

BALAK

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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitia**
Son of the tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l**, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"ta**



Maskil L'David

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitia**

The greatness of gratitude

“So now, please come and curse this people for me, for they are too powerful for me. Perhaps I will be able to wage war against them and drive them out of the land”

(Bamidbar 22:6)

Balak ben Tzipor spared no effort in his endeavor to harm Klal Yisrael. He even went to such extremes as hiring Bilaam ben Be'or to curse them. Just as Moshe was the greatest prophet of Klal Yisrael, so was Bilaam the greatest prophet the nations ever had. From this exalted position, Bilaam knew full well that the entire world exists only in the merit of Am Yisrael and the Torah, as Yirmeyahu (33:25) states, “If not for My covenant with the day and night, had I not set up the laws of heaven and earth.” If not for the Jews, the world would have ceased functioning long ago. Had Bilaam succeeded in his venture, he would have been destroyed along with the Jews. What led such a smart man to make such a foolish move?

Let's take a closer look at these two prophetic giants – Moshe Rabbeinu and l'havdil, Bilaam Harasha. Moshe Rabbeinu, infused with kedushah, spent his entire life seeking ways of coming closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He even separated from his wife in his quest to constantly be available to commune with the Shechinah.

In contrast, Bilaam was never interested in discovering the truth. On the contrary, he spent his life submerged in defilement. Since he did not want to face the truth, he continually evaded contact with Hashem. Eventually, he was put in his place and forced to transmit Hashem's message. While Moshe wanted to have a relationship with Hashem, Bilaam's sole interest in connecting to Hashem was to discover the moment of Heavenly wrath against Bnei Yisrael. Bilaam desired to exploit these few moments to bring destruction upon them.

Moshe's kedushah was an outcome of his attribute of gratitude. As we see in the Ten Plagues, Moshe did not strike the water that saved him from the Egyptians when he was hidden in the Nile as an infant. Does water have feelings or understanding? Miriam, his sister, deserved his

gratitude for protecting him from harm. Moshe certainly displayed gratitude toward her, as well as to Batya, who saved his life. But Moshe did not suffice with that. In his greatness, he showed gratitude even to an inanimate object as water, and did not strike it at the time of the Plagues of blood and frogs.

The quality of gratitude is at the root of closeness to Hashem. When one accustoms himself to show thankfulness for everything done for him, he automatically thanks Hashem, as well, for His wonders.

Chazal enjoin us, “Do not cast stones into a well from which you drank water” (Tanchuma, Matot 3). Ingratitude towards inanimate objects leads directly to ingratitude towards Hashem Himself. As Moshe teaches us, gratefulness to inanimate items leads to gratefulness towards people which, in turn, leads to gratefulness toward Hashem.

Bilaam, light-years away from Moshe, had a serious flaw in his trait of gratitude. For example, when he didn't understand why his donkey veered off the road, he struck it time and again. This, despite the fact that his donkey had faithfully served him all the years. Denying the good of his donkey was only a step away from denying the good that Am Yisrael brought upon the world. Bilaam was fully aware that without the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu as prophet of Am Yisrael, he would never have become prophet of the nations. For this alone, he should have felt gratitude toward Moshe and Bnei Yisrael.

Herein lays the answer as to how Bilaam had the audacity to curse Am Yisrael. His ungratefulness blinded him to the truth. Bilaam was so depraved that he tried to destroy Am Yisrael completely.

Hakarat hatov is an essential attribute that is acquired gradually. By habituating oneself to appreciate the inanimate objects, one learns to appreciate with gratitude every Jew because of the mutual obligation inherent in the Nation of Israel. By accustoming oneself to appreciating other Jews, one will feel appreciation to Hashem Who created him in His image.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

14 – Rabbi Yosef MiTrani

15 – Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh

16 – Rabbi Emanuel Meshali

17 – Rabbi Shimon Biton, Av Bet Din, Marseilles, France

18 – Rabbi Yosef Kapach

19 – Rabbi Bentzion Abba Shaul, Rosh Yeshivat Porat Yosef

20 – Rabbi Avraham Chaim Na'eh



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Unconsciously Answering Amen

Mrs. Yakot Fahima, was suddenly stricken with a brain tumor, rachmana litzlan. Her family members were terribly concerned and turned to me to ask that I pray on her behalf, in the merit of my forefathers.

