Nasso 2013

1.

Permanency of Hashem's berachos

Nachlas Tzvi page 342

"May Hashem bless you and safeguard you" (6, 24)

"יברכך ה' וישמרך."

The Medrash Raba (11) explains the word 'bless' refers to a financial blessing whereas 'safeguard' refers to guarding one from the spiritual evil forces. What is the explanation of this Medrash? Why in Shemonah Esray do we say 'heal us, we will be healed'/"רפאנו ה' ונרפא"? Meaning, it's obvious that if Hashem heals us then we will be healed. The Bnai Yissoschor (on Tefila) explains that there are two different types of healing. A healing directly from Hashem will permanently last. Conversely, being healed by an angel will only be a temporary healing. Therefore, when we say 'heal us' we are asking Hashem to do so directly. We then say 'we will be healed', this indicates our certainty and belief in Hashem that we will be permanently healed. With this we can properly understand the aforementioned Midrash. The word 'bless' refers to a financial blessing; this means that Hashem should directly bless us. A blessing in this form will last and we will be financially stable. Subsequently we will be naturally guarded from the evil forces which will be incapable of negatively affecting our finances because the bracha of Hashem will be everlasting.

2.

Bar mitzvah without escalation

Rabbi Frand on the Parashah pages 207-208

"On the second day, Nethanal son of Zuar offered, the leader of Issachar. He brought his offering etc." (7, 18-19)

"בַּיּוֹם הַשֵּׁנִי הִקְרִיב נְתַנְאֵל בֶּן־צוּעַר נָשִׂיא יִשָּׂשכָר. הִקְרִב אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ."

Every bar-mitzvah boy's nightmare is to have to read parshas Naso, which has 176 pesukim. The truth is that many of the words in the parsha are repetitious, making any bal korays (reader of Torah) life much easier. Why is this so? The Midrash relates that the prince of Yehuda, Nachshon ben Aminadav, brought his offering, and then it was Nesanel ben Tzuar's turn. The question was; what should he bring? Should an identical korban be brought? Some Shuls (Baruch Hashem) could have a bar mitzvah every Shabbos for twelve consecutive weeks. With each following bar mitzvah the baalay simcha (family members of the bar mitzvah boy) might incorrectly try to improve and upgrade the food items served to celebrate the bar mitzvah. They might try to outdo the previous bar mitzvah. Nesanel foresaw this potential problematic escalation. If Nesanel were to go one up on Nachshon there would be no end to it. The pressure would mount, as would the anger, the resentment, the jealousy and no doubt the lashon hara as well. So Nesanel did a wonderful thing. He brought exactly the same korban as Nachshon. This

enabled all those behind him to do the same thing, and thus all of their korbanos were identical. Nesanel set the tone, all Jews are the same. The korbanos of the tribal princes were korbanos yachid (private offering), which is prohibited to bring on Shabbos. Since these korbanos were deliberately identical in order to avoid hatred and jealousy and coupled with the fact that these korbanos promoted a sense of community and harmony, Hashem considered them as korbanos tzibur (communal) and allowed them to be brought even on Shabbos. (See Chafetz Chaim al HaTorah pages 195-196.)

The Gemara in Mesechas Kesubos (8b) relates the history of the process of burial and their expenses. The Gemara says that originally the burial expenses were more difficult for the family members than the actual death. Therefore, they used to leave the corpse in the street and run away. Rashi explains that they used to bury the deceased in very fine clothing such as silk. The Gemara says this changed once Rebbi Gamliel came along. He instructed others to bury him in flax which is cheap. Subsequently everyone followed him. (Rebbi Gamliel was the leader; therefore everybody else followed his lead.) The Marsha explains that those who were wealthy were buried in fancy clothing. Out of embarrassment, those who were poor followed their lead. This occurred until it became too financially difficult to the extent that they would leave their deceased unburied. Meaning, **the social pressures were so great that people were actually spending money that they didn't have. They literally accrued so much debt that they would leave their dead loved ones on the floor. This is what setting high standards can unfortunately lead to.**

Nowadays many of the simchas that Baruch Hashem commonly occur are blown out of proportion. Bar Mitzvas, engagement parties and weddings are just a few of the examples. The expenses are unprecedented. These expensive simchas cause great problems for those who cannot afford them. Tremendous social pressure is being placed on individuals who can't afford such extravagant simchas. Many people complain and discourage this practice. They themselves say they will try to put a stop to it. They say that if it was in their power they would put an end to it. But then they themselves make an extravagant simcha. They themselves try to outdo the previous simcha. If we want to try to outdo people then let's try to learn and perform mitzvos better than others. Let's try to do more chessed (kindness) than others. Let's try to visit sick and elderly people more than others. Spending $20,000 on flowers is definitely unnecessary and inappropriate. Realistically this is unaffordable for many. **True, at least their money is being spent on these permissible and mitzvah matters rather than on other items. However, it is still incumbent upon us to have the realization, awareness and sensitivity towards others.** Just because many people can afford such luxurious simchas, it doesn't mean that others can. **This puts an indirect pressure on many who can't afford this lifestyle. These high standards must be lowered.**

There is unfortunately a lot of competition that exists in many schools and yeshivas. People compete and try to outdo the clothing of their fellow peers. Why does a moose or a guy on a horse make the clothing more chashuv (important)? If anything, having an animal should decrease the value of the garment. Who even decides what is considered cool or not? The problem with this expensive clothing is the same problem that exists with these elaborate simchas. These kids might additionally come home and complain to their parents that it's not fair that they receive less allowance than their fellow classmates. **This is one of the reasons why many schools have chosen to wear matching uniforms. When a school decides to have**

uniforms there is less competition, pressure and jealousy. At the same time there is more unity. Wealth shouldn't be flaunted in any way in order that there shouldn't be any indirect pressure towards others who can't afford it. For example, if someone went on a fancy vacation he shouldn't show off about it by telling everyone. We can learn all of this from Nesanel ben Tzuar.

(The following addition was heard from Rabbi Shalom Rosner (Rav in Israel and Rebbi at Reishit) on parshas Toldos 5767. Thank you Jonny Daniel for typing this up in order that this can be added. This addition shtims (coincides) beautifully with the aforementioned information.)
It is quite perplexing that the Torah divulged such few details about Yitzchok Avinu's life. There is merely one perek (Bereishis 26) that solely talks about Yitzchok. Furthermore, what is even more bizarre about this perek is that it essentially exactly mirrors the chronicles of Avraham's life. Meaning, there was a famine in Canaan, Yitzchok went to Avimelech in Grar, and he told them that Rivka was his sister. He re-dug the wells which Avraham built but were subsequently filled by the Plishtim. Finally, he built mizbeachs (alters) and made treaties.
Seemingly, Yitzchak's entire life was merely a mirror image of Avraham's life! Why was this so?
Rabbi Meidan (Rabbi in the Gush) quotes Rashi (Bereshis 25, 19) that Yitzchok even looked like Avraham. He notes that Avraham was a revolutionary individual and innovator by introducing monotheism to the world. However, his legacy would only continue and be properly sustained if properly rooted with a strong foundation. The second generation of any movement is the most important in that it should not change anything the previous generation attempted to accomplish. