

Balak, King of Moab

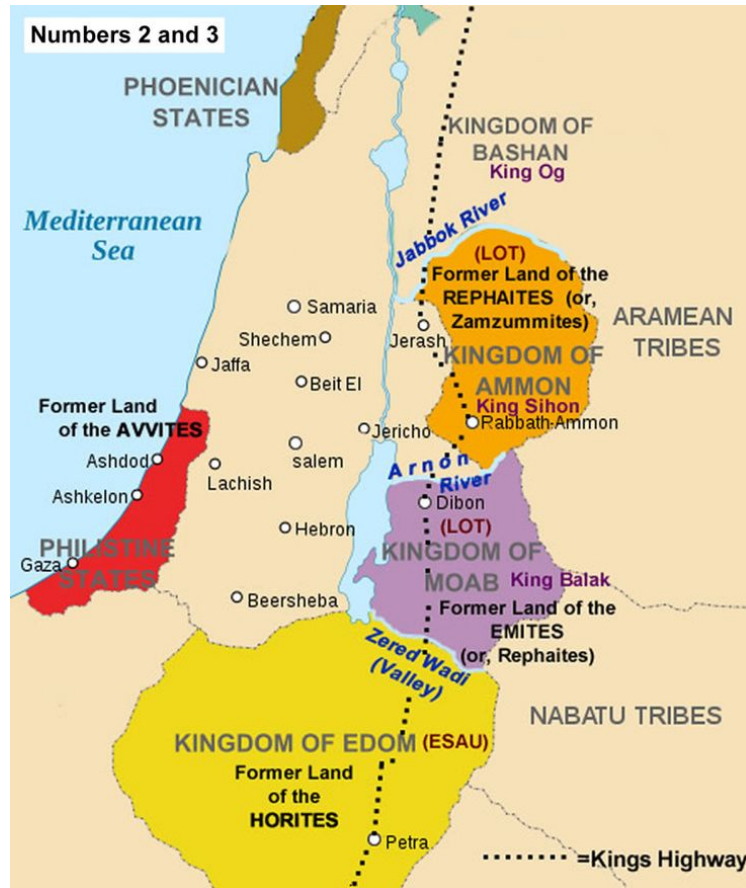


Summary: Balak, the king of Moab, summons the prophet Balaam to curse the people of Israel. On the way, Balaam is berated by his donkey, who sees, before Balaam does, the angel that יהוה sends to block their way. Three times, from three different vantage points, Balaam attempts to pronounce his curses, but each time blessings issue forth instead. Balaam also prophesies on the end of the days and the coming of the Messiah. The people fall prey to the charms of the daughters of Moab, and are enticed to worship the idol Peor. When a high-ranking Israelite official publicly takes a Midianite princess into a tent, Pinchas kills them both, stopping the plague raging among the people.

Numbers 22:2 Now saw Balak, the son of Zippor, אַתְּ 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*) אַתְּ all that is around us, as licks up the ox אַתְּ 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*



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: The entire world knew that the Hebrews have come out of 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: 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

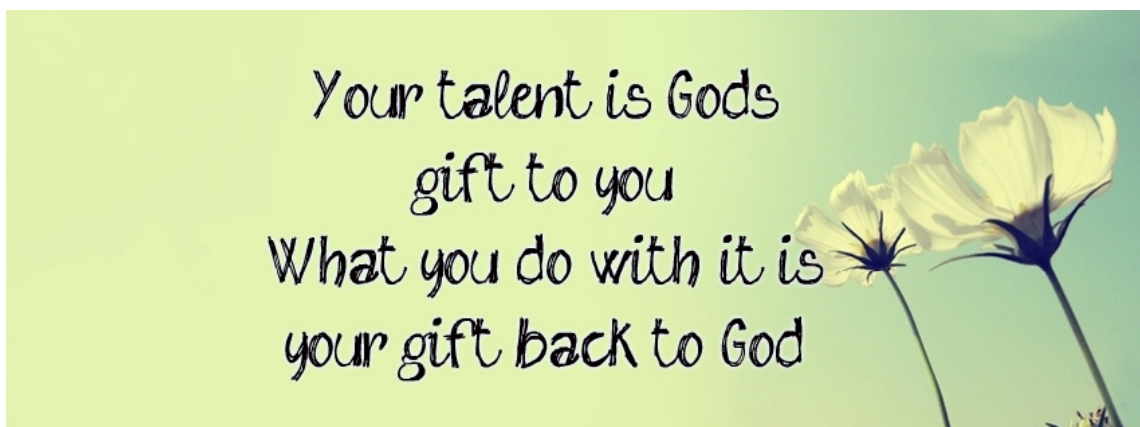
Question: Who was Balaam? Balaam was a descendant of Laban, son of Beor, the sorcerer who taught him the occult arts. The Midrash tells us that Balaam was so great a prophet that his prophecy equaled that of Moses. Since יהוה created his world with symmetry, everything that exists on the positive side has a negative counterpart. The equivalent of Moses was Balaam. The gentile 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.

