

Treasures of the Torah.

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,
46 and upon finding a single pearl of great value,
he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
Matthew 13:45*

‘Are You Ready for Change?’



10th June 2023 - 21 Sivan 5783

Numbers/Bamidbar

B'ha'alotkha (When you set up) 8:1–12:16

Shabbat Shalom Talmadim, and welcome to this week's Parsha Pearl.

B ha'alotkha (When You Raise/set up) opens with:

The instruction to make the Menorah.

God instructing Moses to inaugurate the Levites for service in the Mishkan (Tabernacle).

The request for a second chance to offer the Passover sacrifice, due to being unclean at the first Passover.

The complaints of the Israelites for lack of food and their punishments.

The gossip of Aaron and Miriam and the subsequent punishment of Miriam.

The parsha begins.

Lev 8 Adonai said to Moshe, 2 “Tell Aharon, ‘When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps are to cast their light forward, in front of the menorah.’” 3 Aharon did this: he lit its lamps so as to give light in front of the menorah, as Adonai had ordered Moshe. 4 Here is how the menorah was made: it was hammered gold from its base to its flowers, hammered work, following the pattern Adonai had shown Moshe. This is how he made the menorah.



At first it would seem that our opening passage about the lampstand has nothing to do with the parsha at all. A few lines are given to the making of the lampstand, the complexity of which is outlined in Exodus 25:31-37

The lampstand, in Jewish understanding seems to have many meanings and there seems to be disagreement even in its actual shape ; curved or straight branches, for example. (see picture)

Among its symbolism, is the representation of spheres of the realms or the light of YHVH within our midst.

My own thoughts consider the six days of creation, with Messiah illuminating each day and the corresponding six covenants with Christ, the seventh covenant, in the midst of them. Whatever the meaning, we simply are not told in the text, and this applies to all the elements of the tabernacle and the furnishings. However, we are told in the book of Revelation that the seven candles are said to represent the seven angels over the seven churches. Is the first menorah, a foreshadow of what is revealed to John?

Rev 1:12 I turned around to see who was speaking to me; and when I had turned, I saw seven gold menorahs; 13 and among the menorahs was someone like a Son of Man, wearing a robe down to His feet and a gold band around His chest....

.....20 Here is the secret meaning of the seven stars you saw in my right hand, and of the seven gold menorahs: the seven stars are the angels of the seven Messianic communities, and the seven menorahs are the seven Messianic communities.

The instructions for the menorah tell us that the light must shine forward, which would seem impossible if the cups were placed on top of a vertical shaft. It is clear, however, that Moses was shown the design by YHVH at Sinai and relayed it to Bezalel for the crafting.

The manufacture of it does nonetheless leave us with a few conundrums. One talent of gold was estimated to weigh around the amount of an average person, but once again it is difficult to come to a proper conversion as the talent weight changed throughout the ages. However, the Babylonian talent weighed around 66lb.

The instruction to make the lampstand out of one piece of gold, would seem impossible, but melting it down and using it to make the different parts is far more feasible. However, one thought from the sages suggests that YHVH told Moses to put the whole talent of gold into the fire - the full menorah then took shape miraculously.

The opening passage in Numbers 8 give us only a few lines in the introduction to the menorah. There is a great deal more to be done in its study which I would like to deal with on another day. In the meantime, you might want to do some on your own. The remaining chapters refer to the separation and purification of the priests for service unto the Lord. Chapter 9 reiterates the first

and second Passovers. These are to be celebrated, as a result of uncleanness, one month apart. Regulations apply to both alien and native-born peoples.

In the Parsha, I want us to look upon the pearl I have drawn out for us. This week it shines upon the attitude we all have when great change comes upon us.

Chapter 10, tells us about the manufacture of silver trumpets, which are to be blown for the gathering of the leaders (one trumpet) and for the people, (two trumpets). The trumpets will be blown to signal manoeuvres into battle as well as coming together for celebrations.

It was important for the Israelite community to know the significance of the different trumpet calls. They are:

Tekiah. The tekiah blast consisted of three medium-length blasts, from a low to high pitch, which signified the call to repentance. It resembled a cry.

