

Parshas Noso – David Freedman *(reprinted)*

יב סיון תשע"ו – 18th June 2016 – שבת פ' נשא

The concluding part of this week's Sedra, comprising of some 77 posukim from a Sedra of 176 posukim, repeats in detail each of the twelve prince's offerings which were brought following the inauguration of the Mishkan on the first of Nisan.

We are familiar with the many reasons suggested by the commentators as to why the Torah repeats the identical gifts given by each Nasi on each of the twelve days. Such explanations include: to emphasize the uniqueness of each gift given as a Kiddush Hashem - to sanctify the honour of Hashem's name; to show the achdus of the oneness of the princes love for each other and the entire congregation; to show how each prince had the same desire to serve the Almighty, although as Rashi explains, each did so in an individual manner, and also to show that individuals gifts are equally great in the eyes of Hashem.

However, I would like to explore some interesting questions raised by our Sages on aspects of the Korban brought by each Nasi

- As each offering was a personal offering, how come it could be brought on Shabbos, as normally personal offerings are only permitted on weekdays?
- How is it that when the Torah summarises the gifts at the end of the chapter, (Ch 7, v 84-88), the sum of the twelve vessels is indicated, whereas the contents of these vessels, (flour mixed with oil) is omitted; yet with the gold ladles of incense, both the vessel and the contents (incense - ketores) is included in the summary of the offerings, (Ch 7,v 86).

"Each prince brought one silver bowl, its weight 130 shekels, is totalled in v 84 as twelve silver bowls, ...weight 130 shekels," with no mention of the flour mixed with oil - and so on with the other vessels. Except with the gold ladles of incense, which are totalled as "twelve gold ladles filled with incense" v 86.

Yalkut Shemoni explains that Rabbi Yishmael states that when Hashem saw each Nasi's identical offering, each of which was brought on the same day as the dedication of the Mishkan, on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, He commanded Moshe to have one offering per day, to honour each Nasi's highest intentions of serving Hashem and that each prince deserved to be mentioned in turn, each on a separate day.

But this statement of Rabbi Yishmael requires an explanation, suggesting that the gifts were brought on the same day as the dedication of the Mishkan, and that Hashem commanded Moshe for each Nasi to bring his korban on a different day, over the first twelve days of Nisan.

Perhaps the answer is in the posuk itself. Posuk 84 states "This is the dedication of the Alter, on the day it was anointed from the princes of Israel, twelve silver bowls, twelve silver basins," The Torah is informing us that all the princes brought their offerings on the same day, Rosh Chodesh Nisan, but they knew there was too much to be accepted on the same day. They also knew that the offering of flour mixed with oil not offered up on the day it was brought becomes invalid, so they brought the vessels and contents separately, so they could add the contents to each vessel just prior to being offered to Hashem, each on their own day. With the Ketores, however, the princes knew that incense is not invalidated if left over night, so it was brought intact.

This also explains the reason why the summary of verses v 84-88 differs for Ketores to the other offerings. This explanation further explains why the offering could be brought on Shabbos, as although they started out as a free will offering, when they were brought, they were by Hashem's command.

May we learn from the princes pure intentions of serving Hashem and for the Beis Hamikdosh to be built speedily in our days.

Dedicated to the memory of my father, Avraham Yitzchok ben Eliezer Hacohen, on his Yahrzeit

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