
THE WEISS EDITION

חַקַּת-בַּלַּק

Chukas-Balak



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Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב
תנצב"ה

לזכות

הנערה **שיינא זעלדא** תחי'

בת הרה"ת **משה** וזוגתו מרת **רבקה יהודית** שיחיו **שריף**
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים עשרה שנה
היא עונת בת מצוה בשעטו"מ ביום כ"א סיון ה'תשפ"ו יה"ר שתקבל על עצמה עול
מלכות שמים ועול מצוות בלבב שלם,
ותצליח בקיום המצוות מתוך יראת שמים טהורה לנח"ר הורי' וכל משפחתה שיחיו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות זקניה הרה"ת **יצחק** וזוגתו מרת **חנה** שיחיו **קופפער**

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת הרה"ח **שלמה שניאור** זלמן ע"ה
ב"ר **מיכאל הי"ד קייזן**
נלב"ע ביום ח' תמוז ה'תשע"א
תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י בני משפחתו שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת

מרת **מרים יודית** בת ר' **ראובן** ע"ה לייקין
נלב"ע ביום י' תמוז ה'תשנ"ג
תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י חתנה

הרה"ת **אייל** וזוגתו מרת **גאלדא**
ומשפחתם שיחיו **בן ציון**

לזכות הנערה **דבורה** תחי'

בת הרה"ת **אלכסנדר זאב** וזוגתו מרת **חיה מושקא** שיחיו **שוסטערמאן**
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים עשרה שנה
היא עונת בת מצוה בשעטו"מ ביום טו"ב תמוז ה'תשפ"ו

יה"ר שתקבל על עצמה עול מלכות שמים ועול מצוות בלבב שלם,
ותצליח בקיום המצוות מתוך יראת שמים טהורה לנח"ר הורי' וכל משפחתה שיחיו

חַקַּת

Chukas

20:29 | כ:כט

וַיִּבְכּוּ אֶת אַהֲרֹן שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל

*The entire house of Israel
wept for Aharon for thirty days.*

How I Really Feel about You

The Torah emphasizes that Aharon's passing was mourned by the entire Jewish nation. The Midrash explains that Aharon was particularly beloved by the people because he was active in restoring peace between disputing parties and quarreling families.¹

How did Aharon initiate peace between parties in a dispute? He approached each of the parties separately and said, "Have you seen how your friend is berating himself, saying how ashamed he is to see you after what he's done to you?" He would thereby instill feelings of reconciliation in each of them. When the two would later meet, they would be ready to overlook their disagreements and reestablish their friendship.

1. Avos d'Rabbi Nasan 12:3.

Aharon's conduct is often cited as an example of the Talmudic teaching² that one may modify the truth in the interest of peace. Notably, the Talmud only says that one may *modify* the truth, not that one may speak falsely, for the Torah prohibits saying something inherently false even for the sake of peace. But this raises a question about Aharon, who told each party that the other was remorseful and seeking reconciliation, when in fact they were not!

The answer is that although Aharon's words may have seemed like a misrepresentation of the facts, they were not inherently untrue.

Proof for this can be found in the Rambam's ruling in the Laws of Divorce, where he says that when a husband is halachically obligated to divorce his wife, the court may use physical force to prevail upon him to agree to give his wife a *get*, a bill of divorce, even though a *get* is valid only if given *willingly*.³ This is not a contradiction because, as the Rambam explains, the genuine desire of every Jew is to observe all the mitzvos and to refrain from the prohibitions. Therefore, when he agrees under pressure to do a mitzvah, he is actually just acknowledging his *true* will and desire.

If this is true regarding any mitzvah, then it is certainly so with regard to the mitzvah to love one's fellow Jew, "a fundamental principle of the Torah."⁴ Accordingly, when Aharon spoke of the love between two Jews as an obvious reality, even though outwardly they behaved otherwise, it was perhaps an *embellishment* of the truth, but it was certainly far from being entirely false.

—*Sichos Kodesh 5741, vol. 4, pp. 439–440*

2. Yevamos 65b.

3. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Geirushin 2:20.

