

Torah Portion Beha'alotcha
Numbers 8:1 – 12:16

The Hebrew word “beha'alotcha” means “when you step up” .

This portion finds the given instructions for the arrangement of the Menorah and the cleansing and dedication of the Levites for service. Yahweh also allows for the observance of a Passover celebration in the second month for those who were unable, for various reasons, to participate in the festivities in the first month. Instructions for the silver trumpets are also given. The children of Israel leave Mt. Sinai and the presence of Yahweh goes with them as a cloud by day and a fire by night.

Shortly after leaving Mt. Sinai the people begin to complain to Moses on several occasions. In chapter 11 we find that Moses becomes very weary with the people and he feels that he cannot hold up under the pressure any longer, for it has become too much for him to carry. In fact, the burden he carries is so heavy that he requests of Yahweh to just take his life for he cannot bear the burden of the complaining people any longer.

How many leaders have fallen prey to this same problem? I have personally seen many leaders fall by the wayside. I have heard it said that “it is lonely at the top”. As human beings we are especially quick to grumble and complain to the person in charge. Do we ever stop and think about the heavy burden that they may carry? Having been a leader myself for many years I can tell you that it is not an easy job! I too have questioned God as to why he placed me in this position of leadership or authority. It would be so much easier just to be a bench warmer and take all my complaints to the leader. Remember, the leader is a human being also! They are subject to weakness and fatigue just like any other person.

I once encountered a Pastor of a very large congregation. He was suffering from severe depression and was thinking about resigning from his pastoral position, of which he had ministered for many, many years. As we talked, and I tried to encourage him, I asked him this question - “brother, have the sheep starting biting you?” His response was immediate laughter! He responded, “yes, they have. I never knew that sheep could bite so hard, they seemed like such gentle animals, but their bites are quite severe”. He then thanked me for that question. He continued, “I have never been asked that before, but it is a perfect scenario.” I'm not sure what he finally decided to do, but I just hope that he was able to overcome and continue with the ministry into which he had been called.

Moses too was feeling the bites of the sheep. They had become quite harsh. Here we find that this great man of God could not take anymore and wanted death over leadership of these horrible biting sheep. God responded to his cry, not with death, but with help.

God instructs Moses to choose out 70 elders from amongst the people. These elders would help Moses in the leadership of the people.

Instead of grumbling and complaining to the Pastor, or leader, wouldn't it be so much better if a person just offered help instead? Help, and most importantly, prayer!

This portion ends with the dissension of Aaron and Miriam. Not only did Moses have to put up with the complaining of the people, but his own brother and sister were now complaining about him. Yahweh took this as a personal affront to Himself. Moses was His chosen instrument. In I Chronicles 16:22 we read: “...touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm”. (KJV)

God dealt with Aaron and Miriam. Wisdom obtained from the Word should speak volumes to us about withholding our wagging tongues. Even David would not go against King Saul but he waited for Yahweh to correct the problem.

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