

זכור את־יום השבת לקדשו.  
ששת ימים תעבד ועשיית כל־מלאכתך,  
ויום השביעי שבת לה'

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

**PARASHAT NASO**  
11<sup>TH</sup> IYAR 5781  
21<sup>ST</sup> & 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY 2021  
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## THE UNDERLYING THREAD OF NASO

DANIELLA DONOFF  
SHEVET MORASHA

This week's Parasha talks about many seemingly unconnected concepts. Firstly, it talks about the Levitical Families of Gershon and Merari and the different parts of the Mishkan that they carried whilst they were travelling through the desert. After that we learn laws about taking unclean people out of the camp where G-d's spirit dwells. This is followed by a conversation about a 'Sotah' a woman suspected of adultery by her husband. Then come laws about a Nazarite, who takes on extra restrictions to reach another level of holiness, such as cutting out grape products, haircuts and any contact with a dead body. Next is the priestly blessings. Followed by the repetitive list of all the gifts brought by each tribe to the Mishkan. The biggest question here is, why are these unconnected concepts all given over one after another?

The last word of the priestly blessing is 'shalom', which means peace. Rabbi Isaac Arama explains that 'shalom' does not just mean a lack of war and violence, but it is referencing a completeness and harmony in the world. "Peace is the thread of grace issuing from Him, may He be exalted, stringing together all beings, supernal, intermediate, and lower. It underlies and sustains the reality and unique existence of each" (Akedat Yitzchak, Ch. 74). Similarly, Isaac Abarbanel writes, "That is why G-d is called peace, because it is He who binds the world together and orders all things according to their particular character and posture. For when things are in their proper order, peace will reign" (Abarbanel, Commentary to Avot 2:12). This version of people is similar to Bereishit, where G-d makes order from chaos. Each aspect of the world is valued as a vital part of the whole system. All the different concepts in this Parasha are about bringing peace in this way.

The Sotah, the woman whose husband suspects her of committing adultery must obliterate the name of G-d as part of

a ritual, this is normally forbidden under any other circumstances. From this, the sages derive that G-d is prepared to renounce His own honour to make peace between a husband and wife.

The families of Gershon and Merari are given the honour of carrying parts of the Mishkan through the desert which they were happy with, unlike Korach who created a rebellion as he was unhappy with his position. The list of the offerings from the princes of the twelve tribes is a way of showing that they were all important enough to be mentioned in the Torah, even though they had all brought the same offering they were all still listed. By giving these princes and Levitical families the honour of being mentioned in the Torah, it ensures that they won't feel cheated out of the recognition they deserve, and they won't rebel like Korach did. This shows the importance of keeping the peace within a nation by honouring all those who deserve it.

The mentioning of the Nazarite shows us a conflict within Judaism. There is a strong emphasis on equality between all Jews in the eyes of G-d, as well as an elite group that is the Levi'im and Kohanim. The concept of a Nazarite brings this option of religious honour to all the other people, they also may be part of a religious elite and have this honour and equality if they wish. This should avoid any cases of jealousy about inequality and a religious elite that was formed by the accident of birth. This shows that these seemingly unconnected themes are actually all linked by the umbrella theme of peace, unity, and togetherness. Peace is often fragile, so doing whatever one can to keep peace between people or to even create peace is shown as a high priority.

Many Jewish prayers talk about peace, including the aforementioned priestly blessing. Peace has always been a tricky topic for the Jews – whether it be in the rest of Bamidbar itself or throughout Jewish History up until everything that has been happening in recent weeks. We should take these lessons from Parashat Naso and make sure that everyone feels recognised and respected - which will lead to peace and unity!

**DANIELLA IS ROSH OF MILL HILL SVIVA.**

London	In: 20:39 Out: 22:04	Oxford	In: 20:42 Out: 22:10	Leeds	In: 20:53 Out: 22:29
Manchester	In: 20:57 Out: 22:28	Bristol	In: 20:46 Out: 22:13	Liverpool	In: 20:57 Out: 22:31
Cambridge	In: 20:39 Out: 22:08	Birmingham	In: 20:48 Out: 22:18	Jerusalem	In: 18:58 Out: 20:15

# NASO 5781: MAKING EVERYONE COUNT

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



At times, Sefer Bamidbar can seem a little tedious. It is not by coincidence that the English name given to this book is “Numbers”. Chazal referred to it as חומש הפקודים – literally ‘the book of countings’.

