

B'HA'ALOTCHA – “WHEN YOU KINDLE”

NUMBERS (BE'MIDBAR) 8:1 – 12:16

INTRODUCTION: KINDLING THE MENORAH

1. As this portion begins, it speaks again of the kindling of the menorah.
 - a. Spoken of in Ex. 25:37, 27:21.
2. Coming on heels of the offerings of the princes, rabbis suggest that Aaron is informed that, not only offerings, but lighting a light is expression of thanks and with long-reaching effects.
 - a. That's why kindling of lights at Chanukkah commemorates rededication of Temple.
 - b. It is synonymous with gifts of the princes.
3. It is to suggest spiritual conquest (overcoming) which is achieved:

“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.” – Zech. 4:6

4. Of course, the spirit of God is synonymous with the seven branched menorah.
 - a. Seven spirits of God and seven fires – Revelation 4:5
5. Spiritual conquest is not achieved by violence but by being a light.
6. In relation to this mission – light to the nations – rabbis quote Isaiah:

“A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.” Isaiah 42:3

7. In other words, not through violence but through the agency of being a light.
 - a. It illuminates the darkness and, in fact, “needs” darkness in order to stand out.
8. Matthew quotes the above verse and relates it to the mission of Y'shua.

“Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Y'shua knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. Yet He warned them not to make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘BEHOLD! MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN, MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED! I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE WILL DECLARE JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. HE WILL NOT QUARREL NOR CRY OUT, NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS. A BRUISED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK, AND SMOKING FLAX HE WILL NOT QUENCH, TILL HE SENDS FORTH JUSTICE TO VICTORY; AND IN HIS NAME GENTILES WILL TRUST.’ ” - Matthew 12:14-21

9. When He advanced the Kingdom it was by means of being a light in the darkness.
10. Verse 2: “toward the face of the menorah” – as explained in Exodus 25:37.
 - a. Aaron was to arrange wicks on both sides so as to face toward the central wick.
 - b. This concentrated light toward the center; gave one combined blaze of light.
 - c. Teaching that man's attention should be centered on God's service.
 - d. We ultimately see this as facing toward Messiah, the Light of the World.

CHAPTER 8: CONSECRATION OF LEVITES

1. Verses 5 - 26: Because they assumed role of substituting for firstborn, the Levites needed to be consecrated just as the Kohanim had been consecrated (Lev. 8).
 - a. They, too, would be handling (transporting) holy vessels and materials.
2. Verse 6: "Take the Levites" – not before they had proven themselves.
 - a. In Egypt it is taught that only Levites observed Torah.
 - b. The other tribes assimilated into Egypt and worshiped idols.
3. In the desert, only Levi abstained from worshiping the golden Calf.
4. Verse 7: were sprinkled with the waters of purification – mixed with ashes of Red Cow.
 - a. Only way to remove defilement due to contact with dead body.
5. Verse 7: They were to shave their entire bodies – act of purification.
 - a. Notice that Joseph did this before appearing before Pharaoh.
 - b. Kohanim did this upon their consecration.
6. They were to also wash their clothes – clothes being a reminder of the shame of our sin.
 - a. Going back to Adam when God clothed him in order to cover nakedness.
7. Verse 10: children of Israel were to "lay hands" upon them – literally to lean upon them.
 - a. Being distinguished by the people just as Moses would distinguish Joshua by leaning.
 - b. The term in Hebrew is *s'micha* and denotes "support."
8. Verse 11: "shall offer the Levites" – literally to "wave."
9. This is to say that having been given by the Israelites to God, they are now given back to Israelites.
 - a. They are God's servants as, as such, serve the people.
 - b. This also formalized their assumption of the role of the firstborn.
10. The firstborn of Israel had forfeited their position by worshiping the golden Calf.
 - a. Reuben forfeited his position.
11. Thus, Levites became the equivalent of the firstborn which begs this question.
12. If firstborn are "redeemed" in Egypt and Levites are equivalent, do Levites equate to bride?
 - a. Set apart from those set apart.
 - b. Picture would be bride committed adultery, covenant was broken and then renewed.
13. The Body produces those who are equivalent to the Messiah's wife.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." – Eph. 5:25-27

14. There are those in Revelation who are "set apart" from those "set apart."

"These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb." – Rev. 14:4

15. Verse 19: "And to make atonement" – Israel tithed to Levites so they are free to serve God.
 - a. By accepting, Levites provide atonement to Israel for sin of Golden Calf.
 - b. Again, this is how they lost birthright even as Reuben lost birthright to Joseph.

