



THANK YOU HASHEM For Shabbos Kodesh!

לעילוי נשמת: אריה ישראל בן מרדכי ע"ה י"ח תמוז ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Parshas Chukas-Balak

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HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

THE BAAL SHEM TOV and his students stressed the eternity of the Torah: each and every detail – even the most obscure and seemingly inapplicable among them – is eminently relevant for all times. In this vein, although the mitzvah of *Parah Adumah* seems to be irrelevant to our current state of impurity in the throes of exile, the founder of Chassidus reveals the message this *chok* holds for you and me, today. The *Orchos HaTzaddikim* points out that traits, both negative and positive, are referred to as "*middos*," which literally means "measurements." The reason for this is that there is no trait which is purely negative or purely positive. Rather, it is always a question of how much, how often, and in what setting one is utilizing those traits. The Baal Shem Tov explains that *gaavah*, pride, is a perfect example of this phenomenon. Chazal teach that *gaavah* is one of the worst of all traits – of an arrogant person, Hashem says, "I am not able to dwell with him." When a Jew is arrogant, he pushes Hashem out of his life. Taking credit for his accomplishments, this person is serving himself, a form of *avodah zarah*. However, pride has a positive employment as well. The verse states "*Vayigbah libo b'darkhei Hashem*," there is an aspect in which one's heart should be filled with pride and confidence in serving Hashem. One of the interesting *halachos* regarding *Parah Adumah* is that while it purified those who were impure, it rendered impure those who were pure. The Baal Shem Tov taught that the *Parah Adumah* hints to the *middah* of *gaavah*, a trait which shares this strange nature. Just like the *Parah Adumah*, arrogance "purifies the impure" when employed in a holy manner by granting the beginner to

OH IT'S TIME TO SAY
GOOD SHABBOS...

GO ON HOME AND FIND THE GIFT,
THAT'S WAITING THERE FOR YOU.

- Abie Rottenberg

avodas Hashem a healthy sense of accomplishment and pride over his initial successes. However, also like the *Parah Adumah*, arrogance "renders impure those who are pure" when those who have tasted true success in avodas Hashem become arrogant in their avodah. Seen in this way, *Parah Adumah* carries an extremely relevant message: A person must always evaluate his relationship with the trait of pride. Is he using this emotion in the correct *middah*-measurement in a manner which allows it to purify the impure, or is he misusing it, pushing Hashem out of his life in a manner which renders impure those who are pure? May Hashem grant us the wisdom to serve Him with *middos tovos*! 🙏

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 👉 Hashem teaches Moshe the *halachos* of *Parah Adumah*
- 👉 The nation arrives in Midbar Tzin where Miriam dies, and the people thirst for water. Angry at the nation, Moshe strikes the rock instead of speaking to it as Hashem had commanded. Water issues forth, but Moshe is told that neither he nor Ahron would enter Eretz Yisrael.
- 👉 Ahron dies and is succeeded by his son Elazar. After another eruption of discontent, snakes attack the encampment. Hashem tells Moses to place a brass serpent upon a high pole - all who will gaze heavenward will be healed.
- 👉 The people sing a song in honor of the miraculous well that provided water in the desert.
- 👉 Moshe leads the people in battles against the Sichon and Og and conquers their lands.
- 👉 King Balak of Moav employs the prophet Bilam to curse the Jewish nation. Along the way, Bilam is berated by his donkey who sees and is frightened by an angel blocking the path. From three different vantage points, Bilam attempts to pronounce his curse. Each time, blessings issue forth instead.
- 👉 The people are led astray by the daughters of Moab and worship the idol *Peor*. When a high-ranking official consorts with a Midianite woman in public, Pinchas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

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P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

כי מראש צרים אראנו ומגבעות אשורנו הרעם לבדד ישכן ובגוים לא יתחשב:

“As I see them from the mountain tops, gaze on them from the heights, there is a people that dwells apart, not reckoned among the nations.”