When I came to visit her in the hospital, her sister, Aishah, was there. She pleaded of me, "Please, Rabbi David, go into my sister's room and do not emerge without good tidings! Stand in prayer before Hashem, until my sister regains consciousness! I have full faith that the tefillah of tzaddikim does not go unheard." She spoke with strong faith, certain that the merit of my ancestors could reverse the harsh decree.

I entered the room and began reciting Tehillim. Her son, Yehuda Fahima, stood over her. When he saw me, he called out, "Mother! Rabbi David arrived! Wake up!" I noticed that photographs of giants of our nation surrounded her bed. She had pictures of Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzaira, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, and others. I remembered the injunction of her sister, Aishah, who would not allow me to exit her room empty-handed. I believed that the simple, pure faith of this family would surely bring salvation to this woman.

I continued praying at her bedside. Suddenly, the woman's lips quivered, and the word Amen was heard after I said a blessing. Her condition steadily improved before the eyes of the on-lookers, in spite of the doctors' dire predictions. The incident made a great kiddush Hashem.

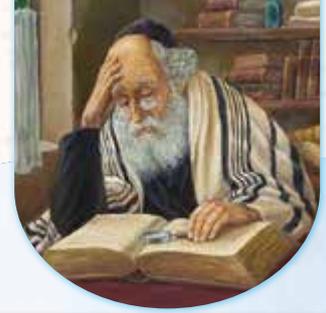
Mrs. Fahima merited a complete recovery, in the merit of her family's simple faith in the power of the tzaddikim.

The Power of Faith

A man once wished to receive my blessing regarding a certain matter. He took pains to come to where I was staying, but we ended up not meeting. The coveted blessing never reached him. But Baruch Hashem, he was blessed nonetheless.

When we met at a later time, the man told me, "Honored Rav, I came that time to receive your blessing. But I never got it. Nevertheless, I saw success in my endeavor."

I corrected him, "You are mistaken, my friend. Since you were so intent on receiving a blessing in the merit of my holy fathers, going all out in this endeavor, you proved that you have great faith in the power of the Sages. This faith itself, not your own expertise, was the cause of your success."



Words of Our Sages

Finding favor

"He does not look at evil in Yaakov, and has seen no perversity in Yisrael"

(Bamidbar 23:21)

In his sefer Mishneh Halachot, the gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Menashe Klein zt"l, explains this pasuk:

One who sees no "evil" or shortcoming in his fellow Jews, but rather focuses only on their virtues, merits the continuation of this pasuk, "Hashem, His G-d is with him." The Shechinah will constantly be at his side, "and he has the King's friendship." Hashem, so to speak, becomes his "friend." Hashem favors one who finds favor in His children.

Tzaddikim are always humble and self-effacing while considering others meritorious and great (Tiferet Shlomo).

The Admor, Rabbi Aharon of Belz zt"l, always looked for opportunities to praise Klal Yisrael. He utilized their good qualities as a springboard for judging them favorably.

One Shabbat, as he was walking down the street, he chanced upon a fellow Jew smoking in public. "Do you not know that it's Shabbat today?" asked the Admor's attendant.

"I know!" was the impudent reply.

The Admor asked his attendant what the man had said. When the attendant repeated the insolent words, the Admor chastened him, "You didn't understand. He said, "I? No! He is clearly confused to which day it is."

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week:

"And the remnant of Yaakov shall be"

(Michah 5:6)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah recounts Hashem's kindness to Am Yisrael in that He put into Bilaam's heart the thought of blessing our nation. This is directly related to Parashat Balak, where the two resha'im, Balak and Bilaam joined forces to curse Am Yisrael and ended up blessing them.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Don't act despicably

It is forbidden to relate rechilut even if it is completely true. It is superfluous to state that if two people were good friends and someone relates rechilut about one to the other, he is considered despicable in Hashem's Eyes.

