

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

THE 10TH OFFERING

9 Red Heifers

By: Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Parshas Chukas opens with the laws of the *Para Adumah* (Red Heifer).

In the course of codifying the halachos of the *Para Adumah*, Rambam tells us a bit of history:

"From the time the mitzvah was commanded, nine *Para Adumahs* were offered to date. The first was brought by Moses and the second was brought by Ezra. Seven others were brought until the destruction of the Second Temple. And the 10th will be brought by the King Moshiach, may he be speedily revealed, amen, may it be Hashem's will!"

These last words of Rambam are perplexing. *Mishneh Torah* is a halachic work, not a book of prayers.

Moreover, it's known that Rambam weighed his words carefully.

Why did Rambam insert a prayer that Moshiach be speedily revealed, in a halachic work?

Perhaps we can offer a simple answer: Rambam wanted to teach us the halacha that we must daven for Moshiach to come!

But this isn't a very good answer, because such a halacha would have made more sense for Rambam to include in the final chapters of *Mishneh Torah* which discuss the laws of Moshiach.



Red Heifers being raised in Shilo, Israel, June 2023

Why does Rambam offer this prayer in the laws of the *Para Adumah*, where Moshiach is only mentioned as a side point? Isn't it out of place?


One possible explanation is that, indeed, Rambam is teaching us something very profound about praying for Moshiach to come:

Even if Moshiach is only mentioned as a side note - it's not even the topic -- this should awaken a deep yearning, to the extent that a Jew cries out in prayer: *May he be speedily revealed, amen, may it be Hashem's will!*

In the penultimate chapter of *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam writes that it is an obligation not only to believe in Moshiach, but also to anticipate his arrival.

If one believes that Moshiach will come, but doesn't anticipate his arrival, then one's *emunah* is lacking.

The consciousness of a continuous belief and anticipation of Moshiach's arrival can only come from an understanding that without Moshiach, we are all incomplete, the entire world is lacking.

And that is what Rambam is teaching us by inserting a prayer for Moshiach's arrival into the laws of the *Para Adumah*. 

Q&A for Your Shabbos Table

Q: What is the meaning of the word *Tammuz*?

A: Tammuz was the name of an idol (Yechezkel 8:14). Some believe a special feast was made for that idol in the month of Tammuz.

Q: What is the exact date of the passing of Miriam in this week's parsha?

A: Miriam passed away on 10 Nissan 2487.

שׁוֹרֵעַ אֶרֶץ תִּקְפֶּה, ב

Q: What historical event took place on Erev Shabbos of Parshas Chukas?

A: On Erev Shabbos Parshas Chukas in the year 1244, 20 wagons full of Talmud and other seforim were burned by gentiles in front of a certain cathedral in Paris, France. Some have the custom to fast on the Erev Shabbos of Chukas.

A fast day was not designated for a specific day in the month because when the sages sought to determine whether this was a decree from Heaven, there was a reply via a dream that it was. This is hinted to in the opening words of the parsha, *Zos Chukas HaTorah*, which are translated by Onkelos to indicate that there was a decree [that the Torah would be burned].

Shortly before Pesach 2019, this very cathedral caught on fire, sustaining severe damage.

מִיָּא שֶׁם, סִקִּי"ט

Recognizing the Divine

Balak vs. Yitro

by: Mishaal Sionov

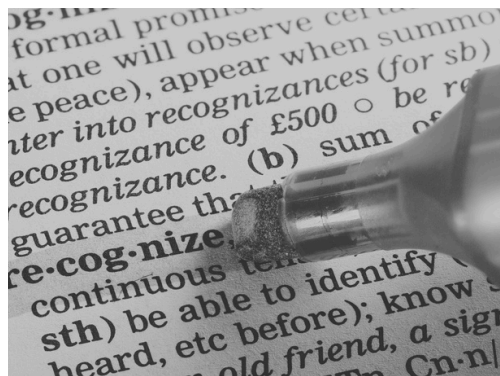
A careful analysis of a subtle but major contrast sheds light upon a very interesting anomaly. This week's Parsha discusses a gentile named Balak, who "saw all that Israel did to the Emorites," and decided to employ Bilaam to cast a negative energy onto the Jews.

Another gentile by the name of Yitro also noticed the awesome might of the Jewish nation in their battle against Amalek. Yet, his reaction was essentially the exact opposite from that of Balak's, as he seized inspiration and even converted to become a member of Am Yisrael.

Why did Balak choose to respond with an insecure lust of jealousy and hatred, whereas Yitro embraced motivation and ended up joining the club? Where and why did their paths diverge?

R. Eliezer Zeytouneh shared a profound insight. The answer can be readily discerned in the Torah's description for each character. "Balak Ben Tzipor saw all that Israel did to the Emorites," the Torah testifies.

All he saw was a victorious nation; he lacked the depth to see further. He failed to notice the Divine Hand of Hashem that orchestrated it all. Yitro, however, was a different story. "Yitro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that G-d had done for Moshe and for Israel - "Hashem had taken Israel out of Egypt."



Yitro was genuine enough to see G-d and attribute the events that transpired to Him. Thus, after leveling up from having just an awareness of a Divine force to actually seeing the Creator work His wonders, He wanted to draw near to Him.

Balak, only saw a people reveling in extraordinary successes, which practically drove him to the brink of an insatiable fury.

It doesn't take much to see G-d or appreciate his personal providence in current events, our nation's survival throughout history, or one's personal life. Someone who knows what to look for sees G-d in even the smallest of things, like a cell of an organism which was masterfully designed in intricate complexities that far outweigh the genius of any man-made innovation. He sees that the same G-d who created the universe and runs the entire show single-handedly is also very much present in his personal life, and every moment becomes a meaningful opportunity to connect with the Divine origin. ☯

HAYOM YOM

9 Tammuz

All Jewish parents who require special deliverance and salvation for their children [should know that] the most reliable means [to secure this] is to support those who study Torah.

Chassidic Story

Pockets Full of Faith

The chassidim were gathered around the table of the Maggid of Mezeritch, Reb DovBer, as he told a story of his rebbe, the holy Baal Shem Tov.

"It was an uneventful Shabbat by the Baal Shem Tov," began the Maggid, "until the conclusion."

The Maggid continued: Immediately after the conclusion of the evening prayers — still before havdalah — a woman rushed in to the room where the Baal Shem Tov and his chassidim had concluded their prayers.

"You've got to help me, Rebbe!" she cried out. "I am in desperate need of funds to marry off my daughter, and I have nowhere left to turn!"

The Baal Shem Tov heard her out, and then directed his chassidim to reach their hands in to their pockets and give whatever money they found there for this worthy cause. Amazingly, the funds they came up with were the exact amount that the woman said she needed.

"Tell me," the Maggid concluded the story, "what is the lesson to be gleaned from this story of our master the Baal Shem Tov?"

One chassid offered his thought: "This story shows the miraculous powers of the Baal Shem Tov. Even though it was impossible that anyone would have money in their pockets — for Shabbat had ended just moments earlier — the Baal Shem Tov performed this miracle to help this poor woman"...

to be continued...

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8:12pm Candle Lighting
8:17pm Mincha
Followed by Kabbalas Shabbos
8:45am Chassidus Shiur
10:00am Davening
5:00pm Tanya Shiur (men & women)
8:00pm Mincha
9:19pm Maariv / Shabbos Ends