

Torah Talk—מאמרי תורה



The Parasha Letter of The Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital

Parasha Beha'alotecha
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פרשת בהעלותך
י"ט בסיון תשע"ו

Torah Reading: *Bemidbar* (Numbers) 8:1-12:16

In this *parasha*, the Bnei Yisrael receive instructions regarding Pesach; they journey forth from Sinai and complain to God on several occasions, provoking God's anger; Miriam and Aaron speak against Moshe.

Chapter 10, verses 1-10 describe the construction of the *chatzotzrot*, the trumpets used in the worship service:

א וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב עֲשֵׂה לָךְ שְׁתֵּי חֲצוֹצְרוֹת כֹּסֶף מְקֻשָּׁה תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם וְהָיוּ לָךְ לַמִּקְרָא הַעֲדָה וּלְמִסַּע אֶת־הַמַּחֲנֹת: ג וְתִקְעוּ בָהֶן וְנוֹעְדוּ אֵלַי כָּל־הַעֲדָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ד וְאִם־בְּאַחַת יִתְקְעוּ וְנוֹעְדוּ אֵלַי הַנְּשִׂאִים רֵאשֵׁי אֲלֹפִי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ה וְתִקְעֶתֶם תְּרוּעָה וְנִסְעוּ הַמַּחֲנֹת הַחֲנִיִּים קִדְמָה: ו וְתִקְעֶתֶם תְּרוּעָה שְׁנִית וְנִסְעוּ הַמַּחֲנֹת הַחֲנִיִּים תַּיִמָּנָה תְּרוּעָה יִתְקְעוּ לְמַסְעֵיהֶם: ז וּבְהִקְהִיל אֶת־הַקְּהָל תִּתְקְעוּ וְלֹא תִרְעִיעוּ: ח וּבְנִי אֶהְרֹן הַכֹּהֵנִים יִתְקְעוּ בַחֲצוֹצְרוֹת וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְחֻקֹּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: ט וְכִי־תִבְאוּ מִלְחָמָה בְּאַרְצְכֶם עַל־הַצָּר הַצָּר אֹתְכֶם וְהִרְעַתֶּם בַּחֲצוֹצְרוֹת וּנְזַכְרְתֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְנוֹשַׁעְתֶּם מֵאִיְבֹיְכֶם: י וּבְיוֹם שִׁמְחַתְּכֶם וּבְמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם וּבְרֵאשֵׁי חֲדָשֵׁיכֶם וְתִקְעֶתֶם בַּחֲצוֹצְרוֹת עַל עֲלִיתֵיכֶם וְעַל זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

1 And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: **2** 'Make two trumpets of silver; of beaten work you should make them; and they shall be to you for the calling of the congregation, and for causing the camps to set forward. **3** And when they shall blow with them, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the door of the tent of meeting. **4** And if they blow with only one, then the princes, the heads of the thousands of Yisrael, shall gather themselves to you. **5** And when you blow an alarm, the camps that lie on the east side shall

take their journey. **6** And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that lie on the south side shall set forward; they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. **7** But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. **8** And the sons of Aharon, the *kohanim*, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for a statute forever throughout your generations. **9** And when you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets; and you shall be remembered before Hashem your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. **10** Also in the day of your gladness, and in your appointed seasons, and in your new moons, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; and they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Hashem your God.'

Many people do not realize that the worship service in the *Beit HaMikdash*, the Temple, consisted of a great deal more than offering animal and grain sacrifices. It contained much pomp and circumstance, singing, mostly by the *Levi'im* [Levites], and what amounted to a full orchestra, including the *chatzotzrot* described above.

The Talmud in *Masechet* [Tractate] *Arachin*, chapter 2, describes some of the rules surrounding the orchestration:

Mishnah 3. They blew never less than twenty-one blasts in the sanctuary and never more than forty-eight. They played never on less than two harps, or more than six, nor ever on less than two flutes or more than twelve. On twelve days in the year was the flute [halil] played before the altar: at the offering of the first Passover sacrifice, at the offering of the second Passover sacrifice, on the first festival day of Passover, on the festival day of the feast of weeks, and on the eight days of the feast [of tabernacles]. And they did not play on a pipe [abub] of bronze but on a reed pipe, because its tune is sweeter. Nor was any but a pipe solo used for closing a tune. Because it makes a pleasant finale.

Mishnah 5. ...there were never less than two trumpets and their number could be increased into infinity. There were never less than nine lyres, and their number could be increased into infinity. But there was only one cymbal.

Mishnah 6. There were never less than twelve Levites standing on the platform and their number could be increased into infinity. No minor could enter the court of the sanctuary to take part in the service except when the

Levites stood up to sing. Nor did they join in the singing with harp and lyre, but with the mouth alone, to add flavor to the music.

Musical instruments, such as those used in the *Beit HaMikdash*, date back to almost the creation of the world. Chapter 4 in *Bereshit* [Genesis] tells us:

כֹּא וַתֵּלֶד עָדָה, אֶת-יָבֵל : הוּא הִיָּה--אָבִי, יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶל וּמִקְנָה. כ וְשֵׁם אָחִיו, יוֹבֵל :
הוּא הִיָּה--אָבִי, כָּל-תַּפֵּשׁ כְּנֹר וְעֹגֵב.

20 And Adah bore Yaval; he was the father [developer] of such as dwell in tents and have cattle. **21** And his brother's name was Yuval; he was the father [creator] of all such as handle the harp and pipe.

Interestingly enough, the text goes on (verse 22): “--וְצִלָּה גַם-הוּא, יָלְדָה אֶת-תּוּבַל קַיִן--” -- “And Tzillah, she also bore Tubal-cayin, the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron...”

This juxtaposition of the invention of instruments of music and potential instruments of war is not coincidental. I believe that it comes to teach us that each of us makes decisions in our life how to use the raw materials given to us. We can take metal and create, for example, a flute, in order to fill the world with music. Conversely, we can take the same metal and forge a bomb, in order to fill the world with chaos and destruction. God gives us the raw materials; how we decide to utilize them on this earth is up to us.

May you all have a Shabbat filled with uplifting music!

Shabbat Shalom.

For Discussion:

- Paint a verbal picture of what the worship service in the *Beit HaMikdash* may have looked like, sounded like, and felt like.
- What kind of music do you like? Why do you think music exists in the world?
- If you were given a piece of metal, what would you create and why?