Particularly the opening parshiot are filled with intricate lists of numbers, head-counts, subtotals and the final tallies. Again and again we read of the instruction to count. Again and again we are told of the numbers in each tribe, in each encampment and in the nation as a whole. Why all the detail and why the repetition?

In order to answer, let’s begin with another question relating to Parashat Naso. Following the census of the rest of Bnei Yisrael, there is a counting of the three families of the Levi’im – Gershon, Kehat and Merari. The Torah lists each one of them together with their tally and the specific job they had in carrying parts of the Mishkan. Unusually however, this census is cut off in the middle. The description of Kehat and their role appears at the end of Parashat Bamidbar, while Gershon and Merari appear at the beginning of Naso.

The Abarbanel gives a fascinating answer as to why the parshiot were split up in such a strange fashion. He notes that these three families are not listed in chronological order. Seemingly the Torah should have started with Gershon, the oldest. Nonetheless, Kehat is mentioned first as they had the most significant role in terms of carrying the Aron (which housed the *luchot*) and other *keilim* of the Mishkan. The Kli Yakar and others point out how it is a sign of *kavod haTorah*, honouring the Torah, to mention them first.

The problem with this is that Gershon, as

the *bechor* (firstborn), should also have been entitled to a special status. Thus explains the Abarbanel that since he ‘lost out’ on the honour of carrying the most significant vessels, the Torah saw fit to mention him in pride of place, at the start of a new parasha, in order to compensate for the slight he may have felt. In listing the different families, the Torah took pains to ensure that none of them should appear to be devalued.

The essence of the counting of the people in Sefer Bamidbar is about highlighting the value of each and every individual. Rashi writes that the entire purpose of counting was to

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show חיבתן לפניו – how precious they were before Hashem. Akeidat Yitzchak writes in his commentary that: שכל אחד מהם יהיה לו חשיבות אחד – they were counted in a way that each one of them was given significance like a king or a Kohen. It is far from coincidence that the way the Torah says to count is literally to “raise up their heads” – to elevate them and show how precious and

worthwhile they are.

Perhaps it would have seemed more efficient for the Torah to leave out some of the numbers. Perhaps the longest parshiot could have been shortened if they included just the final numbers without the repeated focus on each individual, each family and each tribe. But that would not have conveyed this crucial message. The Torah went out of its way to teach us that each individual has a unique and meaningful role to play. It is only when everybody does, that the final number can be added up.

Shabbat Shalom!

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# TANACH PARALLELS: SHIMSHON AND YITZCHAK

JOEL LEIGHTON | SHEVET TZION



Parashat Naso teaches us about the laws of the Nazir, which is reflected in the Haftarah which tells us the beginning of the story of Shimshon, arguably the most famous Nazir to have lived. The Haftarah

however finishes just after Shimshon's birth, before we really hear anything about him. The question is why? Why does the Haftarah which links to the parasha through the Nazir stop before we see the Nazir in action or learn anything about him?

Before we understand this, we will need to ask another question. The story begins with a malach (angel) coming to bring a message to 'Manoach's wife' – why are we not told her name if she is the recipient of the message? Additionally, why does the malach tell Manoach twice to listen to his wife's version of the message?

Rav Jesse Horn notes some fascinating parallels between this story and the beginning of Parashat Vayera, when the malachim come to tell Avraham of Yitzchak's birth. In both stories: the woman was barren; a malach(im) are sent in advance to warn of the coming birth; only one parent is warned by the malch(im), while the other is sceptical; the male character invites the malach(im) to eat; the most important person of the coming generation is born out of the story; the language of hurrying and running is used; the male character is told to listen to his wife; and more.

There are even some parallels between Shimshon and Yitzchak: both were tied up at some point (Shimshon after being captured by the Pelishtim and Yitzchak during Akiedat Yitzchak), and faced death and blindness during this episode; both marry an outsider (Shimshon married Pelishti girls, while Yitzchak married Rivkah who was from Padan Aram) and their spouse tricks them (Delilah by forcing Shimshon to tell

his secret and selling him out to the Pelishtim, and Rivkah during the episode where Yaakov takes the bracha from Esav).

