

Embracing the Journey of Faith and Individuality

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Parshat Naso begins by discussing the duties of the Kohanim in the Mishkan. These responsibilities included carrying and assembling the sacred items. The Mishkan was a place of great sanctity, with the Divine Presence resting upon it. However, due to the Jews' nomadic lifestyle in the desert, the Mishkan had to be disassembled and reassembled whenever they traveled. This unique aspect of the Mishkan teaches an important lesson about life – just as the Mishkan could be disassembled and reassembled, individuals may encounter changes and challenges as they move through different phases and locations in life. The crucial understanding is that HaShem is ever-present and can be carried along on this journey. Regardless of the circumstances or changes, one can find stability and spiritual

connection by recognizing that God is always with them.

We then have the laws of the expulsion of impure individuals from the camp and the laws of the Sotah, a woman suspected of immorality. These laws emphasize the importance of avoiding impurities such as idolatry, which is likened to arrogance and anger. And we can see in the history of the Jewish people that impurity often entered the nation as a result of deviating from God's path. The Sotah serves as a symbol of this temptation and the bitter consequences it brings. The ongoing exile of the Jewish people is a test of their faithfulness to HaShem. While many remain steadfast in the face of adversity, others succumb to the challenges and lose touch with their Jewish identity. This serves as a reminder that each individual is tested throughout their life, and it is their responsibility to remain faithful and true to HaShem, regardless of the circumstances.

After that is the Nazarite, an individual who dedicates themselves entirely to God. The Nazarite takes upon themselves specific obligations, such as abstaining from wine and allowing their hair to grow. However, the Gemara considers this extreme level of abstinence as a form of sin! The reason for this is that by abstaining from permissible pleasures of the world, one may deny themselves the enjoyment and gratitude that should be associated with them. Judaism encourages individuals to appreciate the blessings that HaShem has provided in the world, including the enjoyment of food, drinks, and other permissible pleasures. By engaging in these pleasures mindfully and with gratitude, one can experience the Divine Presence within them.

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The Parsha also includes the blessings of the Kohanim, known

as Birkat Kohanim, and the sacrifices offered by the presidents of each tribe. The blessings of the Kohanim are a profound expression of God's favor and protection upon the Jewish people. These blessings extend to various aspects of life, including financial success and the safeguarding of one's possessions. They serve as a reminder that material prosperity should be used wisely and in accordance with HaShem's will. The sacrifices brought by the tribal leaders highlight the uniqueness and individuality of each person's service to HaShem. Although the fact of the matter was that every one of these sacrifices was exactly the same, they held distinct meanings for each individual and tribe. This emphasizes the importance of recognizing and embracing one's individuality while following the guidelines of the Torah.

So even amidst life's changes and challenges, HaShem is always present. The laws of impurity and the Sotah serve as reminders to avoid immorality and remain faithful to HaShem. The Nazarite's path emphasizes the importance of embracing the permissible pleasures of the world and experiencing gratitude for God's blessings. The blessings of the Kohanim and the sacrifices brought by the tribal leaders highlight the unique individuality within the Jewish people. By understanding and applying these teachings, we can navigate our spiritual journeys and strengthen our connection with HaShem.

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