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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON NASO - 5766

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Parsha Page by **Fred Toczek**

A survey of parsha thoughts from Gedolei Yisroel compiled by Fred Toczek. Perfect for printing and use at your Shabbos tisch.

NOSSO (NASO) 5757 - 5762

I. Summary

1. The Duties of the Levite Families. The tasks to be performed by the sons of Gershon, Kehoss and Merari were given. A census revealed 8,580 such individuals between the ages of 30-50 ready for service.

2. Purification of the Camps. Impure Israelites were to be sent out from the three camps (i.e., the innermost camp containing the Shechina; the middle camp of the Levi'im; and the outermost camp of the Israelites). According to the person's level of impurity, he was required to leave some or all of the camps.

3. Four Laws Involving Kohanim

(a) Wrongfully keeping another's property. If one confessed to wrongfully keeping another's property, he must add 20% to the original amount, and bring a guilt offering to Hashem as atonement for his sin. If the original owner died without heirs, repayment was made to the Kohein.

(b) Sotah. A wife suspected for good reason of adultery was brought to the Kohein. If she confessed, the marriage ended in divorce. If not, she underwent the sotah process in which, after being warned, she drank "bitter waters" (i.e., a mixture of holy water from the laver and dust from the Mishkon floor). She then had to swear to the Kohein that if she was guilty, she would suffer harmful effects after drinking the waters. The words of the oath were written on a scroll and were blotted out in the water, which she then drank. If she was guilty, the physical deformities that resulted bore witness to her faithlessness, and she was accursed among her people and died. If she was innocent, no injuries resulted and she was promised the blessing of motherhood. (Two Notes: [a] if she died, her illicit lover also died; and [b] the sotah process only worked if the husband was himself free from sin.)

(c) The Nazir. A "Nazir" (one who voluntarily took an oath to become completely consecrated to the service of Hashem for a given period of time)

was obliged to abstain from wine and strong drink made from grapes, cutting his hair and having contact with a dead body. If he accidentally defiled himself, he had to shave his head, bring an atoning sacrifice and begin anew the above-time period. When the time was up, he was required to bring a sacrifice, shave his head and have his hair burnt beneath the sacrifice; after the Kohein performed additional ceremonies, the Nazir was freed from any further restrictions and returned to a normal life-style.

(d) The Priestly Blessing. The Kohanim were instructed to bless the people with the following blessing: "May the L-rd bless you and keep you. May the L-rd make His Face shine upon you and be gracious upon you. May the L-rd lift up His Countenance on you and give you peace."

4. The Mishkon. The Mishkon (Tabernacle) had been erected and dedicated on the first of Nissan in the second year after the Exodus. The leaders of the twelve Tribes jointly presented a gift of six wagons and twelve oxen for transport of the Mishkon and its contents, which gift was allocated among the Gershonites and Merarites (but not the Kehothites, who were obligated to carry the holiest of the vessels on their shoulders -- Kol Dodi on the Torah notes that the Ark weighed approximately eight tons, not including the Tablets; thus, if four Levites were able to carry it, they were obviously aided by Divine assistance). Each of these leaders then brought identical gold and silver vessels and sacrificial animals and meal offerings on twelve successive days of dedication.

II. Divrei Torah

A. Lil'Mode U'lilamed (Rabbi Mordechai Katz)

The Priestly Blessing.

a. Material Wealth. The Kohen's blessing states that "May Hashem bless you and watch over you". If Hashem blesses us, doesn't He also watch over us? We are requesting that Hashem "bless" us with material wealth, and "watch over us" to protect us from misusing such wealth. We must always remember that it is Hashem's blessing that entitles us to our lot and, accordingly, remain humbly grateful for, and charitable with, whatever wealth Hashem bestows upon us. Rashi notes that the blessing for Hashem to "watch over us" also includes our wish to be protected from the dangers -- both physical and spiritual -- that wealth can bring about.

b. Praying to Hashem. When the Kohanim bless the people, they do something unusual -- they face the people, not the Ark (and, symbolically, Hashem). Aren't prayers usually directed towards Hashem? Hashem desires to bless His children; thus, there is no reason to ask Him to do so. Rather, the Kohen must direct his words to the people to urge us to act in accordance with Hashem's will, so that we are deserving of Hashem's blessing without the need for any intermediaries. (Talmud Yerushalmi)

B. Artscroll Chumash

Each of us has a role. The Parsha begins with Hashem's instruction to Moshe to "take a census of the sons of Gershon, as well, . . ." The phrase "as well" implies that the Gershonite census is related to the Kohathite census described earlier. The Kohathites carried the sacred parts of the Mishkon, which the Gershonites carried the less sacred parts. The words "as well" teach us that both tasks were necessary for the Tabernacle and that both were to be performed with equal joy. R' Moshe Feinstein, zt'l teaches that this speaks to those who may be discouraged because they feel they are not as learned or wealthy as others; the Torah is reminding us that whether one bears the exalted Ark or only its hooks and curtains, every role is significant, because each person is a unique participant in the sacred service.

C. Soul Of The Torah (Victor Cohen)

Unity. The Lenchener noted that the priestly blessing is said in the singular. The greatest blessing that the Jews need is one of unity.

D. Wellsprings of Torah

Eternal Possessions. "And every man's hallowed things shall be his; whatsoever any man gives to the priest shall be his." What bearing does this statement on the portion dealing with robbery? Fools believe that the money that they have in their coffers is theirs, while the money they give to charity is no longer theirs. They therefore fill up their coffers with stolen goods. Actually, quite the opposite is true. Only those possessions given away for sacred purposes - "hallowed things" - remain the property of the original owner forever.

E. Love Thy Neighbor (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

1. Peace Between Husband and Wives. As noted above, the sotah process involved the priest giving the woman a drink in which was placed a portion of the Torah with G-d's name. Of course, under normal circumstances it is forbidden to erase G-d's name. It is, however, permissible in order to make peace between husband and wife.

2. Greeting Others With A Smile. "The L-rd shall make His Face shine upon you." As we are required to emulate G-d, what is the practical application of this verse? To, as Shamei writes, "greet others with a cheerful countenance."

F. Something To Say (Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser)

1. True Ownership. "And man's holies shall be his, and what the man gives to Kohein shall be his." The Torah tells us that an owner retains the right to decide which Kohein will be the recipient of his gift and that, once given to such Kohein, they are his property. The Kutno Rebbe reflects on the words "and they shall be his," explaining that a miser is not the master of his money. Only one who is able to give of his wealth is considered its master. When one gives, he shows that the property is actually his and that he is able to control it property.

2. An Individual Gift. "May G-d bless you and safeguard you." Despite the fact that the priestly blessing was recited before the entire congregation, it was phrased in the singular. One explanation is that it is not always possible, or wise, to give everyone the same blessing. For example, rain may be a blessing for a farmer but a hindrance for a traveler. Only G-d knows precisely what blessing is appropriate for each of us. He therefore tells the Koheinim to bless the people in the singular; each person should receive the form of blessing that is most appropriate for him/her.

From: kby-parsha-owner@kby.org on behalf of Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org] Sent: June 08, 2006 6:18 PM To: KBY Parsha Subject: Parshat Naso

To our readers:

For the next month, Israel is a parsha ahead of the Diaspora. Since most of our English readers are abroad, we will send the Parshat Hashavua for outside of Israel. The website's Parsha page contains articles on both parshas:

<http://www.kby.org/torah/parsha.cfm>.

Naso

"So shall you Bless Bnei Yisrael"

Rosh Hayeshiva Rav Mordechai Greenberg, shlita

The dedication of the Mishkan is introduced by the priestly blessing. What is the connection between the two?

