

“You have struck me these three times”

## Bolok and Bilom Conspired to Prevent the Appearance of Dovid HaMelech — the Fourth and Final Leg of the Kisei HaKavod

In this week's parsha, parshas Bolok, we read (Bamidbor 22, 28): **“ויפתח ה' את פי האתון ותאמר לבלעם מה עשיתי לך כי הכיתני: זה שלש רגלים — Hashem opened the mouth of the she-donkey and she said to Bilom, “What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times?”** Based on the Midrash (Bamidbor Rabbah 20, 14), Rashi makes the following comment: **“זה שלש רגלים, רמז לו אתה מבקש לעקור אומה החוגגת שלש רגלים בשנה”** — the donkey intimated to Bilom that he was attempting to uproot a nation which celebrates three festivals during the year. (Note that the phrase employed by the possuk to indicate that he struck the donkey three times is “sholosh regolim” — the same phrase and name used to refer to the three festivals.) It is worth trying to understand why the celebration of the “sholosh regolim” — the three festivals — specifically, rather than some other mitzvot, served to protect Yisroel from the wicked Bilom's curses.

We shall begin our explanation based on the words of the Agra D'Kallah. He elaborates on the fact that Bolok hired Bilom to curse Yisroel in order to safeguard the holy spark — the “nitzotz hakadosh” — of Dovid HaMelech that was concealed and buried within the nation of Moav within Ruth the Moabite. It is a well-known fact that the nations of the world are sustained by the holy sparks that are concealed in their midst. Furthermore, when these “nitzotzei kedushah” are finally extracted, those nations are weakened and ultimately cease to exist.

Thus, we can interpret the text as follows: **“וירא בלק בן ציפור”** — by means of his magic, Bolok saw that the spark of Dovid HaMelech was concealed within the nation of Moav; **“ויגר”** — **“מואב מפני העם מאד”** — the people of Moav were extremely frightened that Yisroel would extract this holy spark from their midst; **“כי רב הוא”** — due to the formidable forces of kedushah that they possessed; **“ויואמר מואב אל זקני מדין עתה ילחכו הקהל”** — Moav appealed to the elders of Midian to help them prevent the destruction of the safeguards they had built as protection, surrounding this holy “nitzotz”; **“כלחור השור”** — **“את ירק השדה”** — for if they succeed we will be devoured and terminated. This is the gist of his elaborate explanation.

We can add a spicy tidbit to this wonderful explanation based on the words of the Midrash (B.R. 44, 23). Out of the ten nations that inhabited the Land of Canaan, HKB”H only delivered seven into the hands of Yisroel. The remaining three nations — the Kini, Knizi and Kadmoni — representing Edom, Amon and Moav, are not destined to be delivered into Yisroel's hands until the times of the Mashiach. Additionally, it is known that at the time of the final redemption, all of the other nations will cease to exist — as prophesied by the wicked Bilom (Bamidbor 24, 19): **“וירד מיעקב והאביד שריד מעיר”** — one from Yaakov shall rule and destroy the remnant of a city. Rashi explains: **“על מלך המשיח”** — **“אומר כן שנאמר בו וירד מים עד ים, ולא יהיה שריד לבית עשו”** — this is a reference to the Melech HaMashiach of whom it is said, “There shall be not remnant from the house of Eisav.”

Now, according to the Zohar hakadosh (Parshas Pekudei 232b), Dovid HaMelech himself is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach: **“דוד איהו הוה מלכא בהאי עלמא ודוד יהי מלכא”** — **“לזמנא דאתי, ועל דא אמר אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פנה”** — Dovid was the king in this world and he will be the king in the days to come.