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.

Question: Have we all been given the same talents or gifts from יהוה? **Romans 12:6** Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; **7** Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teaches, on teaching; **8** Or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness. C-MATS

Question: What does יהוה say about not using the talents that He has given us? **Matthew 25:13** Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes. **14** For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. **15** And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his certain ability; and straightway took his journey. **16** Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. **17** And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. **18** But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his master's money. **19** After a long time the master of those servants comes, and reckons with them. **20** And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Master, you delivered unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. **21** His master said unto him, Well done, you good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your master. **22** He also that had received two talents came and said, Master, you delivered unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. **23** His master said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things: enter you into the joy of your master. **24** Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Master, I knew you that you are an hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not sown: **25** And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the earth: lo, there you have that is yours. **26** His master answered and said unto him, You wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not sown: **27** You ought therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. **28** Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which has ten talents. **29** For unto every one that has shall be given and he shall have abundance: but from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has. **30** And cast you the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. C-MATS

1 Peter 4:10 As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of Elohim. C-MATS



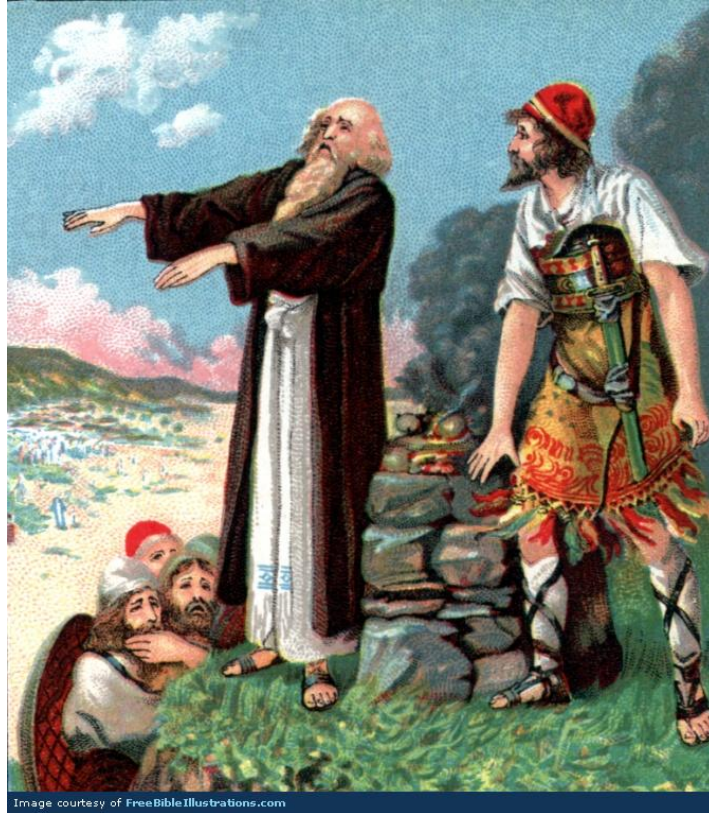


Balaam and Balak

Question: Who was Balak, King of Moab? Although natural enemies, Moab and Midian banded together and appointed a Midianite, Balak son of Zippor, as king over them since he was a mighty warrior. Balak recognized that the power of the Israelites was supernatural, so he too sought a way of undermining them supernaturally. Together with the elders of Midian, he hatched a plan to hire Balaam—a well known and powerful sorcerer and prophet—to curse the Israelites. Since the Israelites' strength lay in their mouths, i.e., in prayer, he planned to defeat them with a stronger "mouth"—Balaam's curse.



