

LAMPLIGHTER

11 Sivan
Parshas
Naso
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Naso, describes the offerings that the twelve tribal leaders of Israel brought for the altar, beginning on the day the Tabernacle was consecrated. On each tribe's appointed day, its leader brought a gift.

The Torah, normally sparing in its use of words, enumerates every detail of each tribe's offering, even though all the gifts were exactly the same.

The Torah is not a history book, recording events that occurred long ago. Its teachings are relevant to each person in every generation. What, then, can we learn from the repetition of the exact same offerings twelve times?

There are twelve different paths by which a Jew can become closer to G-d, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel. Each tribe followed a unique path in its service of G-d. Each leader dedicated the offerings according to his own manner of spiritual service.

Despite the uniqueness of each offering, and the spiritual path which each represented, they were considered to be communal offerings. They were brought, not on behalf of the individual, but on behalf of all the Jewish people. It is for this reason, explains the Midrash, that the Torah does not distinguish whose offering was brought on which day.

This juxtaposition of the uniqueness of the individual and the equality of the collective whole is mirrored in the fact that the tribal leaders' spiritual intentions were unique while the actual physical offerings were the same. This is also true of the Jewish people; each Jew is unique, and yet all Jews are equal.

There are certain qualities which all Jews share equally, and, there are also other qualities within each Jew which are uniquely personal. However, even the uniquely personal qualities can lead to unity among the Jewish people.

How so? When Jews realize that all Jews need each other, and that only by binding ourselves with our fellow Jew can we be complete.

The dedication gifts from the tribal leaders were offered in a similar manner. Each leader brought his tribe's gift in a unique way on a separate day. However, each of these offerings was imbued with, and accompanied by, the feeling that this offering was also a communal offering—united with all the other leaders and tribes.

Journey Toward Peace

By Menachem Feldman

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" (shtut). The Talmud states, "A person does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of folly enters him." Thus, the sotah personifies the person who acts against their 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 they 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.

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.

Slice of LIFE

“I want you to smile”

I grew up in the Bronx, in a religious home. Although my parents were not affiliated with any chasidic group or movement, they sent me to a local Jewish day school which just happened to be operated by Chabad-Lubavitch. It was called the Bronx Lubavitch Yeshiva, and it accepted students from all walks in life.

While attending this school, I had the opportunity – when I was nine years old – to come for a Shabbaton in Crown Heights. This was my first introduction to what Chabad was all about. It was also the first time that I spend a night away from home, and I remember very vividly the dormitory experience – staying up the whole night, playing games and drinking green soda.

The Shabbaton concluded with a Farbrengen at the Chabad Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, by which time I was completely exhausted, having not slept for nearly 40 hours. The Rebbe started to speak – he was speaking Yiddish, which I understood because my parents spoke Yiddish at home – but I just couldn't stay awake. I started nodding off.

Suddenly, I felt jolted awake, and I found myself staring straight into the Rebbe's blue eyes. And he announced, “The boys from the Bronx should sing a niggun!”

That was my first encounter with the Rebbe.

Not long after, I switched schools and enrolled at the Chabad Yeshiva in Brooklyn. During those years, it was a custom for the yeshiva boys to have an audience with the Rebbe on their birthday, and I remember going in once and confiding in the Rebbe about something I had done wrong. Rabbi Yoel Kahan, my mentor in the yeshiva, had told me, “You can tell the Rebbe anything. If you did something wrong, tell him and he will advise you what tikkun you must make, how you can make it right. Ask him for advice, and he will help you.”

So I did. And the Rebbe's response showed me his human side. He was so very compassionate. He didn't exactly

say, “It's nothing what you did – don't worry about it,” but he was very reassuring. I was just a naïve kid and that was exactly what I needed. I felt a personal connection with him at that moment – I felt understood totally. The Rebbe understood what I needed to hear, and his reassurance and his kindness meant the world to me. Here I was pouring out all my issues to him – which, in retrospect, looking back as an adult, were not big issues. But, back then, they were big to me.