16. Verse 19: “that there be no plague among” – interestingly a plague was soon to break out.
17. Children of Israel called to be a “kingdom of priests” but were proven unworthy of call.
 - a. So a plague would have broken out and swept through if firstborn had approached.
 - b. As it turns out, a plague did break out because Israel allowed Egyptian influence.
 - c. It was Egyptian influence (Golden Calf) that led to loss of birthright to firstborn.
18. Verse 24: “From 25 years of age” – didn’t minister until they were 30.
 - a. This suggests there was a five-year apprenticeship.
 - b. Could assist but wasn’t given specific task until 30 yrs.
19. Verse 25-26: Those over 50 were not to minister except to aid another Levite.
 - a. Rabbinical teaching is this was closing gates, assisting with the chorus.

CHAPTER 9: SECOND PASSOVER

1. Verse 1: Dates this as first month of the second year of Exodus; Numbers begins in 2nd month.
 - a. Proves that this is not in chronological order.
2. Rashi writes that this is the only Pesach observed during the entire 40 years in the wilderness.
 - a. Interesting because the men had to circumcise themselves in the land before Pesach.

“At that time the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. . . . Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.” Joshua 5:2-5,10

3. No one uncircumcised was to eat it (Exodus 12:48).
 - a. The point is, those born in wilderness were uncircumcised and wouldn’t have eaten.
 - b. There may validity to the notion that this was the only Pesach they celebrated.
4. Rabbis suggest that the command was not to go into effect until entry into the land.
 - a. Circumcision in the wilderness would have been dangerous in the wilderness.
 - b. Parents of uncircumcised children were not to partake.
 - c. Whether this is accurate or not is debatable but is intriguing.
5. Verse 5: “kept the Passover”
 - a. On the 14th of Aviv at dusk (which is technically beginning of 15th).
6. Verse 6: “Certain men who were unclean” – introduction of *Pesach sheni* (second Passover).
 - a. Occurs one month later but there is no festival – they eat a *pesach* offering and *matzah*.
7. It doesn’t say why they were unclean but there are traditions:
 - a. They were carrying the coffin of Joseph.
 - b. They had accidentally came in contact with a corpse.
8. As a consequence of this, anyone who is contaminated or far away may keep *Pesach sheni*.
9. Considering Pesach speaks of redemption, does this hint at a second redemption (Exodus)?
10. Verse 14: “One statute for home born and stranger – *ger*” – must observe all ordinances.
11. This demonstrates that the Exodus is significant for the “stranger.”

12. Paul alludes to this in 1 Corinthians 10:

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”
– 1 Corinthians 10:1-2

13. He says “our father” not “my fathers” suggesting these non-Jews are “descendants” of that generation.

14. Exodus is synonymous with redemption and deliverance from sin.

a. Without the Exodus the holy people would have dissipated and vanished.

CHAPTER 9: CLOUD UPON MISHKAN

1. The camp would move and stop depending upon the movement of the cloud.

a. When it moved they moved; when it rested, they rested.

2. Verse 15: it covered the *mishkan* as manifestation that He was in their midst.

a. In the evening, it had the appearance of fire.

3. Verse 18: “At the commandment of the LORD the people journeyed.”

a. They were not to act presumptuously in their journeys – they waited on Him.

4. In consideration of this, many who feel they need to move should be sure it is His direction.

a. There was no ambiguity about their movement.

b. I believe the LORD will indicate the time to move.

CHAPTER 10: SILVER TRUMPETS & BREAKING CAMP

1. Verse 2: “Make two silver trumpets” from a single plate of silver.

a. For summoning the congregation or princes.

b. Were also used to announce movements of the camp and times of war.

2. Some sources say these trumpets were for Moses’ exclusive use.

3. Note the camps did not move until the silver trumpets were sounded; as opposed to shofar.

a. Silver represents redemption – movement of the camp is part of redemptive process.

4. Blast on one trumpet was signal for the princes of the tribe to meet;

a. Blast on two was signal for the entire congregation.

5. The sound was either *tekiah* – a long clear blast - or *teruah* or “alarm” – succession of short, staccato notes.

6. *Tekiah* was sounded for the mustering of princes of congregation.

a. *Teruah* was sounded for the four camps to begin their journey, not for summoning.

