



The law of jealousy versus the cup of deliverance

Parashat naso (35) – Lift up (the heads)

Torah: Bemidbar 4:21 to 7:89

Haftarah: Shophetim 13:2-25

Apostolic Scriptures: Ma`asei 21:17-32

This week's *sidrah* follows directly on what we covered last week. We concluded with the *Lěwite* family of *Qeath* carrying the consecrated furniture of the *mishkan* after the priests had packed and covered it according to YAH's rules. We also saw how the *Lěwites* would camp around the *mishkan* and the rest of the nation would camp around them, towards the outside. Although not necessarily circular, we still see the pattern of a wheel within a wheel, similar to the vision of *Yehezqěl* 1:15-20. In this way, we see the Presence of YAH tabernacle in the midst of His people, so that we are reminded of the words of *Yeshua*:

Yohanan 20²⁹ יהושע said to him, "T'oma, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Since we already know what the tasks of *Qeath* and his family are, we now learn the obligations imposed on the family of *Gěrshon*. This involves the transportation of all the curtains, except the veil that is already packed, all the coverings and ropes that go with it, and all other necessary accessories. Their supervisor is *Aharon*'s other son, *Ithamar*, the priest. Finally, the duties for the family of *Merari* come into the spotlight. Their supervisor is also *Ithamar* and their duties include the transportation of all the boards, bases, pillars, pegs, ropes, and other accessories. Although the entire tribe of *Lěwi* was previously counted from one month old and older, it is also necessary to keep a count again of men who are suitable to handle the transportation of the tabernacle.

In order to maintain order and good management, it is important that responsible persons are appointed as supervisors in each area. The *Lěwites* did not decide what they would be transporting, but were assigned specific tasks to ensure that everything ran smoothly – from dismantling at the old campsite to re-erecting at the new campsite. When everyone is aware of their assigned tasks and carries it out thoroughly, there is no real need for supervision. Supervisors are, however, appointed to avoid mistakes and to equalise the work.

The worker with an assigned task is not required to exercise control over the entire project. Only the appointed supervisors must have a clear picture of what everything entails and then ensure that it is applied correctly. However, it is important that each member of the team fully understands his task and handles it responsibly, so that the correct balance can be maintained to successfully complete the project. Unfortunately, not everyone has a calling to act as a supervisor; it is only for a smaller group of people. The

worker is subordinate to a higher authority and respects the rules that are set. Someone who only works well under supervision cannot, unfortunately, be a good servant in the heavenly Kingdom.

In this *sidrah*, the *Torah* teaches us two important fundamentals by which man wants to be viewed. The first need of any human being is to be included in a group, to be counted, to be part of something. This week's *sidrah* therefore begins with the words "Take a census also...". This count took place in the manner that was typical of the custom in the ANE. People would stand in rows while an emissary of the ruler moved among them. Everyone would look down with their heads bowed. When the emissary came to someone who would be acceptable, he would place his hand under the person's chin and lift his head, after which the person would be set apart for the service to be performed. This is where this study gets its name: נָשָׂא (*na-so*), raise [the head].

The second necessity that every human being has, is to be assigned a task, to have some responsibility. Unfortunately, there are many people who still wonder why they were put on earth, what YAH's purpose is for them. Any person who cannot satisfy both of these needs feels worthless and cannot experience a purposeful life. We have heard many people ask: "What is my purpose on earth?" "What am I living for?" Most of these people are not part of the Way of Truth, so consequently they do not experience the love of YAH and other people in their lives, but the moment they are drawn into YAH's Kingdom and a task is assigned to them, their lives change drastically.

Most *Torah*-obedient believers come from various theological backgrounds before they step onto the Path of Truth and begin to live a lifestyle according to the rules that YAH has established. When we begin to study *Torah*, we realise the extremely organised and orderly way of life that is a reflection of *Yeshua's* heavenly pattern. When believers move forward according to this pattern, they find that YAH's Word, *Shabbat*, and all the set-apart festivals move together in unity with YAH's Presence, as the *Ruach* then engages with the spirit of the believer. It is almost as if ordinary people are transformed into a heavenly army that approaches YAH together in worship.

However, there are certain circumstances that cause YAH's Presence to not always be among the believers and this is something we will now focus on. Any form of impurity defiles not only the person, but ultimately the entire camp. As we learned in a previous study of *tahor* and *tamei* (cf. *Wayyiqra* 14:1 to 15:33), it is necessary for us to apply those rules to distinguish ceremonial purity and cleanliness from ceremonial impurity and impurity.

Anyone with a contagious disease, most commonly leprosy, as well as people with discharges, and anyone having become unclean by a corpse, must be sent away from the camp. The proverb used by rabbis came to the modern Western world through the teachings of John Wesley and Matthew Henry:

"Cleanliness is next to godliness".

This proverb teaches us the inseparability of being set apart and purity. It is also the foundation for discipline, something we seriously addressed last week and which must still be applied in the life of every believer. Although many explanations are given by many sages regarding the laws of purity, the most important one seems to be that a person becomes unclean as a result of contact with death. The reason for this is that this would not have been destined for man, but had to happen as a result of the fall, something we must be reminded of at all times.

Another form of impurity was theft and dishonesty. The rules that YAH gives us are directly linked to our attitude. If we act with the wrong attitude, that is, an impurity of thoughts, will and emotions, spiritual

illness would also eventually appear in the body as a warning. Any mixing of impurity with purity would not only bring dishonour to YAH's Name, but also cause defilement of the entire camp.

To this day, YAH is busy creating the nation of *Yisra'el*, of which we are a part, as His perfect firstborn – a set-apart nation of priests (cf. *Kěpha Aleph* 2:9-10). In order to accomplish this role among believers, it is first of all necessary that everyone knows, understands and applies the rules and principles of the Kingdom. The call of *Torah* is now heard more than ever by people worldwide and many are responding to this pure, set-apart lifestyle. This can only happen when everyone walks this way together without any form of impurity, through a healthy spirit and a loving, covenant relationship with YAH:

- 🏆 *Debarim* 8³ "And He humbled you, and let you suffer hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, to make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every *Word* that comes from the mouth of יהוה.
- 🏆 *Amos* 8¹¹ "See, days are coming," declares the Master יהוה, "that I shall send a hunger in the land, not a hunger for bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the Words of יהוה.

Any form of unfaithfulness to another person is also unfaithfulness to YAH. A guilty person would have to compensate for financial damages and add 20% to that. Compensation or restoration is an important part of repentance, *t'shuvah*. If compensation does not take place, there is also not complete repentance. Everything possible must be done to ensure that compensation plus the additional part is fully restored. We learn an important lesson from the Apostolic Scriptures:

Luqas 19⁸ But *Zakkai* stood up and said to the Master, "Look, Master, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have taken whatever from anyone by false accusation, I repay fourfold." ⁹ And יהושע said to him, "Today deliverance has come to this house – since he also is a son of *Abraham*.

We see, as it were, seven steps to true repentance:

- 🏆 Recognition of sin
- 🏆 Self-blame
- 🏆 Confession before YAH and the person or persons who have been harmed
- 🏆 Plead forgiveness from YAH and person/persons
- 🏆 Intention to change lifestyle
- 🏆 Compensation
- 🏆 Faithfulness in tests that YAH may send to confirm true repentance

We must realise that any harm to our neighbour is an offense against YAH. Any person who robs or harms his neighbor in any way also does so to YAH. Compensation is therefore important to restore not only the honour of YAH, but also that of our fellow man. A person who has transgressed must also be able to rest his conscience in the knowledge that everything humanly possible has been done to avoid a similar incident in the future. Here the guilty person's head is '*naso-ed*', lifted up, to be able to live life to the fullest to the honour of YAH. We should view this command as a psychological brake to not commit the same offense again.