The Rebbe had that special ability to see me for who I was at that stage – with so much empathy – as he could see everyone who came to him, at whatever stage they were in their lives.

By the time my Bar Mitzvah arrived, I decided that I wanted to observe all the Chabad customs. I planned to put on Chabad tefillin and to pray from the siddur according to the nusach Ari.

Just before my Bar Mitzvah, I had my birthday audience with the Rebbe, and he asked me about my preparations. I answered that I had learned to chant the Torah portion of the week as well as the Haftarah. And that I also had a Talmudic pilpul prepared.

“What about the maamar – the chasidic discourse?” the Rebbe asked.

I didn't know what to say. I was thinking to myself, “What maamar? I don't know any maamar.” I had no idea that there was a Chabad custom to deliver a maamar. Nobody had told me.

As if reading my thoughts, the Rebbe said, “Well, if you didn't learn any maamar, you can get a copy of one and just read it on the day of your Bar Mitzvah.”

So now I was thinking to myself, “Read it where? Who in my parents' synagogue, Young Israel of the Bronx, is going to understand a chasidic discourse?”

And once more the Rebbe responded as if reading my thoughts, “You don't have to do it in public. You can just give it over to a friend.”

And that is what I did.

By the time I was in the twelfth grade, I considered myself a total Lubavitcher, and I was completely immersed in chasidic studies. I wanted to continue, but my parents were adamant that I should go to college. That was the American dream, after all.

Because of the pressure from them, I

did register at Brooklyn College, and I took the test for the state scholarship, which I was awarded. But I didn't want to go, and I desperately tried to get an appointment with the Rebbe, so that he could convince my parents of the right path for me. But I was told that there was a six month wait – the Rebbe was that busy. Finally, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe about my situation and, shortly after, I was notified that, despite the backlog, I was to come right over with parents.

My mother was a plain-spoken woman. She told the Rebbe, “You yourself went to college, so it must be all right.”

The Rebbe replied, “I was much older then – twenty-six already. At his age, he needs to study in yeshiva at least two more years.”

“But he will lose his scholarship,” my mother argued.

The Rebbe said, “Don't worry, if he loses his scholarship, I'll pay for his education, if need be ... if he still wants it.” My mother reluctantly gave in. And then, all of a sudden, the Rebbe said to her,

“I want you to smile.”

His request was so unexpected that it was funny. And she couldn't help but smile.

Then the Rebbe said, “Now that you're smiling, you can go. I want people to be happy when they leave here.”

It was a very personal and wonderful touch.

Truth be told, my mother wasn't happy that I opted not to go to college. But in later years, when she saw that I did just fine in life without going to college, she conceded that the path I had chosen was a good thing.

After I completed my yeshiva studies and received rabbinic ordination, I became a teacher – I taught at the Hebrew Academy in Seattle, and I was the educational director of the Chabad House at Berkley. Afterwards, I came to Los Angeles, where I am to this day, and where I lecture at Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon Chabad. As well, I preside over a little synagogue – Congregation Ahavas Yisroel in the La Brea area of LA.

This is how my life turned out, and for this, I have the Rebbe to thank.

Rabbi Chaim Citron is a lecturer at Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon Chabad in Los Angeles and the rabbi of Congregation Ahavas Yisroel in the vicinity. He was interviewed for JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe project in his home in September of 2011.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

“A guide for all the troops under your influence...”

[By the Grace of G-d
Winter, 5704 [1944]
Brooklyn]
Greetings and Blessings!

You have no doubt duly received all the printed matter that we mailed you. We are certain that it is proving to be helpful, especially in fortifying the spirit of Torah and Yiddishkeit. Lit. (Yid.), “Jewishness” — the Torah way of life. among the troops, in lending them courage, and in buttressing their trust in G-d.

