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PARSHAT NASSO

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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

THE ULTIMATE BLESSING!

Shabbat arrives and the family gather around the table. The children approach their father for a blessing, and out of his holy mouth emanates the famous words Yevarechacha Hashem Veyishmeracha – May Hashem Bless you and Guard you. This was the daily priestly blessing, given by the Kohanim in the Bet Hamikdash. But it seems a bit superfluous. Why not just say may Hashem Bless us?

What are we specifically asking for?

There are of course many beautiful interpretations to this deep blessing, but we shall focus on one.

There once was a couple who had been married for many years ... happily married. They had met in their teens; it was love at first sight. Their families got on well, their friends approved ... they married young. After bringing up the kids, they decided to take a cruise before planning a long and happy retirement. They could afford a five-day short trip around the Mediterranean. The cruise gave them a day wandering around the gift shops of the Greek island of Santorini.

In the back of a dark, almost deserted store, the wife found a dusty old lamp. She gave it a quick polish, to see what it could look like...and out popped our friendly neighborhood genie.

"I usually give just one wish", said the genie, "but I can see that you two are a couple still in love after all these years; you may each have a wish."

"Oooh!" said the wife, "I'd like to be on a proper ocean cruise...somewhere in the South Pacific".

And in an instant, she was gone, wafted off to her dream...maybe she meant to include her husband, but these wishes tend to be taken literally.

"And you, sir?", asked the genie.

Conscious that he was alone, and the world was at his fingertips, the husband thought long and hard ...

"I'd like a wife thirty years younger than me", he eventually decided.

And in an instant, he aged thirty years, and the genie disappeared.

Words are powerful. The power of speech singles man out from all the other creatures, and we must cherish this gift.

It is for this reason that when it comes to the priestly blessing (Birkat Kohanim), every word counts.

The Kohanim bless the people daily stating Yevarechecha Hashem Veyishmeracha – May Hashem Bless you and guard you.

Rashi states that every word is important.

The Kohen is not merely giving a blessing that we should be blessed with wealth, rather the Kohen is going a step further, blessing us that this newly found wealth should last. It should stay with us – Hashem should guard us from losing it.

Our Sages relate a story of Rav Yosi Ben Kisma, who was very wealthy.

Once some people came and kidnapped his two sons, taking them captive to Rome. When Rav Yosi heard the news, he was devastated.

He understood the kidnappers wanted a ransom and immediately took with him a big sum of money heading to Rome. Once he got there and found the leader of the kidnappers, he entered his home and put 100 gold dinar coins on the table. "Here is 100 gold coins for my two sons, now please return them to me".

The captor looked on and laughed. "If you think you are going to gain their release with that, think again. Now get out of here and bring back much much more money." Rav Yosi, left distraught. He exited the building and began to pour out his heart in prayer to Hashem.

Hashem, in His ultimate mercy, harkened to the prayer of the Tsadik and sent His

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Ministering angel Michael, to cause pain to the captor.

Suddenly the captor began to have severe stomach pains. He coped with these for a while, but then couldn't take it any more. His advisors, said to him, maybe it was due to that holy rabbi, and maybe he should after all accept the rabbis offer.

He called back the rabbi and told him he would accept the 100 gold coins.

Rav Yosi, glanced towards him, and said, that offer was an old one, now that he had been put through trouble of having to come back there was a new offer, "I will give you 80 gold coins."

"What, are you mad, do you ever want to see your two sons? Get out of here and bring me 100 coins."

Yet sure enough as soon as Rav Yosi left the building, the captors' pains became stronger.

He realized it must be connected and recalled R Yosi.

"Ok give me 80."

"I will give you 50."

"You have a cheek, get out."

R Yosi left, and again the pains began to become unbearable. Call him back.

"Ok give me 50."

"50? You have caused me so much trouble, sending me backwards and forwards, now I will take them for free?" Retorted Rav Yosi.

The kidnapper was amazed. "For free? What, do you think I have gone through all this trouble to kidnap your children so that I return them for free. Get Out!" However as soon as he left, the captor's stomach was in such pain he thought he would die. Bring him back.

"Ok take your children, just get out."

"Mmm I think not." Answered R Yosi. I think you owe me some money. "Pay

me and then we will leave." And so it was, not only did R Yosi receive back his two sons, but he was also paid!

This is the meaning of the Birkat Kohanim.