A related issue, also something that many people struggle with, is the issue of not forgiving or walking around with regrets. When a brother or sister asks for forgiveness, it should not be refused. Any form of unforgiveness is a violation of *Torah*. One who does not forgive his or her fellow man becomes spiritually unclean and defiles YAH's camp. That person will remain guilty, while the one who pleads for forgiveness will be clean (cf. *Yehezqel* 18:21-32). Please take these words of *Yeshua* to heart:

Yohanan 20 ²³“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”

We also learn (*cf. Mattithyahu* 18:21-22):

Luqas 17 ³“Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴“And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day comes back to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.” [on that day]

Sha’ul was so concerned about *Yeshua*’s followers that he warned them to settle a matter before the sun went down. When we let transgressions linger, especially overnight, it is viewed in a serious light. *Yeshua* taught his followers to forget transgressions quickly. They were even to forgive people before they were asked to (*cf. Luqas* 15:17-24):

Eph`siyim 4 ²³and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the renewed man which was created according to *Elohim*, in righteousness and set-apartness of the truth. ²⁵Therefore, having put off the false, **speak truth, each one with his neighbour**, for we are members of one another. ²⁶**Be wroth, but do not sin.**” Do not let the sun go down on your rage, ²⁷nor give place to the devil. [emphasis original]

While cleansing the camp of any defilement, we also learn the rule regarding the wife who is suspected of adultery by her husband. Marriage is something that *YAH* established at Creation, the most fundamental covenant relationship. The law of jealousy was applicable to both the man and the woman. Infidelity, especially adultery, is extremely defilement and destructive, which is why the *Torah* devotes an extensive set of rules around this matter. This was also common practice in the ANE, according to historians.

First, we see a special grain offering being offered. The standard grain offering would be finely ground wheat flour, but in this case finely ground barley flour is offered, which is half the value (*cf. Melakim Bēt* 7:1, 16, 18). It was the staple food for the poor and livestock in the ANE (*cf. Shophetim* 7:13; *Melakim Aleph* 4:28; *Melakim Bēt* 4:42; *Yehezqēl* 4:12). The possible reason for this is the questionable reputation of the woman or the ambiguous, suspicious nature of her actions¹.

This grain offering is also known as the “grain offering of jealousy, an offering of remembrance that remembers the guilt” (v. 15). In this way, the man would bring the woman’s suspected transgression before *YAH* so that He could announce judgement upon her. The earthenware jar in which the water was placed was worthless compared to the other utensils in the tabernacle and therefore suitable for this type of test. The substance added symbolises the curse of sin, for it is the earth that was cursed after the fall. However, it could also indicate man’s humble beginnings (*cf. Berēshith* 1:27) and ultimate death (*cf. Mizmor* 22:15), when he returns to dust.

We learn from Scripture that a woman’s hair should hang loose, something that would normally be tied up. Loose hair represents the temporary loss of her honour and good reputation. It may also be that she is trying to prove her innocence, even that she may be in mourning over a possible crime (*cf. Wayyiqra* 10:6; 21:10; *Yehezqēl* 24:17), or a form of impurity (*Wayyiqra* 13:45).

Medical doctor and expert on Scripture and graduate theologian, M R de Haan, offers a natural explanation for what may be the result of this case as opposed to the supernatural explanation, something that has touched the imagination of many people. He is of the opinion that the (treated) test water that the woman had to drink, reacted on the chemical composition of her digestive system, something that would not work

1 Keil, CF, and Franz Delitzsch. The Pentateuch, volume 3:31. Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament.

normally due to her guilt. Science has established that certain emotions and disorders of the nervous system change specific chemical compositions of our body secretions. He also mentioned bitter herbs, but these are not found in any original manuscripts. Symptoms described in *Torah* are that the woman's hip will fall and her belly will swell. Various scholars have various opinions, but the general acceptance of scholars is that the organs that committed the sin will be punished so that the woman will remain childless and will forever be cursed among her people.

We see here a preview of the bride of *Yeshua*. She must keep herself pure and will not be found guilty by bitter water, the judgement of *Yeshua*. The law of jealousy is mainly about the forgiveness of the sinner and not about the death of the sinner. This will therefore be someone who knows, understands and applies *Torah*, but who has strayed from the truth. The law of jealousy will therefore free *YAH*'s people from a pursuing, suspicious spirit. Few people realise that it is this law that *Yeshua* fulfilled on our behalf for our salvation when he did not utter a word before his accusers.

