

LAMPLIGHTER

16 Tamuz
Balak
1042
6 July
5772/2012

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Balak, the king of Moab, was an evil person. Our Sages teach that he hated Jews more than any of our enemies. It is therefore surprising, at first glance, that this week's Torah portion, Balak - an entire Torah portion - goes by his name!

The Talmud cautions against naming children after evil individuals. "May the name of the wicked rot!" our Sages said. Why then would a portion of our holy Torah bear the name of such an evil person as Balak?

To explain:

The name of a particular Torah portion is indicative of its content. What does Balak contain? The prophecy of Bilaam, a prophecy that is replete with blessings for the Jewish people, and also alludes to the End of Days. We must therefore conclude that the name of Balak is somehow connected to these positive subjects.

The Torah provides us with a great deal of information in its narration of the story of Balak. We are told all of the pertinent events that led to the frustration of his evil plan: how he wanted to curse the Jewish people, how he hired Bilaam, and how his curses were transformed into blessings.

It follows that when Jews use the name of Balak in reference to the Torah portion, it has the same positive connotations. Thus not only is there no contradiction to our Sages' declaration "May the name of the wicked rot," but the mention of Balak in this context only serves to attest to his disgrace.

Balak's evil intentions were not just nullified, but his actions produced an actual increase of blessing for the Jewish people. By engaging Bilaam to curse them, Balak caused them to receive the most exalted of G-d's blessings.

Balak was the medium through which much genuine good was brought about. This is an additional reason why the Torah portion is immortalized by Balak's name.

And what is the connection to the End of Days of exile?

When Moshiach comes and ushers in the Final Redemption, not only will the nations of the world cease their oppression of the Jewish people, but all the power and vast resources that were used to tyrannize them in the past will be directed toward helping Jews in their G-dly service.

This was exactly what happened to Balak. His evil plan was not only thwarted, but he himself brought advantage and benefit to the Jewish people. The name of the Torah portion thus alludes to the role of the gentile nations in the Messianic era, may it commence at once.

(Adapted from Likutei Sichot, Volume 23)

The Secret of Jewish Survival

By Naftali Silberberg

When you need an honest appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses, your mother isn't the right person with whom to speak. I recently stumbled upon a wise quote: "Your enemies have vital information which your friends are withholding from you." Withholding because they are reluctant to hurt you by dwelling on your flaws, or simply because the warm relationship you share makes them blind to your faults.

This is what makes Bilaam's prophecies so unique. The words of scores of prophets and prophetesses are recorded in the books of the Scriptures. To a certain extent, their divinely inspired words are coloured by their "insiders" perspective; their deep love and care for their brethren. Bilaam, on the other hand, was a vicious anti-Semite whose greatest wish was to bring about the demise of our nation. Let us examine the words of the one who futilely toiled to pinpoint our weak point, who in vain sought to uncover our area of vulnerability.

The stunned Moabite princes listened in shock as the soothsayer who was retained to curse the Jews thus began his series of soliloquies: "How shall I curse whom G-d has not cursed? How can I invoke wrath anger when G-d isn't angry?"

Why was this nation immune from G-d's curses and wrath? Balaam continues:

"Because from their beginning, I see them as mountain peaks, and I behold them as hills; it is a nation that will dwell alone, and does not reckon with the nations."

As is the nature of poetic prose, these words are (also) allegoric. Our sages tell us that "mountain peaks" are an allusion to our Patriarchs, and the hills refer to our Matriarchs.

The secret of our nation's survival; our ability to withstand the curses, wrath and schemes of the Bilaam's of the generations, is our Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Jewish fathers and mothers who instil within their children the sense that they are a nation whose destiny is to dwell alone. Parents who teach their children that "a nation who dwells alone" is not a curse; it's not a blight which we must try to overcome. It is a blessing.

Slice of LIFE

THE MISSING VOCAL CHORDS

About thirty years ago, a Chabad chasid, Rabbi Shalom-Ber Segal, worked as a headmaster in the Chatam Sofer Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. One day he noticed something unusual: one of the students was studying from the book 'Tanya'.

Now, Tanya is universally accepted as a masterpiece but it is mostly studied by the followers of Chabad. So Rabbi Segal asked him for an explanation.