It goes without saying that at all times we are ready to be of assistance in these matters to the best of our ability, and you will no doubt let us know if an appropriate opportunity presents itself.

You have been granted the sacred task of serving as the spiritual leader and guide for all the troops under your influence — both by raising their spirits so that they will be firm in their trust that there will be a complete victory and so that they will not stand in dread of the enemy, and arousing them to be firm in their religious belief and to make staunch efforts to observe the Torah and its mitzvos to the best of their capacity and possibility. For G-d, the L- rd of Hosts, abides among them and constantly watches over them and scrutinizes all their actions. Their camp should therefore be holy.

As it is written in the Torah of Moshe (Devarim 23:10-15): “When you go out to encamp against your enemies, be on your guard against anything evil.... For G-d, your L-rd, moves about in the midst of your camp to save you, and to deliver your enemies to you. Let your camp therefore be holy.” [...]

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

My Wife Says I'm a Hypocrite

By Aron Moss

Question: *Is it acceptable to eat non-kosher as a parent and require your children to eat only kosher? I was brought up eating only kosher, and remained so until my late 20's. I loved growing that way, as it provided me a clear Jewish identity, it made me aware of my Jewish responsibilities, and I feel it gave me the confidence to tell non-Jewish people around me that I was Jewish (as I could not eat various things at work events), and also strength of character to say 'no' to things that may be tempting, a character trait I continue to carry forward into my adult life.*

In my 20's, I felt old enough to make a decision as to whether I wanted to keep kosher or not, and started eating non-kosher meat. Both my kids are under 10 years old and keep kosher and I'd like them to continue doing so until they are old enough to make an informed choice (like I did). It would be a lot harder for them to start keeping kosher in the future than the other way around.

I get told by certain people around me (including my wife) that I'm being hypocritical, either I should start keep kosher again, or my kids should have the choice. I've been pushing back saying it is not hypocritical, as I kept kosher until my 20's when I could make an informed decision and they can do the same, so I'm being consistent.

I'd value your thoughts.

Answer: Let me firstly say that I think it is great that you are bringing up your kids to eat kosher. That's the Jewish way. And it's great your wife tells you how wrong you are. That's also the Jewish way.

But I don't think you are a hypocrite. Rules can be different for kids and for adults. I'm sure when you were a kid, your parents held your hand when you crossed the road. But now you cross all by yourself. So should your kids be allowed to cross themselves too? Not everything adults can do, kids can do. So it is not hypocritical to make kids keep kosher when the parents don't.

But by doing so, you are not achieving your stated goal. You want your kids to have the kosher childhood you had. And they are not getting it.

You grew up in a home where both parents kept kosher, and imparted that value on their children. The clarity of identity that this gave you, was because your parents, consciously or not, conveyed being kosher and living Jewishly as a conviction that they believe in for themselves, and so they wanted to share it with you.

But you are not giving your children that clarity. If you don't keep kosher yourself, then consciously or not, you are teaching your kids that at the end of the day it doesn't really matter if you do or don't eat kosher. This is the message your kids are getting, even if they never actually see you eating non-kosher. Teaching others to do something you don't do simply can't be convincing. Kids can sense the passion behind your words, or lack thereof.

The subtlety of your argument, that you chose to not keep kosher as an adult and you are letting them do the same, is lost on them. All they know is that kosher is not important enough for you to keep. Like holding hands when you cross the street, it's just something you do as a kid until you're old enough to drop it.

So if you truly want to give your children the gift that you had, to learn those vital lessons of identity, self control and pride in who you are, you need to be living it yourself. Which means weighing what is more important to you - the convenience of eating what you want, or the fulfillment in teaching your children what you believe. It may demand some measure of sacrifice on your part, but as the devoted father you are, I think you can do it.

