

Shvilei Pinches

Parshas Bolok

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Bilam and Bolok Attempted to Harness the Negative Force of Amoleik Combining the Last Two Letters of Each of Their Names to Spell Amoleik

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Parshas Bolok, we read:

“וירא בלק בן צפור את כל אשר עשה ישראל לאמורי, ויגר מואב מפני העם מאד כי רב הוא, ויקץ מואב מפני בני ישראל, ויאמר מואב אל זקני מדין, עתה ילחכו הקהל את כל סביבותינו, כלחוך השור את ירק השרדה, ובלק בן צפור מלך למואב בעת ההוא, וישלח מלאכים אל בלעם בן בעור פתורה אשר על הנהר ארץ בני עמו לקרא לו לאמר, הנה עם יצא ממצרים הנה כסה את עין הארץ והוא יושב ממולי, ועתה לכה נא ארה לי את העם הזה כי עצום הוא ממני, אולי אוכל נכה בו ואגרשנו מן הארץ, כי ידעתי את אשר תברך מברך ואשר תאור יואר.”

Bolok the son of Tzippor saw all that Yisroel had done to the Amorite. Moav became very frightened of the people, because it was so numerous, and Moav was disgusted in the face of Bnei Yisroel. Moav said to the elders of Midian, “Now the congregation will lick up our entire surroundings, as an ox licks up the greenery of the field.” Bolok the son of Tzippor was king of Moav at that time. He sent messengers to Bilam son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the members of his people, to summon him saying, “Behold! A people has come out of Egypt. Behold! It has covered the surface of the earth and it sits opposite me. So now — please come and curse this people for me, for it is too powerful for me; perhaps I will be able to strike it and drive it away from the land. For, I know that whomever you bless is blessed and whomever you curse is accursed.”

1. At first glance, we are struck by the fact that the text repeats the term “עם”, people, three times in association with Yisroel: a) “ויוגר מואב מפני העם” b) “הנה עם” c) “ארה לי את העם הזה” This requires explanation.
2. Regarding the possuk: “ובלק בן צפור מלך למואב בעת ההוא” -- Bolok the son of Tzippor was king of Moav at that time — Rashi teaches us, based on the Midrash Tanchuma: מנסיכי מדין, לא היה ראוי למלכות, מנסיכי מדין: “ובלק בן צפור מלך למואב בעת ההוא, לא היה ראוי למלכות, מנסיכי מדין: --Bolok was a prince of Midian and was not really worthy to be the king of Moav; however, since Sichon died, he was appointed their king in their time of need. Let us endeavor to understand what was so unique about Bolok that prompted the Moabites to appoint him as their king in this time of need — even though he was not a member of Moav? In fact, since Bilam possessed such a tremendous power of speech, why did the Moabites not choose him as their king in this dire time of need?

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3. Examining Bolok's statement to Bilam: "אולי אוכל נכה בו" -- **perhaps I will be able to strike it** — reveals that he begins by utilizing the singular form "אוכל" and concludes with the plural form "נכה"; his statement should have employed either all singular or all plural verbs. The Zohar hakadosh (Bolok 198.) actually points out this difficulty: "אולי אוכל נכה בו, האי קרא הכי הוה ליה למימר, אולי אוכל אכה בו, או אולי נוכל נכה בו".

Bilam Feared Shmuel Who Severed Agag the King of Amoleik into Pieces

Let us begin our illuminating journey by focusing on one of the prophecies HKB"H forced upon Bilam (Bamidbar 24, 23): "וישא משלו ויאמר אוי מי יחיה משמו אל" — **He declaimed his parable and said, "Who will survive when He imposes these!"** The commentators expended much energy deciphering the meaning of this prophecy. The Arizal, however, in Shaar HaGilgulim, however, provides us with the following interpretation (Introduction 33): "אוי מי יחיה משמו אל אותיות משמואל" — the Hebrew words in this possuk for "**when He imposes these**"--אל- משמו — spell out משמואל when joined together, which means "from Shmuel." Thus, Bilam alludes to his fear of Shmuel HaNovi. This, too, deserves explanation; why was Bilam so afraid of Shmuel HaNovi?

