

Parashat Balak

וַיֵּרָא בָלָק בֶּן צִפּוֹר אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֹמְרֵי.

Balak, son of Tzipor, saw all that Israel did to the Amorites.¹

This *parashah* focuses on two principle characters, Balak and Balaam.

שער הפסוקים, פרשת בלק

ראיתי לבאר כאן, ענין בלק ובלעם, שהיו קוסמים וחכמים, שאין כמותם בעולם. וכמ"ש חז"ל כי בבחי' אחת היה בלק טפל לבלעם. ובבחי' אחרת, היה בלעם טפל לבלק.

Sha'ar HaPesukim, Likutei Torah, and Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Balak

I see fit to explain here the characters of Balak and Balaam, who were unrivaled magicians and sages. As our sages have said, in one respect Balak was inferior to Balaam, and in another Balaam was inferior to Balak.

וגם בזהר האריך בענין בלק ובלעם, כי נקרא בלק בן צפור, ע"ש חכמתו שהיה קוסם, ע"י צפור א':

The *Zohar*² also speaks at length about Balak and Balaam, noting that the former is called "Balak the son of Tzipor" because of his wisdom; he performed magic using a certain bird.

Tzipor in Hebrew means "bird"; thus, "Balak the son of Tzipor" means "Balak, who owed his magical powers to a bird."

גם ראינו תכלית שנאתם עם ישראל על חנם, משא"כ בזולתם. זולתי עמלק, שגם הוא היה שונא גדול לישראל.

We note also their unbounded and unfounded hatred of the Jewish people. No other people exhibited such hatred save Amalek, who also hated the Jewish people greatly.

ולכן רצוני לייסד ענין זה, על מאמר ספר הזוהר בפרשת בלק דף קצ"ט ע"ב שורה כ"ג, וז"ל, ודוד מלכא אמר, כי הנה הרשעים ידרכון קשת כוננו חצם וגו', ואע"ג דהאי קרא וכו', אמרו עמלק, ע"ם ל"ק, עמא דלקא לון וכו'. בלק, בא לק וכו', בלעם, ב"ל ע"ם וכו'. מה אתון אשתארו עמ"ק, בלבל עמק דמחשבה דילהון, דלא ישלטון, ולא ישתארו בעלמא וכו' עכ"ל:

I therefore wish to base the explanation of this matter on the statement of the *Zohar*³ that "King David said, 'For behold, the wicked draw the bow; they aim their arrow....' Even though this verse.... They said, *Amalek* means 'The people [am] that lick [lak],' i.e., the people that lick their sustenance from us.... *Balak* means 'Come [ba] to lick [lak]'.... *Balaam* means 'the non- [bal] people [am].' What

1. Numbers 22:2.

2. 3:184b.

3. 3:199b.

letters remain? Those that spell 'depth' [omek]. He confused their deep thoughts so that they could not rule, and they did not remain in the world...."

Balaam is spelled *beit-lamed-ayin-mem*.

Balak is spelled *beit-lamed-kuf*.

Amalek is spelled *ayin-mem-lamed-kuf*.

The *Zohar* here notes that the names *Balaam*, *Balak*, and *Amalek* are phonetically inter-related. The first two letters of *Balaam* and *Balak* are the same; the last two letters of *Balak* and *Amalek* are the same; and the first two letters of *Amalek* are the same as the last two letters of *Balaam*. Furthermore, the letters of the names *Balak* and *Balaam* that are not common to both spell *Amalek*. These phenomena will be used later.

דע, כי כל דברים אלו מיוסדים, ע"ד בחי' גלגול נשמותיהם, מהיכן נשרשו. הנה עמלק הוא בחי' פסולת הרע, שהוברר מן קין בן אדה"ר,

Know that all these things are based on the transmigration of the souls of these nations and the significance of their origins. Amalek is the waste product of evil that was separated out of the soul of Cain, the son of Adam.

As we will see, there was a good and an evil aspect to Cain's soul. The evil was separated from the good and became the source of Amalek.

והוא בחי' אחת, מן ה' מיני ערב רב, שנתערבו בישראל, שהם, עמלקים, רפאים, כנוצר בוזהר בפרשת בראשית כי גם בערב רב, היה עירוב רע של קין ושל הבל.

This is one of the five types of spirituality embodied in the mixed multitude that became intermixed with the Jews. These five types were the Amalekites, the Rephaim, etc., as mentioned in the *Zohar*⁴ that in the mixed multitude there was an admixture of the evil of the souls of both Cain and Abel.

ולכן עמלק שונא גדול לישראל היה, וכמ"ש למטה בפסוק ויסר קיני מתוך עמלק,

Therefore, Amalek hated Israel greatly, as it is stated further on in Scripture, that the Kenites follow the Amalekites.

As far as I can tell, this refers to the fact that in Balaam's prophecies concerning what will happen in the messianic future,⁵ his prophecy concerning the Kenites⁶ follows his prophecy concerning the Amalekites.⁷ The Kenites (*Keini: kuf-yud-nun-yud*) are evidently etymologically related to Cain (*Kayin: kuf-yud-nun*).⁸

כי הטוב שבקין, נברר ביתרו הנקרא חבר הקיני, הנפרד מקין, ר"ל מן הרע של קין, שהוא עמלק:

For the good in Cain was separated out into Jethro, who is called "Chever the Kenite," i.e., who was separated out of Cain, that is, from the evil of Cain, which then became Amalek.

4. 1:25a; *Tikunei Zohar* 50 (86a).