Yevarechecha Hashem Veyishmerecha – may Hashem bless you with money and may He guard it with you. How will He protect your wealth - Yaer Hashem Panav Elecha VeyChuneka – He will shine His Face on you (send his Ministering Angel Michael) and find favor in you. Yisa Hashem Panav Elecha Veyasem Lecha Shalom – He will ensure that not only do you guard your wealth, but you will add to it and be at peace.

This is the blessing our Kohanim give us; this is the blessing we give our children every Shabbat at the dinner table. May Hashem always send us His blessings Amen.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT NASSO

In this week's Parasha we read 'וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: G-d spoke to Moses:

דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר בְּהַתְּבָרְכֶם אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמַר לָהֶם: Speak to Aaron and his sons: Thus shall you bless the people of Israel. Say to them:

יְבָרְכֶם ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ: G-d bless you and protect you!

וְיִדְבָּר ה' אֶלֶיךָ וְיִחַן: G-d deal kindly and graciously with you!

וְיִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם: G-d bestow [divine] favour upon you and grant you peace!

Thus - וְשָׂמוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָנִי אֲבָרְכֶם:

they shall link My name with the people of Israel, and I will bless them.

The words וְאָנִי אֲבָרְכֶם And I will bless them, simply means that ה' will bless ישראל עם through the Kohanim. But it also can be understood as a promise to the Kohanim that if they'll bless ישראל עם G-d himself will bless them.

This promise, says Rabbi Avigdor Miller זצ"ל, is not only for the Kohanim but as we see in Parashat לך, it is for everyone who bless ישראל עם. As our forefather Abraham, וְאָבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶךָ - I will bless those who bless you, G-d promised that if you bless his children, he will repay you by bringing blessing into your life.

We have lots of opportunities in our daily lives to bring ברכה into our lives. For

example, when we hear an ambulance passing by, instead of saying, 'Oh, I cannot stand that noise,' we can say, "G-d, please send complete healing to your Jewish people". When you see a person who is having a hard time finding his or her soulmate, we can pray, "please G-d send them their future spouse". Children on their way to school also need a blessing and a prayer that they will succeed in their studies and will not suffer from bad friendships, etc. We should accustom ourselves to bless G-d's children, whether it is with having children or שְׁלוֹם, education or financial issues, etc. And by blessing others we shall be blessed by G-d in all matters of spiritual and physicality. Amen.



RABBI DANNY FISHER
Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

פרשת נשא

In this week's Parsha we find that Bnei Yisroel are blessed with the words 'וְיִשֶּׂם לָךְ שְׁלוֹם' Hashem should grant peace on you. The Medrash Rabah tells us about the greatness of שְׁלוֹם and in fact the final part of שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה is about שְׁלוֹם for this very reason, because of its greatness. We also find the idea in הלל that anyone who is a student of אהרן הכהן must personify the concept of שְׁלוֹם וְרוּדֵף שְׁלוֹם "loving peace and Perusing peace", which is what

famously epitomised. Another place in the תורה where we find the manifestation of how integral שְׁלוֹם is, is the incident with אלעזר. פְּנִיחָם בְּנֵי אֶלְעָזָר famously sanctified ה' name through the killing of זמרי, and due to this was given a reward that was called a ברית שְׁלוֹם a covenant of peace. The פסוק says הִנֵּנוּ נֹתֵן ה' לָנוּ אֶת בְּרִית שְׁלוֹם. We see the greatness of שְׁלוֹם that when פְּנִיחָם restored שְׁלוֹם to ה' name, his reward was that of שְׁלוֹם. What is it about שְׁלוֹם that it is such an important concept and a foundation of the world? שְׁלוֹם is likened to a vessel which can hold

within it all of ה' goodness. Just like when one wants to drink, a cup is the container to hold the water that allows us to drink, so too שְׁלוֹם because of its Vitality to the world's continuity, it is the vessel that allows us to receive ה' goodness.

The Nesivas Sholom asks why is it that the stress the importance of שְׁלוֹם. He points out that שְׁלוֹם isn't just about stopping a dispute but positively infusing connection and togetherness into the world. We find this when Hashem makes שְׁלוֹם between the Melochim and the other spiritual beings as it says בְּמִרְמִי עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בֵּין הַמַּלְאָכִים. Even though there is no evil inclination in

the higher spheres when it says Hashem made שלום it means that the whole world is connected to שלום.

