

Beha'alotecha 5786

Numbers Rabbah 15:21

When Moses ascended, he stipulated with Israel that he would descend at the end of forty days. When he tarried in descending, as it is stated: "The people saw that Moses tarried [*boshesh*] in descending" (Exodus 32:1), and *boshesh* is nothing other than an expression of tarrying, as it is stated: "Why does his chariot tarry [*boshesh*] to arrive, why are the hoofbeats of his chariot late" (Judges 5:28), all Israel entered to the elders and said to them: 'Moses stipulated that he would descend at the end of forty days. It is now six hours later and he has not descended and we do not know what became of him. "Rise, craft for us a god that will go before us, as this [*ki zeh*] man, Moses, who took us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him"' (Exodus 32:1). When they [the elders] heard this, they said to them: 'Why are you provoking the One who performed all those miracles and wonders on your behalf?' They did not heed them and they killed them.

Bechor Shor on Numbers 11:1

"Like mourners." They were mourning like mourners over a deceased, for they were short-spirited and grieving because the Lord desired to bring them into the land and they would go to war, as they were fearful and lacking in faith."

Rashi on Numbers 10:29

WE ARE JOURNEYING UNTO THE PLACE — Immediately — within three days — we shall enter the Land of Canaan. They said this, because on this first journey after leaving Sinai they really set out with a view to entering the Land of Israel, only that they sinned at the incident of "those who complained" which prevented their further progress (Numbers 11:1). — But why did Moses include himself with them in the statement "we are journeying" to enter the land? Because the decree that he should not enter it had not yet been made regarding him, and he was yet under the belief that he would enter (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 78:3).

Rashi on Numbers 11:1

[AND THE FIRE ... DESTROYED THEM THAT WERE] IN THE EXTREMITY OF THE CAMP — i.e. those amongst them who were extreme in baseness — these were "the mixed multitude". But R. Simeon the son of Manassia said: it means that the fire

consumed the most distinguished and prominent ones among them (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 85 and Rashi's two explanations of ומקצה אחיו on Genesis 47:2).

Chizkuni on Numbers 11:1

“And the Lord’s fire raged among them;” this was a punishment fitting the crime, as they had dared to look at the glory of the Lord which is also known as fire, i.e. אש אוכלת, Exodus 24,17. They had already been warned not to do this in Exodus chapter 24. Rashi explained this in connection with Exodus 24,10.

Exodus 24:9-10

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel ascended; and they saw the God of Israel—under whose feet was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire, like the very sky for purity.

Ohr HaChaim on Exodus 24:11

And G'd did not lay a hand on the nobles of the children of Israel; Why did the Torah have to make mention of בני ישראל? If the Torah had merely written: "He did not lay a hand on them," I would have known already that the subject of the verse are the elders who were mentioned in the previous verse. Perhaps the Torah wanted us to know that the reason why G'd did not lay a hand on these people at that time was that they were "the nobles of the children of Israel." Alternatively, G'd did not want to spoil the prevailing spiritual high and joy of the people by killing so many of their leaders at that time and causing them to be mourned (compare *Bamidbar Rabbah* 15).

Leviticus 10:1-2

Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his fire pan, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before GOD alien fire—which had not been enjoined upon them.

And fire came forth from GOD and consumed them; thus they died by GOD's will.