5. Numbers 24:14-24.

6. Ibid. 24:21-22.

7. Ibid. 24:20.

8. Ibid. 24:22.

Spiritually, thus, Jethro derives from the good part of Cain while Amalek derives from the evil part of Cain. The fact that Jethro is called “Chever the Kenite” alludes to his spiritual descent from Cain, just as the juxtaposition of Amalek and the Kenites in Balaam’s prophecies alludes to the spiritual descent of Amalek from Cain.

ובלק ובלעם, היו מעורבים משתים רעות, מן הרע של קין, ומן הרע של הבל, ולכן יש בכל אחד מהם בי
אותיות ב"ל, מן הבל,

Balak and Balaam both comprised both evils: the evil of Cain and the evil of Abel. Therefore both their names contain the letters *beit-lamed* from Abel.

וכמבואר לעיל בפסוק וירא מלאך ה' אליו בלבת אש מתוך הסנה, כי לא הוברר מן הבל, רק ה' אחרונה, והיא הטוב שבהבל, ונתנה במשה.

As was explained previously, on the verse “And he saw the angel of G-d in the heart of (*belabat*) the fire within the bush,”⁹ the only part of Abel that was rectified was the first letter of his name, the *hei*, this being the last letter of the Name *Havayah*. It signifies the good of Abel, and it was given to Moses.

We have seen previously that Moses was a reincarnation of Abel. We see here that it was specifically the *hei* of Abel’s name (*Hevel*) that became reincarnated in Moses.

ובי אותיות ל"ב של הבל לא הובררו, והיה בהם הרע של הבל, ונתנו בבלק ובלעם בלב"ל:

The remaining two letters, *beit-lamed*, were not rectified, and they embodied the evil of Abel. They were given to Balak and Balaam, as the first two letters of their respective names.

גם בחיי הרע של קין שנתערב בהם, נרמז בשמותיהם, כי כבר אמרנו שהרע של קין הוא עמלק, והנה ג' אותיות הראשונות, שהם עמ"ל, נתנו בבלעם, ואות קי נשארה בבלק.

The evil of Cain that was mixed into them is also alluded to in their names, for we already stated that the evil of Cain is Amalek, and the first three letters of *Amalek* (*ayin-mem-lamed*) were given to Balaam and the last letter (*kuf*) remained for Balak.

Balaam: *beit-lamed-ayin-mem*; *beit-lamed* from Abel and *lamed-ayin-mem* from Amalek.

Balak: *beit-lamed-kuf*; *beit-lamed* from Abel and *kuf* from Amalek.

The *lamed* of Balaam here does double-duty: it signifies part of the *beit-lamed* of Abel and the *ayin-mem-lamed* of Amalek.

ואמנם, עם היות שבלק ובלעם, יש בכל אחד מהם רע של קין ושל הבל, עכ"ז עיקרו של בלק, הוא מן הרע של קין. ועיקרו של בלעם, הוא מן הבל:

Nonetheless, even though both Balaam and Balak embodied the evils of Cain and Abel, Balak mainly expressed the evil of Cain and Balaam mainly expressed the evil of Abel.

The Arizal now explains how this is so.

9. Exodus 3:2.

וענין בלק, נרמז בפסוק וירא בלק בן צפור, בן יתרו, שעליו נאמר, גם צפור מצאה בית, אבי צפורה אשת משה, כנזכר בזוהר בפרשת בלק דף קצ"ו ע"ב. והטוב לקחו יתרו, ונעשה צפור טהורה. והרע נתן בזרעה והוא בלק, דמבני בנוי של יתרו הוה, כנזכר שם. וכבר נתבאר אצלינו כי הנשמה של קין, נתנה ביתרו. ורוח של קין, בשמואל הנביא:

The character of Balak is alluded to in the verse "And Balak, the son of Tzipor, saw...." Balak was a descendant of Jethro, of whom it is said, "The bird (*tzipor*) has also found its home..."¹⁰ Jethro was the father of Tziporah, the wife of Moses, as mentioned in the *Zohar*.¹¹ Jethro took the good of Cain for himself and thus became a permitted bird. He transmitted the evil of Cain to his offspring, i.e., Balak, who was descended from Jethro, as mentioned there in the *Zohar*. We have already explained¹² that that the soul (*neshamah*) of Cain was reincarnated in Jethro and the spirit (*ruach*) of Cain in the prophet Samuel.

Jethro's connection to Balak is alluded to by the fact that named his daughter Tziporah, i.e., "the bird of the [holiness of G-d's Name, represented by the letter] *hei* [of His Name]." By so doing, he indicated that he had rectified part of Cain's soul and had identified with the good in it. The evil, indicated by the word *tzipor* without the *hei*, the plain bird, was passed on to Balak, the son of Tzipor.

וענין בלעם, נתבאר אצלינו בכמה מקומות, איך עיקרו מן הבל, בסוד ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה, בישראל לא קם, אבל באומות העולם קם, ומנו בלעם.

We have explained on several occasions that Balaam is derived chiefly from Abel, this being the mystical meaning of our sages' statement on the verse, "And there arose in Israel no other prophet like Moses," meaning that in Israel there arose no such prophet, but amongst the nations there did arise a comparable prophet, i.e., Balaam.¹³

גם ביארנו בפסוק הנה ילדה מלכה גם היא בנים לנחור אחיך, כי ר"ת 'היא בנים לנחור, הם הבל, לרמוז על לבן בן בתואל הארמי, שהוא מהבל, וכל משפחתו ג"כ היו משם, כמבואר אצלינו בפרשת תשא, במעשה העגל.

