

# BLESSINGS FROM ZION

*by Shlomo Katz*

## Parshas Naso

### Blessings from Zion

**Nasso**

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Today's Learning:

Bava Kamma 2:5-6

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Yevamot 23

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Pesachim 48

This week's parashah includes the Birkat Kohanim / priestly blessings. We read (Bemidbar 6:27), "Let them place My Name upon Bnei Yisrael, and I shall bless them." The Gemara (Sotah 37b) teaches that in the Bet Hamikdash, the Kohanim recited Hashem's name as it is written ("Y-K-V-K"), whereas outside the Bet Hamikdash they recite His "nickname" ("A-D-N-Y").

R' Moshe Zuriel shlita (former mashgiach ruchani of Yeshivat Sha'alvim) notes that the connection between Hashem's blessings and Yerushalayim, the location of the Temple, is mentioned in other verses as well. We read, for example, in Tehilim (128:5), "May Hashem bless you from Zion . . ." This teaches, says the midrash, that all blessings come from Zion. This means, R' Zuriel writes, that as long as Eretz Yisrael is incomplete and the Bet Hamikdash is not standing, all blessings that we receive come in a hidden form and Hashem's providence is not clearly seen. This is what the Zohar on our parashah alludes to when it states: "How beloved are Yisrael before the Holy One, Blessed Is He, for the upper realms are not blessed except because of them - i.e., Yisrael. Hashem has taken an oath that He will not enter the Yerushalayim which is above until Yisrael enter the Yerushalayim which is below. As long as the Shechinah is thus in exile, His Name is incomplete, so- to-speak." (Otzrot Ha'mussar p.93)

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From the Parashah . . .

*"He counted them at the word of Hashem, through Moshe, every man over his work and over his burden; and his count [was] as Hashem 'tzivah' had commanded Moshe."* (Bemidbar 4:49)

This verse appears to be repetitious. R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik z"l (the Brisker Rav; died 1959) explains:

The midrash teaches that the word "tzivah" / "had commanded" implies not a one-time instruction, but a commandment for all time. Yet, the commandment for the Levi'im to carry the Mishkan and its components and implements was not for all time; it ended once Bnei Yisrael were settled in Eretz Yisrael. Thus, our verse must be understood as referring to two different subjects. The first half of the verse states that the Levi'im carried their "work" and "burden" - i.e., the Mishkan - as Hashem had commanded Moshe. In this part of the verse, the word tzivah is not used. The second half of the verse, which does say tzivah, refers to the commandment that Levi'im are eligible to serve in the Mishkan and Bet Hamikdash when they are between the ages of 30 and 50.

Thus, the verse is not repetitious.

(Chiddushei Maran RY"Z Halevi)

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*"The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nachshon son of Amminadav, of the tribe of Yehudah."* (Bemidbar 7:12)

Why did the princes of the tribes bring their sacrifices in the order in which they did (as described at length at the end of our parashah)? R' Eliyahu Hakohen z"l (Izmir, Turkey; died 1729) explains:

Yehuda went first, since Yehuda was the king of the tribes [and the ancestor of the Davidic dynasty]. Yissachar went next, for his tribe were Torah scholars, and Torah scholars are called "kings" as well. Zevulun was third, to demonstrate the importance of supporting Torah scholars. [Zevulun was a merchant who supported Yissachar.] Reuven was next, for he, alone among the brothers, was not jealous of Yosef. This teaches that one who wants to support Torah scholars must first overcome the trait of jealousy, a trait that prevents one from giving charity with open hands. Next was Shimon, whose name spells the Hebrew words: "Sham Avon" / "There is sin," referring to one who does not overcome his jealousy. The next tribe was Gad. The Torah uses the word "gad" to refer to the mahn. This teaches that one who wants to support Torah scholars must accept upon himself to provide all of their needs, just as the mahn provided all of Bnei Yisrael's nutrition and could taste like anything. Next came Ephraim and Menashe. The former's name alludes to being fruitful, for a Torah scholar whose needs are taken care of will be fruitful in his learning. The latter refers to forgetfulness, i.e., that such a scholar can forget (i.e., not worry) about material needs. After them was the tribe of Binyamin, whose ancestor and namesake was one of the four people who never sinned. Similarly, a

Torah scholar whose needs are provided for will never sin. Such a scholar's judgments ("din") will be accepted, and therefore Dan came next. Fortunate ("Ashrei") is such a scholar; therefore Asher was next. Finally, the words of such a scholar will be sweet like dripping honey / "nofet tzufim" - alluded to by the name Naftali.

