

PARSHAT NASO
NUMBERS 4:21-7:89
10 SIVAN 5782/9 JUNE 2022



E Pluribus Unum
Painting by Ephraim Urevbu

ONE FRAGRANT COLLECTION

1. “Take a census (שָׁאוּ אֶת-רֵאשֵׁי) of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its tribes....The Israelites shall camp each under the banner of their ancestral house.” (Numbers 1:2, 2:2)

Twelve paths across the Red Sea (midrash)
Twelve stones on the high priest’s breastplate
Twelve orders of march
Each tribe accorded a designated territory

2. The chieftains brought the dedication offering for the altar....The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah. His offering: one silver bowl weighing 130 shekels and one silver basin... (Numbers 7:10-13)
3. Our rabbis says that although they all presented similar offerings, they meant by them to symbolize great events, which each one selected in accordance with their own judgement. (Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 13:14)

4. May it be your will, Adonai my God and God of my ancestors that in Your great kindness You will shine upon the holy souls that renew themselves as birds and sing and praise and pray on behalf of the holy people Israel...that if I, Your servant, am from the tribe of _____ whose section of the *nasi* I have read today in Your Torah, may all the holy sparks and holy illuminations that are included within the holiness of this tribe shine upon me, to grant me understanding and intelligence in Your Torah and my awe of You, to do Your will all the days of my life..." (Blessing for *nasi* readings)
5. The chieftains of Israel, the heads of the ancestral houses, namely the chieftains of the tribes...brought their offering before Adonai: six carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two chieftains and an ox for each one. (Numbers 7:2-3)
6. While we may perhaps be able to provide a complete ox by our own efforts, it takes two oxen to pull our common wagon. (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson)
7. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.
(Concluding sentence of Declaration of Independence, approved July 4, 1776)
8. You mix various rich sweets in one fragrant collection.
(Concluding line to poem introducing the motto of *Gentleman's Magazine*, "E Pluribus Unum," first published in 1731)