

Parshas Balak-Bilaam Must Not Win
by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

When Bilaam was predicting the future of the rest of the world after he was forced to bless Am Yisroel, he used the expression [Bamidbar 24:17] *Ashurenu vela Karov*, I see him but not nearby. The context of this statement was that Bilaam saw that Am Yisroel will reach prominence as well as its proper place among the nations of the world but not in the near future. Everything Balak was afraid of would take place at much later period in history.

The Chizkuni understands Bilaam to be saying that Balak need not worry about being absorbed by Am Yisroel since Am Yisroel will not reach its greatest eminence in Balak's lifetime. So Balak could be at ease. However, when Am Yisroel will reach its great elevation, they will indeed be big and even the stars will help Am Yisroel as hinted at in this same verse, he will draw a star from Yaakov. The entire creation, including all of the heavenly bodies will work in unison to bring about Am Yisroel's true distinction and status. Interestingly, Chizkuni understands the nation Keni in verse to be Moav. In this he differs from Rashi Who understands Keni to be descendents of Yisro. Chizkuni supports his understanding from the Keni, Kenizi and Kadmoni referred to in Bereishis 15:19 as eventual heirs to Eretz Yisroel. Chazal understood these three nations to be Moav, Ammon and Edom who related to Avraham. Eventually, Moav will be part of Eretz Yisroel. Balak was to know this so that he should know that the security he feels is only temporary and he cannot stop Hashem's plans no matter how hard he tries.

The Munkatcher Rebbe, Zt'l, points out that we also find the word *Ashurenu* by the first Brach that Bilaam gave when he stated [Bamidbar 23:9] 'from the hills I see him.' Rashi says on this verse that the hills are referring to the avos and emahos, the patriarchs and matriarchs who are the foundations for Am Yisroel. They are our

ancestors both by lineage and by being the prime examples of how we Am Yisroel, their children are to live our lives. The Munkatcher Rebe, Zt'l, explained that Bilaam, as all of our enemies, wanted us to give up all hope of the final geulah. If we despair of our final geulah, chas veshalom, we would melt down and cease to exist. But we must not despair. We cannot let Bilaam win. As long as we work to strengthen our faith in the geulah, the merit of our Avos and Emahos will stand by us to see that that we will not fall down. In merit of our holy illustrious ancestors, may we live to see the final redemption promised to them for us as their descendents. Amen.