The Magid explains that the reason why Hashem is called שלום as it says עושה שלום במרומי is because nothing is created unless it has in it the four main

concepts fire, wind, water, and dust. When you think about it each of the four substances are against each other as we see water puts out the fire. We see other opposites, which contradict each other, cold and hot, summer and winter. Really all these creations should not last and be destroyed,

however Hashem created שלום as part of nature which enabled the world to exist in harmony. So too שלום not only stops a fight between people but also strengthens the world and causes it to function in the best way possible.

שבת שלום



OUR CHAHAMIM

Rabbi Raphael Pinto

Imbued with great piety, Rabbi Raphael Pinto was a man fervently and unequivocally connected to the service of G-d and the performance of mitzvot. Many were those who had the immense merit to know and draw close to him. He was the son of Rabbi Haim Pinto of Casablanca (who himself was the grandson of Rabbi Haim Pinto of Mogador).

As much Jews as Arabs, all came to him for much-needed comforting and blessing. It would never take long for these to go into effect, and the people who came there to pray or light candles – those who had fallen prey to great difficulties – felt themselves comforted by Rabbi Raphael, who would normally give them a glass of Mahia. He took advantage of this respite to recount stories of the Tzaddikim and the miracles they performed.

Rabbi Raphael would tell the pilgrims that it was forbidden to display one's sadness in the home of Rabbi Haim Pinto because, he made it clear, faith is increased through joy. And in this way the pilgrims left his home, profoundly convinced that their troubles had disappeared. These same people, who were not at all ungracious, came back to offer a Seuda as a way of saying thank you. As noted above, Arabs came to ask for blessings as well, and these were always granted to them. Rav Eliyahu Dahan heard with his own ears the story of an Arab who had a serious problem with a member of his family. They had entered into the cattle business together, and they trusted each other so much that no contract had been made between them, right up until the day that one of them tried to cut the other out of

the business. Given the fact that there were never any documents that had been drawn up and signed, our man's feeling of being in the right didn't necessarily make him so.

Now the person that Rav Eliyahu Dahan had been listening to (our man in question) had a Jewish neighbor. She advised the man to visit Rabbi Raphael Pinto. It must be said that the man didn't have much faith, but in desperation went to his home.

Rabbi Raphael Pinto warmly welcomed him, and the man lit a candle and began with the following innocent and sincere words: "Rabbi Pinto, I don't know you, but I want to believe in you. I want neither cattle nor money, but if I'm to lose everything, may my business partner, the person who so dishonestly tricked me, not profit either."

Rabbi Raphael Pinto consoled him as best as possible and promised that the miracle of the Tzaddik wouldn't delay in happening. At the end of the same week, the mother of our man, having come from the village, announced that all the cattle were dying. The stable they were in had caught on fire and they had been seriously injured by the intoxicating smoke that was created by the blaze.

It was from the time of that story that our man regularly visited with the Tzaddik to thank, in his manner of prayer, both Rabbi Raphael and Rabbi Meir Pinto.

The home of Rabbi Raphael was insignificant in appearances but incredibly grand by virtue of the teachings that came out of it. In walking inside, independent of the joy and faith that filled the home, one could discern one great feature at the Tzaddik's, a feature that was probably the most important of all: Modesty.

It is said that a few days before his passing,

Rabbi Haim Pinto of Casablanca gathered his sons together in order to bless them. When it came the turn of Rabbi Raphael, Rabbi Haim Pinto began to cry. When he was asked the reason for the tears rolling down his face, he declared that his son would die a horrible death.

And unfortunately, we know that his prophecy came true one day in 1980, 43 years after his death. In fact, an Arab in the neighborhood and two other individuals broke into Rabbi Raphael's home in the middle of the night and savagely beat him with an iron bar, then stole everything he had. After a week of unbearable suffering, Rabbi Raphael rendered his soul to G-d. The Tzaddik's maid remembers that a few days before his passing, he said, "On the day that I die, a great darkness will ensue."

And so it was that on the night following his death, Casablanca found itself completely in the dark, an electrical failure having plunged the inhabitants of the city into a total blackout. Finally, not long after the death of the Tzaddik, an Arab neighbor entered his home and, finding Rabbi David Shlita there, said, "May the Tzaddik himself disclose the identity of his murderer." That same night, around midnight, the police arrested the murderer in question. One can say that the Arab's request had been granted because the murderer quickly admitted to his horrendous crime.

The day of the burial, the entire city of Casablanca was in mourning. One month later another tragedy struck, and this time Rabbi Meir also left this world. On that day, the Chevra Kadisha came to pray and was forced to wait close to five hours as the Tzaddik agonizingly passed away, yet with a smile on his lips.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO READ A NEWSPAPER THAT WAS DELIVERED ON SHABBAT?