We also explained, in our comments on the verse "Behold, Milkah gave birth to children, she as well, from your brother Nachor,"¹⁴ that the initial letters of the words for "she, children from your brother" (*hi banim leNachor*) spell the name Abel. This indicates that Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramite, was an incarnation of Abel. All his family was also from the same soul-root, as we have explained in our comments to the story of the Golden Calf.

One of the children of Nachor (Abraham's brother) and Milkah enumerated in this verse is Bethuel, the father of Laban.

ובפרט במה שהודעתך, כי לבן עצמו נתגלגל בבלעם:

10. Psalms 84:.

11. 3:196b.

12. *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, introduction 32 (34a).

13. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 14:34.

14. Genesis 22:20.

This is especially so in light of what you have already learned, namely, that Laban himself was reincarnated in Balaam.

Thus, Balaam embodied the evil of Abel.

וצריך לידע, מה ערוב יש לבלק עם בלעם,

You must know also what type of admixture there is between Balak and Balaam.

הנה ביארנו בפסוק ותגנוב רחל את התרפים אשר לאביון כי בשליש אמצעי דת"ת דועיר, שהוא החזה, שבו התחלת גלוי האורות של יסוד דאימא, שם מאחורוי הוא מקום התחלת כתר דרחל, ובתוכו מתלבשים שתי עקביים דרגלי לאה ושם הוא בחיי התרפים

We have explained in our comments on the verse “And Rachel stole her father’s *terafim*,”¹⁵ that the middle third of *tiferet* of *Z’eir Anpin*, which is located at its chest, is where the lights of *yesod* of *Ima* begin to be revealed. At that level, behind *Z’eir Anpin*, is where the *keter* of Rachel begins, and within the *keter* of Rachel are vested the two heels of the feet of Leah. This is the location of the *terafim*.

The *terafim* were idols; Rachel intended to stop her father from serving idols by stealing them from him when she left his home.

Yesod of *Ima* is the drive of the intellect to express itself in the emotions. Although this drive is what gives birth to *Z’eir Anpin*, the *partzuf* of the emotions, it is subdued throughout the initial, higher stages of its development, i.e., its own intellect and the primary emotions of *chesed* and *gevurah*. Only at the level of *tiferet*—and at that, the middle level of *tiferet*, not the higher part of *tiferet* that is basically the interface between it and the primary emotions—does the intellect’s drive to express itself as emotion begin to be revealed. For it is at this level that true awareness of the other occurs. *Chesed* and *gevurah*, although they are the impetuses to give or withhold from another, are primarily concerned with their own needs to give or withhold. *Tiferet* is where true awareness of the *needs* of the recipient comes into play, i.e., empathy.

There are two principle iterations of *Nukva* of *Z’eir Anpin*, two “mates” or means of expression the emotions flow through. The higher one is Leah, or thought, and the lower one is Rachel, or speech. Since speech is an expression of the emotions that have been processed through thought, the lower level (the “heel”) of Leah becomes the highest level (*keter*) of Rachel.

The evil of Balak and Balaam, which we are seeing derived here, can come to be only when Rachel is back to back with *Z’eir Anpin*. This, we know, is the initial state when these *partzufim* are created. As we have seen previously, whenever the male and female are not in full spiritual union there is an opening for evil to draw sustenance.

וע"ש באורך אמנם הענין בקצור הוא זה,

For the full explanation of this, see there at length. But the idea in short is this:

כי הנה נודע בסוד ענין הליכת ארבע אמות בארץ ישראל, כי גם הארת חו"ג שביסוד דאבא, יוצאות עד לאה, ונודע, כי לאה היא ממלכות דאימא שבתוך זעיר, ונמצא כי יש בלאה אורות דאבא.

We already know—from our discussion of walking four cubits in the land of Israel—that the radiance of *chesed* and *gevurah* of *Abba* present in the *yesod* of

15. Genesis 31:19.

Abba eventually reaches Leah. In addition, we know that Leah originates from the *malchut* of *Ima*, which is vested in *Z'eir Anpin*. Thus, there are lights of both *Abba* and *Ima* in Leah.

Abba is insight, or abstract intellect, while *Ima* is applied intellect. Thought derives from applied intellect, since thought is the most natural means for intellect to express itself. *Malchut* of *Ima* is the expression of intellect. Nonetheless, something of the inspiration of *Abba* also is present in thought, for as we have explained previous, the initial purity of insight of *chochmah* must be present together with *binah* to keep the flow of thought from going astray.

והנה ראש לאה מכוון אחורי הדעת דועיר אשר בתוכו יש יסוד דאבא, עם אורות חו"ג שבתוכו. והיסוד עצמו מלוּבש תוך היסוד דאימא אשר גם בתוכו יש חו"ג אחרות. והיסוד עצמו דאימא, מלוּבש תוך חלל אמצעי של גלגלת דו"א, הנקרא דעת.

Now, Leah's head is situated behind the *da'at* of *Z'eir Anpin*, in which is vested the *yesod* of *Abba*, in which in turn is vested the lights of *chesed* and *gevurah* of *Abba*, as we have just stated. The *yesod* of *Abba* itself is vested in the *yesod* of *Ima*, in which is vested as well other lights of *chesed* and *gevurah*. The *yesod* of *Ima* is vested in the middle cavity of the skull of *Z'eir Anpin*, which is the seat of its *da'at*.

