

May 31, 2018

Parashat B'ha'alotecha

Numbers 8:1-12:16

<https://www.sefaria.org/Numbers.8.1-14?lang=bi&aliyot=1>

Sam

Shmue'l ben Miriam Etta v'Yaakov Mordecai ha-levi

Maya

Bracha Na'ariya bat Aliza v'Gedaliah Mendel

Carter

Moshe Re'uven ben Chaya Esther v'Kurt

Summary:

Carter: This week's Torah portion is *B'ha'alotecha*, the third *parasha* in the book of *B'midbar* or Numbers. Today we will be reading chapter 8, verses 1-3.

Maya: In this week's *parashah* G!d speaks to Moshe, describing the *menorah* for the Tent of Meeting. The Levites are appointed to serve as assistants under Aharon and his sons. Those who are unable to celebrate Passover during *Nisan* are given a time in the month of *Sivan* to observe a "second Passover."

Sam: By day cloud and by night fire show G!d's presence over the *mishkan*. When the cloud of G!d's presence lifts from the *mishkan*, the Israelites pick everything up to follow the cloud, setting out on their journey, tribe by tribe. When the Israelites complain about the lack of meat in their meals, Moshe and maybe even G!d become frustrated. God does provide the people with meat, but then strikes them with a serious plague.

Maya: Miriam and Aharon talk about the "Cushite woman" whom Moshe has married and complain that G!d speaks not only through Moshe but also through them. When Miriam is struck with a skin disease, Moshe begs G!d to heal her. Once she has recovered, the people continue their journey.

1) Carter: In this week's *parashah* we learn that when the *mishkan* was finished a cloud of G!d's presence came down and settled on the tent to cover it during the day. Why do you think that G!d covered the *mishkan* with a cloud when it was completed? <<Maya picks 3>>

Sam: This reminds me of the pillar of cloud that G!d used to lead the Israelites by day as they wandered in the wilderness. Maybe the cloud helped the Israelites better see where the *Mishkan* was located at the center of their camp. Or maybe this was G!d's way of protecting the holiness of the *mishkan*.

2) Sam: Just like the pillar of cloud that guides the Israelites by day and the pillar of fire that guides them by night, we learn that the *mishkan*--which is covered by cloud during the day also is covered by something that looks like fire at night. Why do you think that G!d might cause something like fire to cover the *mishkan* at night? <<Carter picks 3>>

Maya: Maybe the fire is to remind the Israelites of the experience Moshe had at the burning bush where he met G!d personally, or maybe just like the smoke from fire rises, maybe G!d covers the *Mishkan* with something that looks like fire so that the Israelites will see smoke rising and their attention will go to G!d.

3) Maya: In this week's *parashah* we noticed G!d uses different forms to represent G!d's presence--clouds and fire, but there's **JUST ONE G!D! So why do you think G!d wouldn't choose just one thing to represent G!d? <<Sam picks 3>>**

Carter: This reminds me of a story. . . Once there was a powerful stonecutter who worked so hard on a hot, hot day--chipping away at the side of a mountain, proud of the strength it took to do his job. But when he saw that the sun was draining his energy, he knew that the sun must be the most powerful thing in the world and wished, "If only I could be the sun and have all that strength!" Immediately--his strength was renewed. He looked around and saw the mountain and the stonecutter far below. He had become the sun! But no sooner did he notice his new form and power, he also noticed that there was something blocking him from shining on the mountain--A CLOUD! "If only I could be the cloud that blocks out the sun--that would be true power!" No sooner had he thought this and suddenly he felt cooler and more settled, and he noticed he was much closer to the mountain and the stonecutter. . . but then he started to drift. "Well, if the wind can move a cloud, then surely the wind is even more powerful than a cloud." WOOSH! And the stonecutter raced along across the face of the Earth with the speed and power of the wind until suddenly he ran into the face of the mountain. BAM! "You know," said the stonecutter "if a mountain can stop the wind. . ." FLASH! And suddenly he was rooted, tall, and strong. He was a mountain--proud of his majesty and beauty, when. . . chip, chip, chip he felt the annoying chipping of someone at his toe. It was the stone cutter cutting out blocks of stone to be used by others for building their homes and creating their own works of art. And before the stonecutter could even make a wish, BOOM he was back in the hot sun chipping away at the base of the mountain. This story reminds me that there is power and holiness in all parts of life. Maybe this is what G!d is trying to teach us by representing G!d's power in different forms.

CARTER'S TORAH READING

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כא

נִשְׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן גַּם־הֵם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם לְמִשְׁפַּחֹתָם: כב

מִבֶּן שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְיַעֲלֶה עַד בְּן־חַמִּישִׁים שָׁנָה תִּפְקַד אוֹתָם כָּל־הַבָּא לְצַבָּא כג
צָבָא לְעַבְד עֲבָדָה בְּאֶהֱל מוֹעֵד:

21) *Va-yidabeir Adonai el-Moshe leimor.*

22) *Naso et-rosh b'nai Geirshon gam-heim l'veit avotam l'mishp'hotam.*

23) *Me-ben shlosim shanah va-ma'alah ad ben-hamisheem shanah teefkod otam kol-habah leetzvo tzavah la'a'vod avodat b'ohel mo'ed.*