We have all sinned and are only declared righteous through *Yeshua*'s redemption. Every *Torah*-obedient believer who fully follows *Yeshua* will be declared pure and faithful through the cup of redemption. Those who reject *Yeshua* and *Torah* will be seen as the adulterous woman and will be condemned on the final *Yom Kippur*, the day of reckoning or redemption. We learn from a very well-known passage in the Apostolic Scriptures how a woman was brought to *Yeshua* after she had been caught in adultery. The Pharisees and Scribes actually did this to test him, hence the answer he gives to their expectation that she should be stoned:

Yohanan 8 ⁷But as they kept on questioning Him, He straightened up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

It is important to note that only the woman was brought to *Yeshua* and not the man. He obviously knew their motives and said nothing, but wrote in the dust on the floor of the temple with his finger. Here *Yeshua* once again fulfilled the law by not paying attention to man's judgement of the woman, but doing what his Father had done long before: he showed his empowerment with his finger just as *YAH* with His finger, on stone tablets, gave us the rules by which we must live. It is possible that *Yeshua* wrote the law of jealousy in the dust on the temple floor as a warning against the people who wanted to accuse the woman. After he had written, they disappeared, possibly because they knew what he was writing.

With this, *Yeshua* indicated what *YAH*'s house is founded on: the law of *Mosheh* **and** the prophets. These men, appointed by *YAH*, were masters in their field who understood not only the Ten Words, but also the pillars, the principles upon which the Ten Words rested (*cf. Shemoth* 21-23 in its entirety). The prophets held legal status on earth, granted to them by *YAH* and together with their knowledge and application of the Ten Words, everything merged with the ministry of *Yeshua*: the living Word. This is one of the most important reasons why we study both *Torah* (*Mosheh*) **and** the prophets weekly:

Kěpha Aleph 1 ¹⁰Concerning this deliverance the prophets have sought out and searched out, prophesying concerning the favour for you, ¹¹searching to know what, or what sort of time, the Spirit which was in them was pointing out concerning Messiah, when it was bearing witness beforehand the sufferings of Messiah, and the esteems that would follow,

Just like the woman's accusers, we also stand guilty before *YAH* and have no right to pick up a stone against anyone else, regardless of the so-called offence. There are cases of apostasy everywhere, people who reject *Yeshua*, believers who completely turn around and walk away from every form of love towards *YAH*. The enemy is cunning and will stick his dirty, greasy fingers in everywhere to cause trouble, to sow division. However, this does not mean that we should sit in sackcloth and ashes, but that we will only humble ourselves, that we will also intercede for such people and congregations.

It is precisely here that the rule of the נָזִיר (*na-Zir*) comes into play. Many people experience the call of YAH to perform certain tasks, to fulfill certain callings. Every prophet in Scripture was personally called by YAH to perform a specific task. However, other people are told in other ways to partially withdraw themselves from society, to live a more set-apart life altogether than the average follower of YAH. They may also be called by messengers, as we learn:

Shophetim 13 ⁵“For look, you are conceiving and bearing a son. And let no razor come upon his head, for the youth is a Nazirite to Elohim from the womb on. And he shall begin to save Yisra’el out of the hand of the Philistines.”

There are many special characteristics in someone who is chosen and set apart by YAH as a *nazir*, but we must never lose sight of the fact that any person may dedicate himself or herself to YAH according to a specific need. *Nazir* translates as ‘dedicated’, ‘zealous’ and even ‘untended’. The latter has mostly to do with vineyards that are not harvested during the *sh’mithah* and *yovel* (cf. *Wayyiqra* 25:5, 11; *parashat b’har* [25]) and thus left uncared for. The word is derived from נָזַר (*ne-Zer*) which translates as ‘crown’ (cf. *Shemoth* 39:30) as worn by the high priest. However, it also has the meaning of something that is set apart, as the high priest is set apart for a special task. We therefore see a sign on the head of the person who sets himself apart for YAH: no razor may come near him; his hair is the sign of his being set apart and also a sign of a special relationship between YAH and the *nazir*.

