

Haftarah Summary Rabbi Aron Tendler

Around the year 2790 - 971 b.c.e., the Bnai Yisroel were subject to the rule of the Philistim. In the year 2810 - 951, Shimshon became the Judge - Shofet of the nation and served his people as both their greatest Tzadik and greatest warrior. This week's Haftarah tells the story of Manoach and his wife, the parents of Shimshon (Shoftim Cap. 13). Manoach's wife was barren, and in response to her Tefilos, Hashem sent an Angel, disguised as a man, to tell Manoach's wife of her impending pregnancy. The child would have to be a Nazir from the moment of his conception, and he would grow up to save the Jews from their enemies.

Manoach requested from Hashem that the "man" appear a second time, and the Angel appeared a second time. The same instructions were repeated to both Manoach and his wife, after which Manoach invited the "man" to join them for a meal. The "man" refused the invitation but suggested to Manoach that he offer a Korban to Hashem. Manoach did so, and as the flame rose to consume the offering, the "man" entered the flames and disappeared. Manoach and his wife then realized that the "man" was really an Angel, and understood the divine significance of their, yet to be born, child.

The connection to our Parsha is the fact that Shimshon was to be a Nazir. The commentaries explain that in contrast to the laws of the Sotah - the accused adulteress, it was the merit of Manoach's wife which brought about the birth of

Minyan Schedule

Erev Shabbat Parashat Naso
Candle lighting 4.37 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat 29/05/15 4.47 pm

Shabbat Parashat Naso
Shacharit 30/05/15 9.15 am
Children's Service 10.00 am
Mincha/Ma'ariv (Mizrachi) 4.35 pm
Shabbat ends 5.35 pm

Erev Shabbat Parashat Behaalotcha
Candle lighting 4.35 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat 05/06/15 4.45 pm

Announcements

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Shimshon. Shimshon is among the most difficult figures in Jewish history to understand. For a comprehensive presentation and explanation see, "Samson's Struggle", by Rabbi Gershon Weiss. *Rabbi Aron Tendler and torah.org.*

Or Chadash

קהילת אור חדש

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Shabbat Parashat Naso

12 Sivan 5775; 30 May, 2015

Shabbat Torah reading: Stone Chumash page 748, and Haftarah page 1181.

President Jonathan Erlich

Rabbi-in-residence Rabbi Franklin

Dvrei Torah Rabbi Franklin

The Blessing of Wholeness

Rabbi Marc D. Angel

Many people feel the need to be noticed. They dye their hair neon green, or they wear immodest clothing, or they say things that are intended to shock. They will do anything to keep the limelight focused on themselves: they will tell a stream of jokes, they will speak without listening to others, they will take "selfies" and send them to anyone and everyone they can think of. The message they convey is: NOTICE ME. Underlying this thirst for attention is the deep feeling of unworthiness, the fear of not being noticed. Also underlying this exhibitionism is the desire to stand above the crowd, to be distinguished in some way from the normal run of humanity.

Human beings are often (always?) frail and insecure. They need to be reassured that their lives mean something to others. They dread being ignored or forgotten. It is as though they evaluate the worthiness of their lives by how others respond to them. Their feelings of success or failure in life are determined by others.

The ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius, taught: "What the Noble Person seeks is in himself. What the petty person seeks is in others." The challenge is to be the Noble Person.

The Torah portion this week includes the Priestly Blessing. The Cohanim are commanded to bless the people, serving as the conduits for G-d's blessings.

The third line of the blessing states: May G-d shine His countenance upon you and give you shalom.

Shalom, usually



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BUILDING A TORAH COMMUNITY

translated as peace, has the connotation of wholeness. The blessing is recited in the singular (lekha, not lakhem), meaning that it is aimed at each particular person, not at the people at large. The blessing is for each individual to feel a sense of completeness within him/herself, to feel secure and unafraid. The blessing is to understand that the value of our lives is dependent on ourselves, not on the opinions of others. When G-d shines His countenance upon an individual, that person comes to understand that life is ultimately defined by the relationship of one's self with G-d. G-d's light eliminates the shadows and doubts.

The kabbalists and musar writers have long emphasized the virtue of "hitbodedut," being alone with oneself. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan translated "hitbodedut" as meditation. A person needs time to think deeply and alone, to separate inner reality from outer illusions, to receive G-d's light and move out of the shadows. "Hitbodedut" helps a person develop the inner wisdom and inner poise that lead to internal shalom. "Hitbodedut" is a means of seeking the self and, at the same time, transcending the self.

Albert Einstein wrote: "The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of all true art

and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, a snuffed out candle. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our minds cannot grasp, whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly: this is religiousness." May G-d shine His countenance upon you and give you shalom. *Rabbi Marc. D. Angel and the Institute of Jewish Ideas and Ideals.*

Shevet Levi of Today Rabbi Berel Wein

In this week's parsha the Torah highlights the special role and status of the tribe of Levi. They are counted separately from the rest of the tribes of Israel. Their status in society is that they are engaged in work in the Temple, have their own separate cities distributed throughout the Land of Israel and are to be supported by the tithe (ten percent of the crop produced from the agriculturally based economy of the Jewish society) contributed to their upkeep and economic well being. They are, so to speak, the elite class of the Jewish people, the beneficiaries of the apparently unearned largesse of the working class.

Now, why would the Torah countenance and even prescribe such an uneven societal status? Especially in our time when the current, yet always fleeting, political correctness of society strives for the ultimately equal distribution of wealth and national responsibilities, this Levite exceptionalism seems anachronistic. I imagine that in the current particular expression of demonization, the tribe of Levi would be labeled as being "parasites." And yet the Torah ordains and demands such a societal condition.

The tribe of Levi, which included the descendants of Aharon - the kohanim, was the smallest of all of the tribes of Israel numerically. Their exceptionalism began already in the land of Egypt when they were exempted from the hard labor that was endured by their fellow Jews. Yet we find that there was little opposition recorded in the Torah to this special treatment of the tribe of Levi.

Even Korach, who claimed to be the champion of equal treatment for all Jews, really only wanted to replace Moshe and Aharon with himself and other Levites. I think that all of this has basic relevance to our current Jewish society and its vexing challenges.

Not every one has the opportunity to devote one's self to full-time Torah study or to constant public or religious service. Not everyone has the ability to create a start-up technological company. Not everyone has the ability or inclination to be a university professor or a medical doctor or technician. Not everyone can be a successful storekeeper or business manager. Yet there is no doubt that our Jewish society

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here in the state of Israel needs full-time Torah students, religious and social service volunteers and professionals, start-up geniuses and computer geeks, professors, physicians, auto mechanics and all sorts of technicians, plumbers and builders, storekeepers and even rabbis.

In the times of the Temples, the Torah made it easy by classifying, so to speak, who was who and specifically identified the tribe of Levi for constant Torah study and teaching and full-time Temple service. In our current society this process of identification is more difficult, inexact and even confusing. Yet it is basically one of the most important issues that we must successfully deal with.

In the current society we certainly need "Levites" - Jews who are exclusively devoted to Torah study, teaching and public religious service. The problem is in identifying these "Levites" and nurturing them. That is really the core of the issue after all of the political smoke dissipates and wafts into the passing air. *Rabbi Berel Wein and torah.org.*

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