Rashi interprets the pasuk, "Only take care and be very careful, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld ... the day that you stood before Hashem, your G-d, at Horeb" (Devarim 4:9-10), as an admonition not to forget Torah. The Ramban writes about this, "This is not correct at all" -- rather, it is an admonition not to forget the event of Mt. Sinai. The main aspect of this assembly was the intimate encounter between Israel and G-d: "Face to face G-d spoke with you on the mountain, from amid the fire." (Devarim 5:4) Chazal comment on this:

"May He kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." (Shir Hashirim 1:2) This is comparable to a child who returns home from school and finds his father

eating cake. He asked for a piece, and [his father] gave him. [The child] said to him, "I want only from what is in your mouth!"

This direct contact is called, "maor panim" (shining face), in contrast to the state of "hastarat panim" (hidden face). This is what we pray in the end of Shemoneh Esrei, "Bless us, our Father, all of us as one together, with the Light of Your Face, for with the light of your face you have given us, Hashem, our G-d, a Torah of life," etc.

We do we encounter the light of his face after leaving Sinai? In the Mishkan, as the Ramban writes in Parshat Teruma:

When Hashem spoke to Am Yisrael face to face the Ten Commandments ... they are holy, and worthy that there should be amidst them a Sanctuary for His Presence to dwell amongst them ... The primary desire of the Mishkan is the dwelling place of the Divine Presence, which is the Ark, as is written, "It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the Cover." (Shemot 25:22) The secret of the Mishkan is that the Glory that dwelled on Mt. Sinai should dwell on it in a hidden manner.

The cherubs, whose face was "one towards another," continue the intimate connection of face to face of Sinai. But when the Mishkan is dismantled -- then what?

It says it Divrei Hayamim II (35:3), "[Yoshiyahu] then said to the Levites ... Place the Holy Ark in the Temple that Shlomo ... built. Then you will no longer have any carrying on your shoulder." The Ramban writes (Hil. Klei Hamikdash 2:12-13):

When the Ark is carried from place to place it is carried neither on animals nor on wagons. Rather, it is a mitzvah to carry it on the shoulder ... When carrying it on the shoulder, it is carried face to face.

Thus, even at the time of transport, the kohanim continue the signs of affection of face to face from Mt. Sinai.

This maor panim exits also outside of the Mishkan, in shuls, as Chazal comment (Sotah 38a): "So shall you bless Bnei Yisrael -- face to face." This is the meaning of the benediction that the kohanim recite prior to the priestly blessing, "to bless His nation Israel with love" -- face to face. Similarly, Chazal comment, "Let Hashem shine His face to you" -- this is the light of the Torah.

In Midrash Shir Hashirim it says (Parsha 2, #20-21):

"Behold he stands behinds our wall." (Shir Hashirim 2:9) -- After the wall of Sinai.

An additional interpretation:

"Behold he stands behinds our wall." -- Behind the walls of the shuls and batei midrash. "looking through the window" -- from between the shoulders of the kohanim. "peering through the lattices" -- from between the fingers of the kohanim.

From the shoulders of the kohanim who carry the Ark, the Divine Presence sprouts through their fingers. Perhaps, for this reason the kohanim raise their hands to their shoulders.

From where did Israel merit the priestly blessing -- "So shall you bless Bnei Yisrael?" From what it says at the assembly of Mt. Sinai, "So shall you say to the house of Yaakov." Just as the secret of the Mishkan is the continuation of the Divine Presence of Sinai, so, too, the secret of the priestly blessing is the continuation of the maor panim inherent in the giving of the Torah. Perhaps, for this reason we conclude the benediction of the Torah in the morning with the priestly blessing. Placing the priestly blessing before the dedication of the Mishkan teaches that the dwelling of the Divine Presence in Israel is not dependent only on the Mishkan, but rather, "Wherever I permit My Name to be mentioned I shall come to you and bless you." (Shemot 20:21)

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From: ravfrand-owner@torah.org on behalf of **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Friday, June 10, 2005 2:10 AM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Nasso

"RavFrاند" List - **Rabbi Frاند on Parshas Nasso** -

Message to Manoach and His Wife: Go Beyond The Letter of the Law

The Haftorah for Parshas Nasso is the famous story of the birth of the mighty Shimshon. There is a difficulty in this story that troubles all the commentaries. The Angel announced to the barren wife of Manoach that she would have a child and instructed her to abstain from wine and strong drink and from coming into contact with tumah [impurity]. The Angel further instructed her that the child to be born would be a Nazir from birth. No razor would ever be allowed to pass over his head. This child, the Angel informed Manoach's wife, would become the savior of Israel. After delivering this information and these instructions, the Angel departed from the woman.

Manoach's wife related the incident to her husband and Manoach prayed to G-d that he may be able to hear the Angel directly: "Please, my L-rd, may the man of G-d whom you sent come now again to us and teach us what we should do with the lad who is to be born." [Shoftim 13:8]

G-d responded to Manoach's plea and sent the Angel back. Manoach asked him "What should be the conduct of the lad and his behavior?" [Shoftim 13:12]

The Angel responded: "Of everything that I spoke to the woman, she should beware. Of anything that comes from the grapevine, she shall not eat. Wine or strong beverage, she shall not drink. Anything contaminated she shall not eat. Everything that I commanded her, she shall observe." [Shoftim 13:13]

This is virtually a verbatim restatement of what the Angel already told Manoach's wife. The commentaries ask two questions. First - the Angel did not answer Manoach's question. Manoach asked about the "conduct of the lad and his behavior". The Angel spoke about the conduct and behavior of Manoach's wife! Second - what new piece of information did the Angel convey to Manoach that the Angel had not already told to his wife? It appears to be a totally redundant statement of something Manoach already knew!

Rav Elya Meir Bloch offers a beautiful insight. There is only one slight difference between what the Angel said the first time and what he said the second time. The first time the Angel said she should not drink wine and strong drink. The second time the Angel said "anything that comes from the grapevine she shall not eat." This would include grapes, grape-flavored lollipops -- anything that is remotely related to grapes. In addition he adds, do not drink wine and strong beverage.

This, Rav Elya Meir says, was the answer to Manoach's question. Manoach's question was how to raise a child who would grow up to be the savior of Israel. It is hard enough to raise any child. However, the challenges of raising a child who is called upon to be a 'nazir from the womb' are infinitely harder. Manoach wanted to know "How should I raise such a child? What techniques in child rearing should I utilize to insure his spiritual purity and to guarantee the success of his Divine mission?"

The Angel responded that the way to successfully raise a 'nazir from the womb' is through the meticulousness and the zealotry of accepting "fences" (har-chokos), above and beyond the letter of the law (lifnim m'shuras hadin). The secret to raising the future leader of the Jewish Nation involved taking the extra step and going the extra mile. Your wife should not only refrain from drinking wine -- which is the basic requirement for a nazir -- but she should not even go near grapes! Such meticulous observance on her part will make an impression on the child.

The way to instill Fear of G-d into any child is to allow the child to see Fear of G-d in his or her parents. I believe it was Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, and perhaps others as well, who commented on the difference between European Jews and American Jews. He said that both in Europe and in America there were (and are) Sabbath observant Jews. However, the difference was that in Europe there were Jews who observed "Erev Shabbas" [the eve of the Sabbath]. In other words, these Jews would already abstain from all forbidden forms of work at noon on Friday. This

image of an "Erev Shabbos Jew" was a European phenomenon, which is not observed in America.

