



**THE GREAT
ATTEMPT
TO MALIGN
THE JEWISH
PEOPLE**

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Balak

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Fearful From the Conventional & Spiritual

[CLICK TO VIEW!](#)



Leveraging Megalomania to Intensify the Curse

[CLICK TO VIEW!](#)



Hourly Video: Parshas Balak

[CLICK TO VIEW!](#)

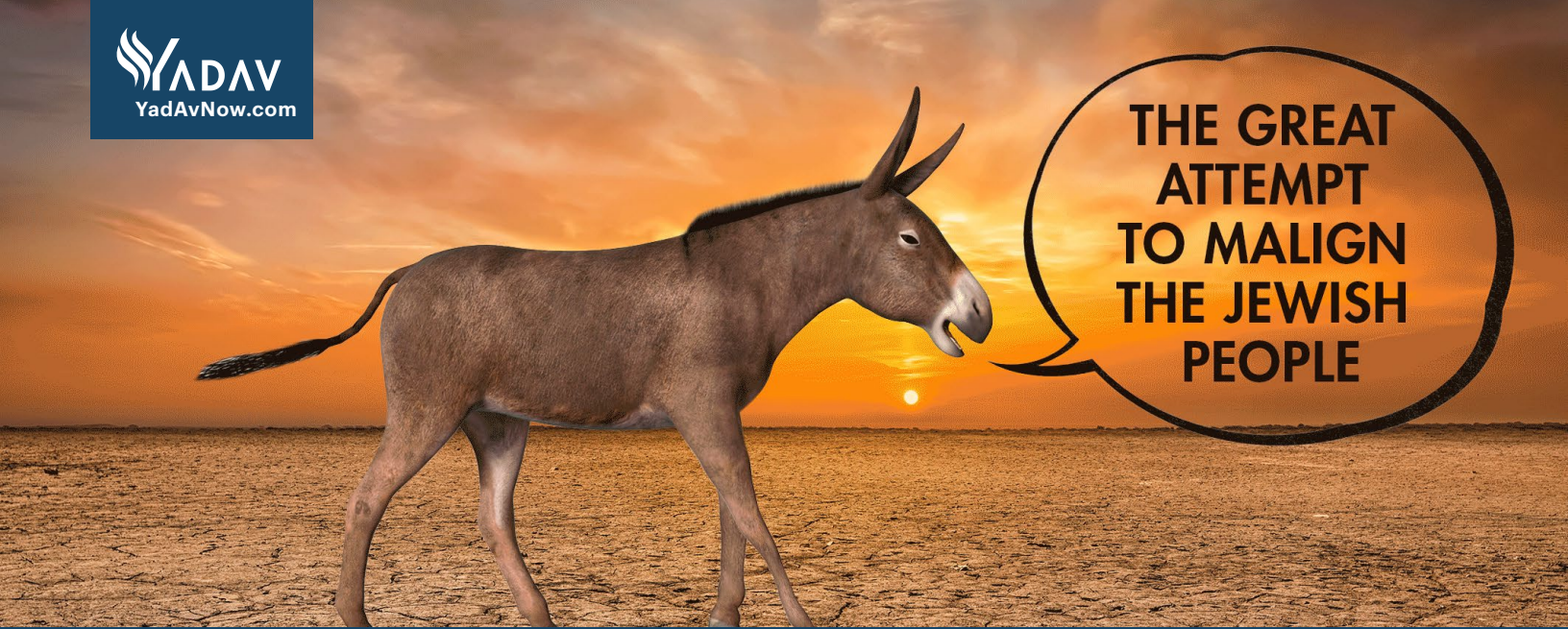


Alacrity Inspired to Action when Subsumed by Emotion

[CLICK TO VIEW!](#)



New Video Series!
**PIRKEI
AVOS**



**THE GREAT
ATTEMPT
TO MALIGN
THE JEWISH
PEOPLE**

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Balak

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Balance/Counterbalance: The Power Of Speech vs. the Sword

CLICK TO VIEW!



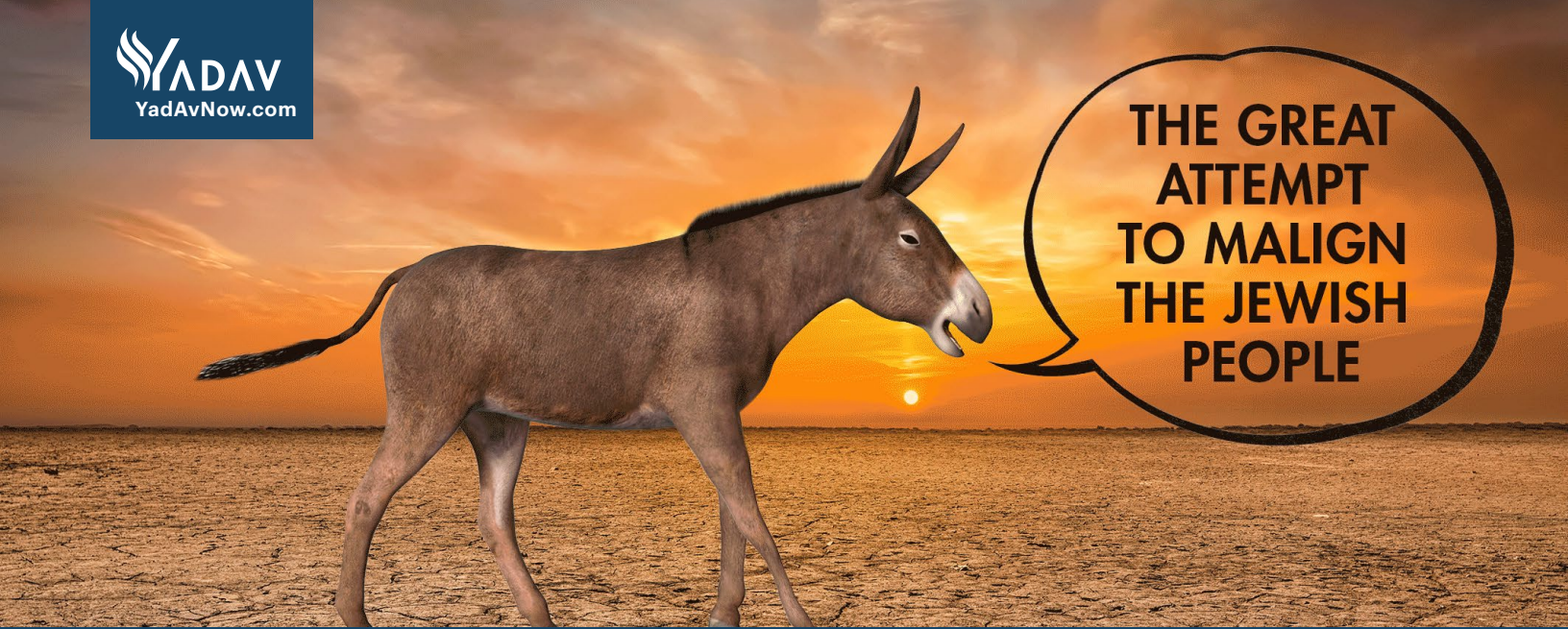
1. The Jewish People wanted passage thru Edomite territory.
2. Moshe: We were enslaved by the Egyptians & redeemed us when we called out to G-d.
3. Rashi: G-d responded due to the blessing we received from our Patriarch Yitzchok and the voice is the voice of Yaakov.
4. Edom's response to Moshe was: We shall come out with the sword against you.
5. Rashi: We also have a blessing from our Patriarch Yitzchok "And you shall live by the sword."
6. Bilaam wanted to curse the Jewish People but G-d didn't allow him.
7. Bilaam was killed by the sword.
8. Rashi: He exchanged his craft for ours so we exchanged ours for his.
9. His craft is "by the sword you shall live"; ours is power of speech – "the voice is of Yaakov."
10. "By the sword you shall live" is a classification, not a blessing.
11. Edom came out against the Jews with a strong hand.
12. Rashi: "Strong Hand" alludes to the blessing: The hands are the hands of Esav.
13. Midrash: When the voice is the voice of Yaakov the hands are not the hands of Esav.
14. Esav is the counterbalance to the Jewish People.

