

Candle Lighting

7:50

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:54

Sunset

8:09

Motzei

Shabbat

8:47



Parshat HaShavuah

NASO

נשא

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י"ב סיון תשע"ב

A PUBLICATION OF



# Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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## WHO DESERVES THE CREDIT?

RABBI PERRY TIRSCHWELL

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Who gets the credit for building the Mishkan? The names that first come to mind are Betzalel and his right hand man Ohaliav.

However, in the Torah's introduction to the Parshat Hane-si'im ,sacrifices brought by the heads of each tribe in honor of

the inaugural opening of the Mishkan, it states "And it was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the Mishkan"(7:1).

There is a famous comment by Rashi on this verse that explains that Moshe erects and takes down the mishkan each of the seven days of Ymei Hamiluim. This is Rashi's second explanation of this verse. According to this explanation, Betzalel still gets the credit for building the Mishkan. Moshe just "kicks the tires" a few times to make sure that the Mishkan could be assembled, disassembled and reassembled, preparing it for the travels in the desert.

Amongst the many contributions of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l are his rules about Rashi on the Torah. If Rashi quotes two explanations on a verse, the Rebbe says that the first one is always closer to the simple meaning (pshat). The reason why Rashi quotes a second commentary is that there is a strong question on the first explanation. The second explanation, says the Rebbe, is always less close to the pshat of the pasuk.

The "erector set" explanation I quoted above is actually Rashi's second comment on our pasuk. His first comment is, "Betzalel, Ohaliav and all the artisans built the Mishkan, but the Torah gives the credit to Moshe because he relayed each detail of the plans which G-d had shown him on Har Sinai to the arti-

sans with painstaking dedication." According to this explanation, Moshe (at least in this pasuk) is given the credit for the construction of the Mishkan.

I'd like to suggest that Rashi isn't taking the credit away from Betzalel or anyone else involved in the Mishkan.

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## SURRENDERING YOURSELF

ELIANA FELDAN ('13)

“If anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a nazirite’s vow to set himself apart for Hashem, he shall abstain from wine and any other intoxicant... no razor shall touch his head... [and] throughout the terms that he has set apart for Hashem, he shall not go where there is a dead person” (6:2-5).

This week’s parsha introduces Bnei Yisrael to the unique idea of *nazirut*- a man or woman who takes a pledge to abstain from drinking wine, cutting their, and coming in contact with a dead body. It is puzzling. We know that Hashem has put us on this Earth to enjoy His creations in moderation. This idea of abstinence seems foreign to our religion’s philosophy and worldview. How should we understand *nazirut*?

The answer can be found in the lesson one can learn from the idea of *nazirut*. While it is still something with the ability to be actualized if one desires, it is not *nazirut* that Hashem wants us to aspire to, but the humility that it engenders.

The Gemara Brachot (10a) explains that Hashem afflicts Chizkiyahu Hamelech with a fatal illness because he, in response to a *nevuah* that his children will be evil, decides to remain unmarried, and therefore unfulfilling of the mitzvah of *pru u’rvu*, of procreation. When teaching this to our Navi class, Mrs. Horowitz explained that while it may seem extreme—no parent would want to bring forth evil children—it is the fact that Chizkiyahu consciously deems his will more important than Hashem’s will that makes him deserving of the punishment. We cannot allow what we want, or what we feel is most important, to dictate our lives, for at the end of the day, it is Hashem who sees the big picture, and knows what is best for all of us.

This idea of putting one’s personal will over Hashem’s will is exactly what Hashem is cautioning Bnei Yisrael against with the laws of *nazirut*. The nazir goes far to devote his entire self, to Hashem. He does not drink, does not groom, and even in the death of his mother or father, does not attend the funeral. He is a holy being, placing himself in a higher category, appreciating that his life belongs to Hashem.

With the understanding that it is Hashem’s view, His ability to see the big picture, that should guide us through life, and not what we necessarily think is right, a person will not only feel humbled but comforted. Knowing that there is a Divine plan designed just for you, and you alone—how could one not find direct comfort?

In his Letter for the Ages that he writes to his son, the Ramban teaches, “In all your actions, words and thoughts, always regard yourself as standing before Hashem, with His Shechina above you, for His glory fills the whole world.” We must stand there, with open arms, and give ourselves up to Hashem—and give ourselves up to the people we wish to become.

*On behalf of the entire Ashreinu staff, I would like to take this opportunity to dedicate the final edition of Ashreinu to Rabbi Tirschwell. Thank you so much for all that you have done, both for the hours you put into making sure Ashreinu is perfect, and for what you have done for the WYHS family as a whole. Thank you for sharing your vision, and doing everything in your power to see that dram become a reality.*





## YOU DON'T NEED A TITLE

### LEORA LITWIN ('12)

This week's parsha recalls the initiation of an exciting and long-awaited period in our history – the dedication of the Mishkan. It is in this sedra that the practice of bringing korbanot officially comes into play. The Torah informs us that the *nesi'im*, leaders, from each shevet are responsible to offer a korban to Hashem in the Mishkan. When recounting this remarkable and unforgettable occasion, the Torah highlights that Nachshon ben Aminadav, the leader of the tribe of Yehuda, was the first *nasi* to bring forth his korban on behalf of his shevet.

On this event the question can be raised, why is the shevet Yehuda given the sacred honor and privilege of offering the opening korban to Hashem in the newly erected Mishkan? Additionally, before each tribe leader is introduced as he brings a sacrifice, the title of *nasi* precedes his listing. However, in the case of Nachshon ben Aminadav such a title is omitted, and instead the word "*l'mateh*," "of or for the tribe of [Yehuda]," is inserted – a term that is not used when discussing the other *nesi'im*. Why is the meaning of this change in phraseology in the case of Nachshon?

Think back to Parshat Vayeishev. When the brothers go down to Egypt in search of bread during a plaguing famine, the youngest of Yaakov's children, Binyamin, is taken captive by Yosef, who has yet to reveal himself to his brothers. Anticipating the utter degeneration of his father's soul and stability that would ensue upon hearing that his second and last son of his beloved wife Rachel will never return home, Yehuda selflessly pleads for Binyamin's freedom. It was in this *z'chut*, the merit of his bravery, fortitude and keen acceptance of responsibility, that the tribe of Yehuda is honored with the opportunity to bring forth the first korban in the Mishkan.

Further, Rabbi Henry Isaacs explains that Nachshon ben Aminadav is not called a *nasi*, for he is, the epitome of *z'rizut*, the unique quality of rushing wholeheartedly and enthusiastically to partake in Torah and mitzvot. He is famous for being the zealous man who takes the leap of faith into the Yam Suf upon leaving Egypt, causing the sea to split. The other tribe leaders need the title of *nasi* to justify why they brought korbanot during the Chanukat haMishkan. They are filling the role of "tribe leader," and thus that is their sole place in carrying out this task. Nachshon, however, deserves to bring a korban, and the first one at that, for he displays the quintessential qualities of a true Torah Jew. He, standing on his own two feet as Nachshon ben Aminadav, warrants this glorious undertaking.

Lastly, the Torah offers insight into the pure motivations of Nachshon in bringing the korban by placing the word *l'mateh* after his name. Although Nachshon is a devout human being, a prototype of the earnest Torah observant Jew, and evidently earns the job of bringing a korban on his own merit, he still understands the concept of communal responsibility. While Nachshon does not have to offer this sacrifice as the *nasi* of Yehuda, he humbly completes this task on behalf of his entire tribe.

We often become focused on seeking titles – mere words that seem to hold certain connotations. However, as seen in this week's parsha, it is not the label that one is given, but the attributes that one displays and the diligence with which one works, that will be recognized. And even if one does not possess a revered title before his name, as shown with Nachshon, it is not to say that the role he or she plays is not equally as important, or even more important, than that of one of the "big names." Each member in a unit holds a unique role that is irreplaceable, and we need every individual to acknowledge and appreciate the inimitable part that we each play. We can never shrug off a responsibility, even if we regard our duty as seemingly inconsequential, because when one piece one piece is missing, the entire puzzle does not exude a clear picture.



## DEJA VU ERAM ZAGHI('12)

Much of this week's parsha is spent repeating the same details about the korbanot of each prince of every single tribe. To some of us this might seem superfluous, however, as we know every single word in the Torah has its own unique purpose. This begs the question—why the repetition? Could the Torah not have just simply described the korban once?

Although many commentators provide their own insightful answers, the one that strikes me as most fitting was actually presented in Rabbi Lanner's Chumash class. We quoted the Ramban who stated that the reason why each korban of every prince is mentioned is because they each has a different intention and purpose when bringing his korban. We then made a correlation between the korbanot and our own daily davening. In both situations, every prayer and korban seem so similar yet remain unique. Each Jew has the same structure of davening as the other—regardless if he is Sephard or Ashkenaz. However, each Jew still has his own intention and his own purpose when praying.

But if this is so, why did each prince bring the same korban? Why can each Jew not just have his own structure of prayer rather than saying the same homogeneous?

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik explains that although the Torah lists each offering separately, it still gives the sum of all twelve offerings. Rabbi Soloveitchik explains that although each prince had his own spiritual goals for his tribe, he still realized that each tribe's ambition is for a national, transcendent and united goal. The reason the structures of korbanot and prayer are fixed is because we all should have our own goals, but they must be in conjunction with the bigger picture.

I think that it is our challenge to constantly remind ourselves that no matter our personal ambitions, our different customs, or even our unique outlooks, we are all here for one ultimate and unified goal—that is the true strength of the Jewish people.

*Rabbi Tirschwell continued*

The Torah dedicates the next eighty-six verses to the sacrifices of the princes of each tribe, dwarfing the passing reference to Moshe in our pasuk. The artisans and the princes deserve the lion's share of the credit. Moshe was the one who had the vision which they made happen, and the one who tested the Mishkan to make sure it worked.

This past month there have been more than enough tributes to my leadership of WYHS over the past 15 years. It is true that I shared with the WYHS family a vision of what our school should look like, feel like, and dream to be. However, the true credit goes to the people who made it happen- WYHS's teachers, past and present. They are the nesi'im- the leaders of each tribe- our twelve classes of graduates. Our faculty and staff are the ones who have made a transformative difference in the lives of the approximately 750 students who have attended our school. I am forever indebted to them for making the dream a reality. May they continue to "challenge and inspire" future generations of teenagers.

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