Shevarim. The Shevarim consisted of three shorter blasts, low to high with the middle blast slightly longer than the rest, this is a broken series of blasts and is said to represent the brokenness of the hearts of the people. The middle blast reflects one tekiah blast.

Teruah. The teruah, which also means 'shout', consists of nine short blasts which are a warning sound and a call to battle.

Tekiah Gadola is one long sustained blast of the breath with a high pitch at the end. This is said to signify the sound of hope.

When change comes, we can respond by refusing it or accepting it; we can complain or get excited or we can remain 'the instructed, or 'the adapted'.

Adaptation may seem a positive move, if the change is necessary, but change itself, is not always for the good. However, those who are resistant to God's change are called rebellious in His eyes. The adaptation we are speaking of regards the need of the people to change as they walk along their journey with the Word, which is Yeshua Himself, alongside them.

Moses was called the humblest of men. Now the man Moses was very humble (gentle, kind, devoid of self-righteousness), more than any man who was on the face of the earth. Num 12:3 Despite his upbringing and standing before God, he was able to understand that position with men means nothing if your relationship with God is not right.

Leaders who show humility, do not need to prove their authority. We see this in how Yeshua lived His life and how it showed us the way to conduct our own lives. However, we also see how He became angry about the level of merchandising activity He saw in the temple.

John 2:13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts He found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So He made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves He said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

In order to understand the narrative in the accounts of scripture, we not only have to try and understand the settings but also develop a context to understand outcomes and responses, or why people did, spoke or reacted in certain ways.

God considered David, a man after His own heart, yet knowing all that David would do in His life, YHWH chose him to be His king over Israel; despite Solomon's faults, he too was chosen to write the books of wisdom. Despite Moses' faults and struggles in being the leader, prophet and chief-king over all of Israel, God still chose him, above all men, to do what he had to do. Never was there a leader like Moses. Moses had a level of friendship and intimacy with God, that often saw them talking to one another in very familiar ways. YHWH never chose a leader amongst the leaders of the Israelite clans. He chose a man who was forced to flee from his culture, in order to return to it again many years later. In order to make this move, Moses had to undergo significant change.

Moses was a man like any other man. He had his failings and pride and needed to learn humility if he was to walk with God. He soon realised that in his calling he had to walk alongside people who had enough of their share of their own problems. However, a zeal to see the people come together and do what God wanted of them was to transpire over time. A people who were not his people would soon become his people. His humility and in order to see the purposes of God's promises fulfilled, saw him offer his own life for the salvation of his people; this was a foreshadow of our Yeshua's sacrifice for us.

My focus in this week's study is to look at the problem we have with change. We will, I hope find a few answers to this sticky problem.

Let us put a brief context to the time we are now reading about.

In reality, the people have just begun their journey (they are in fact at the beginning of their second year) unknowing that soon this reasonably short, only a few days trek, would turn into an expedition of discovery and phenomenal change, leading to the emergence of a new generation led by Joshua, Moses' assistant.

As we read on, the people continue to moan and grumble about the manna that has been provided by the Lord for their daily consumption. We see that being fed by God was simply not enough for them. They desired the food they used to eat back in their captivity. There, it was given freely,

One of the situations I have difficulty with, and a question I often ask, is why, despite the number of livestock travelling with the caravan of the peoples, did they not have meat to eat as part of their daily diet? What do you think?

11:1 But the people began complaining about their hardships to Adonai. When Adonai heard it, His anger flared up, so that fire from Adonai broke out against them and consumed the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then the people cried to Moshe, Moshe prayed to Adonai, and the fire abated. 3 That place was called Tav'erah [burning] because Adonai's fire broke out against them.

4 Next, the mixed crowd that was with them grew greedy for an easier life; while the people of Isra'el, for their part, also renewed their weeping and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt — it cost us nothing! — and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, the garlic! 6 But now we're withering away, we have nothing to look at but this man." (Manna)

In this passage we are already witness to the fire of God's anger breaking out in the camp, but still the people complain. From the very moment they left Egypt, the attitudes of the people don't seem to have changed much at all.

This is not the first time the people have complained about food.

Ex 14:11 They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

Exodus 16:

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, **7** and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because He has heard your grumbling against Him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?”

8 Moses also said, “You will know that it was the Lord when He gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because He has heard your grumbling against Him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.”

