with it a message that was directed to him. He took immediate action. The results of that action are with us until this very day. We must realize that Hashem is always sending us little messages, encouraging us to live our lives in meaningful manner, intimating to us that we should be doing things differently on changing our focus in life. We just have to begin listening.