



Parashat Balak

This week's parashah is Parashat Balak. The parashah tells us the riveting story of how the diabolical King Balak hired the evil gentile "prophet" Bilam to curse the entire Jewish People. Arrogant and certain of success, Bilam tries wholeheartedly to curse the Jewish People, and keeps trying, only to discover that, as he himself is eventually forced to admit, he can only speak the words that Hashem places in his mouth! Thus, far from cursing the Jewish People, Bilam ends up repeatedly blessing them! He is compelled to sing their praises, highlight their special qualities, and even to reveal what the world will be like when Mashiach comes - may it be speedily in our days!

How strange it is that the one place in the entire Torah that speaks openly about the coming of Mashiach should be here. How odd it is that such awesome words about such a wondrous time should come from the mouth of such a low and evil, impure heathen.

In truth, however, upon closer look, it is all readily understood. The era of Mashiach will see the world transformed, with all evil and impurity removed from the earth. At that time, "the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d just as water covers the ocean floor", darkness will be transformed into light, and all of the nations of the world will stream to Jerusalem, saying: "For from Zion Torah comes out and the Word of G-d from Jerusalem!"

Thus, it is entirely appropriate that the revelation of what a transformed world will be like when Mashiach finally arrives should come through the transformation of an evil gentile's intended, dark curses into unintended, luminous blessings!

Shabbat Shalom!
Rabbi Yitzchak David

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