In America, if Candle Lighting is 4:18 on Friday afternoon, the husband might walk in the door from work at 4:12. He has enough time to remove his wallet and his keys and his change. He says "Good Shabbos" and so begins his Shabbos. This is not "forbidden". Such a person is most definitely a "Sabbath observer". But there is no way to compare the impact of the "European Erev Shabbos" on impressionable young children, as compared to the "American Erev Shabbos."

This was the lesson that the Angel taught Manoach. If the child sees the extra 'Fear of Heaven' in the parent that leads him or her to abstain even from that which is permitted -- such an upbringing will have impact on the spiritual growth of the child and allow him to potentially grow up to become a savior of Israel. When a parent cuts corners and tries to get by with the "letter of the law", the child will in no way have the same appreciation for the lesson or values the parents are ostensibly trying to convey to their progeny.

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 463, Dee'chui Eitzel Mitzvos. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

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EMES LIYAAKOV

Weekly Insights from MOREINU

HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY ז"ל

[Translated by Ephraim Weiss <Easykgh@aol.com>]

In this week's parsha, we read about the halachos of a sotah. If a man has reason to suspect that his wife has been disloyal, he may take her to the Kohen, to ascertain the truth. The Kohen writes the shem Hashem, and then dissolves it into a cup of water, and gives the potion to the woman to drink. If the woman is indeed guilty, she dies in a gruesome manner. However, if she is innocent of any wrongdoing, the potion carries with it great bracha.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetsky ז"ל explains the concept of sotah in the following manner. The nature of a person is that if he suspects someone of wrongdoing, it is very hard to completely remove that suspicion from his mind, unless Hashem himself assures him that his qualms are groundless. While in legal terms, two witnesses are satisfactory for determining a person's guilt, in this case, even if the man hears from two witnesses that his wife is innocent, he will still have some doubt. The concept of two witnesses is a legal term; in court the halacha is that we must accept the testimony of two witnesses, but witnesses by no means serve to remove all doubt. In order to reassure the husband that his wife is innocent, we put her through this 'test' of drinking the water. The Torah tells us what the results will be; therefore the man can be assured of the truth.

Based on this concept, Rav Yaakov explains that the purpose of the sotah is not to incriminate a woman, but on the contrary, serves to establish her innocence beyond a shadow of doubt. From the standpoint of halacha, the woman is already cleared; we make the woman drink the water to prove to the husband that his wife is in fact innocent. The Gemara in Masseches Chullin (.A%MQ) says, "Peace between a man and his wife is so great, that we allow the name of Hashem to be erased in water (in the case of the sotah) to ensure shalom bayis." Now we may understand this Gemara in a

new light. At first glance, the sotah seems to serve the opposite purpose, undermining shalom bayis, by incriminating a woman who otherwise would have been assumed innocent. However, based on our new understanding of the sotah, we can explain that the sotah does not serve to incriminate a guilty woman, but rather to clear an innocent woman, and ensure that the husband harbors no unfounded suspicion against his wife, so that they may continue to live together peacefully.

In order to ensure peace, we allow the shem Hashem to be erased. How much more so must we strive to promote peace amongst all of Klal Yisroel, so that we may be zocheh to greet Moshiach, as one united nation.

<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/>

Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

Sir Jonathan Sacks

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

[From 2 years ago 5764] <http://www.chief Rabbi.org/tt-index.html>

Naso - The Priestly Blessings

In Jerusalem, looking down on Israel's Parliament, the Knesset, is a magnificent building, the Israel museum. It houses an extraordinary array of exhibits, drawn from almost every age, place and culture. There are items from the entire history and geography of the Diaspora. There is a large collection of idols and graven images from ancient Canaan, reminding us in the most vivid way of what our ancestors broke away from. But in many ways the most remarkable exhibit is not a work of art, nor is it a piece of exquisite workmanship. It is not made of silver or gold or precious stones. It is a tiny fragment of parchment containing a mere fifteen words.

What makes its special is that it is the oldest surviving fragment of biblical literature, some 2700 years old. It comes from the era of the First Temple, built by King Solomon. It is so old that it is not written in the Hebrew alphabet as we recognise it today, which dates from the Babylonian exile, but rather in the ancient Semitic script, the first alphabet known to mankind.

What is it that has survived 27 centuries, half the history of civilisation? By a wonderful stroke of fate, it contains perhaps the oldest liturgical formula still in regular use: the priestly blessings, set out in today's sedra. Why someone wrote them down on this piece of parchment, it is impossible to say, though it is likely that it was used as a kamea - a charm of good luck or blessing. I find it intensely moving that these words, first said so long ago, still stay with us in this physical form as well as in our prayers.

The Torah sets out the blessings in a simple passage:

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

"So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." The literary structure is precise. In the original Hebrew, the first line has three words, the second, five, and the third, seven (as I have pointed out elsewhere, these prime numbers have special significance throughout the Mosaic books: three-, five- and seven-fold repetitions always signify a keyword). Equally precisely, the first has 15 (3x5) letters, the second 20 (4x5) and the third, 25 (5x5).

What is the meaning of the blessings?

"The Lord bless you and protect you." Blessing in the Mosaic books always means material blessing:

So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today-to love the LORD your G-d and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul-then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

Against the idea basic to many other faith systems - which embrace poverty, asceticism or other forms of self-denial - in Judaism the world as G-d's creation is fundamentally good. Religion is neither otherworldly nor anti-worldly. It is precisely in the physical world that G-d's blessings are to be found.

But material blessings can sometimes dull our sensitivities toward G-d. The great irony is that when we have most to thank G-d for, often we thank Him least. We tend to remember G-d in times of crisis rather than in eras of prosperity and peace:

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your G-d for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your G-d, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your G-d, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery . . . You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

More than any other factor, this has led to the decline and fall of civilizations. In the early, pioneering years they are lifted by a collective vision and energy. Then as people become affluent they begin to lose the very qualities that made earlier generations great. They become less motivated by ideals than by the pursuit of pleasure. They think less of others, more of themselves. They begin to be deaf and blind to those in need. They become, in a word, decadent. What happens to nations happens also to individuals and families. Hence the first blessing. "May the Lord protect you," means: May He protect you from the blessing turning into a curse.

"May the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you." The word "grace" has such strong Christian associations that we sometimes forget its centrality to Judaism. What is grace?

Judaism is a religion of intellect: of study, questioning, ideas, argument and the life of the mind. The historian Paul Johnson described rabbinic Judaism as an "ancient and highly efficient social machine for the production of intellectuals." Yet the Book of Proverbs says:

Let kindness and truth not leave you. Bind them around your throat, inscribe them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will find grace and good intellect in the eyes of the lord and man. Grace (chein) takes precedence over good intellect (sechel tov).

In kaddish de-rabbanan, the prayer we say after studying a rabbinic text, we pray for spiritual leaders who have "grace, loving-kindness and compassion." Once again the power of intellect is secondary to the personal qualities of sensitivity and graciousness. Grace is that quality which sees the best in others and seeks the best for others. It is a combination of gentleness and generosity.

The second priestly blessing is: May G-d "make His face shine on you," meaning, may His presence be evident in you. May He live a visible trace of His being on the face you show to others. How is that presence to be recognized? Not in severity, remoteness or austerity but in the gentle smile that speaks to what Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature." That is grace.

"May the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace." 'To make peace in the world we must be at peace with ourselves. To be at peace with ourselves we must know that we are unconditionally valued. That does not often happen. People value us for what we can give them. That is conditional value, what the sages called "love that is dependent on a cause". G-d values us unconditionally. We are here because He wanted us to be. Our very existence testifies to His love. Unlike others, G-d never gives up on us. He rejects no one. He never loses faith, however many times we fail. When we fall, He lifts us. He believes in us more than we believe in ourselves.