A WORD

from the Director

There is a story I would like to share with you about the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan:

At midnight, when all were asleep, the Chofetz Chaim would enter his study, close the door and stand there in total darkness. The Chofetz Chaim would then commence to pour out his heart to G-d. He began by praising G-d for His kindness, detailing everything that had happened during the day. When he finished his own personal account, the Chofetz Chaim began speaking about the merits of the entire Jewish people.

At this point the Chofetz Chaim's style of speech, as well as his tone, changed drastically. Instead of thanking and pleading, he began demanding. The Chofetz Chaim would declare that G-d owes the Jewish nation a full accounting.

He would ask, "G-d, what have You given us? You gave us a great and Holy Torah, but it was sealed and closed. What have we done in return?"

We opened the Torah, gave you the Prophets, the sages of the Talmud, the Torah geniuses; we tied crowns to the Oral Torah. But alas, what have we received in return for this? We have received misfortune, persecutions and murder. We were not prepared for this. Throughout the lands where we were dispersed and exiled, we brought our Torah with us, carrying it, saving it from our enemies, and we carry it still to this very day! It is firmly within our grasp."

This was how the Chofetz Chaim demanded the accounting. Then, he would proceed with the demand for payment of the debt.

"How much longer must we wait? Until when? We are totally broken. G-d, consider and ponder, is the heart of one Jew whole?"

This is what the Chofetz Chaim would do every single night. When the dawn came, he would return to his studies, eagerly awaiting Moshiach's arrival and confident that the debt owed would be paid.

Let us demand that which is due the Jewish people - Moshiach, NOW!

J. I. Gutterman

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The Ba'al Shem Tov

By Yerachmiel Tilles

When the Baal Shem Tov (Besht) began to teach publicly in 1734, he was opposed by certain rabbinic leaders. The Besht's charismatic leadership and Kabala-based doctrine made them apprehensive. Further, the Besht's insistence on every Jew's ability and obligation to establish a relationship with G-d, regardless of his level of scholarship, led them to fear that the Besht denigrated the need for in-depth Torah study. There were other points of disagreement, but these were the basic ones. Nevertheless, there were rabbis from the "opposition" who recognized the Besht's greatness, as this eyewitness report from 240 years ago by Rabbi Yaakov Kaidener, a well-known scholar and author, demonstrates:

When I was working as a teacher in Yanova, the esteemed chief rabbi of Dubrovna, Chaim Mordechai Margolius, lived nearby. On one of his occasional visits to torne, the citizenry came to greet him. He repaid our display of honor by sharing with us some of his original insights in Torah.

Afterwards, the conversation turned to the ways of the Chasidim, and some of those present made snide remarks about several of the great Chasidic rabbis. Eventually, they started to make fun of the founder, the holy Baal Shem Tov.

At this point Rabbi Margolius burst out, "Stop this talk! Let not my ears hear such things about this holy angel and precious man! True, I am also one of those who oppose the ways of Chasidism, as is known. You saw that I said nothing till now. Nonetheless, we in these parts do not oppose the holy Besht, G-d forbid. On the contrary: in our eyes, he is just as great as the holy Ari of Zefat!"

When the crowd heard this, they were amazed. They asked, "Rabbi, please tell us who he really was, for we are confused. If he was so great, why do so many denigrate him? And were not his ways unlike those of the great men of the past?"

The rabbi replied, "Your are right; his ways were different, and his teachings were different. Nevertheless, there is no need to be startled by this at all. Even if there could be found a verse in his sermons that seemed to be misquoted, it would still be forbidden to entertain any doubts about his words, for all the letters of the Torah were given into his hands from above, to do with according to his will.

"This can be compared to a great and exalted king who had a beloved only son, whom he loved as much as his own life, and out of this great love gave him all his precious treasures. Once, the king's ministers came to him and said, 'Our lord king! May you and your son live forever! We know that the king gave his son all the precious treasures, and who can say anything about what the king does; especially since he already did it. Moreover, his son is worthy of this due to his great wisdom and good deeds. But, we cannot understand why your son is arranging the treasures of the king differently than the king-literally from one extreme to the other!'

