

Chukat Balak

July 4th 2020
12th of Tamuz 5780

859



Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hilula

12 - Rabbeinu Ya'akov, the 'Ba'al HaTurim'

13 - Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, hy"d

14 - Rabbi Yosef Matrani

15 - Rabbi Chaim Ben Attar zya"á

16 - Rabbi Emanuel Mishali

17 - Rabbi Shimon Bittan, Av Beit Din
Marseille, France

18 - The Maharal of Prague

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"á

MASKIL LEDAVID

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

The Council of Hashem Prevails

"He sent messengers to Balam son of Beor to Petor, which is by the River of the land of the members of his people, to summon him saying, "Behold! a people has come out of Egypt, behold! it has covered the surface of the earth and it sits opposite me"

(Bamidbar 22:5)

This verse seems puzzling. Why did Balak's message to Bilam include the fact that Am Yisrael came out of Egypt? This information was well known and clear to all since their redemption was preceded by the Ten Plagues, which declared Hashem's name throughout the world (Shemot 9:16). Similarly, when Hashem split the sea for Bnei Yisrael, all the peoples became agitated and gripped with terror from seeing Hashem's power and how He leads His people with signs and miracles (ibid 15:14). In light of this, it seems strange that Balak saw fit to point out the fact that Am Yisrael left Egypt when this matter was evident to all.

Chazal tell us that Balak was a greater sorcerer than Bilam, and he possessed many more powers of impurity than him. If Balak's power of impurity was so great, why did he need to send messengers to Bilam asking him to curse Am Yisrael, when he could have done this himself using his own powers? As we see, this request required Balak to humiliate himself by pledging to repay Bilam with many promises, so that he would agree to carry out the mission of cursing Bnei Yisrael. Seemingly, Balak could have saved himself all this bother and embarrassment by cursing Bnei Yisrael himself, without asking for Bilam's help?

This question is even more compelling in light of the fact that Balak knew that Bilam was the nations' prophet, and certainly Hashem will not allow him to curse His Chosen Nation to whom He gave the Torah. It is difficult to understand how Balak was so sure of himself that Bilam would be able to curse Am Yisrael, despite the fact that rational thinking would reason that Hashem will prevent him from doing so.

One can reconcile these questions according to the sefer 'Shema Yisrael', which quotes Rabbi Moshe Medinor. He explains Balak's words (Bamidbar 22:5), "Behold! a people has come out of Egypt", as implying that behold, Am Yisrael has come out of Egypt which is a place of impurity and filth. Egypt is termed 'the land's nakedness', because of its inherent immorality. However, despite Am Yisrael dwelling inside this filthy place, "behold! it has covered את עין הארץ", the surface of the earth" (ibid), meaning that they covered their materialistic, worldly eyes (עיניהם הארציות), to prevent them from gazing at forbidden sights.

Balak knew that wherever there is immorality, Hashem's presence departs and the destroyer is given permission to destroy. Therefore, Balak wished to make Bnei Yisrael sin by gazing at forbidden sights and defiling

their eyes, but he did not succeed since Bnei Yisrael had accustomed themselves to guarding their eyes already while in Egypt, a place flooded with immorality. Am Yisrael merited being redeemed from the forty-ninth level of impurity and elevating themselves to the forty-ninth level of purity since they were careful to guard their eyes from all the forbidden sights in Egypt. This is the merit that enabled them to be redeemed from that exile.

The tzaddik, Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk (Tiferet Shlomo al HaTorah, Balak), states: "A person's main holiness is dependent on guarding his eyes. The more he guards his eyes from looking at forbidden sights, the more he sanctifies himself and grows in levels of Torah and fear of G-d. This is why it says, (Bamidbar 15:39), 'and not explore after your heart and after your eyes after which you stray.'" The eyes and heart are procurers for sin (Bamidbar Rabba 10:2) and they cause a person to contemplate bad thoughts, even immoral reflections.

Now we can understand why Balak turned to Bilam and did not rely on his own powers to cause Bnei Yisrael to stumble. He knew that when Am Yisrael were in Egypt, the source of all impurity and filth, they safeguarded the purity of their eyes so as not to stumble with forbidden sights, and this is why they merited redemption. If so, Am Yisrael's purity is what prevails in their merit and saves them from all kinds of troubles. The commentaries tell us that it was this 'purity of the eyes' that caused Am Yisrael to be distinctive and set apart from the Egyptians in three ways: They did not change their names, their attire and their language, meaning that they were particular about modesty and the way they dressed, they did not foul their mouths with immoral speech, and their names too were taken from a holy and pure source. It was in this merit that they were redeemed from Egypt.

