

CBAJ Family Shabbat Companion: Parshat Behaalotecha
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Behaalotecha Roundup
(Chabad.org)

The Parshah begins with the instruction for Aaron to light the Menorah in the Mishkan. The Menorah had seven branches made out of one lump of solid gold according to the fiery image that G-d had shown Moses. Next we read about how Moses initiates the Levites to do their service in the Mishkan. Every man from the tribe of Levi between the ages of 20 and fifty served in the Mishkan by helping the Kohanim (priests) do their work.

Some background information on the next incident: What we're reading about here is the Jew's first year in the desert after they came out of Egypt. So as they neared the end of the year, they had to prepare for their first Passover. The most important part of celebrating Passover was bringing an offering in the Mishkan—the Paschal sacrifice (called the *Korban Pesach*). So, in this Parshah, G-d commands the Jews to prepare and bring the sacrifice. But some of the people are impure (*tameh*) because they have come in contact with a dead body and so they can't bring the sacrifice.

Now, instead of just thinking, "Oh, too bad, we'll have to wait till next year," these people are really upset. So they go to Moses and say, "Why should we miss out on doing the mitzvah? We also want to bring the Paschal sacrifice!" Moses passes over their question to G-d, asking what they should do. And lo and behold, G-d tells them that they will get a second chance. Exactly a month after Passover will be Pesach Sheini—the Second Passover, when everybody who wasn't able to bring the Paschal Sacrifice in the right time has another opportunity to bring it. This is a very important story because it teaches us that it's never too late to do a good deed and that we always get a second chance.

Now we read a bit about how the Jews rested and camped in the desert. There was a "Cloud of Glory" over the Mishkan that represented G-d's presence. Whenever the cloud was over the Mishkan, the Jews camped in that place. When the cloud lifted, they began traveling, until it came down again upon the Mishkan, when they stopped. G-d also told Moses to make two silver trumpets. Different sounds were blown for different occasions: when Moses wanted to talk to the leaders of the tribe, when it was time to begin traveling, when Moses wanted to gather the whole nation, when the Jews were going to war, and when bringing the sacrifices on special holidays.

Every night, manna came down in the camp, and every morning, the people gathered and ate it. But now, after a year, the people complain that they are sick of eating the manna and want meat. G-d promises to send them meat and the next day large swarms of quail come over the camp, and the Jews have more than enough meat to eat. G-d tells Moses to appoint seventy people to help him in his job; he does so and these seventy people get some of Moses' spirit.

Miriam says something bad about Moses and she gets stricken with *tzaraat* (remember learning about it in Parshat Tazria?). She has to be outside the camp for seven days, and the Jews don't travel for those seven days, waiting until she is healed.

2. Q&A on the Parsha

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1. Toward which direction did the wicks of the menorah burn, and why?

8:2 - They leaned toward the middle wick so people wouldn't say that the *menorah* was lit for its light.

2. From what material and in what manner was the menorah made?

8:4 - It was hammered out from one solid piece of gold.

3. Moshe was commanded to cleanse the *levi'im* by sprinkling on them "*mei chatat*." What is "*mei chatat*"?

8:7 - Water containing ashes of the *parah adumah*.

4. Which three "*tnufot*" (wavings) are in the Parsha?

8:11 - The wavings of Kehat, Gershon and Merari.

5. Why did Hashem claim the firstborn of the Jewish People as His possession?

8:17 - Because in Egypt He spared them during *makat bechorot*.

6. Why are the words "*Bnei Yisrael*" repeated five times in verse 8:19?

8:19 - To show Hashem's love for them.

7. When a *levi* reaches age 50, which functions may he still perform?

8:25 - Closing the courtyard gates of the *Mishkan* and *Beit Hamikdash*; singing during the *avoda*; loading the wagons to transport the *Mishkan*.

8. Why was the *mitzvah* of *Pesach Sheini* not commanded directly to Moshe?

9:7 - So the people who asked about it could be rewarded by being the catalyst for its teaching.

9. What similarity is there between the way the *menorah* and the trumpets were made?

8:4, 10:2 - They were each made from a single, solid block.

10. What three purposes did trumpet signals serve?

10:2-7 - Announcement of the gathering of *Bnei Yisrael*, the gathering of the *nesi'im*, and the beginning of a move of the encampment.

11. How many tribes marched between the Gershon-Merari detachment and that of Kehat? How wgather?

10:25 - They gathered and returned things lost by the other tribes.