FORCED, AGAINST HIS will, to carry out the opposite of his intention to curse and destroy them, Bilam showers blessing upon the Jewish nation in this week's parsha. These blessings from a non-Jewish enemy are exceedingly unique in their quality and reveal some deeply positive truths of the Jew's experience wandering alone through a hostile world. In a definitive statement clarifying the identity of the chosen people, Bilam declares, *“Hein am l'vadad yishkon uvagoyim lo yischashav”*, “Indeed, they are a people that dwells alone and are not counted among the nations.” The Degel Machaneh Ephraim explains this verse in a beautiful way.

Endowed with an objectively true system of morality gifted to them by the Creator of existence in His holy Torah, the Jewish nation stands apart from the entire world. As the People of the Book, our nation has always conducted itself with an ever-advanced measure of education, civility, and nobility. The Torah's laws, ideals, and precepts have enabled the Jewish nation to rise above senseless and immoral acts perpetrated by individuals and nations alike through the course of history. Our tzaddikim and their writings have long served as moral beacons of light, guidance, and clarity cutting through the dismal fog of a humanity which often runs the risk of sinking into the basest realms of existence.

In order to preserve this elevated identity, it is imperative that we preserve a measure of distance from the nations of the world. When we allow secular ideals to shape the way we think, act, and feel, we run the risk of losing sight of our holy mission and forfeiting the elevated path upon which our forefathers walked from time immemorial. Devoid of an overwhelming awareness regarding the divine gifts that make us

special and unique, we are unable to share those gifts with a world more in need of them now than ever before. The Degel Machaneh Ephraim teaches that in order to ensure that a certain degree of distance is always maintained, Hashem implanted within the nations an inherent aversion toward Jews. Even if they are unable to rationally explain their feelings, the general sentiment historically felt among significant segments of the global population is that Jews are lesser, inferior, even evil. This natural and unexplainable feeling prevents these communities from ever allowing Jews to grow too close. Jewish historians have long pointed out that large-scale violence against Jews was almost always preceded by assimilation and secularization. The enmity of the nations toward the Jews ensures that the boundaries remain clear and defined.

While the historical consequences of this reality have been vastly tragic, the Degel Machaneh Ephraim chooses to see the positive. He teaches that the scourge of anti-Semitism ensures that no matter how they try to assimilate and demolish the borders that protect their elevated spiritual state, Jews will forever remain Jews, always conscious of their separateness and constantly forced to confront the implications of their unique identity.

The tzaddik teaches that this is the deeper meaning of Bilam's blessing. It is because the Jews must ever remain *“Am l'vadad yishkon”*, “A people that dwells alone”, Hashem made it so that *“Uvagoyim lo yischashav”*, they should not be important (*“chashuv”*) in the eyes of the nations. The rest of the world will always see am Yisrael as being inferior so as to prevent them from growing too close. In this way, our national identity of holiness and elevation will ever be preserved. 🕎



No matter how hard a Jew may try to escape his heritage, the nations of the world will never let him forget that he is a member of “a nation apart”, a nation of holy priests and a holy people.

Zechus Avos

Yahrtzeit of the Week

15 Tamuz: Monday night, Tuesday – July 7th

Rabbeinu Chayim Ibn Attar (1696-1743)

The saintly Ohr Hachaim HaKadosh, Rabbeinu Chaim ben Rav Moshe Ibn Atar zy”a, was a renowned tzaddik and gaon who lived and taught Torah in Morocco, Syria, and Yerushalayim. He is best known for authoring sefer *Ohr HaChaim*, a commentary on the Torah intertwining *peshat*, *remez*, *drush*, and *sod*. This tzaddik passed away on Motzei Shabbos Balak, 15 Tamuz 5503/1743.

Parshas Balak contains a number of interesting *remazim* to the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh. This is appropriate, since (through Rus) Moshiach descends from Balak, and it was widely felt that the Ohr Hachaim could have been Moshiach had the generation been worthy. In fact, the Baal Shem Tov's ill-fated attempt to reach Eretz Yisroel was primarily motivated by a desire to meet with the Ohr Hachaim, a meeting the Baal Shem said would have brought Moshiach. Indeed, the tzaddik was *niftar* on Motzei Shabbos when we mention Eliyahu Hanavi who will announce Moshiach's arrival, the beginning of the week of Parshas Pinchos about whom the Yalkut Shimoni says “Pinchos is Eliyahu.”