"The Lubavitch Rebbe told me a year ago to start learning Tanya because of a miracle that occurred in our family," was the answer.

After a bit of prodding, the young man continued.

"My fifteen-year-old sister (then aged thirteen) was the pride of her school; she was active, intelligent and a very talented speaker. But one morning, with no warning, she woke up unable to utter a sound. At first my mother was calm and encouraging, then she begged, finally even tried threatening, but my sister only wept and wrote on a page, 'I want to talk, but nothing comes out.'

"My mother called my father from work in a panic, and he too tried to be calm, 'It's probably just laryngitis or fatigue or even nerves. No sense rushing to the doctor, just a little rest will do the trick.'

"But after three days the entire family was hysterical. They succeeded in contacting a medical professor in Tel-Aviv, a department head in a hospital. Although at first his secretary told them that they would have to wait four months, after she heard their story and reported it to the professor, she informed them that he agreed to see them immediately. Half an hour later they were knocking at his door.

"The professor received them cordially, showed them in and asked my sister to sit down. But as he began to examine her, the expression on his face turned to anger. He looked up at my parents, furiously threw his wooden tongue-depressor into the garbage pail, leaned toward them and shouted, 'Who do you think you are trying to fool? Do you think I am some child that you can play games with me!'

"They were astounded; their eyes wide in amazement. 'We don't understand,' stammered my mother. 'What is wrong?'

"Don't understand, is it?' the doctor sputtered. 'My dear lady, your daughter was born with no vocal chords! She has never spoken a word in her entire life!'

"My parents looked at each other in shock. What was going on here?

"It can't be!' blurted my father. 'Just three days ago she spoke perfectly! For years... all her life... she spoke beautifully! You can ask the principal of her school. She was a prize student, I promise you!'

"In minutes, the doctor's secretary had the principal on the phone. The professor began to grill him. But after a few minutes the Professor thanked him, hung up the phone, and turned to the parents. 'It's impossible! I never saw anything like it in my life. I'd stake my reputation on it, that it is physically impossible that this girl ever spoke.'

"He began pacing back and forth deep in thought. Suddenly he stopped, turned to my parents and said: 'Listen, I don't understand what is happening here. I apologize for what I said to you earlier and for getting angry. I'm sorry, but there is absolutely nothing that can be done, or at least nothing that I can do.'

"But they did not give up. There is more than one doctor in the world, they thought. So for the next few months they travelled from doctor to doctor hearing the same story, until finally they ended up in the office of a doctor in England who was supposed to be the foremost specialist in the field. He was their last medical hope...but he, too, disappointed them.

"Now it just so happened that while in England they were staying by a cousin of theirs, who, when he saw the looks on their faces when they returned from the specialist, suggested that they go to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe, 'If anyone can help, he can.'

"But my father wanted no part of it. 'No sense in getting desperate,' he said. 'We aren't Chabadniks. This is obviously something from G-d. Only He can help, and surely He will help,' and so forth.

"But his objections didn't work. My mother was all for it. That day they bought the plane tickets and two days later they were at the Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn.

"Back in those years there wasn't such a line to see the Rebbe, and because of the urgent nature of their visit, they were already scheduled for 'yechidut' the next

evening; the Rebbe would see them privately.

"Later, my mother told me that the moment they entered the Rebbe's room she felt for the first time there was really hope; here was someone who really cared. She couldn't restrain her aching heart, and for five minutes she wept and poured out her soul. When she finished, the Rebbe requested that, if they didn't mind, he would like to speak with my sister alone.

"When they closed the door behind them, the Rebbe looked deeply at my sister and said: 'I know that you are an intelligent and mature girl and that is why I'm going to tell you this. In your previous incarnation you did things that were not good. It is not important what they were, but the only way to correct them was to have your soul come into this world and be mute from birth. In heaven, however, you have some very holy relatives and in their merit you were given the power to speak... until three days ago.'

"The Rebbe paused until it was clear that she understood and then continued. 'Now, this is where you have to do your part. If you are willing to accept on yourself to make Shabbat parties every Shabbat afternoon, to which you will invite all the non-observant girls in your area and talk to them about Judaism, you will be able to talk again. Do you understand?'

