

“ Brachot Are Not Only For Kohanim To Give”

A simple message that can forever change our lives I share with you today.

One of the most striking aspects of Parashat Naso, which all commentators focus on, is the repetitive listing of the twelve Nesi'im and the korbanot that they brought in conjunction with the dedication of the Mishkan. Despite the fact that each and every Nasi brought the same gift as his predecessor, the Torah details each offering in precise words and terms. It does not skimp on words or details. The same Torah which can consolidate laws that fill volumes of Gemara chose to elaborate expansively in order to give each Nasi his place in the eternal spotlight of the Torah's wisdom. Why?

R' Pesach Krohn relates the story of Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spector, (1817-1896), the Kovno Rav. Under Russian law, all young men were obligated to enlist in the army. Besides the obvious threat of violent death, maintaining any semblance of religious observance in the Russian army was virtually impossible. The only way out was an exemption from army service.

Ya'akov, a student who was much beloved by his rebbi, Rav Spector, applied for such an exemption. Moscow did not immediately respond to the request, and each day Ya'akov's friends, together with their beloved Rebbi, anxiously awaited to hear news of whether Ya'akov's exemption was accepted, or not.

One afternoon, as the Rav was deeply engrossed in his learning, the door opens suddenly and a young man stuck his head into the room. As soon as he saw R' Yitzchak, he excitedly exclaimed “We just got the news, Ya'akov was granted an exemption!” Rav Spector breathed a sigh of relief and said with a radiant smile, “May HaShem bless you for bringing me this wonderful news. May you merit long years and good health. Thank you ever so much!” The boy left smiling feeling good that he got a Bracha and at the same time made his rebbi so happy. Immediately, R' Yitzchak Elchanan opened his Gemara and again immersed himself in thoughts of learning.

A few minutes later, another student opened the door. Not knowing that his rebbi already heard the news, he apologized for interrupting saying he had something very important to share. Then he announced with joy, “Rebbi, we've gotten word that Ya'akov is exempt!” Rav Yitzchak Elchanan replied with just as much enthusiasm as he had the first time. “How wonderful!” He showered him with blessings as well. “May HaShem bless you for bringing me this wonderful news. May you merit long years and good health. Thank you ever so much!” The boy closed the door and left, beaming with joy that he had made his rebbe so happy and received such a wonderful Bracha.

Six times, different boys came in with the same news, each one anticipating the happiness their rebbi would feel at the news, each one not aware that others had preceded him. Rav Yitzchak Elchanan smiled at each boy, expressed his gratitude and made him feel as important as the first one, **AND GAVE A BRACHA TO EACH ONE..** The Torah in our

parasha repeated the ceremony for each and every Nasi with the same enthusiasm to teach us the importance and respect for each individual.

What a wonderful and powerful lesson for us. How often has it occurred when someone happily and excitedly calls us with some news, as an act of Chesed to make us happy, and what do we do? We coldly respond and say, “Oh, I already heard that news.” The person who felt so uplifted and happy to share something because he thought it would bring us joy and pleasure – now feels disappointed and dejected. What a lost opportunity for us of giving him a Bracha and a let-down feeling for him. Or else, someone brings us a cup of water to the podium from which we are speaking, but we already have a cup of water from someone else. Do we say, “thank you but I don’t need it”, or smile and make him feel good by saying, “thank you so much, and may you have good health” and accept the second cup, together with a Bracha at the same time..

At the end of the day, let us review all number of times we made someone feel good and the number of Brachot we gave. For giving Brachot is a sign of love we have for a fellow Jew, a Kiyum of “VeAhavta L’Rei’acha Kamocha”. Then count the number of lost opportunities that we could have done, but failed to do so, and decide if our day was indeed successful--- in the eyes of HaShem

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

KOL HAKAVOD TO ALL WHO ANSWERED LAST WEEK:

*Mr Yaakov Doerschuck-KOLLEL MEMBER-Switzerland//Mr Eliezer Teller-Brooklyn,NY//*ATTORNEY STEVEVN Mauner-KOLLEL MEMBER- Bet HaKerem//

*Pechman Family-Jerusalem//Libby Ziegler-Flatbush, NY//Rabbi J. Karzen-Jerusalem//

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT NASO:

1-Which perek in Tehilim has the same number of pesukim as parashat Naso?

2-The Torah states (5:8) that when a thief confesses his crime he must repent, bring a guilt offering and repay the amount he stole plus a penalty of 1/5th to his victim, if he is alive. If the victim is not alive then the money is paid to his nearest relative. If there are no relatives then the money is to be given to the Kohanim who were serving in the Temple at that time. Question: how is it possible for a Jew not to have any relatives???

3- A Nazir, upon completing his term of Nezirut must bring a sin-offering (6:4). Why should a Nazir have to bring a sin-offering, what sin did he commit???

4- Under what conditions does HaShem promise a “miracle” to a woman??

5-Which Shofet (Judge) of Israel was a Nazir??