



**“How goodly are your tents, Yaakov, your dwelling places, Yisrael”**

## **The Wicked Bilam’s Attack on Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash and David HaMelech’s Victory by Going to Them Daily**

This week’s parsha is parshas Balak. It chronicles how the wicked Bilam was hired to curse Yisrael but was compelled by HKB”H to bless them instead. In this essay, we will focus on the berachah (Bamidbar 24, 5): **“מה טובו אוהליך יעקב משכנותיך ישראל”—how goodly are your tents, Yaakov, your dwelling places, Yisrael.**

Our blessed sages teach us that this berachah refers to the Batei Kenesses where we daven and the Batei Midrash where we study Torah. The wicked Bilam intended to curse Yisrael by depriving them of these places of worship and study. HKB”H, however, prevented him from doing so, as we learn in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 105b): **“מברכתו של אותו רשע אתה למד מה היה בלבו, ביקש לומר שלא יהו להם בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות, מה טובו אוהליך יעקב, לא תשרה שכניה עליהם, ומשכנותיך ישראל.”** **From that rasha’s berachah, you learn what was really in his heart. He intended to say: (1) that they should not have synagogues and study-halls, but was compelled by HKB”H to say: “How goodly are your tents, Yaakov,” and (2) that the Shechinah should not rest upon them, but was compelled by HKB”H to say: “And your dwelling places, Yisrael.”**

We also learn an intriguing chiddush concerning this essential berachah that sets it apart from the other Berachos uttered by Bilam (ibid.): **“אמר רבי אבא בר כהנא, כולם מדרשות, שנאמר ויהפוך ה’ אלקיך לך חזרו לקללה חוץ מבתי כנסיות ומבתי מדרשות, את הקללה לברכה כי אהבך ה’ אלקיך, קללה ולא קללות.”** **Rabbi Abba the son of Kahana said: They all reverted back to curses except for the one regarding synagogues and study-halls. For it says (Devarim 23, 6): “And Hashem, your G-d, transformed the curse into a blessing for you, because Hashem, your G-d, loved you.” The passuk specifically says “curse” (“kelalah”) and not curses (“kelalot”).** Rashi

teaches us that the berachah that did not revert to a kelalah was the one pertaining to synagogues and study-halls; Yisrael will have them forever; they will never cease to be.

This implies that the main focus of the battle waged by the wicked Bilam against Yisrael mainly concerned **Batei Midrash and Batei Kenesses—study halls and synagogues.** Thus, Yisrael achieved a monumental victory in this intriguing battle, seeing as all of Bilam’s other Berachos reverted to “kelalot,” but this special berachah remained due to the intervention of HKB”H.

This, in fact, is the rationale for the minhag brought down by the Rama in Darkei Moshe (O.C. 6, 3): **“הנכנס לבית הכנסת אומר, מה טובו אוהליך יעקב משכנותיך ישראל, ואני ברוב חסדך אבוא ביתך—אשתחוה אל היכל קדשך ביראתך”** **one who enters a synagogue should say: “How goodly are your tents, Yaakov, your dwelling places, Yisrael. As for me, through Your abundant kindness, I will enter Your house; I will prostrate myself toward Your holy Sanctuary in awe of You.”** His source is the Seder Rav Amram Gaon (149).

As we have learned, when Bilam uttered the berachah of **“mah tovu,”** his true intent was to curse Yisrael by denying them Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash to daven in and study Torah in. But HKB”H foiled his plans and annulled the kelalah. Therefore, it is fitting for a Jew to express his gratitude to Hashem upon entering a synagogue or study-hall by uttering this passuk. In light of what we have learned though, it behooves us to consider why the wicked Bilam chose to attack specifically the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash of Yisrael. Clearly, there are other sacred practices and places he could have chosen to attack.

## Balak Wanted to Prevent the Extraction of the Spark of David HaMelech from Moav

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing an important concept from the incredible teachings of the great Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, zy" a, in Agra D'Kallah. He explains that Balak, the King of Moav, was extremely fearful that Yisrael would be able to remove the holy spark—"nitzotz"—of David HaMelech from Moav, which was concealed within Ruth the Moaviah:

"דהנה ידוע חיות אומה היא מחמת איזה ניצוצות מהקדושה השקועים בתוכה, וכשישראל מבררים הניצוצות אזי נשארים האומות פגרים... והנה עיקר חיות האומה במואב היה מניצוץ הקדוש של דוד וזרעו, אשר היה ספון וטמון בקליפת מואב, ולכך נצטוו ישראל שלא להתגר בם מלחמה, עד יגיע הזמן להתגלות הניצוץ הקדוש."

