

Balak

June 25-26, 2021

16 Tamuz, 5781

This week's parsha is Balak, the parsha where the king Balak calls Bila'am a non-Jewish "prophet" to curse the Jews, which ends up turning into a significant blessing. Moav (and Amon) are offspring of Lot who was saved by Avraham's beseeching Hashem to save S'dom.

If Lot was fleeing from S'dom, and his daughters used wine to seduce him, and have relations, one may ask why Lot would have wine at all? He wasn't even able to take his material wealth with him (stated in Rashi earlier). There is a medrish that says the wine was provided as a miracle, to ensure the birth of Amon and Moav- who would later be the legacy of Ruth the fore parent of David Hamelech and the Davidic dynasty that leads to Moshiach.

The younger sister was more modest than her older sister (see Bereishis 19:32-34 Rashi) – which could be why she was the fore mother of Ruth who exhibited similar modest characteristics.

Moav is the name of the child born to the older daughter of Lot, who wasn't modest- the name explicitly states that she had relations with her father, whereas the younger daughter named her child in a more modest fashion.

Rashi explains that Moav Jews are allowed to stir up trouble (Rashi Bereishis 19:38).

Fast forward to the Jews leaving Egypt, Moav – the nation Balak ruled was threatened by the Jews. Rashi explains in Balak some of the history, and the treaties with Midyan. Midyan explained to Balak, that the Jews power is with their mouth according to Rashi. Balak was not even a true Moavite, he was appointed to rule Moav after Sihon died, he was a midianite it seems based on Rashi. (Moav and Midian were

sworn enemies, yet united against their common enemy, the Jews).

Rashi explains that Bilaam was able to have prophetic power, because Hashem gave spiritual Navi like insight to non-Jews as well, so that the non-Jews cannot claim they were never given a chance to repent, so Hashem gave the nations prophets who abused the power to lead people to lude sexually immoral behavior. There is a connection therefore between Moav, and Bilaam and the act that brought about Moav- incest – which Lot was blamed for as Rashi explains in Bereishis quoting a gemara that R'Levi said, (Bereishis 19:33) the person who obsesses over forbidden relations will in the end "feed his flesh" i.e. commit the sin.

All this needed to happen, (much like the sink hole for Korach) as we know the mouth of the donkey was created in the final hours of creation before Shabbos. Rashi in Balak draws comparison to Bilaam's journey and Avraham's. The parallels are in their opposites. A lesson can be drawn on a journey for love versus hate, or a journey in the name of Hashem (which Bilaam's theoretically was, in that he knew he needed permission from Hashem, which he didn't communicate to Balak, Bilaam basically knew it seems, from Rashi, that he wouldn't be able to embark on a mission to curse the Jews.

The blessing and prophecy of Bilaam is full of references to Yakov and the praises of the Jews. Which are all countering the activities of the nations who wished to curse the Jews. The pinnacle of the blessing was the commentary on Israel's modesty.

There is a lot more to write about the connection between this parsha and Bereishis.

Good Shabbos.