Leah, being thought, is situated opposite the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin*. As we have seen, the lights (mentalities, energies, consciousness) of *Abba* and *Ima* are concealed as they descend through the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin*, becoming revealed only from *Z'eir Anpin's tiferet* on down.

ונמצא, כי כשיוצאים אורות דאימא אל לאה, צריכים לבקוע שתי מחיצות, שהם כלי היסוד דאימא, וכלי הראש דועיר, ואח"כ יוצאות לחוץ, ונכנסים בראש לאה, ומתפשטים בכל שיעור קומתה, וד העקבים שלה, המתלבשים תוך כתר דרחל כנזכר:

Thus, when the lights of *Ima* shine into Leah, they have to break through two barriers: the vessel of *yesod* of *Ima* and the vessel, i.e., the skull, of the head of *Z'eir Anpin*. Only then can they issue outward and enter the head of Leah, then spreading through her entire length, reaching her heels, and becoming vested in the *keter* of Rachel, as we have described.

והנה נתבאר שם בדרוש התרפים, כי להיות כאן מקום העקביים של לאה, אשר היא עצמה דין גמור, להיותה מן אורות מועטים, היוצאים מן מקום האורות המכוסים, ואינם יוצאים אלא ע"י בקיעה כנזכר, ובפרט בחי העקבים שבה, שהם דינים קשים,

Now, it is explained in our comments on the passage regarding the *terafim* that here, i.e., the *keter* of Rachel, is the position of the heels of Leah, which herself is complete judgment—since she derives from diminished lights that issue from the location of the concealed lights, which issue only by breaking through the barriers, as we said. Her nature of complete judgment is particularly apparent in her heels, which express harsh judgment.

Leah is principally judgment, since she derives from the lights of *Abba* and *Ima* that are hidden within the upper half of *Z'eir Anpin* (as opposed to how they become revealed when they descend to

the lower half of *Z'eir Anpin*, as we said). Since these lights are concealed, Leah does not benefit from the broad perspective of uncontextualized intellect. Thought is a process of weeding out invasive thoughts and focusing on the idea on which the individual wishes to think about. Thought is thus a phenomenon of judgment, of rejecting competing thoughts.

The heels express harsh judgment because they are hard skin, designed to be impervious to attacks from thorns and rough ground.

ולכן הקליפות מתאחזות שם, ואותם האורות הנזכר של אימא, שנתפשטו עד העקבים של לאה, שהם בוקעים ובולקים כתר ראש רחל, ונכנסים בתוכה כנוז, יוצא הארתם לחוץ, ונאחזים בהם החיצונים:

For this reason, the forces of evil can derive sustenance from this level, and a radiance of the said lights of *Ima* that spread down to Leah's heels, which break through into the *keter* of Rachel's head and enter into it, as we said, issue outside, and the forces of evil latch on to it.

Even though the purpose of judgmentality is to preserve the integrity of holiness, its downside is that when it gets wrapped up in its own momentum it begins to focus on the negative aspects of *all* parts of reality, turning on the good it intended originally to protect. This is the perfect opportunity for evil to gain a foothold. As we all unfortunately know, well-intended but unchecked anger and judgmentality is the ruin of many otherwise salvageable situations.

ונמצא, כי בחי האורות דאימא, שהם חלק המגיע אל שתי העקבים עצמם דלאה, הבולקים ונכנסים תוך ראש רחל, מה שיוצא מהם לחוץ אל החיצונים, הוא נקרא בלק. לשתי סיבות, אחת כפי הבנת הלשון, כי העקבים ההם בולעים ובוקעים ראש רחל, ונכנסים בתוכו, ואינם יוצאים אלא ע"י בליקה הנזכר, וזהו בלק:

The part of the lights of *Ima* that reaches Leah's two heels and breaks through and enters Rachel's head and shines outward to the force of evil, is called *Balak*. This is so for two reasons: first, the meaning of the word *Balak* is "to break through"¹⁶ and thus refers to how these heels break through Rachel's head and enter it. Since they shine outward through breaking through, they are called *Balak*.

ועוד, כי הנה יתרו אביו של בלק כנז"ל, הנה הוא בחי היסוד עצמו דאימא, שהוא ג"כ בחי קין, כמבואר אצלינו במצות ולא ירבה לו נשים, כי היסוד דאימא נקרא אהייה, וכולל די אהייה הנודעים, שהם, בי דיודיין, ואחד דאלפין, ואחד דההיין. וכלם בגי יתרון,

Second, Jethro was the ancestor of Balak, as we said, and he embodied the *yesod* of *Ima*, which was also embodied in Cain, as we have explained—in our comments on the commandment that the king should not have many wives. *Yesod* of *Ima* is indicated by the Name *Ekyeh*, specifically the four known spellings out of *Ekyeh*, i.e., two using the letter *yud*, one using the letter *alef*, and one using the letter *hei*. The combined numerical value of all of them is the same as that of Jethro plus the three *kolels* for the three spellings-out.

The numerical value of the two Names *Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *yud* is 322; that of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *hei* is 151; that of the Name *Ekyeh* spelled with the letter *alef* is 146. $322 + 151 + 146 = 619$.

Jethro: *Yitro*: *yud-tav-reish-vav* = $10 + 400 + 200 + 6 = 616$.

16. See Isaiah 24:1.

ובלק הוא בנו נמשך ממנו, כנזכר והוא מאימא, אשר ממלכות שבה נעשת לאה, עד העקבים שלה.

Balak is Jethro's descendant, who is derived from him, as we said, and he is derived from Ima, from whose *malchut* Leah is constructed, all the way to her heels.

והנה האורות היוצאות מאורות דאימא שבז"א אל לאה, הם ד' מוחין, ע"ב, ס"ג, מ"ה, ב"ן ושרשם נשארם בז"א, והמלרים לבד יוצאים אל לאה, כנודע כי הנקבה רמוזה במלוי השם. והנה ד' מלויים הנז, עם ד' כוללים שלהם, הם בגימטריא בל"ק,

The lights that issue from the lights of *Ima* (that are present in *Z'eir Anpin*) into Leah are the four mentalities expressed through the four spellings out of the Name *Havayah* whose numerical values are 72, 63, 45, and 52. Their roots, i.e., the four letters of the Name *Havayah* itself, remain in *Z'eir Anpin*, while the letters used to spell them out shine outward to Leah. As is known, the feminine is alluded to in the letters used to spell out the Name. The numerical value of the four sets of letters used to spell out the Name these four ways, together with the four *kollels* is the same as that of *Balak*.

The numerical value of the letters used to spell out the 72-Name is 46; that of the letters used to spell out the 63-Name is 37; that of the letters used to spell out the 45-Name is 19; that of the letters used to spell out the 52-Name is 26. $46 + 37 + 19 + 26 = 128$.

Balak: *beit-lamed-kuf* = $2 + 30 + 100 = 132$.

כי בהם היה נאחו, בבחי תרין עקבים דלאה הבולקים ראש רחל. ובפסוק אשר מחזה שדי יחזה, יתבאר ענין זה ביותר לקמן:

This indicates that **Balak was rooted in these four spellings-out, i.e., in the two heels of Leah that break through Rachel's head. We explain this idea more in our discussion of the verse "...who envisions the vision of the Almighty" further on.**

ואמנם ענין בלעם, עיקרו מאורות דעת דאבא כנז"ל, וזה ענינו,

As for Balaam, he derives principally from the lights of *da'at* of *Abba*, as we said. The explanation of this is as follows.

כי הנה אורות דאבא בצאתם לחוץ אל לאה, צריכים לבקוע ג' מחיצות, והם, יסוד דאבא, ויסוד דאימא, וראשו של זעיר, ואז מתגלים ונכנסים בראש לאה. וגם הם מתפשטים בכולה עד העקבים שלה, וגם הם בוקעים ויוצאים, וניתנים בכתר של רחל עצמה:

When the lights of *Abba* shine outside, to Leah, they have to break through three barriers: *yesod* of *Abba*, *yesod* of *Ima*, and *Z'eir Anpin's* head. Only then can they be revealed outside and enter Leah's head. They subsequently spread throughout her entire stature, all the way to her heels. These heels then break through and enter Rachel's *keter*.

והנה הכתר של רחל, הוא הנקרא מקום הבליעה, כי הוא מלביש את שתי העקבים של לאה, ובולעם בתוכו.

Now, Rachel's *keter* is in this context called the place where these lights are

absorbed, for it clothes Leah's two heels and absorbs their light within it.

והנה כל קומת רחל, היא נעשת מבחי' אורות מגולים, שמן החזה ולמטה, ולכן הוא יותר רחמים מן לאה. אבל במקום הזה הנזכר, נחשך האור שלה, לפי שיש שם כמה מחיצות של כלים, כי האור היוצא מיסוד דאימא, הנשלם בחזה ונגלה שם, ובוקע כלי הת"ת דזעיר מאחוריו, ויוצא לחוץ להאיר ברחל, צריך שבתחלה יבקע מחיצת כלי הראש של רחל מצד אחוריים, הדבוק עם הגוף דזעיר כנודע. ואח"כ צריך שיבקע עוד שתי מחיצות, של כל עקב ועקב משני עקבי לאה, אשר בתוך ראשה כנזכר, וכל עקב יש בו שתי מחיצות, אחור ופנים שבו. ואח"כ מחיצת הכלי ראש רחל מצד הפנים, ואז יוצאים האורות ההם אל כתר דרחל, אשר מצד הפנים שלה, ובהכרח הוא שמתמעט ונחלש כח האורות ההם למאוד, ולכן נאחזים בהם החיצונים.

Rachel's entire stature is constructed out of revealed lights, i.e., those lights that shine from *Z'eir Anpin's* chest downward. Rachel therefore exhibits more mercy than does Leah. But in this location i.e., her *keter*, her light is dimmed because it must shine through a number of barriers, i.e., vessels. For the light that issues from *yesod* of *Ima*—which terminates at the chest of *Z'eir Anpin*, is revealed there, breaks through the back of the vessel of *tiferet* of *Z'eir Anpin*, and shines outward toward Rachel—must first traverse the barrier of the back of the vessel of Rachel's head, which right next to the body of *Z'eir Anpin*, as is known. It must then traverse two more barriers, i.e., that of each of Leah's heels, which are there inside Rachel's head, as we said. Each heel has two barriers: its back and front. It must then traverse the front of the vessel of Rachel's head. Only then do these lights reach Rachel's *keter*, which is situated in her front. It is obvious, thus, that these lights must be considerably weakened by the time they reach Rachel's *keter*, and therefore the powers of evil can latch on to them.

ובפרט עם טעם אחר שנתבאר אצלינו בענין עץ הדעת, כי במקום שאורות דאימא נגלים מחוץ לנרתקם, שם נאחזים החיצונים.

This is especially true when we consider another reason—that we have explained in our discussion of the tree of knowledge—i.e., that wherever the lights of *Ima* are revealed outside their sheath the powers of evil can latch on.

ולכן אותה ההארה המגיע אל הכתר עצמו דרחל, אשר בתוכו מובלעים ב' עקבים דלאה, יצא ממנה הארה לחוץ אל החיצונים, והוא מקום אחיזת בלעם, ע"ש הכתר דרחל הבולע עקבי לאה.

Therefore, from the radiance that reaches Rachel's *keter*—in which are absorbed the Leah's two heels—a further radiance shined outward to the powers of evil. This is the location of Balaam, who is so named because Rachel's *keter* absorbs (*boleia*) Leah's heels.

ואמנם עיקרו של בלעם, הוא מאורות דאבא שנכנסו בלאה, ונתפשטו עד כתר דרחל כנזכר.

Nonetheless, Balaam's chief origin is the lights of *Abba* that enter Leah and extend to Rachel's *keter*, as we said.

הרי כי בלק הוא מאורות דאימא שבעקבי לאה, ובלעם הוא מאורות דאבא שבכתר דרחל:

We thus see that Balak is from the lights of *Ima* in Leah's heels, while Balaam is

from the lights of *Abba* in Rachel's *keter*.

ונלעײד חיים, כי בזה יובן היות בלק כלול מקין והבל, וכן בלעם. כי הרי בשני העקבים דלאה, יש אור או״א. וכן בראש רחל. אלא שעיקר עקבים דלאה, מאורות דאימא. ועיקר כתר דרחל, מאורות דאבא, כנלעײד:

It appears to me, Chaim Vital, that this is how we understand that Balak and Balaam comprise elements of both Cain and Abel. For there is light from *Abba* and *Ima* in both of Leah's heels and in Rachel's head. It is just that Leah's heels derive mainly from the lights of *Ima* while Rachel's *keter* derives mainly from the lights of *Abba*. So it appears to me.

ובזה תבין, איך בלק היה קוסם, ובלעם הוא נחש, כנזכר בזוהר והטעם הוא, כי הנחש אין כחו אלא בפיו, וכן בלעם שעיקרו מן הבל כנז״ל, והוא הבל הרע, היוצא מן הפה.

You can now understand why Balak was a magician while Balaam was a sorcerer, as is stated in the *Zohar*. This is because a sorcerer's power is just in his mouth, and so Balaam was mainly from Abel, as we said, and he was the evil breath that issues from the mouth.

Abel (*Hevel*) in Hebrew means "breath."

אבל בלק עיקרו מן קין, שהוא מאימא, שהוא בחי מעשה, כמו שידעת בענין ל״ב אלהיים דבראשית, דאבא אומר ואימא עושה.

But Balak was mainly from Cain, who was derived from *Ima*, which is expressed through action, as you know from our discussion of the 32 times the Name *Elokim* is mentioned in the account of creation. There we explained that *Abba* speaks and *Ima* acts.

The Name *Elokim* is associated with *binah*, and it is the only Name of G-d used in the account of creation, which chronicles G-d's *action* as the Creator of the universe. In this account, G-d is described as both creating through speech ("G-d said 'Let there be...' and there was...") and action ("And G-d made...").

והקסם הוא ביד, וכמשיה וקסמים בידם, כי בלק היה יותר בקי בהם מבלעם:

Magic is performed with the hand, as it is written, "...with magic tokens in their hand...", for Balak was more expert at these than was Balaam.

Balak's emissaries came to Balaam with magic instruments, so that he not be able to refuse on account of not having the right tools.

ונלעײד חיים ששמעתי ממורי ז״ל, כי בלעײם בגימטריא קמ״ב, כמנין הוי״ה ואהי״ה, הוי״ה ואדנ״י, עם ד׳ כוללים שלהם. והוא ע״ש שהוא לוקח הארות ז״א, הנקרא הוי״ה, היוצאות ללאה, הנקרא אהי״ה. והארותיו של ז״א הנזכר, שהם שתי ההוי״ת, היוצאות אל רחל, הנקראת אדנ״י:

It appears to me, Chaim Vital, that I head from my master, of blessed memory, that the numerical value of Balaam is 142, which is the numerical value of the

Names *Havayah* and *Ekyeh* and the Names *Havayah* and *Adni*, together with their four *kolels*. The significance of this is that Balaam takes the radiance from *Z'eir Anpin*—which is referred to by the Name *Havayah*—that shines to Leah—which is referred to by the Name *Ekyeh*—and the said radiances from *Z'eir Anpin*—which are indicated by two Names *Havayah*—that shine to Rachel, who is referred to by the Name *Adni*.

[This is the end of Rabbi Chaim Vital's comment.]

Based on this exposition, the Arizal explains the sequence of the events of the story.

*Moab became terrified of the people, for they were numerous, and Moab became disgusted because of the Israelites.*¹⁷

שער הפסוקים, פרשת בלק
הענין הוא,

Sha'ar HaPesukim, parashat Balak

The mystical explanation of this is as follows:

כי ב' בחיי היו בישראל, אחד, הם ישראל עצמם, אשר בדור ההוא, כי שרשם הוא ניצוצות משה, הבא מן הבל, כמבואר אצלינו בענין דור המדבר, בפסוק ויקם מלך חדש על מצרים.