9 Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the Lord, for He has heard your grumbling.’”

10 While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.

11 The Lord said to Moses, **12** “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

13 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. **14** When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. **15** When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was.

If being saved from the judgements of God was not enough, this capacity to complain against the works and *will* of God will carry through the history of all believers. It shows us that we can soon turn into spoilt children, whose father gives them everything, but soon forgets his kindnesses when he has to discipline them.

Israel, however, is not unique in this attitude. She is the pattern for change and struggle, and the tribulation she must experience identifies her as the bride who must go through the fire of trial.

Moses was now in the third period of life - the final forty years. Moses at 80 years old, will find that there is still time to change. The Lord had not finished with him yet.

God is adapting His people and they must know that if they are to make it to the land, they must be changed by His word and have it written in their hearts. Friends, this is a prerequisite for entrance into the house of God. The bride, having made herself ready, shows to her husband that her heart is filled with Him, and that the required change has taken place in her to become *one* with Him. We must realise that before we enter into the Holy Place our hearts must be pure and our hands clean. We may be moving horizontally along the path in the earthly tabernacle, but we are also ascending, going up to the mount of the Lord.

In Chapter 11:10 -15, Moses vents his frustration on the Lord. Alongside those who see the need and get on with what must be done, there will always be those who need to be instructed. If a

person is of the latter, then there has been no change. They simply have not adapted to the conditions and they simply are blind to the things that must be done.

YHWH, has given the people His commandments and His Torah. He has proven that He loves them and is their God and yet this is soon forgotten over a hungry stomach. Moses' frustration comes about. He is willing to call it quits and see his life brought to an end. Moses has done what the Lord has asked and has gone through a process of great personal change. Still the lord is demanding more from this man. This is the price that must be paid to walk so closely with the Most High.

The problem was however, he couldn't see any change among the people. They were still a grumbling and ungrateful lot.

When it comes to leading God's people we often forget that significant change must come upon the person the Lord calls for this task. On the surface, we see the joy that serving others brings but inside the man, conflicts brew and great forces fight for his soul. The fight between the human and spiritual sides are constant contest. Great sacrifices have to be made on all fronts.

Let us imagine Moses' situation again. He was a Hebrew adopted into the family of Pharaoh. Conflicts between his roots and princely position must have been a struggle. He fell from such high status and became a shepherd. What a parallel this is to the story of our saviour who came down from His heavenly throne to become a mortal man to shepherd His own flock.

Scripture tells us that we must pray for those who lead us - for those who pray for us must give an account to God.

In this passage in the book of Timothy, we are told:

1 'I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, **that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.** 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior..." -1 Timothy 2:1-3.

Such prayers of intercession are to help lead peaceful, quiet, godly and holy lives. It intimates that the leaders must be aspiring to do the same, but in reality, are governments and the corridors of leadership are far from godly indeed.

In this passage in Hebrews we see further admonition:

13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, **for they watch over your souls as those who must give an account.** To this end, allow them to lead with joy and not with grief, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Can you imagine having a government of godly leaders who pray over the people?

All authority, good or bad is given by God. It is given so that change can occur. God's judgments, we often forget, bring both blessings and discipline to people. When government leaders don't pay attention to the word of God, great hardship comes upon the people. A godly government will rule over a godly nation.

You can now imagine how the relationship between Moses and YHWH grew on a daily basis as they met each other in the tent of meeting.

YHWH had a plan for the establishment of a holy people in a holy land. Can you see how the two go together? What a blessing it would be to have leaders like Moses.

YHWH's response to Moses is to allocate seventy of Israel's elders among the people who have standing in the community.

YHWH's discipline is not yet finished among the people. On account of their grumblings, He will give them what they want. The meat appears in the form of quail, and this they must eat every day for a whole month. By the end, they will loath what they have had to eat and some will die through glutinous cravings.

After relaying the message to the people and bringing the elders to the tent of meeting, YHWH now tells Moses that from the spirit that was given to him, for his calling, a portion shall be given to the appointed elders to share the burden. The passage tells us in v25, that when the spirit rested upon them, they spoke in ecstasy, or that they prophesied.

What is strange in the next few verses, is that two men, Eldad and Medad, also received the spirit even though they did not gather with the rest of the leaders at the tent of meeting.