Being aware of this, Balak chose this introduction in his message to Bilam, informing him that since Am Yisrael's abstention from immorality in Egypt was their redeeming factor, it would be necessary to develop a clever strategy to bring them to sin, which would then remove Hashem's presence from them.

Let us take note of Hashem's great kindness to us in revealing the nation's wicked plans, by inserting fear in their hearts to single-handedly cause Yisrael to stumble. Hashem does this intentionally because He knows that if our enemies would smite us secretly, the damage would be manifold and we would have no chance of being saved from them. But since their evil plans are brought to light, blessing no longer rests on their deeds, and they only succeed in smiting Yisrael in a way that allows for revival, forgiveness and pardon.





Walking in their Ways

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

A Release of Faith

My dear friend, R' Moshe Gopez shlita, was sitting shivah in Eretz Yisrael for a family member. I arrived to perform the mitzvah of comforting the mourners, and also delivered a shiur in Mishnayot for the elevation of the soul of the deceased. I intended to travel to Yerushalayim after the Ma'ariv prayers. Mr. Yechiel Ben-Moshe, manager of a branch of Bank Mizrachi, offered to drive me to my destination. His friend, Mr. Nachmani from Mexico, joined us. He wanted to ask my advice regarding an issue he was dealing with.

During the course of our trip, Mr. Nachmani related that a relative in Mexico had been kidnapped. His captors had been holding him for the past month, demanding the astronomical sum of ten million dollars for his release. Due to the complicated situation, there was a real danger to his life.

After a few moments of thought, the following words came from my mouth, of their own accord, "B'ezrat Hashem, your relative will be released by the end of this week." I myself was shocked at my words.

Mr. Yechiel Ben-Moshe joined me for a most uplifting Shabbat in Ashdod. After Shabbat, he packed up his belongings and turned on his cell phone, which had been off all Shabbat. Suddenly, a call came in from his friend, Mr. Nachmani. He tripped over his words in his excitement at relating that my words had come true. During Shabbat, the level of security slackened, and the abducted man snatched the opportunity to escape to home and safety. The joy of his family and friends knew no bounds. They all witnessed the actualization of my berachah, in the merit of my holy forefathers, zy"a.

When I was notified of his release, I turned to those around me and said, "See how great is faith in Hashem. One who places his trust implicitly in Hashem is helped in a supernatural way."

Hashem allowed me to invoke the merit of my ancestors and bless the captive with a speedy freedom in their merit.

The Haftarah

"The remnant of Ya'akov will be" (Micha 5-6)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about Hashem's kindness that He performed with Am Yisrael, by directing Bilam's heart to bless the people. This is the same topic as the Parsha which tells us about the wicked Balak, king of Moav and the wicked Bilam who intended to curse Am Yisrael, however, in the end, they blessed them.

Guard Your Tongue

One is forbidden to live in proximity to 'ba'alei lashon hara' (habitual speakers of lashon hara), and all the more so is it forbidden to sit among them and listen to their conversation, even if one does not intend to accept what they say since he allows himself to listen to their words.



In Our Father's Path

Life in the Jungle Follows Exceptional Order

"Then Hashem uncovered Bilam's eyes" (Bamidbar 22:31)

During life, we meet up with the concept of "Hashem uncovered" on a constant basis. When going through life in this world, man does not perceive certain happenings, even things which he experiences, until Hashem 'opens the eyes of the blind'. Hashem decides to open his eyes and he suddenly becomes aware.

The Maggid, Rabbi Elimelech Biderman shlita, quotes from the sefer 'M'sod Si'ach Chassidim', where the following incident is related. Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya"a, the Holy Ohr HaChaim, once addressed his congregation, advising them to consider themselves among the students of Rabbi Meir who said (Avot 4:12), "Reduce your business activities and engage in Torah study". From now on, he advised them, they should concern themselves with their business affairs only during the first three days of the week, while the rest of the week they should devote to Torah study alone. Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya"a promised them that he can guarantee that their income will not be affected in any way and they will not feel any lack.