7. These are the same sounds that are part of *Yom Teruah* (Rosh Hashana).

a. First comes the *tekiah*, *teruah*, *sh’varim* and *tekiah gadol*.

8. Verse 9: The trumpets were to be sounded when Israel went against an adversary.

a. Would be remembered before the LORD and saved from enemies.

9. This is evident later in Scripture: 2 Chronicles 13:12-16

10. Verse 11: 20 Iyar the cloud lifted and they broke camp to journey toward Moab.

a. This was only 10 days short of a year of camping at Sinai.

11. Verse 17: The Tabernacle was taken down.

a. As soon as Judah’s camp began, Aaron and sons began covering the furniture.

- b. Merari and Gershon began dismantling the tent and loaded it on wagons.
 - c. They moved out after the camp of Judah.
 - d. Kohath would follow after Reuben with the furnishings.
12. When the cloud rested, Judah would stop and Merari and Gershon assembled mishkan.
 - a. By time Kohath arrived with furniture, the tent was set up.
 13. Verse 25: “rearguard of the camp” – literally, “gatherer.”
 - a. This was Dan’s camp – would protect and gather stragglers and anything dropped.
 14. Verse 29: Hovav is synonymous with Jethro, father-in-law of Moses.
 - a. Moses invites him to join the nation and be their eyes.
 - b. To be their guide as they journey through the wilderness – that is Midian.
 - c. Not the Sinai peninsula but the Arabian peninsula.
 15. Brings up interesting point: the cloud led them so why did Moses need a scout?
 16. Rabbis say the cloud was not a guide but an indication of when to journey and to rest.
 - a. Implies that, though Spirit leads us, we do have a responsibility to employ wisdom.
 17. Verse 33: Journeyed for three days – should have taken them to Canaan.
 - a. Instead they ended up in wilderness of Paran.
 - b. Rabbis say they traveled without rest for three days.
 18. The ark journeyed before them – yet should have been furniture with Kohathites.
 - a. Many reasons offered but most conclude this was for this journey only.
 - b. In an effort to inspire them to leave Sinai.
 - c. The cloud also spread over them to protect them from the desert sun.
 19. Verse 35-36: When they would move, Moses would pronounce, “Arise O LORD and let your enemies be scattered.
 - a. Moses would ask for God’s protection on each journey.
 - b. The ark before them would signal God was leading them to ultimate victory.
 - c. Being they were in Arabia, God was protecting them from their sworn enemies.
 20. When it would rest, he would declare, “Return, O LORD to the myriad thousands of Israel.”
 - a. This section of *torah* separated by two inverted *nuns*.
 - b. This is recited today in the synagogue when the ark is opened to bring forth the Torah.
 21. That the ark went before them on this journey – is this inspiration for what happened in 1 Samuel 4?

“And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, ‘Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.’ – 1 Samuel 4:3

22. In the wilderness, they had just experienced a defeat of sorts and the ark led them.

CHAPTER 11: THE MURMURINGS AGAINST MOSES

1. As they begin to move further into the wilderness, they became frantic about provision.
 - a. They left Sinai and reverted again to the corruption inherited in Egypt.
 - b. Ultimately, this would lead to being disqualified from entering the land.
2. Verse 1: their murmurings resulted in a fire breaking out in the edges of the camp.
 - a. Rabbis believed it was concentrated on the *arav rav* – mixed multitude.

- b. These were the people who attached to Israel in guise of sincere converts.
 - c. They were a thorn in people's side and incited them to revolt.
3. The place this happened was known as *Taberah* – “burning.”
4. Verse 4: the mixed multitude among them “fell a lusting” – considered to be rabble.
- a. They started complaining and influenced Israel to complain.
 - b. Israel began to weep – discontent is contagious and it spread.
 - c. Looking for a reason to complain they found it with those who mixed with them.
5. They were lusting after the food of Egypt.
- a. Wasn't that they didn't have food – had flocks and herds.
 - b. They didn't have the food they enjoyed in Egypt.
 - c. Lusting after our food (e.g. Taco Bell, KFC) instead of manna provided.
6. Verse 5: “We remember the fish, etc... we ate free of charge” – longed for what Egypt offered.
7. They end up longing for food of Egypt, preferring slavery of Egypt to their present situation.
- a. Egypt wouldn't give them straw for brick and wouldn't give them food.
 - b. Rabbis say this is to say, we didn't have to obey God's command in order to eat.
8. Willing to trade “birthright” for a “mess of pottage.”
- a. Interestingly, Esau is the “tare” among the wheat.
 - b. Name associated with weed or unfruitful grass.
9. God gives us what we need not necessarily what we want.
- a. the manna was enough to satisfy hunger but not lusts for Egypt.

