

## Parashah Beha'alotcha

The one where Moses faces challenges leading people through the desert - and prays for help and receives it.

**The parashah begins with the lighting of the menorah in the Tabernacle**, which is set up by Aaron and his sons.

**The parashah goes on to show how Moses faces challenges as he leads the people.** Some people are unhappy with the manna provided for food and miss the meat they had in Egypt. Moses is burdened by the responsibility of providing for their needs and prays for assistance.

**In response to Moses' prayer for help, he is told to select 70 elders from among the people.** These elders are filled with the divine spirit and join Moses in governing the community, easing his burden.

**Miriam and Aaron, Moses' siblings, also have concerns about Moses' leadership and question why he holds a such authority.** Their criticism leads to a divine confrontation resulting in Miriam getting a skin condition as a punishment.

**Moses intercedes on behalf of Miriam, and after seven days of isolation outside the camp, she is healed and allowed to rejoin the community.** This episode underscores the consequences of challenging the established leadership and the importance of intercession and forgiveness.

**Then quail is provided to satisfy the people's craving for meat, but in their greed, many take advantage and eat too much.** This episode leads to a divine punishment, and a great number of people die because of their gluttony.

Throughout their journey in the wilderness, the Israelites continue to be guided by a divine cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night.

In this parashah, **we witness the challenges and complexities of leadership, the importance of divine guidance, and the consequences of going against Moses** as the Israelites navigate their way through the wilderness.

## Teen Takeaways from Parashah Beha'alotcha

- 1. Leadership and teamwork:** Just like in this story where Moses shared responsibilities, it's essential to learn how to work in a team and trust others to get things done together. So many projects and challenges are too much for one person. Uniting with others gets the job done more efficiently and creates bonds between the people who work together. Becoming b'nai mitzvah requires relying on others like your parents, your friends, your tutors, your teachers, and Hello Haftarah!
- 2. Being a source of light:** The lighting of the menorah is a reminder to be a positive influence and bring light into your own life and the lives of those around you. Most people think of the menorah as connected to Hanukkah. However, the menorah referred to here is a seven-branched one that stood in the ancient Jerusalem Temple. There is a replica of it across from the Knesset, the Israeli government building. It was a gift of the British after the establishment of Israel in 1948. The Hanukkah menorah is called a "Hanukkiah."
- 3. Gratitude and positivity:** Instead of complaining about what you don't have, try to be grateful for what you do have. A positive attitude can make tough situations easier to handle. The Mishnah asks, "Who is rich?" and answers, "The one who is happy with what they have."
- 4. Dealing with family disagreements:** Even family members like Miriam and Aaron disagreed with each other. Remember to be understanding and talk things out when you have conflicts with your siblings or parents. It is quite normal to have disagreements with other family members, especially at your age. We have to learn how to disagree without being disagreeable. Making up and repairing the damage caused by those fights is essential in becoming a responsible adult.
- 5. Overcoming fear and doubt:** When you face challenges, don't let fear or doubt stop you. Believe in yourself and your abilities, just like the Israelites should have done when they were afraid of entering the Promised Land.
- 6. Stay humble:** Humility, or not bragging about yourself, is a good quality. Even if you're good at something, it's important to stay humble and not show off. Let others give you compliments. It feels so much better than self-praise.
- 7. Avoid gossip and apologize:** Gossip and saying mean things about others can hurt people. If you make a mistake, like Miriam did, it's important to say sorry and make amends. Gossip spreads too far, and you can never take it all back.
- 8. The power of prayer:** Prayer can be comforting and help you find strength during tough times. It's okay to ask for help from a higher power or simply take a moment to reflect. Your prayers will help you recognize what you need to do to make things happen. The Hebrew word for prayer is a reflexive one; meaning it is something you do within yourself.
- 9. Seeking guidance:** Just as the Israelites had guidance through the wilderness, it's okay to seek guidance from trusted adults when you're unsure about something in your life. Who are the adults that you trust enough to turn to for guidance?
- 10. Life's journey:** Life is like a journey with ups and downs. Remember that you can overcome challenges and keep moving forward, even when things seem tough.

## Summary

These lessons from Parashah Beha'alotcha can help you navigate your teenage years with **more wisdom and understanding**. They're not just about ancient stories; they can be applied to your everyday life, too.

