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Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:
Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:
Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – June 25 / Tammuz 15

Candle Lighting.....8:14 pm
Mincha7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – June 26 / Tammuz 16

Shacharis..... 8:00 am and 10:00 am*
Torah Reading 10:50 am
Rabbi Drasha 11:15 am

Mincha8:20 pm
Rabbi’s Drasha.....8:45 pm
Shabbos Ends9:23 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:09 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am
Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am
Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm
Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin
*This week’s Bulletin
is sponsored by
The Berman Law Office
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Balak, the king of Moab, summons the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is berated by his donkey, who sees, before Balaam does, the angel that G-d sends to block their way. Three times, from three different vantage points, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses; each time, blessings issue forth instead. Balaam also prophesies on the end of the days and the coming of Moshiach.

The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab, and are enticed to worship the idol Peor. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into a tent, Pinchas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people. ❖



Among Bilaam’s prophecies is the only explicit allusion to Mashiach in the Torah: “A star shall shoot forth from Jacob.” This allusion is chosen, because Mashiach’s coming will introduce new light into our existence, brightening our horizons.

Other sources in our Torah heritage explain that the star to which the verse refers is an analogy for every individual Jew. Every person is a source of positive energy, radiating light.

The Chassidic tradition fuses the two sources together, explaining that every person is a star, because every person contains a spark of Mashiach within his soul.

-- The Rebbe

Keeping in Touch

Balak was a wicked man, an immoral king who hated the Jewish people and wanted to destroy them. Why then is his name immortalized as the title of a weekly Torah reading? Our Sages state that a person should not be named after a wicked man. Surely, this applies with regard to the name of a Torah portion.

Naming the Torah reading “Balak” is a means of negating the forces associated with him. As the Torah reading relates, Balak’s intent was thwarted entirely. The name Parshas Balak is an eternal source of positive influence, frustrating any power that seeks to harm the Jewish people.

The narrative in our Torah reading relates, moreover, not only that Balak’s intent was foiled, but that Bilaam whom Balak brought to curse the Jewish people showered powerful blessings upon them, including the blessings which will become manifest with the coming of Mashiach. Thus the name Balak refers not only to the negation of evil, but to its transformation into a positive influence.

-- The Rebbe

**Thank You to:
The Baal Korei, and
The Security Volunteers**

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, June 26, 2021
Daylight Savings Time

Earliest Tallis 4:13 AM
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:09 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) . 1:38 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 7:02 PM
Earliest Evening Shema.... 9:06 PM

Chassidic Masters

Balak: A View From Above

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The Torah portion Balak relates how Balak, king of Moav, hired the prophet Bilam to curse the Jewish people. G-d, however, frustrated the king's scheme and caused Bilam to utter praises and blessings of the Jewish people.

Among Bilam's words of praise and blessing, we find the following: "I see him [Israel] from the peak of flintrocks, and gaze upon him from the heights; it is a nation dwelling alone, entirely dissimilar to other nations."

What is the connection between the two parts of the verse?

In explaining the words: "I see him [Israel] from the peak of flintrocks," Rashi comments: "I gaze upon their beginnings and their roots, and see them braced and as strong as these flintrocks and rocky heights, on account of their Patriarchs and Matriarchs." Bilam's statement was thus allegorical.

When something is so profound that it cannot be understood or explained directly, it becomes necessary to draw an analogy from something less profound.

Here too, Bilam found it necessary to compare the Jewish people to flintrocks, though, in truth, they are much stronger than that.

Wherein lies this great strength?

The true power of a Jew lies not in his physical might but in his spiritual prowess, particularly his power of mesirus nefesh, a submission to the Divine that is so profound that he is willing to lay down his life if necessary for the realization of G-d's will.

The soul that possesses the power of mesirus nefesh is referred to as "the peak of flintrocks."

This power emanates from a Jew's mighty, firm and immutable faith in G-d, a faith so powerful that a Jew will offer his very life in order not to renounce G-d.

Rashi thus states "I gaze upon their beginnings and their initial roots and see them braced and as strong as these flintrocks and rocky heights, on account of their Patriarchs and Matriarchs," for the strength of mesirus nefesh is passed on to all Jews from the Patriarchs and Matriarchs.

The power of mesirus nefesh is entirely different from the strength of mundane matter. In the physical realm, strength means that a corporeal entity exists in a powerful manner. Mesirus nefesh, however, presupposes the very opposite of

being — the complete nullification of self.

The Alter Rebbe thus explains that the power to act with mesirus nefesh is a byproduct of G-d's shining within every Jewish soul, for mesirus nefesh flies in the face of nature; a living creature doesn't do things that cause its own negation.

This then is the connection between the two parts of the verse: "I see him [Israel] from the peak of flintrocks ... it is a nation dwelling alone, entirely dissimilar to other nations:"

Their power of mesirus nefesh causes the Jewish people to be entirely alone, wholly unlike other nations.

Since the power of mesirus nefesh is a gift granted from Above, it is not subject to the vagaries of time and space. Thus, although other traits transmitted from generation to generation may wane with time, the power of mesirus nefesh that Jews receive from the Patriarchs and Matriarchs is immutable. ❖

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 165-173



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The Three Weeks

The “Three Weeks” is an annual mourning period that falls out in the summer. This is when we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple and our launch into a still-ongoing exile.