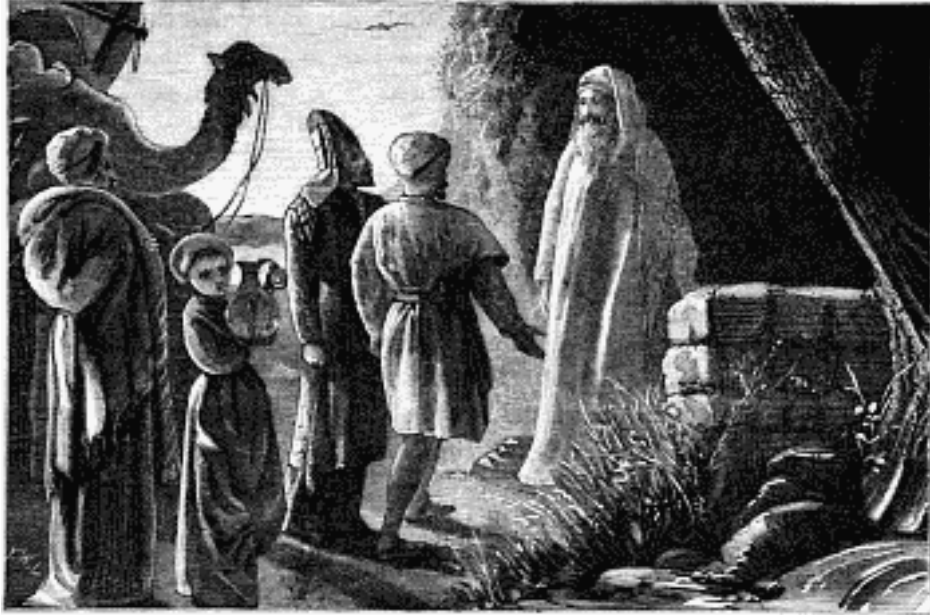
Kingdom of Moab and surrounding neighbors



Balak and 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. 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* **את** 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 **את** the word of **יהוה** my Elohim, to do anything great or small. 19 Now, please, **אתם** 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 **את** word that **יהוה** my Elohim...implying he can only speak what the presence of **את** tells him to speak and repeats this statement in Numbers 24:13 that says, I cannot go beyond **את** commandment of **יהוה** to speak either good or bad of my own mind. C-MATS



Balaam receiving the messengers

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 **אתם** *with them*; but only **את** the words which I say to you, **אתו** *him* you shall do. 21 Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled **את** his **אתנו** *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 **אתנו** *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*



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 Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of Elohim? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **10** Nor thieves, nor covetous (greedy), nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of Elohim. C-MATS



Balaam and His Donkey

Numbers 22:23 And saw the donkey **אתה** 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 **אתה** 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 **אתה** the Angel of יהוה, she pushed up against the wall and crushed **אתה** 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 **אתה** the Angel of יהוה, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam was so angry that he hit **אתה** the donkey with a staff. C-MATS



Balaam's donkey speaks

Numbers 22:28 And opened **את־** יהוה **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־** יהוה **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: 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*

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: 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.'

Numbers 22:32 The Angel of יהוה said to him, Why have you hit **את** your donkey three times? **יצאתי** 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, **חטאתי** I sinned; because I did not know that **אתה** 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** the words that I speak to you, **אתו** him you shall speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. C-MATS



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*

Question: Who was this angel and why was it sent? This is 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*



The angel of יהוה prevents Balaam from going forward.

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 them that love Elohim, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If Elohim be for us, who can be against us? C-MATS

Ecclesiastes 3:1 For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven: 2 A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up; 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; 5 a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 a time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to cast away; 7 a time to tear and a time to sew; a time to keep silence 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

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



City of Kiryat-Hutzot

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*

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 אלהי 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 אלהי fourth part of Israel? May I die the death of the righteous and let my end be like theirs! C-MATS



Balaam's First Prophecy

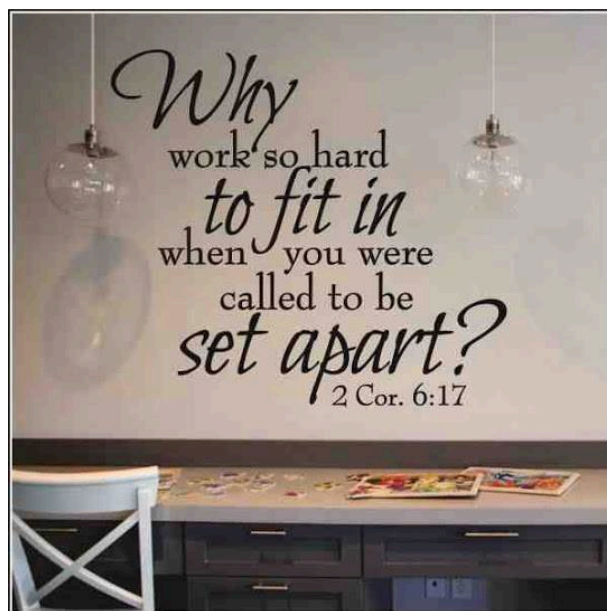
Question: What do you think the Torah means when it says the Israelite people are “a people that will live alone”? Like every people, the Israelite People has its special role in the world. Our role is to live an especially ethical and spiritual life according to the values of the Torah, and serve as 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 is 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 Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says יהוה, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says יהוה Almighty. C-MATS

