

## Appendix #1 “Balak, Balaam and the Power of Words”

Numbers 24:1-5

**א** וַיֵּרָא בַלְעָם, כִּי טוֹב בְּעֵינָיו יְהוָה לְבָרֵךְ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְלֹא-הִלָּךְ כַּפְּעַם-כַּפְּעַם, לְקַרְאֵת נְחֻשִׁים; וַיִּנְשֹׂת אֶל-הַמִּדְבָּר, פָּנָיו.

**1** And when Balaam saw that it pleased God to bless Israel, he went not, as at the other times, to invoke enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

**ב** וַיִּשָּׂא בַלְעָם אֶת-עֵינָיו, וַיֵּרָא אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֹׁכֵן, לְשִׁבְטָיו; וַתְּהִי עָלָיו, רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים.

**2** And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling tribe by tribe; and the spirit of God came upon him.

**ג** וַיִּשָּׂא מִשְׁלוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר: נְאֻם בַּלְעָם בְּנוֹ בְּעֹר, וַנְאֻם הַגָּבֵר שָׂתֵם הָעֵינַן.

**3** And he took up his parable, and said: The saying of Balaam the son of Beor, and the saying of the man whose eye is opened;

**ד** נְאֻם-שֹׁמֵעַ, אֲמַר־י-אֵל: אֲשֶׁר מַחְזִיחַ שְׂדֵי יַחְזִיחַ, נִפֹּל וּגְלוּי עֵינָיִם.

**4** The saying of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, fallen down, yet with opened eyes:

**ה** מַה-טֹּבוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ, יַעֲקֹב; מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ, יִשְׂרָאֵל.

**5** How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!

Numbers 24:9-10

**ט** מְבֹרָכֶיךָ בְּרוּךְ, וְאַרְרִיךָ אָרוּר.

**9** Blessed be every one that blesses you, and cursed be every one that curses you.

**י** וַיִּחַר-אַף בְּלֶק אֶל-בַּלְעָם, וַיִּסְפַּק אֶת-כַּפָּיו; וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלֶק אֶל-בַּלְעָם, לָקַב אִיבֵי קְרֹאתֶיךָ, וְהִנֵּה בִּרְכַתְּ בְּרוּךְ, זֶה שָׁלַשׁ פְּעָמִים.

**10** And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smashed his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam: 'I called you to curse my enemies, and, instead, you have blessed them three times!

**1) What does this story about Balaam and Balak teach us about the power of words?**

***2) Why do you think the line “Mah Tovu ohalecha Ya’akov...” was placed at the start of the prayer service?***