Based on this introduction, it is reasonable to posit that Moav's major fear and concern was that the presence of Dovid HaMelech's spark would be discovered. As the future Melech HaMashiach, he would lead Yisroel in the conquest of Edom, Amon and Moav, and the forces of tumah and impurity would ultimately be eradicated completely once and for all — a fulfillment of the prophetic words: **“והאביד שריד מעיר”** -- and destroy the remnant of a city. An allusion to this eventual reality can be found in the possuk (22, 7): **“וילכו זקני מואב וזקני מדין וקסמים”** — **“בידם”** — the possuk employs the word “בידם” — meaning “in their hands.” This word can be viewed as an abbreviation for the words: **“בן ישי דוד משיח”** — the son of Yishai, Dovid the Mashiach — implying that their main fear was related to the holy spark of Dovid, the future Melech HaMashiach.

## The Three Festivals Correspond to the Three Patriarchs Who Are the Three Legs of the Throne

Following this enchanting path, let us rise to the occasion and proceed to explain why HKB”H granted the donkey the power of speech and had her say to Bilom: **“כי הכיתני זה שלש רגלים”** — you have struck me these three times. At this point, let us introduce the enlightening words of the Shaarei Orah, authored by the divine kabbalist, Mahari Gikatalia. He addresses an interesting question. On the one hand, the Torah refers to the three festivals of Pesach, Shavuos and Succos as the “sholosh regolim.” Yet, according to the Gemoreh (Succah 48a), Shemini Atzeres is considered a festival onto itself, a fourth festival: **“רגל”** בפני עצמו. Here is what he writes:

**“ולפיכך אמרה תורה (שמות כג ד) שלש רגלים תחוג לי בשנה, כנגד אברהם ויצחק ויעקב, והרגל הרביעי הוא חג העצרת, כמו שאמר (במדבר כט לה) ביום השמיני עצרת תהיה לכם, ואמרו חז”ל בסוף סוכה (דף מח.)... שהוא רגל בפני עצמו, ואם הם רק שלוש רגלים היאך שמיני עצרת רגל בפני עצמו והרי הם ד’ רגלים, אלא רגל בפני עצמו באמת שהוא כנגד מגן דוד [בברכת הפטרה], והוא סוד רגל רביעית לכסא מרכבה.”**

In fact, there are actually four festivals; however, Shemini Atzeres stands alone and is the secret to the fourth leg of the Throne of Glory (Kisei HaKavod), the holy Chariot (Merkavah).

To understand the sacred words of the Shaarei Orah let us refer to several sources. Regarding the possuk (Shemos 23, 14), the Midrash (S.R. 1, 2) comments: **“שלש רגלים תחוג לי בשנה,”** HKB”H established three festivals in the merit of the three Patriarchs, the Ovos. The Tur (O.C. 417), citing his brother, delineates the association of the festivals with the Ovos as follows: **“פסח כנגד אברהם דכתיב (בראשית יח ו) לושי ועשי עוגות ופסח היה, שבועות כנגד יצחק, שתקיעת שופר של מתן תורה היה בשופר מאילו של יצחק, סוכות כנגד יעקב דכתיב (בראשית לג יז) [ויעקב נסע סוכותה ויבן לו בית] Pesach corresponds to Avraham; Shavuos corresponds to Yitzchok; Succos corresponds to Yaakov.**

Thus, the Shaarei Orah explains that the festivals are referred to as the “sholosh regolim,” because they correspond to the three Ovos, who merited becoming the three legs of the Throne of Glory — the Kisei HaKavod. (Note that the word “regolim” derives from the Hebrew word for leg.) Shemini Atzeres, however, is referred to as: **“רגל בפני עצמו”** — a festival, a “regel,” all by itself, because it represents Dovid HaMelech — who merited becoming the fourth leg of the Throne. This idea is similarly expressed by the Recanati (Noach): **“ואולי כי לזה כוונו רז”ל באמרום על שמיני עצרת רגל בפני עצמו, כי השלשה רגלים הם לשלשה אבות והרגל הרביעי הוא לדוד והוא שמיני עצרת.”**

The Megaleh Amukos on parshas Voeschanon (200) writes that the four legs of the Throne of Glory correspond to the four letters of the name Havaya. The three legs corresponding to the Ovos correspond to the letters **יהי**; while the fourth leg, representing Dovid HaMelech and completing the set, corresponds to the final letter **ה** of the holy name. Concerning this idea, he adds (ibid. 252) an amazing allusion: the numerical value of the words **מרכבה שלימה** — meaning the complete Chariot — equals the numerical value of the names **אברהם יצחק יעקב דוד** — Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov and Dovid.