You are in a crowd. In the distance you see someone you recognize. This person is well-known. You met him once, briefly. Did you make an impression on him? Does he remember you? Does he know who you are? Briefly your eyes touch. From the distance, he smiles at you. Yes, he remembers you, he knows who you are, he is pleased you are here, and by his eye contact and his smile he communicates these things to you. You are relieved, lifted. You are at peace with yourself. You are not merely an anonymous face in a crowd. Your basic worth has in some way been affirmed. That, in human terms, is the meaning of "May the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

We speak of "seeking recognition." It is a telling phrase. More even than power or wealth or success or fame we long for what we believe these things will give us: standing in the eyes of others, respect, esteem, honour, worth. We can dedicate a lifetime to this search, but it is not a good one. People do not confer respect for the right reasons. They follow politicians who pander to their worst instincts. They feel the charisma of pure power. They flatter the wealthy. They are like moths to the flame of fame.

The recognition that counts is our reflection in the eyes of G-d. He loves us for what we are and what we could become. He loves the good in us, not the successful or persuasive or charismatic. He ignores the image we try to project because He knows us from within. His is the voice within us that says, "With Me, you do not have to pretend. I know you. I knew you before you were born. I know you because I made you, and I made you because I need you - or more precisely, because the world needs you. There is a task only you can do. Now, therefore, be strong and do it. You need not seek praise; you shall not be deflected by criticism; for I will be with you every step of the way. When you feel most alone, that is when I will be closest." That is making eye-contact with G-d. It is the meaning of the third blessing: "May the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

The most profound element of the blessing, however, lies in the concluding sentence: "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

In the ancient world, magi, oracles and religious virtuosi were held to have the power of blessing. They were able to invoke supernatural forces. This is the meaning of what Balak king of Moab says to the pagan prophet Bilaam:

"A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. 6 Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that those you bless are blessed, and those you curse are cursed." The biblical story of Bilaam is a satire on this idea. Bilaam's contemporaries, and perhaps he himself, believed that blessing or curse lay within the power of the holy person. Nothing more arouses the ridicule of the Bible than self-importance. Bilaam is made to see that his own donkey has greater powers of spiritual insight than he does. It is not the person who has power over G-d; it is G-d who has the power to reveal Himself to the person - and if He so chooses, He can give it to a donkey rather than to an esteemed religious figure. Holiness is not - though it is often confused with - self-importance. True holiness is transparency to the Divine.

This is the meaning of "So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them." It is not the priests who bless the people, but G-d. In themselves, they have no power. They are intermediaries, channels through which G-d's blessing flows.

An ancient midrash says:

The house of Israel said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "Lord of the universe, you order the priests to bless us? We need only your blessing. Look down from Your holy habitation and bless Your people." The Holy One, blessed be He, replied to them, "Though I ordered the priests to bless you, I will stand together with them and bless you." It is not the priests who bless the people. Rather, it is through them that G-d blesses the people.

Finally, why was it the priests who were chosen to be vehicles of G-d's blessing? One reason is self-evident. Their entire being of the priests was

within the precincts of the holy. They were the intermediaries between the people and G-d. But there is another reason offered by the commentators. Apparently prosaic, it has nonetheless profound wisdom.

The priests had no share in the land. Unlike the rest of Israelites, they had no fields or farms, no businesses, no source of income through the work of their hands. Instead, they were dependent on the gifts of the people. The Israelites gave them a portion of the harvest called *terumah*. They received other statutory gifts. So when the Israelites prospered as a whole, the priests benefited. They had a direct interest in the prosperity of the nation. More than anyone else, the priests were dependent on the welfare of others. They were able to bless the people with a full heart, because if others were favoured, so too would they be.

This may seem like an appeal to self-interest precisely where it does not belong, in the sphere of the holy, the sacrosanct, the Temple. Yet the genius of Judaism is that it is not predicated on superhuman virtue. It is not addressed to angels or saints, but to human beings in all our fallibility. Though its ideals are surpassingly high, its psychology is realistic throughout.

It was Adam Smith in his masterwork, *The Wealth of Nations*, who pointed out that self-interest, when properly channeled, led to the welfare of all. Smith himself sensed that there was something religious about this, and he gave it a quasi-religious name. He called it the invisible hand, which was as near as he could come to speaking about divine providence -- the mysterious yet benign way in which, though each of us may be concerned about our own narrow welfare, we are part of something larger than ourselves, in ways we cannot always understand. Our separate strands are part of a larger pattern.

The great Spanish poet and philosopher Judah Halevi noted that almost all our prayers are in the plural. We do not pray that G-d should give me something; we pray that he should give us something. "Bless us, O our father, all of us together." There is a spirit of community written into the liturgy. We do not ask our G-d to listen to the prayers of individuals, but of those of the Jewish people as a whole. When Moses prayed on behalf of the people, he was answered. When he prayed for himself - to be allowed to enter the promised land - he was not.

Halevi adds that there is nothing mystical in this idea. He explained it with the following analogy. Imagine, he said, trying to defend your house against enemies. There are two ways of doing so. One is to build a wall around the house. The other is to combine with neighbours and build a wall around the town. The former is more expensive and offers less protection. To act with others for everyone is easier and more secure.

So, he said, with prayer: If we pray by ourselves for ourselves, then we rely on our own merits, about which we can never be certain. But when we pray together with the whole community, we combine our merits with theirs. Prayer is like a protective wall, and praying together is more powerful and effective. We do not need superhuman piety - merely enlightened self-interest - to realize that our destinies are interconnected. When we are blessed, we are blessed together. Prayer is community made articulate, when we delete the first person singular and substitute the first person plural.

Protection, grace, peace - these are G-d's blessings, communicated by the priests. We are what we pray for. If you seek to understand a people, look at its prayers. The Jewish people did not ask for wealth or power. They did not hunger after empire. They had no desire to conquer or convert the world. They asked for protection, the right to live true to themselves without fear; for grace, the ability to be an agent for good in others; and peace, that fullness of being in which each of us brings our individual gifts to the common good. That is all our ancestors prayed for, and it is still all we need.

From: Halacha [halacha@yutorah.org] Sent: May 24, 2006 1:13 PM
Subject: **RABBI JOSH FLUG** Weekly Halacha Overview- The Mitzvah of Kiddush On Shabbat Part II

The Mitzvah of Kiddush on Shabbat Part II

Last week's issue discussed the timeframe of Kiddush as well as the concept of Kiddusha Rabbah, the daytime Kiddush. This week's issue will focus on the types of wine that may be used for Kiddush as well as the permissibility of using non-wine items for Kiddush.

The Use of Cooked Wine for Kiddush

The Gemara, Baba Batra 97a, states that the wine that is used for Kiddush must be fit for the wine libations on the Altar of the Beit HaMikdash. The Mishna, Menachot 86b, states that cooked wine (yayin mevushal) is not fit for libation upon the Altar. As such, Rambam, Hilchot Shabbat 29:14, rules that one may not use cooked wine for Kiddush. Furthermore, Rashi, Teshuvot Rashi no. 88, rules that the proper beracha on cooked wine is Shehakol and not Borei P'ri HaGafen. Following either opinion would invalidate most kosher wines and grape juices which are both pasteurized and cooked.

What most people rely on is the opinion of Tosafot, Baba Batra 97a, s.v. Ileima, that the beracha on cooked wine is Borei P'ri HaGafen and one may recite Kiddush on cooked wine. While Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 272:8, sides with the opinion of Rambam, Rama, ad loc., rules that cooked wine is valid for Kiddush. Furthermore, Rama adds that even if one has non-cooked wine, but the cooked wine is better, one should use the cooked wine.