A nation's existence and life-force derive from the holy sparks (nitzotzot) that are buried within its midst. Once Yisrael extracts those sparks of kedushah, that nation will be a lifeless corpse and cease to exist. The holier and more valuable the "nitzotz," the greater the fear of it being taken away, and the greater the effort they exert to conceal it. Now, the essential life-force of Moav stemmed from the holy "nitzotz" of the neshamah of David and his descendants buried within their klipah. For this reason, Yisrael was commanded not to instigate a war with Moav until the time designated to reveal that holy spark; that would also mark the end of the realm of Moav.

Accordingly, the Agra D'Kallah interprets the pesukim at the beginning of this week's parsha (Bamidbar 22, 2): "וירא בלק בן ציפור"—**Balak the son of Tzipor saw**—with his tremendous powers of tumah, he saw that the holy "nitzotz" of David HaMelech was concealed within the nation of Moav; "ויגר מואב מפני העם מאד"—**Moav was very frightened of the people**--they feared that Yisrael would take that holy "nitzotz" away from them; "כי רב"—**because it was invaluable**—they knew that they could not exist without it; it sustained them.

he interprets "ויקץ" to mean that they created a fence of thorns—"kotzim"—with the tumah of the klipah of Moav around that "nitzotz" to protect it from Bnei Yisrael—to prevent them from returning it to its rightful place in the domain of kedushah. This prompted the leaders of Moav to express their intense fear: "ויאמר מואב אל זקני מדין עתה ילחכו הקהל"—**Moav announced to the elders of Midian**

that the people of Yisrael will now trample the unholy fences we have built to secure and surround the holy "nitzotz" of David HaMelech. They will remove it from Moav and return it to the domain of kedushah, where David is destined to become the King of Yisrael. As a consequence, we will cease to exist. This is the gist of his sacred insight.

## Balak Feared that David Would Become the Melech HaMashiach

Let us embellish this thought based on a teaching in the Midrash (B.R. 44, 23). At the Bris bein HaBesarim—the Covenant of the Parts—HKB"H bequeathed to Avraham Avinu the ten nations living in the land of Canaan. Yisrael, however, only conquered seven of them. The other three—the Kini, Kenizi, and Kadmoni, who are Edom, Amon, and Moav—however, will only be delivered to Yisrael by HKB"H in the times of the Mashiach. Furthermore, we know that at the time of the future geulah, all of the other nations will be abolished, as foretold by the prophecy of the wicked Bilam (ibid. 24, 19): "וירד מייעקב והאביד שריד מעיר"—**one from Yaakov shall rule and destroy the remnant of a city**. Rashi explains: "על מלך המשיח אומר כן שנאמר בו וירד מים עד ים, ולא יהיה שריד לבית עשו"—**this is a reference to the Melech HaMashiach of whom it is said** (Tehillim 72, 8): "**He shall rule from sea to sea,**" and (Ovadia 1, 18): "**There shall be no remnant from the house of Eisav.**"

Now, the Zohar hakadosh teaches us that David HaMelech himself is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach (Lech Lecha 82b): "דוד מלכה חי לעלמין ואפילו ביומי מלכה משיחא איהו מלכה דהא תנן מלכה משיחא אי מן חייה הוא דוד שמייה ואי מן מתייה הוא דוד שמייה." **David HaMelech lives on forever; and even in the times of the Melech HaMashiach, he will be king. For, we have learned that the Melech HaMashiach, whether he is from the living, his name is David, and whether he is from the dead who have been resurrected, his name will be David.** Similarly, in his piyut for Hoshanah Rabbah (Ometz Yishecha), Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir proclaims: "איש צמח שמו הוא דוד בעצמו"—**a man has sprouted up, Tzemach is his name, and he is none other than David.**

With this in mind, we now have a better understanding of Balak's intense fear. Not only would the holy "nitzotz" of David HaMelech that sustained them be lost, but

he was even more fearful of the fact that David was destined to become the Melech HaMashiach. As such, at the time of the future geulah, he would come to redeem Yisrael, and they would finally inherit the territories of Edom, Amon, and Moav. They would destroy all the forces of evil and tumah, the idols and false gods would be utterly obliterated, and the world would be perfected under the sovereignty of the Almighty.