## Dovid Merited the Royal Throne for Supplying the Fourth and Final Leg

Based on the enlightening words of the Shaarei Orah, we can suggest a new understanding why HKB”H promised Dovid HaMelech, a”h, that he and his descendants would sit atop the royal throne forever. We find this promise expressed to him by HKB”H via Nosan HaNovi (Shmuel II 7, 16): **“ונאמן ביתך וממלכתך — עד עולם לפניך כסאך יהיה נכון עד עולם”** — your dynasty and your kingdom will remain steadfast before you forever; your throne will remain firm forever. Elsewhere we find (Tehillim 89, 4): **“כרתי ברית לבחירי נשבעתי לדוד עבדי, עד עולם אכין זרעך ובניתי לדור — ודור כסאך סלה”** — I have sworn to Dovid, My servant: For all eternity I will establish your seed, and I will build for generation after generation your throne. Selah.

To begin with, let us explain the concept of HKB”H sitting on His Throne of Glory. It is written in Yeshayah (6, 1): **“ואראה — את אדני יושב על כסא רם ונשא”** — I saw the Lord sitting upon a high and lofty throne. Clearly, this is not to be understood simply and literally. For, HKB”H is not a physical being. Nevertheless, an explanation for this concept is provided by the Maharal in Gevuros Hashem (Chapter 70). HKB”H’s sovereignty in this world is perceived as a king sitting atop his royal throne. We find this expression employed in Pharaoh’s statement to Yosef (Bereishis 41, 40): **“רק הכסא אגדל ממך”** — only by the throne shall I outrank you. There Rashi explains that the concept of the “throne” — **“כסא”** — is an expression of sovereignty and kingship.

We can expand on this explanation by introducing the words of the author of the Tanya in Shaar HaYichud V’HaEmunah (Chapter 7): **“הנה הוא ידוע לכל, כי תכלית בריאת העולם הוא בשביל — התגלות מלכותו יתברך, דאין מלך בלא עם”** In other words, the purpose of creation is that HKB”H be recognized and referred to as **“מלך”**, King. Now, you cannot have a king without a people, his loyal subjects. Hence, by Yisroel accepting upon themselves the yoke of His sovereignty, HKB”H effectively became King of all of creation.

So, the matter of HKB”H sitting on His Throne can be understood in the same vein, as it is written (Esther 1, 2): **”בימים ההם כשבת המלך אחשוורוש על כסא מלכותו אשר בשושן הַבִּירָה”** — in those days, when King Achashveirosh sat on his royal throne which was in Shushan the capital. There Rashi explains that the possuk refers to when his kingship became an effective reality. Similarly, when HKB”H’s sovereignty is revealed and becomes apparent — as it is written (Tehillim 145, 13): **”מלכותך מלכות כל עולמים וממשלתך בכל דור ודור”** — Your kingdom is a kingdom spanning all eternities, and Your dominion is throughout every generation — then He is described as a king sitting atop his royal throne.

It turns out, therefore, that HKB”H’s firm, stable seat on His Throne of Glory did not become a reality, so to speak, until Dovid HaMelech became the fourth and final leg of the Throne of Glory. Sitting on a throne possessing four legs indicated that HKB”H’s sovereignty over Yisroel was finally complete. Therefore, measure for measure — *”midah k’neged midah”* — HKB”H promised Dovid and his descendants that they would sit atop the royal throne of Yisroel forevermore.

In this light, we can begin to comprehend the possuk (Divrei HaYamim I 29, 23): **”ויושב שלמה על כסא ה’ למלך תחת דויד אביו”** — Shlomo sat upon the throne of Hashem as king in place of his father Dovid. At first glance, it is astonishing that Scriptures refers to sitting on Dovid’s throne as sitting upon the Throne of Hashem--**”כסא ה’”**. Yet, based on what we have just discussed, the association becomes apparent. Dovid and his descendants merited sitting on the royal throne of Yisroel, due to his completing the set of four legs of the heavenly Throne — which correspond to the four letters of the holy name. By doing so, in effect he placed HKB”H, so to speak, on His Throne of Glory. Thus, sitting on Dovid’s throne, which serves as a Chariot bearing the Throne of Glory, is tantamount to sitting on the Throne of Hashem with all four of its letters.

### What Function Did Dovid HaMelech Fulfill that the Holy Ovos Did Not?

We are now obligated, however, to answer a perplexing question. According to the Shaarei Orah, the three holy Ovos — Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov — merited becoming the first three legs of the Throne of Glory. Correspondingly, HKB”H granted us the *”sholosh regolim,”* the three festivals. Dovid HaMelech, on the other hand, merited becoming the fourth leg of the Throne. Correspondingly, HKB”H granted us Shemini Atzeres, which is referred to as a separate festival--**”רגל בפני עצמו”**.

How is it possible that the sacred Ovos, who served Hashem so completely, were incapable of completing the necessary set of four legs required to support the Throne of Glory? In fact, the Gemoreh states explicitly (Berachos 16b): **”אין קורין אבות אלא לשלשה”** — only three are referred to as Ovos. Nonetheless, Dovid HaMelech’s contribution was necessary to provide the fourth leg and to complete the Throne. So, it is imperative to ask: what service of Hashem did Dovid HaMelech provide that the Ovos failed to provide?

Furthermore, as explained, the three festivals — Pesach, Shavuos and Succos — together with Shemini Atzeres comprise the four legs of the Throne of Glory. If so, why does HKB”H distinguish between them and mention them separately in the Torah? It specifically states: **”שלוש רגלים תחוג לי בשנה”** — three festivals shall you celebrate during the year; Shemini Atzeres, **”רגל בפני עצמו”**, stands alone and is mentioned separately. Why aren’t they mentioned together as corresponding to the four legs of the Throne of Glory?

Hashem has enlightened me and inspired me to propose a novel explanation. We have learned in the Mishnah (Ovos 1, 2): **”על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים”** — creation is sustained by three things — Torah, religious service and acts of kindness. The Zohar hakadosh (Vayetztei 146b) explains that the three Ovos constitute the three pillars that support creation: **”על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים, התורה דא יעקב, העבודה דא יצחק, גמילות חסדים דא אברהם”** — Yaakov is the pillar of Torah, Yitzchok is the pillar of religious service and Avraham is the pillar of human kindness.

So, now let us address the missing ingredient supplied by Dovid HaMelech. We can deduce the answer from what we have learned in the following Gemoreh (Avodah Zoreh 4b):

**”לא דוד ראוי לאותו מעשה [דבת שבע] דכתיב (תהלים קט כב) ולבי חלל בקרבי... אלא לומר לך שאם חטא יחיד אומרים לו כלך אצל יחיד... והיינו דרבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן, מאי דכתיב (שמואל ב כג א) נאום דוד בן ישי ונאום הגבר הוקם על, נאום דוד בן ישי שהקים עולה של תשובה.”**

It was arranged from above that Dovid would fail in the matter involving Bas Sheva. As a result, he established the pathway of teshuvoh — repentance — for all of Yisroel to emulate.

### Torah Religious Service Kindness and Teshuvoh Are the Four Legs

It appears that the three legs of the Kisei HaKavod which represent the three holy Ovos correspond to the three pillars that support the world: **תורה, עבודה, גמילות חסדים**. Nonetheless, the wisest of all men states (Koheles 7, 20): **”כי אדם אין צדיק בארץ”**

**“אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא”** — there is no man on earth who is so righteous that he will never sin. Therefore, the fourth leg of the Throne corresponds to Dovid HaMelech, who demonstrated the benefits of teshuvoh for all of Yisroel. Even if a person failed to some degree regarding the three basic pillars--**תורה, עבודה, גמילות חסדים** — he can correct his wrongs by means of teshuvoh.

Hence, the fourth leg does not represent an entirely novel form of service. Rather, it corresponds to teshuvoh which actually addresses man’s failures within the realms of the first three legs — Torah, religious service and acts of kindness. This accounts for why HKB”H only mentions explicitly in the Torah “sholosh regolim” — corresponding to the three pillars, **תורה, עבודה, גמילות חסדים**. After all, they ideally encompass all manner of service of Hashem. Still, it was necessary for HKB”H to add Shemini Atzeres as a separate entity so that a person could correct any shortcomings or wrongs committed within the realm of the three legs by means of teshuvoh.

Support for this idea can be found in our holy sources based on a teaching in the Zohar hakadosh Raeyah Mehemnoh (Pinchas 122a). It teaches that transgressions cause a separation between the final letter **ה** of the holy name and the first three letters **יהי**. Yet, by performing teshuvoh, the final “hei” can be reunited with the first three letters. In fact, the word **תשובה** can be broken down to form the words **תשובה** — alluding to the fact that the process of repentance is able to restore the letter “hei” to its former position. This fits magnificently with the idea proposed above. Due to his act of teshuvoh, Dovid HaMelech merited becoming the fourth leg of the Throne of Glory — uniting the final “hei,” the fourth leg, with the first three letters and legs.

How beautifully this explains the statement in the Gemoreh (Yoma 86a): **“גדולה תשובה שמגעת עד כסא הכבוד”** — teshuvoh is so great that its effects reach all the way to the Throne of Glory. We have learned that Dovid HaMelech supplied the fourth and final leg of the Throne of Glory by means of the mitzvah of teshuvoh. As a result, this allowed HKB”H, as it were, to sit on a Throne of Glory supported by four strong, healthy legs. Hence, if we emulate the ways of Dovid HaMelech and perform **תשובה** — which reunites the final “hei” with the first three letters, **תשובה** — the effects of our teshuvoh reach the Kisei HaKavod; we reinforce the fourth leg of the Throne.

### **“I Shall Recite the Blessing and It Is Fitting for Me to Recite”**

With this understanding, we can begin to unravel a puzzling scenario described in the Gemoreh (Pesochim 119b) involving Dovid HaMelech. The Gemoreh describes a feast that HKB”H makes for the tzaddikim in future times:

**“עתיד הקב”ה לעשות סעודה לצדיקים ביום שיגמל חסדו לזרעו של יצחק, לאחר שאוכלים ושותים נותנים לו לאברהם אבינו כוס של ברכה לברך, ואומר להן איני מברך שיצא ממני ישמעאל. אומר לו ליצחק טול וברך, אומר להן איני מברך שיצא ממני עשו. אומר לו ליעקב טול וברך, אומר להם איני מברך שנשאתי שתי אחיות... אומר לו למשה טול וברך, אומר להם איני מברך שלא זכיתי ליכנס לארץ ישראל... אומר לו ליהושע טול וברך, אומר להן איני מברך שלא זכיתי לבן... אומר לו לדוד טול וברך, אומר להן אני אברך ולי נאה לברך, שנאמר (תהלים קטז יג) כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא.”**

After eating and drinking, the cup for reciting Birkas HaMazon will be given to Avraham; he will refuse the honor on the grounds that Yishmael descended from him. Similarly, Yitzchok will refuse the honor on the grounds that he begat Eisav. Next Yaakov will turn down the honor, because he married two sisters. Moshe will refuse on the grounds that he was not allowed to enter Eretz Yisroel. Yehoshua will refuse because he did not merit having a son. When the honor of reciting Birkas HaMazon will be offered to Dovid, he will say, “I shall recite and it is fitting for me to recite.” Supporting the fact that Dovid HaMelech will be the one to recite the blessing, the Gemoreh quotes a statement of Dovid’s in Tehillim (116, 13): **“כוס ישועות אשא ובשם ה' אקרא”** — I will raise the cup of salvations and I will invoke the name of Hashem.

Not surprisingly, the commentaries are bewildered by this sequence of events. All of Dovid’s predecessors refuse to recite the blessing because of some personal flaw; yet, Dovid accepts the honor in a very bold fashion. This is especially surprising since our blessed sages (Chullin 89a) attest to Dovid’s extreme humility. Additionally, he states in Tehillim (51, 5): **“כי פשעי אני”** — **אדע וחטאתי נגדי תמיד** — indicating that he is always cognizant of his sins and shortcomings. So, how is it that Dovid will not hesitate to accept the honor and will actually do so with bravado, proclaiming: **“אני אברך ולי נאה לברך”** -- “I shall recite and it is fitting for me to recite”?

Yet, based on our present discussion, an explanation is readily available. As noted above, HKB”H arranged that Dovid HaMelech specifically would be the individual to establish the path of teshuvoh for all of Yisroel to emulate. Additionally, we have learned in the Gemoreh (Yoma 86b): **“גדולה תשובה”** — **שמביאה את הגאולה** — teshuvoh has the power to bring about the redemption. In like fashion, the Rambam states (Hilchot Teshuvoh 7, 5): **“אין ישראל נגאלין אלא בתשובה”** — Yisroel will not be redeemed without the performance of teshuvoh. Finally, we have already pointed out that Dovid HaMelech himself is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach. Combining all of these factors, who better to demonstrate for Yisroel the ways of teshuvoh which will herald in the future and final redemption?!

## “I will raise the cup of salvations and I will invoke the name of Hashem”

We can now rejoice that we can begin to appreciate the depth of Dovid HaMelech's wisdom. Upon seeing that his righteous predecessors will all decline to recite the blessing because of some miniscule personal flaw, he will come to an amazing realization. Why did HKB”H save him for last to recite the blessing over the cup? If the mighty find themselves deficient, what merit could he possibly have after failing in the matter of Bas Sheva?

It will strike him that this was all part of the divine plan. If HKB”H had not arranged it, he would not have sinned with Bas Sheva. It was his destiny to demonstrate the paths of teshuvoh for all of Yisroel — which would ultimately merit them the final redemption. It is a well-known fact (Berachos 34b): **“מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדין”** — where baalei teshuvoh stand, complete tzaddikim do not stand. Therefore, HKB”H will arrange that Dovid HaMelech will be the last one available to recite the blessing over the cup. This will demonstrate the tremendous power of teshuvoh and its ability to hasten the redemption. Once struck by this realization, Dovid will immediately agree and will proclaim: **“אני אברך ולי נאה לברך”** -- I shall recite and it is fitting for me to recite — for where baalei teshuvoh stand, the totally righteous do not stand.

This explains beautifully the Gemoreh's substantiation of the fact that Dovid HaMelech will be the one to recite the blessing over the cup. They bring proof from his own statement: **“כוס”** **“אקרא”** -- I will raise the cup of salvations and I will invoke the name of Hashem. Firstly, he states that he will raise the cup in the future. Then he explains: **“ובשם ה”** **“אקרא”** — in the merit of teshuvoh, I was able to complete the set of four legs of the Throne corresponding to the four letters of the name of Hashem.

It struck me that this also explains very nicely Dovid HaMelech's statement (Tehillim 26, 12): **“רגלי עמדה במישור”** **“במקהלים אברך ה”** — my foot stands on the straight path, I will bless Hashem in assemblies. We find a wonderful interpretation of this possuk provided by the great Rabbi Aryeh Leib of Tzintz, zy”a, in Melo HaOmer. Dovid's enemies and critics claimed that the leg that Dovid represents, the fourth leg of the Throne, stands atilt due to the impropriety with Bas Sheva. Dovid HaMelech, however, dispels their claim by responding: **“רגלי עמדה במישור”** — my representative leg stands straight and steadfast and to prove that it is so: **“במקהלים אברך ה”** — I will be the one to recite the blessing over the cup for the righteous assembly in the future; this will prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that my leg stood on the straight path without a flaw.

At this point, we can better appreciate the donkey's statement to Bilom: **“מה עשיתי לך כי הכיתני זה שלש רגלים”** -- What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times (sholosh regolim)? As we know, she was alluding to the fact that he was attempting to uproot a people that celebrates the “sholosh regolim” during the year. In fact, she wished to communicate to him that his attempts to prevent the extraction of the holy spark of Dovid HaMelech from Moav would prove unsuccessful. After all, the three Ovos only represent three of the four legs of the Kisei HaKavod that HKB”H sits upon. The neshamah of Dovid HaMelech, representing the fourth and final leg, has yet to be revealed. Hence, its appearance is inevitable.

## Bolok and Bilom Wished to Prevent Yisroel from Performing Teshuvoh

Continuing along this exalted path, let us focus on the commentary of the Megaleh Amukos on Voeschanon (107). He explains that with Bolok's statement to Bilom (Bamidbar 22, 6): **“ועתה לכה נא ארה לי את העם הזה”** — now, please come and curse this people for me — he intended that Bilom curse them so as to eliminate their power of teshuvoh during the month of Elul and Rosh HaShanah. The word meaning curse in this possuk is **“ארה”**. This word can also be interpreted as an abbreviation for **אילול ר'אש ה'שנה**. The word **א"ת** can be interpreted as an abbreviation for **אילול ת'שרי**. He adds that the word **“ארה”** is an allusion to the fifty days of teshuvoh extending from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Hoshana Rabbah. For, during this fifty day period there are one thousand (אל"ף) two-hundred (רי"ש) hours during which to perform teshuvoh — the process of **תשובה** — restoring the final letter “hei” to its proper position. Thus, the word **ארה”** is composed of these three elements — the “aleph,” the “reish” and the “hei.”

It is now exceedingly clear why Bolok chose that specific moment in time to fight over the fifty days of teshuvoh extending from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Hoshana Rabbah. As we have seen, their main objective was to prevent the discovery and revelation of the “nitzotz hakadosh” of Dovid HaMelech — who established the pathway of teshuvoh for all of Yisroel to emulate. In the merit of teshuvoh, Yisroel would ultimately merit the final redemption led by Dovid HaMelech himself as Melech HaMashiach. Furthermore, the fifty days of teshuvoh under discussion actually serve as preparation for the fifty-first day, which is Shemini Atzeres. As we have learned, Shemini Atzeres is a festival in its own right--**“רגל בפני עצמו”** — corresponding to Dovid HaMelech who supplied the fourth and final leg of the Kisei HaKavod. Hence, they battled with all their might to eliminate the power of teshuvoh inherent in these fifty days.

Let me add another allusion to be found in Bolok's request: "ועתה לכה נא ארה לי את העם הזה" -- now, please come and curse this people for me — based on what the Agra D'Kallah writes (Lech Lecho) on the possuk (Bereishis 13, 8): "ויאמר אברם אל לוט אל נא תהי מריבה ביני ובינך" — Avram said to Lot, "Please let there not be a feud between me and you. He finds an allusion in this possuk to Dovid HaMelech who was to eventually descend from Lot through Ruth the Moabite. For, the fifty-first day of the days of teshuvoh is Shemini Atzeres, which corresponds to Dovid HaMelech. The Hebrew letters which represent the number fifty-one are **נ"א**; these two letters also form a word meaning please, which appears in this possuk. Hence, we can expound the possuk as follows: "אל נא תהי מריבה" — let us not abolish Shemini Atzeres — the fifty-first (**נ"א**) day — due to our disagreements.