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



Balaam blesses the Israelites

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*

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



Balaam's Second Prophecy

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, אהו Him shall I do. 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 אהו 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 אהו 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 אהו his eyes and he saw אהו 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 spoke 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. *Chumash*

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*



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: **אמרת** *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 generations 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 do the Scriptures say about men like Balaam?

2 Peter 2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; **16** But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. **17** These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. C-MATS

Jude 11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. C-MATS

Revelation 2:14 But I have a few things against you, because you have them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. **15** So have you also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. **16** Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. C-MATS

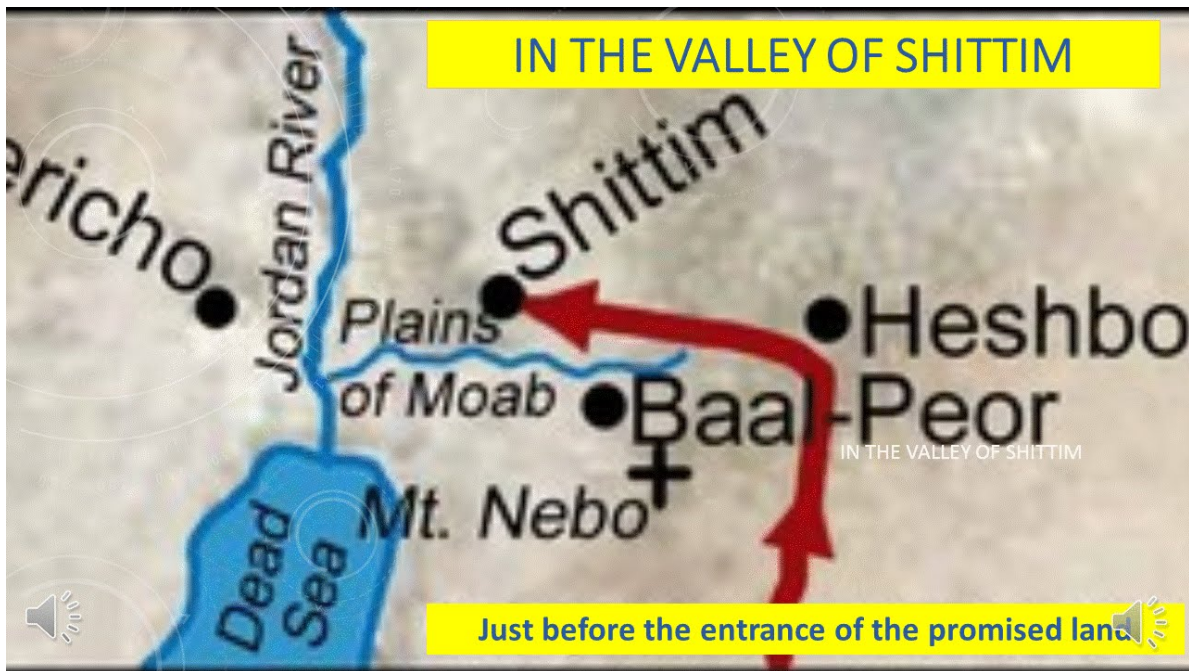
Numbers 24:20 When he (*Balaam*) looked on אֲתָם Amalek, he spoke this parable and said, Amalek was the first among the nations; but he will perish forever. **21** And he (*Balaam*) looked on אֲתָם the Kenites and spoke this parable and said, Though your dwelling is אֲתָתְךָ strong and you set your nest 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.)

