

**Wembley Synagogue**

בְּהַעֲלוֹתָךְ

Insights from the commentators into the Sidra of Beha'alotcha 5768

What's the Sidra about?

1st Aliya: Aharon is instructed to light the Menorah, and the Menorah's construction is reviewed. Moshe is commanded to inaugurate the Leviyim into the service of the Mishkan. **2nd Aliya:** The Leviyim are inaugurated into Temple service. Their term of service was from age 25 to age 50. **3rd Aliya:** Bnei Yisrael keep their second Pesach since leaving Egypt. The laws of Pesach Sheni are taught for those who were unable to bring the Pascal Lamb at the appropriate time. **4th Aliya:** The movement of the Pillar of Clouds as the indicators of when to set or break the camp is identified. In addition to the Pillar of Clouds, Moshe is commanded to make two silver trumpets that would be used to herald the travelling of the encampment or the movement of troops during war. **5th Aliya:** The description of the nation's travels from the desert of Sinai is recorded. Moshe approaches Yitro, who refuses his offer to join them in Eretz Yisrael. **6th Aliya:** The two verses of "When the Ark went forth" are stated, and then things begin to unravel. The main body of this Aliya describes the nation's complaints against the physical conditions of their dwelling in the desert. The Manna is described in contrast to the nation's desire for "real food". Moshe expresses his frustrations as leader, and Hashem promises to send quail to satisfy the people's desire for meat. Moshe is instructed to appoint a Sanhedrin to help him govern and teach the nation. The 70 Elders are divinely confirmed, and Eldad and Maydad prophesy the transition of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua. **7th Aliya:** The quail descend upon the camp in large quantities. Aharon and Miriam speak Lashon Harah about Moshe, resulting in Hashem confirming Moshe as His pre-eminent servant and prophet. Miriam is afflicted with Tzard'at. (Source: Rav Aron Tendler)

מִבֶּן חָמֵשׁ וָעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמֵעַלָּה - From twenty five years of age and up. (8:24)

The Leviim did not enter the "workforce" until they were thirty years old. They studied and trained for five years after their induction into service. Rav Moshe Feinstein, zl, observes the incredible amount of time and diligence necessary to ensure proficiency in only one mitzvah.

וַיֵּעַן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּרִנּוֹן מִשְׁרַת מֹשֶׁה - Yehoshua bin Nun, the servant of Moshe answered. (11:28)

Why does the Torah give Yehoshua the title "Moshe's servant." Is there significance to this label? Rav Mordechai HaKohen, zl, explains that being so close to Moshe, literally as his servant, Yehoshua had a profound appreciation of how difficult it was for Moshe to attain the spiritual plateau of prophesy. Suddenly, he heard two young men prophesying in the camp. This disturbed him, because one does not suddenly become a prophet.

וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנּוּ מְאֹד - Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble. (12:3)

How are we to understand Moshe's humility in the context of a person who spoke to Hashem? After all, Moshe achieved what no human being had ever achieved. How did he remain humble? Gelilei Zahav explains that Moshe conjectured that had any other person experienced what he had, they would be much greater and would have accomplished much more than he. This is humility.

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמְעוּ-נָא דְבַר - And (Hashem) said (to Aharon and Miriam) Please listen to My words. (12:6)

Siftei Chachamim notes the use of the word "na," please. Although Hashem strongly disapproved of Aharon and Miriam's actions, He spoke to them gently. Had He spoken to them in an angry tone, they would not have accepted His admonishment. While they certainly would have listened, the effectiveness of the rebuke would have been diminished had Hashem not spoken to them in this imploring manner. What a powerful lesson in the "art" of giving rebuke.

אֶל-מִלּוֹ פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה יֵאָרוּ שִׁבְעַת הַיָּרֹת
Towards the face of the menorah shall the seven lamps
cast light (8:2)

A SEVEN-BRANCH CANDELABRUM

The Weekly Halacha Discussion- A review of practical halachic topics related to the weekly Sidra
By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt.

QUESTION: In view of the Biblical prohibition against duplicating vessels that were used in the Mishkan, would one be allowed to make a seven-branched candelabrum? If one owns such a candelabrum, is he allowed to keep it?

