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Rosh Kollel

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PARASHAT NASO 2022

“ The Gift of Love”

Being that parashat Naso falls on Erev Shavu'ot [in Aretz] we cannot overlook the obvious connection between Naso and Shavu'ot and the fact that Yom Yerushalayim was at the beginning of the week.

Parashat Naso contains one of the most beloved p'sukim in the entire Torah, the Birkat Kohanim, which Gd blesses us through the Kohanim. These three brachot which the Kohanim bestow upon us every morning [in Aretz] and during the major festivals in Chutz La'Aretz are introduced by the Kohanim with a bracha : “Praised are You, HaShem, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with the Kedusha of Aharon and has commanded us to bless His nation with love.” Where do we find a source that the kohanim must deliver their brachot with love for all Israel? This question has been on my mind for a long time but this year- that Naso is connected to Shavu'ot I believe the answer is found.

Chazal ordained that Megillat Rut be read on Shavu'ot. This is the biblical book which records the ancestry of Dovid HaMelech, initiator of Yerushalayim as the capital of a united Israel,(long before President Donald Trump) and forerunner of Moshi'ach. This Megillat Rut, from beginning to end, speaks of love as the necessary condition for the birth of Dovid and the advent of the redemption.

Lot, nephew of Avraham Avinu, returns Avraham's loving kindness with disdain by leaving Avraham for the greener pastures of the city Sedom. Lot's descendant, Ruth, repairs her great-grandfather's transgression by returning to that very land and faith with her mother- in-law, Na'omi. At this time, Mo'av, the nation unto which Ruth was biologically born, was not permitted to marry into the Jewish faith [even after conversion], because the founders of that nation hatefully refused the wandering, embattled Israelites bread and water [Devarim 23:4]. Ruth enabled the female descendants of Mo'av to be allowed to marry into the Jewish nation, through the interpretation of Chazal(Yevamot 77a) and because she treated her mother-in-law with the ultimate love and kindness by sharing her life's values and providing her with sustenance.

We find the entire love story between Bo'az and Ruth, grandparents of Dovid, was forged by loving kindness. Bo'az first noticed Ruth when, as a homeless immigrant-convert, she comes to gather the forgotten sheaves, and gleaning the produce of the corner of the field -a law of loving kindness to the poor. Bo'az is immediately attracted to Ruth, despite the fact that she is a stranger, since “it has been told to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law, by leaving your father and mother and the land of your birth and coming to a nation you did not know” [Rut 2:10]. Ruth is portrayed as characteristic of Avraham, who left his land, his birthplace and his father's house for a land he did not know [Bereishit 12:1]-and Avraham is the quintessence of Chesed, loving kindness.

Elimelech, elder kinsman of Bo'az, left Bet-Lechem, Israel, during a famine-for the greener pastures of Mo'av, instead of helping his people in time of need. Bo'az repairs his relative's mistake by redeeming Na'omi's sold land and performs a Yibbum [levirate marriage] with Ruth, which is considered the ultimate in loving-kindness. Megillat Rut teaches us that the world will only be repaired and redeemed through loving kindness. Is it any wonder, then, that the Kohanim must bless our nation with Love? The Kohanim representatives of Gd and Torah must feel love in

**their hearts for every Jew-as did Bo'az and Ruth-so that they can communicate to Israel the greatest blessing of all:
the love for every Jew which will ultimately bring redemption and peace.**

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler