



# PARSHAS BALAK

**DERASHA BEFORE  
KABBALAS SHABBOS &  
SHALOSH SEUDAH TORAH**  
**5772**

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH  
\$1.00 EACH

# Hashem Loves You!

## Unconditional Love

In the Haftorah of Parshas Balak, Hashem exhorts the Jewish people: -עַמִּי זָכֶר-נָא מֵהַ- "עַמִּי זָכֶר-נָא מֵהַ- 'My people, please remember what Balak the king of Moav advised, and what Bilam the son of Beor answered him ... in order that you should know the justice of Hashem.'

In Parshas Devarim, the Torah states, וְלֹא-אָבָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמַע אֶל-בְּלַעַם וַיִּהְיֶה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ, 'Hashem your G-d didn't want to listen to Bilam and Hashem your G-d transformed the curses into blessings for you; **because Hashem, your G-d, loves you.**'

Hashem wants us to remember the Parsha whose essence is: Hashem loves you!

A person must feel, or at least believe if his emotions fail him, "Hashem loves me!" Bilam attempted to tarnish the Divine love by focusing on the sins of the Jewish people<sup>3</sup>, but his attempt failed. The love of Hashem to every individual Jew is unconditional; our actions do not affect Hashem's love at all. On Shabbos - the day of love - we do not sacrifice sin-offerings, because love obscures faults<sup>4</sup>.

Thinking that one is unloved by Hashem because of one's many failings borders heresy. It is a crucial part of Jewish belief that Hashem loves us despite our faults!

## Believing that Hashem Loves us is a Crucial Component of Judaism

The Gemara<sup>5</sup> relates that the sages initially wished to include the parsha of Balak into Krias Shema, but refrained from doing so because it would be too lengthy for recital twice daily. From this Gemara we deduce that **feeling loved by Hashem is part of קבלת עול מלכות שמים** (accepting the yoke of Heaven).

A person is not allowed to invalidate himself. Although we do not include the parsha of Balak in Krias Shema, we do introduce Krias Shema with the blessing of 'Ahava Rabba' which describes the overwhelming love Hashem has for each one of us.

This infinite love exists even today when we do not see or feel it due to Hashem's concealment. Even the concealment of Hashem is due to his love for us – everything he does is to our benefit!

## Only with Emunah Can We Know that Hashem Loves Us

The Chasam Sofer notes that Balak is the only parsha for which pure Emunah (faith and trust) in Hashem is required. For every other episode related in the Torah there were at least individual witnesses. However, no one observed the scheming of these foreign dignitaries.

We know of the episode of Bilam and Balak only because Hashem told it to us. To accept as true the parsha which demonstrates the vast love of Hashem for the Jewish people we need complete faith in Him. Even if you do not feel loved by Hashem, *believe that He loves you!*

Parshas Balak introduces the most tragic period of the Jewish year, The Three Weeks, when Yerushalayim and the Bais HaMikdash were destroyed. We reinforce our belief that in Hashem's affection precisely as it seems that he abandoned us to cruel enemies.

### **The Redemption is Almost Here**

It is plainly clear to any observer of current events that Mashiach is very close. As the situation both in Eretz Yisrael and her neighboring countries worsens progressively, we become more and more aware that a natural solution is impossible.

R' Mottel of Slonim zt"l, who never related any story for which did not have an extremely reliable source, related the following in the name of the Rav of Apt zt"l:

Before Mashiach will come, the governments will wrangle with each other, and they will want to wage war, but will refrain from doing so because they will know that war will be good for the Jews. However, Hashem will grab them by their 'Chupereenes' (hair fringes) and force them to go to war. Then there will be a great salvation and Mashiach will come."

The Rav of Apt concluded, "And you can quote this in my name as if you heard it from a prophet."

R' Yaakov of Pshevorsk also quoted the above in the name of the Rav of Apt.

The Rebbe of Apt's prediction seems to be playing itself out on the world stage right now. It is a very serious time. We must abandon anything petty, and dedicate all of our powers to serving Hashem, Torah, tefilah and loving every Jew. Ignore the empty and silly distractions of political infighting! When we will be united as a nation we will merit that Hashem will reveal himself.

### **YOU Can Bring Mashiach**

Every person must regard himself as responsible for the entire Jewish people. The Tanya instructs:

Every Jew must meditate on the greatness of Hashem - He fills the Heaven and Earth, and above and beyond. Hashem disregards his entire kingdom and focuses only upon the Jewish people, and every individual Jew. A person has to focus on this fact: Hashem is focused on me and the smallest positive effort I expend is priceless!

Accept Hashem as your king and eagerly fulfill everything He demands of you. Hashem focuses carefully upon each individual and checks to see if he is serving him properly. Our actions are of utmost consequence<sup>6</sup>.

It is in the power of even one congregation<sup>7</sup>, or even one individual, to bring Mashiach.

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<sup>1</sup> מיכה ו:ה

<sup>2</sup> דברים כג:ו

<sup>3</sup> במדבר כד:א רש"י

<sup>4</sup> רמב"ן פ' פנחס

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<sup>5</sup> ברכות דף י"ב ע"ב

<sup>6</sup> תניא פרק מ"א

<sup>7</sup> זוהר

# **Mashiach is Concealed in Tamuz and Balak**

## **The Three Weeks Begin and Conclude with Shabbos**

The period of The Three Weeks – which begin with the seventeenth of Tamuz and conclude with the ninth of Av – are under the dominion of the Satan. Due to the potency of the evil forces, the destruction of Yerushalayim and the Bais HaMikdash took place during this time period.

This year however, The Three Weeks both begin and end with Shabbos. Because both Shiva Asar B'Tamuz and Tisha B'Av occur on Shabbos, we do not fast on these days as we usually would but fast instead on Sunday.

When a fast day is observed on a day other than it was originally intended for, its severity is relaxed and there is much more room in halacha for leniencies. The strength of the evil forces dominant on Shiva Asar B'Tamuz and Tisha B'Av is undermined by the holy power of the Shabbos.

Because at the beginning and conclusion of his time period, the domination of the Satan is weakened, his strength is diminished for the entire duration of The Three weeks<sup>1</sup>.

Now - when the powers of evil are being undermined at their climax - is especially conducive for the elimination of any evil which holds sway within our hearts.

## **Tamuz and Reuven**

Each of the twelve months of the year corresponds to one of the twelve tribes. Tamuz corresponds to Reuven. The stone of Reuven on the Choshen (breastplate) was red. Red is the color of the attribute of Din – Harsh Judgment. The character of Reuven is Din and Tamuz is also the month when the attribute of Din is supreme.

Av is also a month of Din, although it is not as severe as in Tamuz. Av corresponds to the tribe of Shimon. Both Reuven and Shimon did not receive a blessing from Yaakov. They, as well as their months, are under the control of evil forces.

Of the twelve leaders of the tribes, only the two leaders of Reuven and Shimon sinned. Elitzur ben Shdeir of Reuven was part of Korach's rebellion, and Shlimuel ben Tzurishadei of Shimon is Zimri who sinned with the Midyanite princess at the sin of Ba'al Peor. The Satan is strong during their months and their souls fell prey to him.

## **Reuven's Connection with Moshe Rabbeinu**

Although Reuven did not receive a blessing from Yaakov, he did receive one from Moshe. Moshe stated; "יחי ראובן ואל ימות"<sup>2</sup> – Reuven will live in this world and will merit the World to Come despite his sin<sup>3</sup>. In appreciation for his blessing, the tribe of Reuven revered Moshe Rabbeinu more so than any of the other tribes.

Reuven wished to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan River, and not receive its inheritance in Eretz Yisroel proper, because, "ומקנה רב ה' לבני ראובן"<sup>4</sup> – Reuven possessed a large amount of livestock and on the eastern side of the Jordan there was abundant pasture.

However, the words, **ומקנה רב** can be interpreted as follows: The children of Reuven had a **מקנה** (a **קנין**) – a strong connection – to their **רב**, their Rebbe Moshe. Reuven wished to settle the eastern side of the Jordan because that is where Moshe Rabbeinu was buried<sup>5</sup>.

**יחי ראובן ואל ימת** (they both equal to 774). Reuven had an especially close connection to Moshe Rabbeinu because of the blessing he bestowed upon them.

### **A Great Treasure is Hidden in Tamuz and Av**

Tamuz and Av are the lowest point of the year. It was during these months that the Meraglim explored Eretz Yisrael with a mistaken objective and fated Tamuz and Av to be the months of destruction when the forces of evil prevail.

However, there is a wondrous depth to these days. Mashiach is hidden within them.

The prophet Zechariah<sup>6</sup> predicted that the fast of Tamuz and Av will be transformed into joyous Yomim Tovim.

The wedding of Boaz and Rus (the great-grandparents of Mashiach) was on Shiva Asar B'Tamuz<sup>7</sup> and the Midrash<sup>8</sup> states that Mashiach is born on Tisha B'Av. Tisha B'Av is referred to as a **Moed**<sup>9</sup> – a festival! On Tisha B'Av, the Rebbe of Plontch (father-in-law of the Rebbe of Satmar Zt"l) once tearfully demonstrated how we will recite Kiddush on Tisha B'Av when Mashiach will come.

Yirmiyah lamented, "כל רודפיה השיגיה בין המצרים"<sup>10</sup>, 'All those who pursued her [the Jewish people] reached her during Bain HaMitzarim' – a reference to the ill-fated Three Weeks. Throughout history, the enemies of the Jewish people wrecked havoc during this time period.

However, a reference to the inner essence of The Three Weeks can be found in these words of Yirmiyahu. Anybody who pursues her – the Shechina (Divine Presence) – will attain his goal during Bain HaMitzarim. Although extra effort is required during this time because of the dominance of evil, those who persist will be successful<sup>11</sup>.

The ruins of Tamuz and Av conceal a tremendous treasure.

### **The Concealment of Kingship**

The organ of Bris Milah is the holiest organ in the body. However it is covered with a shell of impurity – the foreskin – and Milah is necessary to remove it.

Tamuz and Av are actually the greatest days of the year; beneath their surface glows the radiant light of Mashiach. However, like the organ of Milah, they are covered with a thick shell of impurity.

The Mohel must remove the foreskin until the **עטרה** – crown - of the organ is revealed. The kingdom of Mashiach inherent in these months is covered today with a thick spiritual foreskin. Our mission is to remove these impure forces and reveal the **עטרה** of Mashiach.

Both, **חדש מנחם אב** and **תמוז** are gematria **משיח** (they all equal 453). When Mashiach will come, we will celebrate the kingdom of Mashiach during these months.

### **Amon, Moav and Edom**

Hashem promised Avraham that his descendents would conquer the land of ten nations. However, the Jewish people only conquered Eretz Yisrael which was inhabited by the seven nations of Canaan. Hashem forbade them from waging war with the remaining three nations, Amon, Moav and Edom.

However, the Jewish people did acquire a portion of Moabite territory when they defeated Sichon and inhabited his territory. This is because prior to waging war against Moshe Rabbeinu, Sichon had won a battle against Moav and occupied parts of its territory.<sup>12</sup>

We will merit fully inheriting the lands of Amon, Moav and Edom when Mashiach will come. Moshe Rabbeinu - who was our first redeemer - will appear again as Mashiach - the final redeemer. He began the conquest of the three nations by conquering the land of Sichon and will conclude it when he arrives as Mashiach.

### **The Three Weeks and the Three Nations**

There are ten attributes of holiness. Seven of these are concrete and pertain to our earthly existence. The other three are completely above the realms of this natural world.

Each of the ten nations the Jewish people were destined to conquer corresponded to another of these ten attributes. Only seven of these ten were actually given to us. We will receive the other three with the commencement of the supernatural era of Mashiach.

The ten weeks prior to the first day of the year - Rosh Hashana - correspond to these ten attributes. The seven weeks before Rosh Hashana are called "שבעה דנחמתא", the seven weeks of consolation. Each week, a passage of the book of Yeshaya, the prophet of consolation, is read as the Haftorah. These weeks are celebrated because they correspond to the seven attributes we enjoy already today.

However, we have no grasp of the goodness that lies in The Three Weeks which immediately precede the שבעה דנחמתא. The revelation of the three heavenly attributes awaits the arrival of Mashiach. Today they are cloaked in a thick shell of impurity and are inaccessible.