Mishna Berurah 272:23, does note that if the non-cooked wine is equivalent or superior to the cooked wine, it is preferable to use the non-cooked wine in order to fulfill the mitzvah according to Rambam. Nevertheless, R. Yehoshua Y. Neuwirth, Shemirat Shabbat KeHilchata ch. 47, note 91, suggests that if someone prefers to use cooked wine in order to avoid the prohibition of stam yeinam (the prohibition to benefit from non-cooked wine that was handled by a non-Jew), cooked-wine is, by definition, superior to any non-cooked wine.

Rav Ovadia Yosef, Yechave Da'at 2:35, suggests that although Shulchan Aruch rules in accordance with the opinion of Rambam, Sefaradim – who follow the rulings of Shulchan Aruch – may still recite Kiddush on cooked wine. His leniency is based on the opinion of R. Shimon Ben Tzemach, Tashbetz 1:85, who maintains that Rambam only invalidates cooked wine if the wine is worsened through the cooking process. R. Yosef feels that one may combine the opinion of Tashbetz with the opinion of Tosafot and allow recitation of Kiddush on cooked wine for Sefaradim based on the principle of sfek-sfeika (double-doubt).

Rama's leniency does not necessarily extend to pasteurized grape juice. The Gemara, Berachot 36a, states that the reason why a unique beracha of Borei P'ri HaGafen is recited on wine is due to its ability to provide simcha (happiness). Ostensibly, it is the alcoholic content of the wine that gives it its unique beracha. Grape juice, which is non-alcoholic, should not receive the beracha of Borei P'ri HaGafen. However, the Gemara, Baba Batra, 97a, states explicitly that one can recite Kiddush using the juice of freshly squeezed grapes. How does one resolve the apparent discrepancy?

R. Shlomo Z. Auerbach, Minchat Shlomo no. 4, suggests that the reason why the beracha of Borei P'ri HaGafen includes grape juice is because of its potential to ferment. Although this logic would not apply to pasteurized grape juice where the fermentation process is suspended, R. Auerbach claims that the pasteurization itself is not significant enough to remove the Borei P'ri HaGafen status from the grape juice. If, however, the grape juice is converted into concentrate (grape powder) and then reconstituted (by adding water), the new compound is considered significantly different than the original grape juice and since it doesn't have the potential to become alcoholic, the proper beracha is Shehakol. R. Yitzchak Weiss, Minchat Yitzchak, 8:14, disagrees with R. Auerbach, and

maintains that one may recite Borei P'ri HaGafen on grape juice from concentrate.

Kiddush on Non-Wine Items

The Gemara, Pesachim 106b, records that Rav would sometimes recite Kiddush on bread instead of using wine. The Gemara, Pesachim 107a, also has a discussion regarding the use of other beverages for Kiddush. There are various opinions in the Rishonim regarding the propriety of non-wine items for Kiddush. Rabbeinu Tam (cited in Rabbeinu Asher, Pesachim 10:17) maintains that one cannot recite Kiddush using bread. Rambam, Hilchot Shabbat 29:9, permits the use of bread for Kiddush. However, Rambam ibid, 29:17, does not allow the use of other beverages for Kiddush. Rabbeinu Asher, op. cit., rules that if one does not have wine, he should use bread for Kiddush at nighttime and chamar medinah (a beverage that serves as a replacement for wine in that locale) for the daytime Kiddush. The reason he gives is that the most befitting item to use in place of wine is bread. Therefore, bread is the best replacement at the nighttime Kiddush. However, during the daytime, since the only beracha recited is the beracha on the item used for Kiddush, the HaMotzi recited as Kiddush will not be perceived as Kiddush, but rather as the start of an ordinary meal. Therefore, it is not proper to use bread for the daytime Kiddush and one should use chamar medinah.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 272:9, and Rama, ad loc., rule in accordance with the opinion of Rabbeinu Asher. R. Ovadia Yosef, Yabia Omer Orach Chaim 3:19, notes that while Shulchan Aruch's ruling may provide the same conclusion as Rabbeinu Asher, perhaps it is due to a different reason. R. Yosef suggests that Shulchan Aruch doesn't totally disregard the opinion of Rambam that other beverages are invalid for Kiddush. Therefore, at the nighttime Kiddush, where recitation of Kiddush on other beverages would constitute a beracha l'vatalah (a blessing recited in vain) according to Rambam, one may only use bread as a replacement for the wine. However, at the daytime Kiddush, since the only beracha recited is the beracha on the beverage and there is no concern for beracha l'vatalah, one does not have to be concerned for the opinion of Rambam.

Chamar medinah is defined as a wine replacement for that locale. Rambam, Hilchot Shabbat 29:17 (who does allow chamar medinah for Havdalah), explains that the leniency of chamar medinah is only applicable in a place where most of the city drinks that beverage "as its wine." As such, Magen Avraham 272:6, rules that in a place where wine is available one cannot use chamar medinah as a wine replacement. Taz, Orach Chaim 272:6, justifies the practice of reciting Kiddush using chamar medinah. He claims that since wine is more expensive than chamar medinah, it is as if there is no wine available. Taz concludes that it is nevertheless a mitzvah min hamuvchar (a preferable way to perform the mitzvah) to use wine even if it is more expensive. Taz's opinion notwithstanding, Mishna Berurah 272:24, rules that even if wine is more expensive, one should not use chamar medinah for Kiddush.

There are those who have the custom to recite Kiddush on whiskey. This custom is most likely based on the ruling of R. Avraham Danzig, Chayei Adam, Hilchot Shabbat 6:18, who rules that one who prefers whiskey over wine may recite the daytime Kiddush on whiskey provided that the cup contains a revi'it (approximately 3.3 ounces) and that he drinks a cheekful of the whiskey. Chayei Adam does imply that even if whiskey is preferable to wine, there is still a mitzvah min hamuvchar to use wine. Chayei Adam's opinion is accepted by Mishna Berurah 272:30.

Rashbam, Pesachim 107a, s.v. Chamar, rules that water can never become chamar medinah. Based on this exclusion, contemporary Poskim discuss whether drinks such as coffee, tea, milk, juice and soda are considered chamar medinah (See Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 2:72 and Yabia Omer op. cit.). It should be noted that these drinks would most likely not be included in Chayei Adam's leniency to use chamar medinah. If one considers these drinks to be chamar medinah, their use would only be justified in a situation where there is no wine available.

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From: Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com on behalf of **Rav Kook List** [ravkooklist@gmail.com] Sent: June 07, 2006 2:15 PM To: Rav Kook List Subject: [Rav Kook List] Rav Kook weekly message: Delusions of Grandeur

Delusions of Grandeur

Rabbi Nissan Zaks recounted:

A rather peculiar man lived in London during the time that Rav Kook served in the local rabbinate. What was so peculiar about him? He thought he was "Mashiach" (the Messiah). His relatives brought him to psychologists and even turned to Jewish 'miracle workers,' but to no avail. No one was able to rid him of his insanity.

Finally, they brought him to Rav Kook, and this is what the Rav told him:

"You should know that you are right. To a certain degree, you are "Mashiach", for every Jew has a Messianic spark in him. Some have a small spark, and some - like you - have a large one.

"However, this spark is only valuable if it is kept secret. If you speak about it, you might lose it, G-d forbid."