4. Rashi, Vayikra 19:18.

 21:7 | ז:א

וַיָּבֹא הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲטֵאֵנּוּ כִּי דִבַּרְנוּ
 בְּה' וְנָבִיא... וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל מֹשֶׁה בְּעַד הָעָם

*The people came to Moshe and said, “We have sinned,
 for we have spoken against G-d and against you...”
 So Moshe prayed on behalf of the people.*

When Moshe Forgives

Bnei Yisrael spoke against G-d and Moshe, and were attacked by venomous snakes. Nevertheless, Moshe prayed on their behalf. “From here we learn,” says Rashi, “that one who is asked to forgive should not be cruel about pardoning.”

In the Talmud, however, it seems that this principle is learned from a much earlier source—Avraham’s prayers to heal Avimelech and his household from their punishment for abducting Sarah. The Mishnah remarks, “From where do we learn that one who is asked to forgive should not be cruel? As it is written,⁵ ‘Avraham prayed to G-d; and G-d healed Avimelech.’”⁶

This raises a question on Rashi. If we have already learned this ethic of forgiveness from Avraham, what more can we learn here? Evidently, according to Rashi, Moshe’s conduct teaches us something that Avraham’s conduct does not.

The difference lies in the Torah’s emphasis that Moshe prayed “*on behalf of the people*.”

Avraham forgave Avimelech to the extent that he was willing to pray that Avimelech not be punished for his actions.

5. Bereishis 20:17.

6. Bava Kamma 8:7.

Moshe, however, forgave Bnei Yisrael so wholly that he was able to pray for their general wellbeing, as if they had never wronged him at all.

G-d's response to Moshe's prayers likewise reflected this degree of forgiveness. He instructed Moshe to place a bronze serpent upon a pole, and all who gazed upon it would be healed. As Rashi explains, "Does a snake cause life or death? Rather, when Israel looked heavenward [toward the serpent] and subjected their hearts to their Father in heaven, they would be healed."⁷ Hence, commensurate with Moshe's concern for Bnei Yisrael, the brass serpent not only removed their immediate punishment, it fully rehabilitated them and caused them to change their conduct for the long term.

Rashi therefore learns from Moshe that "we should not be cruel about pardoning"—even our pardoning should be generous, not begrudging. We should harbor no resentment whatsoever toward those who ask for our forgiveness, and even actively seek their wellbeing.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 28, pp. 138-144*

7. Bamidbar 21:8.

בלק *Balak*

כד:יד | 24:14

לָכֵן אֵיעָצֶדְךָ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָעָם הַזֶּה לְעַמֶּךָ בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים

*Come, I will advise you what this people will do
to your people at the end of days.*

Radical Blessings

Fearing that the Jews would wage war against him and conquer his land, Balak, the king of Moav, summoned the prophet Bilaam and asked him to curse them. Bilaam, however, knew that Balak had nothing to fear, for as a prophet he certainly knew that G-d had commanded Bnei Yisrael, “Do not distress Moav, and do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as an inheritance.”¹

Nevertheless, Bilaam made no attempt to reassure Balak, because he himself was eager to harm Bnei Yisrael and was excited by this opportunity to curse them. As Rashi notes, “Bilaam hated them more than did Balak.”² Whereas Balak

1. Devarim 2:9.

2. Rashi, Bamidbar 22:11.

hated the Jews because he felt threatened by them, Bilaam hated the Jews fundamentally and irrationally—pure, simple, baseless hatred.

Despite Bilaam's enthusiasm, things did not go to plan. "...Hashem, your G-d, did not want to listen to Bilaam. So Hashem, your G-d, transformed the curse into a blessing for you, because Hashem, your G-d, loves you."³ Not only did G-d force Bilaam to bless the Jews instead of cursing them, He transformed the curses themselves into blessings. And since Bilaam had hoped to unleash his unfounded hatred in his curses, the blessings G-d forced him to bestow were extraordinary, reflecting G-d's fundamental and unconditional love for His people.

