

Parshas Balak / 17th of Tamuz – “The Broken Engagement”

1. **Bamidbar 23, 1:** Bilam said to Balak, “Build for me seven altars and prepare for me seven bulls and seven rams.
2. **Yalkut Shimoni:** Why seven altars? Corresponding to the seven righteous people who built seven altars from Adam until Moshe and were accepted. Adam, Noach, Shem, Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, and Moshe. He said, “Why did you accept these? Wasn’t it because of the service they served before You and You accepted them? It is not more fitting for You to be served by 70 nations than by one nation?” The Divine spirit responded, “Better a dry piece of bread with peace in it than a house full of contentious celebrations [Proverbs 17,1]. Better a meal offering mixed with oil that is dry than a house full of contentious sacrifices. You want to bring in strife between Me and my children!”
3. **Mishne Taanis 4,6:** Five catastrophes befell our ancestors on the Shiv’ah ‘Asar b’Tammuz and five on Tish’ah b’Av: On the 17th of Tammuz: The Tablets were broken, the Tamid offering was stopped ,the city walls were breached , Apostomos burned the Torah, and he constructed an idol (or "an idol was constructed") in the Sanctuary.
4. **Isaiah 62, 5-6:** As a young man takes a maiden [Metzudos Dovid – ‘with no separation’] in marriage, so will your children settle in you; and like a bridegroom’s rejoicing over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, have I posted guardians; all the day and all the night, continuously, they will never be silent! Do not give Him silence, until He establishes and until He makes Jerusalem a source of praise in the land.
5. **Talmud Pesachim 87a:** Like a bride in her father-in-law’s house, and not like a bride in her father’s house.
6. **Talmud Menachos 87a:** What do the watchmen [angels] say? ‘You will arise and have compassion on Zion.
7. **Hosea 11,9:** The holy one in your midst and I will not enter a city.
8. **Talmud Taanis 5a:** I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I can enter the earthly Jerusalem. [Rashi - God will not come to the heavenly Jerusalem until there is holiness in the midst of earthly Jerusalem.]
9. **Devarim 33,4:** The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage to the congregation of Israel
10. **Talmud Pesachim 49b:** Do not read it as “the heritage” – rather as “an engagement.”
11. **Talmud Tamid 32a:** Anyone who engages in the study of Torah [at night] – the Shechina is before him.
12. **Talmud Pesachim 87a:** ‘I am a wall’ [Shir Hashirim 8,10] – alludes to the Torah
13. **Nefesh Hachayim 1,4:** When a person’s heart strays to think of impure thoughts of adultery, he is bringing in a prostitute [the symbol of jealousy] into the supernal holiest of holies, thereby increasing forces of unholiness into the supernal holiest of holies much worse than the forces of unholiness that Titus caused by his bringing in a prostitute into the holiest of holies in the Temple below.
14. **Bamidbar 23,9:** It is a people who shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.
15. **Isaiah 62,1:** For the sake of Zion I will not rest; for the sake of Jerusalem I will not be silent.
16. **Psalms 101,6:** My eyes are turned to the faithful of earth.