There were two types of people that made up Israel in that generation. The first was the Jews themselves who lived in that generation, the source of whose souls were sparks of Moses' soul, who in turn derived from Abel. (This is explained in our exposition on the generation of the desert, on the verse, "And a new king arose over Egypt.")

הבחי' הבל, הם הערב רב, הנקראים עם סתם, והם מן הרע אשר בקין כנוז"ל.

The second type of people was the mixed multitude, who are referred to in Scripture simply as "the people," without any qualifier.¹⁸ They derived from the evil aspect of Cain, as explained above.

וכנגדם אמר, ויגר מואב מפני העם מאד כי רב הוא, שהם הערב רב, הנקראים רב.

It is with reference to *them* that it is written, "And Moab became terrified of the people, for they were numerous." This refers to the mixed multitude, who are described as "numerous."

The literal meaning of the words translated as "mixed multitude" (*erev rav*) is "a numerous mixture." The phrase "the people, for they were numerous," therefore quite clearly refers to the mixed multitude.

ואמר ויקץ מפני בני ישראל עצמם שהם מן הבל.

The narrative then goes on to say that "Moab became disgusted because of *the*

17. Numbers 22:3.

18. See Rashi on Exodus 32:7; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 16, pp. 408 ff.

Israelites,” referring to the Jews themselves, who were derived from Abel.

The literal meaning of the words translated as “the Israelites” (*benei Yisrael*) is “the children [or ‘descendants’] of Israel,” i.e., of Jacob; this refers only to the direct descendants of Jacob as opposed to Moses’ converts.

*Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this assembly will eat up everything around us, as the ox eats up the greens of the field.”*¹⁹

ספר הלכותים, פרשת בלק		לקוטי תורה, פרשת בלק
דע, הנה שור מועד, זה כח קליפת עשו. והוא שור שחור הנזכר בדרו"ל,		כי הנה שור מועד, זה מכח הקליפות עשו, והוא שור שחור הנזכר בדרו"ל

Likutei Torah and Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Balak

An ox that has been established legally as a goring ox derives from the evil of Esau, who is the “black ox” mentioned in the sages’ teachings.²⁰

Once an ox gores other animals three times unprovoked, it is legally classified as a “goring ox” (*shor mu’ad*) and its owner becomes liable for full damages it causes instead of just half.²¹

In discussing under what dangerous circumstances a person may interrupt his prayers in order to flee for safety, the sages said that “If an ox’s head is in a [fodder] basket, go up to a roof and kick the ladder away from underneath you,” i.e., get as far away as possible, for the ox will not take kindly to anyone it perceives as interrupting it from its meal. “Samuel said: ‘This applies only to a black ox in the month of Nisan, because then the Satan is dancing between his horns.’” Rashi says on this: “Because the days of autumn have passed, when the land is dry, and the ox now sees it full of greenery, it gets high-spirited and the evil inclination enters it.” No longer having to worry about food, the ox becomes mischievous, so it is better to stay away from it.

In any case, we see here that the image of a “black ox” is a particularly threatening type of evil, associated with the evil inclination, which in turn is often personified as Esau.

והוא לוחך את יר"ק [קר"י] השדה מן הנשמות היוצאים		והוא לוחך את יר"ק הנשמה, הן הנשמות היוצאות מזווג
מזיווג עליון מהשדה אשר ברכו ה' לכן אמר השדה, בה' הידוע,		עליון, מהשדה אשר ברכו ה'. ולכן אמר השדה, בה' הידועה.

It “eats up the greens of the field.” This refers to the souls that issue from the supernal coupling, i.e., from the “field that G-d blessed.”²² This is why they said “the field,” with the definite article.

When Jacob appeared before Isaac disguised as Esau, in order to receive his blessings, Isaac said, “Behold, my son’s fragrance is like that of the field that G-d blessed.” Rashi says this means that Isaac recognized on Jacob’s garments the fragrance of the Garden of Eden (which he remembered from when he was temporarily there when he was almost slaughtered). Thus, “the field that G-d blessed” is the Garden of Eden, or in Kabbalistic terms, the *sefirah* of *malchut*. In this imagery, holy souls are the “grass” that grows in the “holy field.” The union of *Z’eir Anpin* and *Nukva*, which is often allegorized as the fertilization of the earth by the rain of heaven, produces the grass of the earth, the souls that issue from this union.

19. Numbers 22:4.

20. *Berachot* 33a.

21. Exodus 21:35-36.

22. Genesis 27:27.

גם רמזו בהשדה גימ'י שד"י רומזו לצדיק יסוד דאקרי | וגם רמזו השדה גמטריא שד"י, רמזו לצדיק יסוד, נשמת כל חי דמתמן פרחין כל נשמתין. | דאקרי נשמת כל חי, דמתמן פרחי כל נשמתין.

This is also alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word for “the field” (*hasadeh*, 314) is the same as that of the Name *Shakai*, alluding to the supernal righteous one, who is also called “the soul of all life,” from which all souls take flight.

Hasadeh: *hei-sin-dalet-hei* = 5 + 300 + 4 + 5 = 314.

Shakai: *shin-dalet-yud* = 300 + 4 + 10 = 314.

The Name *Shakai* is associated with the *sefirah* of *yesod*, which in turn is associated with sexuality, the area of life that serves as the basic test of righteousness.

Thus, the Moabites complained to the Midianites that the Jews threatened to wipe them out, just as evil threatens to annihilate the holy souls produced by the holy union of *Z'eir Anpin* and *Nukva*. They saw themselves as the good ones and the Jews as the embodiment of evil.