"She nodded her head in eager affirmation.

"Do you agree?' She again nodded, with even more enthusiasm.

"If so' continued the Rebbe with a smile, 'Say yes.'

"Tears were streaming down her cheeks as she gazed into the pure blue eyes of the Rebbe. Without hesitating she clearly said...

"Yes!'

"From that moment on my sister spoke normally, and every Shabbat she makes a party to which more than 50 girls come from all over.

"The next year my parents took me to receive the Rebbe's blessing. He asked me where I'm going to learn Torah, and when I told him he answered: 'Because you are going to be learning in a chasidic yeshiva, it is a good idea that you should learn Tanya a half-hour each day.'

"And that is why I learn Tanya."

[Adapted by Yrachmiel Tilles from the rendition of Rabbi Tuvia Bolton, who heard it from Rabbi Pinchas Segal, the brother of the Rabbi Segal in the story.]

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the **Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.**

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The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 1042

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Torah has testified about... the King Moshiach. In the portion of Bilaam [commonly called "Balak"] mention was made of him, for there prophecy is made concerning two anointed kings. The first anointed king was David, who saved Israel from her enemies and the last anointed king is Mashiach who will arise from his sons and save Israel in the end of days. (Maimonides)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

21 Tammuz, 5710 (1950)

Greetings and blessings,

I received your letter. Thank you for the information contained therein.

May it be G-d's will that your stay - in a vacation spot together with your family - will lead to the desired benefit of enhancing the health of the body and strengthening it in an obvious manner, according to the adage of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, stated in the name of his father, the Rebbe Rashab [Rabbi Sholom Dovber]: "How dear is a Jewish body! For it, so much Torah is poured out!"

See Maimonides' Hilchos Deos (Laws of Knowledge), the beginning of ch. 4, "Maintaining a healthy and sound body is among the ways of G-d."

From this we can draw a most obvious inference to the importance of the health of the soul. If it is necessary to devote energy to this throughout the year, how much more so is it necessary to strengthen this endeavour with additional power during the time when we are occupied and showing interest in the health of the body. This is necessary lest one come to a situation where the strength of the body will lead to the weakness of the soul (Zohar I, p. 180b). See also Shabbos 147b with regard to "the waters of the Diomse."

I am not writing merely for the sake of rhetoric, but rather to arouse an undertaking, somewhat like is'hapcha [transformation], to use the days and the opportunity for restoring the health of the body for strengthening the soul, i.e., to add a fixed time for special study during this vacation period. Also, one should seek out opportunities to inspire others coming to vacation in your place or surroundings to Torah study, Divine service, and deeds of kindness, each person according to his own situation. Sometimes, it might be helpful to explain to them that we are not able to comprehend the secrets of the sublime providence. Perhaps the purpose they all came to this particular place was to add jewels to the crown of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, has already promised: "One can rest assured that no effort will go unrewarded." He is a faithful person upon whom one may rely.

With wishes for a healthy summer for both body and soul; with regards to all those who seek our welfare,

3 Menachem Av, 5710 (1950)

Greetings and blessings,

You have certainly received my letter from 6 Tammuz. I hope that you will answer the questions mentioned there.

Your son related to me that your daughter does not feel well from time to time.... Certainly, she has seen a doctor and is following his directives. Surely, she lights candles on the day preceding Shabbos and festivals. You should see to it that, at least until she is eighteen years old, she give at least three coins to tzedakah [charity] in a charity box designated for the charity fund of Rabbi Meir Baal HaNes before lighting candles. It would also be desirable for you to recite chapter 71 from Psalms [at that time, the previous Rebbe's chapter corresponding to his age] each day until Rosh HaShanah.

Your son also related that his aunt ... is not in the best of health. The above directive concerning obeying the instructions of a doctor, a specialist, should also be communicated to her. She should also give at least three coins to tzedakah in a charity box designated for the charity fund of Rabbi Meir Baal HaNes before lighting candles for Shabbos and festivals. And at least once a week she should provide food for a Jew (a guest or a poor man).