Now we must look into a little context. The men are considered to be related to Moses and did not attend the group because they thought themselves unworthy to carry the responsibility of the elders. YHWH, however, honoured them because of their dignity. The Targum Jonathan expounds further.

But two men had remained in the camp; the name of the one Eldad, and the name of the second Medad, the sons of Elizaphan bar Parnak, whom Jokebed the daughter of Levi bare to him when Amram her husband had put her away; and to whom she had been espoused before she gave birth to Mosheh. And the Spirit of prophecy resting upon them, Eldad prophesied, and said: Behold, Mosheh shall be gathered from the world; and Jehoshua bar Nun, the minister of the camps, will be established after him, and will lead the people of the house of Israel into the land of Kenaan, and make it their inheritance. Medad prophesied, and said: Behold, quails come up from the sea, and cover all the camp of Israel; but they will be to the people (a cause of) an offence. And both of them prophesied together, and said: Behold, a king will arise from the land of Magog, at the end of the days, and will assemble kings crowned with crowns, and captains wearing armour, and him will all nations obey.

The prophecy of the men, outraged Joshua, and this is why he asked Moses to act severely upon them. Furthermore, we understand that the Spirit of prophecy remained upon these two men.

Moses makes a statement which Paul repeats in 1Corinthians 14

‘However, keep on eagerly seeking the things of the Spirit; and especially seek to be able to prophesy. **2** For someone speaking in a tongue is not speaking to people but to God, because no one can understand, since he is uttering mysteries in the power of the Spirit. **3** But someone prophesying is speaking to people, edifying, encouraging and comforting them. **4** A person speaking in a tongue does edify himself, but a person prophesying edifies the congregation. **5** I wish you would all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you would all prophesy. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in tongues, unless someone gives an interpretation, so that the congregation can be edified.’

Note, the Spirit of prophecy, when used correctly in orderly worship, is used to edify the congregation.

Acts 2:17 reiterating Joel 2:28 tells us that YHVH will in the last days pour out His spirit upon all flesh. We see in this event that it is a reflection of what happens in the pattern of the exodus. In other words, as YHVH gathers His people from the nations to which He scattered them, signs will follow them. This will be a time of revival and renewal among the great regathering.

Before we end this study, we cannot leave without approaching the judgement of YHVH upon Miriam who spoke against Moses. Let us remind ourselves that we had just witnessed the elders prophesying when YHVH put Moses' spirit upon them.

Miriam was a prophetess in her own right, and the elder sister of Moses. Now possibly in her nineties, her age and closeness to Moses, did not stop her from feeling jealous against her younger brother. Were Aaron and herself not also worthy to lead the Hebrews? 'Did YHVH not speak to them also', she said.

The text tells us that YHVH called both of them to Him before the tent of meeting and chastised them severely for speaking against His anointed. YHVH reminds them that it was to Moses to whom He appeared in person, not in a vision or a dream, as He did to other prophets. As a result of Miriam's gossip the Lord places Tz'arat, a form of leprosy, upon her, and she must now remain outside the camp for seven days.

How would this appear to the others? Here, Miriam the prophetess, sister of Moses and to the high priest Aaron, has been punished by God. Surely they must realise, that no one is above the chastisement of the Lord. Friends, the Lord shows no favouritism toward anyone. All of us are capable of reacting in jealousy and responding in gossip no matter what the anointing is.

As we close, we too must realise, that YHVH appoints who He will for service and position. There is no qualification needed, because it is by the Holy Spirit, and through every spiritual blessing in Christ that we function. Humility allows us to accept the choice of God and the position we find ourselves in; humility allows us to be changed.

In the flesh, it is often difficult to remove someone from the position of leadership, especially if they have appointed themselves to it. Humility will always help us to move aside for the next appointee. When our time is up and if we have been responsible and wise in our position, there is always a promotion ahead. Things can become mighty difficult when we resist the Lord.

Leaders, in particular, should always be looking to be replaced. In fact, diligent leaders will take it upon themselves to seek out the one who will replace them, just as Moses did with Joshua.