"The king answered, 'I gave him these treasures and they are his to do with as he pleases. Besides, I am confident that he is sufficiently

wise so as to not cause any harm, and that nothing improper will come from his hand.'

"Exactly the same is known to us about this holy man, the Baal Shem Tov. Once he expounded on the passage in the Talmud [Shabbat 81b]: Rabbi Chisda and Rabba bar Rabbi Huna were traveling in a boat. A certain woman said to them, 'Let me sit between you.' They did not let her. She uttered an incantation and stopped the boat. They said an incantation and released it.

"Rashi explains that the incantation she voiced was the name of a certain power of impurity, and that the incantation they uttered in return was the name of a pure power. The Besht questioned, 'It makes sense that the Talmud did not say explicitly what this woman uttered, since it was an impure name, but why not tell us what the rabbi said, so that we would know the incantation to recite in order to counteract witchcraft? After all, there are several pages in the Talmudic tractate Gittin devoted to incantations for various maladies.'

"The Besht's answer was that witchcraft is nullified by pronouncing the verse 'You shall not allow a witch to live' [Ex. 22:17], having in mind its hidden meanings. He then proceeded to expound on the mysteries of this verse, and said that through these meditations any type of witchcraft in the world can be counteracted.

"He then said that Rabbi Chiya and Rabba bar Rabbi Huna also used this verse and these meditations to thwart the witchcraft. Thus, when the Talmud states that 'she uttered an incantation,' it means a name of an impure power. The Talmud seems not to specify what they said because the correct text is not 'they uttered an incantation' ['milta"mem-lamed-tof-alef'], but 'they uttered milat'- without the alef at the end of the word-which is the initials of this very verse: Mechasheifa lo techaye, 'You shall not allow a witch to live.'

"After we heard this, we went to great lengths to find ancient copies of the Talmud. Eventually we found a very old one, from the earliest days of printing. Sure enough, the Besht's words were borne out: her 'incantation' was printed with an alef, while their 'incantation' was without one, but with the two lines ["] between the last two letters indicating that it is to be read as an abbreviation. Thus we were privileged to see that his words of Torah are those of the Torah of Moses from Sinai!

"So, do not do this evil anymore of belittling this holy and awesome man, who is the prince of the Torah. For the Torah of Truth was in his mouth, and he caused many to return from sin, for he was an angel of the L-rd of Hosts!"

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Completing the headcount of the Children of Israel taken in the Sinai Desert, a total of 8,580 Levite men between the ages of 30 and 50 are counted in a tally of those who will be doing the actual work of transporting the Tabernacle.

G- d communicates to Moses the law of the sotah, the wayward wife suspected of unfaithfulness to her husband. Also given is the law of the nazir, who forswears wine, lets his or her hair grow long, and is forbidden to become contaminated through contact with a dead body. Aaron and his descendants, the kohanim, are instructed on how to bless the people of Israel.

The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel each bring their offerings for the inauguration of the altar. Although their gifts are identical, each is brought on a different day and is individually described by the Torah.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 14 - 15 June	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	4:49	5:51
Adelaide	4:53	5:52
Brisbane	4:43	5:39
Darwin	6:11	7:03
Gold Coast	4:40	5:36
Perth	5:01	5:59
Sydney	4:35	5:34
Canberra	4:40	5:39
Launceston	4:30	5:34
Auckland	4:53	5:53
Wellington	4:40	5:43
Hobart	4:24	5:30
Byron Bay	4:38	5:34

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PARSHAS NASO • 11 SIVAN • 14 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	4.55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	5.20 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	SHIUR CHASSIDUS	9.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	9.54 AM
	SHACHARIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	4.40 PM
	MAARIV	5.51 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	4.55 PM
	MAARIV	5.40 PM