Balak sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, to Petor, which is by the river of the land of his people, to call for him, saying, “...please come and curse this people for me.”²³

שער הפסוקים, פרשת בלק
הנה בלעם, כחו בנחש, כי הוא מן הבל המקיף, ואין כחו אלא בפיו.

Sha'ar HaPesukim, parashat Balak

Balaam's power was sorcery, for he derived from the enveloping breath, and therefore his power was solely in his mouth.

As explained previously, Balaam derived from Abel, whose Hebrew name (*Hevel*) means “breath.”

אבל בלק מן קין, בחי המעשה,

But Balak derived from Cain, who personified action.

As explained previously, Cain is derived from *Ima*, which is expressed in action, as opposed to *Abba*, which is expressed in thought.

שהוא הקסם, כי הוא מן גבורות דרועין וידיים ואצבעות, ולכן כתיב וקסמים בידם.

He was therefore a magician, for he derived from the states of *gevurah* in the arms, the hands, and the fingers, and that is why it is written “with magic tokens in their hands.”²⁴

As mentioned previously, Balak's emissaries came to Balaam with magic instruments, so that he not be able to refuse on account of not having the right tools. The implication of the verse's phraseology is that magic is something done with the hands, as opposed to sorcery, which is more a matter of incantations and charms, uttered with the mouth.

Inasmuch as he derived ultimately from *Ima*, Balak was associated with the axis of *gevurah*. Both *chesed* and *gevurah* are associated anatomically with the arms, hands, and fingers—*chesed* with the

23. Numbers 22:5.

24. Ibid. 22:7.

right and *gevurah* with the left.

ובלק היה רוצה, שבלעם שהוא בחינת ההבל, שהוא אור מקיף, שנקרא אהייה, שיקללם מבחי' שרשו הנאחו שם. ולכן נרמזו ב"פ שם אהייה הנזכר האחד, ברית יהשור יאת ירק דהשדה, שהוא האיייה. והשני, בסית ולכיה נ"א קבייה ל"י, שהוא האהי"י. ושניהם בהפוך צרופי שם אהייה, המשתנה ל"יב צירופים כנודע.

Balak wanted Balaam—who personified breath, which is the encompassing light, signified by the Name *Ekyeh*—to curse them from his source in which he was rooted. Therefore the Name *Ekyeh* is alluded to twice in this passage: the first as the initials of the words for “the ox the greens of the field,” and the second as the final letters of the words for “please come and curse for me.”²⁵ Both of these letter-sequences are permutations of the Name *Ekyeh*, which has twelve permutations, as is known.

“The ox the greens of the field”: *hashor et yerek hasadeh*; the initial letters of these words are *hei-alef-yud-hei*. “Please come and curse for me”: *lechah na arah li*; the final letters of these words are *hei-alef-hey-yud*.

Although the Name *Ekyeh* is composed of four letters, and should therefore have 24 permutations ($4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 24$), two of its letters are the same (the two *hei*'s), and there are therefore only 12 unique permutations.

ובלעם היה רוצה לקללם מבחי' בלק, הנאחו באור הפנימי, והוא שם הוי"ה. ולכן נרמז בדברי בלעם, ג' צרופי שם הוי"ה, וכלם בהפוך,

Balaam, on the other hand, wanted to curse them from the spiritual source of Balak, who was rooted in the inner light, signified by the Name *Havayah*. Therefore three permutations of the Name *Havayah* are alluded to in the words of Balaam, all in reverse order:

האחד, בסית ליניו פיה הליליה והשיבותי, שהוא וההי"י.

The first is the final letters of the words for “Lodge here for the night, and I will give you an answer...”²⁶

The Hebrew for these words is *linu poh halailah vehashivoti*, the final letters of which are *vav-hey-hey-yud*.

הב', בסית לכיה קבייה ל"י אותיו שהוא ההי"ו.

The second is the final letters of the words for “Come and curse them for me.”²⁷

The Hebrew for these words is *lechah kavah li oto*, the final letters of which are *hei-hey-yud-vav*.

השלישי, בסית טוביה איו רעיה מלביי, שהם הוהי"י.

The third is the is the final letters of the words for “to do either good or evil on my own.”²⁸

25. Ibid.22:6.

26. Ibid. 22:8.

27. Ibid. 22:11.

28. Ibid. 24:13.

The Hebrew for these words is *to'vah o' ra'ah milibi*, the final letters of which are *hei-vav-hei-yud*.

והענין הוא, במה שהודעתוך בדרושי שמות הספירה איך בעולם הבריאה, שם הם בחי' אהי"ה והוי"ה כדרך צרופיהם, ולהיות כי שליטת החיצונים מתחיל מן הבריאה ולמטה כנודע, לכן משם היה רוצה לקללם.

The explanation of this accords with what I have told you in connection with how the *sefirot* are called in the world of *Beriah*. There, the *sefirot* are known by the permutations of the Names *Ekyeh* and *Havayah*. And since it is from the world of *Beriah* on down that the powers of evil begin to have dominion, Balaam therefore wanted to curse them from there.

As explained in the previous installment, Balak derives from the lights of *Ima* in Leah's heels, while Balaam derives from the lights of *Abba* in Rachel's *keter*. Thus, Balak is an inner light and Balaam is an encompassing light. The encompassing light is higher and more powerful, but the inner light permeates more thoroughly. Each party therefore wanted to curse the Jews with the other's qualities.