בלק spelled out is **בית למד קוף**, which equals 672. That is equal to the gematria of **עטר אבן חיים** with the 4 words.

קוף can also mean: בית - in the House of Hashem, the Beis Medrash, למד - we learn, קוף - spelled out **קוף ואו פא** is equal to **אור החיים**.

Zechuso Yagen Aleinu!

This section is adapted from the yahrtzeit remazim of R' David Friedman. 🕎

The kever of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh



Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

LAST WEEK, WE explained that the Jewish soul feels a natural joy and pleasure when Shabbos arrives, triggered by the unifications which automatically take place in the spiritual realms when this exalted day arrives. While the majority feel compelled by this special joy to engage in physical delights on this day of rest, tzaddikim channel this energy by engaging with the deepest secrets of Torah – the greatest possible pleasure and joy of this world. Still, even those tzaddikim must express their joy in a physical way as well through the medium of the Shabbos meals. This is because Shabbos, the seventh day of the week, is a taste of the seventh millennium – a time after the coming of Moshiach when even the physical bodies of am Yisrael will be permeated with the deepest light of spirituality. Indeed, the eating of Shabbos is a most elevated act of spiritual service. In the words of the Chernovitzer Rav, “You must know that the eating of Shabbos is entirely spiritual and completely holy. Indeed, it rises to a completely different place than eating during the week.” This is because while the holiness of a Jew’s eating during the week is contained within the Berachos made over the food, on Shabbos the very eating itself is holy. This is hinted in the verse, “*V’yom hashevi’l yihyeh lachem kodesh*”, “The seventh day shall be holy for you;” “*V’yom hashevi’l*,” on Shabbos, even “*lachem*,” even that which is ordinarily bound completely to the realm of physicality, “*kodesh*,” is entirely spiritual and completely holy. 🕎

This section is adapted from the sefer “*Sidduro Shel Shabbos*” by R’ Chaim of Chernowitz zy”a (1760-1816)

P’nimiyus Ha’Halacha

The Inner Dimension of Jewish Law

WHEN ONE IS eating foods of the same *beracha* which include one of the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is praised, the *beracha* should be made on that special food. (*Orach Chayim*, 211:1) For example, if one sat down to eat dates and plums –he would make a “*Ha’eitz*” on a date, which is one of the seven species. This factor of *shivas haminim* overrides both “*shaleim*” (whole) and “*chaviv*” (preferred). Therefore, even if the plums are whole or preferred, the *beracha* would still be made on the dates. (*Chayei Adam* 57:5) When faced with two or more of the *shivas haminim*, the order of precedence is as follows: wheat, barley, olives, dates, grapes, figs, and pomegranates. Chazal established this order based on a verse in which the seven species are introduced, “A land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs and pomegranates, a land of olives which produce oil, dates which produce honey.” The precedence of the species is dependent upon their proximity to the word “land” which appears twice in the pasuk. Therefore, because they are mentioned immediately after the second “land,” olives and dates are considered more important than grapes, figs and pomegranates (which appear third, fourth, and fifth from the first mention of the word “land”. (*Orach Chaim* 211:4)

In Likutei Halachos, (*Birkas HaPeiros* 2), Reb Nosson of Breslov writes that a Jew’s sustenance should only derive from food grown and produced in Eretz Yisrael. Food grown in *chutz la’aretz*, a lowlier spiritual plane under the influence of the negative forces of impurity, could be damaging to a Jew’s avodas Hashem. Reb Nosson explains that this danger is mitigated by making a *beracha*. When a Jew makes a *beracha* on food grown and produced in *chutz la’aretz*, the food becomes sanctified with the holiness of Eretz Yisrael itself. The reason for this is that the root of Eretz Yisrael’s holiness is the faith that Hashem created the world and gave us this special land. When we make a *beracha*

and acknowledge that this item was created by Hashem as well, it becomes included in the special faith Eretz Yisrael embodies.

