

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

June 4 – June 11, 2009

12 Sivan – 19 Sivan 5769



Candle lighting time 8:22 pm
Friday June 5

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

PARASHAT NASO (Commentary on Page 2)

Annual: Numbers 4:21 – 7:89 (Etz Hayim, p. 791)

Triennial: Numbers 5:11 – 6:27 (Etz Hayim, p. 796)

Haftarah: Judges 13:2 – 25 (Etz Hayim, p. 813)

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### We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Issy Egdal, Pam Toland and David Krapf

### and a Happy Anniversary to:

Laura & David Ilan, Lenore & Ira Polk and Linda & Mel Haskins

### This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Harry Chanin, Samuel Schwartz, Beatrice Holtz, Israel Meyer Roobin, Ruth Brahn Karson, Linda Lamb,  
Annie Becker Marshall, Max Nathan, Hermina Stern Spielberger

## **It's CSI Yearbook Time!**

**Do we need to update YOUR ad?  
Do you want your personal ad to be the same  
as last year? How about your business ad?  
Have you moved? Changed your phone number?  
Have you changed your email address?**



**Birthday and anniversary listings are \$4.00 each.  
Do you want to add a new family member's  
birthday or anniversary?**

**To make any changes for the 2009-2010 Directory  
you must call Beth Cohen at 474-1221 by July 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Thank you for your support and cooperation.**



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**The Gaudet All-Star Baseball Camp will be held  
Friday June 5<sup>th</sup> at the Luther Williams Field.  
They need more volunteers!!  
If you would like to help, please call  
Jami at 474-4368 or Jimmy at 477-9480**

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Don't forget the CSI Gift Shop for all your gift needs.

**\*Weddings\* \*Graduations\* \*Housewarming Gifts\*  
\*Birthdays\* Anniversaries\* \*B'nai Mitzvahs\***

We have a wedding registry for Leah Schallheim & Valiant Haller.

Free gift wrapping and local delivery.

Call Terri or Deborah to help you with your shopping needs.



## Parashat Naso

*Commentary by Evonne Marzouk, the founder and Executive Director of Canfei Nesharim. She has also worked since 1999 for the Office of International Affairs in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).*

**Learning From Our Mistakes** - We do not need to suffer through devastating consequences in order to learn how to live differently. In the Torah portion of Naso, we learn of the treatment of the Sotah, a wife who is suspected of adultery. Because her guilt cannot be proven by witnesses, but her husband suspects her and cannot forgive her without proof of her innocence, a miraculous test determines her innocence or guilt.

The woman is forced to drink "bitter waters that cause curse (Numbers 5:18)," formed of water, the dirt of the sanctuary, and the ink of an erased curse. If the woman is guilty, she will die; if she is innocent, she will be cleared of all suspicion.

Immediately following the ordeal of the Sotah, the Torah addresses the vow of the *Nazir*: "A man or woman who sets him/herself apart by making a nazirite vow to abstain for the sake of God, from new or aged wine shall he abstain (Numbers 6:2-3)." This is a voluntary vow that any individual can take upon him or herself, to avoid wine or any grape products for a fixed period of time.

### What Comes First?

Why does the vow of the Nazir follow the ordeal of the Sotah? Rashi comments that: "whoever sees an adulteress in her disgrace should vow to abstain from wine, for it leads to adultery." One should learn from the experience of seeing another person (the suspected adulteress) stumbling, says Rashi, by committing oneself not to make the same mistakes (through the vows of the Nazirite)--even beyond the boundaries of our usual commandments.

In contrast to the Torah's ordering, the Talmud discusses the Nazir before the Sotah. Why does the Talmud reverse the order?

The Mei Shiloach, Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Ishbitz, explains this with an interesting exploration of mistakes. The usual way, he writes, is that "a person can only uphold the teachings of the Torah when he has stumbled in them," i.e, a person makes mistakes and then learns from them. As mentioned above, this is why the Torah order is first Sotah (mistake), and then Nazir (correction).

However, continues the Mei Shiloach, the sages of the Talmud embraced "Torat Imecha" (the Torah of our mothers). These two words are cited from Proverbs 1:8: "Hearken, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the instruction of your mother [Torat Imecha]." According to Rashi, "the discipline of your father" refers to the written and oral Torah, whereas "the instruction of your mother [Imecha]" are the safeguards for the Torah. This refers to the additional edicts of the rabbis, safeguards for the Torah which go beyond the "letter of the law" and are meant to keep us from stumbling.

The sages loved the Jewish people the way a mother loves her child, and wanted the best for them. They therefore ordered Nazir (correction) before Sotah (mistake), so that the Jews would learn to be good and to restrain themselves from temptation, and would thus not need to suffer the pain of their mistakes.

Although the sages understood that one can and should learn from one's mistakes, the intention of the rabbis was that we should use the fences around the Torah to prevent ourselves from mistakes that could cause us pain, suffering, or distance from God.