There are different layers of Halachic issues regarding the reading of newspapers on Shabbat. One issue is the content of the

paper. That is, certain content is prohibited to be read on Shabbat because it is considered mundane and inappropriate for Shabbat reading.

In fact, many of today's newspapers and magazines are not even suitable for weekday reading. Nevertheless, even if the content of the newspaper is permissible, there is still a question as to whether it may be read on Shabbat, because it was

delivered by a non-Jew on Shabbat.

The Halacha prohibits subscribing to a newspaper delivered on Shabbat, because it is tantamount to directing the non-Jewish delivery agent to perform the melacha of carrying on Shabbat.

If a person, nevertheless, violated this prohibition, and a newspaper was delivered on Shabbat, it is forbidden to read the newspaper on Shabbat. In fact, the

newspaper is muksha and cannot even be moved or brought into the house. The reason is that one is not allowed to benefit from melacha that was done for a Jew on Shabbat until after Shabbat. According to the Be'er Moshe (Ch. 95), it is permitted on Mosei Shabbat only "Bichdai Sheya'asu." That means the time that it would have taken that newspaper to be delivered on Mosei Shabbat. If it takes the delivery boy half an hour to bring the paper from the place, he picks them up, then one would have to wait a half hour after Habdalah

before reading the newspaper. The Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata is a little more lenient. He ruled that one doesn't have to wait "Bichdai Sheya'asu;" it can be read right away on Mosei Shabbat. This applies to cases in which the newspaper was delivered in violation of the Shabbat. However, if the subscriber stipulated that he is not interested in Shabbat delivery, and nevertheless, the paper was delivered, it is permissible to read on Shabbat. There is no problem having mail delivered on Shabbat, since the

Jew did not request that it arrive specifically on Shabbat. Therefore, it is permitted to read "kosher" magazines that happen to arrive on Shabbat.

SUMMARY: One should cancel his subscriptions to newspapers that arrive on Shabbat. If one cannot cancel the subscription totally, he should at least stipulate to the company that he is not interested in Shabbat delivery. Newspapers delivered on Shabbat, in violation of the Halacha, are muksha and cannot be read until after Mosei Shabbat.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Nasso

The Torah assigns the exact Mishkan-related tasks to be performed by the families of Gershon, Kehat, and Merari, the sons of Levi. A census reveals that more than 8,000 men are ready for such service. All those ritually impure are to be sent out of the encampments. If a person, after having sworn in court to the contrary, confesses that he wrongfully retained his neighbor's property, he must pay an additional fifth of the base price of the object and bring a guilt offering as atonement. If the claimant has already passed away without heirs, the payments are

made to a kohen. In certain circumstances, a husband who suspects that his wife had been unfaithful brings her to the Temple. A kohen prepares a drink of water mixed with dust from the Temple floor and a special ink that was used for inscribing Hashem's Name on a piece of parchment. If she is innocent, the potion does not harm her, but, rather, it brings her a blessing of children. If she is guilty, she suffers a supernatural death. A Nazir is one who vows to dedicate himself to G-d for a specific period of time. He must abstain from all grape products, grow his hair and avoid contact with

corpses. At the end of this period he shaves his head and brings special offerings. The kohanim are commanded to bless the people. The Mishkan is completed and dedicated on the first day of Nissan in the second year after the Exodus. The prince of each tribe makes a communal gift to help transport the Mishkan, as well as donating identical individual gifts of gold, silver, animal and meal offering.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



1

What is the significance of the number 8,580 in this week's Parsha?

4:47-48 - It is the number of levi'im between ages thirty and fifty.

2

Besides transporting the Mishkan, what other service performed by the levi'im is mentioned in this Parsha?

4:47 - Singing and playing cymbals and harps to accompany the sacrifices.

3

On which day did Moshe teach the command to send those who are teme'im (ritually impure) out of the camp?

5:2 - The day the Mishkan was erected.

4

Name the three camps in the desert.

5:2 - The Camp of the Shechina was in the center, surrounded by the Camp of Levi which was surrounded by the Camp of Yisrael.

5

Who was sent out of each of the camps?

5:2 - A metzora was sent out of all three camps. Azav was permitted in the Camp of Yisrael but excluded from the two inner camps. A person who was lame from contact with the dead had to leave only the Camp of the Shechina.

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