

Shiur L'Yom Chamishi¹

[Thursday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Balak:*** **Numbers 24:1-25**
 Haftarah: **Micah 6:4-5**
 B'rit Chadasha: **I Corinthians 1:30**

Like gardens by the riverside; like aloes planted by the Holy One.

[Numbers 24:6(b)]

Today's Meditation is Proverbs 16:1-2;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #12, *Sh'ma Koleinu* [Hear our Cry]

Vayar Bila'am ki tov be'eynei Adonai l'varech et-Yisra'el – Then Bila'am saw that it was good in the eyes of the Holy One to bless Israel ... *v'lo-halach kefa'am-befa'am likrat nechashim* – and he did not go out and seek serpentine powers as before Numbers 24:1a.

The 'nations' – in Hebrew, *goyim* - are an irritable, spiteful, mixed-up, messed-up, vanity-chasing, vain imagination-obsessed lot. Ah, but the Holy One sees them all as seeds of Adam through 'Noach'. He therefore loves and longs to commune with them all – and calls us as His Covenant people to serve as vessels of light and ambassadors of goodwill among them all - anyway. He knows that the serpent's *ra*, *shachat*, and *chamas* cocktail keeps their leaders and minions in a state of perpetual agitation, irritability, and overstimulation. He knows they can't help themselves. He knows they have made been fed so much misinformation by serpents and charlatans that they wake up in the morning and go to bed at night raging. He knows not only *that* they rage, but *why* they rage. He knows that, because they operate under serpentine delusion, raging/outrage has become the nations' *go-to coping mechanism* for every situation and circumstance that doesn't provide instant gratification – or at least tranquilize their insatiable *self-obsession*, *lust*, *envy*, *greed*, *pride*, *gluttony*, *voyeuristic curiosity*, *wrath*, *sloth*, and *vengeance* cravings. They rage over territories. They rage over air, water, animals, food, and natural resources. They rage over who has – or should have – the most money and power. They rage over weather patterns and climatology. They rage over vain imaginations about 'morality', 'progressiveness', 'social justice', 'diversity', 'equity', and 'inclusion'. They rage over ethnicity, skin pigmentation, social status, and sexuality. They rage over political theory, pseudoscience, and pop psychology. They rage over doctrines and dogmas of religion. They rage over their different perceptions and interpretations of history. They rage over statues and symbols, chants and slogans. They rage over words and their meanings. They rage over faux medicine and fake food. They even rage over parts of speech and pronunciations.

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They rage over criminals (at least those with whom they have nothing in common), and they rage over law enforcement's efforts to stop or prosecute criminals (or at least with whom they share something in common). They rage over guns (well, actually just the guns that are in the hands of people whom they obsessively hate and want to see destroyed). They rage over abstract ideas. They rage over news, entertainment and sports. They rage over ideologies. They rage over respect. They rage over what celebrities do and say. And, most of all, they rage at and about US. We are not like them. We are not moved by what moves them. That makes us convenient scapegoats. Every so often, therefore, as an outlet for the unquenchable rage of their brainwashed minions, the elites of the world decide it is time for another holocaust. That is the only way the cabals can think of to keep their raging minions from turning on the ones who are really causing the problem – which, of course, are the cabals themselves.

***With all this Nation Rage Going On,
Someone Has to be the Adult in the Room. Guess Who that Is?***

Yawn – so what else is new? How do we bear up under the weight of this kind of hatred? How do we carry on as if being hated, cursed, and threatened with annihilation every decade or so - is normal? We *can*, and we *do*, carry on life as if everything – including the hatred, the cursing, and the virulent threats of annihilation we receive from the agitators of the not-so-new world order - is 'normal' because ... well, for us it sort of *is*. We carry on because the Holy One is our Covenant Partner, and He has made it clear that life on the point of the not-so-new-world-order's spear, the tip of the idolatrous nation's sword, and the *deceived minions of the serpent's* target on our backs is His plan for us. Their hatred, their ranting, and their violent attacks keep us on our toes – and focused on our mission. We know that as the mountains surround Jerusalem, the Holy One is all around His people. We teach our children from the cradle that those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High will abide in the over-arching shade/protection of the Almighty. We know it is the following groups of us who are most likely to suffer at the hands of the mobs, the lunatics, and the radical anti-Semitic progressives:

1. Those of us who lose focus on the mission of redemption to which we are called;
2. Those of us who get lazy or hard-hearted in regard to the weightier *mitzvot* of Torah - *i.e.* caring for widows, the fatherless, the foreigner, the poor, and the Levite, loving neighbors, etc.;
3. Those of us who allow ourselves or our families to get drawn into the not-so-new-world-order's highly-touted arsenal of seduction traps – *i.e.* *materialism/envy/greed; sensuality/sentimentality/sexual perversion; pseudo-intellectual weaponization of abstract concepts political theories, scientific hypotheses, philosophical dogma, medical opinions,*

propaganda labeled as 'education', indoctrination labeled as 'entertainment', formal religious edicts, and occult humanism/so-called 'social justice' movements;

4. Those of us who start to love something, someone, or some cause - or any aspect of this world - as much or more than we love the Holy One;
5. Those of us who get distracted by all the emotionally charged *slogans of misdirection*, the clever spin of the world's demagogues, the profane, virtue-signaling rants of the celebrities, the false narratives propagated by the bought-and-paid-for media, and/or the emotionally charged rhetoric of the institutional thinkers;
6. Those of us who get offended by all the bluster, bullying, and the violence and start responding to it in kind (with rage of our own);
7. those who let down their guard and cease to *sh'ma* the Shepherd's Voice and follow His leading; and
8. Those of us who, for whatever reason, go A.W.O.L from the Covenant calling, abandon what the world thinks of as the 'lesser' *mitzvot, mishpatim, and chukim* of Torah, and try to fit in with and be part of the raging nations.

The raging of the nations and the plots of their demagogues are always a 'vain thing'. The Holy One has them figured into His Plan, and they will avail them nothing – as long as maintain *lovely Ya'akovian tents* and *goodly Yisraelian tabernacles* as Torah directs. That is why our adherence to Torah is so important. That why For those who are wise within the camp of the Redeemed care more about training up and discipling our youngsters in the Torah and its ways than we do worrying about the '*raging of the nations*'. We know better than to expect truth or fairness from the worldly purveyors of 'news' [*i.e.* the paid and exalted gossips and propagandists of secular humanism]. We know better than to seek information from the secular 'news', seek education for either ourselves or our children from secular institutions, or seek help of any kinds from secular governments, political parties, or politicians. That is why we have learned to pay zero attention to self-appointed experts' opinions or commentaries. We know to – and know how to – pursue a surer source of knowledge – a source of REVELATION, instead of the radical AGENDA-DRIVEN DIS-INFORMATION put out by the humanists. They stay far too busy with the calling of the Holy One to fret over evildoers, or to waste so much as a second worrying about – much less reacting to - the not-so-new-world-order's latest barrage of hate-filled, fearmongering, race baiting, class envy inciting, ivory tower philosophizing, paranoid-delusional, virtue-signaling horse manure. They stay too busy co-laboring with the Holy One in His Grand Plan for the redemption of mankind as a species and for the restoration of Creation to its originally intended state of beauty, fruitfulness, and shalom to sweat over nations-rage. They stay fully engaged and occupied with their Divinely assigned tasks of

sh'ma-ing the Holy One's Voice, *sh'mar*-ing His Covenant, and *asah*-ing His *mitzvot* – and thereby *becoming who* and *learning to do what* they were created, redeemed, and betrothed to do – *i.e.* offering the blessing of Avraham to all families, households, bloodlines, geographical places, and epochs of time they can – to give their adversaries any ammunition they can really use. They know that the only way we can be destroyed is if we turn ourselves.

Nevertheless, somewhere nearby there is always a lot of activity going on in furtherance of a conspiracy to do us unfathomable levels of harm. We are not oblivious to the danger, of course; but we are fully confident that the Holy One is with us, *as He* promised Avraham in Covenant that He would always be for his progeny. We know that our King is going to deal with this latest conspiracy – and its conspirators – as He has done with all the others. But just for fun, let's slip behind enemy lines for a moment with the Writer of Torah, and see what happens at a prototypical Anti-Israel/Anti-Zionist rally.

Welcome to The Inner Workings of An Anti-Israel Rally!

