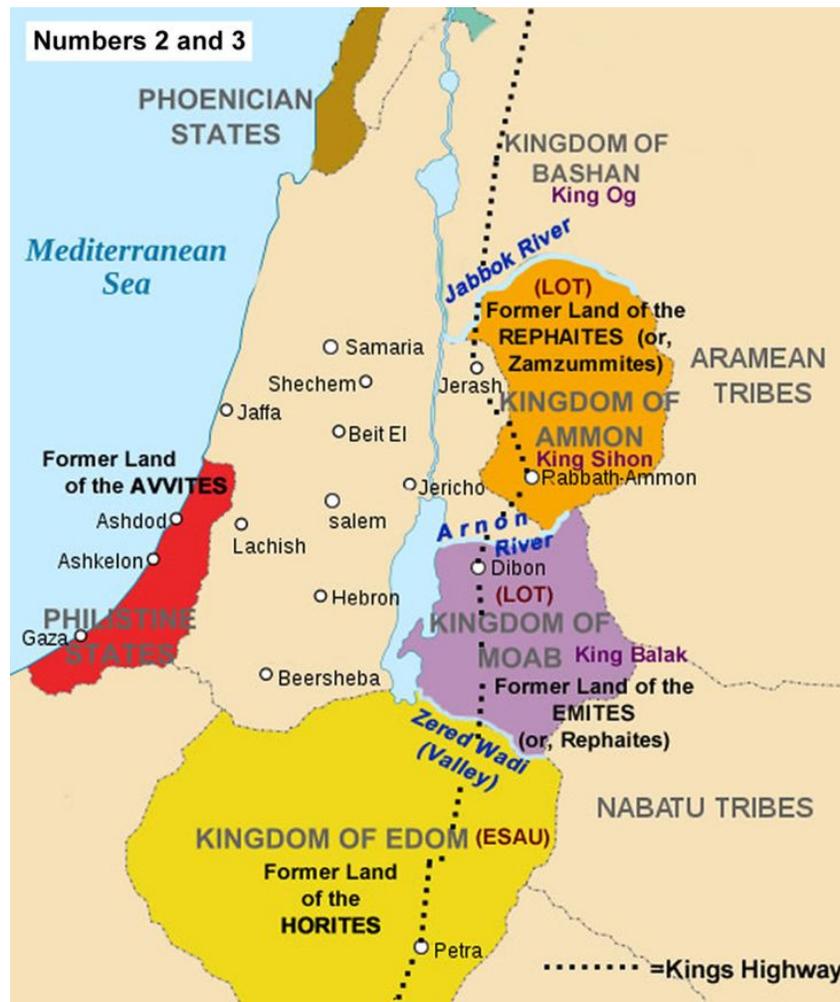


Balak, King of Moab



Numbers 22:2 Now saw Balak, the son of Zippor, **אָחַז** all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 Moab was very afraid of the people, because there *were so* many of them: Moab was overcome with stress, because of *the* Children of Israel. 4 Moab said to the elders of Midian, Now shall lick up (*consume us*), this company (*Israelites*) **אָחַז** all that is around us, as licks up the ox **אָחַז** the grass of the field. Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time. C-MATS

Question: Why did the Moabites and the Midianites come together to fight Israel? Moab and Midian had been traditional enemies, but now they came together in response to the perceived threat from Israel, which, they feared, would uproot and utterly destroy everything in its path, as an ox pulls out the roots of grass so that nothing is left of it. Seeking some formula to save itself, Moab hoped that the Midianites, among whom Moses had lived when he fled Egypt as a boy, could shed light on the reason for his success and how he could be defeated. The Midianites said that his strength lay in his mouth, so the Moabites sent for the evil prophet Balaam, whose power lay in his ability to curse. *Chumash*

Question: Who were the Moabites? The Moabites were relatives of the Israelites, both peoples tracing their descent back to a common ancestor, Terah. Terah's son Haran fathered Lot, whose son Moab was born after an incestuous relationship between Lot and his eldest daughter (Genesis 19:37). The Moabites descended from Lot's son Moab. Moab was eventually overtaken by tribes from northern Arabia and no longer existed among the nations. *Chumash*

Question: How can we resolve conflicts? Balaam and Balak were enemies from two warring nations, but they banded together as allies to reach their common goal of fighting against the Israelite people. While they cooperated to do *evil*, we can use the same principle of focusing on our common goals, and cooperating to do *good*. Many times when we are involved in a conflict, we can get so wrapped up in our immediate goal and what we see is preventing it, that we can develop a 'tunnel vision' and become blinded to what would otherwise be obvious. When things aren't working out, and we find ourselves getting frustrated, it always pays to try to cool down, or look for more cool-headed advice. Usually the answer is closer than it seems.

Question: Is it possible to find a common goal with every adversary? Generally it is, if you dig deep enough. The trick is to ponder the underlying motivation of a person's behavior and respond to it rather than his negative behavior. Some common motivations people have are: a desire for respect, or attention, or to be at peace or friendship with others.

Question: Is it ever appropriate to compete rather than cooperate? There is no doubt that competition can be a big motivator, and get people to push themselves harder than they would otherwise. When the competition is one where both parties accomplish more because of it, it can be very positive. But when the object of the competition is to bring the other one down rather than to use it as a tool to bring oneself up, it is generally negative and spiritually harmful.

Spiritual Exercise: Find ways to cooperate with others this week instead of tearing them down.



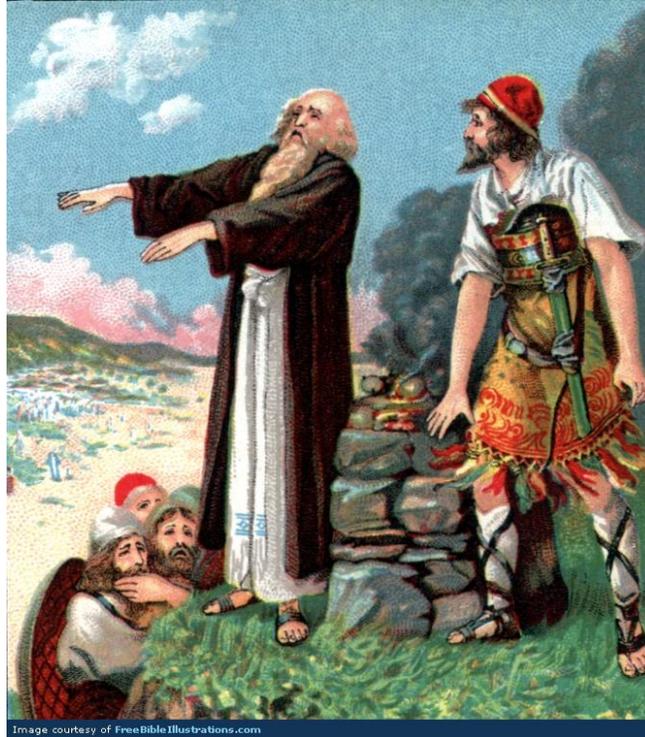
Numbers 22:5 Balak sent messengers to Balaam, the son of Beor, to Pethor, which *is* by the (Euphrates) river in his native land saying, There are a people that have come out of Egypt: they cover אֶת the face of the earth and they live next to me: 6 Come now and please curse for me אֶת people this; because they *are* too mighty for me: perhaps I will be able to strike them down and drive them out of the land: because I know that אֶת he whom you bless *is* blessed and he whom you curse is cursed. C-MATS

Question: What does “they *are* too mighty for me” mean? The Hebrew phrase, Atzum hu mimeni also translates, "He is mightier from me". For in truth, the might of the people of Israel is The Messiah, who is descendent of Balak, King of Moab! (Ruth the Moabite, ancestress of King David, is a descendent of Balak). *Chumash*



Ruth the Moabite, ancestress of King David

Question: Who was Balaam? Balaam was a descendant of Laban, son of Beor, the sorcerer who taught him the occult arts. Balaam became the gentile “prophet” to the nations. יהוה, in His wisdom, ordained that the gentile nations should have a “prophet” who would be comparable to Moses -- though much inferior to him -- so that they would not be able to contend that if only they had had someone who could communicate to them the will of יהוה, they would have been as righteous as Israel. The nations offered Balaam large sums of money for his services. Balaam was known for his ability to see into the future. There is an instant every day when יהוה is "angry", meaning that יהוה judges sinners at that time. Clearly, someone who is guilty of transgressions is most vulnerable at that instant, and it was Balaam's "talent" to see into the future and know when that moment was at hand. A curse at that time could subject its victim to such Divine judgment. Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, but יהוה thwarted His plan by not sitting in judgment on that day. Balaam repeated futile attempts to curse Israel, but יהוה insisted that he bless Israel. יהוה wanted these sublime blessings to come to Israel through the agency of the wicked and immoral Balaam, so that all the world would know that everyone is helpless to harm Israel against יהוה's will.



