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Parshah Beshalacha
by Julie Zhuk on 2022-06-18

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The beginning of the parsha starts out talking about a menorah and a musical instrument called trumpets. In the first part I am going to try explaining the significance for both of these things. This parsha may not come off with full understanding to every reader. I used a child version to understand what the parsha said. Even with that read, I didn't fully understand what the big deal about this menorah and these trumpets were. The only time I have ever read about Jews using a menorah is for Channuka. Here I learned, the Jews used them in this week's parsha! Reading both this children's version of the parsha story and finding some sources online helped me understand better.

The menorah is all about the Jews kindling the candlebra, which was the menorah. They used it in the Holy Temple. G-d gave instructions to the high priest, who was Aaron at the time on how to light this menorah. The menorah was a basic staple for the temple, it was a fundamental symbol of the Jewish faith. The light that was coming from the menorah was representing light coming from G-d Himself. It also gave the Jewish people a spiritual enlightenment and that was used in the Holy Temple to illuminate the world. Aaron followed all of the instructions given to him, step by step. G-d gave Moses instructions to use musical instruments known as trumpets, this was to attract the attention of the Jewish people. This was how the Jews learned it would be time for them to break camp and they would be moving onto another area. These trumpets were used only by Moses and no one else in any other generation or timeframe. Other times Moses used those trumpets, was to get the Jews ready for another battle or make announcements about days of festivals.

The menorah was the message for the Jews and the trumpets were just a medium. The menorah was the one that had a core value to it. The trumpets were just a form for Moses to communicate to the Jewish people. If the musical instrument being the trumpet didn't work then someone would invent some kind of loudspeaker. Menorahs were used throughout many generations, not just during the time of Moses. The menorah was more important for the Jews than the trumpets. We don't have a Holy Temple anymore and we see that as a tragedy. The trumpets were seen as a side piece in comparison to the menorah. When Moses used the trumpets, it was as if he was using a form of messengers to get the word out to the people. Having the menorah nearby gave him the actual product, what to say to the people.

The other half of this week's parsha was about G-d waiting for the Jews to give an offering of a paschal lamb. He told Moses what kind of message to convey to the Jewish people. The Jews were going to give this offering once again in the desert. The last time they did that was the evening they left Egypt. When we read the Torah, we learn that things happened in a chronological order, but G-d didn't keep track of it that way. He put in the described events afterwards and a lot of this had to do with the Jews not always being on their best behaviors. G-d knew that the future generations would read the history of what happened. G-d didn't want Jews from the future generations to have bad thoughts about what kind of Jews were around

before their time. It's not a problem in general, because the Torah doesn't read in chronological order in the first place. G-d had a reason for the Jews to give an offering of this paschal lamb. We learn in this parsha that the Jews wandered around the desert for a forty year period.

Never in that time did the Jews ever give this kind of a sacrifice. This was not a good thing on the Jews part, that is why the Torah covers up their mistake. The story is put into the Torah sometime later to not draw attention to it. There are a few reasons why the Jews didn't give a paschal sacrifice while wandering in the desert. For one thing, it says in the Torah the Jews were supposed to have first settled down in the land of Israel. That's why they didn't do it while walking around the desert. The other reason they didn't give this offering was G-d wanted all the boys and men to have had a bris mila. It wasn't possible in the desert so they didn't do it. The last thing mentioned in this parsha isn't so much why they didn't do it, but that the Jews didn't WANT TO DO IT. Usually Jews would give a sacrifice after realizing they made a mistake and were asking forgiveness from G-d. In the desert when they wandered around for forty years, many of them complained left and right. Ever since their departure from Egypt, nothing seemed to be right.

Between the food being sent down from the heavens to G-d, the Jews complained it was always the same thing. They didn't have meat or fish and while in the desert they were thinking of the times they were in Egypt and they were enjoying these luxuries. G-d got so sick of them complaining about the maan, so He sent a consistent amount of meat for a long time. In the end, that didn't leave the Jews feeling happy either. There is another story from the parsha Sheni, it's referring to the Second Passover. There was a group of Jews that were impure. Being impure it was not possible for them to give an animal sacrifice to G-d. This group consisted of the men carrying the coffin with the body of Joseph. They were not impure because of any religious wrongdoing on their part. The parsha makes a joke about this and says, those Jews could have stated how they were off the hook, it wasn't their fault they couldn't give a sacrifice.

They were going to take one for the team and they could have gone to get a drink with each other and done that. They didn't do this and instead they came running to Moses complaining. Those Jews were complaining because they wanted to give G-d the animal sacrifice. They wanted to feel close to Him, they wanted to be connected with Him again. They stamped their feet and G-d heard movement and He heard them. It was their way of saying to G-d that they wanted a second chance. That is where the Second Passover came from. Everything changed when the Jewish people showed Moses how much they wanted it. G-d can tell when we want something so special as in being connected to Him. If we want it He will make it happen.