Today's aliyah thus begins as follows: *When Bila'am perceived/understood that in the eyes of the Holy One it was tov – i.e. a fountain bringing forth goodness in waves - to bless Israel ...* Yes, Bila'am, you have perceived correctly. It is indeed *tov* – a fountain that brings forth waves of goodness – to bless the people of Israel. This is a corollary to the fundamental axiom of spiritual intelligence, which declares, with no exceptions: *'the reverent fear of the Holy One is the beginning of wisdom.'* See Psalm 110:10; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 9:10, and Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Alas, wisdom is not the forte of the globalist elitists and their brainwashed liberal minions. They prefer the false, demonic wisdom of this world – *i.e.* that which leads to bitter envy, self-seeking (*i.e.* sensual, sexual, sentimental and pseudo-intellectual narcissism), accusations and blame, slander and libel, agitation-propaganda, lust for power, and violent silencing of any and every voice of dissent. And they have a very, very different agenda than 'blessing' Israel. Their agenda is thus the farthest thing in the world from wisdom – but it is great excuse to hold a rally, to throw a party, to stage a bloody riot the professional gossips with whom they are in league will relabel a 'peaceful protest', or participate in a day of rage!

Our study today thus begins amidst a flurry of activity – just a little way down the road from the Camp of the Redeemed. The outside world is doing what the outside world does this time of year – holding big, showy, noisy outdoor events. For the purpose of our studies today, the *place to be* is going to *Peor*² - a rugged high place in the jagged hills of ancient Moav. The powers to be of the outside world have

² *Pe'or* means a *cleft*, or *wide opening* – or *an opening* (*i.e.* mouth, door, or portal) *of vision*.

quite a show planned for this place. The outside world loves a party thrown-together on a whim. And man, does the pagan world love a good show!

Smoke and Mirrors; Pomp and Circumstance; Dogs and Ponies; Chest-Beating and Sword-Rattling; Ho-Hum ...This Too Shall Pass!

Through the medium of the Balak/Bila'am parable Torah has been revealing to us what 'religious services' always turn out degenerating into outside the context of the Covenant. At every venue at which Bila'am has been invited to speak we have seen him kick off the festivities by telling Balak: ***Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me seven bulls and seven rams.*** And each time Balak has done exactly as Bila'am has ordered, and ***offered a bull and ram on each of the seven altars.*** Why all the hype? What did any of this have to do with the price of camels in Damascus? Think about it. Altar building *takes time - and money, and workers.* All for what? Ah, that's the secret. Neither the altar-building nor the sacraments performed on the altars had anything whatever to do with Bila'am's mission or his message. They were just the kind of thing the people expected. Their sole purpose was to get the crowd involved, jack up the drama, and fill the atmosphere with fervor, anticipation, and expectation. They were just intended go get the crowd ready for smoke, mirrors, and manipulation. Oh, what a show! What a couple of showmen! In pagan cultures, you see, religion is *all about the show and the showmen.* They are not trying to serve any 'god'; they are trying to manufacture, then manipulate one. Their 'services' are for themselves, and what they want - not to honor any deity. Their meetings are therefore *full of empty hype,* and their 'symbols', 'sacraments', and 'sermons' are *solely aimed at crowd manipulation.* First at the high places of Ba'al at *Kiryat Chuzot,* then at the *meadow of Tzofim,* and most recently at *the crest of Peor,* Bila'am has ordered the construction of seven altars, and ordered those seven bulls and seven rams be slaughtered on those altars. No god told him to do this; it was just part of the occult 'show'. Pagan concepts of 'worship', you see, follow man's ideas and schemes - not the instructions of the Holy One

Now the altars are built, and the crowd has been summoned. Seven bonfires of holocaust are lighting up the sky. **Numbers 23:28-30.** Seven choice bulls have been carefully selected from the local herds. Seven strong young rams have been brought forth from local flocks. The priests of Ba'al have donned their finest pagan vestments for the occasion. This is their moment in the spotlight, and they are ready to take full advantage. Fourteen flint knives have been sharpened for the occasion. At each of the seven altars, far too near the fire for creature comfort, stand one bull and one ram. Each is bewildered, panicked and bleating. And then, upon command from Balak the sharpened flint knives flash simultaneously – and the magnificent animals crumple to the ground. The flesh of their lifeless carcasses

is thrown on the burning altars. Thick smoke arises. The atmosphere is filled with the pungent smell of burning. The sound of the beating of drums fills the air. There is shouting.