Balaam and Balak

Question: Balaam was world-famous in his time, with great power and abilities. He could even communicate directly with יהוה! But Balaam was far from great, because he misused his talents to boost his own ego, and harm others. When considering a person's greatness, is it possible to separate his public behavior and accomplishments from his private life? The Torah teaches us to look at a person as a whole and not to compartmentalize. A person's private life is just as much a measure of who he is, and actually more so, than his public persona. Someone who acts destructively towards himself or others cannot be considered great, no matter what he accomplishes in public.

Question: Do you think it is healthy the way people make a big deal over famous entertainers, athletes and other celebrities? There is nothing wrong with appreciating someone's talents, as long as we keep it in perspective. We should remember that their looks, wealth, or talents are only gifts that יהוה has given to them. We should also keep in mind that celebrities are only people just like we are, and they are not even necessarily great or even good people, unless their inner values and character traits are as good as their glittering outer image.

Question: Everything about a person is 'heaven sent' except for his values and the goodness of his character. How do you understand this, and how does it relate to the idea of greatness? Most things about us - our looks, our intelligence, and talents, and even whether we will be rich or poor, are given to us by יהוה as the 'backdrop' to our lives. They are not something we earn and they are not something we choose. Our only real choice, and therefore our only real accomplishment, is how we relate to our life's circumstances, and whether we use them to build ourselves into good, caring people with healthy values - or the opposite. This is the only genuine measure of greatness.

Spiritual Exercise: Achieve greatness. Use your talents to benefit others today.

Question: Have we all been given the same talents or gifts from יהוה? Rom 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. C-MATS

Question: What does יהוה say about not using the talents that He has given us? Matt 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. 14 Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 21 His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 22 The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; and I have gained two more.' 23 His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 24 Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" C-MATS

**Your talent is YHUH's gift to you.
What you do with it is your gift
back to YHUH.**

1 Peter 4:10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of יהוה's grace in its various forms. C-MATS



Balaam and Balak

Question: Who was Balak, King of Moab? Although Balak was the king of Moab around 1200 B.C., his title is not mentioned here, possibly because he was renowned as a mighty warrior long before he became king. Thus the Torah wishes to imply that even Balak -- not a mere king who relied on others to fight his battles -- was intimidated by the approaching Israelite host. It may also be that Balak was not a king at first; his people elevated him as a result of their fear of Israel. Balak was not even a Moabite. He was a foreign noble whom the Moabites appointed to lead them against Israel.

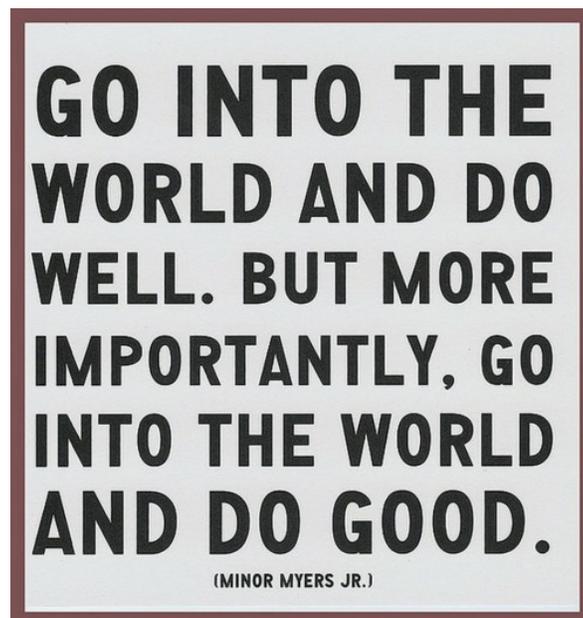


Kingdom of Moab and surrounding neighbors

Question: The entire world knew that the Hebrews had left Egypt. Why did Balak need to mention it now to Balaam? When Jacob and his family came to Egypt, they miraculously grew in number. Pharaoh, fearing that ultimately the Hebrews would take control of the land, consulted his three advisors: Balaam, Iyov, and Jethro. Balaam advised him to stop the growth of the Hebrew people by casting the newborn babies into the Nile River and torturing the people with excruciating labor. Balak now complained to Balaam, "Obviously your idea failed: Not only did they multiply and survive, but they even managed to leave Egypt valiantly. Since they pose a threat to me, it is incumbent upon you to do something to stop these people. I implore you to curse them!" *Chumash*

Question: Why do you think it is specifically the goodness of a person's character that determines how great a person is? It is the only thing that is fully in our control. A person's physical abilities and even mental capacity, although he can choose to develop it to a greater or lesser extent, are more or less something he gets as a 'free gift' from יהוה, given through a person's genes, etc. Our character traits, emotions and goodness of the heart, on the other hand, fall squarely within the realm of our free will and therefore are the only true measures of how much we have striven to be great. The Torah teaches that the true measure of a person's worth is not his talent, but the goodness of his heart.

Question: In the upcoming World of Truth, many of those who stand on the top of the ladder of greatness in this world will be at the bottom and many today who are on the bottom will be at the top. How do you understand this? This world is a place where the flashy - those with great natural talents - stand out and shine. A person's charismatic public persona can easily overshadow his personal cruel or selfish behavior. However, in the future World of Truth, everything falls away except for that which we have truly earned, which are choices of goodness and unselfishness we make throughout our lifetime. And on that scale, some of the humblest, most unsung people in this world are going to shine as the true stars.



Spiritual Exercise: How good is in your heart? Do you desire to do good things for others? What is something kind you can do for someone today?

Proverbs 12:2 A good man shall obtain favor from מִיְהוָה but a man of wicked devices will He condemn. C-MATS

Proverbs 13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. C-MATS

Proverbs 14:14 The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways, and the good man rewarded for his. C-MATS

Proverbs 22:1 A *good* name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favor rather than silver and gold. C-MATS

Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man does good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubles his own flesh. C-MATS

Proverbs 14:21 He that despises his neighbor sins; but he that has pity on the poor, happy is he. C-MATS

Proverbs 14:31 He that oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker; but he that has mercy on the needy honors Him. C-MATS

Proverbs 19:17 He that has pity upon the poor lends to יְהוָה and his good deed will he pay him again. C-MATS

3 John 11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from יְהוָה. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen יְהוָה. C-MATS

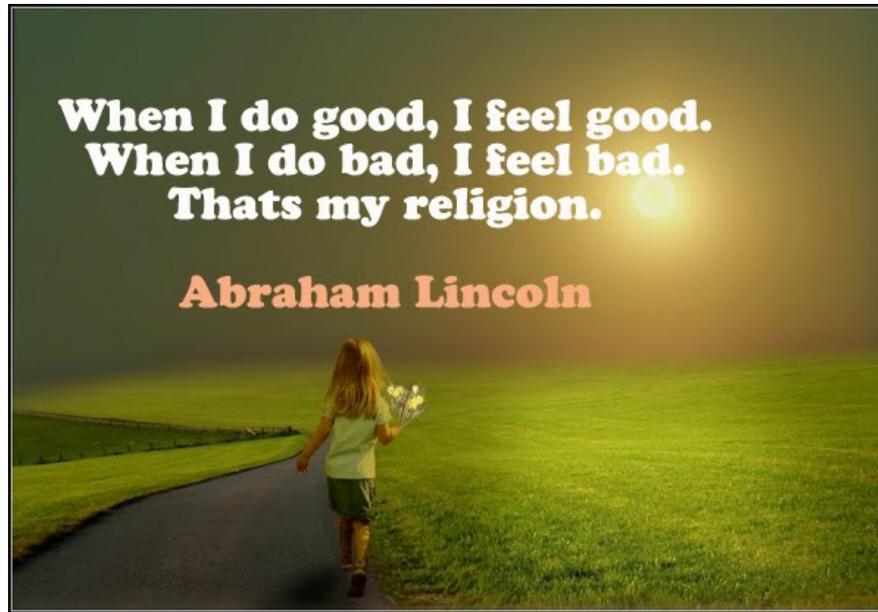
1 Peter 4:19 Those who suffer according to יְהוָה's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. C-MATS

1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify יְהוָה on the day he visits us. C-MATS