When The Megalomaniac Subverts His Will

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Bilaam rises early to hitch his donkey.
2. G-d responds: Don't think your action is unique—Avraham, their forefather, preceded you in this area.
3. Avraham rose early to hitch his donkey to the Akeida.
4. He rose to curse the Jews, Avraham to do the will of G-d to sacrifice his son.
5. Chazal: Hate and Love disrupt protocol.
6. Why did G-d respond to Bilaam, which was contrary to G-d's will?
7. Bilaam personified evil; he wanted to bring intense prosecution upon the Jews.
8. Though Bilaam's alacrity and zeal were contrary to G-d's will, he demonstrated a level of negation never displayed before in a positive vein.
9. Avraham their forefather displayed this characteristic in a more difficult setting.
10. He rose early to sacrifice his son.



**THE GREAT
ATTEMPT
TO MALIGN
THE JEWISH
PEOPLE**

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Balak

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The Exponential Value of the Seemingly Inconsequential

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Bilaam was commissioned by Balak to curse the Jews.
2. He suggested Balak build 7 altars to sacrifice a bull and ram on each of them.
3. Bilaam's diatribe: He built 7 altars himself, which equaled number of altars of Patriarchs combined.
4. Guide For The Perplexed: The objective of sacrifices is an outlet for one to express his need to serve a Higher Being- G-d.
5. Without this outlet of expression one would serve a deity.
6. Ramban vehemently disagrees & rejects Rambam.
7. Sacrifices activate-coalesce spiritual forces.
8. Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk: Ramban misunderstood Rambam.
9. Rambam concurs regarding sacrifices brought in the Mishkan and Temple.
10. These were brought in locations that had the special effect.
11. Rambam refers to sacrifice one brings on his private altar when this was permitted.
12. Midrash: The Patriarchs are the location for the Divine Presence.
13. The altar of the Patriarchs was the equivalent of the altar of the Temple.
14. This was not the case with Bilaam.