Even if the two people were avowed enemies, if someone comes along and reports to one of them that the other spoke ill of him, he is considered a gossip-monger and will be held accountable.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

It was in the days that Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar, better known as the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, lived in Sali, Morocco. A wealthy man named Yeshua Saportas lived there, as well. This Yeshua owned vast estates, with fields and vineyards that earned him fortunes. However, he was an ignoramus. He fulfilled those mitzvot that he was aware of, but they were few and far between.

The one mitzvah that he held dearly was emunat chachamim. He did not take a step without first conferring with the tzaddik in his town, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh.

One day, this man made the deal of a lifetime: He purchased a beautiful orchard in Sali. The trees produced fruits that were known far and wide for their quality. The secret of this orchard lay in the fact that two clear streams flowed through it, providing fresh, pure water. As these streams merged into one, an impressive sight greeted the eyes of the onlooker.

The clear mountain air, the lush foliage and cool spring waters attracted vacationers, transforming the orchard into a well-sought-after resort. Throughout the year, Jew and gentile alike flocked to this haven.

Yeshua invested a majority of his wealth in this enterprise. He expected that in a few short years, his profits would outweigh his investment. Of course, he consulted with the Ohr Hachaim before purchasing this plot. As soon as he received his blessing, he closed the deal.

About a week later, as Yeshua walked through the land, he felt that something wasn't right. He looked around and was shocked to discover that the streams of water that irrigated the orchard were completely dried up! There was not a drop of water in sight!

He hurried to the water source, thinking that perhaps something was blocking the flow of water. But to his chagrin, he found that the streams themselves were dry. He called professionals to investigate, but to no avail.

Yeshua's world turned black. No water meant no money. Yeshua was left nearly as dry as his land.

He dejectedly made his way to the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh where he burst forth in bitter tears. After he unburdened his heart, the Ohr Hachaim turned to him:

"My son, I watched as you drank the glass of water I offered you on your last visit. I noticed that you did not make a berachah either before or after drinking. It is because of this that your streams dried up!

"I am certain this is the cause of your downfall. I even have proof of it in Tanach. Yeshayahu (12:3) tells us: 'And you shall draw water with joy from the fountains of salvation.' The word **בששון** (with joy) is an acronym of the following: **בברכות שתיים, שהכל ובורא נפשות**. Only one who is careful in these berachot will merit drinking waters of life from the fountains of salvation. However, one who is not careful in this, is liable to lose the blessing. Resolve, from this day onward, to be meticulous with berachot. I guarantee that your streams will give their waters as before."

The words that emanated from the pure heart of the tzaddik found their way into Yeshua's. He resolved to be careful with berachot and even undertook to teaching others the importance of berachot. He left the tzaddik's house with a lighter heart.

One day later, the waters miraculously began to flow once again.

Yeshua kept his end of the deal. He hung a large poster over the gate of his orchard. On it was written the berachot of Shehakol and Borei Nefashot, with a reminder of one's obligation to make berachot before and after eating and drinking.

There are those that say that this place got the moniker, "Ma'ayanot Chaim" – life-giving streams, which was named after the tzaddik who played a vital role in its reestablishment. For many years, this place drew visitors who flowed there for healing and salvation in the merit of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, zt"l.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v' Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita



Nullifying evil

Balak was known as a world-master of witchcraft and wizardry, to a greater degree than Bilaam. He employed the powers of impurity at will. Why, then, did he seek the services of Bilaam to curse Am Yisrael? Balak knew that when Am Yisrael had been in Egypt, the source of all impurity and defilement, they had scrupulously guarded their eyes from gazing at forbidden sights. This was the merit that earned them salvation.