Indeed, all the townspeople as one obeyed his words, which automatically changed their entire way of life. Within a few weeks, their regular business associates became accustomed to the fact that from Wednesday until Sunday, these people were not available for commerce. From that time on the townspeople saw many blessings in their work and even though they cut down the amount of time they were involved in business, they were no less well-off.

This is how things carried on for several years, until the Holy Ohr HaChaim zya"a left his town to settle in Eretz Yisrael. Morocco's glory now departed and from then on, their impulse started growing steadily and they began to doubt their simple, innocent faith that reducing their occupation in business does not reduce their income. Eventually, they totally forgot about the commitment that they had accepted upon themselves while the Holy Ohr HaChaim was still Rav in their town, and they once again began managing their businesses throughout the week. While they thought that this will surely double their income, they were astounded to see that on the contrary, they were not left with any more money, and their great toil had not brought them profit. This was a clear demonstration of the truth of their Rav's words, how income that is fixed by Heaven is not dependent on the degree of man's toil...

The Maggid also quoted the Radak on the verse (Tehillim 145:17), "Righteous is Hashem in all His ways". Our eyes perceive animals devouring each other, as a cat preys on a mouse and devours it, and we do not understand the justice in this!

But the truth is that Hashem determined that the time had come for this mouse to die, so He sets into motion that this mouse should 'present itself' to the cat who will devour it as a means of satisfying its hunger. This means that it is not the cat who killed the mouse, rather it died because its time had come, but Hashem who runs the world brought it to the cat since as it was anyway destined to die, it should rather occur through the cat so as to be its source of nourishment. The Radak writes, "With justice and uprightness He provides each being with its sustenance, and even though animals devour other animals, for example, a cat devours a mouse, and similarly the lion, bear, tiger and other animals that prey on other animals, and also birds that prey on other birds, all is justice from Him, for while those animals were alive, He also provided food for them, but when their time comes to die, it has been previously decreed that their death should sometimes be the cause of satisfaction for other animals."

Treasures

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



Pearls of the Parsha

Where Did All the Resurrected People Run To?

"This is the teaching regarding a man who would die in a tent" (Bamidbar 19:14)

Chazal tell us, "The Torah only endures in one who kills himself over it".

Rabbi Chaim Brisker's zt"l once related the following powerful illustration:

Imagine to yourselves that one-day, Heaven decides to allow all deceased people to get up from their graves for one hour. In this hour they may do whatever they wish. When the matter became known in this world, all swarmed to the cemetery to reunite with and welcome their dear ones. But as soon as the graves opened, all the dead stood up and ran as quickly as they could to the Beit Midrash, where they sat and learnt Torah with a great and awesome diligence. They showed no interest in looking at or speaking to anyone in this world.

This is Chazal's intention when saying, "The Torah only endures in one who kills himself over it". It implies that the Torah endures only in one who considers his time in this world as if it was given to him as an opportunity to get up from his grave for one hour, which he uses to run to the Beit Midrash...

One Cannot Be a Messenger to Carry Out a Sin

"Do not refrain from going to me, for I shall honor you greatly, and everything that you say to me I shall do" (Bamidbar 22:16-17)

We have a rule that one cannot make someone a messenger to carry out a sin. The one who sends is not liable for the deed which the messenger performs, but if the sender promises to reward him for doing so, then he is considered as the person's messenger (and the sender is liable), for the messenger is only committing the sin because of the reward.

This then, explains Rabbenu Yohantan Eibeshitz zt"l, is what Balak was implying to Bilam when he said, "Do not refrain from going to me". Do not be afraid that you will be harmed by being my messenger to perform the sin of cursing Am Yisrael, for "everything that you say to me I shall do". Since I am prepared to pay you in full for your act, your mission will be on my account and you will not be harmed because of it. Therefore, "so go now and curse this people for me", as my messenger, and you have no reason to fear being punished.

Mistakes Always Repeat Themselves

"Behold! the people will arise like a lion cub and raise itself like a lion; it will not lie down until it consumes prey" (Bamidbar 23:24)

Why did Amalek imagine that he would succeed in overcoming Yisrael? "Amalek is the first among nations, but its end will be eternal destruction" (Bamidbar 24:20)?