There is a clear link that the navi is trying to make between these two characters and these two stories. In order to answer our questions and take away some messages, we will need to look into the differences between these two episodes, so here are some contrasts: with Shimshon – the mother was told the message, with Yitzchak – the father was told; Manoach's wife was outside in the field and does the running, Sarah was known for being inside (ba'ohel) while Avraham does the running; Avraham offers the malachim food immediately, Manoach

offers food as the malach is leaving; Yitzchak marries outsiders because the locals aren't good enough, Shimshon ignores the local Jewish girls to chase after non-Jewish women; after being tied up Yitzchak lives, Shimshon dies; Yitzchak is known for inner strength (gevurah), Shimshon is known for his physical strength. This is just a name a few.

So, what is the point? To answer our earlier questions about Manoach's wife – perhaps we are not told her name, and Manoach is repeatedly told to listen to her, because it reflects Manoach's lack of respect for her. We see Manoach's wife almost taking on the 'Avraham' role in this story. While Sarah is suspicious of the message, Manoach is suspicious of his wife. To answer our first question of why we don't really see Shimshon on the Haftarah – it could be because we learn everything about Shimshon from this story. The lack of respect Manoach had for his wife influenced Shimshon and his relationships. He is aggressive, violent and lacks respect for other lives.

A message we can learn is the importance of respecting every person and every life, as we often fail to appreciate how much our actions can influence other people.

**JOEL WAS A MADRICH ON H-COURSE 5781.**

**A MESSAGE WE CAN LEARN IS THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING EVERY PERSON AND EVERY LIFE, AS WE OFTEN FAIL TO APPRECIATE HOW MUCH OUR ACTIONS CAN INFLUENCE OTHER PEOPLE.**

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- Applications are open for **Summer Machane 5781!** With the Government's roadmap in place we are looking forward to a fantastic Summer Machane, with some epic residential Machanot and day camps for children in Years 3-10. Spaces are filling up fast, so if you haven't yet signed up make sure you do so as soon as possible and join us for a summer experience not to be missed! Join us from **2nd-15th August** and enjoy a fantastic Bnei Akiva experience full of fun, friends and Ruach! Sign up today at [bauk.org/camps](http://bauk.org/camps) or email [camps@bauk.org](mailto:camps@bauk.org) for more information.

- We're thrilled and proud to launch **Lishmah**, our brand-new **Women's Bet Midrash!** We hope it will be an exciting and **dynamic Makom Torah** for the young women of our community, and become a centre of regular Limmud Torah in London! **Kicking-off on Tuesday (25th May)** with Night Seder and a **Shiur from Rebbetzen Lauren Levin**, sign up at [tinyurl.com/lishmah-bet-midrash](http://tinyurl.com/lishmah-bet-midrash)!

- Calling **Shevet Refael** (Year 10) and **Shevet Seenai** (Year 11)! Sign up for our brand new **Hadracha Training programme** to better prepare you for your roles as Madrichim and **gain leadership skills for life!**

Running in the London and Salford Batim once a week throughout June. Sign up today at [tinyurl.com/ba-hadracha](http://tinyurl.com/ba-hadracha)!

- **SBM is back!** Join us at the **Bayit on Thursdays** from 19:00-19:45 for Chaburot followed by davening, **dinner** and a **guest speaker!**

- **Mazal Tov** to **Dan Ellis** and **Hadassah Simon** (Shevet Avichai) on their **engagement** this week!

- **Mazal Tov** to **Joey Sanford** (Shevet Ne'eman) and **Talia Kupferman** on their **engagement** this week!

- **Mazal Tov** to **Alex Fachler** and **Isabel Assor** (Shevet Morasha) on their **engagement** this week!

- Keep an eye out for **exciting Bnei Akiva events** for all ages! **Stay Safe > Stay Inspired > Stay BA**

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to get regular updates with what is going on in the Tnuva.

- Visit [bauk.org/feedback](http://bauk.org/feedback) for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!

## SHABBAT SHALOM!!!

Shevet Refael (Year 10) and Shevet Seenai (Year 11)

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