James 4:17 Anyone who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. C-MATS

Hebrews 13:16 Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices יְהוָה is pleased. C-MATS

Ephesians 4:31 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Yahshua יְהוָה forgave you. C-MATS



Elders of Midian come to Balaam

Numbers 22:7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the payment for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. 8 And Balaam said to them, Stay here tonight and I will bring **אתכם** *you* what words **יהוה** speaks to me: and the princes of Moab remained with Balaam. 9 Elohim came to Balaam and said, Who *are* these men with you? 10 Balaam said to Elohim, Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent *them* to me saying, 11 *There are* a people who came out of Egypt, which covers **את** *the* face of the earth: come now and curse *for me* **אתו** *him*; perhaps I will be able to overcome them and drive them out. 12 Elohim said to Balaam, You will not go with them; you will not curse **את** *the* people: because they *are* blessed. C-MATS



Balaam receiving the messengers

Numbers 22:13 Balaam rose up in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, Go back to your land: because יהוה refuses to allow me to go with you. 14 And the princes of Moab rose up and they went to Balak and said, Balaam refused to come with us. 15 Balak sent other princes, more honorable than the first. 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, Balak, the son of Zippor, said, Please, let nothing hinder you from coming to me: 17 I will reward you very well and I will do whatever you ask me to do: come, please curse *for* me אֶת people. 18 Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond אֶת the word of יהוה my Elohim, to do anything great or small. 19 Now, please, אַתָּם you stay here tonight that I may know more of what יהוה said to me. C-MATS

Question: Who is speaking through Balaam? In Numbers 22:18 Balaam says, I cannot go beyond אֶת word that יהוה my Elohim...implying he can only speak what the presence of אֶת tells him to speak and repeats this statement in Num 24:13 that says, I cannot go beyond אֶת commandment of יהוה to speak either good or bad of my own mind. C-MATS



Greedy Balaam

Question: How greedy was Balaam? By speaking of a houseful of gold and silver Balaam revealed his greed, as if to say if he were able to transgress the word of יהוה he would -- but only for a huge sum of money. He implied here that it would be far more economical for Balak to pay him for an effective curse than to invest even larger sums in a standing army that was not guaranteed to win in battle.

Question: What happens to a greedy man?

Proverbs 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house; but he that hates bribes shall live. C-MATS

Proverbs 28:25 He that is of a greedy spirit stirs up strife; but he that puts his trust in יהוה shall be made fat (prosper). C-MATS

1 Corinthians 6:9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of יהוה? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of יהוה. C-MATS

Numbers 22:20 Elohim came to Balaam at night and said to him, If the men have come to summon you, get up and go אִתָּם *with them*; but only אֶת־ the words which I say to you, אִתּוֹ *him* you shall do. 21 Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled אֶת־ his אֲתוֹ *ass* and went with the princes of Moab. 22 Elohim's anger was aroused because Balaam went (*with the men*): and the Angel of יהוה stood in the way as an adversary against Balaam. Now he was riding on his אֲתוֹ *ass* and his two servants' *were* with him. C-MATS

Question: Why did יהוה allow Balaam to go? Sometimes יהוה is influenced by the entreaties of people to do things of which He does not approve. An example of this is the permission יהוה gave the nation to send spies to the Land even though He had promised them that it was good and they had nothing to fear. Since Balaam was so anxious to go, יהוה left it up to him, but warned him that he could not say what he wished against them. יהוה was angry because Balaam went even though he knew it was wrong (v. 22). *Chumash*



Balaam and His Donkey

Numbers 22:23 And saw the donkey **את** *the* Angel of יהוה standing in the way and his sword drawn in his hand: and the donkey turned out of the way and went into the field: and hit Balaam **את** the donkey to turn her back onto the road. 24 But the Angel of יהוה stood in the path (*passing among*) the vineyards having stone walls on both sides. 25 When saw the donkey **את** *the* Angel of יהוה, she pushed up against the wall and crushed **את** foot of Balaam against the wall: and Balaam hit her again. 26 The Angel of יהוה went further and stood in a narrow place, where *there was* no way to turn *either* to the right or to the left. 27 When saw the donkey **את** *the* Angel of יהוה, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam was so angry that he hit **את** the donkey with a staff. C-MATS



Balaam strikes his donkey

Numbers 22:28 And opened **את** *the* mouth of the donkey and she said to Balaam, What have I done to you that you have hit me three times? 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, If I had a sword in my hand I would kill you now, because you have mocked me. 30 And the donkey said to Balaam, *Am* I your donkey on which you have ridden ever since I *became* yours until this day? Have I ever treated you like this before? And Balaam said, No. 31 Then opened **את** *the* eyes of Balaam and he saw **את** *the* Angel of יהוה standing in the road with his sword drawn in his hand: and Balaam bowed down his head and fell flat on his face. C-MATS

Question: How did Balaam make a fool of himself? Balaam made a fool of himself when he lost his temper at his donkey. He let his temper take control of him and ended up causing himself even more grief. It's always worth it to try to stay calm even in the face of frustration.

Question: Is there anything a person can do to prevent himself from losing his temper? It's not easy, but if we combine trying to stay calm and trying to keep things in perspective, we can often succeed.

Question: Losing one's temper is equivalent to forgetting about יהוה. What's the connection? יהוה is very involved with all of our lives. He constantly sends us the situations we need in order to reach the maximum spiritual and personal growth, which is for our ultimate good. If we can remember that - and Him - even in the midst of life's challenges, while we may at times feel frustrated, angry, or hurt, we are very unlikely to 'lose it.'

Question: Is it healthy for a person to 'blow off steam' by losing his or her temper? It might sometimes provide a feeling of temporary relief, but in the long run it always ends up damaging our health, character, and the people around us.

Love is... Slow to Anger

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5

Question: What does יהוה say about himself? Exodus 34:5 And יהוה descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the Name of יהוה. 6 And יהוה passed by before him and proclaimed, יהוה, יהוה is El, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness וְאֱמֶת and truth, 7 Showing mercy to thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, *but by no means clearing the guilty; but placing the iniquity of the אבות fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation.* C-MATS

WHOEVER IS
SLOW
TO **ANGER**
IS BETTER THAN THE
MIGHTY

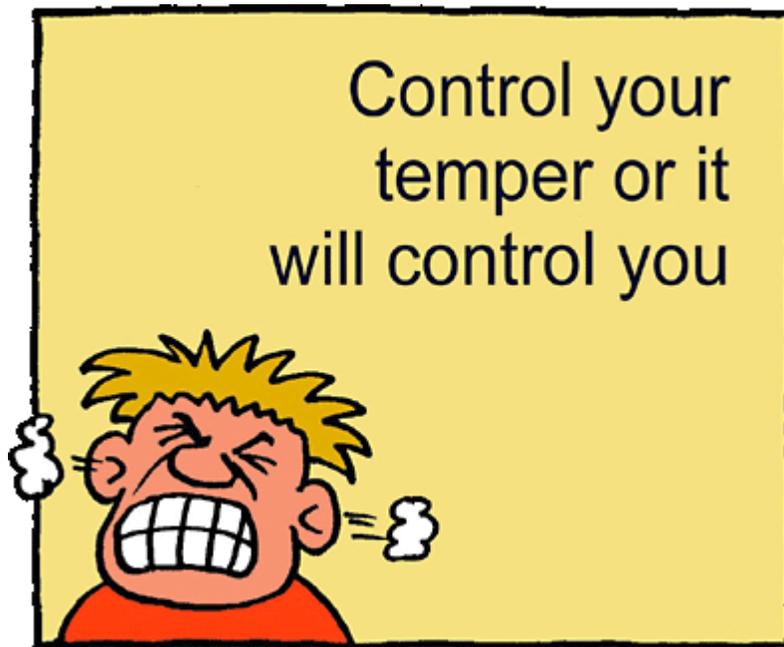
Proverbs 16:32

Question: What should we do if we are angry?