The Three Weeks are much loftier and more joyous than the seven weeks of consolation which we enjoy today; they are just buried underneath the boot of the Satan. "כי רבים"<sup>13</sup> בני שוממה מבני בעולה - the days of destruction, Tamuz and Av, are in essence greater than the holidays which we celebrate. בני שוממה is also gematria המלך משיח. The days of destruction are great because they contain the light of Mashiach.

The reading of the conquest of Sichon before the Three Weeks begins serves as a ray of hope. Moshe began the conquest of Moav; he will soon arrive again as Mashiach and complete it.

### **Balak the Father of Mashiach**

Nechemia did not merit that his work should be named after him due to a slight error on his part and had his book inserted into the book of Ezra<sup>14</sup>. Clearly, only those of great merit and perfect record could have a book of Torah named after them. It is very strange that the evil Balak should have a parsha named after him.

It is not Balak himself who is commemorated in the name of his Parsha, but the holy seed of Mashiach which he contained. Balak the king of Moav, was the ancestor of Rus, the matriarch of the Davidic dynasty.

Balak can be compared to the foreskin that covers the עטרה of the organ of Bris Milah. He was a hard shell that concealed the kingdom of Mashiach. In fact, he was eventually killed by Pinchos aka Eliyahu Hanavi, who is the angel of Bris Milah. Eliyahu killed Balak just as the Mohel removes the foreskin.

### **Balak Feared the Seed of Mashiach**

Balak knew that he contained the seed of Mashiach and detested himself for it. Mashiach is referred to as tzippor, a bird<sup>15</sup>. וירא בלק בן ציפור , Balak saw that - בן ציפור - he would have a son who is tzippor - Mashiach.

Bilam antagonized him, "האזינה עדי בנו צפור"<sup>16</sup>, 'Listen to me you whose son is tzippor.' Bilam knew that Balak was being forced to harbor the seed of Mashiach and it was irritating him terribly.

Balak begged Bilam, "לכה ארה לי יעקב" - curse the spark of Mashiach that belongs to Yaakov which exists in me! He further explained, והוא יושב ממולי, he is encamped opposite me. ממולי is similar to מילה. Balak panicked at the thought that the Jewish people would circumcise the shell of impurity that surrounded the seed of Mashiach which he contained.

Balak expressed concern that, "ילחכו הקהל את כל סביבתינו", 'This nation will devour our entire surroundings.' על יד בן ישי בית הלחמי is gematria (they both equal to 991).

If we peer into the essence of Balak, ignoring his outer appearance, we will find Mashiach. בלק when we spell out each letter and ignore the letters which we see when his name is spelled - למד, קוּף - is gematria "והבט פני משיחך"<sup>17</sup>, 'see the face of your Mashiach' (they both equal 540). This type of gematria is referred to as נעלם<sup>18</sup>, concealed. Indeed, Mashiach was concealed in Balak.

Also, the gematria of the נעלם of תשעה באב (בית) - is בית (ש)ין (ע)ין (ה)א (ב)ית (א)לף (ב)ית - תשעה באב of נעלם (they both equal 1067). Hidden in Tisha B'Av is the Third Bais HaMikdash.

### **Transforming Curses into Blessings**

Hashem transformed the curses of Bilam into blessings, and we have to transform Tamuz into a month of jubilation. This is accomplished primarily through Torah study.

Asniel ben Kenaz conquered the city of Kiryas Sefer<sup>19</sup>. The Gemara<sup>20</sup> interprets this to mean that he had restored three thousand halachos that had been forgotten when the Jewish people mourned Moshe Rabbeinu. How does the Gemara connect his conquering of Kiryas Sefer to his restoring these halachos?

Eretz Yisrael is a land of Torah. Each square meter of the land is covered with halachos. If Asniel conquered Kiryas Sefer, it was because he had first studied and mastered<sup>21</sup> the halachos in the Torah that are connected to Kiryas Sefer.

We are now in the time period which corresponds to Amon, Moav and Edom. We will conquer their lands with the arrival of Mashiach only through intense efforts in mastering Torah. This is how we remove the shell which covers these countries and the foreskin which cloaks the holiness of The Three Weeks and reveal the kingdom of Mashiach.

