

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 34

8th June 2015

BEHA'ALOTHECHA

19th Sivan 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 8, verses 1- 14

- ✚ Moshe informs Aaron that Hashem has commanded him to light the Menorah which was crafted out of one piece of solid gold. The three wicks on the right and the three on the left must all face the central lamp.
- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe to purify all the Levi'im by sprinkling water over them. The Levi'im then have to shave their entire body and immerse their clothing in the Mikveh.
- ✚ The Levi'im then have to take two young bulls for sacrifices. Moshe then takes them down to the awaiting nation who are gathered around the entrance to the Ohel Moed (tent of meeting) to watch the final consecration rituals.
- ✚ Once inaugurated, the Levi'im commence with their duties in the Ohel Moed

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 8, verses 15 -26

- ✚ The firstborn were saved by Hashem whilst they were in Mitzraim (Egypt) and belong to Him; but Hashem substitutes them for the Levi'im who will then be employed to work on behalf of Bnai Israel and provide atonement for them. The Levi'im are made to work full time from the age of 30 to 50. Those Levi'im who are between the ages of 25 to 30 are to be employed as apprentices.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 9, verses 1 - 14

- ✚ In the second year after the Exodus, Hashem tells Moshe that Bnai Yisrael have to offer up a Korban Pesach on the 14th of Nissan. However those who were deemed impure, which excludes them from bringing a Korban; will be allowed to bring one on the 14th of the following month instead.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 9, verse 15 - Chapter 10, verse 10

- ✚ From the day the Mishkan was erected, it was covered by a cloud during the day, and a fire by night. When the cloud lifted, this signalled that Bnai Israel should break camp and journey onwards, following the cloud until it came to rest in a new location of Hashem's choosing.
- ✚ In addition Moshe was asked to make two silver trumpets, The trumpet blasts blown by the Kohanim will indicate when the camp is to move, assemble, celebrate holy days, go to war etc.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 10, verse 11 - 34

- ✚ The order of breaking camp, before travelling to their new destination is discussed in detail.
- ✚ Moshe invites his father-in-law, Reuel (Yithro) to join them on their journey, but he declines.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 10, verse 35 – Chapter 11, verse 29

- ✚ No sooner than Bnai Yisrael start traveling, they start complaining. First they complain about the "arduous" journey. Then they grumble about the manna, expressing their desire for meat. A forlorn Moshe turns to Hashem and insists that he can no longer bear his leadership role any longer.
- ✚ Hashem tells Moses to gather seventy elders who will assist him in his leadership duties, to ease his burdens. He also promises to provide Bnai Yisrael with an abundance of meat.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 11, verse 30 - Chapter 12, verse 16

- ✚ Hashem causes a wind to sweep in huge numbers of quail from the sea. Those who ate gluttonously died in a plague.
- ✚ Miriam, Moses' sister, spoke negatively of Moses' decision to become celibate. Hashem was highly displeased by this Loshen Hora and smote Miriam with *Tzara'at* (leprosy) for one week.

Haftorah – ZECHARIAH Chapter 2 verse 14 to Chapter 4 verse 7

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Shortly before the building of the Second Temple. Zechariah prophesies a vivid depiction of the joy that will prevail when Hashem will return back to Jerusalem.
- ✚ Zechariah describes a scene in the Heavenly Court; where Satan was seeking to incriminate the first Kohen Gadol to serve in the Second Temple, because of his sins. Hashem himself defends the High Priest and in turn rebukes Satan for his accusations.
- ✚ Hashem then proceeds to outline the rewards awaiting the Kohen Gadol if he and his descendants follow in Hashem's ways. Namely resuming full service in the Bais Hamikdash and the coming of the Moshiach.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ The beginning of the sedra begins with how the Menorah should be lit.
- ✚ In the Haftorah Zechariah describes his vision he has of the Menorah, symbolising that victory of Israel's enemies will be achieved by the Spirit of Hashem and not by physical force.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

This week's Parsha of Bea'alothecha gives us one of the most dramatic examples of Bnai Yisrael's ingratitude and bad behaviour towards Hashem and Moshe; the constant complaints about almost everything that came their way, and their desire to return back to Mitzraim (Egypt), all because of the lack of meat they had to eat whilst in the desert. They complain that "now our souls are dried out, there is nothing [to eat, except for this manna...".

Although the Torah explains that the manna is in fact an all-encompassing food product containing all the nutrients and vitamins required to survive, some of Bnai Yisrael missed the variety in which the Egyptian menu had on offer, and were quite vocal about their displeasure. In a rare response for him, Moshe gets angry and seems to lose it. Not with Bnai Yisrael but Hashem himself "Moshe said to the Lord, Why have you done this evil to your servant? And why have I not found favour in your eyes, that you have placed the burden of this entire nation on me?". I find this quote fascinating. It appears to me to be an abdication of Moshe's responsibility, but isn't that what leadership is all about; taking the rough with the smooth

The S'forno has a different take on Moshe's words. He explains that Moshe, was simply explaining to Hashem what the problem was. Basically Moshe's own children regardless of their differing opinions would still love respect and trust Moshe unconditionally. Whereas, Bnai Yisrael, who are not his biological children are suspicious of Moshe's actions and have begun to mistrust his judgment and leadership skills. Moshe is explaining that the natural bond which exists between a parent and their child even in the presence of conflict and disagreement can be easily reconciled but lacking that tie, and the goodwill and understanding that comes with it, Moshe is telling Hashem, "I'm sorry, I've managed to lead your people this far but now I'm unable to handle them, because they lack the necessary condition to lead. TRUST!

The S'forno's, defence of Moshe from the charge of selfishly and angrily abandoning his people has taught me very important lesson. Yes there is always going to be some form of conflict and differing of opinions, yet how you acknowledge and deal with it is just as important as the resolution of the situation itself. As long as there is still respect between all parties for one and another, despite their opposing views and grievances, there is still hope in finding common ground to build upon; in order to come to an amicable reconciliation. Moshe no longer had this luxury. Even though he still exhibited the natural love and concern for Bnai Yisrael's welfare; the nation's basic trust of him had gone, meaning as far as Moshe was concerned: there was no way back in being able to work things out and regain the people's trust in order to carry on as their physical and spiritual leader.

The S'forno's message is clear: in the face of a conflict, good will and trust must not be rescinded if any compromise is to be made possible. I appreciate it's not always easy to do, but, I think, it's very good advice to follow.