(Semuchin L'ad)

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From the Haftarah . . .

*"The angel of Hashem said to Manoach, 'If you detain me, I shall not eat from your food, but if you would bring up an olah / elevation - offering, bring it up to Hashem,' -- for Manoach did not know that he was an angel of Hashem."* (Shoftim 13:15)

Why did the angel say, "If you detain me, I shall not eat from your food," rather than simply saying "I shall not eat from your food"? Also, why did the angel advise Manoach to sacrifice specifically an olah?

R' Moshe Yechiel Epstein z"l (the Ozhorover Rebbe; died 1971) explains that this verse is teaching us an important lesson regarding the proper practice of the mitzvah of hachnassat orchim / hosting guests. The prophet tells us that Manoach wanted to make a big feast because he did not realize that his guest was an angel. This means that Manoach acted instinctively rather than being sensitive to the needs of his guest. True hachnassat orchim involves recognizing the unique needs of each guest and fulfilling them. For example, maybe the guest is hungry and cannot wait for you to prepare a feast. Or, perhaps the guest is in a hurry to leave and does not have time for a big meal.

From whom do we learn this? From Avraham. He said to his guests (Bereishit 18:5), "I will fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves, then go on . . ." Is this the way to welcome guests? Was Avraham so stingy? And, was it polite for Avraham to appear to be throwing them out of his house with the words "then go on"? Rather, Avraham was telling his guests, "You do not need to stay a long time if you do not wish to." And, the Torah tells us that Avraham followed up on his words: "So Avraham hastened to the tent to Sarah and said, 'Hurry! Three se'ahs of meal, fine flour! Knead and make cakes!' Then Avraham ran to the cattle, took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the youth who hurried to prepare it." In the same vein, Rashi also informs us that Avraham served each course as it was ready, without waiting for the whole meal to be prepared. [Ed. note: R' Epstein does not address the fact that Avraham, like Manoach, seems not to have recognized that his guests were angels. Nevertheless, we can learn from Avraham's behavior to be sensitive to a guest's potential needs and not to assume that he can sit and wait for us to prepare a large feast.]

This is what the angel meant when he said, "If you detain me, I shall not eat from your food." The fact that you wish to detain me while you prepare a roasted animal shows that you are not a sensitive host. Therefore, I will not eat from your food. Indeed, your suggestions shows that you are self-

centered. Therefore, you should take the animal that you wanted to use to show off your hospitality and bring it as an olah sacrifice, which is given entirely to Hashem.

(Be'er Moshe)

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## Diaries

This week, we present an excerpt from Eleh Masei, subtitled "A Journal of the Journey of the Rabbis, Members of the Committee to Raise the Crown of Judaism in Our Holy Land, Who Toured All the Settlements of Shomron [Samaria] and Galil [Galilee] in the Winter of 5674 [1914]." This journal was written by R' Yonatan Binyamin Halevi Horowitz, and recounts the travels together of R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, R' Ben-Zion Yadler, R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap, and R' Moshe Kliers.

At 2:00 P.M. [either on Sunday, 23 Marcheshvan 5674 / 1914, or the next day], we arrive in the settlement of Shafiah . . .

We are met on the road by some of the settlers of Shafiah (six in number) and some young Torah scholars who are guests there. In the home of one of the farmers who is a Torah scholar, R' Nachum son of R' David Baharan, son-in-law of R' Chaim Dov, they received us with joy. . .

This settlement has existed for 18 years, and they occupy themselves with planting and dairy farming.

They tell us that their school is neither better nor worse than other schools that are controlled by the teachers' union. The genders are mixed in classes, they do not cover their heads and there is no trace of Torah. Their entire "Judaism" consists of their nationalistic feelings and speaking Hebrew.

The rabbis [of the delegation] attempt to persuade them not to go bare - headed in school.

One of the farmers objects and says that they may not change anything in the school without the approval of the principal. This farmer also objects to the agreement that was signed to separate terumot and ma'asrot [from the produce], saying that they are subject to the jurisdiction of the council of Zichron Yaakov. . . The rabbi of Yaffo [R' Kook] rebukes him in a pleasant way and wins him over with intelligently spoken words until he [the farmer], too, signs the agreement.

We daven Minchah in the shul which is, potentially, a beautiful building, but which has been partially destroyed. The repairs would require 600 Francs.

This settlement, like [the settlement called] Bat Shlomo, has a mikvah, but it is destroyed and desolate. It could be fixed relatively cheaply, but the poverty is such that aid is needed from the outside.

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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