

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Parshas Naso 5775 (2015)

In this week's Parsha, Naso, we find that Hashem instructs Moshe that, each day for twelve days, one prince representing each of the twelve tribes should bring their offering for the inauguration of the altar.

"The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nachshon, son of Aminadav, of the tribe of Judah" (Bamidbar 7:12).

There is something significantly different about the way the Torah introduces Nachshon ben Aminadav compared to ANY other prince of the eleven remaining tribes. The Torah does NOT use the title of "PRINCE" when it comes to Nachshon ben Aminadav. It just says, "Nachshon ben Aminadav, of the tribe of Judah."

Check it out! For the next eleven days, each of the remaining tribal heads bringing a sacrifice is given his proper title.

"On the second day, Nethanel, son of Zuar, "prince" of Issacher, offered...."

"On the third day, the "prince" of the children of Zebulun, Eliab, son of Helon...."

This pattern continues throughout each and every one of the remaining eleven days of inauguration. Only Nachshon ben Aminadav is left without his title. Why?

We are coming off of a very long stretch of Yomim Tovim, having started with Pesach, counting down seven weeks and then culminating with a three-day observance of Shavuot. Everybody counts down differently. Some people counted down the amount of meals left to cook. Some of our members counted down the amount of trips left to walk back and forth to Shul, two to three times a day. Personally, I counted down the amount of D'rashas and classes that I still had to give: 25...24...23....

One would think that, by the time we got to Shavuot night, everyone would be burnt out. But the most amazing thing happened. We had a really beautiful turnout for our Tikun Leil Shavuot. Individuals came. And sat. And learned. And participated in a class until midnight. Wow! What a beautiful honor to our Shul and to its membership. Stand up and take a bow. You deserve it.

But those are not the only ones deserving of taking a bow. All those who participated in making this entire eight-week period such an amazing success deserve to be acknowledged as well.

- Those who led the services.
- Those who read from the Torah.
- Those who came at night to help make Minyan.
- Those who helped by serving as Gabbai.
- Those who helped with the kiddushes and meals.
- Those who helped with the set-up and clean-up.
- Those who brought the flowers.
- Those who helped with Shalosh Seudos.
- Those who did NOT TALK during Davening.
- Those who attended Shul and showed their love and support of our precious Minyan.
- Those who have only nice things to say about their fellow members and keep any and all nasty comments to themselves.

And finally, all those functions that I may have inadvertently missed -- but I know they deserve as big a thank you as anyone else. Stand up and take a bow as well!

When people step up to the plate and give from their hearts, when they endure self-sacrifices in their desire to serve G-d, in their desire to help the community and expecting nothing in return, those people need to be honored as "individuals" for who they are, and not just because they are a part of a bigger picture.

Chizkuni teaches us why Nachshon ben Aminadav was not given the title of "prince" in this week's Parsha. His commitment was proven so often to be so powerful, that he earned the right to bring the first sacrifice and initiate the offering process -- because of who he was as an individual, not just because he was the prince of Judah.

Many of us have shown a willingness to be active as part of a group, when everyone else is involved as well.

This week my "Thank You's" are directed to those who have proven themselves as "individuals." We should all take a separate moment to thank them -- and be inspired from their example.

We have a long summer ahead of us, with fewer and fewer people available each week to help pick up the slack.

You can become a Nachshon ben Aminadav. Give of your time from the heart, as much as you can ... and then some. You, too, will be more than a "just" a prince.

Thank you, and have a great Shabbos.