This explains beautifully the pronouncement of the people of Moav to the elders of Midian (Bamidbar 22, 4): **“עתה ילחכו הקהל את כל סביבותינו, כלחוך השור את ירק השדה”**—**now**, if Yisrael extract the **“nitzotz”** of David, the future Melech HaMashiach from us, **the congregation will chew up our entire surroundings, as an ox chews up the greenery of the field.** Rashi comments: **Whatever an ox chews up is devoid of any sign of berachah.** In similar fashion, at the time of the future geulah, Yisrael will consume all the holy **“nitzotzot”** from the nations of the world, and the spirit of tumah will be completely obliterated from the earth. We can suggest an allusion to this in the passuk (ibid. 7): **“וילכו זקני מואב וזקני מדין וקסמים”**—**we can interpret the word “בידים”** as an acronym for **“בן ישי דוד משיח”**—**the son of Yishai, David Mashiach.** This suggests that their primary fear was on account of the holy **“nitzotz”** of Mashiach ben David.

**“It was in the heart of my father David to build a Temple for the sake of the name of Hashem, G-d of Yisrael”**

Continuing down this path, we will now proceed to explain the war waged by the wicked Bilam against the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash. We will begin by introducing an exposition in the Midrash (V.R. 35, 1) related to a statement by David HaMelech, Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (Tehillim 119, 59): **“חשבתי דרכי ואשיבה רגלי אל: עדותיך, אמר דוד, רבוננו של עולם, בכל יום ויום הייתי מחשב ואומר, למקום פלוני ולבית דירה פלונית אני הולך, והיו רגלי מביאות אותי לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות, הדא הוא דכתיב ואשיבה רגלי אל עדותיך.”** **“I considered my ways and returned my feet to your testimonies.”** **David said: “Master of the Universe, each and every day I would consider and say, ‘I am going to this place and to that dwelling,’ but my feet would take me to Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash. Thus it is written, “I considered my ways, and I returned my feet to your testimonies.”**

I had a wonderful thought concerning the yearning of David HaMelech to go to the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash each and every day. I would like to refer to the sacred, inspirational remarks of Shlomo HaMelech as he addressed the entirety of Yisrael upon the completion of the construction of the Beis HaMikdash (Melachim I 8, 14):

**“ויסב המלך את פניו ויברך את כל קהל ישראל וכל קהל ישראל עומד, ויאמר ברוך ה' אלקי ישראל אשר דיבר בפני את דוד אבי ובידו מילא לאמר, מן היום אשר הוצאתי את עמי את ישראל ממצרים לא בחרתי בעיר מכל שבטי ישראל לבנות בית להיות שמי שם, ואבחר בדוד להיות על עמי ישראל, ויהי עם לכב דוד אבי לבנות בית לשם ה' אלקי ישראל.”**

**ויאמר ה' אל דוד אבי, יען אשר היה עם לבבך לבנות בית לשמי, הטיבות כי היה עם לבבך, רק אתה לא תבנה הבית, כי אם בנך היוצא מחלצריך הוא יבנה הבית לשמי, ויקם ה' את דברו אשר דיבר, ואקום תחת דוד אבי ואשב על כסא ישראל כאשר דיבר ה' ואבנה הבית לשם ה' אלקי ישראל.”**

**Then the king turned his face and blessed the entire congregation of Yisrael, while the entire congregation of Yisrael was standing. He then said, “Blessed is Hashem, G-d of Yisrael, Who spoke with His word to my father David—and fulfilled with His power, saying, ‘From the day when I took My people Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, I did not choose a city from among all the tribes of Yisrael in which to build a Temple where My name would be; but I chose David to rule over My people Yisrael.’**