The period begins on the 17th of the Hebrew month of Tammuz, a fast day that marks the day when the walls of Jerusalem were breached by the Romans in 69 CE.

It reaches its climax and concludes with the fast of the 9th of Av, the date when both Holy Temples were set aflame. This is the saddest day of the Jewish calendar, and it is also the date that many other tragedies befell our people.

Observances:

There are various mourning-related customs and observances that are followed for the entire three-week period (until midday of the 10th of the Hebrew month of Av, or—if that date falls on Friday—the morning of that day). We do not cut our hair, purchase new clothes, or listen to music. No weddings are held.

17 Tammuz is a fast day, on which we refrain from eating and drinking from dawn to nightfall.

The final Nine Days of the Three Weeks are a time of intensified mourning. Starting on the first of Av, we refrain from eating meat or drinking wine, and from wearing freshly laundered clothes.

9 Av is a more stringent fast than 17 Tammuz. It begins at sunset of the previous evening, when we gather in the synagogue to read the Book of Lamentations. Besides fasting, we abstain from additional pleasures: washing, applying lotions or creams, wearing leather shoes, and marital relations. Until midday, we sit on the floor or on low stools.

There is more to the Three Weeks than fasting and lamentation. Our sages tell us that those who mourn the destruction of Jerusalem will merit seeing it rebuilt with the coming of Moshiach. May that day come soon, and then all the mournful dates on the calendar will be transformed into days of tremendous joy and happiness. ❖

“It would be desirable that you establish the custom of reciting Tehillim — at least a few chapters — in shul during the weekdays as well. Convey to the congregants the words that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related: that reciting Tehillim protects [a person] from many undesirable matters and draws down abundant good for the needs of every single individual.”

-- Lubavitcher Rebbe

16 Iyar, 5711

From Our Sages

Moab said to the elders of Midian (Numbers 22:4)

Moab and Midian were erstwhile enemies, as it is written (Genesis 36:35), “. . . who smote Midian in the field of Moab”; but out of fear of Israel, they made peace between them.

And why did Moab seek the advice of Midian? When they saw that Israel was victorious beyond the norm, they thought: “The leader of this people rose to greatness in Midian; we shall ask them what is his measure.” Said they: “His power is entirely in his mouth.” Said Moab: “We, too, shall bring a person whose power is in his mouth against them.”

-- (Rashi)

Curse me this people, for he is mightier than me (Numbers 22:6)

The Hebrew phrase atzum hu mimeni (“he is mightier than me”) also translates as “he is mightier from me.” For in truth, the might of the people of Israel is Moshiach, who (via Ruth the Moabite, ancestress of King David) is a descendant of Balak!

-- (Shaloh)

Balaam arose in the morning and saddled his donkey (Numbers 22:21)

From here we see how hatred causes a person to break from convention. Balaam had many servants at his disposal; yet in his eagerness to go curse Israel, he saddled his donkey himself. Said the Almighty: “Evil one! Their father Abraham has already preempted you when, to fulfill My will, he ‘rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey’ (Genesis 22:3).”

-- (Rashi)

In order to place before man the “free choice” that is essential to his mission in life, G-d so ordered His world that every positive force has its negative counterpart. Were there to exist a good element which cannot be put to corrupt use, then man’s potential for evil would be disadvantaged and would not present the equal challenge which makes for the choice factor in life. In the words of King Solomon (Ecclesiastes 7:14), “One corresponding to the other, G-d created.”

But this “equality” between good and evil extends only to the most superficial level of reality. When a person learns to look beyond the surface of things to their inherent purpose, he will see that only the good in the world is real and substantial. Good is an existence in its own right, while evil exists merely to provide the tension which imbues the positive acts of man with meaning and significance.

Hence there cannot be anything “original” to evil, which is but a shallow, corrupted refraction of the good in the world. If Balaam was able to transcend the norm with the intensity of his hate, this was only because, centuries earlier, Abraham had done the same out of love of his Creator.

-- (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

G-d opened the mouth of the donkey (Numbers 22:28)

This was to impress upon Balaam that there is no place for pride over the fact that he has been given the gift of prophecy. If it suites G-d’s purposes, even a donkey will see angels and make speeches.

-- (Keli Yakar)

Haftorah for Balak in a Nutshell

Micah 5:6-6:8

This week's haftorah makes mention of the incident of Balak the king of Moab hiring the sorcerer Balaam to curse the Jewish people — the main topic of this week's Torah reading.

The prophet Micah prophesies about what will occur after the war of Gog and Magog, the war which precedes the coming of the Messiah and the Final Redemption.

"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples — like dew sent by G-d, like torrents of rain upon vegetation that does not hope for any man and does not wait for the sons of men." The prophet describes how G-d will remove the idols and sorcerers and how He will destroy the Jews' enemies.

The prophet Micah then goes on to rebuke the Jewish people for not observing G-d's commandments, calling as witness the "mountains and hills" — a reference to the Patriarchs and Matriarchs — and reminding them of the great things G-d had done for them. He took them out of Egypt and replaced the curses that Balaam son of Beor wanted to utter against them with blessings.

The Jewish people respond by saying that they do not know how to serve G-d and ask for guidance. The prophet reminds them of the Torah, and that all they need to do is contained within it: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what G-d demands of you: but to do justice, love kindness, and walk discreetly with your G-d." ❖

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Good Shabbos to all!

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