G-d is the One Who heals, but, to a certain extent, He acts through a doctor. Nevertheless, He established that the primary medicine for Jews is tzedakah, good deeds, and a chapter of Psalms. I hope to hear good news from you, that your health has improved and that everything has become better.

(From *I Will Write it in Their Hearts* translated by Rabbi Eli Touger, published by Sichos in English)

CUSTOMS CORNER

Fast Day Postponed

To mourn the breaching of Jerusalem's walls and the other tragic events that occurred on this day and repent and rectify their causes, Tammuz 17 was instituted as a fast day. This year, however, the actual fast is held tomorrow (Sunday), due to the holiness of Shabbat

"The Three Weeks" Begin

The 17th of Tammuz also marks the beginning of The Three Weeks period of mourning which culminates on the 9th of Av, commemorating the conquest of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Holy Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people.

Like mourners, we do not cut our hair, and various pleasurable activities are limited or proscribed. (Consult a qualified rabbi regarding specific proscriptions).

The Lubavitcher Rebbe urged that the Three Weeks should be a time of increased giving of charity and Torah study (in keeping with the verse (Isaiah 1:27), "Zion shall be redeemed by law, and her returnees by charity"), particularly the study of those portions of Torah that deal with the laws and the deeper significance of the Holy Temple.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbos is the 17th of Tammuz, when the ancient city of Jerusalem was assaulted by invading gentiles. Twenty-one days later, on the Ninth of Av (Tisha B'Av), the Holy Temple was set afire and razed.

The fact that this interval on the Jewish calendar is known as the "Three Weeks" and not the "Twenty-One Days" is not incidental. The number three alludes to the inner significance and function of the Three Weeks as a period of preparation for the Third Holy Temple.

On a superficial level the Three Weeks are a sad time, a period of mourning for the destruction of the Temple and the beginning of the Jewish people's current exile. But on a deeper level they contain a hidden good. Why? Everything that happens in the world is directed by G-d. G-d is the essence of good, and everything He does is good, even if it doesn't appear that way at first. Having come directly from G-d, there is no other possibility.

Accordingly, the Three Weeks, although superficially associated with sadness, contain a positive meaning: At the exact moment when the Second Holy Temple was destroyed, the Third and eternal Holy Temple was constructed up in heaven! In this light the entire destruction can be seen as nothing but a preparatory stage in the Redemptive process, a necessary step toward the Final Redemption with Moshiach, at which time the concept of exile will no longer exist.

At present, the good contained within the Three Weeks remains hidden. But reflecting upon its true, inner meaning hastens the day when its inner goodness will be revealed, when the Temple will be re-established.

Let us therefore accustom ourselves to seeing the hidden good that exists in all things, thereby meriting the ultimate revelation of inner goodness with the revelation of Moshiach.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

THE IMPORTANCE OF A BROTHER-IN-LAW

There once lived a chasid who took great pains to ensure that his daughter married a Torah scholar of the highest calibre. True, most parents naturally desire only the best marriage partner for their children, but this individual was particularly consumed by the idea. He travelled from city to city, combing through dozens of yeshivas, trying to find the perfect young man.

In one such yeshiva, the father finally found the right person, an assiduous scholar of sterling character. The father went to consult with the dean. "He is our best," concurred the dean. "However, I must warn you -- thus far he has rejected every single marriage proposal. If you succeed in persuading him, you'll have found the best possible person for your daughter."

Not one to waste time, the father approached this particular student and praised his daughter to the heavens, extolling her virtuous character until the student agreed to meet her. The two met and, to everyone's surprise, agreed to marry.

The father's happiness knew no bounds. They set a date for the wedding and began the frenzied preparations for the happy event. Once, during this time, the groom remarked to him, "I want you to know that I have older brothers." However, the father was so busy arranging the upcoming wedding, he hardly paid attention to this particular remark.

Shortly after the wedding, the young man died suddenly, leaving his wife in heavy grief. Only now did her father recall the strange remark about other brothers. According to Jewish Law, his daughter could not remarry until one of these brothers either married her, or complied with the chalitzah process, which severed their ties to her. The father now found himself in a real quandary; he had neglected to secure the names or addresses of these brothers. How was he to find them?