In this way, in order to attain the same status as the high priest, it is possible for anyone who is willing to pay the price: sacrifice. In this case, however, it is not mandatory, but voluntary. However, each person who presents himself or herself as a *nazir* before YAH must be persistent in what is sacrificed. It is also not a matter of bragging to others or looking down on people not doing it. A good example of a modern-day *nazir* is someone who decides to quit smoking, stop drinking alcohol or even avoid certain foods. On the contrary, anything that steals our attention from time to spend in YAH’s Word should be banned from our lives. Think of that dear social media...

Most modern cases where someone takes a vow of abstinence will be permanent in nature. Since there is no official temple or priestly order, no sacrifice is required, but if something is temporarily abstained from, it would be appropriate to have a gathering with close family and friends at the end of the period during which praise and thanksgiving are offered to YAH. Please keep in mind that this vow of abstinence is in no way a guarantee of entering eternal life, any more than keeping *Shabbat* and the set-apart festivals can guarantee it. Nor is it something that YAH commands anyone to do, but only a method by which a person wishes to live closer to YAH.

Only two persons in Scripture can be considered lifelong *nazirim*, namely *Shimshon* and *Shemu’el*. A possible third could be *Yohanan haMatbil* (the Immerser), but it is difficult to determine whether he lived as a *nazir* before his official ministry as a baptist. The fact that a *nazir*’s hair is not cut is simply a sign of the person’s abstinence. This also places strong emphasis on the translation of ‘unkempt’, as in the case of the grapes (cf. *Wayyiqra* 25:5, 11). However, with today’s fashion trends, it will be impossible to identify a true *nazir*. This is where the person’s character will have to come to the fore.

Although we already learned about the setting up of the tabernacle four months ago, we are now learning about the offerings brought by each tribe, also called the leaders of *Yisra’el* or heads of their fathers’ houses. YAH expects more from a leader than the average person and we learned that the precious stones on the *choshen* were provided by leaders of the tribes (cf. *Shemoth* 35:27). A leader must be someone who is willing to endure more, to pray, to watch, to give. He must also be willing to be withheld from privileges that others may enjoy.

The first gifts we note here are six tent wagons with twelve oxen. Two wagons and four oxen went to *Gērshon* and would be used to transport the curtains and accessories. Four wagons and eight oxen would go to *Merari* for transporting of the boards, bases, and accessories. The furniture of the *mishkan* would not be transported by wagon, but was carried by the family of *Qehath*.

This entire chapter, the longest in Scripture after *Mizmor* 119, may seem a little tedious with all the repetitions. Some readers may think that all the items of the offerings could have been mentioned once and then all those who brought them, but we learn here that all the offerings are mentioned with the same enthusiasm because all are equally important. The last will enjoy the same respect as the first. *YAH* does not get tired of receiving the same offering day after day, but it must be given with the right attitude. We place an illustration for information in addendum A.

A person in need is more grateful to receive something than a person who has abundance. Gratitude for food should be the same every day. We should not take anything for granted and even less should we insist on anything. It is not our right to eat like a king every day, but only by the favour of *YAH* do we have the privilege of having food and drink. Even if we eat the same food two days in a row, we should be just as grateful the second day as the first.

This narrative may seem like a flashback, but we must keep in mind that the people were still encamped at *Sinai*. On the first of twelve consecutive days, *Nahshon*, the son of *ʿAmminadab*, brought the following:

Bemidbar 7 ¹³And his offering was one silver dish, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty *sheqels*, one silver bowl of seventy *sheqels*, according to the *sheqel* of the set-apart place, both of them filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ¹⁴one gold ladle of ten *sheqels*, filled with incense; ¹⁵one young bull, one ram, one male lamb a year old, as an ascending offering; ¹⁶one male goat as a sin offering; ¹⁷and as a slaughtering of peace offerings: two cattle, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of *Nahshon*, son of *Amminadab*.