[from 'An Angel Among Men' by R. Simcha Raz, translated by R. Moshe Lichtman, p. 354]

From: peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com on behalf of Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com] Sent: June 08, 2006 4:20 AM To: Peninim Parsha

**Peninim on the Torah
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum**

PARSHAS NASSO

Take a census of the Bnei Gershon, as well. (4:22) The word naso, which is usually defined as "raise up" or "elevate" is translated here at "count." Why is naso used when pakod or sefor, both words meaning to count, could have been used? Horav Baruch M. Ezrachi, Shlita, asserts that, indeed, here the word naso has a dual connotation. They were counted, but they were also elevated. He first draws a distinction between one who elevates himself to serve Hashem, as we find regarding Yehoshafat HaMelech, "His heart was elevated in the ways of Hashem" (Divrei Hayamim 2, 17:6) and one who is just plain arrogant. Quite possibly, the one who is smitten with arrogance may even be involved in a lofty spiritual endeavor, but it is more about him than about the endeavor. The endeavor is something external to him. He is the important factor, and the endeavor itself is secondary. Thus, one can toil in the field of spirituality and yet remain nothing more than a haughty person. He does not connect with what he is doing. Vayigba libo, "His heart was elevated," however, means that his very essence, his heart, his total being, grew together with his endeavor in "the ways of Hashem."

We have established that true distinction is accorded to one whose actions represent his essence, and an endeavor which carries out the will of Hashem is a true elevation of one's spirit. Now, let us attempt to give meaning to the words gam heim (Bnei Gershon were counted) "as well." The words "as well" imply that this is a novel idea, almost as if we might have assumed that Bnei Gershon had not been counted. Why? Rav Ezrachi explains that Bnei Kehas, who carried the Aron Hakodesh, were counted first. Their function demanded that they be given precedence. Thus, although Gershon was the Levi's firstborn, the sons of Kehas were counted first. They carried the Aron. The question that glares at us is: Why were Bnei Gershon not selected to carry the Aron? After all, the firstborn does have some intrinsic rights.

The Kli Yakar explains that had Bnei Gershon been selected to carry the Aron, it would have detracted from the distinction of this endeavor. People would assume that the reason Bnei Gershon were counted first was that

Gershon was the b'chor - not because he carried the Aron. Therefore, the role of carrying the Aron was assigned to Bnei Kehas. Because they carried the Aron, they were counted first. In this manner, the eminence of the "carriers of the Aron" was duly noted.

We wonder if this is the proper way. Is it appropriate to arrogate the function of carrying the Aron from the ones who, by virtue of their sequence in birth, should have been accorded this privilege, just to prove a point - that carrying the Aron was a holy and privileged endeavor, worthy of distinction? Rav Ezrachi derives from here a powerful lesson. For Bnei Gershon to be counted second, so that Bnei Kehas who carried the Aron could precede them, is in itself a kavod, honor, for Bnei Gershon. They were being distinguished by being counted second, since being second means that they were giving honor to the Aron. In other words, Bnei Gershon did not lose distinction by being counted second. In fact, they benefited from this position. Their status was raised as a result of what they had relinquished! This act of abdication elevated them and made them a nesui rosh.

This is the meaning of naso, elevate/count, Bnei Gershon. This elevation came as a result of their being counted second, thereby demonstrating that they were giving honor to the Aron Hakodesh. Ironically, being the background was what brought them to the foreground.

A man or woman who shall disassociate himself by taking a Nazirite vow of abstinence for the sake of Hashem. (6:2)

Ibn Ezra offers an alternative interpretation for the word yafl: "who shall do something astounding." One who takes a vow to abstain from physical pleasure that society finds desirable is doing something that is unique. His actions evoke amazement. This endeavor is worthy of pe'e, wonderment. The Rambam writes that one who makes a Nazirite vow for the sole purpose of sanctifying himself for the sake of Hashem, so that he can serve Him better, is truly deserving of the accolade, "the crown of G-d is upon his head" (Ibid 6:6).

The Baal HaTurin asserts that the Nazir is prohibited from coming in contact with a corpse because people should not think that one upon whose head the Shechinah rests is a doreish el ha'meisim, one who seeks out the dead. Horav Yosef S. Elyashiv, Shlita, explains this in the following manner. A Navi, prophet, or any spiritual leader is permitted to come in contact with a corpse despite his lofty spiritual plane. Everybody is acutely aware of the Navi's spiritual preeminence, his lofty mission, his pure intentions and his Divinely inspired endeavors. No one would think for a moment that he is an individual who is a chameleon, who seeks out the dead and the powers of ritual contamination. Therefore, he may come in contact with a corpse. People will think nothing of it.

The Nazir, however, is an average person who has decided to create a change in his life. He seeks to ascend the ladder of spirituality, to abstain from the physical pleasures which enslave the average person. He seeks to purify himself from the filth that prevails in this world. In other words, he wants to be different. This is cause for amazement. It is a pe'e, wonderment, for someone to seek to rise above his peers to choose a life of total commitment. People begin to talk. No one is prepared to accept the truth: that he is making a change for the better. They will say that he must be surely seeking out the dead, acting in a "strange" manner because he is divining. Therefore, to circumvent any unnecessary foolish envy, the Torah prohibits him from coming in contact with a corpse. This way, people will have to face the truth: this Nazir is for real. He has broken out of the mold of complacency. He seeks spiritual growth. This awareness might even spur others to follow suit.

May Hashem bless you and safeguard you... and establish peace for you. (6:24,26)

The Midrash Tanchuma interprets yevarechecha, "May (Hashem) bless you," to mean, "may Hashem grant you wealth." V'yishmeracha, "and (Hashem) should safeguard you," is interpreted as, you should perform

mitzvos. Last, we entreat Hashem to establish peace among us. This is a reference to peace with our enemies as well as peace within our own camp. We wonder why the Torah chose a sequence in which a physical blessing for wealth and prosperity precedes a spiritual blessing for being safeguarded through mitzvah performance. One would think that the spiritual blessing is of primary significance and should, therefore, precede the physical blessing of material wealth.

Horav Simchah Hakohen Shepps, zl, explains that we must first understand the underlying foundation of the blessing of material wealth. Simply, it means more and more of everything. Veritably, this is not the meaning of true wealth, for if one is not satisfied with what he has, then winning the mega millions lottery will not fulfill his needs. Furthermore, even if someone has an enormous amount of wealth, he will not be happy unless he has more than everybody else. Therefore, we must say that the blessing of wealth is a reference to the solitude and satisfaction, the sense of fulfillment and contentment, that one sustains when he realizes that he has no financial worries.

Chazal teach us in Pirkei Avos 4:1, "Who is a rich man? He who is happy with his portion." Only one who is happy and satisfied with what he has can be considered a wealthy man. Otherwise, whatever he has is not enough. One who does not have enough is not wealthy. Indeed, as Rav Shepps adds, the yesod ha'chain, principle of life, is that one should feel that he never has enough yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven, but that he has more than enough material wealth. Regrettably, many of us settle for the opposite.

We now understand the sequence of the blessings. First, one should be blessed with enough wealth. He should feel that Hashem has blessed him with sufficient wealth. He is satisfied and content. His mind is at rest. Then, he can maintain a positive attitude towards mitzvah performance. One whose mind is at ease can absorb himself in mitzvos. Only then can he be at peace, for, if he does not merit the blessing of contentment with regard to his monetary needs, then his mitzvah performance will be lacking. His attitude will be deficient, and his mitzvah observance will suffer. One whose gashmius, physical/material needs seems lacking - and, consequently his ruchniyos, spirituality, is also substandard - cannot truly be at peace. Thus, the sequence that the Torah has selected is not only practical, but it is critical.