Wow – what a spectacle! It has all been very *noisy*, very *bloody*, very *smelly*, very *smoky*, and very *showy*. But so far ... well, so far it has been just a bunch of *noise*, *blood*, *smell*, *smoke* and *hype*. The priests and the gathered throngs of Moav keep trying to get *Peor*'s attention and to awaken his supposed appetite for Hebrew blood. But alas, all the hoopla does not seem to be working. *Peor* is not talking. Multitudes of deceived human beings desperately want the people of Holy One of Israel to be cursed, you see. But Someone far more important and eminently more powerful wants to make sure we are *blessed* instead. That is how the AVRAHAMIC COVENANT FACTOR works. That is what the Creator's Grand Redemptive Plan requires. The world had better get used to it – and so had we.

Despite All the Bluster and the Angst ... Look, We Are Still Here!

We are halfway through the Bila'am episode. And well ... at this point we may all be saying "*So far, so good*". Up to this point Bila'am's appearance in our world has been uneventful for our camp. So far Bila'am has been very careful to speak only the words that the Holy One has placed in his mouth. That means that so far absolutely all Bila'am has been able to do – with the cold steel of the Angel of the Holy One's sword pressed ever so tightly against his neck, of course – has been to lavish buckets of glowing praise upon our people.

What seemed like two excellent opportunities to curse Israel have come and gone for Balak and Bila'am - and so far the silver Balak promised has gone completely unearned. It all started at *Kiryat Chutzot*³. When Bila'am gazed upon our camp from that strategic high place the worst thing he could say about us was that we are '*a people that will dwell apart*' and will '*not be reckoned among the nations.*' He proclaimed to Balak's horror that *only the Holy One can determine who is blessed and who is cursed*, and that *Israel has been blessed above all nations*. The score right now is therefore: *Angel of the Holy One* - two; *Dream Team of Darkness* – zero.

Then Bila'am took up a watchtower post in the field called *Tzofim*⁴, on the plain of Mount *Pisgah*. From that vantage point all he could talk about was *how pure of iniquity and perversion we appeared to him*, and how powerfully *our God is with and among us*, giving us the strength of a wild ox. There he declared – again to the despair of Balak - that *once the Holy One has blessed a nation or a people, his*

³ The name of this particular 'high place' – i.e. an open-air center of pagan worship on top of a high hill - can mean "*city of streets*", or "*city on the outskirts*".

⁴ *Tzofim* means "*watchmen*" or "*watchers*".

blessing cannot be 'reversed' – i.e. the blessing of the Holy One of Israel cannot be revoked or overridden by any curse that might be spoken by man.

As I said – *so far, so good*. But let's not count our chickens before they hatch. Bila'am may be under Angelic guard right now, but he is still a very, very dangerous man. He has only delivered two oracles; he has two more to deliver before he is done.

Bila'am's Third Oracle – the Oracle of Pe'or

After the oracle/prophecy at *Tzofim* went so badly for him Balak took his hired prophet Bila'am to a third vantage point - the high place Torah calls *Pe'or*. The only thing Torah tells us about this particular mountain pass, at this particular point in time at least, is that it '*looks out toward Yeshimon*'. **Numbers 23:28**. *Yeshimon* is a Hebrew word meaning '*wasteland*' or '*desert*' or '*place of ruins*'. At this location Bila'am lifted his eyes and prophetically saw Israel '*dwelling at peace by tribes*'. Torah then tells us something pretty amazing concerning Bila'am. It says:

Vatehi alay ruach Elohim

And the spirit of Elohim [God] was upon him.

[Numbers 24:2]

Did you catch that? The *spirit of Elohim* [God] – the mighty *Ruach* of Genesis 1:2 - is actually upon Bila'am. We are not talking Moshe or Aharon or Y'hoshua here – we are talking about *a pagan prophet for hire!*

What exactly do you think might happen if the *Ruach Elohim* fell upon a pagan prophet for hire in our day? This could be good! Why do I say that? Go back in time with me to Genesis 1:2. There we were told: *And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep*. Then what happened? The *Ruach* of Elohim – the breath, or Spirit of God – moved upon/brooded over the face of the waters, and God said: **Light, BE!** – and light was. **Genesis 1:3**. And *it was good*. **Genesis 1:4**.

Pe'or overlooked a wasteland - a place 'without form, and void, covered in darkness'. When the spirit of Elohim moved on Bila'am it was like the spirit of Elohim moving/brooding over the 'face of the deep' in Genesis 1:2.

