

Torah Weekly

June 5-11, 2022
6-12 Sivan, 5782

Torah Reading:
Naso: Numbers 4:21 - 7:89
Haftarah:
Judges 13:2-25

PARSHAT NASO

Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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ALEPH INSTITUTE
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

Individual and Community

Does the individual ever feel lost in relation to the broad needs of the community? Jewish law provides us with teachings concerning the detailed organization of our lives. There is no doubt that if properly carried out, these create a communal or even global atmosphere of great beauty and harmony. But what about me as an individual? Where am I?

The liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt had several goals. One was that they should receive the Torah on Mount Sinai. This took place seven weeks after the Exodus. Another was that they should build the Sanctuary, the prototype of the Temple. This was carried out some time later under close instruction from Moses.

After months of work, finally it was ready. On the first of Nissan, fifty weeks after leaving Egypt, the dedication of the Sanctuary began. It lasted twelve days, and every day was marked by a beautiful ceremony, conducted in turn by the *nasi* ("prince") of each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

As described in the [Torah \(Numbers 7:12-83\)](#), each day the prince of one of the Tribes brought a magnificent gift to G-d, as a personal offering from his

own possessions. Every gift included a large silver platter, a silver bowl, and a golden spoon filled with incense, and a number of cattle for offerings. In memory of the fact that these gifts were brought during the first twelve days of Nissan, in some communities the relevant passage in the Torah is recited each day.¹

The Lubavitcher Rebbe points out an interesting feature in this episode.² Although each prince brought an identical gift, the Midrash explains that each one had a different intention in his choice. There was a symbolic meaning in the weights of the platter, the bowl and the spoon, and in the number of different kinds of cattle. But for each Prince although the gift was exactly the same, the symbolic meaning was different.³

There is a teaching of the Sages that just as everyone's face is different, so our ideas and approach to life are different.⁴ Yet G-d demands what looks like a uniform contribution from all of us. Every Jew must keep all the 613 Commandments, every non-Jew must keep all the seven Noahide laws. Like that of the princes, our "gifts" to G-d seem identical.

At the same time everyone has a unique contribution without which the world

would be lacking. The specific meaning of the details, their inner dimension, is where this individual contribution is expressed. For example, when a person prays he or she is saying the same words as everyone else, but each person's thoughts during the prayer are private and their own.

The episode of the princes teaches us that in the global responsibility of Judaism no individual need feel lost. Everyone is uniquely important; indeed, each person, man or woman, is crucial for the fulfillment of G-d's plan for the world.

By Tali Leowenthal Journey Toward Peace

It's hard to be spiritual in a material world. Our possessions come to possess us; we can't put down our smartphones or that last piece of chocolate cake. We can spend years working to achieve success in a career, in a relationship or in any other worthy pursuit, and then throw it all away for a foolish, temporary temptation.

So how do we achieve harmony in our lives? How do we get to a place where there is no conflict between our spiritual goals and our physical needs?

In the portion of Naso, the Torah teaches us how to move from spiritual folly to inner peace. It does so by describing three laws: 1)

the “wayward woman”; 2) the nazirite; 3) the priestly blessing, which concludes with the blessing for peace.

First the [Torah](#) describes the law of the “wayward woman.” The Hebrew word for “wayward” (*sotah*) is related to the word for “foolishness” (*shutut*). The Talmud states, “A person does not commit a transgression unless the spirit of folly enters him.” Thus, the *sotah* personifies the person who acts against his or her better judgment as a result of great temptation.

To discover how to overcome the state of the *sotah*, we look to the next portion, the portion of the [nazirite](#), which when understood correctly is the secret to achieving the inner spiritual harmony described in the priestly blessing.

The nazirite—the man or woman who takes a vow to temporarily refrain from drinking wine, cutting hair and becoming ritually impure—is referred to as “holy.” Yet, paradoxically, the Torah teaches that at the conclusion of the [nazirite](#) period he or she must offer a sin offering. This implies that although the choice to become a nazirite was the right choice for that person at that specific time, and thus a holy choice, the nazirite way of life is not the preferred one.¹

In Torah’s ideal model of holiness, the human being engages with the physical world and imbues it with spirituality, creating peace between body and soul. But occasionally, in order to achieve this ideal state of holiness, a person may have to take the path of the nazirite. If one wants to ensure that he is in control, that the wine, chocolate cake or smartphone will indeed enhance his spiritual life, then sometimes he first has to disengage. He has to demonstrate that he can survive for a period of time without dependence on the specific material possession.