The Arizal (ibid.) addresses this issue by pointing out the association with Bilam's earlier words of prophecy (ibid. 20): "וירא את עמלק וישא משלו ויאמר, ראשית גוים עמלק ואחריתו" — **He saw Amoleik and declaimed his parable and said, "Amoleik is the first among nations, but its end will be eternal destruction."** Rashi comments: "וירא את עמלק, נסתכל בפורענותו של עמלק. ראשית גוים עמלק, הוא קדם את כולם להילחם בישראל" — he foresaw Amoleik's punishment; Amoleik was the first nation to attack and wage war with Yisroel; its ultimate fate will be extermination at the hands of Yisroel.

Seen in this light, the wicked Bilam was expressing his pain and grief over the annihilation of Amoleik. Now, Shmuel HaNovi anointed Shaul as the first king of Yisroel and commanded him to wage war against Amoleik, as it is written (Shmuel I 15, 1):

"וויאמר שמואל אל שאול אותי שלח ה' למשחך למלך על עמו על ישראל ועתה שמע לקול דברי ה', כה אמר ה' צבאות פקדתי את אשר עשה עמלק לישראל, אשר שם לו בדרך בעלותו ממצרים, עתה לך והכיתה את עמלק והחרמתם את כל אשר לו ולא תחמול עליו, והמתה" — **As retribution for Amoleik's attack on Yisroel shortly after their departure from Egypt, HKB"H commands Shaul to completely annihilate Amoleik without pity for women, children or animals.**

Shaul embarked on that military mission, aimed at the total destruction of Amoleik, but showed pity on Agag the king of Amoleik and spared his life. As a result, it was necessary for Shmuel HaNovi to come and kill Agag, as it is recorded (ibid. 33): "וישסף שמואל את אגג לפני ה' בגלגל" — **and Shmuel severed Agag into pieces before Hashem in Gilgal.** So, after Bilam laments the future elimination of Amoleik, he continues his lament: "אוי מי

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– **“יחיה משמו אל”** – **Who will survive when He imposes these!** – alluding to Shmuel, who will appoint Shaul as king to battle Amoleik and who will severe Agag into pieces himself.

Bolok and Bilam Derive from Amoleik

I would like to propose an explanation regarding what prompted the wicked Bilam to lament the annihilation of Amoleik based on a passage from the Zohar hakadosh (Reayah Mehemnah, Ki Seitzei, 281:); it states that the spirits of Bolok and Bilam derived from the negative force of Amoleik up above. This would explain why they, more than any other people or nation, hated Yisroel so vehemently. The Zohar adds that this is also why the name Amoleik is incorporated in the very names of these two enemies of Yisroel – the “ayin-mem” from **בלעם** combines with the “lamed-kuf” of **בלק** to form **עמלק**. Due to their common origin from the impurity of the klipah of Amoleik, they joined forces to wage war against Yisroel.

This coincides beautifully with the Midrash (Esther Rabbati 7, 13) that states that before Amoleik attacked Yisroel in Rephidim, they sought Bilam’s counsel; he was the one that advised Amoleik to attack at that time:

“ויבא עמלק וילחם עם ישראל ברפידים, ומהיכן בא עמלק, אמר רבי כרוספדאי בשם רבי יוחנן, שבא מאצל בלעם הרשע, שבא ליטול עצה ממנו ואמר לו, יודע אני שבעל עצה אתה וגם בעל מחשבות רעות, וכל הנוטל עצה ממך אינו נכשל, אמר לו ראה מה עשו אומה זו למצרים שעשו להם כמה טובות, ומה למצרים שעשו להם כמה טובות עשו להם כך, לשאר אומות על אחת כמה וכמה, היאך אתה יועצני, אמר לו בלעם לך ועשה עמהם מלחמה.”