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



The People of Israel at Peor

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 ליהוה יהוה said to Moses, take אתם 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*

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

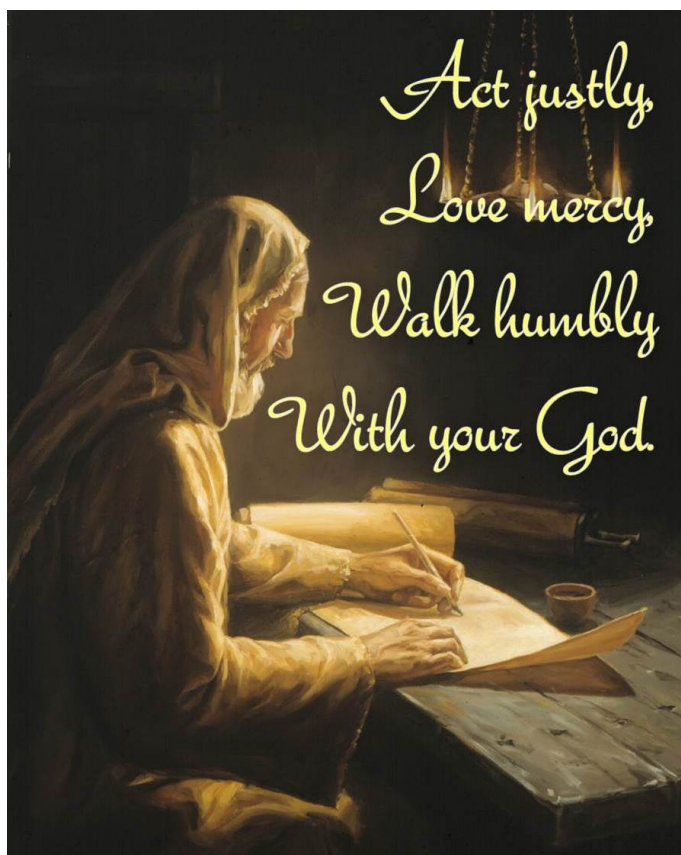
Do You Know?

1. Balak, King of Moab, asked _____ to 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 Baal 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 was a prophet around the year 3200 during the reigns of Achaz and Chikiah. The prophecy in this selection relates to the period prior to the war of Gog and Magog and the coming of the Messiah. The connection to our lesson is the mention of Balak and Balaam as examples of יהוה's caring and protection for the Israelite people. The story of Balak involved יהוה protecting us from our enemies even when we were totally unaware of their sinister conspiracies and intentions.

Micah 5:6 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 יהוה, 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 יהוה, 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. C-MATS

Micah 6:1 Hear you now אַתָּה what יְהוָה says: Arise, plead your *case before* אַתָּה the mountains and let the hills hear your voice. 2 Hear, O you mountains, אַתָּה 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 אַתָּה Moses, Aaron and Miriam. 5 O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab devised and what Balaam the son of Beor answered אַתָּה 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

Brit Chadashah

Question: Balaam rode an ass to Moab and יְהוָה was angry that he went. Yahusha rode an ass into Jerusalem. What was the difference in the two journeys? Matthew 21:1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Y'shua two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, **Go into the village over against you, and straightway you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.** 3 **And if any man say ought unto you, you shall say, The Master has need of them; and straightway he will send them.** 4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell you the daughter of Sion (Zion), Behold, your King comes unto you, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6 And the disciples went, and did as Y'shua commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. 8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and spread them on the road. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that comes in the name of יְהוָה; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Yahusha the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. C-MATS

Question: What makes a person wise? 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not Elohim made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of Elohim the world by wisdom knew not Elohim, it pleased Elohim by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Mashiach crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Mashiach the power of Elohim, and the wisdom of Elohim. 25 Because the foolishness of Elohim is wiser than men; and the weakness of Elohim is stronger than men. 26 For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But Elohim has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and Elohim has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has Elohim chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are you in Mashiach Y'shua, who of Elohim is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in יְהוָה.

Question: Balak wanted to destroy the Israelites. Can destruction come upon the righteous? Will the wicked always be brought to judgment? 2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Master that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not. 4 For if Elohim spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to the abyss, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds; 9 יהוה knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before Adonai. 12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deception while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of *our* Adonai and Savior Y'shua haMashiach, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. C-MATS

The True Measure

Question: It's nice to be smart and talented. But there is something which is far more important for you 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? 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. In the game that Marc watched them, Steve had scored every point for the team. 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.**

