

G-d said to Bilaam, “You shall not go with them! You shall not curse the people, for it is blessed.” (22:12)

Bilaam really wanted to do his job, to carry out his mission to curse the Jews. Hashem told him that he should not go. Bilaam offered to send a curse via long distance from his home. Hashem reiterated His position: no cursing the Jews. Bilaam then offered (out of the kindness of his heart) to bless the Jews. Hashem replied, “They do not require your blessing. They are a blessed people.” *Rashi* analogizes this to a bee whose honey is very tasty and beneficial, but, accompanying procuring the honey, is the chance that one might get stung. We tell it *lo miduvshach v’lo meiuktzach*, “We want neither your honey nor your sting.” Apparently, they go together. This presents a question. Understandably, the Jewish People had no need for Bilaam’s blessings, and, furthermore, his blessings earned them the curse of his sting, but why would Bilaam want to bless the Jews? What benefit would he derive from blessing the Jews?

Horav Michael Peretz, Shlita, explains that this is specifically the reason that *Klal Yisrael* wanted nothing to do with Bilaam – not even to receive his blessing. They understood that a despot such as Bilaam generates curse even through his blessing. Anything to do with him, regardless of its innocuous nature, was dangerous. This was the man who taught the world the idea of employing moral seduction as a tool for taking down a person – even a nation. Such a man could not be trusted – even for blessing. No good can ever be derived from someone so evil.

Furthermore, associating with Bilaam, even through the medium of blessing can be dangerous, just as in the case with the bee. While one is enjoying the honey, his mind is not on the bee – until he has been stung; then, it is too late; the damage has been done. While the Jewish People would be concentrating on Bilaam’s blessing, he would be occupying himself with destroying them. By the time they would have realized this, they would have been stung.

A similar idea may be noted from the *Talmud Sanhedrin* 97a – concerning *Rav Tivyumi*, who never told a lie. He later married a woman who hailed from a city whose inhabitants also never prevaricated. In the end, a situation occurred in which *Rav Tivyumi* was compelled to lie for the sake of *Tznius*, modesty.

Rav Peretz explains that now that *Tivyumi* lived in a city where everyone told the truth, he no longer had reason to be so careful, thus, he allowed his guard to fall. He did not realize that one must be vigilant under **all** circumstances. It is when one least expects trouble and his guard is down that trouble finds him. It was specifically in the city where he thought he had nothing about which to worry, that he discovered how wrong he was.