Psalm 4:4 In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. C-MATS

Psalm 37:8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath: Fret not yourself, *it intended* only to evil-doing. C-MATS

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turn away wrath; but a grievous word stirs up anger. C-MATS



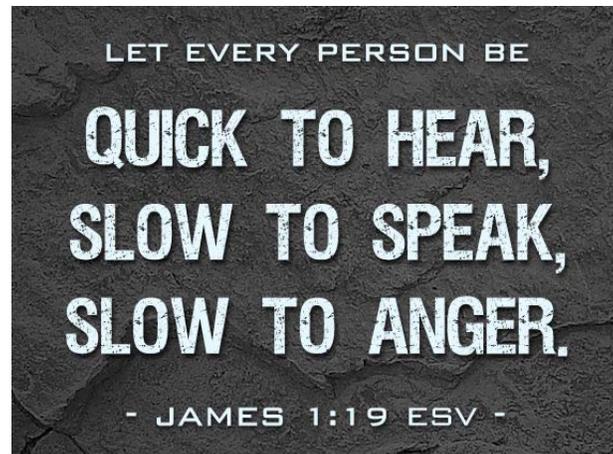
Proverbs 29:11 A fool utters all his anger; but a wise man keeps it back and stills it. C-MATS

Proverbs 29:8 Scoffers set a city in a flame; but wise men turn away wrath. C-MATS

Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife and a wrathful man abounds in transgression. C-MATS

A hot-tempered man stirs up
strife, but he who is slow
to anger **quiets** contention.

PROVERBS 15:18



Matthew 5:22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. **23** "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. C-MATS

Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** and do not give the devil a foothold. C-MATS



Balaam's donkey speaks

Question: Why was the donkey allowed to speak? In a most unusual miracle, Balaam's she-donkey now was granted the power of speech to admonish him for striking it. The purpose of the miracle was to show Balaam that even man's normal functions, such as the ability to speak, are under יהוה's control. If a beast could speak intelligently, then surely Balaam could be forced to say what יהוה wanted him to, and be silenced if he wished to oppose יהוה's will. This proved to him that his sorcery could not prevail against יהוה. *Chumash*



Balaam encounters the Angel

Question: Was Balaam able to see angels? Balaam was not accustomed to seeing angels, for if he was, it would not have been necessary for his eyes to be uncovered. If Balaam had been a true prophet, he would have had no trouble seeing an angel; but his base character made even such a degree of revelation impossible. Actually, Balaam was a sorcerer, not a prophet. The awe-inspiring prophecies he uttered later were temporary that יהוה granted him only for the honor of Israel. After his ignoble return to his homeland, he did not prophesy again, and reverted to his permanent status of sorcerer. *Chumash*

Numbers 22:32 The Angel of יהוה said to him, Why have you hit את־ך your donkey three times? יִצְאָתִי I came out to stop you, because you are rushing to oppose Me; 33 And the donkey saw Me and turned from Me three times: unless she had turned from me, I would have killed you and saved her life. 34 Balaam said to the Angel of יהוה, חָטָאתִי I sinned; because I did not know that אתָּה you stood in my way: now if it displeases you (for me to go), I will turn back now. 35 The Angel of יהוה said to Balaam, Go with the men: but only את־ך the words that I speak to you, אִתּוֹ him you shall speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. C-MATS



The angel of יהוה prevents Balaam from going forward.

Question: Who was this angel and why was it sent? An angel of יהוה. The use of יהוה, the Name that indicates יהוה's compassion, implies that יהוה was being merciful to Balaam by sending an angel to save him from a sin that would lead to his own destruction. Three times יהוה's angel tried to prevent him from continuing on his evil mission and three times he persisted, impervious to the sword-wielding angel. *Chumash*

Question: Do things just accidentally happen? The hallmark of evil and sinfulness is an attitude of "It just happened." Nothing is coincidental; every event is purposeful and significant and designed by יהוה to form you.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love יהוה, to those who are the called according to His purpose. **29** For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. **30** Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. **31** What then shall we say to these things? If יהוה is for us, who can be against us? C-MATS

Proverbs 16:3 Commit your works to יהוה and your purposes shall be established. 4 יהוה has made everything for its own end; yes, even the wicked for the day of evil. C-MATS

Eccl 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, 8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. C-MATS



City of Kiryat-Hutzot

Balak Welcomes Balaam

Numbers 22:36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out לקרא אתו *to meet him* at a city in Moab, which *is* on the Arnon border, which *is* in the extreme end of the territory. 37 Balak said to Balaam, I sent *for you* more than once to come to me! Why did you not come to me? Did you think I would not pay you enough? 38 Balaam said to Balak, I have come to you now, but I have no power at all to say anything. The word that Elohim puts in my mouth, אתו *them (Him)*, will I speak. 39 Balaam went with Balak and they came to Kirjath-huzoth. 40 Balak offered oxen and sheep and he sent for Balaam and the princes that were אתו *with him*. 41 And it came to pass on the next day that took Balak את- Balaam and brought him up into *the* high places of Baal that there he might see the extent of the people *(of Israel)*. C-MATS

Question: Where did Balak take Balaam to curse the Israelites? Balak took Balaam to a hill on which was a Moabite idol, Baal, in the hope that it might inspire him and perhaps add to the effectiveness of the hoped-for curse. He wanted Balaam to see the Israelite camp, thinking that this would increase his hatred of the Israelites, and that perhaps the prophet's malicious gaze might have a harmful effect on Israel. *Chumash*



Balaam's First Prophecy

Numbers 23:1 Balaam said to Balak, Build me seven altars here and prepare me seven oxen and seven rams. **2** Balak did as Balaam asked; Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. **3** Balaam said to Balak, Stand by your burnt offering and I will go: perhaps יהוה will come to meet me: and whatever He shows me, I will tell you. Balaam went to a high place. **4** And Elohim met Balaam and he said, Unto את seven altars I have prepared and I have offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. **5** And יהוה put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, Return to Balak and you will speak *what I have said*. **6** Balaam returned to Balak and he stood by his burnt sacrifice in front of Balak and all the princes of Moab. **7** And Balaam spoke his parable and said, Balak, the king of Moab, has brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east saying, Come curse Jacob and come defy Israel. **8** How will I curse whom Elohim has not cursed? Or how will I denounce *whom* יהוה has not denounced? **9** For from the top of the rocks I see them and from the hills I see them: yes, a people that will live alone and will not think of themselves as one of the nations (*gentiles*). **10** Who can count the dust (*ashes*) of Jacob or number את fourth part of Israel? May I die the death of the righteous and let my end be like theirs! C-MATS

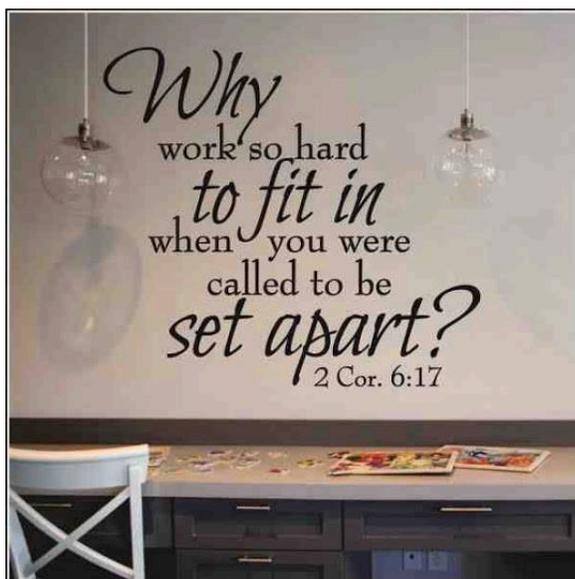
Question: What do you think the Torah means when it says the Hebrew people are “a people that will live alone”? Like every people, the Hebrew People has its special role in the world. Our role is to live an especially ethical and spiritual life according to the values of the Torah, and serve as an example to help the rest of the world move closer to peace and spirituality. There are times that this role will make it necessary to stay apart from certain activities that run counter to it -thus 'living' alone. *Chumash*

Question: Was Balaam able to curse the Israelites? A recurrent theme of Balaam's prophecies was that despite his successful reputation, he had no independent power either to deliver an actual curse or even to utter words to that effect. Even when the Israelites had sinned and were deserving of a curse, יהוה did not let it happen. When Jacob gained the blessings through deception, Isaac said in **Genesis 27:33 Isaac trembled violently, uncontrollable and said, Who? Where is he that has taken venison and brought it to me and I have eaten all of it before you came and have blessed him? Yes and he will be blessed.** When Jacob rebuked Simeon and Levi, he cursed their anger, but not them. **Genesis 49:7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.** And when they were to enter the Land and receive blessings and curses, the Torah is careful not to pronounce a curse directly upon them. **Deuteronomy 27:12 These will stand to bless את the people upon mount Gerizim, when you have come over את the Jordan Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Joseph and Benjamin.** *Chumash*

Question: Do all people act the same? Everyone is unique. Some people, though, tend to stand out as 'different' from the people around them. We should know that whoever we are, we are that way because that's how יהוה made us, and that's fine.