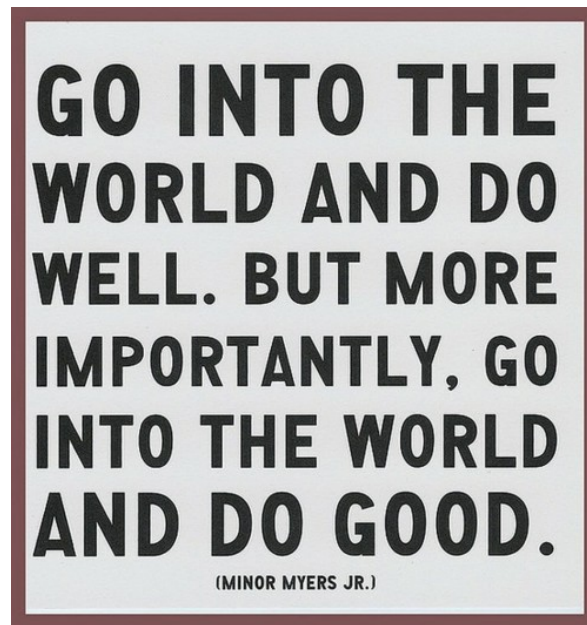
Question: Do you think the head counselor made a fair choice by choosing - after Steve had proved how he was clearly the most intellectual and best athlete of the group? While Steve did have these things, the way he selfishly hogged the basketball and especially the way he callously knocked over the 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.

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: 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 יהוה and his good deed will he pay him again. C-MATS

3 John 11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that does good is of Elohim: but he that does evil has not seen Elohim. C-MATS

1 Peter 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of Elohim commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. C-MATS

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin. C-MATS

Hebrews 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices Elohim is well pleased. C-MATS

Question: Balaam lost his temper and beat his donkey for not following his commands? 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: 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.

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

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. C-MATS

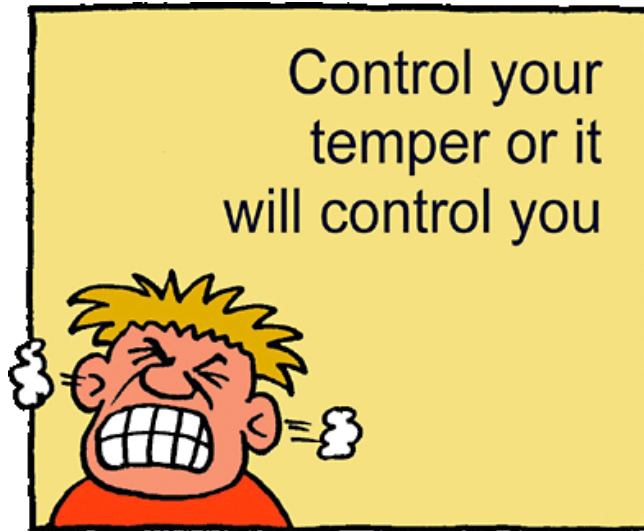
Love is...
Slow to Anger

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5

Question: What should we do if we are angry?

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

Ephesians 4:26 Be you angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath, **27** Neither give place to the devil. C-MATS



Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of Gehenna fire. **23** Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you; **24** Leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. C-MATS

Question: What does **Raca** mean in this verse? Raca is a term of reproach derived from the Chaldee reka, worthless. ("Raca denotes a certain looseness of life and manners, while fool, in the same passage, means a downright wicked and reprobate person.") Smith's Bible Dictionary

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.



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 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; **10** But which becomes women professing godliness with good works. C-MATS



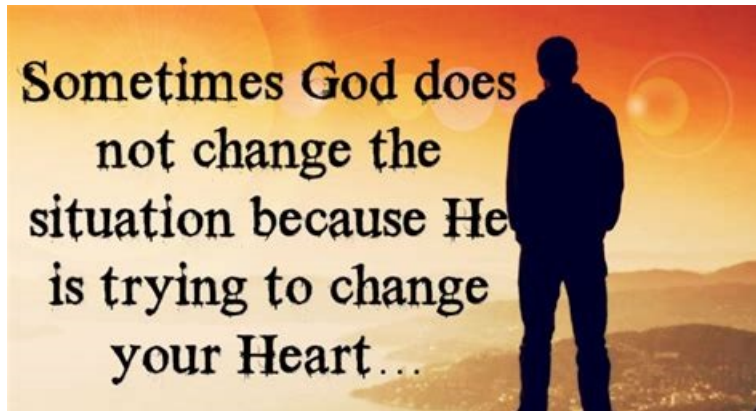
Matthew 5:27 You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shall not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. If such sexual lust is breaking the seventh commandment, then knowingly dressing 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: **But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceiving while they feast with you; 14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed 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 ויהוה will lay bare their secret parts. 18 In that day will take away יהוה את תפארתן 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 area so tight like they are painted on 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



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)