

Parashat Balak Numbers 23:27-24:13

First Aliyah

²⁷ Then Balak said to Balaam, “Come now, I will take you to another place. Perhaps God will deem it right that you damn them for me there.” ²⁸ Balak took Balaam to the peak of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland. ²⁹ Balaam said to Balak, “Build me here seven altars, and have seven bulls and seven rams ready for me here.” ³⁰ Balak did as Balaam said: he offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

Second Aliyah

¹ Now Balaam, seeing that it pleased the Eternal to bless Israel, did not, as on previous occasions, go in search of omens, but turned his face toward the wilderness. ² As Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him. ³ Taking up his theme, he said:

Word of Balaam son of Beor,
Word of the man whose eye is true,
⁴ Word of him who hears God’s speech,
Who beholds visions from the Almighty,
Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:

Third Aliyah

⁵ How fair are your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwellings, O Israel!

⁶ Like palm-groves that stretch out,
Like gardens beside a river,
Like aloes planted by the Eternal,
Like cedars beside the water;

⁷ Their boughs drip with moisture,
Their roots have abundant water.
Their king shall rise above Agag,
Their dominion shall be exalted.

⁸ God who freed them from Egypt
Is for them like the horns of the wild ox.
They shall devour enemy nations,
Crush their bones,
And smash their arrows.

⁹ They crouch, they lie down like a lion,
Like the king of beasts; who dare rouse them?
Blessed are they who bless you,
Accursed they who curse you!

Fourth Aliyah

¹⁰ Enraged at Balaam, Balak struck his hands together. "I called you," Balak said to Balaam, "to damn my enemies, and instead you have blessed them these three times!" ¹¹ Back with you at once to your own place! I was going to reward you richly, but the Eternal has denied you the reward." ¹² Balaam replied to Balak, "But I even told the messengers you sent to me, ¹³ 'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not of my own accord do anything good or bad contrary to the Eternal's command. What the Eternal says, that I must say.'