As we have looked at the process of change, we see that adaptation is part of the natural process of one who is being changed and conformed to Torah. The change eliminates the past, and causes one to die to self. Those who find fault or grumble, or rebel against the goodness of the Lord, sadly, will not enter the Lord's rest.

Finally, the greatest change we can experience is the transition from death to life, not the other way around. Jesus requires that in order for us to inherit life eternal we must first die and become born again. The new birth experience is not possible unless death has occurred first. Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

We are reminded of Jesus' visit to the tomb of His friend Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead four days. Why did Jesus take so long to arrive at the site? He had to make sure that the body of Lazarus was surely dead. In the tomb, Lazarus lay bound, even if he was alive he could not have moved. All of his extremities were bound and he was useless. Friends, in order to be useful to the Lord we must first become dead and useless. It is only when the redeemer, the saviour of our souls turns up does resurrection power enter into our lifeless souls. He will cut the ties that bind us and set us free, we will become born again to live life with Him. How wonderful is that?

Friends, this gives us a different viewpoint now when the scripture tells us that the dead in Christ shall rise first on the day of His return.

The apostle Paul gave us this remark in Galatians 3: 19 "For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Beloved, the curse of the law, the legal aspect of its sentence over us was death, but Messiah Yeshua has set us free from such a sentence. Like Lazarus, the binding and the bondage to law has no longer any jurisdiction over those whom He has set free.

Furthermore, Paul goes on to say,

5: 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Beloved, let us pursue a life, worthy of our calling. It demands change.
Are you still on course?

Shalom



Numbers 6:

24 'Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishmerekha.

[May Adonai bless you and keep you.]

25 Ya'er Adonai panav eleikha vichunekka.

**[May Adonai make his face shine
on you and show you his favour.]**

26 Yissa Adonai panav eleikha v'yasem l'kha shalom

**[May Adonai lift up his face
toward you and give you peace.]**

Shabbat Shalom
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Additional readings.

Haftarah/Prophet : Zechariah 2:14-4:7 - B'rit Hadashah/ Renewed Covenant: Matthew 14:14:21

Glossary

*Midrash: In Judaism, the **Midrash** is the genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (Aggadah) and occasionally the Jewish religious laws (halakha), which usually form a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (Tanakh)*

*Targum: **Targum Onkelos** (or **Onqelos**), is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum (Aramaic translation) to the Torah. However, its early origins may have been western, in Israel. Its authorship is attributed to Onkelos, a famous convert to Judaism in Tannaic times (c. 35–120 CE)*

Targum Jonathan: **Targum Jonathan**), otherwise referred to as **Targum Yonasan/Yonatan**, is the official eastern (Babylonian) Targum to the Nevi'im/Prophets. Its early origins, however, are western (i.e. from the Land of Israel), and the Talmudic tradition attributes its authorship to Jonathan ben Uzziel of Jerusalem in the time of King Herod

Tannaim: Tannaim were the Rabbinic sages whose views are recorded in the Mishnah, from approximately 10-220 CE. The period of the Tannaim, also referred to as the Mishnaic period, lasted about 210 years.

Talmud: The **Talmud** means "instruction, learning", "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism. The term "Talmud" normally refers to the collection of writings named specifically the **Babylonian Talmud** (*Talmud Bavli*), although there is also an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*) or Palestinian Talmud. The Talmud has two components:

1. The Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law;
2. The Gemara (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Hebrew Bible

Jubilees: The Book of Jubilees claims to present "the history of the division of the days of the Law, of the events of the years, the year-weeks, and the jubilees of the world" as revealed to Moses (in addition to the Torah or "Instruction") by angels while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights. The chronology given in Jubilees is based on multiples of seven; the jubilees are periods of 49 years, seven "year-weeks", into which all of time has been divided

Vulgate: This is the Latin Bible. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between 382 and 405 CE, this text became known as the 'versio vulgata', which means 'common translation'.

Rashi , whose real name is Shlomo Yitzchaki was born in France in the 11th century. Rashi wrote a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the Hebrew Bible.

Moses ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides became better known by the acronym Rambam. He was born in 1138 in Cordoba, Spain. He was a Sephardic Jew and influential philosopher. He is considered to be among the greatest of Torah Scholars.

Nachmanides- 13th century French Jewish Philosopher, commonly known by the acronym; Rambam.