“I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.” – Psalm 37:25

10. What we want is not always what we need; indicative of lusting.
- a. They disdained the food God gave them – manna represents word.
 - b. עמר *omer* and אמר *amar*.
11. Compare Israel's response to God's food to Daniel's response to Babylon's food.

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” – Daniel 1:8

12. In the end, Daniel looks healthier than all the others who had eaten the king's food.
- a. Perhaps, God wanted to purge Israel of everything Egyptian.
 - b. Perhaps He wanted them to detox from those things associated with Egypt.
13. Paul warns this generation from making the same mistakes these people made when he says:

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” – 1 Corinthians 10:11

14. Verse 7: the Torah then begins to compare the manna with what they were lusting after.
- a. Israel did not have to work to gather it, it was indeed “free.”
15. Verse 8: “taste of a cake baked with oil” – literally “something juicy made with oil”
- a. Said to have tasted like wafers made with honey (Ex. 16).
16. Verse 10: People gathered outside their tents and wept publicly.

- a. That they desired publically to return to Egypt and doubt the LORD incited Him.
 - b. At this, Moses apparently felt despair and cried out to God.
17. Verses 12-15: Cries out:
- These aren't my kids, why am I having to babysit them?
 - I can't do this alone anymore.
 - If this has to be on me, kill me.
18. This reminds us of what Elijah prayed when he fled for his life.

“But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, ‘It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!’” 1 Kings 19:4

19. Yet, in a way, Israel was “children” to Moses and therefore can't shirk his duties.

CHAPTER 11: THE SEVENTY ELDERS AND GIVING OF QUAIL

1. Verse 16: Nevertheless, God tells him to call seventy men of the elders.
 - a. People that he “knew.”
 - b. Not a popularity contest but those who had proven their integrity.
2. Verse 17: They were to bear the burdens of leadership with Moses.
 - a. Not to impose burdens because they were the leadership.
 - b. This is the basis for our representative style of government.
 - c. They are to bear burdens, not impose them.
 - d. Republic founded upon biblical principles.
3. Verse 17: Takes same spirit upon Moses and places it upon them.
 - a. Does not diminish the spirit upon Moses.
 - b. But as a flame can kindle another flame, so does spirit of God.
 - c. They prophesied; a manifestation of the spirit after it came upon them (verse 25).
4. Their presence in the camp would help to diminish the murmurings in the camp.
5. This amounted to what would later be called the Sanhedrin.
 - a. Not a new concept – elders in Egypt (Ex.3:16, 4:29).
 - b. 70 elders before 10 commands were given (Ex. 24:1).
 - c. Those men were apparently destroyed in verse 1.
6. These are distinguished from the seventy judges that were appointed in Exodus 18.
 - a. This was a result of Jethro's advice.
 - b. This “Sanhedrin” was to lead the nation along with Moses.
7. Verse 18-20: LORD tells them since you wanted flesh, you shall have it til it comes out noses.
 - a. For 30 days you will eat flesh until it is loathsome.
 - b. Because you said it would have been better for us in Egypt.
 - c. Moses seems to doubt for a bit.
8. God asks Moses, “Is the LORD's hand too short?”
9. Verse 25: God places the spirit that was upon Moses upon elders and they prophesied.
 - a. They didn't do it after this however according to most translations.
 - b. Onkelos, however, renders “they did not cease to prophesy.”
 - c. This is interesting because we see gifts of the spirit in operation in wilderness.
10. Prophecy here is not predicting the future but admonishing the people under God's authority.

11. Two elders, Medad and Eldad prophesied even though they were not present with the others.
 - a. They didn't have to be at tabernacle in order to be empowered by spirit.
 - b. They just needed to have the heart to lead the people.
 - c. This angers one young man, some say Joshua, to have them incarcerated.
12. Consider the animosity that first emerged when the non-Jewish believers were being empowered by the spirit of God.
13. Verse 29: "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets" – don't be jealous for me.
 - a. Desires that God would put His spirit on all the people.
 - b. Demonstrates how meek and virtuous Moses is – cares for all the people.
 - c. Reminds of an incident in the Gospels.

