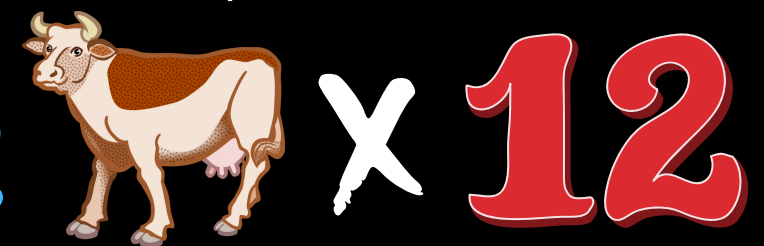


NASO - נְשׂוּא

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

Parshas Naso begins with the Torah continuing the **census** of the families of the tribe of Levi. Hashem tells Moshe to count the men in the family of **Gershon** from 30 to 50, and that their job is to carry the cover and hangings of the Mishkan, guided by Aharon's son Itamar. Moshe is also told to count the family of **Merari**, and that their job is to carry the planks of the Mishkan along with the sockets, pegs and chords, also under the guidance of Itamar. The men aged 30 to 50 are 2,750 for the family of **Kehas**, 2,630 for **Gershon**, and 3,200 for **Merari**, with a total of 8,580. Each of these men was given a specific job in carrying the Mishkan. Hashem then commands Moshe that anyone who has become ritually impure because of a seminal emission or by touching a dead body has to be removed from the camp of the Jewish people until they become pure again. Someone who has wronged someone else has to repay the value of the wrongdoing plus one-fifth, and if it cannot be repaid to a person, it goes to a Cohen as a donation. The Torah describes the laws of a **Sotah**, a woman who is suspected of cheating on her husband. She is brought before a priest and given a special drink that will cause a gruesome death if she is guilty, but blesses her with fertility if she is innocent. Next are the laws of a **Nazir**, a man or woman who vows to abstain from consuming any grape products, cutting his or her hair or coming in contact with any dead body, even for a close relative. Once his vow ends, the **Nazir** brings a sin-offering, a burnt-offering and an offering of well-being, along with several other components. The **Nazir** shaves his or her hair and burns it in the fire of the well-being offering, thus ending the vow. Hashem tells Moshe to teach Aharon the **Priestly Blessing**. On the day that Moshe finished setting up the **Mishkan**, each **Tribal Chief** brought a contribution to the Mishkan: 6 carts and 12 oxen, which Moshe distributed to the families of **Gershon** and **Merari** to help transport the Mishkan. The Torah describes the offerings of each of the 12 Tribal Chiefs: a silver bowl and basin filled with flour and oil for a meal-offering, a gold ladle filled with incense, a bull, ram and lamb for a burnt-offering, a goat for a sin-offering, and two oxen, five rams, five goats and five lambs for an offering of well-being. This process lasted 12 days, with each Chief bringing an offering on a different day. The Torah tells us the total amount brought by the Tribal Chiefs, and that Moshe went into the Mishkan to speak with Hashem, whose voice would come from atop the **Aron**, Ark, between the two **cherubim**.

THINK ABOUT IT: Even though the each of the Tribal Chiefs brought the same exact offering, the Torah lists each of the offerings **twelve times**, in equal detail. Why do you think that is? What can this teach us?



IS THE NAZIR A ROLE MODEL?

You might have noticed that one of the offerings that a **Nazir** brings after his or her vow ends is a **sin-offering**. That leads us to the question: **is becoming a Nazir a good thing?** And **what is the reason for the sin-offering?** **Our Sages** teach that someone who takes this vow as a corrective measure to avoid temptation is praiseworthy. **Rambam** (1138-1204, Spain & Egypt) explains that adding prohibitions and limits beyond what the Torah requires is discouraged, because the Torah wants us to be balanced rather than excessively prohibitive. However, he agrees that someone who needs to limit him or herself is right to do so. Thus, perhaps the reason for the sin-offering is the act of adding prohibitions to the Torah, or separating oneself from the community through the process.

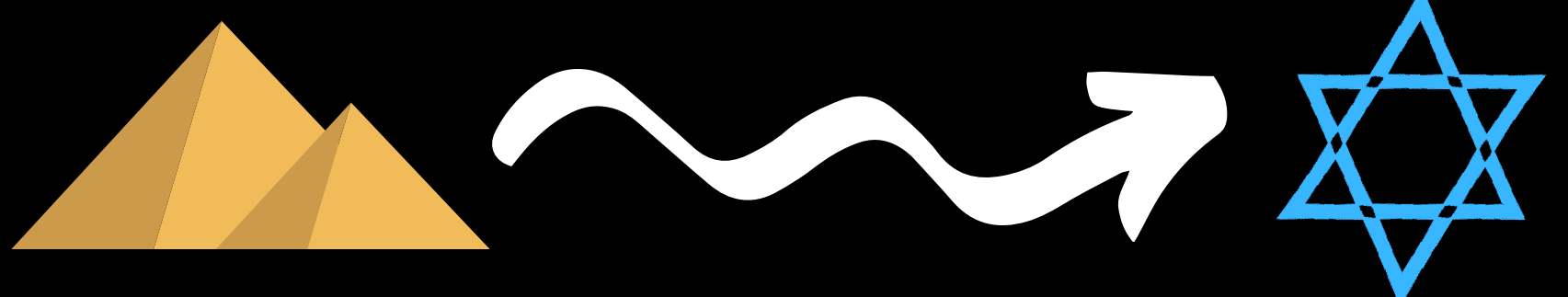
כל ימי נזרו קדש הוא לה: (במדבר ו:ח)
All of the days of his **Nazirite** status, he is separate for Hashem.

DISCUSS: Do you think that becoming a **Nazir** is a good thing or a bad thing? Why would it be good? Why would it be bad?



THE CAMP OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

This week, we conclude the **census** of the Jewish people that began in last week's Parsha. This map shows the layout of the camp, with the tribes that lead their side of the camp circled in purple.



THINK Look at the map. Do you see anything interesting or unusual about how the tribes were laid out? Which direction did the camp generally move? Who were the leaders?