From where did Amalek derive the courage to fight against Am Yisrael after seeing all the miracles that were performed for them?

The Chatam Sofer zya"l explains that the word 'עמלק', Amalek, is an acronym for קהת, לוי, משה, עמרם, Amram, Moshe, Levi, Kehot. Amalek realized that his name hints to these four great personalities, and he understood this to mean that he has the power to fight against them.

But Amalek did not take into account that the last letter of each of their names spells 'מיתה', death, (משה, קהת, לוי, עמרם), meaning that whoever fights against them will die.

This reckoning is hinted at in the verse "Amalek is the first (ראשית) among nations", meaning that the first letter of each of these four, called the heads (ראש) of Yisrael and each one a nation, spells Amalek. This is why he thought that he would succeed in fighting them. The verse continues, "but its end will be eternal destruction", the end, meaning the last letter of their names, spells 'death', eternal destruction. This shows that Amalek's end is destruction and death.

Moshe was Distressed Only About the Honor of Heaven

Man's main purpose in this world is to increase the honor of Heaven and sanctify His Holy Name in public. We find that Moshe and Aharon unintentionally diminished Hashem's honor, by hitting the rock instead of speaking to it as they had been told, as it says (Bamidbar 20:12), "Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Children of Israel". Due to this they received a severe punishment and did not merit bringing the people to the Holy Land.

Of course, this claim against Moshe and Aharon was a very subtle one because Hashem is particular with His pious ones by a hair's breadth. There is no doubt that throughout his life Moshe Rabbeinu a"h was zealously concerned about His Great Name. He sacrificed his soul to increase and glorify the honor of Hashem Yitbarach in the world.

We find an example of this in this week's Parsha. When Bnei Yisrael sinned and spoke against Hashem and against Moshe, Hashem sent the people the fiery serpents who bit them, causing many of the nation to die. When Moshe cried out to Hashem to stop the plague, Hashem replied (Bamidbar 21:8), "Make yourself a fiery [serpent] (שרף) and place it on a pole". However, in place of a fiery serpent, Moshe Rabbeinu made a serpent, as it says (ibid 21:9), "Moshe made a serpent (נחש) of copper and placed it on the pole".

How do we understand the fact that Moshe did not fulfill Hashem's command in an exact way?

The Mefarshim answer that the serpents (נחשים) came as a punishment for speaking lashon hara about Hashem, which was, in fact, the sin of the first serpent (which caused Adam and Chava to sin), while the fiery serpents (Seraphim) were a punishment for speaking lashon hara about Moshe, who is referred to as an 'angel', as it says (ibid 20:16), "He sent an emissary (מלאך) and took us out of Egypt". An angel is also called a Seraph, as it says "the Seraphim were standing above Him". Therefore, one who offends the honor of talmidei chachamim is punished by being bitten by a Seraph, as the Tanna says (Avot 2:10), "their (the Sages) hiss is the hiss of a Seraph (serpent)".

When Moshe cried out to Hashem, Hashem replied, "Make yourself a Seraph, a fiery serpent" meaning Hashem was distressed about and had mercy on the slight to Moshe's honor, more than he was concerned for His own honor. This is why He commanded him to make a Seraph, for it hints to the slight to Moshe's honor. But Moshe Rabbeinu a"h, who out of his great humility was concerned for Heaven's honor more than for his personal honor, therefore made a 'nachash' which hints to the slighting of Hashem's honor. It was the primeval snake, in Hebrew the nachash, that spoke disparagingly about Hashem. Moshe was willing to forgo the slight to his personal honor and was not distressed about it, rather he cared only about the honor of Heaven.

This shows us the extent to which Moshe Rabbeinu was careful with Hashem's honor. His entire aspiration in life was to increase His honor and intensify Hashem's Kingship in the eyes of the people. But here Moshe made a mistake and hit the rock, which as we said, was considered a very subtle sin of diminishing Hashem's honor, in comparison to Moshe's lofty level, and this is why he was punished.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Chazal tell us (Sanhedrin 105b) that all Bilam's blessings turned into curses, besides the blessing of "How goodly are your tents, O Ya'akov, your dwelling places, O Israel", which was said regarding the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot.