"Now John answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.' But Y'shua said, 'Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in my name can soon afterward speak evil of me. For he who is not against us is on our side.'" - Mark 9:38-40

14. Perhaps it was jealousy that prompted them to "restrain" this person.
 - a. Y'shua's point is same as Moses' – that all God's people were filled with Spirit.
15. Verse 31: A wind brings the quail "from the sea" – came from the direction of Egypt.
 - a. They lusted after Egypt and its offerings so God gave them things of Egypt.
 - b. Israel wanted a king and they got Saul.
16. God gives the people what they want to demonstrate it is not what they needed.
17. The quail, exhausted from long flight, weren't able to get above 2 cubits off the ground.
 - a. They could be netted easily.
 - b. Yet, ironically, the people became ensnared in their own lusts.
18. A plague was the result of this lusting – struck them when meat was in their teeth.
 - a. Where they died was called, in English, "the graves of lust."
 - b. The instigators died instantly; everyone else ate them for a month.
 - c. God demonstrated that He could easily provide for their needs.
19. Centuries later the psalmist writes:

"He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens; and by His power He brought in the south wind. He also rained meat on them like the dust, feathered fowl like the sand of the seas; And He let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. So they ate and were well filled, for He gave them their own desire. They were not deprived of their craving; but while their food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came against them, and slew the stoutest of them, and struck down the choice men of Israel. In spite of this they still sinned, and did not believe in His wondrous works." - Psalm 78:26-32

20. We glean from this that, in a time of prosperity, judgment comes.

CHAPTER 12: MOSES' LEADERSHIP CHALLENGED

1. Moses comes under fire from those of his own household – his brother and sister.
2. This is amazing considering that people had just died from lusting after flesh.
 - a. The people had doubted God's ability to lead them.

3. Likewise, Miriam calls into question Moses' designation as leader of the people.
 - a. Miriam is considered the instigator since she was struck with leprosy.
 - b. She was removed from camp just as those who were struck dead.
4. Moses' Cushite wife is focus of controversy.
 - a. Some think this is Zipporah – a native of Midian synonymous with *Kusi* of Arabia.
 - b. Others interpret as Ethiopian which would mean second wife.
5. Miriam was the one who watched over Moses as a baby in bulrushes.
 - a. Led the women in song when they crossed the sea.
 - b. Ironically is guilty of *la'shon ha'ra* – evil tongue.
6. Verse 2: Essentially claims equality with Moses; basically same argument Korah makes.
 - a. The LORD heard it and vindicates Moses.
 - b. The LORD hears what is spoken about His servants and people and vindicates.
7. Verse 3: "Moses was very meek, above all the men on the face of the earth."
 - a. Doesn't defend himself; God defends him.
8. His meekness doesn't cause him to shrink from confrontation with Pharaoh.
 - a. Meekness does what is right in God's eyes.
 - b. Includes not thinking too highly of one's self.
9. Moses wrote the Torah; those who wish to live by Torah should consider meekness a must.
 - a. As we strive to follow God, we must do so with humility.
10. Verse 5: God called Aaron and Miriam together to the door of the *mishkan*.
11. Verse 6 – 8: Moses is not like other prophets but enters *mishkan* at will.
 - a. He doesn't learn through visions or dreams but God speaks to Him plainly.
 - b. Moses is worthy of God's confidence in things pertaining to leading the people.
12. God speaks to him "mouth to mouth" or "face to face."
 - a. To see His similitude – not his face or form but His presence.
 - b. Burning bush and passed him by in cleft of rock.
13. Verse 10: Miriam is struck with leprosy for her slander against Moses.
 - a. That Aaron is not struck suggests he was drawn in, not the instigator.
 - b. Verse 12: Aaron pleads with Moses not to hold her guilty.
 - c. As a *metzarah*, she would be considered as dead though still alive.
14. Though the object of the slander, Moses nevertheless appeals for her healing.
 - a. God heeds his prayer of "forgive them" but there were consequences nevertheless.
 - b. Shut outside the camp for seven days then restored.
15. She was healed immediately but had to remain separated as evidence of God's rebuke.
 - a. Technically she had not been declared a *metzarah* by the priest.
 - b. Perhaps this is why she did not have to go through the normal process.
16. When she rejoined them, then they journeyed to wilderness of Paran.