

## MOU - Balak

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כָּרַע שָׁכַב כְּאֵרִי וּכְלָבִיא מִי יְקִימוּנוּ מִבְּרִכְיָהּ בְּרוּךְ וְאֶרְיָהּ אֶרֶוּר. (במדבר כד, ט)

Balak is a really "out-of-place" parsha in the Torah. Firstly, it is the only parsha in the Torah that is named after a goy (king of Moav) who *remained* a goy (unlike Yitro who began as a goy but then converted). Secondly, nobody in Am Yisrael witnessed any of the goings on described in parshat Balak, it was all behind the scenes. If HKB"H would not have revealed them to Moshe, we would never have known about them (רש"י, בבא בתרא יד, ע"ב).

In this shiur I would like to explore the essence of the nation of Moav and try to understand how this relates to current events.

The gematria of מוֹאָב is 49, associated with שְׁעָרֵי טְמֵאָה. The origins of the nation of Moav began with טְמֵאָה. The eldest daughter of Lot, following the destruction of Sdom, slept with her father Lot and the child born of that incestuous union was Moav (לז, בראשית יט).

The next time the Torah mentions Moav (indirectly) is in connection with the wars of the princes of Eisav, וַיָּמָת חָשֶׁם וַיִּמְלֹךְ תַּחְתָּיו הַדָּד בֶּן בְּדַד הַמֶּכָּה אֶת מִדְיָן בְּשָׂדֵה מוֹאָב וְשָׁם עִירוֹ עֲוִית (בראשית לו, לה). For the first time, the Torah tells us *where* the kingdom of Moav is located. We spoke about it briefly in last week's shiur, that Moav is located directly north-east of Edom on the map, basically comprising most of the east coast of the Dead Sea, in what is now Jordan. Edom's hatred for Am Yisrael and their geographical proximity to Moav must surely have impacted Moav as well, אוֹי לְרָשָׁע וְאוֹי לְשֹׂכְנוֹ.

When Am Yisrael leave Egypt, Moav is mentioned in Shirat HaYam וְנִבְּהָלוּ אֱלֹהֵי אֲדוֹם אֵילֵי מוֹאָב יֹאחֲזֵמוּ רָעַד נִמְגּוּ כֹל יִשְׁבֵי כְנָעַן (שמות טו, טו), the generals of Edom and the gods of Moav will be in a panic. From this we understand that Moav was a pagan nation (אֵילֵי מוֹאָב).

The next time we encounter Moav is in this week's parsha, which the Torah succinctly summarizes in sefer Devarim ... עַל לֹא יָבֹא עִמּוֹנֵי וּמוֹאָבֵי בְּקִהְלֵהּ ה' דָּבַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא קִדְּמוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּלָחֶם וּבַמִּים בְּדַרְךְ בְּצִאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַר עָלֶיךָ אֶת בְּלָעַם בֶּן בְּעוֹר מִפְּתוֹר אֶרֶם נִהְרִים לְקַלְלֶךָ (דברים כג, ג-ה). Moav did not militarily attack Am Yisrael like Sichon. They showed lack of hospitality, and worse – they hired Bilam to curse us and sabotage us spiritually.

In Shoftim we read how Eglon the king of Moav (grandson of Balak) oppressed Am Yisrael until בן גרא managed to assassinate him and Am Yisrael defeated them in battle (ל, שופטים ג, ל).

Although Megilat Rut appears later in the order of the Tanach, the story related in Megilat Rut is *chronologically* the next chapter in the saga. We all know the story of Rut, who was the granddaughter of Eglon (הוריות י, ע"ב). Tosfot (יבמות מח, ע"ב) highlights discrepancies in the timeline and proves that Rut could never have been Eglon's granddaughter, but was instead a *descendant* of Eglon. Rut, a member of the Moabite royal family first married Machlon (מלבי"ם, רות א, ד), son of the rich tycoon Elimelech and his wife Naomi. After Elimelech died, followed by his sons Machlon and Chilyon, Rut decided to convert and accompany Naomi back to Eretz Yisrael. There she married Boaz and became the great grandmother of David HaMelech.

When David was fleeing from Shaul HaMelech, he sent his parents to the king of Moav seeking asylum. David assumed that since his great grandmother Rut was descended from Moav, that Moav would look after them. However, the king of Moav killed David's parents because he didn't want David to become king (במדבר רבה, יד, א).

Later when David became king, he took revenge by conquering Moav and turning the kingdom of Moav into a vassal state which paid taxes to David.

