

# Parshat Naso: Body & Soul (Grounding and Elevating)

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In Parsha Naso Moshe finishes erecting the *mishkan* (the tabernacle.) The tribe of Yisachar points out that the *mishkan* is floating, there is nothing to carry it and transport it. All the tribes then bring covered wagons and oxen to transport the *mishkan* on its journey.

Reb Nosson tells us that this advice applies to each of us. He says that because our spirituality is transcendent, because it's so uplifting and elevating, we need to remember to be grounded. We need to find a way to practically carry and transport ourselves on our personal spiritual journey. This may not be an issue that people consciously grapple with every day. But when we do something particularly elevating, for example, we take a trip to Uman, we celebrate a deeply

meaningful *Yom Tov*, or we get caught up in our prayers, we feel elevated. Yet, we also have to remember we have to be grounded in order to “carry” this spirituality.

When Rebbe Nachman was younger, he wanted to serve Hashem with true *mesirat nefesh*, soul sacrifice, every fiber of his being. He thought a good expression of this would be if he conquered his desire for food. So, he refused to taste his food. What he would do is take chunks of food and swallow them whole without tasting them. He did indeed kill his desire for food. (He also did other extreme devotions.)

But, when he got older, he told his Chasidim that he shouldn't have done all these intense devotions, all these things that by-passed his physicality, his material body, so harshly. He told them these practices were very harmful and in fact they had harmed his own health.

The Rebbe teaches that it is important to stay grounded. We are souls, true, but we live in the material world. Even in prayer we shouldn't just pray for our spiritual needs, we should also pray for our mundane needs. If you have a torn coat or a missing button, you should daven for that too. In that way we manage to stay in this world while maintaining our spirituality. We need both aspects in order to live a complete existence and fulfill our purpose in this lifetime.

May you have a day in which you fulfill your purpose.

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