The tzaddik sees this amazing concept hinted to in a famous Gemara about the significance of making a *beracha*. The Gemara (*Berachos* 35a) resolves two seemingly contradictory verses – “*La’Shem ha’aretz umelo’ah*”, “The earth and all that fills it belongs to Hashem”, and “*V’ha’aretz nasan l’vnei adam*”, “He gave the earth to man” – by drawing a distinction between before and after a *beracha* is made. **Before** a *beracha* is made, “*la’Shem ha’aretz umelo’ah*” – the food belongs to Hashem. **After** a *beracha* is made, “*v’ha’aretz nasan l’vnei adam*” – it becomes permissible for us to partake in the food.

Commenting on the first pasuk, Rashi writes that the words “*ha’aretz umelo’ah*” refer to Eretz Yisrael and other lands. Based on a teaching from Rebbe Nachman that any time we see the word “*aretz*” we assume it is speaking about Eretz Yisrael, Reb Nosson writes that the word “*aretz*” in the second verse is a reference to the Holy Land. The Gemara quoted above teaches that the pasuk “*la’Shem ha’aretz umelo’ah*” is referring to before a person makes a *beracha*. In accordance with Rashi’s comment, at this stage there exists both Eretz Yisrael as well as other lands – a mighty distinction between the land that stands witness to Hashem’s creation of the world and other lands that have not yet been sanctified by this awareness. However, the verse that refers to the stage after a *beracha* has been made, “*v’ha’aretz nasan l’vnei adam*”, only mentions Eretz Yisrael, because making a *beracha* has the ability to sanctify the other lands with the holiness of Eretz Yisrael. Berachos are so incredibly powerful! A *beracha* made with feeling and consciousness has the power to turn the piece of *chutz la’aretz* in our hand into Eretz Yisrael! 🕎

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

One year, there was a shortage of esrogim before Sukkos in the city of Berditchov. Only after great exertion and much effort was an esrog acquired for use by the entire city. The esrog was brought to the Rav, Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov zy"l, and it was understood that all the townspeople would come on Sukkos to make a *beracha* on this esrog.

Erev yom tov, the gabbai of the shul noticed the precious esrog on the table. He thought, "First Rav Levi Yitzchok will say the *beracha* over the esrog, after which all the important figures in town will have their turn. When they are finished, everyone else will follow. I will surely be among the last people to hold and say the *beracha* on the esrog, if at all! What can I do to make sure I can fulfill the mitzvah in the proper way?"

The gabbai came up with an idea. He decided that he would wake up extra early the following morning. When no one was around, he would make the very first *beracha* on the esrog! After the yom tov meal, he went to bed straight away and prepared for his early morning. As the first rays of dawn crept across the sky, the gabbai quietly tip toed into Rav Levi Yitzchak's office. Carefully, he removed the esrog from the box. But because he was in such a state of fear and panic determined to finish the deed without being discovered, he accidentally dropped the esrog! Examining it confirmed his worst fear – the *pitom* had broken off and the esrog was now unfit for use by anyone! The shamash gabbai was heartbroken. Because of his misdeed, the entire city of Berditchov now had no esrog at all!

The gabbai came before the tzaddik, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov, crying bitter tears of shame and brokenness. Between sobs, he told the tzaddik what had happened, and braced himself for the rebuke he certainly deserved. But instead of making the gabbai feel even more horrible than he already did, Rav Levi Yitzchok used the episode to advocate on behalf of the Jewish people. He turned his eyes heavenward and cried out, "Ribbono Shel Olam – Master of the World! Look down from heaven and see what a special nation You have! See how excited they are to fulfill Your holy mitzvos!"

In every situation, there is a ray of light waiting to be unearthed. The city of happiness is found in the state of mind – it is up to us to interpret situations in a positive light, to find the merit, holiness, and goodness concealed within! ✨

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"Thank You Hashem" is a powerful sound bite. These simple words are a prayer, blessing, appreciation, sanctification, and expression of spiritual intimacy—all in one. Jews from all walks of life utter them in all life circumstances, finding meaning and strength in direct access to Hashem. Our mission is to ignite that passion and pride in every Jew worldwide. To remind us all that Hashem exists in every single aspect of life. That He loves each of us in every situation, environment, and spiritual position. And that by saying His name with gratitude, we return His love every day.

"THANK YOU HASHEM
FOR SHABBOS KODESH! WEEKLY"
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