Question: Does that mean a person should never try to change? If there are things about us that are destructive to ourselves or others, or that go against our true values, we should try to change and improve. But besides from this we should accept ourselves and try to make the most of who we are.

Spiritual Exercise: Be separate from the world. Stand up for what you know is right and do not go along with the crowd.



2 Corinthians 6:17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says יהוה. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says יהוה Almighty." C-MATS



Balaam blesses the Israelites

Numbers 23:11 Balak said to Balaam, What have you done to me? I told you to curse my enemies and you have blessed *them* altogether. **12** Balaam answered and said, No, **את** that which יהוה has put in my mouth, **אתו** *Him* must I take heed to speak. **13** Balak said to him, please, come with **אתי** *me* to another place where you may see them: you will see only some of them and not all of them: but curse them from there. **14** Balak brought him into the field of Zophim at the top of Pisgah and built seven altars and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. **15** And Balaam said to Balak, Stand here by your burnt *offering* while I meet *Him* over there. **16** יהוה met Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, Go again to Balak and say this. **17** When Balaam came to him, Balak stood by his burnt *offering* and the princes of Moab **אתו** *with him*. Balak said to him, What has יהוה spoken? C-MATS

Question: Why had Balak chosen this place for the sacrifices? Balak himself had a great knowledge of sorcery and saw that Israel would suffer a damaging blow at a certain summit, which he hoped would be the summit where he would now take Balaam (v. 14). But Balak was only partly right; that was the mountain where Moses would die, not where Balaam would achieve his desire. For his part, when יהוה told him that he was to continue to bless Israel, Balaam wanted to end his mission, but יהוה put a "halter and a hook in his mouth," as it were, thus making it clear to Balaam that he was not a free agent. Balaam returned to Balak, but by this time some of Balak's officers had left in disgust, sure that he could not be trusted to deliver a curse. Balak himself asked sarcastically (v. 17) what יהוה had said, as if to taunt Balaam for having no power of his own. *Chumash*



Balaam's Second Prophecy

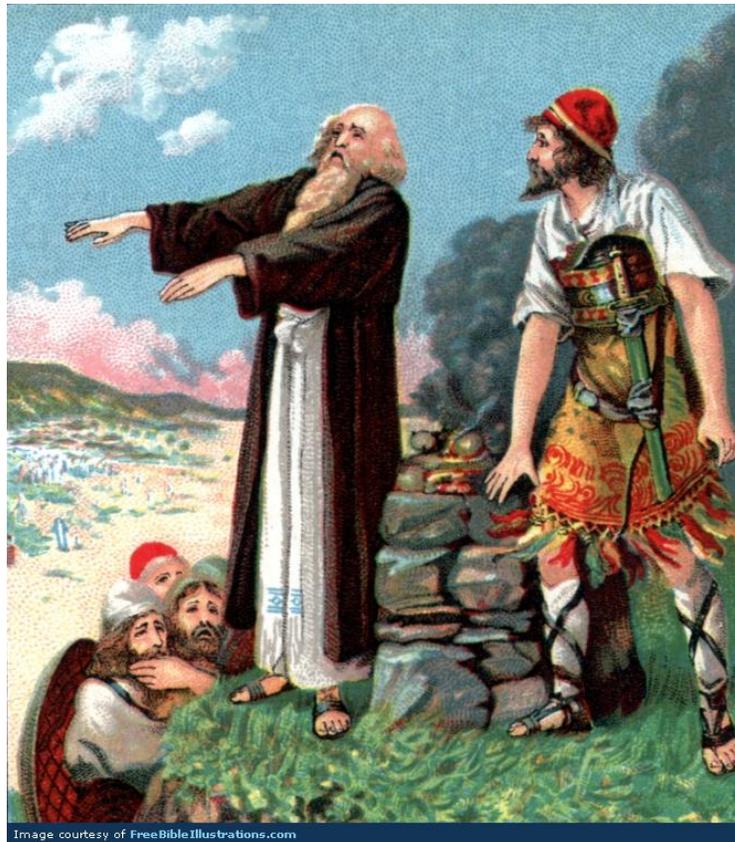
Numbers 23:18 Balaam spoke his parable and said, Get up, Balak and hear; listen to me, son of Zippor: **19** Elohim *is* not a man that lies; or the son of man who repents (*changes his mind*): He said *it* and He will do *it*. He has spoken and he will bring it to pass. **20** I have received *a commandment* to bless: and when He blesses; I cannot reverse it. **21** He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor has he seen perverseness in Israel: יהוה their Elohim *is* with them and acclaimed as king among them. **22** Elohim brought them out of Egypt; He *has* given them strength of a unicorn (*wild ox*). **23** *There is no enchantment that can work* against Jacob or any divination *that can work* against Israel: now it can be said of Jacob and of Israel, What is this that Elohim has done?! **24** The people will rise up as a great lion and lift up himself as a young lion: he will not lie down until he eats up the prey and drinks the blood of the slain. C-MATS

Question: What does “The people will rise up as a great lion” mean? Balaam foretold that Israel would begin its conquest of the Land and, like a young lion maturing to full strength, grow ever more powerful. It would not finish its work until it conquered and plundered all the Canaanite kings. From the moment Israelites arise in the morning, they seek to perform commandments, the way a growing lion learns to become skilled at seeking prey. Even when they lie down at night, they conquer their enemies, because they pray before they go to sleep and entrust their souls in יהוה's hands. If danger comes while they sleep, He protects them and fights their wars. *Chumash*

Question: What did Balaam learn when he could not curse Israel? This experience taught Balaam that the best way to harm the Israelites was not through curses, but by enticing them to sin. Chapter 25 recounts how this came about, and that the sin and plague described there was a

direct result of Balaam's evil counsel. *Chumash*

Numbers 23:25 Balak said to Balaam, You won't curse them at all, but *at least* don't bless them either. **26** Balaam answered and said to Balak, I told you that I will say all that יהוה says, אתו *Him* shall I do. C-MATS



Balaam's Third Prophecy

Numbers 23:27 Balak said to Balaam, Please, come and I will bring you to another place; perhaps it will please Elohim that you may curse them from there for me. **28** And brought Balak את־ Balaam to the top of Peor that looks toward Jeshimon. **29** Balaam said to Balak, build me seven altars and prepare me seven bullocks and seven rams. **30** Balak did as Balaam had said and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. C-MATS

Question: Why did Balak take Balaam to the Mount of Peor? Balak was a sorcerer, and he foresaw that Israel would suffer a tragedy that would emanate from the height known as Peor; he hoped that the tragedy would be Balaam's curse, and he was partly right because Balaam gave Balak advice there how to overthrow the Israelites. Practitioners of sorcery often see things superficially, without understanding them. *Chumash*

Numbers 24:1 When Balaam saw that it pleased יהוה to bless את־ Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek for sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness. **2** And lifted up Balaam את־ his eyes and he saw את־ Israel encamped tribe by tribe; and the spirit of Elohim came on him. C-MATS



The spirit of Elohim comes on Balaam

Numbers 24:3 Balaam spoke this parable and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, says and the man whose eyes have been opened says: **4** He who hears the words of El (*G-d*), who saw the vision of the Shaddai (*Almighty*), who has fallen, yet has his eyes open: **5** How lovely are your tents, O Jacob and your encampments, O Israel! **6** They spread out like valleys, like gardens by *the riverside*, like the aloe trees which יהוה has planted and like cedar trees beside the waters. **7** He will pour the water out of his buckets and his seed *will have* much water and his king will be mightier than Agag and his kingdom will be exalted. **8** Elohim brought them forth out of Egypt; He *has given him* the strength of a unicorn (*wild ox*): He will devour the nations (*gentiles*) who are his enemies and will break their bones and pierce them through *with* his arrows. **9** When he lies down he lays down as a lion and as a great lion: Who dares to stir him up? Blessed *is* he that blesses you and cursed *is* he that curses you. C-MATS

Question: Why does Balaam speak of blessing Israel first? Balaam spoke first of the blessing and only then of the curse. Isaac reversed the order, speaking first of curse and then of blessing. **Genesis 27:29** Let people serve you and nations bow down to you: be master over your brothers and let your mother's sons bow down to you: cursed be every one that curses you and blessed be he that blesses you. Both reflected the life experience of their sort of people. Wicked people such as Balaam start out in a blaze of glory, and then plunge into the cursedness they deserve. The righteous, on the other hand, may begin their careers in difficulty and hardship, but ultimately they will be blessed. **Proverbs 14:23** All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Question: What does Balaam prophesy about the kings of Israel? Aloes are fragrant trees, which symbolize the spreading fame of Israel's kings and scholars. Their stature will be comparable to well-watered cedars. Since flowing water symbolizes abundance and a well can symbolize offspring, the king who will be anointed from his sons will be great. The simile continues by likening the success of the king's offspring to seeds planted near plentiful waters. *Chumash*

Question: What does modesty mean? Modesty means keeping things private that should be kept private. Balaam blessed the Israelite people because they set up their tents in a modest, dignified way, so that people couldn't gawk into each other's private dwellings. They were careful to pitch their tents in a way that the openings didn't face each other so they couldn't see into each other's tents. Acting with modest dignity shows we respect privacy -- and respect ourselves.