As He was in Genesis 1:2 the Holy One is about to say something having to do with the introduction of light into the world. Israel, it seems, is the vehicle chosen by the Holy One to bring into the world the light of Genesis 1:3 – Divine light, a light that pre-existed the sun, the moon, and the stars. So it came to pass that Bila'am - under the influence of the *Ruach Elohim*, of course - pronounced the following weighty, unforgettable blessing over B'nei Yisrael:

Mah-tovu ohaleicha Ya'akov⁵
How lovely are your tents, O Ya'akov,

mishkenoteicha Yisra'el
Your dwelling places, Yisra'el!

V'yarom me'agag malko vetinase malchuto
His king shall be higher than Agag, His kingdom shall be exalted.

El motzi'o miMitzrayim
God [El] brings him forth out of Mitzrayim;

keto'afot re'em lo
He has as it were the strength of the wild ox:

yochal goyim tzarav
He shall eat up the nations his adversaries,

v'atzmoteihem yegarem
and he will break their bones in pieces,

vechitzav yimchatz
And he will smite [them] through with his arrows.

Kara shachav ka'ari uchlavi mi yekimeinu
He couched, he lay down as a lion, as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?

mevaracheicha varuch
Blessed be everyone who blesses you,

v'orareicha arur
Cursed/subjected to strict limitations be everyone who curses you.
[Numbers 24:5-9]

Keep in mind that as Bila'am says these things he is looking at the very same people Moshe recently screamed at in anger and called "you rebels". I guess it's all in one's perspective, isn't it. Beauty really is in the eye of the beholder. And maybe even the best of us need a talking donkey and an angel with a flaming sword held over our head now and then to help us see things – and people – from the Holy One's perspective instead of from the perspective of our flesh.

Mah Tov [*How Lovely ...*]

The oracle of Bila'am at *Pe'or* is stunning in its poetic beauty. The opening lines '***mah tovu***' [*How lovely ...*] with which this oracle begins have, even though it was uttered by a pagan, over the centuries become so beloved that the phrase is actually used to open every synagogue prayer service. What exactly was it however that Bila'am found so ***tovu*** [*lovely*] about the '*tents of Ya'akov*'? What's so lovely about

⁵ This commendation of the tents of Ya'akov has been interpreted by Rashi to mean that Bila'am saw the tents of Israel's camp arranged in such a way that none of the openings faced each other, for the sake of *tznuut* (modesty).

a bunch of tents?

Please understand that it was more than goatskins strung over support staves and staked to the desert floor that caught Bila'am's deeply spiritual eye. It was something much deeper – and far more *tov* – than that. Through prophetic vision granted him Bila'am saw the Holy One's redeemed community *as it was meant to be* and *as it is destined to become* – the way it *will* be at the end of days. He saw the Holy One's community thriving not in places of corporate worship, but in individual but closely associated homes. He saw each family living the lifestyle of Avraham, about whom the Holy One said: ***I have chosen him, so that he will teach his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Holy One by doing what is right and just*** Genesis 18:19-20.

Bila'am prophetically saw fathers and mothers doing in their tents/dwellings exactly what Moshe would direct in Deuteronomy 6:7-9: ***Teach [the mitzvot of Torah] faithfully to your children. Speak of them as you sit in your homes and as you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up Inscribe them on the doorposts of your houses, and on your gates.*** From tent to tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling the same beautiful prophetic image arose in Bila'am's eyes. This was not a people dependent upon shrines, clergymen, altars and religious services for their holiness; it was a collection of holy, inspired *families* whose day-to-day lives mirror the wholeness of Heaven's Courts and the holiness of its King.

As A Bridegroom Looks Upon His Bride

Because the Spirit of *Elohim* was upon him Bila'am saw Israel not through human eyes but *as she looks to the Holy One*, Who has betrothed her to Himself as a bride. To the Divine Bridegroom of Heaven Israel is *altogether lovely*. She has captured His heart with one glance of her eyes. Forever she is deemed *beautiful*. Never will there be in His heart the slightest shadow of turning.