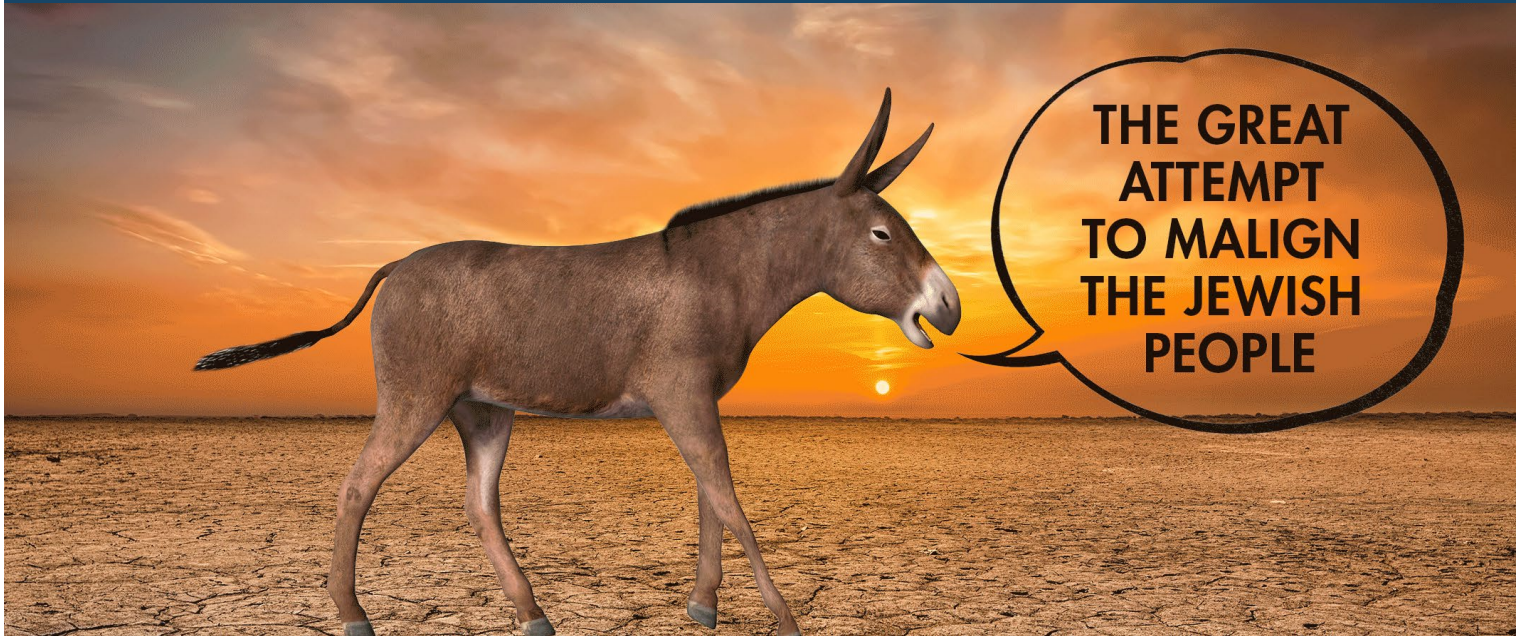
All-Consuming Emotion Trumps All

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. Bilaam hitched his own donkey for travel to curse the Jews.
2. Why would a man of Bilaam's renown, a pompous, self centered, megalomaniac, hitch his own donkey?
3. Avraham at 137 was told by G-d to bring his beloved son as a burnt offering.
4. He rose early in the morning & hitched his own donkey.
5. A man of Avraham's age, wealth, and stature prepared his own donkey?
6. Midrash: Intense love disrupts protocol.
7. When one is consumed with intense love or hate, all that exists is negated; all that matters is the objective of the love or hate.
8. One is consumed and subsumed by the objective.
9. To love is greater than to revere.
10. If one is able to achieve an advanced level of love, one will succeed to do the will of G-d because one's personal interests are negated due to the love.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Balak



The Moment Could Make a Difference

Rashi citing the *Midrash* at the beginning of *Balak*: “Why did G-d allow His Divine Presence to come upon a non-Jew (*Bilaam*) who was evil?” In order to be qualified as a prophet, one must possess special spiritual qualities and characteristics. Not only was *Bilaam* deficient in every quality, he was evil and the antithesis of all that is holy.

Midrash: “It is so that when the Day of Judgment will come upon the nations of the world for all the evil that they had perpetrated they will not be able to respond to G-d that they chose an evil path because they were not given a prophet as the Jewish people were given. Thus, G-d offered them *Bilaam* as their prophet.” If G-d would have offered them a prophet such as *Moshe*, then they would have had a chance to perceive truth and holiness. However, He presented them with *Bilaam*, who was a personification of evil whose behavior was depraved and perverted. He was a man who despised

and detested spirituality to the extreme. Although he was a prophet, he believed that he could deceive G-d. Why was *Bilaam*, a man who was evil, a valid response to the claim of the nations of the world?

Gemara in Tractate *Zevachim*: When G-d was giving the *Torah* at Sinai to the Jewish people, the earth quaked so violently that the nations of the world believed that the world was coming to an end. They came to *Bilaam*, their prophet, stating, “G-d is destroying the world.” *Bilaam* responded, “It is not possible that He is destroying the world, because after the Great Flood G-d entered into a covenant with existence that He would not destroy the world.” They replied, “G-d only promised not to destroy the world with water. Perhaps He is destroying it with fire.” *Bilaam* said to them, “You fools! Do you not realize that G-d is giving His strength/power to the Jewish people (which is the *Torah*). It is because of this monumental moment that the world is quaking.” To this the nations of the world responded, “G-d should bless His people with Peace.”

Despite the fact that *Bilaam* had given them an understanding of the gravity and profoundness of the moment, they turned away and returned to their idolatrous and evil ways. One would think that after experiencing such an awesome event such as the world quaking to the point of destruction that it would have impacted the nations to recognize truth. They should have embraced G-dliness and gravitate to become part of His people.

However, this was not their interest. This was the first and last opportunity that was presented to the nations of the world to decide if they were to, at a minimum, become devout Noahides, or turn away from the path of G-d and ignore what they had witnessed. They chose the latter. Without *Bilaam*, their prophet, they would have not have been able to make a choice.

