



From the desk of
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1

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Naso

HAMELECH

The Great Inauguration

The inauguration of the Mishkan spanned twelve days, the first twelve days of Nissan. On each of those twelve days, one *nasi* brought a *korban*, each in his turn. The first *nasi* to bring was Nachshon ben Aminadav. Interestingly enough, he is the only *nasi* not identified here as such. Some explain that he was worthy to bring a *korban* even had he not been a *nasi*. Others explain that, due to his humility, he did not deem himself worthy of the title.

Another difference between Nachshon's *korban* and that of his peers is the repetition of the word *korbano* – his offering. In general, when one brings a *korban*, he is to view the animal as a replacement of himself. That is, in his mind, he is to visualize that he himself is the offering. This could be the explanation here. First and foremost, Nachshon mentally brought *himself* as a *korban*. Only subsequently did he bring the additional vessels and animals.

Power Tends to Corrupt

Those who rise to positions of power are in grave danger of succumbing to the evil inclination of

conceit and arrogance and snobbiness. Nachshon was beyond all of this.

Our great and righteous leaders excelled in humility. Moshe Rabbeinu, our greatest leader ever, was not coincidentally, the humblest man to ever walk the face of this earth.

One of our greatest Sages of Talmudic Times was known as "Rav". When he would see that multitudes escorted him, he would remind himself of man's lowliness by uttering verses from Iyov (20:6-9) which stressed those points.

Similarly, Mar Zutra the Pious would deliver a *derashah* on Shabbat preceding the upcoming festival. It was a great honor to deliver such a lecture. He would remind himself that honor in this world is fleeting and temporary. He would repeat verses from Mishlei (27:24). (Sanhedrin 7b)

R' Elya's Concern

What about Rav Elya Lopian zt"l? He was *mashgiach* in Yeshivat Kefar Chasidim in the 1950's. Someone heard him repeating over and over the verse (Devarim 7:20): Do not bring an abomination into your home.



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The puzzled visitor inquired as to this peculiar choice of inspiration. R' Elya explained: Soon I will go to Yeshiva for prayers. When I enter, the students will rise out of respect. They will also wait for me at certain points during the prayers. All of this could bring a person to conceit, which is called an abomination to Hashem (Mishlei 16:5). I do not wish to be guilty of being an abomination to Hashem!

The New Rabbi

The people of Simonia asked R' Yehuda Hanasi to send to them a man who could fill the post of Rav of the community. Rebbi suggested Levi ben Sisi, his star pupil. Levi came and the townspeople accepted him ceremoniously. They sat him on an honorable chair on a large platform and began asking him questions in halachah. Levi was silent.

They asked for a *derashah*, but he would not utter a word.

They asked for an explanation of one *pasuk* and again Levi did not respond.

They returned to Rebbi and complained, "You gave us an imbecile."

Rebbi said, "I sent you a wise man, as wise as myself. Tell him to come here."

Levi went to Rebbi and Rebbi asked him what had happened. Levi responded, "They gave me so much honor and respect that my heart began to swell with pride. And then what happened? Pride in, wisdom out. That's how it goes." (Yerushalmi, Yevamot, chap. 12)

What Money Can't Buy

Once there was a rich man. Now, wealth often comes with conceit, and this man was no exception. Heaven wanted to teach him a lesson. So one day, he was taking a walk, his nose held up high in the air, and he lost his way. He did not know how to get back. He was lost for several days, hungry and thirsty.

Finally, he saw a man carrying a jug of water. He begged for a drink, offering an exorbitant sum of money. The man with the jug replied, "I do not want your money. If you agree to give me half of your mitzvah merits, I will let you drink your fill."

He didn't really want to do that, but he saw that he did not have much of a choice. He signed away half of his *mitzvot* and quenched his thirst. The man with the jug continued on his way. Shortly thereafter, the wealthy man felt acute



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pain in his stomach. He shrieked in pain. A different man showed up and identified himself as a physician. The rich man offered him a great amount of money if he would heal him. The doctor said, "I don't want cash. I'll heal you if you agree to give me half of your *mitzvot*."

So he parted with the second half of his *mitzvot* and his stomach pains disappeared.

Somehow, he made it home. His family was so relieved to see him, but he paid no attention to them. He locked himself in a room and sobbed endlessly. He cried himself to sleep and Eliyahu Hanavi came and told him: Hashem wanted to teach you not to be haughty. He sees how bad you feel over having lost all your mitzvah credits. Your *mitzvot* will be returned to you, but be careful not to be haughty in the future." (Sefer Kisei Rachamim)

A Nod of Consent

Rav Yosef was the Av Beit Din of the city of Posen. His wife was the daughter of the Noda Bihudah, Reb Yechezkel Landau. She had a peculiar custom. Whenever Rav Yosef had visitors, the Rabanit would enter and berate him in their presence. Rav Yosef would silently swallow the bitter pill, not responding.

The people of Posen were bewildered and disturbed. How could it be that the Rabbanit was so disrespectful towards her esteemed husband. After all, even her father, the famed Noda Bihudah, afforded him much respect! It was quite disturbing, but they got used to it.

Rav Yosef passed away in Adar 5,569. As his funeral was commencing, his wife said, sobbing, "Reb Yosef! You are the one who forced me to disgrace you whenever you had visitors! Before we wed, you had me agree to always disgrace you in other people's presence. You did this because you feared falling prey to the evil inclination of conceit."

The story concludes that all present noticed the dead man nod his head in acknowledgment! (Ketzeit HaShemesh Begivurato p. 150)

Let us all remember that we are here on a mission. Regardless of our position, let us do our jobs humbly, respecting each person with whom we come in contact. Haughtiness will get us nowhere, or worse.

Let us use our position for the betterment of society.

Shabbat Shalom,
Mordechai Malka