



Dedicated in memory of Rachel Leah bat R' Chaim Tzvi

אמר תורה WOMEN'S TORAH WEEKLY

Volume I, number 10

Brought to you by Naaleh.com

PLEASE NOTE: For the next few weeks, there will be different Parshiot read in Eretz Yisrael and Chutz L'Aretz (the Diaspora). To accommodate all of our members, we have included one article on each Parsha.

Parshat Nasso - THE TWELVE TRIBES: A MODEL OF DIVERSITY

(this Parsha is read outside of Israel this week)
Based on a Naaleh.com class by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summarized by Channie Koplowitz Stein

Parshat Nasso is the exception to the rule that the Torah always uses terse language. The Torah devotes seventy-two verses to what could easily be said in six. The Torah could have listed the names of the heads of each tribe, and then stated that each one brought the same offering for the dedication of the Tabernacle. Instead, the Torah devotes six verses to each tribe. The first states the name of the tribe and its leader. But then the Torah recounts the exact same offering for each tribe for an additional five verses per tribe. The Torah goes one step further; it summarizes in five more verses the total gifts received.

This verbosity seems to contrast and also complement another time the twelve tribes are listed individually, in *Parshat Vayechi*. There Jacob blesses his twelve sons, the progenitors of the twelve tribes in our current discussion. Jacob starts by giving an umbrella blessing that covers all the tribes, "Let me tell you what will be at the end of days." But he then individualizes the blessings so that each son receives a different blessing. By comparing these two parts of the Torah, we will gain insight into some of the values the Torah teaches.

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. However, each part is important. Without any given part the whole would be incomplete, and possibly even useless. In

our study of these two sections of the Torah, we will understand how this duality expresses itself within *Bnei Yisrael*.

Let us start with the story of Jacob blessing his sons. Each son seems to receive an individualized blessing. But did Jacob really bestow twelve different blessings? Are they rather twelve interpretations of one blessing?

A blessing is the wish that an innate potential become realized. If we are each unique, then each of us must be blessed differently. But Jacob understood that when an individual knows his talents and shortcomings, he can contribute effectively to the collective. So while the particular trait Jacob focused on for each tribe was different, his message to each was the same: "Embrace your unique nature. Now, utilize these distinct characteristics to serve the larger community." Our diversity gives each of us a special place and makes each of us a unique component of the whole.

This idea, but in reverse, explains the repetitions of the tribal offerings. While physically the offerings were identical, each man brought his own thoughts and emotions to the process. Each offering was brought with the same mindset of contributing to the service, yet each was unique.

There was one more important aspect to

these offerings. While each leader brought one ox for a total of twelve oxen, each contributed to only half a wagon for a total of six wagons. The message is clear. Each offering was incomplete without partnering with another. Each tribe had to hitch his ox to a wagon in partnership with another tribe's ox. Otherwise his own gift would be useless. No one tribe has everything necessary for the fulfillment of our mission. No one Jew can complete the task of Judaism on his own. We must join together with our fellow Jews.

We are all individual parts of the greater entity of *Kneset Yisrael*, the collective Jewish Soul. Instead of looking askance at a fellow Jew whose customs differ from our own, who wears a different head covering, or dresses differently, or makes a different cholent, we should embrace the beauty of the diversity of our heritage. We each serve the same God, but with our own unique history and talents.

We are one, emanating from one holy place, and emerging as many individuals. We should not be judgmental, but embrace and respect our diversity. As the offerings of the tribal leaders teach us, and as Jacob our forefather understood, we can only achieve unity through loving our diversity. Only then can all our offerings be dedicated to His service.

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Aharon's Unique Mission

(this Parsha is read in Eretz Yisrael this week)
Based on a Naaleh.com shiur on Chassidut by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

On the first verse in *Parshat Beha'alotcha*, Rashi asks, how is the mitzvah of lighting the *menorah* related the idea of *chanukat hanesi'im* (the offerings of the Tribal leaders as described in *Parshat Nasso*). He answers that when Aharon felt regret that his tribe had not been included in the first ceremony of the *Mishkan*, Hashem comforted him by telling him that the *kohanim* (priests) would have a greater share in the service of the Temple through

the *mitzvah* of lighting the *menorah*. The Ramban questions why Aharon, who held the important position of High Priest, was disappointed to begin with. Additionally, why did Hashem choose the lighting of the *menorah*, among all the other important work that Aharon did in the Temple, to placate him?

The Shem MiShmuel answers that the two fundamental pillars of the human personality are the heart, the seat of emotion; and the

mind, the center of intellect. There are seven *middot* (character traits) that encompass the emotional makeup of a Jew: *chesed*, *gevurah*, *rachamim*, *netzach*, *hod*, *yesod*, and *malchut*. Perfecting ourselves through these seven levels is the key to character development and to becoming a master over the heart and emotions. The eighth level represents the power of the mind and the intellect. Aharon's primary function was

continues on next page...

אִמֶּר WOMEN'S TORAH WEEKLY

Parshat Beha'alotcha - Aharon's Unique Mission - Continued

(this Parsha is read in Eretz Yisrael this week)

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur on Chassidut by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

in the realm of the heart. He was the quintessential master of *shalom* – a state where all seven levels work in perfect harmony. He wore the breastplate on his heart, and functioned as the heart of Israel. The role of the priests in the *Mishkan* was also of the heart – perfecting the *middot*. In contrast, the twelve princes represented the mind – think tank of Israel. They were selected because of their outstanding Torah scholarship and great intellectual prowess.

