

Parshat Naso 5778

A blessing on your head **מזל טוב מזל טוב ??** Solomon Rabinovich 1859-1926 aka Shalom Aleichem used a dream to extricate Tevye the milkman from a very awkward situation. Whilst dreams and ברכת כהנים are indeed linked, I would like to share with you a beautiful insight from Rabbi Reisman shlita which he based on thoughts from Rabbi Schwab on this topic. For us in Chutz L'aretz it's something that we associate with Yom Tov however in Eretz Yisrael it's a daily occurrence.

The 15 words of ברכת כהנים are essentially 3 blessings. The people who are being blessed should think about what is being said and the כהנים must understand what they are saying. The explanation is based on a Midrash.

וַיְשַׁמְרֵךְ ה' וַיְבָרְכֵךְ ה' וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ is the first blessing, and it's for Hatzlacha in Gashmius so that a person should have good fortune in his pursuit of his physical needs. The Midrash says וַיְבָרְכֵךְ ה' that Hashem should bless you with wealth and וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ and he should guard that wealth from thieves. So the first blessing addresses the physical needs of a human being.

The second blessing וַיְחַנְּךְ, וַיִּחַנְּךְ is a longer one. It is a blessing that a person should succeed in Ruchniyos ie his spiritual needs. With these words we express that HKB"H should light us up with an understanding of his Torah, וַיִּחַנְּךְ is a Lashon of Chein, a gift. We say Ata Chonein L'adam Da'as, Hashem gives a person Da'as and a gift of understanding. A person has to use it the right way. So וַיִּחַנְּךְ means may Hashem light you up with his countenance and his being and give you Chein. That is a blessing for Ruchniyos. So the first Beracha is for Gashmiyos, the second blessing for Ruchniyos. What about the third blessing וַיְשַׁמְרֵךְ, וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ, what is left?

The last blessing is for Menuchas Hanefesh. A person should not fall into a state of Behala, of tumult. A person should have a calm life in the pursuit of his needs; this applies to whatever needs he has, be they physical or spiritual. A person should have a calmness of Menuchas Hanefesh. וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ means a person should have a sense of Nesias Panim.

There is a Gemara in Maseches Berachos that says וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ is an idea that HKB"H plays favourites and he looks favourably at Klal Yisrael. This is the meaning of the last blessing. There is Menuchas Hanefesh when a person feels that HKB"H is looking and smiling at him with an idea of favouritism in the eyes of Hashem. With this explanation of Rav Schwab we can explain what would otherwise be a difficult Gemara.

The Gemara in the last Perek of Maseches Megillah says that there are three Aliyos on

weekdays, five on Yom Tov, and seven on Shabbos. K'negged Mi? What is so special about 3, 5, and 7? The Gemara responds that they are K'negged the words of the 3 blessings of ברכת כהנים. וַיְשַׁמְרֵךְ, וַיִּחַנְּךְ, וַיְבָרְכֵךְ has three words, וַיִּחַנְּךְ, וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ, וַיְבָרְכֵךְ is five words, and וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ, וַיִּחַנְּךְ, וַיְבָרְכֵךְ is seven words. So we do see that there is a correlation between the Aliyos and the words of ברכת כהנים.

What in the world does ברכת כהנים have to do with the Seder Aliyos that we have for the weekdays, Yom Tov, and Shabbos. With Rav Schwab's explanation it is beautiful. During the week is the time that we pursue our physical needs. Therefore the first blessing of the words is appropriate.

Yom Tov is a time of Aliyah L'regel when we pursue growth in our spiritual needs and therefore Yom Tov is the one with five words and so we have five Aliyos.

Shabbos is a day that Hashem created Menucha, rest. It is a time when we pursue Menuchas Hanefesh and it is therefore fitting that the last blessing of seven words corresponds to the seven Aliyos of Shabbos. Look how beautifully it fits.

In Chutz L'aretz there is a Minhag that after the Chazon says the first blessing, we say bizechus of Avraham Avinu, the second bizechus of Yitzchok Avinu, and the third bizechus of Yaakov Avinu. This fits well.

The first blessing is for Gashmiyos. Avraham's Midda was that of Chesed. Using one's physical possessions in the pursuit of doing kindness to others so therefore we say bizechus of Avraham Avinu we should have Hatzlacha. Avrohom showed this aspect at Pesach when hosting the Malochim. We hope to have good fortune in our pursuit of our physical needs something that can be used for chesed.

The second blessing is K'negged Yitzchok Avinu. Pachad Yitzchok, Yitzchok is the time of Shevuos, the time of Matan Torah. That of course corresponds beautifully to Ruchniyos. This is Yitzchok Avinu.

The third blessing which is of Menuchas Hanefesh corresponds to Yaakov Avinu. Yaakov wanted to Leishev B'shalva. He wanted Menuchas Nefesh. In appreciation for Menuchas Nefesh, the Yehi Ratzon is bizchus Yaakov Avinu which is of course the Yom Tov of Sukkos. That fits well because Yaakov Avinu built Sukkos, and it's K'negged Yaakov Avinu. The whole idea of leaving one's house and being satisfied with the Sukkah is Menuchas Hanefesh. Not needing more and being happy with what you have even if it is a bit more difficult. Good Shabbos.....and sweet dreams.