On the second day, Nesanel ben Tzuar offered, the leader of Yissachar. He brought his offering. (7:18,19)

The pasuk seems redundant. It mentions Nesanel's "offering" twice. Why? It does not do this concerning any of the other Nesiim. The Kesav Sofer explains that it was Nesanel who advised the other Nesiim to offer korbanos in honor of the dedication of the Mizbayach. Chazal teach us that one who brings merit for the masses by motivating others to perform mitzvos has the z'chus, merit, of their mitzvos counted for him. Thus, he has a portion in each and every mitzvah that they perform as a result of his impetus. Nesanel ben Tzuar had a chelek, share, in every korban offered by the Nesiim, since he was the one who inspired their actions. Therefore, his "offering" is mentioned twice, referring both to his personal offering and to the interest he had in all the other korbanos.

The Chovas HaLevavos writes that even if one were to achieve the zenith of perfection in correcting his neshamah, soul, even if he is on the spiritual plane of a Navi, prophet - regardless of his spiritual accomplishments - his merits do not compare to those of someone who is mezakeh es harabim, reaches out to the masses and inspires them to return to serve Hashem. For the latter's z'chusim, merits, multiply each day through the mitzvos that his students' perform. He cites a simple analogy. Two businessmen came to the market to sell their wares. One businessman had a single item for sale, which was worth ten gold coins. The other businessman had a large amount of merchandise, valued at five thousand gold coins. Both men sold their merchandise. The one who had not much to sell did very well, earning ten times the value of his original merchandise. The second merchant did

not fare as well, earning only the usual markup, but he sold everything. When the totals were added up, the first businessman earned a total of one hundred gold coins, while the second businessman, whose markup was not as great, walked away with only seventy five hundred coins. This indicates that the greater one's principle, the more his profit will extend. He does not need the same markup or profit margin as the individual whose principle is more limited.

Likewise, in the spiritual dimension, the one who focuses only on himself will invariably reap impressive benefits for himself, but they will pale by comparison to the benefits that one who has shared himself with others will accrue. The Zohar Hakadosh in Parashas Terumah extols the merit of those who make it their business to persuade and encourage assimilated Jews to return to the beliefs of their ancestors. He writes that one who does this will merit to see his son's sons studying Torah. In closing, he writes that if people could only fathom the incredible reward in store for one who brings back another Jew, they would not stop pursuing their alienated brethren to help them return to a life of observance.

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, wrote a public declaration to all rabbanim to establish yeshivos in their communities, regardless of size, so that Torah would be available to everyone. In the event a suitable rebbe is not to be found, then it becomes the rav's responsibility to teach and nurture these students. He cited the Tanna D'vei Eliyahu who placed the onus of guilt for the 70,000 deaths that occurred in Givaas Binyam during the pilegish b'Givaah incident on the Sanhedrin of that day. Had they taken a more aggressive stand with regard to teaching Torah to the masses, this tragedy would not have occurred. Had these people studied Torah and ethics, the tragedy that engulfed them would never have taken place.

Horav Yehudah Tzedakah, zl, cites Chazal in the Talmud Bava Metzia 85, who state that one who teaches Torah to his friend's son will merit a seat in the Heavenly Academy. Is this the only mitzvah one may perform that grants him access to Olam Habah, the World to Come? Rav Tzedakah explains that one who is himself studying Torah and is able to achieve lofty heights, might think that by taking time off to study with others, with students who are weaker than he is, he loses out. Chazal assure him that whatever he loses in This World, will be reimbursed to him in Olam Habah.

Furthermore, he explains Chazal's comparison of matzdikei harabim, those who reach out and teach the masses, to the stars of the sky. People think that melamdei tinokos, teachers of young children, are inconsequential. Their vocation is an insignificant one; their status in the community is regrettably commensurate with the small-mindedness of its members. Hashem does not view them in the same perspective. Indeed, He values and appreciates their work, holding it very dear to Him. They are, thus, compared to the stars of the sky, who - due to their great distance - seem small and insignificant. This is hardly true, since every star is a world of its own - amazing in size and power.

A young man who taught a daily shiur in Ramat Gan to a group of lay people once approached the Chazon Ish on a day that the weather was very inclement. It was dreary, cold and pouring torrential rain. Did he have to go teach the class, or would the extenuating circumstances permit him otherwise? The Chazon Ish asked, "How many men attend the shiur?" "Usually ten men attend," replied the young man. "How many do you think will appear today?" The Chazon Ish asked. "One man will certainly come, since he lives next to the shul where I teach," the young man said. "Then you must go," declared the Chazon Ish. Limud haTorah is like no other mitzvah. You cannot compare a person who learned Torah one day to a person who did not learn that day. They are two different people. Therefore, you must go and teach your shiur, even for one person!"

The roshei yeshivah of Yeshivas Novordhok would send students around to the small villages seeking young potential students for their yeshivah. This was their recruitment program. One of the bachurim, yeshivah students, returned one day with a young orphan named Yaakov Yisrael, whom he picked up in a small town. He began to teach him Torah, and, after a while, this young boy began to demonstrate his uncanny brilliance.

This happenstance, coupled with an unparalleled diligence borne of a thirst and love for Torah, produced Horav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, zl, the Steipler Rav. All of this occurred because a yeshivah bachur went out of his way to reach out and share Torah with a young orphan.

Last, I present an addendum to a story which found its way into these pages a short while ago about Horav Shlomo Kluger, zl, who became the illustrious Torah giant that he was as a result of the efforts of the Maggid, zl, m'Dubno. It is related that when the Maggid left this world and ascended to his rightful place in the World of Truth, he was shown the fifty Seforim, volumes of Torah exegesis, that "he" had authored. "But, I never wrote these seforim. They are not mine," he protested.

The Heavenly response was, "Veritably, these seforim were authored by Horav Shlomo Kluger, but since you raised him and gave him the opportunity to study Torah, you were the one that catalyzed his spiritual success. Therefore, it is all considered as if you have written them."

Sponsored in loving memory of our dear father and zaidy on his yahrtzeit Rabbi Shlomo Silberberg Zev Aryeh & Miriam Solomon & Family
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From: hamaayan-owner@torah.org on behalf of Shlomo Katz [skatz@torah.org] Sent: June 07, 2006 5:07 PM To: hamaayan@torah.org
Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Nasso

Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

Edited by Shlomo Katz

Nasso Volume 20, No. 31 14 Sivan 5766 June 10, 2006

Sponsored by Yitzchok and Barbie Lehmann Siegel in memory of -
father Dr. Manfred R. Lehmann a"h (R' Menashe Raphael ben
He'Chaver R' Chaim and Fayga)
and brother, Jamie Lehmann a"h (Chaim Menachem ben R' Menashe
Raphael and Sarah)

Today's Learning: Ta'anit 1:1-2 O.C. 565:4-6 Daf Yomi (Bavli): Yoma 3
Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Terumot 36

Our parashah opens: "Take a census of the sons of Gershon also." Why "also"? R' Avraham Saba z"l (Spain; 1440-1508) explains that Gershon was the oldest son of Levi, and his descendants had a claim to be counted before the descendants of Gershon's younger brother Kehat. Since the family of Kehat was already counted at the end of last week's parashah, our parashah says, "Take a census of the sons of Gershon also."

And why were the descendants of Kehat counted first? R' Saba explains that the Torah honors Kehat for his Torah knowledge, just as we read in Divrei Hayamim I (4:9), "And Yaavetz was honored more than his brothers." As the Gemara explains, Yaavetz was one of the greatest Torah scholars of the generation following Moshe Rabbeinu.

