

Maamarei Mordechai

הסביר לפי ממש פשט

Parshas Balak 5785

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Hashem blessed His people through His prophet.

כָּרְעַ שְׁכַב כָּאָרִי וְכָלְבִּיא מַי יְקִימָנוּ מִבְּרָכִיךְ בָּרוֹךְ וְאָרְגִּיךְ אָרוּרִים:

“They kneel and concede like lions, and like a lioness who can stand up to them? Those that bless them are blessed and those that curse them are cursed.” (Bamidbar 24:9).

While this article does not usually address current events, this week’s parsha has too much to say about it for me to ignore it. In a recent interview between a well-established and known antisemite podcaster (who falsely calls himself a journalist) and a gentile religious senator from Texas, the senator backed up his thinking and his political ideology of why he backs the State of Israel. He defended his position by saying that the Torah (he used the secular word) says that “Those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed.” He was paraphrasing our pasuk.

I do not generally publicize my support of the State of Israel based on this verse. Without going too much into detail, as the world sees it, Israel is a political entity (a sovereign nation governed under human laws) and therefore, I like to point out the League of Nations resolution in 1922, the United Nations vote for a Jewish State on November 29, 1947, and the fact that the people have defended itself from invasions multiple times.

However, this is the position the senator took, and I appreciate the sentiment. It is nice to hear that after 1,200 years of persecution under the European gentiles in the name of their religion that someone from that religion will look at the Torah and want to help Jews. Immediately, the podcaster jumped and said, no, it does not say that. The verse is a promise made to Avraham. The implication, that it was not only to Yisroel, but perhaps to Yishmael, too. The podcaster was wrong.

The pasuk certainly does say in regards to Avram, “And those that will bless you will be blessed and those that curse you I will curse; and through you, all families on the earth will receive blessing.” (Bereishis 12:3). That pasuk is when Hashem tells Avram to go to Eretz Canaan, and Hashem blesses him. This is a prophecy that referred to the end of days. This is established further by Yeshayahu. “And it shall be in the End of Days, truth will prevail, Hashem’s Mountain House will be the leader of all mountains...and the masses will come and say, “Let us go up to Hashem’s Mountain, to the House of the Lord...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.” (Yeshaya 2:2-4). In the end, Avraham’s descendants will be the source of blessing for the entire world. Blessing of peace is mentioned in the Torah. “And Moshe and Aharon came...and blessed the people.” (Vayikra 9:23). That blessing was “May Hashem lift His countenance to you and place upon you peace.” (Bamidbar 6:26). The brocho was repeated to Avraham (after he became Avraham), “through your children all the nations of the world shall be blessed.” (Bereishis 22:18).

That pasuk, in regards to Avram was to him and his children. The question would remain, does Yishmael carry these blessings? Does Esav?

The brocho was not only for Avraham. It went to his children. Later, Yaakov receives those blessings from his father, Yitzchok. "Nations will serve you and kingdoms will bow low to you....and those that curse you shall be cursed, and those that bless you shall be blessed." (Bereishis 27:29). This brocho was taken, possibly, through the subterfuge of dressing up as Esav when Yaakov knew Yitzchok wanted to bless Esav. Therefore, there is another pasuk that establishes it. On his way to Charan, Yaakov received a prophecy in the ladder dream. "Through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth, through your children." (Ibid 28:14). It does not repeat the blessing that Yitzchok gave him verbatim, but Hashem does reaffirm that it is through Yaakov's children—not Yishmael or Esav's, or the children of Keturah—that the End of Days blessing will come about. Some will argue, these blessings given to Yaakov were before he was "Yisroel."

Importantly, though, is our verse. Balaam, the gentile prophet of Hashem, looks upon Bnei Yisreol and clearly states, "those that bless you will be blessed, and those that curse you, will be cursed." (Bamidbar 24:9). This is the correct pasuk. It unmistakably refers to Bnei Yisroel. It also says, after Bnei Yisreol was the sovereign in Eretz Yisroel, that gentiles should "Request the good welfare of Yerushalayim, may those who love you enjoy our tranquility." (Tehillim 122:6). Moshe says, "Hashem, your Lord, will place curses upon your enemies and the adversaries that pursue you." (Devarim 30:7).

The children of Yishamel may complain. They were Avram's children, too. He was even circumcised. (Bereishis 17:26). However, Hashem says to Avraham, "Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Yitzchok, and I will establish my covenant with him, an everlasting covenant." (Ibid 17:19). It was specific to Yitzchok and not to Yishmael. The Torah says further, "Yitzchok will be your descendant." (Ibid 21:12). And further, "Please take your son, your only one.... Yitzchok." (Ibid 22:2). This makes Yitzchok his "only" son for inheritance.

Hashem further clarifies this with Yitzchok. "I will establish My oath, that I swore to Avraham, your father." (Ibid 26:3). This again makes the brochos go to Yitzchok and not Yishmael. Lest, Esav's children think they inherited it, we already quoted pesukim that Yaakov received it. It was exclusive to Yaakov, as the Torah says, "May the Lord Almighty (Kel Shkai) bless you...and give you all the blessings of Avraham to you and to your children." (Ibid 28:3-4). The brochos were passed only to Yaakov. Esav received no such blessing.

There is no proof that the Arab Muslims are Yishmael. Yishmael went east into Asia (ibid 25:18) not south to Arabia. However, even if they are as claimed, the brochos went to Yitzchok only and then to Yaakov only and then to his children. They remain and they are outstanding. There will be an End of Days. Those that seek the blessings of peace, tranquility, and prosperity, would be wise to listen to Balaam and how he blessed Bnei Yisroel. May we see an end to all the wars, speedily in our days.