It was only because *Bilaam* had given them an understanding of what was taking place at that moment, that the nations of the world were given the opportunity to make a choice. *Bilaam's* only value as a prophet was to explain to the nations at that moment what was taking place. Despite the source of the information, which was a Divine link, they chose to abandon G-d and everything that He represents. Beyond that point *Bilaam* no longer had any positive value regarding their spiritual growth.

G-d's Communication with Mankind

Midrash: "Why did G-d allow His Divine Presence to come upon a non-Jew (*Bilaam*) who was evil? It is so that when the Day of Judgment will come upon the nations of the world for all the evil that they had perpetrated they will not be able to say to G-d that they chose an evil path because they were not given a prophet as the Jewish people were given. G-d offered them *Bilaam* as their prophet."

By giving the nations of the world *Bilaam*, who was the personification of evil, to be their prophet, how will this satisfy their claim that they will ultimately make in their defense? Seemingly, the value of a prophet is to present to the nations a proper perspective in order to allow them to choose the correct path. This was not the case with *Bilaam*.

Rambam in the *Thirteen Tenets of Belief*: "I believe with absolute faith that all the words of the prophets are true." This is a fundamental of Jewish belief. If an

individual is established as a prophet, when he speaks in the Name of G-d, it must be accepted as the true words of the Omnipotent One.

Another of the Tenets states that the prophecy of *Moshe* was true and that he was the father of all prophets, both those who preceded him and those who followed him. It is necessary to believe that the words of the prophets are true because G-d had created existence with a purpose and objective. Without G-d communicating to mankind his objective, man would have no inkling of His Will.

It would be absurd to say that G-d created such a magnificent creation with a specific purpose and He left it in the hands of man to come upon His purpose without assistance. It is therefore compelling to say that G-d definitely communicated His Will to man through prophecy. One must believe that *Moshe* was the greatest of all prophets because it was through him that G-d had communicated the *Torah* to the Jewish people. If *Moshe* would not be accepted as the ultimate prophet, the *Torah* itself would no longer be immutable. It could be contradicted by others who claim to speak in the Name of G-d. The authenticity and immutability of *Torah* is based on this principle.

If G-d did not provide a prophet to the nations of the world, they could say that G-d had abandoned them and left their choices to chance. If in fact G-d would want them to live as proper Noahides there would be a line of communication to them through a prophet. Therefore, their claim at the end of time that they were not given a prophet would be justified. By giving them *Bilaam*, although he personally was evil and had no relevance to holiness or directing them along a righteous path, G-d provided him as the prophet for the nations. Thus, He revealed his interest in them. If *Bilaam* were to communicate concepts and principles that seem to be contrary to truth and goodness, they have a right to reject his teachings.

Since the destruction of the First Temple, there is no longer have prophecy. The era of prophecy came to an end with the building of the Second Temple. Nevertheless, the Jewish people were given the *Torah*, Written and Oral, which is the eternal Word of G-d that was transmitted through *Moshe*. It is the guideline and prescription for the Jewish people to live their lives until the end of time.

Every conceivable issue relating to the spiritual and physical is determined through the *Torah's* perspective. Those individuals who are classified as *Torah* sages, because of their immersion and continuous involvement in *Torah*, become spiritualized through its study. Consequently, because of their advanced spiritual orientation, they are endowed with a sense and level of clarity to process all aspects of life to conform with *Torah*. These individuals are known to possess "*Daas Torah*." Their minds and senses are imbued with *Torah* perspective.

The Lethal Eye of Bilaam

Bilaam, the prophet of the nations of the world, was commissioned by *Balak* to curse the Jewish people to bring about their destruction. G-d initially said to him, "You shall not go with them (the agents of *Balak*)! You shall not curse the people for they are blessed!"

Sforno: "G-d said to *Bilaam*, 'You shall not go with *Balak's* agents even if you do not intend to curse the Jewish people because when you will gaze upon them you will do so with an evil eye.'

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: us that when *Reb Shaishes* had gazed upon a heretic, he became a heap of bones. G-d did not want the Jewish people to be subject to his evil eye."