"<sup>22</sup>ויהפך ה' אלקיך לך את הקללה לברכה", 'Hashem transformed the curses [of Bilam] into blessings,' is gematria תלמוד תורה (they both equal 1091). Hashem transformed the curses of Bilam, but it is our task to transform Tamuz through intense Torah study.

There is an Ohr Haganuz, hidden light, in the Torah. There is also an Ohr Haganuz in Tamuz. By endeavoring to reveal the hidden light of Torah, the Ohr Haganuz of Tamuz will also be revealed.

### **Holy Eyes**

Every month corresponds to a different organ<sup>23</sup>. Tamuz and Av correspond to the right and left eyes. These two eyes cry because they saw destruction, "עיני, עיני ירדה מים"<sup>24</sup>. But these eyes will also see the redemption, "כי עין בעין יראו בשוב ה' ציון"<sup>25</sup>, 'They will with their own eyes Hashem's return to Tzion.'

The Satan concentrates all of his energies to trap people into seeing forbidden sites during these months. The secret to keeping one's eyes pure is to squelch the curiosity that urges, "Look - just once - to see exactly what it is that you should not be looking at."

Looking at holy letters of Torah is a powerful aid in achieving holy eyes.

### **Fortifying Ourselves**

Kalev arrived at Chevron and found himself facing three giants who were also extremely powerful evil forces: תלמי and אחימן, ששי. Their ancestors had been the ones whose sin resulted in the deluge. (This is explained in Parshas Shelach.)

His colleagues, the other Meraglim, panicked. When they returned from their expedition, they exhorted the Jews to refrain from entering Eretz Yisrael. Kalev, however, strengthened himself to vanquish the spiritual challenges that being in the proximity of these evil beings presented.

The evil forces that ששי, אחימן, and תלמי represented roam in our streets today. Our generation, which winds up history, faces the challenges of Tamuz and Av – the months which conclude the year - every day.

We will succeed in overcoming these ordeals by fortifying ourselves with the courage of Kalev.

### **The Opportunities of Tamuz and Av**

Tamuz and Av are opportune months. The value of any effort expended in the service of Hashem during these months is compounded many times over. The Shabbosim of this era are especially powerful<sup>26</sup> and Torah and Tefilah accomplish much more in Heaven than they usually do.

These months silently cry out: Release us from our captivity under the control of Balak and Bilam!

May Hashem help us overcome the difficulties of these months and reveal the loftiness of the days that languish in the depths. And may each and every one of us merit witnessing the conquest of Amon, Moav and Edom.

**ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים**

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<sup>1</sup> עה"פ מחצת ראש מבית רשע חבקוק ג:יג

<sup>2</sup> דברים לג:ו

<sup>3</sup> רש"י שם

<sup>4</sup> במדבר לב:א

<sup>5</sup> הרה"ק ר' בונים מפשיסחא

<sup>6</sup> ח:יט

<sup>7</sup> חתם סופר

<sup>8</sup> פתיחתא למדרש איכה

<sup>9</sup> איכה

<sup>10</sup> איכה א:ג

<sup>11</sup> עבודת ישראל פ' מסעי בשם הרה"ק המגיד הגדול

<sup>12</sup> סוף פ' חקת

<sup>13</sup> ישעי' נד:א

<sup>14</sup> The Gemara in מגילה states that Nechemia has no name for his נבואות. Recent Gedolim wonder why the printers didn't include ספר נחמיה in עזרא.

<sup>15</sup> אור החיים פ' תזריע

<sup>16</sup> במדבר כג:יח

<sup>17</sup> תהלים פד:י

<sup>18</sup> תוס' חגיגה דף י"ב

<sup>19</sup> יהושע טו:יז

<sup>20</sup> תמורה דף ט"ז ע"א

<sup>21</sup> ערבי נחל

<sup>22</sup> דברים כג:ו

<sup>23</sup> אריז"ל

<sup>24</sup> איכה א:טז

<sup>25</sup> ישעי' נב:ח

<sup>26</sup> תפארת שלמה