The next day, *Nethan'el*, from the tribe of *Yissaskar*, brought exactly the same offering. He had the opportunity to bring more or less, even better, but he brought what *Nahshon* had brought. Day after day, tribal leaders brought their offerings; each one brought the same, no less and no more; no better or worse. Last week we learned about unity in diversity and here we see the result. Each tribal leader brought what another had brought and we see this chapter as pomp, display, ceremony and ritual. This was the typical way in which gifts were received and recorded in the ANE – each one separately so that no one could boast or feel inferior afterwards.

We learn from this that each tribal leader was willing to bring precious things to *YAH* as an offering, something that would rightfully be expected of them. No one had the desire to try to be better than the others, something that shows good spirit and an attitude of unity among the leaders. This is also how *YAH* wants us to live and act towards each other, that there will be no competition over earthly possessions. Each of us should be generous in our daily walk, faithful to our friends, without trying to take advantage of others or where others are humiliated so that we can be exalted.

This week's *sidrah* concludes with one of the most reassuring verses in Scripture:

Bemidbar 7 ⁸⁹And when *Mosheh* went into the Tent of Appointment to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the lid of atonement that was on the ark of the Witness, from between the two *kerubim*. Thus He spoke to him.

At *Sinai*, only *Mosheh* could receive commands or answers from *YAH* in an audible voice. However, it was necessary for him to enter the Tent of Meeting so that he could be at the Ark of the Covenant where *YAH*'s Presence rested. By the favour of *YAH*, each of us today has access to the throne in heaven through *Yeshua HaMashiach*. All who have dedicated their lives to *YAH* through *Yeshua* have the right to serve the Father in Spirit and in truth. *Mosheh* was the only person who was allowed to enter the most set-apart section of the *mishkan* at any time. Likewise, *Yeshua* is the only one who can do so in the heavenly tabernacle, but everyone who confesses and follows him has the privilege of being there with him. When we approach *YAH* through *Yeshua*, talk to Him and listen to His voice when He answers, we will receive the necessary guidance for our lives.

To conclude today's study, we will go back to a few verses that were skipped in the previous chapter. This is known as the priestly blessing and in Hebrew it reads as follows:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יְאֲרֶה יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַיְחַנֶּךָ
יִשְׂאֵל יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשְׂעָם לָךְ שְׁלֹום

While there are several wonderful translations in languages that people may understand more easily, we would like to post a free translation here from Jeff Benner's website²:

יְהוָה will kneel before you presenting gifts and will guard you with a hedge of protection;

יְהוָה will illuminate the wholeness of His being toward you, bringing order and He will give you comfort and sustenance;

יְהוָה will lift up His wholeness of being and look upon you and He will set in place all you need to be whole and complete.

Shabbat shalom!

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Sources :

Sources:

We prefer to not use the word 'God', because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by '*Elohim*' or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from The Scriptures 2009, unless indicated differently.³

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic *Torah* with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

Artscroll Sotne Edition *Chumash*

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable












² <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/studies-interpretation/aaronic-blessing-from-a-hebrew-perspective.htm>

³ <https://isr-messianic.org/>

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Addendum A

So each day, for twelve days in a row, a leader presents to the temple:

Offering and Grain Sacrifice	Burnt Offering	Sin Offering	Sacrifice of Well-being
 <p>flour mixed with oil</p> <p>1 silver plate weighing 130 shekels*</p>	 <p>1 young bull</p>	 <p>1 male goat</p>	 <p>2 oxen</p>
 <p>flour mixed with oil</p> <p>1 silver basin weighing 70 shekels*</p>	 <p>1 ram</p>		 <p>5 rams</p>
 <p>incense</p> <p>1 golden dish weighing 10 shekels*</p>	 <p>1 male lamb one-year-old</p>		 <p>5 male goats</p>
			 <p>5 male lambs one-year-old</p>

* No one is really sure how much a shekel actually is, but www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/weightsandmeasures.html says it's maybe 10 grams +/- 1 gram