The seven days of the *chanukat hamishkan* represent the seven *middot*. The *avodah* of Aharon and the *kohanim* in the *Mishkan* was to make this sanctuary a place where the Divine presence could rest, and a place of *ahavat Hashem*, a place where man's personality could achieve perfection. The Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim* writes that prophecy begins with *middot tovo*. The *shechina* can only rest in a person who has a good heart. Indeed, the

shechina revealed itself during the first seven days of the *chanukat hamishkan* in the merit of the *middot* of Aharon.

The Maharal explains that the numbers eight through ten represent the mind, which is divided into 3 parts: *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*. This corresponds to intellectual knowledge, understanding, and inspiration to create. The Shem MiShmuel writes that the heart and mind must function in consonance with each other. Therefore it is written that on the eighth day, Moshe called a meeting with Aharon, the *kohanim* and the elders of Israel and adjured them to work together so that the Divine Presence would continue to rest in the *Mishkan*.

When Aharon saw that his primary function was of the heart and not of the mind, he felt a twinge of regret. Therefore, Hashem comforted him with the *mitzvah* of the *menorah*. The *menorah* and olive oil represent the light and

wisdom of Torah. Hashem hinted to him that in the future his children, the *kohanim*, would become the prime Torah leaders of Israel, in addition to remaining paragons of proper *middot*. The *Chanukah* miracle led by Mattityahu Kohen Gadol, was a victory of *da'at* – the intellect of Torah- over Greek culture and philosophy.

The Rebbe, Reb Bunim M'Peshischa said that the destruction of the Temple shattered every aspect of Jewish life, except Torah learning. During our long exile, the Jewish people have produced a long line of great Torah scholars and sages. A great percentage of these sages were *kohanim*, notably the Chofetz Chaim. The Shem MiShmuel concludes that Hashem reassured Aharon, "Your focus is now is on the heart, but eventually it will encompass the mind too. Then your children will teach Torah to the Jewish people for eternity."

Rebbetzin's Perspective Part 8:

Excerpted from Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller's Question and Answer series on Naaleh.com

Question:

I feel frozen and incapable of going about my life in a meaningful way because of all the critical comments and opinions I keep getting from people. What can I do to feel free enough to be myself without worrying about all the people who are watching and judging me?

Answer:

Don't delude yourself into thinking that there is true anonymity in this world. You are constantly being observed and evaluated. There is not a moment in which you can escape this reality. The one who is watching you is Hashem. He is a

concerned, loving, caring, Father who is aware of every place you've been, everything you do, and all that you have suffered. Once you internalize this, the fact that other people see you and pass judgment on you becomes insignificant. I recall the time when I was first asked by students if they could tape my classes. At first I was hesitant, but then when I remembered that I would see and hear all this in the end anyway, I realized it was not that bad if other people heard it too. Don't be so overwhelmed by other people. They cannot see what is not there, and what is there, you will have to account for anyway in the end. Sometimes people's responses can help us set ourselves straight because they see us

from a different angle than we see ourselves. For example, if someone comments on your religious level, let your inner life be your guide on that. It is unlikely that people will see you with more scrutiny than the *Shulchan Aruch* or the *Mussar* masters. You have to grow to be who you want to be, but if you find that what you are doing is constantly offensive to other people, you have to ask yourself, "Am I doing this right?" "Am I being a *ba'al machloket* or acting insensitively?" When faced with criticism, you need to be strong enough to ask yourself, "Is this true?" and if it is, internalize it, fix it, and move on.

Class Spotlight: Contemporary Halacha — Shabbat Kiddush-Class 14

Rabbi Michael Taubes

Rabbi Michael Taubes received semicha from RIETS and a Masters in Jewish Education from Yeshiva University. He is the co-editor of Artscroll's Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Machzor on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. Currently, Rabbi Taubes is the Rabbi of Congregation Zichron Mordechai in Teaneck, teaches in Yeshiva University and is an author and editor for Artscroll.

In this course on Contemporary Halacha, Rabbi Taubes presents relevant halachic topics in a well-researched, clear, and engaging manner. Rabbi Taubes' comprehensive lectures examine select topics in halacha beginning from the relevant verses in the Torah, following through to the halachic sources from the Talmud up to contemporary poskim (halachic authorities) of today.

The *Mitzva* of *Kiddush* has both Torah-mandated and Rabbinically required aspects. The Noda B'Yehuda poses an interesting question in his *sefer*, *Dagul Mervava*. Women are obligated *m'doraita* (by Torah) in *kiddush* as men are. A man technically fulfills his obligation of *kiddush m'doraita* in the *shemonai esrai* of *maariv*. Reciting the formal *kiddush* over wine later before the Shabbat meal is only rabbinically mandated. Therefore, a woman who has not prayed *Maariv*, still has a Torah mandated obligation of *kiddush*. Can her husband be *motzi* her with his *kiddush*? Rabbi Akiva Eiger, possibly basing himself on the Ramban in *Parshat Yitro* that maintains that the essence of *kiddush* is acknowledging that it is Shabbat, holds that the *mitzvah m'doraita* of *kiddush* can be fulfilled just by wishing someone "Good Shabbos." Therefore, according to his view, a woman who wishes her husband "Good Shabbos" upon his return from shul, has fulfilled her Torah mandated obligation of *kiddush*. However, the Mishna Berura disagrees with this view and maintains that according to the Rambam, the *mitzvah* of *kiddush* must include the remembrance of Shabbat, but also praise of Hashem. Therefore, according to the Mishna Berura, saying "Good Shabbos" would not exempt a woman from her Torah mandated obligation of *kiddush*.