This explains why Bilaam's blessings also foretell the future and final redemption of the Jewish people. The Talmud⁴ says that Moshiach's arrival will be *b'hesech hadaas*, which literally means "in absence of cognizance." On a simple level, this means that the precise moment of the Redemption cannot be known in advance, so Moshiach's arrival will automatically catch us off guard. According to the teachings of Chassidus,⁵ this Talmudic statement also means that the era of Moshiach will be characterized by an absence of *daas*—knowledge and cognizance. This will not be due to a lack of knowledge, but because a deep-seated, fundamental and suprarational connection to G-d will be revealed in the conscious mind of every Jew. It is therefore most fitting that the suprarational era of Moshiach is foretold in the radical blessings of the irrational Bilaam.

—*Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 38, pp. 88–89

3. Devarim 23:6.

4. Sanhedrin 97a.

5. Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh 4.

 כד:יז | 24:17

אֶרְאֶנּוּ וְלֹא עֲתִידָא אֲשׁוּרְנּוּ וְלֹא קְרוֹב דְּרַךְ פּוֹכֵב מִיַּעֲקֹב

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star shoots forth from Yaakov.

Moshiach and You

Many early sources interpret Bilaam’s prophecy, “A star shoots forth from Yaakov,” as a reference to Moshiach, the future redeemer of the Jewish people.⁶ According to the Sages of the Talmud, however, it refers to every Jew.⁷

The two interpretations of this verse, either as a reference to even the simplest Jew or as a hint to Moshiach, the redeemer of the Jewish people, are not contradictory. In fact, according to the Baal Shem Tov, they are one and the same.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that the soul of Moshiach is the collective soul of the Jewish people. The complete revelation of the soul of Moshiach is therefore dependent on every Jew “preparing and repairing” the aspect of Moshiach’s soul that relates specifically to him.⁸ This is the meaning of the prophet Yeshayahu’s words, “He bears our illness; he suffers our pain.”⁹ The completeness of Moshiach’s identity is dependent on the individual input of every single Jew, and he “suffers” when our work is deficient.

Similarly, the Rambam writes: “A person must see himself and the world as equally balanced on two ends of the

6. See Ramban and other commentaries *ad loc.*

7. See Talmud Yerushalmi, Maaser Sheni 4:6.

8. See Me’or Einayim, Pinchas.

9. Yeshayahu 53:4.

scale... By doing one good deed, he tips the scale and brings for himself and the entire world salvation,¹⁰ for it is truly in the hands of every individual to complete the soul of Moshiach and bring about his revelation.

Bilaam's prophecy is thus equally attributable to the aspect of Moshiach entrusted to the individual Jew as it is to our future redeemer himself.

—*Toras Menachem, vol. 31, pp. 122-125*

10. Mishneh Torah, Hil. Teshuvah 3:4.

לזכות

הת' **אברהם זאב** שי'

לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות בשעטו"מ
ביום ח"י תמוז ה'תשפ"ו

יה"ר שייגדל להיות חסיד, ירא שמים ולמדן
לנח"ר הוריו וכל משפחתו שיחיו

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נדפס ע"י הוריו

הרה"ת **שבתאי אשר** וזוגתו מרת **נחמה קרן** שיחיו **טיאר**

לעילוי נשמת

מרת **אסתר** בת ר' **משה מרדכי** ע"ה **סערעבריאנסקי**

נפטרה י"ד תמוז ה'תשפ"ה
תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ת **צמח** ב"ר **יצחק הלוי** ר' איצ'ה דער מתמיד' ע"ה

גורביץ

נלב"ע ביום ח"י תמוז ה'תשס"ב
תנצב"ה

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נדפס ע"י חתנו הרה"ת **יוסף** וזוגתו מרת **שטערנא שרה** שיחיו **דייטש**

לזכות
מנחם מענדל בן תמר
רבקה בת ברכה
חי' מושקא בת רבקה
חנה בת רבקה
דבורה לאה בת רבקה
מנוחה רחל בת רבקה



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