The possuk states that Amoleik came to battle Yisroel in Rephidim. Where did they come from? They came from seeking the advice of the wicked Bilam. They knew of his evil powers, that his advice was sought after, and that those who sought his advice did not fail. They were aware of what Yisroel did to Egypt, despite the favors Egypt had done for them. So, they were concerned as to what fate awaited the other nations of the world. They sought Bilam’s counsel; he advised them to go and wage war against Yisroel.

Due to their common origins, it was only logical for Amoleik to seek the wicked Bilam’s advice. He advised them to engage Yisroel in battle, because of his great animosity toward Yisroel. In that battle, Amoleik succeeded to the point that Yehoshua and his men had to weaken Amoleik by means of the sword. For this reason, we are commanded (Devarim 25, 17):

“זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים, אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריו ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלקים, והיה בהניח ה’ אלקיך לך מכל אויביך מסביב בארץ אשר ה’ אלהיך נותן לך נחלה לרשתה, תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח.”

This is a commandment to always remember Amoleik’s actions on our way out of Egypt – how he attacked the stragglers who were weak and tired and how he did not fear the Almighty. Even after we have inherited the land and conquered all of our enemies, we are commanded to eradicate all memory of Amoleik!

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Rashi explains: "אשר קרך, לשון קור וחום, צננך והפשירך מרתיחתך, שהיו העובדי כוכבים יראים להילחם בכם, ובא זה והתחיל והראה מקום לאחרים, משל לאמבטי רותחת שאין כל בריה יכולה לירד בתוכה, בא בן בליעל אחד קפץ וירד לתוכה, אע"פ שנכוה הקרה אותה בפניו." All of the other nations, the idol-worshippers, were afraid to wage war against you; Amoleik's initiative opened the door and gave them hope. Rashi draws the analogy to a boiling hot bathtub that is impossible for any living creature to enter; nevertheless, one irreverent scoundrel jumps into the tub and, despite getting burned, cools down the waters for others to follow.

Bolok Joins Forces with Bilam to Trigger the Negative Force of Amoleik

It is now quite clear why Bolok sought Bilam's assistance with respect to waging war against Yisroel; for, he was the one who advised Amoleik to be the first nation to attack Yisroel and they met with some success. Additionally, Bolok perceived that both of their spirits derived from the negative force of Amoleik — as the combination of the last two letters of each of their names testifies.

For this very same reason, Bilam was willing to join him — to unleash the power of Amoleik contained within the two of them and to direct it against Yisroel. Thus, the Moabites specifically chose Bolok as their king, in this hour of need, to harness the klipah of Amoleik in their battle against Yisroel — they envisioned the potential of uniting the forces of Bolok and Bilam.

Based on what we have discussed, it is apparent why Bilam grieved over the annihilation of Amoleik, declaring: "ראשית גוים עמלק ואחריתו עדי אובד" -- **Amoleik is the first among nations, but its end will be eternal destruction**; he was distressed by his own personal loss, being as his spirit derived from Amoleik. Furthermore, as Rashi explained, it was Bilam who encouraged Amoleik to be the first to do battle with Yisroel; so, their eventual extermination by Yisroel will come as a consequence of his advice.

We can add the following tidbit to the interpretation of this possuk: "ראשית גוים עמלק" — initially, when Amoleik had the audacity to attack Yisroel and experienced some success, they gained notoriety as the first nation to do battle with Yisroel; however, "ואחריתו" — when the last letters of Amoleik, embodied by ב-לק and בל-עם, chose to harness the negative force of Amoleik to do battle with Yisroel, that time they failed-- "ואחריתו עדי אובד"

