



Kinder Torah[©]

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Nasso



Man's Best Friend

"A man's holy things shall be his, what he gives to the Kohen shall be his" (Bamidbar 5:10). If someone gives something away to the Beis Hamikdash or to the Kohen, how can it still be his? The Chofetz Chaim zt"l answers this question with a parable from the Medrash. A person once had three friends. He was very close to the first friend. He was somewhat friendly with the second friend. The third friend received hardly any of his attention. One day this man was called to make an appearance before the king. He was frightened. "What does the king want from me?" "When the king summons someone it is not a good sign." The man went to ask his friend to go before the king with a good recommendation about him. Perhaps the king would look upon him more favorably. "Will you please speak to the king on my behalf?" The first friend flatly refused. He did not want to have anything to do with the king. Who knows what the king might do to him for defending his friend? The man went to his second friend. "Will you please speak to the king on my behalf?" "I will tell you what I will do for you, my friend. I will accompany you to the gates of the palace. After that, you are on your own." The man was crushed. These were his two best friends, whom he had loved and cared for his whole life. What would he do? He had no choice but to go to his third friend, the one whom he hardly paid attention to. He did not hold much hope. His close friends had already refused him. What could he expect from this casual friend? "I am in a tough situation. The king has summoned me and I do not know what to do. Perhaps you can help me out by speaking to the king on my behalf. Put in a good word, a character reference, whatever you can do." The man held his breath, waiting for the response. "Do not fear. I will go with you straight to the king, and I will speak on your behalf until you are saved. Nothing will

happen to you." And so it was. The third friend went with the man to the king and saved him from disaster.

Who is the first friend? That is a man's money. It is very dear to him. He spends much time earning it, investing it, counting it, spending it, and worrying about it. After 120 years, a person faces the King of Kings, Hashem. Can he take his money with him? Not at all. The second friend is a man's family and friends. He spends time with them, although not as much time as he spends at his job. They can give him a proper sendoff from this world. More than that, they cannot do. Who is that third friend who will speak on his behalf before Hashem? The Torah he learned and the mitzvos he performed. They are the only things that he can take with him to the next world. They will always stand fast at his side. "A man's holy things shall be his, what he gives to the Kohen shall be his." The holy Torah that he has learned and the holy mitzvos that he has performed. . . they are his friends forever.

Use the Blessings Properly

The *Bircas Kohanim* (Priestly Blessings) are found in this week's parsha. The first blessing (Bamidbar 6:24) reads, "May Hashem bless you and safeguard you." If you look in the Medrash Rabba, Parshas Nasso (11:5) you will see many interpretations of the meaning of this blessing. Let us focus on two of them. "May Hashem bless you", "with affluence" explains the Medrash. "And safeguard you", "that the authorities will not come and unjustly take it away from you." A person who once had material wealth and suffered loss, feels the pain of poverty very sharply. Much more so than the one who was always poor. That is why we are commanded to give enough charity to a poor person to support him at the standard of living he was accustomed to before he became

poor. We see that the blessing of wealth can turn into a curse unless it is guarded and protected.

"May Hashem bless you," with material wealth, explains the Medrash. "And safeguard you," that you should fulfill mitzvos with your riches. What better use can there be for our money than to fulfill mitzvos? Some people do not have that opportunity. The Kohanim are blessing us with prosperity and use of our resources for the fulfillment of mitzvos.

"Kinderlach . . .

In our daily prayers we ask Hashem to shower us with many, many blessings. We ask for wisdom, health, food, clothing, peace, and much more. The question we have to ask ourselves is what will we do with these blessings? Why does Hashem give us health, wealth, and wisdom? To serve Him. He gives us the tools and materials that we need to fulfill His mitzvos. When we wake up in the morning with lots of energy, let us think of all of the mitzvos we can do with that energy. When we receive some money, let us think of a mitzvah or two that we can do with that money. Let us use our minds to think of ways to do our mitzvos better. Serve Hashem with everything.

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Simcha Groffman

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P.O.B. 5338, Jerusalem, Israel 91053

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