After the death of Shlomo HaMelech and the split between the kingdoms of Yisrael and Yehuda, Moav temporarily broke free from the yoke of Am Yisrael, until king Achav reconquered Moav and restored them to vassal status.

All of the above was "build-up" for the episode that follows.

This episode is related in ספר מלכים ב, פרק ג (the chapter immediately *preceding* the story of the אשה השוֹנֵנִית and אֶלְיָשָׁע and the miracle of the oil – the haftara of parshat Vayeira).

Our story takes place during the reign of king Yehoram of Yisrael, son of Achav (at the same time Yehoshafat was the king of Yehuda). As we said above, Achav re-subjugated the kingdom of Moav and they paid taxes to him.

After Achav died, the king of Moav at the time, Meisha, decided to stage a rebellion and attacked the spiritually vulnerable king Yehoram of Yisrael. Yehoram mobilized the army of Yisrael and sent a dispatch to king Yehoshafat of Yehuda asking him to join him in battle against Moav. Yehoshafat agreed.

Instead of attacking Moav directly, taking the shortest route to their common border, king Yehoshafat suggested they instead surprise Moav by attacking from an unexpected direction - from the south, instead of from the west.

This required passing through the southern land of Edom, so they also recruited the king of Edom to help them fight together as one alliance against Moav.

While they were enroute through the scorching desert of Edom, their water supplies ran out. Yehoram king of Israel, who was not "religious" (Achav his father served idols), immediately interpreted this as a sign that G-d was against them and expressed the defeatist attitude that the battle was lost.

Yehoshafat king of Yehuda, on the other hand, who had faith in HKB"H, suggested a simple solution. What does a "religious" person do if they run out of water? They don't send a carrier pigeon to the logistics corp. to airdrop water supplies. King Yehoshafat said "Call for the Navi and let him organize water!" Which Navi? Elisha, the successor of Eliyahu HaNavi.

Yehoshafat said "It will not be simple though, because unless Elisha is commanded by HKB"H, he will not help!" Regardless they sent a messenger to Elisha requesting assistance. Elisha responded "Why should I help you (king Yehoram the idol worshipper)?" Eventually though, Elisha agreed only because king Yehoshafat of Yehuda (who served HKB"H) was part of the alliance.

Elisha said "Send for the musicians!" קָחוּ לִי מִנְגִּן וְהִיָּה כְּנִגֵּן הַמְּנַגֵּן (מלכים ב', טו, א), a prophet who wants to communicate with HKB"H has to be in a mental state of simcha. Elisha offered a mincha to HKB"H and related His reply "Behold this miracle which HKB"H so easily performs", declared Elisha. "HKB"H has given Moav into your hands and you will defeat them. You will smite every fortress and every stronghold city. You will flatten every structure, you will close up every well and you will rain projectiles down upon their fields".

HKB"H answered Elisha's prayer and the dry riverbed in the desert of Edom suddenly gave forth wells of water. The Midrash Tanchuma says that HKB"H caused it to rain prodigiously in the land of Edom and this caused flash floods in the Edom desert, filling every crevice with water.

They then attacked Moav from the south, firing rock projectiles at them. Moav, not expecting an attack from that direction, sounded the alarm, calling all their soldiers to arms, racing to the southern border. As the morning sun rose, it reflected off all the unexpected water in the Edom desert and in the early morning light it appeared red.

To the Moabites, who had never seen water in this region in their lives, it appeared to be blood! This drove them insane and they turned on and began killing one another. Their remaining forces tried to repel the attack, but the alliance of Yisrael, Yehuda and Edom smote and defeated them exactly as Elisha had foreseen. They blockaded Moav. Their rock projectiles destroyed the Moabite cities and fields. The rocks landed and sealed up the wells and penetrated the walls of their fortresses.

The king of Moav, seeing things were not going well for him, dispatched seven hundred "sword wielding warriors" to try לְהַבְקִיעַ, to try "break up" the king of Edom's camp, but failed.

They then took the king of Moav's son, his successor, up to the parapets of the wall of the city and sacrificed him there as an Olah offering. Rashi explains why they did this. Their advisors said that the reason that HKB"H performs miracles for Am Yisrael is because our forefather Avraham offered his only son to HKB"H. So Moav offered the son of the king as a sacrifice to their idols, hoping for a miracle.

This made the king of Edom very angry against Am Yisrael ( מצודת דוד , (מלכים ב ג, כז), because this gory sight aroused his pity for Moav. Another opinion (רש"י, שם) says that it was HKB"H who was angry against the kingdom of Yisrael who at the time were serving idols.

מלכים ב 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of ב עַד קָאן our story from the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of ב

The subsequent centuries leading up to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash gave rise to mixed relationships between Am Yisrael and Moav. At various times we had cultural and trade ties with them, but their hate for Am Yisrael always simmered, waiting for an opportunity.

The Gemara (סנהדרין צו ע"ב) says that it was Moav (and Amon) who repeatedly urged Nebuchadnezzar to conquer Yerushalayim and destroy the 1<sup>st</sup> Beit HaMikdash. Nebuchadnezzar did not want to destroy Yerushalayim, he objected repeatedly, citing different reasons, but each time Moav provided a counter reason why he *should*. The end of the story is as we know – Nebuchadnezzar, convinced by Moav's surreptitious and poisonous rhetoric, conquered Yerushalayim and destroyed the Beit HaMikdash.

The sugya in the Gemara continues with R' Nachman saying to R' Yitzchak "Do you know when בֶּר נְפִלִי will come?" (בֶּר נְפִלִי literally means the "son of a stillborn baby"). R' Yitzchak asked "Who is בֶּר נְפִלִי?" to which R' Nachman replied "He is the Mashiach!" R' Yitzchak said "Why do you call the Mashiach the derogatory name 'son of a stillborn'?" It is a reference to a Midrash (ילקוט) (שמעוני פרשת בראשית, רמז מא) where HKB"H showed Adam HaRishon every generation of mankind until the end of time. When He showed him David HaMelech, Adam saw that David would live for only 3 hours and then die. Adam said "I will donate some years of my life so that he may live!" Adam HaRishon donated 70 years of his life to David HaMelech (Adam was supposed to live 1000 years but he died at age 930). Therefore, the term בֶּר נְפִלִי refers to a descendant of David HaMelech, the Mashiach ben David.

The famous Gemara then goes on to describe what the generation will look like in the generation of Mashiach, which we all know well (פְּנֵי הַדּוֹר כְּפְנֵי כְּלָב, etc.)

The prophets (ישעיהו טו-טז, ירמיהו מח) prophesied the end for Moav. They ceased to be an independent nation about 800 years before the destruction of Bayit Sheini. They were swallowed up into the nations of Nabataea, Babylon and Persia (stretching from Jordan, through Iraq, to Iran of today).

To summarize what we have learned above.

Moav started as a nation from their inception through עַרְיֹת. This is one of their typifying characteristics. We see it at the end of our parsha, the episode of בְּנוֹת מוֹאָב and Ba'al Peor.

Another typifying aspect of Moav is their wealth. We see from our parsha how wealthy the king of Moav was אִם יִתֵּן לִי בָלַק מֶלֶאכְּ בֵּיתוֹ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב (במדבר כב, יח).

Another characteristic of Moav is their never-ending hatred for Am Yisrael. This is the most counterintuitive characteristic. They should have been grateful to Am Yisrael, for if not for Avraham saving Lot from captivity in the war of the 4 vs. 5 kings, Lot would have died and Moav would never have been born. They owe their *very existence* to Avraham Avinu and his descendants. Despite this, they bore a hatred for Am Yisrael. The origins of this hatred perhaps began from their geographic proximity to Edom and Amalek who inculcated their neighbor Moav with this same inexplicable hatred for the sons of Yaakov. However, the hatred is much deeper than that.

It stems from the knowledge that they, Moav, are going to be unwittingly instrumental in the process of Mashiach and the Redemption of Am Yisrael. Just as their hatred for us is counterintuitive, so too is it counterintuitive that the matriarch of our Mashiach – Rut, came from the nation of Moav! Why was it necessary for the origins of Mashiach to emanate from this nation of depravity and hate for Am Yisrael? For answers to this question see shiur on [Vayeitzei 2020](#). At every stage of their existence, Moav tried to prevent this from happening.

Case in point – our parsha Balak! Sefer Meir Panim quotes the Ari z"l as saying that Balak had a nightmare. In his dream he saw a vision of the Shulchan Lechem HaPanim (which Onkelos translates as פְּתוּרָא, "table" in Aramaic). Why was this a "nightmare"? Because there is a *direct linkage* between David HaMelech and the Shulchan Lechem HaPanim. There are three keilim in the Midash that have "crowns" on them. The Aron, the Mizbeach HaKetoret and the Shulchan. These correspond to the three crowns listed in the Mishna כֶּתֶר תוֹרָה וְכֶתֶר כְּהֻנָּה וְכֶתֶר מַלְכוּת (אבות ד, יג).

goes to Aharon HaKohen and his descendants. The crown of Malchut (Shulchan Lechem HaPanim) goes to David HaMelech and his descendants. The crown of Torah (Aron) goes to anyone who wishes to study Torah (יומא עב, ע"ב). Balak's nightmare was that the ancestor of David HaMelech (Shulchan, פְּתוּרָא) was going to be descended from *him* – Rut.

