

PARSHAT NASO
NUMBERS 4:21-7:89
HAFTARAH JUDGES 13:2-25
9 SIVAN 5785/5 JUNE 2025



Sunlight on the Road, Pontoise
Camille Pissarro, 1874

Small Houses in Pontoise
Paul Cézanne, 1874

THE RICHNESS OF CREATIVE SOULS

1. Responsibilities of the Levites; laws of the sotah; laws of the Nazirite; priestly blessing; tribal gifts brought to the Mishkan
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 139 shekels and one silver basin... (Numbers 7:10-13)
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. This invitation to seek and decipher, to *midrash*, already constitutes the reader's participation in the Revelation, in Scripture. The reader, in his own fashion, is a scribe. This provides us with a first indication of what we might call the "status" of the Revelation: its word coming from elsewhere, from outside, and simultaneously dwelling in the person who receives it. (Emanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Verse*)
5. When a person utters words of the Torah, he never ceases to create spiritual potencies and new lights...for at all times, indeed in every moment, the composition [of the inner linguistic elements] changes in accordance with the condition and rank of this moment,

and in accordance with the names that flare up within him at this moment. (Hayim Joseph David Azulai)

6. A person who looks to religion as a source of authority, who wants final and absolute answers to issues of belief and practice, who is impatient with pluralistic or indecisive answers to ultimate questions, will embrace the traditionalist position and view Torah as literally and verbally revealed. In contrast is someone who is prepared to live with ambiguity and indecision, who accepts the inevitability of different points of view on complex moral, theological, and spiritual issues, and who is prepared to become engaged in the issues. (Neil Gillman, *Sacred Fragments*)
7. Often we tend to see a tension between conformity and creativity, between tradition and innovation. On the one hand, we recognize the bedrock of principles upon which a meaningful existence must rest, the time-tested truths which transcend cultures and generations; on the other, we are faced with the powerful drive to create, to personalize, to grow and soar with our individualized talents and tools....Even as they relate to the ultimate common denominator of their bond with God, they each bring to the experience the richness of their own creative souls. (Menachem Mendel Schneerson)
8. "He became influenced by me at Pontoise and I by him....We were always together, but each of us unquestionably retained the only thing that counts, our own sensation. (Camille Pissarro)