But let us remember now the description Torah has given us of the place where this vision occurred. Torah tells us this revelation came forth at *Pe'or* [cleft, or wide opening], overlooking *Yeshimon* – wastelands, desert sands, and barren ruins. In the natural, what Bila'am should have seen from this vantage point was a *wasteland* – miles and miles of *desert sands, dry bones, and barren ruins*. But the presence of Israel's 'beautiful tents' totally transformed the environment. Because the Spirit of *Elohim* was upon Bila'am he prophetically saw Israel turning what were wastelands, desert sands, and places of ruin [*i.e. Yeshimon*], into ***valleys spread forth ... with gardens by the riverside ... full of aloes which the Holy One has planted and shaded by cedar trees beside the waters.***

Picture a desert – hot, dusty, desolate, barren. Now picture the same desert suddenly bursting into bloom, turning into a lush, well-watered, tropical paradise – all at the arrival of a group of people blessed by the Holy One. That mural is exactly what Bila'am saw at *Pe'or* to inspire his third oracle. Have *you* seen it, Beloved? Have *you* seen the desert sands burst into bloom at the presence of the families of the Holy One's people?

Look around you right now, in whatever city or region or country in which you live. The world around you is your desert, your wasteland. I have a question for you. In the midst of that wasteland, that land of ruins, *how lovely are your tents?* Do you understand now why '*all creation waits, and groans, in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed*'⁶? Let the Holy One's creative, prophetic power work in you – in your home – in your family life and business life and recreational life.

The Lost Opportunity

Even with the prophet's word ringing in his ears Balak continued to reject the opportunity the Holy One was providing him and his people to reconcile with the descendants of Avraham, to be reunited with Avraham's God and His ways, and to thereby share the blessings of the covenant. As you will recall, when Lot was still with Avraham, the Holy One spoke and said to Avraham:

***I will make of you a great nation.
I will bless you, and make your name great. You will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you.
In you will all of the families of the eretz be blessed."***

[Genesis 12:2-3]

And now, in addition to this proclamation of the Holy One the final words of Bila'am's third oracle still hang in the air for all the Balak's of the world:

mevaracheicha varuch v'orareicha arur

Blessed be everyone who blesses you [Israel], and cursed be everyone who curses you.

[Numbers 24:9]

The path to blessing and peace and security is not through hating or cursing or fearing Israel. It is not found in calling Jewish people 'apes', 'pigs', and 'dogs', or blaming them for all the world's problems. It is not found in sending children out to act as homicide bombers in Israeli bus stops, restaurants, and shopping malls. The message is clear. The cost of Anti-Semitism is great. He who curses and rejects the light is destined to live in darkness forever.

⁶ See Romans 8:19-23.

The Last Word

At this point Balak has “had it” with Bila’am. He orders Bila’am out of his kingdom. But Bila’am does not “go quietly into that good night”. Bila’am turns to Balak and says in his own defense:

*Did I not also tell your messengers who you sent to me, saying,
If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold,
I can't go beyond the word of the Holy One, to do either good or bad of my own mind;
what the Holy One speaks, that will I speak?
Now behold, I go to my people: come, [and] I will advise you
what this people shall do to your people in the latter days.*

Bila’am then proceeds to deliver to Balak his fourth oracle/prophecy – whether he wants to hear it or not.

Bila’am’s Fourth Oracle

As promised, Bila’am’s fourth oracle does indeed deal with ‘the latter days’. Here is how Torah records this particular seer’s latter-day vision for us:

Er'einu v'lo atah ashureinu v'o karov
I see him, but not now; I see him, but not near:

darach kochav miYa'akov
There shall come forth a star out of Ya`akov,

v'kam shevet miYisra'el
A scepter shall rise out of Yisra'el,

umachatz pa'atei Moav v'arkar kol-b'ei Shet
he will strike through the corners of Mo'av, and break down all the sons of tumult.

V'hayah Edom yereshah
Edom shall be an inherited possession/estate

V'hayah yereshah Se'ir oyevav
Se`ir also shall be a possession, [who were] his enemies;

v'isra'el oseh chayil
While Yisra'el does valiantly.

Veyer'd miYa'akov
Out of Ya`akov shall one have dominion,

V'he'evit sarid me'ir
and will destroy the remnant from the city.

Pssst. *Mashiach is coming, Beloved.* His star [Hebrew *kochav*] is arising. His scepter [Hebrew *shevet*] is being held forth. Even Bila’am knows it. So please do not let talk of a “Palestinian State”, “Colonial Zionism”, an “Israeli Occupation”, ISIS, or ‘the Return of the Mahdi’ - or even the rockets’ red glare - take away your peace or distract you from your covenant mission.

Bila'am Prophecies Regarding Israel's Enemies

Bila'am then turns his attention to the eternal enemies of the Holy One's people – those who will throughout history make war on Israel from without, and will also prophesy concerning what will happen to those who will throughout history seek to destroy Israel from within. Some of the dire things Bila'am has to say about those who determine to oppose Israel may disturb you. I actually hope it *does*. We very much need to know that *we have enemies*. We very much need to know *who they are*. And we very much need to know *what is going to happen to them 'in the end'*.

On the other hand, overemphasis on 'enemies' can distract one from the purpose and destiny for which we were created and redeemed by the Holy One. Vigilant preparation for battle, watching out for signs of imminent attack, and arming for and waging all-out war constitute a part, but only a very small part, of our purpose and our destiny. We must be alert. But we must never allow vigilance against enemies to distract or deter us from *doing what we were created to do* or from *being who we were created to be*.

The Oracle Concerning the Amalekites

The first nation other than Israel over which Bila'am's prophecies is Israel's archetypical enemy - Amalek. Amalek is a nation of nomads – spread throughout the world - of which Torah has previously told us: ***The Holy One will be at war against the Amaleki*** [Amalekites] ***from generation to generation***. Exodus 17:15.

As you will recall Amalek was the first people group to attack the Redeemed Community after the Exodus. Even before the Redeemed Community reached Sinai Amalek had engaged in terrorist attacks against it. Hence Torah tells us that the Holy One actually instructed Moshe:

Write this for a remembrance in a book, and repeat it in Yehoshua's ears, that I will surely wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens.

[Exodus 17:14-16]

Amalek is nothing short of the ultimate 'anti-Israel'. Hence in *Sefer D'varim* [the Book of Deuteronomy] Moshe will write that it is the duty of every member of the Community of the Holy One to remain constantly aware of the enmity of, and to consider oneself to be in a constant state of war with, Amalek⁷ forever:

Remember what Amalek did to you on the way when you came out of Egypt; how he came upon you on the way and attacked your rear, all that were following feebly behind you, when you were weary and faint...

⁷ This should be considered against the backdrop of Deuteronomy 20:10, which requires, before waging war on any nation outside the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael, offering to the people of that nation the option of peaceful surrender.

*You are to wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens;
never forget.*

[Deuteronomy 25:17-19]

It was King Shaul's [Saul's] failure to utterly destroy Amalek and everything and everyone associated with Amalek that led to the Holy One stripping away the kingdom from him and giving it to David. See **I Sh'muel** [Samuel] 15.

Haman, the murderous villain from the Esther story, was – you guessed it - an *Amaleki*. So let us consider just what the gifted seer Bila'am has to say considering this prototypical evil nation – a nation so utterly consumed with hatred of Israel and the God of Israel that the Holy One decreed the only solution was its total annihilation. Torah tells us:

Vayar et-Amalek vayisa meshalo vayomar

When [Bila'am] saw Amalek, he proclaimed his oracle and said,

reshit goyim Amalek v'acharito adei oved

'Chief among nations is Amalek, but in the end he will be destroyed forever.'

Thank you Bila'am for reminding us of Amalek. Thank you for reminding us to inspect closely the nature and mindset of the '*chief among the nations*' in every time period in which we live.

That said, I have a few questions for you, Dear Reader. Do you know who your mortal enemy is? Do you keep the remembrance of Amalek's hatred toward you and treachery against you in the back of your mind at all times? Do you know how to recognize Amalek when he comes up on your radar screen? Do you understand and recognize his tactics and his strategies? Do you know how to deal with him when he attacks?

You should know these things, Dear Reader. Indeed, you *must*. Because *Amalek is real*. He is alive and well today – and every bit as *consumed with evil* as he ever was. He still *hates you – and your God – with a hatred that will not let him rest* until he attacks you and 'drives you into the sea'.

Study the tactics of Amalek as Exodus 17 reveals them. He will in times of his own weakness *wage guerrilla warfare* - attacking your stragglers, your weak ones, your elderly, your women, your children, and your adventuresome 'strays' who venture out of the fold. If these attacks are not dealt with swiftly and with great force and determination, he will be emboldened, will draw strength from the innocent blood he has shed, *and will attack you head on*. Against such an attack you will always need a Y'hoshua to lead your defense.

But back to Bila'am. Bila'am prophesied that 'in the end' Amalek would be

destroyed forever. This prophecy of Bila'am was inspired by the Holy One and is 100% true. In the meantime however please understand that you are *at war* with Amalek – and act accordingly.