After refraining from drinking wine for 30 days, the nazirite can return to the consumption of wine while still maintaining his holiness. Through undergoing the process of the nazirite, one can be holy while engaged in the world. He can use his possessions as tools to attain his spiritual goals, not detract from them.

The Torah provides the roadmap to journey from *sotah* to nazirite to the priestly blessing—from folly to control to peace and harmony.

By Rabbi Menachem Feldman

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Sunday, June 5, 2022 --- 6 Sivan, 5782

Torah Given (1313 BCE)

On the 6th Sivan of the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), seven weeks after the Exodus, G-d revealed Himself on Mount Sinai. The entire people of Israel (600,000 heads of households and their families), as well as the souls of all future generations of Jews, heard G-d declare the first two of the Ten Commandments and witnessed G-d's communication of the other eight through Moses. Following the revelation, Moses ascended the mountain for 40 days, to receive the remainder of the Torah from G-d.

At Sinai, G-d rescinded the "decree" and "divide" (*gezeirah*) that had been in force since the 2nd day of creation separating the spiritual and the physical into two hermetic worlds; from this point on, "the higher realms could descend into the lower realms, and the lower could ascend to the higher." Thus was born the "mitzvah" -- a physical deed that, by virtue of the fact that it is commanded by G-d, brings G-dliness into the physical world.

Passing of King David (837 BCE)

David, a descendent of Judah the son of Jacob as well as of Ruth, a Moabite convert to Judaism, was anointed King of Israel by Samuel in 878 BCE. All future legitimate kings of Israel were David's descendents, as will be Moshiach (the messiah), who will "restore the kingdom of David to its glory of old." David fought many wars, defeating Israel's enemies and securing and expanding its borders. He conquered Jerusalem, purchased the Temple Mount from its Yebusite owner, and prepared the foundation for the Holy Temple (which was built by his son, King Solomon). David served as the head of the *Sanhedrin* and the foremost Torah authority of his generation; he is also the "sweet singer of Israel" who composed the Book of Psalms that for 28 centuries has embodied the joys, sorrows and yearnings of the Jewish people.

King David passed away on the 6th of Sivan of the year 837 BCE, age 70.

Passing of Baal Shem Tov (1760)

In 1734, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov ("BeSHT", 1698-1760), who up until that time had lived as a hidden tzaddik, began to publicly disseminate his teachings. While adding nothing "new" to Judaism, he re-emphasized truths and doctrines that had been buried under the hardships of exile: the immense love that G-d has for every Jew, the cosmic significance of every mitzvah a person performs, the divine meaningfulness that resides in every blade of grass, in every event, and in every thought in the universe. He spoke to the downtrodden masses and to the aloof scholars, giving meaning to their existence, and thus joy, and thus life. Many disciples came to imbibe the "inner soul" of Torah from him, and the new movement came to be known as "Chassidism."

Rabbi Israel passed away on the 6th of Sivan of 1760, and was succeeded (one year later, on the first anniversary of his passing) by his disciple, Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch.

Monday, June 6, 2022 --- 7 Sivan, 5782

Ger Tzedek of Vilna Burned at the Stake (1749)

Avraham ben Avraham, the famed "Ger Tzedek" (Righteous Convert) of Vilna, was born as Valentin Potozki, the son of Count Potocki, one of the richest landowners in Poland. As a student in Vilna he discovered Judaism and decided to convert -- a capital offense in most countries in Christian Europe at the time. He fled to Amsterdam where he secretly converted to Judaism, assuming the name Avraham ben Avraham ("Abraham the son of Abraham").

Years later he returned to Vilna, where he was eventually recognized as the missing son of Count Potocki and arrested by the church. He refused to renounce his faith and was sentenced to death. He was burned at the stake in Vilna on the 2nd day of Shavuot of 1749.

Friday, June 10, 2022 --- 11 Sivan, 5782

Rebbe's Parents Wed (1900)

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory's, parents, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson (1878-1944) and Rebbetzin Chana Yanovsky (1880-1964) were married on the 11th of Sivan, 1900. Their oldest son, Menachem Mendel, was born two years later, on the 11th of Nissan of 1902.