The father travelled to the Tzemach Tzedek in Lubavitch and obtained a private audience with him. He entered the Rebbe's room with a grieving heart. Was his daughter destined to remain a widow?

"Now you come?" the Rebbe rebuked him severely. "You should have consulted with me before the engagement, not now! Anyway, it's too late to change anything; go search in such-and-such city."

Off he went, but, to his amazement, found only gentiles living there. His questions were met with ridicule and outright scorn. "Jews? Here?" people laughed. "There are no Jews in the entire area."

However, being a staunch chasid, the father never entertained the slightest doubt regarding the Rebbe's instructions. He continued working his way through the city, questioning and asking information until finally a particular person drew his attention. There was something about his face and something peculiar about his actions that suggested a Jewish background. "Are you Jewish?" the chasid boldly asked.

"Stop bothering me!" the stranger roared. "I'm not Jewish. I don't even know any Jews. No one here is Jewish. Go away and leave me alone."

The chasid would not be deterred. He badgered the stranger with all sorts of questions, but no admission was forthcoming. "I want you to know something," the chasid finally said. "My leader, the Tzemach Tzedek, sent me here."

"He did?" The stranger suddenly turned deathly pale. His manner became polite, almost docile. "Yes, I am Jewish," he said. "How can I help you?"

The chasid quickly related his predicament to the stranger, who responded, "I can't do anything for you," he said. "You see, I have an older brother. According to Jewish Law, he is the one who must release your daughter."

The stranger gave him the address of a different village and the distraught father took to the road once more.

Here again, the village turned out to be inhabited completely by gentiles, and it was only with great difficulty that the Chasid located the person he needed. The stranger, too, fiercely denied any relationship to Judaism or anything Jewish, and only after the Chasid mentioned the name of his Rebbe did the stranger meekly acknowledge his identity. After the Chasid related his tale of woe, the stranger readily agreed to perform chalitzah. The widow was brought to the village, they performed the ceremony, and she was free to remarry.

Having brought the situation to a happy conclusion, the Chasid made a special trip to Lubavitch to thank the Tzemach Tzedek for his invaluable assistance. Said the Rebbe: "These three were tzaddikim of the highest degree. Two of them chose certain surroundings to help them remain inconspicuous. Because of your self-sacrifice in choosing only the best Torah scholar for your daughter, you were granted the merit of seeing three hidden tzaddikim."

(Selected by Yrachmiel Tilles from "The Third Judge" by Rabbi Elchonon Lesches)

Thoughts THAT COUNT


Whatever the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in His world, He created only for His glory...; and it says, "The L-rd will reign for ever and ever." (Ethics 6:11)

Never fear, says our text: "The L-rd will reign for ever and ever." However dark and twisted the world seems today, however worse the mess and blunder of mankind seems to get, mankind moves on to its destiny. By a thousand ways we can hardly surmise, mankind inches forward to its "spiritual breakthrough," when "the L-rd will reign." That day will come. It is inherent in a creation that was wrought originally to bring Him glory. *(Ethics from Sinai, Rabbi Irving Bunim)*

Correction: In issue 1039 we inadvertently wrote the passing year of Rabbi Mordechai Elyahu as (June 7) 2012; the year he passed away was in fact 2010.

CANDLE LIGHTING: 6 JULY 2012

BEGINS	ENDS
4:56MELBOURNE	5:57
4:59ADELAIDE	5:59
4:49BRISBANE	5:45
6:16DARWIN	7:08
4:46GOLD COAST	5:42
5:07PERTH	6:05
4:41SYDNEY	5:40
4:46CANBERRA	5:46
4:37LAUNCESTON	5:41
4:59AUCKLAND	6:00
4:47WELLINGTON	5:51
4:32HOBART	5:37
4:44BYRON BAY	5:40



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BALAK
17 TAMUZ • 7 JULY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:56 PM
	MINCHA:	5:05 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:40 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:59 AM
	MINCHA:	4:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:57 PM
SUNDAY FAST OF 17 OF TAMUZ (NIDCHA)	FAST BEGINS:	6:11 AM
	SHACHARIS:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	4:45 PM
	MAARIV AND END OF FEAST:	5:44 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS MON-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:05 PM
	MAARIV:	5:55 PM