

Torah: B'midbar (Numbers) 8:1 – 12:16
Haftarah: Z'kharyah (Zechariah) 2:14-4:7
B'rit Hadashah: Hebrews 3:1-14

	yr. 1 8:1-9:14	yr 2 9:15-10:34	yr 3 10:35-12:16
1	8:1 – 4	9:15 – 18	10:1 – 9
2	8:5 – 9	9:19 – 23	11:10 – 18
3	8:10 – 14	10:1 – 7	11:19 – 22
4	8:15 – 22	10:8 – 10	11:23 – 29
5	8:23 – 26	10:11 – 20	11:30 – 35
6	9:1 – 8	10:21 – 28	12:1 – 13
7	9:9 – 14	10:32 – 34	12:14 – 16

Speak to Aharon and say to him
 when causing the lights to go up
 in front of [the] face of the menorah
 the seven lights shall give light

*daber el Aharón ve'amartá
 elav be'ha'alot'kha et-ha'nerot
 el-mul p'néy ha'menoráh
 ya'iru shivat ha'nerot*

דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ
 אֵלָיו בְּהַעֲלֹתָהּ אֶת-הַנֵּרוֹת
 אֶל-מֹול פְּנֵי הַמְּנוֹרָה
 יֵאָרִו שִׁבְעַת הַנֵּרוֹת:

This portion addresses an assortment of issues. It includes instruction to Aharon regarding the menorah, and the L'vi'im (the tribe of Levi) being separated from the rest of the people for service in the Temple, replacing the firstborn of Israel. It also speaks of keeping the Passover in the wilderness at the beginning of the second year after leaving Egypt. It speaks of a cloud and fire that covered the Tabernacle during their journey, and the creation and use of silver trumpets for communication. Instances of rebelliousness arise through complaints regarding food, and Aharon and Miryam complain about Moshe, their younger brother, being favored over them.

The Haftarah speaks about a lampstand, just as the Torah portion began by speaking of the lampstand. It also speaks of a high priest in filthy garments being clothed in fresh garments, just as the Torah portion speaks of cleansing the Levites.

Year 1 Aliyah Highlights

- Nu. 8:1-4** The seven lamps (*nerot* – נֵרוֹת) of the menorah (מְנוֹרָה) are to focus their light (*or* – אֹור) in front of the lamps. This was not included in the original instructions (Ex. 25:31). Aharon was so instructed, and so he did.
- Nu. 8:5-9** The Levites (l'vi'im – לְוִיִּים) were cleansed and presented at the tabernacle and the people assembled.
- Nu. 8:10-14** The people laid hands on them, and Aharon offered them as a wave offering – they belonged to HaShem, separated from the people for his service. They in turn laid their hands on the bulls for sin and burnt offerings.
- Nu. 8:15-22** HaShem set apart for himself the firstborn of Israel when he struck the firstborn of Egypt. The Levites now took the place of the firstborn
- Nu. 8:23-26** Age limits for Levitical duties are established. Starting age of 25 differs from 30 in the census (Nu. 4:3, 23, 30) and postexilic writings (e.g. 1Ch. 23:3, Ezr. 2:36-40). Here are some harmonization attempts: Septuagint reads “25” for all references; rabbis, including the sect at Qumran (clearly Masoretic text) conjecture a five-year training period from age 25 to 30. Another possibility is the changing work profile when transporting the Tabernacle was no longer required.
- Nu. 9:1-8** Preparations for departure from Sinai, similar to departure from Egypt, begins with the observance of Passover. Sinai was about receiving/accepting HaShem's laws. Moving into the promised land is about observing them and fulfilling the covenant. A particular circumstance (contact with the

dead) that prevents some from this observance is brought to Moshe. They are told to stand by (*imdu* – עִמְדוּ).

7. **Nu. 9:9-14** HaShem responds to Moshe with allowance for a second Passover date, and a second reason for exemption: being away on a long journey. How long is not specified. In addition, another category of participants, foreigners (*ger/gerim* – גֵּר / גֵּרִים), is given. There's so much more – ask for it!

Thought Focus

The foreigner (Nu. 9:14): Israel is considered a *ger* (Le. 25:23), as could be the Levites in this portion, separated from the other tribes. Foreigners have always attached themselves to the God of Israel (e.g. Ex. 12:38, 48, Ruth), and have been considered in community life (Ex. 12:48, Le. 24:22, Nu. 9:14, 14-16, 15:15, 35:15) Ultimately, serving HaShem is open to all (Is. 56:7). It is an issue of the heart, and he will always honor anyone with a listening heart (1Ki. 3:9). Postbiblical rabbinics will reinterpret *ger* as “converts.”

Grace: In other religions of the day, being on a journey was not excusable, and therefore subject to punishment. HaShem honors those who seek to worship him in spirit and in truth.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

- (8:2) Has the unquenchable fire of the *Ruach Ha Kodesh* (Holy Spirit) been raised up to burn brightly in your life? (Eze 21:3-4 CJB (20:47-48 other versions), Joh 6:40, 2Co 4:6-10, Mat 5:14-16)
- (8:15) How have you been “set apart for holiness by means of the truth (Joh 17:16-17)? (Num 8:6-14, Rom 12:1-2, Joh 17:6-19, 1Jo 2:15-17)
- (9:2) Who set the “appointed times?” What is their purpose? Are they relevant for you today? (Lev 23:2, Ecc 3:1, Exo 29:38-46, Mat 12:1-8)
- (9:16) Does God's glory dwell in you? If so, is it revealed in you for others to see, or is it obscured by the “clouds” of your life? (Exo 40:38, 2Ch 7:3, Eze 1:27-28, Dan 9:17-19, Joh 1:14, Act 6:15, 2Co 4:6-10)
- (10:11) Are you prepared to pick up and begin moving forward when God tells you it is time for something new? (Exo 40:36-38, Num 9:18, Num 10:13, Isa 42:9, 43:18-19, 48:6, Mat 16:21, Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22)
- (10:35) This verse along with Mic 4:2 and Isa 2:3 are part of synagogue liturgy when the Torah is taken out of the Ark for reading. Does God's Word in you cause the enemy to flee?? (Psa 83:3-4, Isa 51:9-11, Psa 110:1-2, Jer 15:16, Mat 12:30, 2Co 4:2, Heb 4:12)
- (12:13) Moshe's prayer is heart-felt honest and simple. What is your prayer life like? (Psa 30:2-4(1-3), Jer 17:14, Gen 18:23-32, Mat 6:5-7, Mark 12:40, Luk 11:1-4, 22:42-44, 23:34, Jam 5:16)