Bila'am's Prophecy Over the Keyni [KJV 'Kenites']

The second people group over whom Bila'am prophesied is a group called '*ha-Keyni*'. Some English Bibles call this people group 'Kenites'. But that translation obscures their true identity. *Ha-Keyni*, you see, are descendants of *Kayin* [Cain]. You remember, the one who slew his brother *Hevel* [Abel].

Ha-Keyni are mentioned several times in the TaNaKh. The father-in-law of Moshe, Yitro, though himself a *Midyani* (Midianite) was from the area occupied by *Ha-Keyni*. The well mentioned in Exodus 2:17 – at which Moshe met Tzipporah was a well of *ha-Keyni*, who were trying to drive off Tzipporah and her 6 sisters when Moshe intervened.

In the period of the judges [i.e. the 12th-11th century BCE], it was a woman of *ha-Keyni*, Ya'el, who killed Sisera through treachery. The Keyni were actually allies of the Kena'ani. Hence Sisera fled to a Keyni tent to hide from the pursuing Israeli forces. Yael invited Sisera in, offered him protection - and then drove a spike through his head as he slept. **Judges 4:17-22.**

Settling among the B'nei Yisrael, *ha-Keyni* eventually became absorbed into the tribe of Y'hudah. See I Chronicles 2:55. Whole clans of them became 'scribes' – people who unfortunately taught Israel to view the Torah *as a legal code* instead as a living, breathing *Ketuvah* [marriage covenant].

Like their chosen role-model, *Kayin* [Cain] they follow *a form of religion that brings neither satisfaction to them nor pleasure to the Holy One*. *Ha-Keyni* thus became '*the enemy within*'. They are not really Hebrews - but they claim and pretend to be. They know how to 'talk the talk'. They know, and focus almost exclusively on, the '*halakah*' - *i.e.* the extra-Torah legal requirements of the so-called 'Oral Law'.

Just as Amalek seeks to destroy Israel from *without*, *ha-Keyni* seek to destroy their brothers from the position of trust they hold *within*. Of these Keyni, Bila'am prophesied:

Eytan moshaveicha v'sim baseila kineicha

A fortress is your settlement, and in a cliff you have established your nest.

Ki im-yihyeh leva'er Kayin

But when the time comes for the destruction of ha-Keyni,

ad-mah ashur tishbeika

how long will Assyria hold back from you?'

Oy mi yichyeh misumo El

'Alas! Who can survive God's devastation?'

Vetzim miyad Kitim v'inu ashur v'inu-ever

War ships shall come from Kittim, and they will lay waste Assyria and Eber.

V'gam-hu adei oved

But in the end they too shall be destroyed forever.'

Note once again the critical phrase regarding the *timing of the prophesied destruction*. As in the case the Amaleki, the destruction of ha-Kenyi will not take place until *'in the end'*. Do not think your only enemy is Amalek. Some of those you think are brothers are probably *ha-Keyni*. Be careful when they invite you out to their field. Refer back to Genesis 4:8 if you do not understand what I mean.

Questions For Further Study

1. Summarize and state the primary message of the third “oracle” of Bila’am.
2. Summarize and state the primary message of the fourth “oracle” of Bila’am.
3. The Haftarah reading for today is as follows:

***For I brought you up from the land of Egypt; I redeemed you from the house of bondage;
And I sent Moshe, Aharon, and Miryam before you.***

***O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled,
And what Bila’am the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal,
That you may know the righteousness of the Holy One.***

[Micah 6:4-5]

[1] What is the essence of what Balak counseled?

[2] What is the essence of what Bila’am, son of Be’or, answered?

4. The apostolic teaching I have selected for today is I Corinthians 1:30, as follows:

***But of Him you are in Messiah Yeshua,
who became for us wisdom from God—
and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—***

[A] What does it mean to be ‘in’ Messiah Yeshua?

[B] In what way did Messiah become for us ‘wisdom from God’?

[C] Define the terms ‘righteousness’, ‘sanctification’, and ‘redemption’.

[D] In what way did Messiah become for us ‘righteousness’?

[E] In what way did Messiah become for us ‘sanctification’?

[F] In what way did Messiah become for us ‘redemption’?

*May you know the Holy One, and hear His voice,
and not be distracted by the flattery of men, by the allure of public ministry,
nor by the excitement of religious activity.
May you love His People, and quietly fulfill His Will.*

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Proverbs 16:1-2

*The preparations of the heart belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the Holy One.*

*All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes,
But the Holy One weighs the spirits.*