Similarly, we can suggest that this same allusion is inherent in Bolok's request of Bilom: "ועתה לכה נא" -- now, please come. We find that he specifically employs the term **נ"א** — indicating that he is intent on eliminating Shemini Atzeres, the **נ"א** day of the period of teshuvoh corresponding to Dovid HaMelech. He proceeds to spell out his plan: "ארה לי" — by means of your ability to curse, eradicate the fifty days of teshuvoh extending from Rosh Chodesh Elul to Hoshana Rabbah — alluded to by the term **אר"ה**. Recall that the Hebrew word for the letter "aleph" -- **א'לף** — also means one thousand; the letter "reish" has a numerical value of two-hundred; the letter "hei" represents the process of teshuvoh and the reuniting of the final letter "hei" with the first three letters of the holy name Havaya. Thus, the word **אר"ה** alludes to the one thousand two hundred hours contained in this fifty day period of teshuvoh.

### "Hashem placed a דבר in Bilom's mouth"

With his infinite mercy and kindness HKB"H thwarted these wicked plans aimed at the Jewish people. Not only were they unsuccessful at preventing the discovery and revelation of the "nitzotz hakadosh" of Dovid HaMelech — the future Melech HaMashiach — but HKB"H caused Bilom to prophesy about Dovid HaMelech and the Melech HaMashiach. Let us see what the Rambam writes on this subject (Hilches Melochim 11, 1):

"המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה לממשלה הראשונה, ובונה המקדש ומקבץ נדחי ישראל... 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 אומר (במדבר כד יז) אראנו ולא עתה זה דוד, אשורנו ולא קרוב 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'."

The Melech HaMashiach is destined to appear and restore the kingship of Dovid to its former glory and dominion. He will build the Beit HaMikdash and gather in all the members of Yisroel that have strayed and been dispersed. Even Bilom, in his passage in the Torah, prophesies of these two saviors — the first being Dovid and the latter who will descend from Dovid and will provide salvation for Yisroel in the future. Then the Rambam specifically points out which verses refer to Dovid and which refer to the Melech HaMashiach.

Let us conclude our discussion with a pleasant tidbit gleaned from the following possuk in our parsha (Bamidbor 23, 5): "וישם ה' דבר בפי בלעם" — Hashem placed a **דבר** (an utterance) in the mouth of Bilom. The Megaleh Amukos on Voeschanon (200) writes that Moshe Rabeinu yearned to enter the land so that he could be the fourth leg of the Chariot — completing the unit. HKB"H responds to him (Devarim 3, 26): "אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד" — **אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד** — do not continue to address Me concerning this matter. The word **דב"ר** (which has been underlined) used in this possuk can be seen as an abbreviation for the words **ד'וד ב'רגל ר'ביעי** — indicating that Dovid had been selected by Divine Providence to be the fourth and final leg.

Thus, we can suggest the following allusion in the possuk: "וישם ה' דבר בפי בלעם" — Hashem introduced the prophecy of **דב"ר** into the wicked Bilom's mouth — conveying that Dovid HaMelech would appear and ultimately be the Melech HaMashiach -- **ד'וד ב'רגל ר'ביעי** — the fourth leg and completion of the Kisei HaKavod. This was just one more example of the concept of (Shabbos 119 b): "ומלאך רע עונה אמן בעל כרחו" — even the forces and messengers of evil must ultimately submit and answer, "Amen." Let it be His will that we merit following in the footsteps of Dovid who demonstrated the process of teshuvoh for all Yisroel to emulate. In this merit, we will reinforce the fourth leg of the Kisei HaKavod, representing teshuvoh. Thus the holy name will be complete with all four of its letters — corresponding to the four legs of the Kisei — and the Kisei will be complete with all four of its legs — with the coming of the Melech HaMashiach, swiftly, in our times. Amen.

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