



## Asher Manning Gush Chapter Director Crossroads of Intimacy

*"Family is everything"* is a well-used quote often heard in movies or found on fridge magnets. The Hebrew word for family - Mishpacha is used more times in the book of Bamidbar than any other book in Tanach (74!). Families come in all sizes - big and small, but the smallest family unit is the nuclear family - parents & children. The name nuclear stems from the Latin nucleus meaning kernel or seed. And yet, the most common use of nuclear is also most poignant regarding family. At the very core of the family structure is hidden a pulsating energy with infinite potential. The bond between husband and wife holds within it the power to create life, but when abused, the same power can be incredibly destructive.

The pinnacle of physical and emotional intimacy is no trivial matter. The place that it holds, in any given society, is a litmus test for the values and vision embedded in that civilization. Is it seen primarily as an act of pleasure and recreation, to be explored and celebrated by individuals 'pursuing happiness'? Or is it first and foremost an investment in the future, building loving relationships that form the family unit, essential to the continuation of the community.

Bilam, in his mind's eye, saw both options

as a tenable future for the Jewish people.

Standing on Mount Peor, a craggy peak dedicated to Baal Peor, the pagan god of hedonism, he cast his eyes towards the Jewish future. On one hand: מה טובו אוהליך יעקב - the quiet beauty of the Jewish home, the visionary dignity of the Jewish family. And on the other: ויצמד ישראל לבעל פעור - an abandonment of morals and familial responsibilities in pursuit of immediate pleasure and gratification.

Our society stands at the same crossroads today - how must we channel the nuclear fusion of loving intimacy? Do we spend it impulsively or see it as an investment in the Jewish future?



## Tehila Eckhaus 12th Grade, Efrat

This week's parsha, Balak, we talk about Bilam and how he wanted to curse the Jewish people. Bilam's 'specialty' was always finding the negative aspect of things. Throughout the parsha we see how Hashem teaches him the need to also look at the positive side of things and he ends up blessing the Jewish people. Our parsha teaches us the importance of a positive look on life. There are many reasons to be positive: 1. Those who see things in a better light having a happier and longer life. 2. Positivity influences our surroundings and gives everyone around us a happier and better feeling. 3. Negativity is not all to life, there is so much more. If we're negative all

the time, we don't allow ourselves to see the good things in life.

For example, if someone broke their hand, instead of complaining and focusing on the negative they can look at it in a positive way and say: Indeed, I broke my hand but B"H I have hands in the first place and Be"H they will get better'. I think we must go through life with a positive mindset, saying to ourselves: 'Yeah, things can be difficult, but I'm strong! I can do it! don't give up!'. Hashem doesn't give you a challenge you can't handle. The parsha teaches us this important lesson: Even when things get hard and difficult, there is always a positive way to see everything! ■

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## Real Life Rescues

### Tel Aviv Man Revived After Nearly Drowning on Shabbat

On Shabbat evening just before 7:00 p.m., a man was in the water in the ski lake in Begin Park located in southern Tel Aviv, when he began to feel tired and couldn't swim anymore. He thrashed in the water and screamed for help before going under. A police officer in the area rushed over and helped pull the man out of the water together with other bystanders. The officer initiated CPR as emergency services were called.

Shalom Cohen, a United Hatzalah volunteer EMT living in the area, received dispatch's emergency alert, as did another United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Amit Sinai. Both volunteers were at home enjoying the quiet evening hours, Amit was on duty with the ambulance for the weekend and rushed down to the emergency vehicle, switched on the lights and sirens, and raced to the location. He saw the officer performing CPR compressions and took over from the officer after attaching a defibrillator. Amit continued compressions for the next two minutes and managed to bring back the man's pulse.

A mobile intensive care ambulance arrived as did Shalom Cohen, who was traveling in his private car and unable to drive through red lights thus making his trip there longer. The additional EMS personnel joined the effort to stabilize the patient and prepare him for transport.

"It is always a terrific feeling to save a life," Amit, a veteran EMT, said after Shabbat was over. "No matter when the emergency alert comes in, I drop what I am doing and rush over to help. But saving a life on Shabbat, for me, makes the rescue all that much sweeter. It means that I had a hand in maintaining the holiness of Shabbat and preventing a tragedy on this special day. I have to say thank you to the officer who initiated CPR as well as the rest of the team who I worked together with, we all had a part in saving this man's life."