Question: When someone steals another's privacy, what exactly does he steal? To many people, their privacy is their most valued possession. Privacy is the breathing space to let each of us develop into our own, unique selves. It gives us time to reflect on the most important issues in our lives and build close personal relationships with those to whom we choose to draw close. To 'steal' this from someone is to withhold one of life's most basic and essential freedoms.

Question: What do you think it means to be 'dignified'? Being dignified means having self-respect and acting in a way that reflects that. Part of this includes dressing in a way that is appropriate for where we are and that shows we value our privacy and expect others to respect it, too.

Question: What do you think it might mean to respect our own privacy? The way we show respect to others is the way we should show respect to ourselves. People with self-respect know that just as others have a right to privacy, so do they, and will not reveal parts of themselves, neither their body nor their thoughts and feelings to others in ways that violate their self-respect.

Question: Does the way someone dresses say anything about the way they feel about themselves? In general, a person who dresses in a neat, appropriate, and modest way show that they feel comfortable with themselves and have high self-esteem. And someone who dresses in an outlandish or inappropriate way shows the opposite.

Question: Is there such a thing as dressing 'spiritually'? Since all of us are comprised of a physical body and a spiritual soul, when we dress in a way that, while neat and attractive, doesn't overemphasize our body, it allows others to relate to the spiritual, 'soul' part of ourselves easier. **1 Timothy 2:9 I want women to adorn themselves with modest clothing, moderate and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, 10 but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to righteousness. C-MATS**

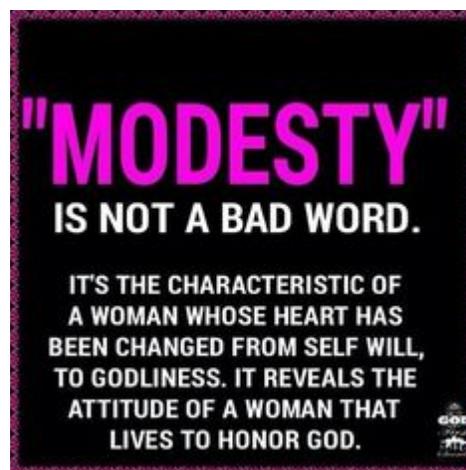
Matthew 5:27 Yahshua said: "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If such sexual lust is breaking the seventh commandment, then knowingly dressing in a manner that provokes or encourages such sin is also sinful. Men, on the whole, are much more affected by what they see than is the case with women as a rule. Women, generally speaking, are affected more by a combination of things than is the case with men. Sexual desire is immediately stirred in men by looking.

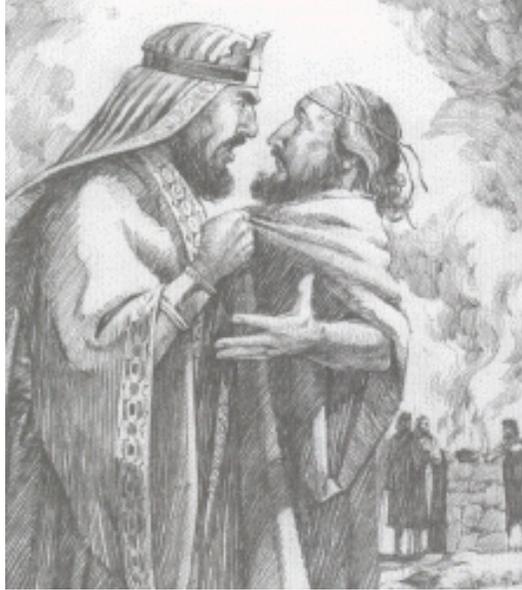
Question: What should a righteous man do to combat this problem? Job was wise when he said, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a woman. (Job 31:1) Peter rebukes men who do not turn from their lust: **12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, 13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children. 2 Peter 2:12-14 C-MATS**

Isaiah reproved the women of Israel for their dress and behavior: **Isaiah 3:16 Moreover, יהוה says, because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing (choppy steps) as they go and making a tinkling with their feet; 17 Therefore, יהוה will kill with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion and יהוה will lay bare their secret parts. 18 In that day will take away תפארת את יהוה beauty of [their] tinkling crescents (ornaments for the moon god) about their feet and the headbands and their round tires like moon for the neck; 19 The pendants and the bracelets and the mufflers; 20 The headdresses and the ankle chains and the sashes and the perfume-boxes and the amulets; 21 the rings and the nose-jewels; 22 The festival robes and the mantles and the shawls and the satchels. C-MATS**

Question: What is the responsibility of the husbands and fathers? Husbands and fathers who allow their wives and daughters to dress immodestly are negligent. Fathers and husbands cannot be weak, but must tell their daughters and wives the truth about their apparel. A woman's body from the breast to the thighs is intended under all normal circumstances to be completely covered in the presence of men except for her husband if she is married. So the breasts, the midriff, the thighs are not meant for general exposure and dress should cover them. Jeans that technically cover the body, but no more cover the form of the body than if they were sprayed on as paint, are not modest even though not a square millimeter of flesh is actually exposed. The same is true of tops and skirts that are skin-tight. Be honest with those you love and encourage them to dress modestly.

Spiritual Exercise: Respect yourself. Dress yourself in a way to reflect the Light of Elohim and not cause others to lust.





Balaam angers Balak

Numbers 24:10 Balak was very angry with Balaam and he struck together **את** his hands: and Balak said to Balaam, I called you to curse my enemies and you have done nothing but bless *them* three times. 11 Now go back to your place: **אמרתי** *I said* to reward you with great honor; but יהוה has kept back your reward. 12 Balaam said to Balak, Didn't I tell your messengers who you sent to me saying, 13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond **את** commandment of יהוה to speak either good or bad of my own mind; *but* what יהוה says, **אתו** *Him* will I speak? C-MATS



Balaam's Final Prophecies

Numbers 24:14 And now I will go to my people: come and I will tell you what this people will do to your people in the latter days. **15** And Balaam spoke this parable and said, Balaam, the son of Beor, says and the man whose eyes are open says: **16** The one who hears the words of El (*G-d*) and knows the knowledge of *the* most High, *who* saw the vision of the Shaddai (*Almighty*), *who has* fallen, *yet* has his eyes open: **17** I will see him, but not now: I will see him, but not soon: a Star will come out of Jacob and a Scepter will rise out of Israel to crush the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Num. 24:17 Time: "I shall see him, but not now." Gal. 4:4.* **18** His enemies will be his possession Edom and Seir, will be a possession; and Israel will do valiantly. **19** From Jacob someone will come who will rule and he will destroy what remains of the city. C-MATS

Question: Who is "a Star will come out of Jacob"? The Messiah is called a "star" -- more likely a shooting star, or meteor -- because he will have to flash across heaven, visible to the whole world, as it were, to gather in Israelites from their dispersion. At that time, Moab will not be spared, even though the Israelites of Balak's generation were commanded not to conquer Moab. *Chumash*

Question: What advice did Balaam give Balak to ensnare the children of Israel? Balaam advised Balak to ensnare the children of Israel with the Moabites. He said to him: "Their יהוה hates immorality, and they are very partial to linen. Come, and I will advise you what to do. Erect for them tents enclosed by hangings of linen, and place in them harlots, old women outside the tent, and young women within the tent to sell them linen garments." And when an Israelite ate, drank, and was merry, and went for a stroll in the market place, the old woman outside the tent would say to him, 'Do you desire linen garments? Come in and buy.'" Said the young woman to him: "Would you like to drink a glass of wine?" Having drunk, his passion was inflamed and he exclaimed to her, "Yield to me!" She seduced him and taught him her pagan practices. *Chumash*

