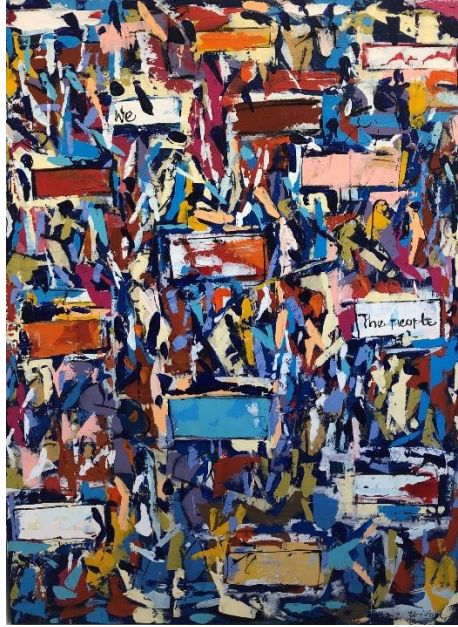


PARSHAT NASO
09 SIVAN 5781/20 MAY 2021



We The People
Acrylic on canvas by Ephraim Urevbu

ONE NATION, MANY ASPECTS

1. 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)

The chieftains also 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).

2. “Take a census [lit., “lift up the head”] of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its tribes...” (Numbers 1:2)
“The Israelites shall camp each under the banner of their ancestral house...” (Numbers 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 territory
3. Our Rabbis say that although they all presented similar offerings, they meant by them to symbolize great events, which each one selected in accordance with their own judgment. (Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 13:14)

4. May it be Your will, Adonai my God and God of my ancestors . . . 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. We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. (Preamble, Constitution of the United States of America, signed September 17, 1787)
6. 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; signed August 2, 1776)
7. “... six carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two chieftains and an ox for each one.”

While we may perhaps be able to provide a complete ox by our own efforts, it takes two oxen to pull our common wagon. (Based on Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson)