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# NEWS & VIEWS

June 13, 2019 | 10 Sivan 5779

Blog Issue

## 70 FACES OF TORAH

Posts from this [Hebrew College-hosted blog](#) are published weekly in [Patheos](#).

### Stepping Out of the Spectacle to Listen

*Parashat Naso (Numbers 4:21 - 7:89)*

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*Lecha Dodi*, one of the love poems to the Holy One that we recite each Shabbat, quotes a meaningful concept from mystical literature: *sof ma'aseh bemahshava tehila* – what comes into being last was thought of first. In the mystics' creation story - and for all of us, on our better days – thought precedes action and the fullness of vision is present even as its realization is incremental.

In the Friday night service, *sof ma'aseh bemahshava tehila* refers to Shabbat. Shabbat is the last day of creation and the last day of the week, but the mystics suggest that it was central to God's vision for time. *Sof ma'aseh bemahshava tehila* can also refer to human beings – the notion that human beings were created last, but were tasked with enacting the very purpose of Creation – of bringing loving presence into the world.

*Sof ma'aseh bemahshava tehila* is embodied in the structure and story of this week's *parasha*, *Naso*. This *parasha* is the culmination of a book and a half of Torah, and its very last verse (Numbers 7:89) is perhaps the most critical. *Naso* tells the story of a grand procession of tribal leaders bringing gifts to conclude the dedication of the *mishkan*. The last verse reads:

*When Moshe came into the tent of meeting to speak with the Divine, he heard the Voice speaking with itself to him from above the cover that was on the ark of testimony from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.*

After all the careful work of building the holy space and articulating what could happen there, after sorting out who could be there and what they should do there, after all the planning and the pomp, the *mishkan* can now fulfill its ultimate purpose: to be a place for human beings to encounter the Divine in the midst of wandering, a portable Sinai.

It would be easy to miss this moment. The people built the *mishkan* and brought gifts to create a place where humans could encounter the Divine. They could see how its physical structure compared to the verbal blueprints. The gifts were assigned and delivered in orderly fashion, with clear notations on who brought what so the thank you notes could be written. The planning and its execution were measurable and described at length, but the encounter itself seems brief – a verse tacked at the end of the *parasha*.

Read more

## IN THE NEWS

Rabbi Or Rose, Director of the [Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership](#), spent Shavuot at the United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong, serving as scholar-in-residence. Commenting on the experience, Rabbi Rose said, "It was an honor to engage with members of the Jewish community of Hong Kong and explore one of the world's great cultural hubs."

Hebrew College's new leadership hires – **Dr. Susie Tanchel** and **Rabbi Jeffrey Summit** – were featured in the June 3, 2019 "[Comings & Goings](#)" section of eJewish Philanthropy and the June 6, 2019 issue of [The Jewish Advocate](#) (paid subscription only).

**Michal Bessler, MJEd` 17** was named interim principal of the elementary school at the Maimonides School in Brookline, MA beginning July 1.

**Dr. Keren McGinity**, Director of the Interfaith Families Jewish Engagement Program at Hebrew College, will be a presenter at Chicago Sinai Congregation's June 13 program, a program she co-created with Rabbi Seth Limmer, entitled "Breaking the Cycle: The Jewish Community in the Age of #MeToo."

**Rabbi Dr. Michael Shire**, Chief Academic Officer, was featured in the June 11 [JNF \(Jewish News Syndicate\) article](#) "Study finds Jewish teens flourish socially, emotionally and spiritually when connected to youth groups."

The [article](#) "The Master's Degree as a Way to Deepen the Talent and Motivation of Teachers" by Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education Dean **Rabbi Dr. Michael Shire** and Associate Dean **Dr. Deborah Skolnick Einhorn** appeared in the summer issue of Prizmah's HaYidion Magazine.

**Rabbi Ayalon Eliach, Rab` 18** was featured in the May 31 [podcast episode](#) of "Judaism Unbound" entitled "Judaism with Purpose(s). Rabbi Eliach was also selected as a 2019-2020 [David Hartman Center Fellow](#).

The [Judaism Unbound](#) podcast episode about "Communal Singing with **Rabbis David Fainsilber, Rab` 14** and **Jessica Kate Meyer, Rab` 14**" was released on June 5. The episode, with host **Lex Rofeberg, MJEd` 18**, was recorded live during the Rabbinical School's January Winter Seminar "The Past and Future of Synagogues."



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