This cannot be allowed. There are only two ways to stop such a thing, for Balak to commit suicide, thus cutting off his progeny and not allowing the emergence of the (great grand) mother of Mashiach - Rut, or ... destroying the ancestor of Mashiach from the father's side - Am Yisrael. If there is no Am Yisrael, there will be no Boaz, no David HaMelech and no ... Mashiach. Committing suicide for Balak was not an option, so how does one destroy Am Yisrael? The greatest superpower Egypt never succeeded to physically destroy them. The only way to destroy Am Yisrael is if HKB"H destroys them. How do you get HKB"H to destroy Am Yisrael? you get an expert curser Bilam to curse them (Bilam lived in a place called פְּתוּרָא אֶשֶׁר עַל הַנְּהָר, does פְּתוּרָא sound familiar?)

That didn't work out too well. Despite Bilam trying to curse, they all turned into blessings. Meanwhile, in the process Balak brought 42 korbanot to HKB"H at Bilam's advice to try curse Am Yisrael. Chazal say that בְּזִכּוֹת these 42 korbanot, his descendant was Rut. The passuk also tells us with Eglon the king of Moav, when Ehud ben Geira told him that he had a message for Eglon from G-d, Eglon stood up out of respect. בְּזִכּוֹת him standing up, Rut was his descendant. We see how HKB"H rewards רְשָׁעִים with such incredible things, imagine how much He rewards tzaddikim who perform His mitzvot!!

If you cannot destroy Am Yisrael by cursing, what's left? Getting Am Yisrael to sin, so that HKBH will be angry with us and destroy us chalila. Thus we have the episode of Ba'al Peor.

The king of Moav tried to prevent David becoming David HaMelech by killing his parents, who sought asylum by him.

Moav successfully tried to get Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the Beit HaMikdash, thinking that would be the end of Am Yisrael.

Throughout history, Moav has been trying to destroy the emergence of Mashiach. How does the Gemara end the sugya (above) – with Mashiach! If you try to play chess with HKB"H you will always lose. HKB"H always has a few unexpected curve balls that ensure you will never succeed in your diabolical mission. You may temporarily inflict harm, but you will ultimately fail.

Moav as a nation vanished, but their spirit lives on in the nations into which they were swallowed up, stretching from Jordan, across the Persian Gulf and to Iran.

Fast forward 3300 years!

The news is filled morning, noon and night talking about the "MOU", the Memorandum-Of-Understanding between the USA and Iran. I think that before this saga began, at least 98% of the world's population had never heard of the term MOU before (yours truly included). Unless you are a lawyer or someone involved in corporate treaties, you would probably never have heard of an MOU before, like me.

I am now going to show you how *nothing* is by chance, how everything is orchestrated by HKB"H. There is a *definite* Divine plan at play here and if we look deeper, we can uncover some of its intricacies.

When was this MOU digitally signed? Erev Shabbat Chukat. The abbreviation MOU sounds very much like "MOO". What is the subject that opens parshat Chukat? פְּרַח אֲדָמָה.

OK, you are saying – that is very weak. The next one, however, is not weak in any way – it is *mind blowing!*

MOU written in Hebrew is אֵם אוּ יוּ. There is only *one place* in the *whole of Tanach* where the rashei teivot אֵם אוּ יוּ appear. Do you know where that is?

וַיֵּרָא מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב כִּי חִזַּק מִמֶּנּוּ הַמְלַחְמָה וַיִּקַּח אוֹתוֹ שְׁבַע מֵאוֹת אִישׁ שְׁלֹף הַרְבֵּב לְהַבְקִיעַ אֶל מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְלֹא יָכֹלוּ. וַיִּקַּח אֶת בְּנוֹ הַבְּכוֹר ... (מלכים ב ג, כו-כז)

The last two psukkim from our story above. What are the statistical chances of that?

It is impossible to read that story without feeling a chill run up your spine. The king of Yisrael (chilonim/left-wing/army), the king of Yehuda (dati'im/right-wing/government) and the king of Edom (USA) all teaming up to make an alliance to attack Moav??

Who is the modern day Moav? They are easy to identify by their characteristics defined above. They are exceedingly wealthy. They have an inexplicable hatred for Am Yisrael and want to wipe us out. They are involved with עֲרִיּוֹת. That description perfectly describes the combination of Iran/Qatar.

Both Iran and Qatar are exceedingly wealthy. What do they use their immense wealth for? For the benefit of their own people? On the contrary. The vast majority of their wealth is invested in destroying Am Yisrael, physically and spiritually.

Iran spends most of its wealth on (firstly lining the pockets of its leaders) and after that for building a military structure, including missiles, drones, proxies

and (they hope) nuclear weapons that has one and only one purpose – to wipe Israel *physically* off the map. Just last week there was video footage of the street of Teheran with billboards of Chumeini, Khomeini, Mujtaba holding hands, together with another [billboard](#) with a text in Arabic and *in Hebrew* (so we Jews would be able to read it) saying "In 5218 days Israel will no longer exist!"

Qatar similarly spends a vast portion of their wealth on trying to destroy Am Yisrael via propaganda – media channels such as Al Jazeera, funding universities all over the western world with anti-Jewish propaganda, fomenting antisemitism all over the world, supporting fundamental Islam all over the world, infiltrating local and national governments throughout the West. Fighting the war for the annihilation of Israel on the unseen front, like Balak and Bilam. In my view Qatar is *much* more dangerous than Iran. You can fight an enemy that you can see, like Iran. However, Qatar, because they are under the radar and invisible, are successfully poisoning the entire world against Am Yisrael using their petro trillions with almost zero pushback. They are "whispering" their poison into hungry ears, just like Moav did with Nebuchadnezzar.

This inexplicable hatred against Am Yisrael which is so counterintuitive, that they are willing to die for it, to sacrifice their own people, 40 thousand of them without blinking an eye, sending suicide bombers, etc. Where does it come from? It is genetically inbred so that they cannot escape it. It is that same hatred of biblical Moav for Am Yisrael, because they know in the depth of their hearts that it is they who are going to be inadvertently instrumental in bringing about Mashiach and they will do everything in their power to try prevent that from happening – for them it is a holy war.

Qatar is the surreptitious mirror image of the overt diabolical Iran. They are "mediators", which in other words means that they are "in bed with everyone". What do you call a woman who sleeps with everyone? It is called *עַרְוֹת*.

Read the story above carefully. Moav tries to send "700 sword wielding warriors" to cause a rift in the alliance of Edom and Am Yisrael? "Sword" is another word for "tongue", like in *וְחָרַב פִּיפִּיּוֹת בְּנֶדָם (תהילים קמט, ו)*. Just as Am Yisrael's true power is in their "mouths" for the power of good, uttering divrei Torah, so too is the true power of our enemies in their mouths, for the power of evil. Like Balak in our parsha, like Qatar, Pakistan and who knows who else using the "swords of their tongues" to cause a rift in the Edom/Israel alliance as we speak.

The end of our story above, is that it ultimately failed. There is mention in that story of things that have not yet happened in our story today, they have yet to happen. Some of the things we read there have already happened, like projectiles raining down on Moav's cities, penetrating their fortresses (bunker busters, Fordu, etc.). Other things like projectiles raining down and destroying

their "fields" and plugging their "wells" (which fields, which wells I wonder?) that have not yet happened in our modern story, but very likely will, soon.

Just like in that story, the slightest setback (no water in the desert) sends the "unbelieving" in Am Yisrael into a paroxysm of defeatism, so too in our modern-day story does the slightest setback send the unbelieving into harangues of defeatism and accusation. Just like back then the solution to the believers is crystal clear – call the Navi, trust in HKB"H to provide the solution, so today is the same modus operandi the only solution.

The very mention of the word MOU sends chills down many peoples' spines. It is a test of faith. It is only a temporary setback.

If you (mistakenly) think the MOU is a bad thing for Am Yisrael, check out the following gematriyot for the Hebrew version of אִם אוֹ יוֹ (gematriya 64) –

הָאֲחִים

אוֹהֲבִים

וְהַבּוֹטֵחַ בְּה'

הַיּוֹם בָּא

בְּנוֹאָה

הַגּוֹיִם

גּוֹג מְגוֹג

דִּין

מוֹאֲבִיָּה

ט' בָּאֵב הַגְּאוּלָּה

בְּנוֹא הַגּוֹאֵל

הוּא אֵלֶיהוּ

וּכְבוֹד ה'

דּוֹדֵי לִי

אָדָם חָנוּה

I am not a Navi, I do not know exactly which of the things in this shiur will transpire, when, if at all. All I can do is present you with the things I have found for you to make of them what you will.

One thing *is* for certain. The end of the story is known. The Gemara (above) ends with it, the coming of בֵּר נִפְלִי. The nations of the world would be wise to pay heed to the passuk we began the shiur with.

Shabbat Shalom

Eliezer Meir Saidel

Machon Lechem Hapanim

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