13. When the Jewish People entered the Land, who took temporary possession of Jericho?

10:32 - The children of Yitro.

14. Which aron is referred to in verse 10:33?

10:33 - The *aron* which held the broken pieces of the first tablets, which was taken to the battlefield.

15. Which two topics are out of chronological order in the Parsha?

9:1, 10:35,36 - The Pesach sacrifice, and the traveling of the *aron*.

16. Which tastes did the manna not offer, and why not?

11:5 - Cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic -- these are harmful to nursing women.

17. Moshe was commanded to choose 70 elders to help him lead the Jewish People. What happened to the elders who led the Jewish People in Egypt?

11:16 - They were consumed in the fire at Taverah (11:3).

18. Who did Moshe choose as elders?

11:16 - Jews who were supervisors in Egypt and had pity on *Bnei Yisrael* at risk to themselves.

19. What was the prophecy of Eldad and Medad?

11:28 - "Moshe will die and Yehoshua will lead the Jewish People into the Land."

20. Why did Miriam merit to have the people wait for her?

12:15 - Because she waited for Moshe when he was cast into the river

3. Shabbat Story (By Simcha as the time differential used?)

10:17-21 - Three: Reuven, Shimon and Gad. In the meantime Gershon and Merari set up the Mishkan.

12. The tribe of Dan, who traveled last, was called "the gatherer of all the camps." What did they Groffman)

SCHOOL'S OUT

Avi, fancy meeting you here. I'm on my way to meet my little brother at school. I am too. We can walk home together. *Ring ring ring ring!* There's the school bell.

Suddenly, the school doors open and the children burst out, running at full speed. Wow, look at that Chaim. Did you ever see anything like those kids? We had better step out of the way before we are run over. *Chaim slowly shakes his head.*

Three thousand three hundred years. These kids haven't been running that long Chaim. They are not that out of breath. I know that Avi. I mean to say that things have not changed much in 3300 years.

Sure they have Chaim. Now we have electricity, telephones, washing machines, and a whole lot of inventions that we did not have 3300 years ago.

That's true Avi. But I am taking about human nature. Oh, I see. What reminded you of that Chaim?

These kids are running out of school. A similar thing happened 3300 years ago. Really? What was it? If you look in your Chumash in this week's parsha, you will see some funny letters. The letter "nun" is written upside down and backwards before verse 10:35 and after verse 10:36.

Let me open my Chumash and take a look at Chaim. Wow, look at that. Why is it written that way? Rashi explains that these two verses do not really belong in this place. G-d moved them from their proper place in the Chumash and inserted them here. Why?

These verses separate two bad events. Before these verses the Torah writes about how the Jewish people traveled quickly from Har Sinai after the giving of the Torah, like a child running from school. Just as a child feels that he has learned enough for the day, so too they felt that they had learned a lot of Torah. They were afraid that if they stayed longer, G-d might give them more mitzvos. Afraid? Mitzvot are great! I have a story for you about how great mitzvot are. Do you want to hear it? Sure Avi.

There was once a man who got a job polishing gems. He was to be paid for each stone that he polished. The first day of work, he received five stones to polish. He happily finished his work and got paid for the day. He noticed that the worker next to him received twenty stones that day. The next day he reported for work and again received five stones to polish. He finished the job quickly and watched his neighbor working hard polishing twenty stones. He was a little upset but figured that since he was new at the job, he did not yet receive a full workload. However, the situation did not change. Every day he received five stones, while his neighbor received twenty. One day, he could no longer hold back. He went to the boss complaining, "What are you doing? Why aren't you giving me more work? I came here to work and make money! Give me work so that I can make money!"

That's a great story Avi! It is a parable to the mitzvos and their reward. The gems are like mitzvot and the pay is like the reward that we receive for doing the mitzvot. So you see, Chaim, mitzvos may be hard work, but they give us great reward. We came to this world to work at doing

the mitzvos to earn the reward. The Mishna in Makkot (3:16) writes: Rebbe Chanania Ben Akashia taught, "G-d wanted to reward the Jewish people. That is why He gave them such a large Torah and so many mitzvot. As the Prophet (Yishayahu 42:21) says, 'Hashem wants the Jews to be tzaddikim, therefore he enlarged and strengthened the Torah.'"

As we are talking, Avi, our little brothers have come out of school. Come, boys. Let's walk home. We have a story for you. Great! We're so out of breath after running so hard.

Well, I have news for you. After you hear this story, you will want to run back to school faster than you ran out of school. What? Run back to school? School's out. That's what you think.