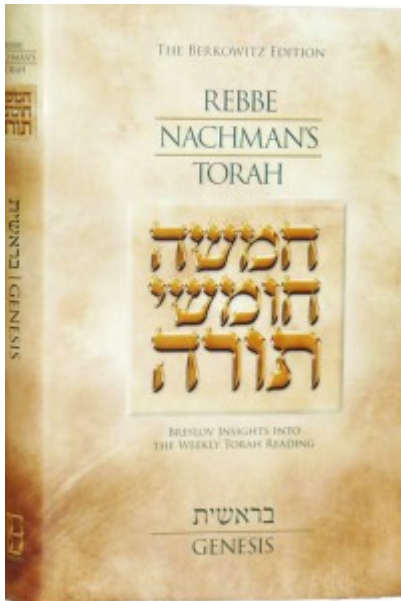


Parsha Pearls Balak 5771

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22:5 Balak sent messengers to Bilaam.

Spiritual Power is Expressed Through the Mouth

Balak, king of Moav, saw that the Israelites had overcome Sichon and Og, who until then had been undefeated.

Balak was told that the Israelites drew their strength from Moshe, whose power was in his mouth—i.e., in the power of his prayer.

Balak therefore decided to battle the Jews with the aid of another man whose power resided in his mouth: Bilaam (Rashi). Our Sages teach that Moshe's strength was matched by that of Bilaam (*Sifrei*).

Moshe corresponds to the state of consciousness associated with holy *Daat*, whereas Bilaam corresponds to the state of consciousness associated with impurity. In either case, the revelation of awareness, or consciousness, is through the mouth. As the verse states, one “speaks awareness” (*Psalms* 19) (LM I, 43; see also below, Chapter 31).

Bilaam is the Opposite of the Torah

Bilaam stands in opposition to the Torah. Each letter in his name—*bet*, *lamed*, *ayin*, *mem*—alludes to the Torah and indicates his obsessive desire to uproot it.

Bet and *lamed* are, respectively, the first and last letters of the Torah.

Ayin has the numerical value of 70, and as such alludes to the seventy faces, or interpretations, of the Torah.

Finally, *mem* has the numerical value of 40 and corresponds to the 40 days in which the Torah was given.

Because Bilaam was steeped in impurity, he desired to uproot the Torah, which is associated with purity (LM I, 36:2).

23:7 Balak, king of Moav, has brought me from Aram.

The Forces of Evil Attempt to Lower Our Consciousness to the Mundane

“Aram” is a reference both to Bilaam’s ancestor, Lavan the Arami, and to Aramaic, the official *Targum* (“translation”) of Torah.

Just as Lavan had attempted to drag Yaakov into a material state of consciousness (see *Genesis* 31), so did Bilaam try to bring the Jewish people into the mundane sphere—the “translation” into physicality of the lofty spiritual levels that may be found in this world.

When a person’s spirituality is subverted and “translated” into something mundane, his connection to God is weakened.

Bilaam intended to bring the Jews to this level in order to cause them to sin (see LM I, 19:4).

23:23 What is God doing?

The Jews Are, at Their Source, Higher than Angels

The messianic days, the Jews will be closer to God than are the angels, and so the angels will then ask the Jews, "What is God doing?" (Rashi).

The Jews' root of being is higher than that of the angels (LM II, 1:1). The source of the souls of the Jewish people is to be found in the Throne of Glory, which is in the World of *Beriyah*, whereas the angels come from the relatively lower world of *Yetzirah*.

Two Ways of Apprehending God

A person can attain a transcendental consciousness that seeks God with the query, "What?" That is to say, "What more can I find out about God? What other levels are there? What else is so far beyond me that I must strive to reach?" This will be the general level of understanding in messianic days. At that time, our experience will be one of deep yearning for God (LM II, 7:8-10).

At present, on the other hand, as a general rule we must strive to recognize that "the earth is full of His Glory" (*Isaiah* 6), assuring ourselves that we are capable of experiencing Godliness even in this world.