**It was in the heart of my father David to build a Temple for the sake of the name of Hashem, G-d of Yisrael. But Hashem said to my father David, ‘Inasmuch as it has been your heart to build a Temple for My name, you have done well by having this in your heart. You, however, shall not build a Temple. Rather, your son, who will emerge from your loins—he will build the Temple for My name.’ Now Hashem has fulfilled His word that He spoke, for I have risen in place of my father David, and I sit on the throne of Yisrael as Hashem spoke, and I have built the Temple for the name of Hashem, G-d of Yisrael.”**

Now, when HKB”H said to David: **“Inasmuch as it has been your heart to build a Temple for My name”**—it appears that He intended to inform David of the reason that he was not chosen to build the Beis HaMikdash, but his son Shlomo was chosen instead. This is evident from the continuation of the text: **“You**

have done well by having this in your heart. You, however, shall not build a Temple. Rather, your son, who will emerge from your loins—he will build the Temple for My name.” This is somewhat confusing! Since HKB”H attests to David’s sincerity to build a house for the sake of G-d, why did HKB”H inform him: **“You, however, shall not build a Temple. Rather, your son, who will emerge from your loins—he will build the Temple for My name”?**

### HKB”H Opted for the Pure Desire of David HaMelech

We find a fantastic explanation in the Yitav Panim (Avnei Zikaron, Rosh HaShanah, 65). HKB”H cherished the unadulterated desire and yearning of David HaMelech to build the Beis HaMikdash. For, his mental desire without an actual deed was purely l’shma—for the sake of Hashem—free of any ulterior motives, ego, or vanity. Actually building the Beis HaMikdash was liable to cause him to gloat, making the deed not l’shma. Here is a translation of his sacred words:

**In other words, due to the fact that your intent was solely for the sake of My name, because it was from your heart; in other words, since you did not actually build it. For, had you actually completed it, a foreign thought could have entered of self-glorification. For he was the one who purchased that location for the Beis HaMikdash and raised the silver and gold. Had he also completed the construction, it would have been fitting to feel honored and glorified for that accomplishment. For this reason, He said to him, “You, however, shall not build a Temple,” for the aforementioned reason. “Rather, your son . . . he will build the Temple for My name.” In other words, although he will actually build it; nevertheless, it will be for the sake of My name. For, he will have less reason for self-glorification, because everything was provided for him by your hand, ready and waiting. You began the process; he merely finished it.**

We will now add a magnificent parable presented by the Bas Ayin (Likutim) in the name of the Midrash. It was told that when Shlomo HaMelech completed the construction of the Beis HaMikdash, he saw two birds perched on the roof, a male and his female mate. He heard the male bird boasting to his mate: **“You see**

**this magnificent structure, if I so desire, I can bring it down with one movement.”** This astounded Shlomo HaMelech. So, he called out to the bird and asked it how it could bring down the structure so easily. The bird replied: **“What does it matter to you that I boast in front of my wife?”**

The Bas Ayin explains the message of the Midrash. HKB”H arranged for Shlomo HaMelech to witness this incident upon completing the construction of the Beis HaMikdash: **Because the bird (boasting to its mate) represents the yetzer hara and the Satan. It claimed, “It is possible for me to ruin the entire structure, so that the Shechinah will not dwell in that holy house, and all of his effort will have been in vain, chas v’shalom.”** This prompted Shlomo HaMelech to ask the Satan, “How are you able to ruin the entire structure of the Beis HaMikdash after I already drove you away by means of teshuvah and good deeds?”

The Satan replied, “Without a doubt, I am incapable of causing you to fail with the commission of an aveirah. Nevertheless, I can trip you up with a minor indiscretion—boasting to your wife that you completed building the Beis HaMikdash in a manner of perfection. This will cause you to entertain a sense of self-pride and arrogance, which will ruin the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash. After all, HKB”H only rests His Shechinah on a person with a lowly spirit.” As it is written (Yeshayah 57, 15): **“כי כה אמר רם ונשא שוכן עד וקדוש שמו, מרום וקדוש אשכון ואת דכא ושפל רוח—for, thus said the exalted and uplifted One, Who abides forever and Whose name is holy: “I abide in exaltedness and holiness, but I am with the despondent and lowly of spirit.”**

