

*“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*

17th June - 19 Sivan 5782

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 the spheres of the realms or the light of the 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 fore-shadow 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 tells 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 the Bezalel for the crafting.

The manufacture, 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 measure may have been the weight used.

The direction to make the lamp stand 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 of this parsha gives us only a few lines in its 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 a some on your own.

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.

When change comes, we can respond by refusing it or accepting it. We can complain or get excited. 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, the resistant to God's change are called the 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, alongside them.

Moses, was called the humblest of men. 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, *YHVH* chose him to be His king over Israel; despite Solomon's faults, he too was chosen to write the books of wisdom, and despite Moses' faults, and struggles in being the leader, prophet and chief-king over all of Israel, God chose him above all men, to do what he had to do. God never chose a leader amongst the Israelite population of Egypt. Surely, there must have been someone else suitable for the task.

So, despite Moses' humility, it does not negate the fact that Moses, at this time, lost his patience with the people. He too, had a zeal to see the people come together and do what God wanted of them. What was the problem?

Before we continue, let us first remind ourselves, that this parsha is full of so many topics that we can delve into. It's really hard not to, but we can do this in our own personal study.

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, unknowing that soon this reasonably short, few days trek, will launch them into the wilderness for forty years.

Anyway, 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 among the camp, but still the people complain. From the very moment they left Egypt, the Israelites complain.

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 and a lot more is still to be changed too. 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 God's word and have the Torah 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.

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.

YHVH, has given the people His commandments and His Torah. He has proven that He loves them and is their God and no other, 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 change, but this change is only part of the whole process that leads to conformation. YHVH is demanding more from this man. If he has changed then why haven't the people? Don't they get it—what's their problem?



On a side note, dealing with people, can sometimes be more difficult than dealing with a nation. Just think about the policies and deliberations and the inordinate amount of time taken up by bureaucracy in order for leaders to agree on important changes. Debates about policies and how to implement them can go on for years.

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

YHVH'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.

After relaying the message to the people and bringing the elders to the tent of meeting, YHVH 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. YHVH, 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 and 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 upon her, and she must now remain outside of 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 upon 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 position we find ourselves in.

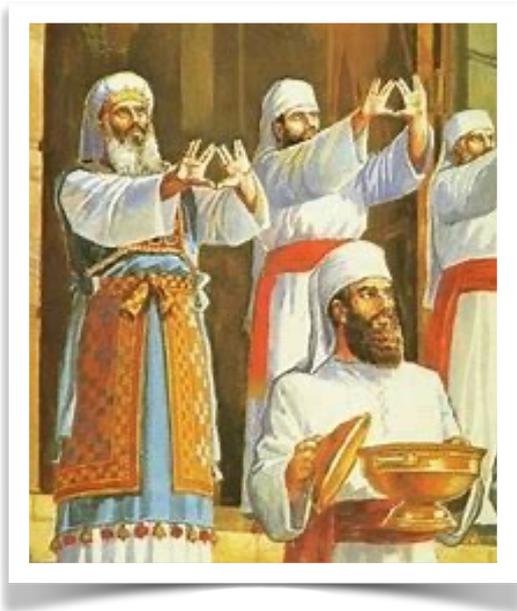
In the flesh, it is often difficult to remove someone from the position of occupancy especially if they have placed themselves in it. We must always be ready to move aside when YHVH shows us our time is up. Things can become mighty difficult when we resist the Lord.

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. 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.

How are you coping with the change?

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
Grant Marshall
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Additional readings.

Haftarah B'chukkotai: Zechariah 2:14-4:7 - B'rit Hadashah: 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.