The wicked Bilam's true desire was that the Batei Knessiot and Batei Midrashot of Am Yisrael should all be wiped out. He wanted a world without Talmudei Torah, without Yeshivot and without Kollelim.

Hashem said to him: Although I gave you permission to go with the leaders of Moav and speak, Am Yisrael will remain alive and in existence forever, for they have their Batei Midrashot which will re-establish themselves generation after generation!

This is why the blessing of "How goodly are your tents, O Ya'akov" remained unchanged, and the wicked will therefore never succeed in uprooting Torah from Am Yisrael, until the end of time.

Indeed, right until today we clearly see the proliferation of Batei Midrash and holy Yeshivot, expanding the boundaries of holiness and fear of G-d.

Establishing a Yeshiva in His Memory

From my youth, relates the Gaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Ohr HaChaim', my soul felt a special connection to the Torah of the Holy Ohr HaChaim, who was the light of Yisrael and its central pillar. I would find special delight in studying his holy words.

Over the years, Eretz Yisrael became home to many Yeshivot, but a Yeshiva in memory of the holy master, Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zt"l (the Ohr HaChaim), had not yet been estab-

lished. The Ohr HaChaim would search for Jews who had wandered far away from the correct path in life, and introduce them to true life through the study of the Torah. I came to a decision that with Hashem's help, I will build an institution in memory of this holy man of G-d. I too wished to bring people closer to Hashem, to show love for even the most distant Jew and focus on his soul that was carved from the Throne of Glory.

Immediately following the six-day war, we indeed established this Yeshiva. Hashem blessed me with the inner strength and courage to frequent various places from where I drew the youths to the Beit Midrash, youngsters who would be playing in the streets on Shabbat with a cigarette in their mouths...

There is a pious, honorable Rosh Yeshiva who lives in the same neighborhood as the Yeshiva. He is the father of a large family who naturally has considerable expenses, yet despite this fact, he donates a respectable sum to the Yeshiva every month.

Once when we met up I asked him incredulously: "I am in awe of the honorable Rosh Yeshiva. You have many children to support, why do you go to such lengths to assist our yeshiva?"

"You should know", my neighbor the Rosh Yeshiva replied with emotion, "I consider it as 'protection money', your shade offers me protection..."

"You are protected by our shade?" I was surprised, "Why?"

Before you established the yeshiva, my young children would not dare go outside after seven in the evening. As soon as it grew dark they would be terrified to venture outside. Empty-headed youth would be walking around, spreading their fear over the entire neighborhood. Yet over time, in the merit of your holy Yeshiva, they all became talmidei chachamim and G-d fearing Jews!"

We are delighted that Hashem gave us the merit to continue passing on

the Torah of the Holy Ohr HaChaim, engraving the memory of Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar on our Yeshiva which spreads the light of the Ohr HaChaim.

After the six-day war, when the Jews were once again allowed to enter the Old City, I went to the Holy Ohr HaChaim's gravesite and I was shocked at what the Jordanians had done to the cemetery. These wicked people had smashed many tombstones, yet the grave of the Holy Ohr HaChaim had remained intact.

There was an Arab worker employed by the Blue Band company, who used to supply the principal of the Talmud Torah, 'Hamesorah', with margarine produced by this factory. One day when they met up, the Arab related to the principal that he had personally witnessed two Jordanians about to smash the Ohr HaChaim's tombstone, when suddenly a boulder fell on them, killing them on the spot.

"I was also supposed to break the tombstone together with them," the Arab related, "but I told them that I am not prepared to do this, and then I ran for my life. This is how I remained alive!"

The holy Gaon Rabbi Gershon of Kitov zt"l (brother-in-law of the holy Ba'al Shem Tov), who later moved to Eretz Yisrael, asked the Holy Ohr HaChaim why he speaks to people who show no fear of G-d. He replied: "What should I do, this is my approach. I reach out to those who are distant and bring them closer to Hashem!"

This was the approach of the Holy Ohr HaChaim, who returned those who had gone astray to the Rock that hewed them, and this too is the approach of the Yeshiva that is named in memory of the Holy Ohr HaChaim.

In his letters, the Holy Ohr HaChaim wrote expressly that he will pray for all those who support his Yeshiva, both in This World and in the Next World. Indeed, all those who assisted the Holy Ohr HaChaim merited seeing wonders.