Gemara: After *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* had spoken critically about the Roman Empire, an individual who had heard his position shared it with another. As a result of this, it came to the attention of the Roman authorities. They ruled that *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* must be put to death. *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* and his son needed to flee and hide in a cave for thirteen years as fugitives. After this time had elapsed a heavenly voice called to *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* and told him to return. He subsequently came upon the individual who had shared his position with another. *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* said to him in amazement, "It is a wonder that you are still alive!" upon saying this he became a heap of bones.

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Kama* tells us that *Rav Kahana*, who was one of the leading *Torah* Sages in Babylon had fled to Jerusalem as a fugitive from the Persian government. He was invited by *Raish Lakish*, the disciple of *Reb Yochanon* to attend his *Torah* lecture. *Rav Kahana* had demonstrated his *Torah* greatness by refuting many of the positions of *Reb Yochanon*. *Reb*

Yochanon, who was at this time in an advanced age was unable to see because his eye lashes had grown over his eyes. He asked two of his students to lift his eye lashes to be able to gaze upon this exceptional *Torah* sage. When he looked upon him, it appeared that *Rav Kahana* was smirking at him.

When *Reb Yochanon* had seen this, he was taken aback and offended. Consequently, *Rav Kahana* died. It was later revealed that *Reb Yochanon's* understanding of what had taken place was incorrect. It was only because *Rav Kahana* had a deformity of the lip that it appeared that he was smirking.

Rabbeinu Bachya: "*Rav Kahana's* passing is not due to the evil eye given to him by *Reb Yochanon*. Because of *Reb Yochanon's* level of purity and spiritual dimension this was not possible. Rather *Rav Kahana's* passing was due to *Reb Yochanon* having a lapse in *Torah* thoughts. *Reb Yochanon* during his entire life was never distracted from *Torah*. Because of this misunderstanding *Reb Yochanon* had a lapse in *Torah* thought and thus *Rav Kahana* was to be culpable." Despite the fact that *Rav Kahana* was a victim of a misunderstanding, he was nevertheless the cause of *Reb Yochanon's* lapse of *Torah* thought. The basis of culpability is "G-d brings culpability to the hands of those who are not worthy."

Torah: There was great strife between *Sarah*, our Matriarch and *Hagar* her maidservant. When *Hagar* was given to *Avraham* as a wife, she soon conceived. After conceiving she began treating *Sarah* with a degree of disrespect. The basis for this insubordination to her mistress was that although *Sarah* had been married to *Avraham* for many years, she was not able to conceive. If in fact *Sarah* was as holy as she appeared to be, why did G-d deny her a child. It was evident to *Hagar* that her persona of holiness was only a facade.

Chazal: *Sarah* had given *Hagar* the evil eye, thus causing her to miscarry. We see that there are many instances in which the holiest of people can give an evil eye in a particular circumstance. The evil eye does not necessarily emanate from any spiritual impurity possessed by the individual. We see that even the holiest and most spiritual person when he focuses on an element that is perceived as evil, he can give that individual the evil eye.

King David in Psalms: "I despise those who hate You..." *Reb Shaishes* had gazed upon a heretic, who was evil.

Because of the disdain that *Reb Shaishes* had for the heretic, the evil eye caused him to become a heap of bones. *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai*, suffered for many years as a result of the irresponsibility and carelessness of an individual. When *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* saw him, he focused upon the injustice that he had endured as a result of his actions.

This caused him to become a heap of bones. When *Reb Yochanon* believed that *Rav Kahana* was smirking at him, it was not something that would be classified as evil. If this is so then why did *Rav Kahana* die? It was because it was the first time in *Reb Yochanon's* life that he became distracted from *Torah* thought. When *Sarah*, our Matriarch saw that *Hagar* was undermining her position as the Matriarch and discrediting her as a devout woman, it indicated a negative aspect in her being. She thus gazed upon her with a negative eye that caused her to miscarry.

Bilaam's evil eye was the most lethal. It was able to uproot and destroy a nation. It was because his essence was evil. He thus saw the Jewish people, who represent holiness and sanctity in the most negative context. G-d therefore commanded him not to accompany the agents of *Balak* to see the Jewish people, regardless of his intent to not to curse them.