Am Yisrael's vigilance regarding their sight made them outstanding and kept them separated from the Egyptian populace on three counts: They maintained their Jewish names, clothing, and language (Pesikta Zutrat, Shemot 6:6). Am Yisrael was careful in tzeniut, in their purity of speech, and in maintaining pure, Jewish names. These were the keys to the geulah.

Balak preempted Bilaam with a crucial piece of information: The secret of the Jews' success is their detachment from abominable acts. Therefore, these men must find some sort of clever scheme to cause Bnei Yisrael to sin in this area. This will automatically remove Hashem's Shechinah from among them. Without His protection, they would be doomed.

This entire episode shows us how much Hashem loves His children and confers kindness upon them. Balak and Bilaam were both evilly clever. Whereas Balak's methods were hidden, Bilaam's were manifest to all. Balak and Bilaam teach us that Am Yisrael has two types of enemies: those who operate secretly and those who operate openly. In His great kindness, Hashem arranges matters so that even the plots of those who secretly wish to destroy us become known.

Balak, as stated, had greater powers of evil than Bilaam. But Hashem, in His chessed, implanted fear in Balak's heart, making him believe he would never succeed in destroying Am Yisrael. For this reason, he approached Bilaam. Balak knew very well that Hashem would never allow Bilaam to curse His beloved people. But Hashem made him think that even a blessing of Bilaam would bring condemnation upon Am Yisrael. In this way, neither Balak's nor Bilaam's powers were used against us.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Sharing with everyone

Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt”l said, “When has fame and a good name, he should use it to benefit others. For this reason, I make every effort to attend each simchah that I’m invited to.”



One day, the car sent to bring him to a wedding arrived at his house very early. They drove to the hall. It turned

out that Rabbi Isser Zalman was the first to arrive. He stayed for the entire seudah and left only after everybody else.

Since he was gone for so long, the Rabbanit was worried about him. When he arrived home, she asked for an explanation. “If the people acted wrongly by sending a car so early, you didn’t have to stay until after all the guests left. It’s not fitting for such a dignified person to remain so long!”

“When Hashem confers honor upon a person, it is his responsibility to share that honor with others.”

Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

R’ Yeshua Deri came to Mogador in 1999 (5759), together with his wife, in order to join in the hilula of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol.

Before joining the hilula, R’ Deri decided to visit Moreinu v’Rabbeinu, in order to receive his blessings. However, he did not have money to offer the Rav for charity, as was customary. He only had some savings, which he had put away for his personal needs.

His wife sensed his hesitation and warned him, “Do not approach the Rav, since you do not have money to donate for charity.” However, R’ Deri did not agree with his wife and told her, “We do have savings, and I can offer them to the Rav.”

His wife argued against this plan, “If you give away all our savings to the Rav, from where will we have money for the approaching holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot?”

He responded simply, “May Hashem have mercy on us.”

His wife attempted to dissuade him from going to speak to the Rav, but he walked into his office and placed an envelope on the table containing one thousand francs. When he left the room, his wife wailed, “How could you give the Rav all our savings?”

R’ Deri stood his ground, “How is it possible to go to the hilula of a tzaddik and not give his descendant money for tzedakah?”

“In that case, you could have donated a quarter of the amount and not given away all the money we had saved!” His wife continued to protest and grumble.

R’ Deri calmed her down and asserted, “In this merit, Hashem will perform miracles for us, so that we will be able to celebrate the holidays joyously.”

After the hilula, the couple returned to their home in Casablanca. On their way, a stranger approached them and asked R’ Deri, “Do you have money to buy provisions to celebrate the festivals properly?”

“No,” he answered. The man took out a sum of one thousand francs from his pocket and handed it to him.

Who was the strange Jew? Only Hashem knows. R’ Deri’s wife was flabbergasted. She saw the tremendous miracle with her own eyes: the entire sum which they had donated in honor of the tzaddik was returned to them. She made peace with her husband. The entire night they sat and discussed the holiness of the tzaddik, zy”a, and how they had received all the money which they needed for the holiday expenses in his merit. In addition, they had given tzedakah, for which they would be rewarded eternally.