Question: What does Peter say about men like Balaam? **They have left the straight path and have lost their way; they have followed the path taken by Balaam son of Beor, who loved the money he would get for doing wrong 16 and was rebuked for his sin. His donkey spoke with a human voice and stopped the prophet's insane action. 17** These men are like dried-up springs, like clouds blown along by a storm; יהוה has reserved a place for them in the deepest darkness. (2 Peter 2) C-MATS

Jude 11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion. C-MATS

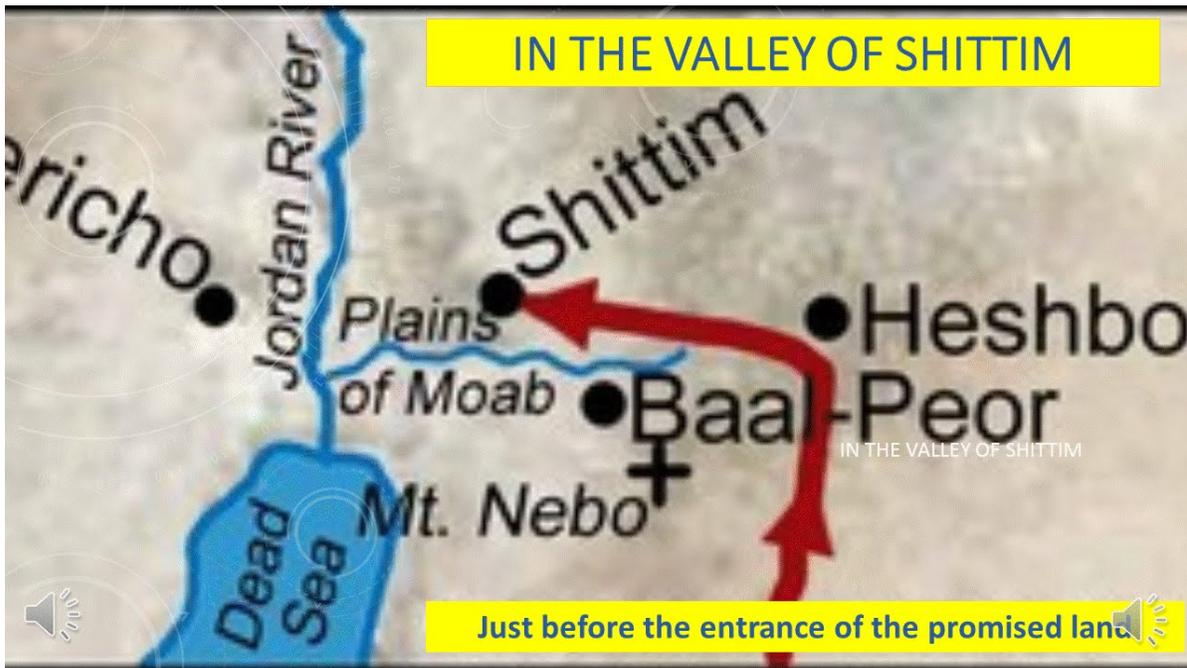
Rev 2:14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. **15** Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. **16** Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. C-MATS

Numbers 24:20 When he (*Balaam*) looked on אֱמֹלֵק Amalek, he spoke this parable and said, Amalek *was* the first among the nations; but he will perish forever. **21** And he (*Balaam*) looked on אֱתֵינִי the Kenites and spoke this parable and said, Though your dwelling is אֵינִי *strong* and you set your nest on a rock. **22** However the Kenite will be wasted *when* Asshur carries you away captive. C-MATS

Question: Why did Balaam who hated them bless them? It would have been fitting that the rebukes (in the Book of Deuteronomy) be pronounced by Balaam, and that the blessings (in the book of Numbers) be said by Moses... But יהוה said: "Let Moses, who loves them, rebuke them," said יהוה when the people of Israel needed rebuke, for rebuke from a loving heart is many times more effective. "And let Balaam, who hates them, bless them," for the blessing of an enemy is so much more real than a lover's praises. *Chumash*

Numbers 24:23 Balaam spoke this parable and said, Who will live when Elohim does this? **24** And ships will come from the coast of Chittim (Cyprus) and will afflict Asshur (Syria) and will afflict Eber (Iran) and they also will perish forever. **25** Balaam left and returned to his home: and Balak went his own way. C-MATS

Question: Who will end the Roman exile of the Israelites? Although the **Chittim** are descended from Yavan [Greece], which was the third of the beasts in Daniel, they developed into a powerful nation in their own right, until they achieved independent status as the Roman Empire. In addition to Rome's conquest of Assyria, this verse alludes to the current, long exile of Israel, because the other land conquered by Rome, can be rendered as **Eber**, the grandfather of Abraham, after whom Abraham was called Ivri, the source of the word Hebrew. This exile was begun by the Romans, and it will therefore be called the Roman exile until it is ended by Messiah, even though other powerful nations, such as the Ishmaelites [Islam], have eclipsed Rome and subdued Israel. (The influence of the Roman Catholic Church is part of this exile.)



The People of Israel at Peor

Numbers 25:1 Israel remained in Shittim and the people began whoring with the daughters of Moab. **2** And the women invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods: where the people ate and bowed down to their gods. **3** Israel joined himself to Baal-peor (*lord-gap*): and the anger of יהוה was blazed up against Israel. C-MATS

Question: How were the Israelite men entrapped to worship Baal? The Moabite women invited the Israelites to feast and drink with them, and when the men became aroused and wanted to cohabit, the women drew their Baal-peor idols from their robes and insisted that the Israelite men bow to them. *Chumash*

Numbers 25:4 יהוה said to Moses, take את־ all the heads of the people and hang אותם them up to ליהוה facing the sun, so that the fierce anger of יהוה may be turned away from Israel. 5 Moses said to the judges of Israel, Kill every man who has joined to Baal-peor (*Peor was a mountain east of Jordan*). C-MATS

Question: Who was Baal? Son of El (god of thunder and lightning), Baal was the sun god of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, whose worship spread to the ancient Hebrews.

Question: How did Moses get rid of the sin in the camp? Moses assembled the leaders to sit as a court and pass judgment on those who were worshipping Baal, and they were hanged in large numbers facing the sun (who they worshipped). *Chumash*



Phinehas stops the Plague

Numbers 25:6 And, surely, one of the Children of Israel came and brought to his brethren את־ a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the Children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation. 7 When Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; 8 And Phinehas went after the man of Israel into his tent and pierced the javelin through את־ both of them, את the man of Israel את־ and the woman through her stomach. So the plague was stopped from among the Children of Israel. 9 And those that died in the plague were 24,000. C-MATS

Question: Who was Phinehas? Phinehas was a priest during the Israelites' Exodus journey, the grandson of Aaron and son of Eleazar, the High Priests (**Exodus 6:25 And Eleazar, Aaron's son, took one of the daughters of Putiel as a wife; and she gave birth to him פִּינְחָס Phinehas: these are the heads of the אבות fathers of the Levites according to their families.**). Phinehas is highly extolled for his promptness and energy in executing the prince of the tribe of Simeon and the Midianitish woman. While even Moses himself knew not what to do, and all the Israelites were weeping at the door of the Tabernacle (**Numbers 25:6**), Phinehas alone was self-possessed and decided. He first appealed to the brave men of Israel, asking who would be willing to kill the criminals at the risk of his own life; and, receiving no answer, he then undertook to accomplish the execution himself. Phinehas, having removed the iron point from his spear (according to Pirke R. El. xlvii., it was Moses' spear that Phinehas had snatched), leaned on the shaft as on a rod; otherwise the Simeonites would not have allowed him to enter the tent. Indeed, the people inquired his object in entering the tent, whereupon he answered that he was about to follow the example of Zimri, and was admitted unopposed. After having stabbed the man and the woman, Phinehas carried both of them on his spear out of the tent so that all the Israelites might see that they had been justly punished. Phinehas was a man of action. He did not wait around to see what others would do. He did what he knew had to be done to promote justice.

Spiritual Exercise: What will you do this week to promote justice?

Do You Know?

1. Balak, King of Moab, asked _____ to come curse the Israelites.
2. The countries of _____ and _____ were afraid of Israel and wanted Balaam to curse the people.
3. יהוה allowed Balaam's _____ to speak to him.
4. An _____ tried to keep Balaam from going to Moab.
5. Balaam struck his donkey _____ times.
6. Balak built _____ altars to יהוה and sacrificed bull and rams so Balaam would curse Israel.
7. Balak wanted Balaam to curse Israel, but יהוה would only allow Balaam to _____ Israel.
8. Balaam gave advice to _____ how to harm Israel by causing the men to enter into immorality.
9. The Israelites killed all the men that worshiped _____, the Sun god of the Moabites.
10. _____ stopped the plague brought on by the Israelite man who took a Midianitish woman into his tent.
11. A woman should wear _____ clothing.
12. _____ work brings a profit.
13. Let every person be quick to hear, slow to _____, and slow to anger.
14. Do not let the sun go down while you are still _____.
15. A _____ man obtains favor from יהוה.