Understanding the Connotation of Dust

Torah: When *Bilaam* had gone to bless the Jewish people he said, "Who has counted the dust of *Yaakov* or numbered a quarter of Israel?..." *Bilaam* did not initially intend to bless the Jewish people, but rather, his evil eye was attempting to find an entry point through which he could curse them.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: "This evil one, through his cunningness and guile was trying to find a way to bring harm upon the Jewish people. He was trying to find a point of vulnerability. He had initially mentioned the holy Patriarchs, who were the foundation of the Jewish people to impart some level of impurity upon their beginnings. When he realized that he could not, he tried to quantify and measure the Jewish people so that they should be susceptible to his evil eye. (The Jewish people are not permitted to count themselves. When a census must be taken, it is only through the halfsilver coin, a *machtiz hashekel*).

Chazal: 'Blessing only comes upon something that is not measured, weighed or counted.' Therefore, the evil one attempted to quantify them in order to undermine their existence. However, he was not able to do so. Thus he said, 'Who has counted the dust of *Yaakov*...' The *Torah* tells us that the Jewish people are compared to dust as it states regarding the blessing that G-d had given to *Avraham*, our Patriarch, 'Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth...' Although this blessing was given to *Avraham*, it did not come to fruition until *Yaakov*. This is the reason the verse states, '...the dust of *Yaakov*.'"

Just as dust cannot be counted, measured, or quantified to any degree, so too the Jewish people cannot. If in fact the blessing was given to *Avraham*, why was it not fulfilled until *Yaakov*? Although *Avraham* only had fathered *Yitzchak*, which is one individual, the *Torah* tells us that *Yaakov* went down to Egypt with seventy individuals. Relative to an infinite and unquantifiable number, *Yaakov* had no greater relevance to "dust" than *Avraham*. If so, why did the blessing only manifest itself with *Yaakov*?

Anything that exists is quantifiable. In contrast, G-d is and His Wisdom are unquantifiable. The *Torah*, being G-d's Wisdom is unlimited and infinite. Although all of the Patriarchs were uniquely spiritual, *Yaakov* was the only Patriarch that embodied and personified the *Torah*. As the verse refers to him, "The perfect man, who dwelt in the tent (of *Torah*)." Therefore, the blessing that G-d had given to *Avraham* manifested itself only with *Yaakov* because he was the Patriarch that had relevance to the infinite. This is the reason *Chazal* tell us that *Yaakov* was the most special of the Patriarchs.

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Metzia*: There are three instances in which one is permitted to alter the truth. One of those circumstances is, if one is asked, "Is it true that you have studied so many tractates?" One is permitted to alter the truth in order not reveal the extent of his *Torah* knowledge. The Commentators explain that it is because of modesty/humility that one is permitted to answer in this manner. However, with the understanding that *Torah* is something that is unlimited and not quantifiable, if one were to quantify his *Torah* knowledge by answering the question truthfully, it would impact negatively upon the spiritual value of his *Torah*. Although one has in fact studied a specific and measurable amount of *Torah*, the innate

value of that is unlimited. Thus, by quantifying it, one would put limitation upon something that is not limited— thereby diminishing the truthfulness of its essence. Therefore, one is permitted to alter the truth.

Torah: “If you toil in My *Torah* you will merit all blessing.” What does “toil” connote? It is one’s unlimited dedication to the study of *Torah* itself. One can only merit the *Torah* and its blessing when one’s involvement in the unlimited is itself at an unlimited level. With this we can understand the *Gemara* in Tractate *Megillah* which states, “If you have toiled and come upon it (*Torah*), you can believe it. If you did not toil and come upon it, do not believe it.” One can only come upon *Torah*, which is infinite, if one is selflessly committed to it. Therefore, only the one who truly toils can come upon its truth.

Seeing G-d as He Wants to Be Seen (From *Chukas*)

Torah: After *Miriam* had passed away, the living wellspring that had provided water for the Jewish people in the desert ceased. The Jewish people, seeing that they were without water complained to *Moshe*.

Torah: “The glory of *Hashem* appeared to them. *Hashem* spoke to *Moshe* saying, ‘Take your staff and gather the assembly...and speak to the rock before their eyes and it shall give its water.’”