### David HaMelech Paved the Way for All of Yisrael to Transform Synagogues and Study-Halls into Miniature Sanctuaries

We will continue to elaborate on this subject by referring to what they expounded in the Gemara (Megillah 29a) on the passuk (Yechezkel 11, 16): **“ואהי להם למקדש מעט, אמר רבי יצחק אלו בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל.”** **“Yet, I have been for them a ‘Mikdash m’ahat’ (a miniature Sanctuary).” Rabbi Yitzchak said: These are the synagogues and study halls in Bavel.** This teaches us that even in times of galus, after the churban of our

Beis HaMikdash, our Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash serve as a **Mikdash m'aht**. Hence, the Gemara states elsewhere (Berachos 8a): "מיום שחרב בית המקדש אין לו להקב"ה—**since the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, HKB"H only has four cubits of halachah in His world.**

We can explain the rationale for the appellation **Mikdash m'aht** based on the sacred words of the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy" a, in Zera Kodesh (Ki Seitzei). He addresses the words we utter in our weekday Shemoneh Esrei in the berachah "ולירושלים עירך: **ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין: עולם—may You rebuild it soon in our days as an everlasting structure.** He teaches us that we build the third Beis HaMikdash daily with our Torah-study and our performance of mitzvos. Here are his sacred words:

"ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בנין עולם, שבונה ירושלים ה', ובמה בונה אותה, 'בימינו' על ידי הימים שלנו, שבכל יום כשאדם עובד אותו יתברך, הכל לפי מעשיו בונה את ירושלים ובית המקדש, יש בונה ביום אחד שורה שלימה, ויש מניח למשל לבניה אחת, כן בונה האדם מישראל שעובד ה' בכל יום, עד שיהיה נבנה בשלימות במהרה בימינו.

וכן שמעתי מהרב הקדוש מזה"ר אלימלך זצ"ל [מליזענסק זי"ע], שכשעשה עליית נשמה ראה שנושאים את כלי בית המקדש, ואמרו לו שהם אותם הכלים שהוציא הוא מהגלות, ופעם אחת אמר שנפלה בית טומאה אחד בצורה גדולה מאד, ובכל יום עולים אלפי אלפים בעלי מלאכות בנאים לבנות החומה.

אבל יש לי שומר טוב, שכשהרב מזה"ר יעקב יצחק מלאנצהוט [הוא החוזה מלובלין זי"ע] מתפלל תפילת י"ח מתפילת מנחה מפיל כל מה שבונים. והבנתי דבריו הקדושים, שמפיל זה על ידי שעל ידי תפילתו בונה חומות ירושלים ובית המקדש, ולפי ערך שבונה חומות ירושלים לפי ערך זה מפיל בהבית הזה של טומאה, כי כשה קם זה גופל".

We beseech HKB"H to rebuild Yerushalayim **—"בימינו—with our days.** Every day, when a Jew serves Hashem according to his own individual abilities, he is contributing to the rebuilding of Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash. One person may be capable of laying down an entire row of bricks while another may only lay down a single brick. Ultimately, they will be completely rebuilt.

Indeed, we build the third Beis HaMikdash daily with our mitzvos and good deeds. Yet, the building is accomplished primarily with the letters of the tefilos that we recite in the Beis Kenesses concerning the galus of the Shechinah and the future geulah (such as "ותחינה עינינו בשוכך לציון ברחמים" and "ולירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב") and the letters of the Torah that we study in the Batei Midrash.

This notion is supported by the holy words of the great Rabbi Chanoch Henich of Alesk, zy" a, in the siddur Lev Sameiach in relation to the berachah Nachem recited on Tisha B'Av:

"ואני אהיה לה נאום ה' חומת אש סביב. שעל ידי שאיש ישראל מתפלל כראוי ואומר דיבורים כראוי וכנכון, עומדים מלאכי השרת ומנסרים מדיבורים שלהם אבנים לבנין בית המקדש, וביותר, אפילו בית המקדש של אש גם כן יבנה על ידי דיבורים של ישראל, וזהו ואני אהיה לה נאום ה', על ידי דיבורים של ה', חומת אש סביב, על ידי שאיש ישראל אומר דיבורים על ידי אש טהור שהוא ביראתו, בזה נעשה לעתיד חומת אש סביב".

When a Jew prays properly and speaks properly, malachim are on hand who carve out stones from their words for the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. Furthermore, even the Beis HaMikdash of fire will be built using Yisrael's words and utterances. This is the significance of the statement: **"And I will be a wall of fire around her, says Hashem."** When a Jew utters words with pure fervor, with awe and reverence, thus will the surrounding wall of fire be formed in the future.