Answers:

1. Balaam
2. Moab, Midian
3. Donkey
4. angel
5. three
6. seven
7. bless
8. Balak
9. Baal
10. Phinehas
11. Modest
12. Hard
13. Speak
14. Angry
15. Good, righteous

Haftorah



Micah, prophet to Israel

Micah 5: 5 And this *man* shall be *our* peace. When the Assyrian shall come into our land and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men. 6 And they shall waste אֶת־ land of Assyria with the sword אֶת־ and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: and He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he comes into our land and when he treads within our border. 7 And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as dew מֵאֵת from יְהוָה, as showers upon the grass that wait not for man, nor wait for the sons of men. 8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he goes through, treads down and tears in pieces and there is none to deliver. 9 Let your hand be lifted up above your adversaries and let all your enemies be cut off. 10 And it shall come to pass in that day, says יְהוָה, that I will cut off your horses out of the midst of you and will destroy your chariots: 11 And I will cut off the cities of your land and will throw down all your strongholds. 12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of your hand; and you shall have no *more* soothsayers: 13 And I will cut off your graven images and your pillars out of the midst of you; and you shall no more worship the work of your hands; 14 And I will pluck up your Asherim out of the midst of you; and I will destroy your cities. 15 And I will execute in anger, wrath and vengeance אֶת־ upon the heathen (*gentiles*) which have not obeyed. Micah 6:1 Hear you now אֵת what יְהוָה says: Arise, plead your *case before* אֶת־ the mountains and let the hills hear your voice. 2 Hear, O you mountains, אֶת־ controversy, יְהוָה and you enduring foundations of the earth; for יְהוָה has a controversy with His people and He will contend with Israel. 3 O My people, what have I done to you? And in which have I wearied you? Testify against Me. 4 For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage; and I sent before you אֶת־ Moses, Aaron and Miriam. 5 O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised and what Balaam the son of Beor answered אֶת־ him; remember from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of יְהוָה. 6 With which shall I come before יְהוָה and bow myself before the high Elohim? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will יְהוָה be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the חַטָּאת *sin of* my soul? 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does יְהוָה require of you, but to do justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your Elohim? C-MATS

The True Measure

Question: It's nice to be smart and talented. But there is something which is far more important to be - good. In this week's Torah portion, we meet Balaam. He was a super genius, very powerful and charismatic and extremely talented. Yet he was one of the worst, most lowly humans who ever lived. Why? Because he used all of his talents selfishly and to hurt others. The Torah teaches that the true measure of a person's worth is not his talent, but the goodness of his heart.

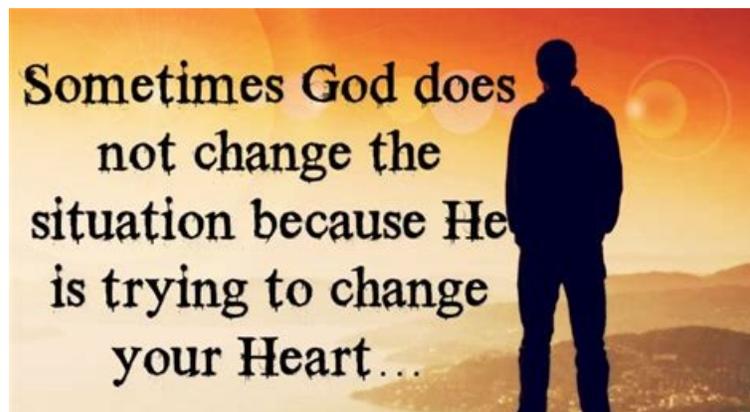
HEART STOPPER

Dan ran with everybody else to the bunk to hear the counselor's decision about who would be chosen to be his new assistant. Although his feet were moving, he wasn't into it. After all, what chance did someone like him have of being chosen when there were guys like Steve? It had all started a week ago, when they first arrived and Marc, the head counselor of their division, had told them that he was going to choose one extra-special guy - "a leader who has what it takes" - for the very special privilege of being counselor's assistant.

That kid would have an hour later curfew every night than the rest of the kids and get extra rations at the camp canteen, and since his job was to make sure everyone else did their jobs, he didn't even have to do any cleaning for weekly bunk inspection!! Who *wouldn't* want a deal like that! So when Marc had told them he was going to observe everyone for a week and then choose, you can bet all the guys set out to put on a winning performance. Dan had been optimistic at first. He was a good, regular kid like everyone else. But he started to lose hope when Marc came by with his clipboard as they were playing basketball. Dan had always been an okay hoop player but compared to Steve, he was a lump of clay. Man, could that kid dribble and shoot! "Give *me* the ball - why fool around?" Steve would yell to the rest of the guys on the team. At first, nobody listened but then when Dan and the others saw what a whiz the guy was, they just did as he said - it was crazy not to. The game that Marc watched them, Steve had scored the team's every point. Dan had hoped he'd get his chance to impress Marc the evening they had quiz night. He'd brushed up on his multiplication tables during after-lunch break and even made sure to check out the map on the wall in case there'd be questions on geography. But then, when Steve started going on about something called quadratic equations - or something like that - and could name the capitals of places Dan hadn't even known existed, he gave up on that one too. So that's why it was almost a joke to be running to the bunk after Marc had blown the whistle for everyone to come and hear his decision. After all, who else could possibly 'have what it takes to be leader' if not Steve? The guy was super smart *and* super talented, what else was there? As the kids got closer to the bunk you could see that Old Jim, the maintenance man, certainly hadn't been expecting everyone to come barging in now. He was getting ready to paint the fence and had the bench with all his paint supplies set up right on the path which led to the bunk's front door. Dan didn't know if Steve (who was running at the head of the pack, naturally) hadn't see Old Jim and his stuff, or just didn't care, but as he breezed by, he just kicked the bench out of the way, sending all the stuff -rollers, brushes and (fortunately still unopened) cans of paint - flying. Dan saw Old Jim's face turn red, but before the old man could even get out a syllable, Steve was long gone. The rest of the kids, following Steve's lead, just ran by, not even giving a glance to the old man shaking his head and looking really upset. Dan, who was jogging toward the end of the pack, was about to pass by too when he thought about how sad and upset Old Jim must feel about what just happened and all the extra work he was going to have to do now. Even for a young guy, picking up all that stuff would be a hassle. Slowing down, he turned the bench back right side up, looked at the old man and said; "Here, why don't you just sit down. I'll pick up the stuff that fell." Jim gave Dan one of the widest smiles he had ever seen. It took Dan a few minutes to pick up all the stuff and he figured he'd get to the bunk in time to shake Steve's hand and congratulate him on becoming the new official counselor's assistant. Hoping he wouldn't get in trouble for showing up late and missing the ceremony, he quietly snuck inside the door. He was surprised to see everyone standing up as he walked in, looking right at him and giving him strange, glowing smiles. "Well, Dan," said Marc with the biggest smile of all, "I saw the whole thing out there. And while you were out there showing us that you have what it takes for leadership - and being counselor's assistant, I was explaining to all the guys why, and they all agree." Dan panned his bunkmate's faces as they were all nodding up and down to Marc's words, even Steve. "Being a leader," Marc went on, "isn't a matter of who has the strongest arms and legs or even the strongest brain. It's a matter of having the strongest heart - that means a heart that cares enough to help a person in need. And I think, Dan, we all saw just now that you win that competition, hands down."

Question: What life lesson do you think someone could take from this story? It is easy to make the mistake of thinking that a great person is one who is rich, famous, good-looking or talented. But while all these things may be nice to be, they don't determine a person's greatness. Rather, it is **the goodness of one's heart which lets us know where someone truly stands.**

Question: Do you think the head counselor made a fair choice by choosing - after Steve had proved how he was clearly the most intellectual and best athlete of the group? While Steve did have these things, the way he selfishly hogged the basketball and especially the way he callously knocked over the old maintenance man's stuff showed he was very lacking inside. **Talents are gifts from יהוה; a good heart is something we have to earn ourselves** - and Dan, not Steve, had clearly won out in that department.



Resources:

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com

"Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com (stories)