### **Learning from Ancient Cultures**

Let's look at this from the perspective of our Torah responsibility to protect the environment--our responsibility to protect ourselves and our children from environmental "mistakes" and the damage that our actions might cause.

In the history of the world, many cultures have made mistakes that have caused serious damage to their environments and ultimately to their own well-being. The book *Collapse*, by the Pulitzer-Prize winning author Jared Diamond, explores ancient and medieval societies that came to new lands and changed their environments, causing such serious consequences that, in the end, the entire society collapsed, leaving only ruins for us to study and learn from.

These settlers, whether in Greenland, Peru, North America, or the Polynesian islands, did not have the benefit of "the wisdom of their mothers" to help them understand the threats that befell them. Deforestation, overgrazing, changes in water use, and other changes had significant impacts on the environments upon which these societies relied. They made mistakes, and as a result, their environment was ultimately unable to sustain them.

When these societies collapsed, the population faced war over scarce resources and starvation. Today we have modern examples of environmental destruction leading to starvation and warfare, such as in the genocide in Darfur, where an estimated 200,000 people have died and 2.5 million have been left homeless by a conflict that began in part as an agricultural skirmish over water supplies.

## **Could Our Way of Life Really Change?**

As modern people living in the complex and global society of the industrialized world, we tend to be overconfident about our relationship to our land and our ability to create and manage the resources that sustain us. We extract seemingly limitless natural resources using the most advanced technologies of any society in human history.

It seems impossible to imagine that our way of life could ever change, or that environmental impacts could ever truly affect our way of life.

We forget that modern Western society has existed for less than four hundred years. That seems like a long time, when we think of all that has happened in that period. But many cultures survived and thrived in an area of land for longer than four hundred years and were ultimately doomed by the consequences of their environmental choices, combined with unexpected circumstances that they could not change, like variations in weather patterns, or political changes elsewhere.

Moreover, our global consumer society has existed for a much shorter period of time, only approximately 60 years. Its environmental impact is without comparison in human history.

We have an advantage over these ancient societies who degraded their land and ultimately were destroyed. We have the ability to learn from their mistakes, and also from our holy Torah, which teaches us how to protect our resources for ourselves and for future generations.

## **The Importance of Foresight**

The ordering of Sotah and Nazir in this week's Torah portion teaches us that we can learn from others' mistakes and from the safeguards of our Torah. We do not need to suffer through devastating consequences in order to learn to live differently.

Throughout our history, particularly in exile, the Jewish people have suffered along with other nations through famines, droughts, and other natural disasters, sometimes brought on by poor management of the environments in which those nations lived. Today, living in our own land in Israel, our responsibility is even more intense--to protect our land for our children and grandchildren.

We live in an extraordinarily complex society by all standards in the history of the world. The globalization of our world presents great opportunities, and can insulate us from certain types of problems, because we can rely on people across the planet to provide us with the products that we need.

However, that globalization also makes us vulnerable. Even disasters or political challenges in distant countries can be felt in the costs of our food and energy resources. The complexity of our society also makes our impact on the environment vastly more significant and broad-reaching than earlier cultures.

Like Joseph, who foresaw the famine of seven years (Genesis 41 and 42) and saved food resources for the "lean" times, we need to adopt a mindset that will take us through not only the good years, but leave enough so that unexpected challenges will not lead to disastrous

consequences. We need to restrain ourselves, and to learn from the mistakes of others so that we do not have to experience the suffering of errors that could have been avoided.

As Jews and as participants in this globalized Western society, we must protect our land and our precious world, so that our children will be able to enjoy the good land and all the resources that God has granted us.

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For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:

Aish.com

[ISJL Taste of Torah](http://ISJL.TasteofTorah)

JTS

MyJewishLearning.com

[USCJ Torah Sparks](http://USCJ.TorahSparks)

Here is a link for the summer issue of the Next Step Newsletter from the USCJ. http://www.uscj.org/images/4957_NextStep_SU09_3.pdf

Interested in participating more in Shabbat service?

Lead a portion of services

Read Torah

Chant the Haftarah

Call Rabbi Bat-Or and she will help you make it happen.

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There are still two easy ways for you to help  
Congregation Sha'arey Israel can make a little extra money...

1. visit [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) for your online searches. This won't cost you anything but CSI makes a penny each time you search.

2. for all your online shopping needs go to [csimacon.org](http://csimacon.org) and click on our Amazon.com link.

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**Quick links:**

- [\*\*CSI Macon Online\*\*](#)
- [United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)
- [JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha](#)
- [Audio Siddur](#)
- [Global Jewish News Service](#)
- [Israeli News Broadcast – in English](#)
- [Crash Course in Jewish History](#)
- [The Jewish Ethicist](#)
- [The Jewish Women's Archive](#)
- [Hadassah](#)
- [Synagogue 3000](#)
- [Learn through USCJ online](#)
- [AJU - Walking with God series](#)
- [The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum](#)
- For the children (or the young at heart):**
- [Torah Portion Coloring Pages](#)
- [Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie](#)