ANSWER: The Talmud (1) forbids manufacturing a seven-branched candelabrum, in keeping with the Biblical (2) prohibition (3) of "imitating" any of the vessels (keilim) that were used in the Mishkan. There are three views in the early commentaries in regard to the extent of the prohibition. Some (4) hold that only an exact replica is prohibited. Any slight change from the original in the Mishkan is permitted. Others (5) hold that any menorah which would have been considered kosher b'dieved, is prohibited. Other poskim (6) are even more stringent. They hold that any seven-branched menorah, made out of any metal, regardless of its shape or form, is prohibited. The Shulchan Aruch (7) rules [in the opinion of the Shach] in accordance with the second view, i.e., that even a menorah that is not made exactly like the one in the Mishkan but would be kosher b'dieved is prohibited. He rules, therefore, that if the menorah is not made from gold but from other types of metals; if the replica is made without the decorative cups, knobs, or flowers that were part of the original menorah; if the menorah is shorter than the 18 tefachim (4.5-6 feet) that the original menorah measured, it is still prohibited to replicate.

There are, however, some poskim who follow the third approach, that a menorah which would not have been considered kosher even b'dieved is still prohibited. In their opinion, it is forbidden to make any menorah, no matter what its shape or form, if it has seven branches. Even a menorah which is made to hold candles and not oil would be prohibited according to this strict interpretation of the halachah (8). A menorah which is round or square would also be prohibited (9). There is a debate among latter-day poskim as to whether the halachah should follow the [Shach's interpretation of the] Shulchan Aruch's lenient ruling or the stricter ruling of other poskim (10).

The poskim are also undecided about whether the prohibition applies only to the manufacture of such a menorah, or also to keeping it in one's possession. The poskim are also in doubt concerning the status of an eight-branched menorah of which one branch broke off (11).

Since this prohibition is of Biblical origin, we must, wherever possible, be stringent when in doubt. Therefore:

- Any menorah with six, eight, or nine branches may be made and kept in one's possession.
- It is prohibited to make a seven-branched menorah out of any metal whatsoever.
- A seven-branched menorah made out of wood or porcelain is permitted (12).
- A round, triangular or square menorah with seven branches is also included in this prohibition.

Many poskim permit a seven-branched electric menorah (13), while others forbid it (14). Ideally, it is best to refrain from making one. If one happens to have such a menorah, many poskim allow one to retain it (15).

FOOTNOTES 1 Rosh ha-Shanah 24a. 2 Tosfos, Avodah Zarah 43b. 3 Yisro 20:20. 4 The view of the Chacham Tzvi 60. See also Meiri (Rosh ha-Shanah 24a) who says that any deviation from the menorah in the Mishkan is permitted. 5 Ma'harik (75), in explanation of the view of Tosfos. 6 Bechor Shor (Rosh ha-Shanah, ibid.) 7 Y.D. 141:8. 8 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 141:14-15, rejecting the view of Mishnas Chachamim who permitted a seven-branched candle menorah. 9 Bechor Shor says that even according to the view of the Shulchan Aruch, a round menorah would be prohibited, since we do not find that the order in which the candles are placed invalidates a kosher menorah. 10 Pischei Teshuvah, Birkei Yosef and Sho'el u'Meishiv 3:71 rule strictly. Many other poskim, quoted in Darkei Teshuvah 141:56, Yabia Omer 1:12 and Yechaveh Da'as 3:61 rule leniently. Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:31, without quoting the various views, rules that only a kosher menorah is prohibited to replicate. He is undecided about an oil menorah which cannot hold the required minimum of half a lug. 11 See Darkei Teshuvah 141:52-53, who remains in doubt concerning these questions and quotes several views. See Birkei Yosef, however, who relates an episode where a seven-branched candelabrum was made and the Rabbis of Yerushalayim ruled that it must be removed. 12 Shach Y.D. 141. 13 Yesodei Yeshurun 1 pg. 47; Mishpatei Uziel Y.D. 18. 14 Shearim Metzuyanin b'Halachah 168:4 quoting Chavalim ba-Ne'imim 3:54; Yaskil Avdi 7:16. 15 See Yabia Omer and Yechaveh Da'as, ibid.

שבת שלום!

Shabbat Shalom



Shabbat starts 8.00pm



Shabbat ends: 10.25pm

לע"נ ר' מרדכי צבי ב"ר יחיאל משה וולפסון ז"ל

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is edited by Chazan Anthony Wolfson

Online at: http://www.wembleysynagogue.org/html/sedra_notes.html