We can now appreciate why Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash are called **Mikdash m'aht**. For, in the merit of the tefilos recited in the synagogues and the words of Torah spoken in the study-halls, we are building the third Beis HaMikdash—swiftly, in our times.

We will now introduce an intriguing idea from the Maharsha. He comments on the Gemara's statement (Megillah 29a): "עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל שיקבעו בארץ (Megillah 29a): **in the future, the synagogues and the study halls in Bavel will be reestablished in Eretz Yisrael.** To explain this statement, he cites the Midrash: "לעתיד יהיה: **בית המקדש גדול כירושלים שבעולם הזה, וירושלים יהיה גדול ככל ארץ ישראל—in the future, the Beis HaMikdash will be as big as Yerushalayim in Olam HaZeh, and Yerushalayim will be as big as all of Eretz Yisrael.** But why will it be necessary for the third Beis HaMikdash to be as big as the entire city of Yerushalayim?

The Maharsha explains the matter as follows: When HKB"H builds the third Beis HaMikdash le'asid la'vo, it will include all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash. This is the implication of the Gemara's statement: **"In the future, the synagogues and the study halls in Bavel will be reestablished in Eretz Yisrael."** They will be reestablished in Yerushalayim to build the third Beis HaMikdash with them. Therefore, HKB"H will enlarge the Beis HaMikdash to incorporate all

of Yerushalayim. Thus, it will be spacious enough to include all of the synagogues and study-halls from all of the galuyos. This concurs magnificently with our explanation that the third Beis HaMikdash will be built from the tefilos and Torah-study of Yisrael in the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash.

Now, the Rambam writes (Hilchos Melachim 11, 1): **”המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה לממשלה הראשונה: ובונה המקדש ומקבץ גדחי ישראל—the Melech HaMashiach is destined to rise and restore the Davidic dynasty to its former state, to its original sovereignty; he will build the Mikdash and gather in the dispersed members of Yisrael.** Therefore, since David HaMelech is destined to be the Melech HaMashiach, who will redeem Yisrael and build the third Beis HaMikdash, we can conjecture that this is why HKB”H did not permit him to build the first Beis HaMikdash. Thus, he would yearn to extend the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash to all of the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash, so that they would serve in the capacity of a **Mikdash m’aht**. By doing so, he paved the way for all of Yisrael to also be able to extend a semblance of the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash to their synagogues and study-halls.

Understood in this light, we can now understand the heartfelt words of David HaMelech cited above: **“Master of the Universe, on each and every day, I would consider and say, ‘(When will the time finally arrive when) I will go to this particular place (Har HaMoriah) and to that particular dwelling (Beis HaMikdash),’ but (when I realized that I was given the privilege of building the Beis HaMikdash) my**

**feet would take me to Batei Kenesses and Batei Mikdash m’aht**”—which function as miniature Sanctuaries—**Mikdash m’aht**. Thus, I was able to pave the way for all of Yisrael to extend to the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash a sense of the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash in preparation for the future geulah and the building of the third Beis HaMikdash.

This now enlightens us as to why the wicked Bilam waged such a strategic, tenacious battle against the Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash. He did everything he could to curse Yisrael, so that they would not succeed in extracting the holy nitzotz of David HaMelech from Moav. For, he understood that David HaMelech was destined to be the Melech HaMashiach, who would extract the sparks of kedushah from all the nations and terminate their existence. He understood that the key to the future geulah is the tefilos Yisrael utter in the Batei Kenesses and the Torah they study in the Batei Midrash. Understanding their vital significance, he attempted to curse them.

Of course, HKB”H foiled his malevolent scheme. Instead, Bilam was compelled to bestow the follow berachah on Yisrael: **”מה טובו אהליך יעקב משכנותיך ישראל”**. In the merit of David HaMelech, who paved the way for all of Yisrael to impart the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash to their Batei Kenesses and Batei Midrash—their **Mikdash m’aht**—may we merit the arrival of David HaMelech to redeem us with the everlasting geulah. At that time, the forces of tumah will cease to exist: **”והאלילים כרות יכרתון לתקן עולם במלכות שדי”**—swiftly, in our times! Amen.

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