Finally, we have learned in the Gemarah (Sanhedrin 20:): "שלש מצות נצטוו ישראל בכניסתן לארץ, להעמיד להם מלך, ולהכרית זרעו של עמלק, ולבנות להם בית הבחירה, ואיני יודע איזה מהן תחילה, כשהוא אומר כי יד על כל כס יה מלחמה לה' בעמלק, הוי אומר להעמיד להם מלך תחילה, ואין כסא אלא מלך שנאמר וישב שלמה על כסא ה' למלך" — upon entering Eretz Yisroel, Yisroel were commanded to perform three mitzvot — to appoint a king, to eradicate Amoleik and to build the Beit HaMikdash. Thus, we stand enlightened regarding Bilam's distress concerning the birth of Shmuel HaNovi. As we know, Shmuel anointed

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Shaul as the first king of Yisroel. Having fulfilled this first mitzvoh, they were then obliged to destroy Amoleik under Shaul's leadership. In the end, Shmuel himself severed Agag the king of Amoleik into pieces. Bilam, whose spirit derived from Amoleik, reacts to this eventual series of events by lamenting: "אוי מי יחיה משמו אל" — who will survive once Shmuel (whose name is formed by the last two words of this lament) is born and the will of Hashem is imposed!

Bilam Grieved over the Birth of Shmuel Who Anointed David as King

Following the lead of our great teacher the Arizal, let us further elaborate on the issue of why Bilam was so disturbed by the birth of Shmuel. It is a well-known fact that the mitzvoh of "mechiyat Amoleik" — erasing the memory of Amoleik — will not be fulfilled completely until the coming of the Mashiach. Rashi comments on the possuk in Yeshayah (34, 10): "מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור, מדורו של משה לדורו של שאול, ומשם לדורו של מלך משיח" — the battle against Amoleik for the sake of Hashem will extend from generation to generation, from Moshe's generation to Shaul's, then to Mordechai's, and finally to the generation of the Mashiach.

Furthermore, according to the Smag's opinion, the mitzvoh of "michiyas Amoleik" applies primarily to the days of the Mashiach (L.T. 226): "כשם שנמחה שבעת עממים, כך נצטוו ישראל למחות את זכר עמלק, שנאמר תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח... מצוה זו אינה נוהגת אלא לימות המשיח לאחר כיבוש הארץ, שנאמר והיה בהניח ה' אלקיך לך מכל אויבך מסביב תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים." This fact can be deduced from the words of the last possuk in Parshas Ki Teitzei: "תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים" — **It shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, gives you rest from all of your enemies all around (in the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you as an inheritance to possess it,) you shall wipe out the memory of Amoleik from under the heaven (--you shall not forget)!"**

The Radbaz on the Rambam (Hilchos Melochim 5, 5), however, disagrees with him: "וראיתי מי שכתב שאין מצוה זו נוהגת עד ימות המשיח, ופרשת שמואל ושאל הויה תיובתיה" In his opinion, the episode concerning Shmuel and Shaul contradicts the Smag's position; for, we see that Shmuel commanded Shaul HaMelech, in the name of Hashem, to wipe out Amoleik, even though the final redemption had not yet arrived.

We find in our sacred sources, however, a solid defense for the opinion of the Smag. Had Shaul followed Shmuel's instructions and completely annihilated Amoleik — without leaving behind a single remnant — the final redemption would have been hastened and realized — Shaul would have represented Mashiach ben Yosef and David HaMelech would have represented Mashiach ben David. This is described by the Pri Tzaddik as follows (Parshas Zachor 10):

"בדורו של שמואל אז לא נתגרה עמלק בישראל, רק כיון שהיו בארץ ישראל צוה השם יתברך לשאול להחרים את כל אשר לעמלק, ואם היה מקיים כאשר נצטווה, היה אז מחיית עמלק

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מכל וכל על ידי שאול שהוא מזרעו של בנימין... ואז היה דוד המלך ע"ה משיח, ושאל היה ראוי להיות משיח בן יוסף.

He points out that in Shmuel's generation Amoleik did not attack or bother Yisroel; nevertheless, HKB"H commanded Shaul to wipe out Amoleik simply because Yisroel were in Eretz Yisroel.