Torah: “*Moshe* said to the Jewish people, ‘Listen now, O rebels, shall we bring forth water from this rock?’ Then *Moshe* raised his arm and struck the rock with his staff...” Because *Moshe* had struck the rock rather than speaking to it as G-d had commanded him, G-d said to *Moshe* and *Aaron*, “Because you did not believe in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the Children of Israel, you will not bring this congregation into the Land that I have given them.” Thus, G-d decreed that *Moshe* will pass away before the Jewish people enter into the Promised Land because he did not follow His command. What precipitated *Moshe*’s failing regarding the rock?

Rabbeinu Yonah: Because *Moshe* had referred to the Jewish people as “rebels”, he was punished. By addressing G-d’s Chosen People in a unbecoming manner, he forfeited his right to enter into the Land with them.

Rashi: *Moshe* was punished because he struck the rock rather than speaking to it as G-d had commanded him.

Regardless of how *Moshe* extracted the water from the rock, the Jewish people were provided with water through a miracle from the Hand of G-d. G-d’s Name was sanctified in either case- whether he spoke to the rock or struck it.

Midrash: “The Jewish people said to *Moshe*, ‘You know how to extract water from a stone.’ If *Moshe* were to request that the stone should give forth water it would do so. *Moshe* was in a quandary. If he were to listen to them and bring forth water from the stone as a result of their request, it would appear that he himself was the one responsible for extracting water from the stone. It would seem that he was the one who caused the miracle *Moshe* wanted that it should be clear that it was G-d who brought forth the water and not him. If they would perceive this incorrectly it would be a desecration of His Name.”

Gemara: *Reb Chanina Ben Dosa* was traveling with his donkey loaded with bushels of harvested wheat that was going to be used to make matzos for Passover. He had come upon a river. If he were to wade across the river with his donkey, the wheat would come in contact with the water and thus become invalidated to be used for *matzah*. He thus commanded the river to split so that he should be able to pass through and not put the status of the wheat into jeopardy. The river would not split.

Reb Chanina Ben Dosa said, “If the river does not split, then I will decree that water shall never flow in this location ever again.” Subsequently, the river split and he was able to cross with the wheat. However, his Arab attendant was left behind on the other side of the river. *Reb Chanina Ben Dosa* again decreed that the river should split on behalf of his attendant who he needed to assist him. The river once again split. Why was the river bound to the dictate and command of *Reb Chanina Ben Dosa*?

Prophet: “For His Glory He created it.” The explicit purpose of Creation is only to continuously glorify G-d’s Name. Every aspect of existence is bound to this prerequisite. *Reb Chanina Ben Dosa*, who was at a level of righteousness and spirituality that the entire world was sustained in his merit, accommodating his need is synonymous with G-d’s Glory. The objective of every aspect of his life was to guarantee and perpetuate the purpose of existence.

Therefore, when *Reb Chanina Ben Dosa* gave the ultimatum to the river to split, the river followed his command. Identically, the Jewish people believed that *Moshe* was able to extract water from the stone through his own initiative because of his spiritual dimension of person. *Moshe* believed that it would be forbidden to acquiesce and accommodate their request. In fact, the water being extracted from the stone was unrelated to his dimension of spirituality but rather only to G-d's Dictate and Will. He was therefore in a quandary as to what to do. If it would not be perceived correctly, it would minimize G-d's Glory.

Midrash: "*Moshe* was put in a precarious position as a result of the demands of the Jewish people. For forty years he did not become angry with them. Although there were many times that they had complained, he restrained himself not to become angry. (Eitz Yosef, a commentator on the *Midrash* explains that he did so because he believed that if he were to become angry with the people, he would be included in the decree that was upon the Jewish people after the sin of the spies, that the generation should perish in the desert.)

"The Jewish people said to *Moshe*, 'Does it matter which rock gives forth water?' (Meaning, they believed he was able to extract water from any rock) *Moshe* became angry and said, 'You rebels...'" He was angry because it was irrelevant to the Jewish people whether G-d's Glory would be manifested or not. *Moshe* was completely nullified to G-d. He was pained that the Jewish people were not sensitive to G-d's Glory and Honor. This was the basis for his failing.



Yad Avraham Institute