Similarly, Kehat's family was honored over the family of the firstborn Gershon because of the former's association with the Torah. On the verse (Mishlei 3:15), "It [the Torah] is more precious than peninim / pearls," the Midrash comments: "More precious than a firstborn" (a play on "lifnim" / "earlier," i.e., the firstborn, who is the early one). The family of Kehat carried the Ark which contained the luchot. Moreover, Kehat used to assemble crowds and teach them Torah. [Ed. note: The publisher of R' Saba's work notes that the source for this fact is unknown.] Kehat's name alludes to his assembling crowds, just as King Shlomo is called "Kohélet" because he also assembled large audiences; however, King Shlomo has an additional letter "lamed" ("Kohélet" vs. "Kehat") because the Mishnah (Avot ch.6) states that a king has 30 special attributes. (The gematria of "lamed" is 30.) (Tzror Hamor)

"The kohen shall make one as a sin-offering and one as an elevation-offering, and he shall provide him atonement for having sinned regarding the person." (6:11)

Why is a nazir / a person who because of a vow abstains from grape products, does not cut his hair and avoids corpse-impurity called a sinner? **R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook** z"l (1865-1935; first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) explains:

Man was created with body and spirit, and perfection is attained by continually developing each one in harmony with the other. Our Sages teach that there is no human who never sins. However, the greatest sin is committed when one tries to ignore the fact that he is human. This is the sin that the nazir commits.

R' Kook adds: The correct approach (unlike the nazir's mistaken belief) is to realize that the fact that a person is susceptible to occasional sin does not detract from his perfection. This is because the foundation of perfection is not to be perfect (which is impossible, for every man must sin), but to truly desire to come as close to perfection as possible.

(Orot Ha'teshuvah ch.5)

"May Hashem illuminate His countenance for you . . ." (6:25)

R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik z"l (1903-1993) comments (citing the Arizal): This verse reflects one of the two ways in which we feel Hashem's influence. One, alluded to here, is "hashpa'at panim" / "the influence of the face." The second, alluded to in Shmot (33:23), "You will see My back, but My face may not be seen," is "hashpa'at oref" / "the influence of the nape (or back)."

R' Soloveitchik continues: These two concepts may be understood through the following illustrations: A river in summertime flows in its bed, kept within its banks and its path. Water comes to those who have prepared for it by digging canals, building dams, pumping water, etc. In contrast, in the spring, when the snow melts and the river rises, the river flows and overflows lawlessly, flooding and damaging fields and orchards on all sides.

The river in summertime is the symbol of hashpa'at panim--a flow that is measured and precise. This is alluded to in the verse (Yishayah 66:12), "Behold, I will incline to you like a river of peace." The wild river of springtime represents hashpa'at oref--an uncontrolled flow. Our Sages say that when we are deserving, rain will flow exactly where and when it is needed. This is hashpa'at panim. When we are not deserving, rain will fall in greater quantity, but with an offsetting loss of quality. For example, the rain will fall where it is not needed and when it is not wanted.

Another illustration: A reading lamp gives off a small amount of light, but focuses it where it is needed. This is hashpa'at panim-- quality over quantity. In contrast, an overhead bulb bathes the room in light, not discriminating between the person reading in one corner and the person sleeping in the other corner. That is hashpa'at oref-- quantity over quality.

The mahn in the desert is a perfect example of hashpa'at panim. It was given in precise measure, and no matter how hard one tried, he could not gather more than one omer's measure per member of his household. But having a hashpa'at panim relationship with G-d comes with a price. Specifically, it calls upon one to distinguish between the sacred and the profane. Thus, for example, the mahn came with the command (Shmot 16:25-26): "Today you will not find it in the field. You may gather it for six days, and on the seventh day it is Shabbat, it will not appear."

Our Sages say that the verse, "You will see My back, but My face may not be seen," was taught to Moshe Rabbeinu in response to Moshe's question: "Why do the righteous suffer?" R' Soloveitchik explains that the answer to this question lies in the difference between hashpa'at panim and hashpa'at oref. A righteous person receives goodness in a precise, targeted manner-quality over quantity. The wicked, on the other hand, experience unrestrained, overflowing goodness-quantity over quality.

(Festival of Freedom p.75)

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From: **RabbiWein@jewishdestiny.com** Sent: June 08, 2006 10:18 AM
WHAT'S NEW AT RABBIWEIN.COM...

TORAH WORKS ONLY IF..... 12 Sivan 5766 / June 08, 2006

One of the questions that Jews who are observant of Torah law and ritual constantly face is: "If Torah is all that it is supposed to be, then why are there many Jews who are observant but are otherwise immoral, bad people?" I always flippantly answer that one should never confuse Judaism with Jews. Torah is pure, pristine, divine and moral beyond description. Jews are human beings, frail of body and will, buffeted by a hostile world and an inimical society. Therefore, there are failures in living up to high ideals. It becomes difficult to control one's passions and desires when the terrible temptations that life offers are omnipresent.

But in my heart I am aware that this is an insufficient, irrelevant answer. It is really only a non sequiter, an avoidance of the basic issue. For why does Torah observance not create a better person automatically? What is the missing ingredient that prevents Torah observance from taking hold of the entire person and elevating him or her? How is the believing, observant Jew to deal with the gap between the promised ideal and the harsh reality that one sees around us? In the midst of the anguish of my recent bereavement, mourning the loss of my beloved wife who was the type of person that the Torah had in mind and lived up to the Torah's ideal in her everyday life, I had an insight into this issue, which I am about to share with you.

The Talmud itself states: "Torah, for those who merit it, becomes an elixir of life. Torah, for those who lack such merit, becomes a potion of poison and death." The Talmud does not specify nor define the merit involved. It is obvious that the Talmud did not treat this merit as a random gift, a chance happening.

"Good traits and behavior patterns – derech erez – must precede the study of Torah." Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, Ramban, following the lead of this idea of the Talmud states that a person can be Torah observant, operating within the technical rules and rituals of the Torah, and nevertheless be a naval, an awful, obscene, despicable person. He therefore challenges Jews to go a step beyond the letter of the law and attempt to infuse true discipline, care for others and holiness into one's life. His formula is that even those acts of life, which are completely permissible to us, must carry holiness and dedication with them. But exalted as these ideas are they still leave us with the gnawing question of why Torah observance does not automatically raise a person to holy heights.

The Gaon of Vilna, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer, provides us with a glimmer of light in understanding this vexing issue. Moshe, in his final words to the Jewish people, described Torah as the blessing of rain and dew. The Gaon stated that rain and dew fall indiscriminately on the earth. Rain makes flowers and bountiful food crops grow, but it also makes weeds, thorns and thistles grow.

Whatever seed is in the ground, good or otherwise, is nurtured by rain. The Gaon says that people who train themselves and are trained by their parents and home environment from their earliest youth, to be good people, before they are even old enough to study and observe Torah, the Torah will then be an elixir of life for them. The rain will create good crops. However, for those that do not have that meritorious training as a basis for their entire persona, the Torah will, like rain on fields of thorns and weeds, be a poisonous and negative force in their lives.

We treasure knowledge of Torah. Our schools teach subjects and ideas. But if the basic personality of goodness is not first created within the child, we will be witness continually to the dysfunction of many in the Torah world that we witness in our society today. The rabbis therefore

wisely stated: "Good traits and behavior patterns – derech erez – must precede the study of Torah."

Morals, probity, honesty, modesty, care and tolerance for others, self-worth and self-discipline, all must precede Torah study. Only then will the beneficial rain of Torah study and ritual observance create the desired Torah person and society. This should be the aim and curriculum of our homes and schools. Knowledge, by itself, can be a dangerous commodity. Planting the right seeds will ensure the beneficial effects of the Torah's rain upon us.

I wish to thank all of you who expressed your support and sympathy to me on the death of my wife. May all of Israel be comforted in our good memories and forthcoming good deeds.