Indeed, the mitzvoh of "michiyas Amoleik" applies to the times of the Mashiach, after HKB"H designates the Mashiach as king, and gives us rest from all of the enemies surrounding us — as explained by the Smag. Nonetheless, HKB"H commanded Shaul to eliminate any trace of Amoleik, since that would have heralded the coming of the redemption. When, however, Shaul spared Agag's life, the redemption was postponed and the fulfillment of the mitzvoh of "mechiyat Amoleik" was postponed as well to the times of the Mashiach.

This provides us with a new way to view the fact that HKB"H sent Shmuel HaNovi to anoint the first two kings of Yisroel — Shaul HaMelech and David HaMelech. It was all in preparation for the future redemption to be led by Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben David. Shaul HaMelech possessed an element of the neshamah of Mashiach ben Yosef and, of course, Mashiach ben David descends from David HaMelech. In fact, according to the Zohar hakadosh (Lech Lecha 82:), David HaMelech himself will be the Melech HaMashiach.

Bilam's Dread of David and the Melech HaMashiach

Bilam's fear of Shmuel HaNovi is now quite easy to understand. Not only did he anoint Shaul HaMelech — who waged war against Amoleik — and kill Agag himself, he also anointed David as King of Yisroel. David HaMelech — who will be the Melech HaMashiach in the future — represents the future redemption (geulah), when HKB"H will completely eradicate all remnants of Amoleik, once and for all, and when the forces of evil and impurity will cease to exist. We describe this scenario daily in our prayers in "Aleinu L'shabeach": **והאלילים כרות יכרתון לתקן עולם במלכות שדי: "the false gods will be utterly exterminated to perfect the world as the kingdom of Hashem.**

Convincing proof of the wicked Bilam's mortal fear of David HaMelech and the Melech HaMashiach can be found in the illuminating words of the Rambam. He reveals to us that Bilam devoted an entire prophecy to David HaMelech and the Melech HaMashiach. He writes (Hilchos Melochim 11, 1):

"המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה לממשלה הראשונה, ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל... וכל מי שאינו מאמין בו, או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו, לא בשאר נביאים בלבד הוא כופר, אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו, שהרי התורה העידה עליו שנאמר (דברים ל ד) ושב ה' אלקיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך וגו', אם יהיה נדחך בקצה השמים וגו' והביאך ה'..."

אף בפרשת בלעם נאמר ושם ניבא בשני המשיחים, במשיח הראשון שהוא דוד שהושיע את ישראל מיד צריהם, ובמשיח האחרון שעומד מבניו שמושיע את ישראל באחרונה, ושם הוא

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אומר (במדבר כד יז) אראנו ולא עתה, זה דוד, אשורנו ולא קרוב, זה מלך המשיח. דרך כוכב מיעקב, זה דוד, וקם שבט מישראל, זה מלך המשיח. ומחץ פאתי מואב, זה דוד... וקרקר כל בני שת, זה המלך המשיח... והיה אדום ירשה, זה דוד... והיה ירשה וגו', זה המלך המשיח, שנאמר ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון וגו'."

In the future, the Melech HaMashiach will return the kingship of David to its former glory, he will restore the Beit HaMikdash and will gather in all of Yisroel that have strayed. . . Anyone who does not believe in him or does not anticipate his coming demonstrates his denial of the prophets, Moshe Rabeinu and the Torah.

In fact, in the passage concerning Bilam (Bamidbor 24, 17-18), he prophesies about the two mashiachs — David and the mashiach that will descend from him to finally save Yisroel, in the end of days. "I see it, but not now" refers to David; "I view it, but it is not near" refers to the Melech HaMashiach; "a star shot forth from Yaakov" refers to David; "and a rod has risen from Yisroel" refers to the Melech HaMashiach; "and he shall strike down the extremities of Moav" refers to David; "and undermine all the children of Shet" refers to the Melech HaMashiach; "Edom shall be a conquest" refers to David; "and Seir shall be a conquest of his enemies" refers to the Melech HaMashiach.

This prophecy clearly demonstrates the wicked Bilam's utter fear of David HaMelech and HaMelech HaMashiach. It is even more obvious now as to why he dreaded the birth of Shmuel HaNovi, who anointed both Shaul and David. After all, his spirit originated from the klipah of Amoleik; Shaul HaMelech waged war against Amoleik; David HaMelech, the future Mashiach, will complete the extermination of Amoleik, once and for all. Foreseeing these events, Bilam cried out in agony: "אוי מי יחיה משמו אל" — who will survive the birth of Shmuel and the ominous future his birth will impose; he understood that Shmuel's birth heralded the ultimate annihilation of Amoleik.

Yehoshua Only Weakened the Two Letters ע"ם from the Name Amoleik

Continuing along this exalted path, let us proceed with the utmost care and caution to resolve the remaining questions we posed above. First of all, why did the Moabites choose Bolok as their king rather than Bilam? Also, why does the verse: "אולי אובל נבה בו" — perhaps **I** will succeed, **we** will strike at it — open in the singular (אובל) and conclude in the plural (נבה)? To address these issues, let us step into the incredible universe of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Koritz, zy"א, in his sefer Brit Kehunat Olam (Maamar Hahster Ahstir 29).

We learned from the Zohar hakadosh that the name Amoleik, עמל"ק, consists of two parts; the first two letters, ע"מ, appear in Bilam's name, בלע"ם; the last two letters, ל"ק, appear in Bolok's name, בל"ק. Based on the possuk concerning the battle with Amoleik (Shemot 17, 13): "ויחלוש יהושע את עמלק ואת עמו לפני חרב" — **Yehoshua weakened Amoleik and its people by means of the sword** — the Brit Kehunat Olam reveals that Yehoshua was only able to weaken the first two letters of the name Amoleik, the ע"מ. A

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careful reading and analysis of the possuk reveals that Yehoshua only weakened Amoleik, and what he specifically weakened was עמ"ו, his "ayin-mem" — the first two letters of the name עמל"ק. The two remaining letters of Amoleik, the ל"ק, remained intact.

In this manner, he explains the following words of the Zohar hakadosh in our parsha (199:) elucidating the name of Bolok: "בל"ק ב"א ל"ק, אתא מאן דלקי לון" — the name Bolok is a conjunction of the words ב"א and ל"ק (dropping the aleph), which signifies the one that will afflict Yisroel. In other words, Bolok embodied the two remaining letters "lamed-kuf," ל"ק, which were not weakened or affected by Yehoshua; with the force of these two intact letters, he hoped to strike and harm Yisroel. This is the gist of the Brit Kehunat Olam's revelation.

Still, why was Yehoshua only able to weaken the first two letters of Amoleik, the "ayin-mem," which appear in the name Bilam, בלע"ם, but not the two letters "lamed-kuf," which appear in the name Bolok, בל"ק? It seems that they were afforded protection due to the fact that Bolok was destined to become the king of Moav. For, HKB"H warns Yisroel (Deovorim 2, 9): "אל תצר את מואב ואל תתגר בם מלחמה" — **You shall not distress Moav nor shall you provoke war with them.** In light of this directive, Yehoshua was not permitted to harm or wage war against the letters "lamed-kuf," which belonged to Bolok, the future king of Moav.

Therefore, Yehoshua, following Moshe Rabeinu's advice, cleverly attacked the two letters "ayin-mem," which belonged to the wicked Bilam — the one who had advised Amoleik to attack Yisroel. The genius of this plan was that by neutralizing the first two letters of Amoleik's name, the "ayin-mem" — representing the foremost part of the klipah's negative forces — the remainder of the klipah would be weakened, as well. After all, it is a well-known principle that the body follows after the head; or, in the words of the Gemarah (Shabbat 75.): "פסיק רישא ולא ימות" — it is inevitable that if the head is removed, the body will succumb as well.

The Moabites Appointed Bolok as King because He Possessed the Letters "Lamed-kuf"

We now understand why the people of Moav chose Bolok over Bilam to be their king in that moment of need. They were aware that Yehoshua had already weakened the letters "ayin-mem" of Bilam's; they realized, as well, that the two letters "lamed-kuf" of Bolok's remained seemingly intact. Thus, they chose Bolok to be king of Moav hoping to arouse the remaining power of Amoleik in order to do battle with Yisroel.

Bolok, however, who was wise and was a renowned sorcerer in his own right, understood that the damage to the first two letters of עמל"ק would eventually take its toll on the remaining two letters, the ל"ק. With this in mind, he sent messengers to Bilam, strategically planning to join forces. After all, Yehoshua had not succeeded in destroying the letters ע"מ completely, he had only weakened them. Therefore, Bolok figured that by

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joining forces, the two letters ל"ק that were not weakened could revitalize and strengthen the two letters ע"ם that Yehoshua had weakened.

At this point, it is worth noting that in our text, Scriptures repeatedly describe Yisroel as עַם, meaning the people: "וַיִּגַר מוֹאֵב מִפְּנֵי הָעַם מְאֹד כִּי רַב הוּא" — **Moav became very frightened of the people ("ahm"), because it was numerous.** We can interpret this as teaching us that Moav was overwhelmed with fear due to the weakening of the two letters "ayin-mem" from the klipah of Amoleik. (This interpretation is based on the fact that the word for "a people," "ahm," is spelled "ayin-mem.") The possuk itself goes on to explain the reason for their fear: "כִּי רַב הוּא" — since the two letters "ayin-mem" are the first two letters of the name Amoleik, representing its head, their power is formidable. When Yisroel diminished this formidable power, the entire body and force of Amoleik was weakened.

How beautifully this explains the hidden meaning of the message Bolok sent to Bilam: הִנֵּה "הנה" — Behold! A people ("ayin-mem") has come out of Egypt. He was alluding to Bilam that Bnei Yisroel had already weakened and seized for themselves the vital force contained in the letters "ayin-mem," from the end of Bilam's name. His message continues: "וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב מִמּוֹלִי" — that people now stand opposite me, בל"ק, prepared to weaken the two letters "lamed-kuf" of his name, as well.

Now, we can make sense of the peculiar phraseology of Bolok's statement to Bilam: אֹלֵי "אולי" — he opens with the singular form--"אוכל" — and concludes with the plural form--"נכה"; he is alluding to Bilam that the initial phase of the war against Yisroel must be conducted by Bolok alone, since his two letters ל"ק remained intact and unaffected by Yehoshua. As Bilam's two letters, ע"ם, draw strength and are reinvigorated by Bolok's ל"ק, then he, too, will be able to join the attack against Yisroel, chas v'shalom.

Notwithstanding, the prophecy Bilam was forced to utter by HKB"H conveys a revealing message: "רֵאשִׁית גּוֹיִם עִמְלֶק" — indeed, Amoleik was the first to venture a military attack against Yisroel, because of Bilam's advice; in that skirmish Yehoshua was only able to weaken the first two letters of his name. Yet, rest assured, not only were the first two letters affected, but: "וְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ עֲדֵי אוֹבֵד" — the last two letters, ל"ק, which remained with Bolok, will be eliminated from existence at the time of the future redemption.

It is timely and fitting to conclude this essay with a nice explanation regarding the formula recited during the Kedushah of Keter on Shabbos and Yom Tov: הֵן גְּאֻלְתֵּי אֲתֻכְּם "הן גאלתי אתכם" — at the time of the future redemption, that "אחריית כראשית" — the end of the name Amoleik, the two letters "lamed-kuf," will be totally neutralized just as the first two letters, "ayin-mem," were already neutralized by Yehoshua; consequently, all four letters of the name Amoleik will be eradicated — swiftly, in our times. Omein.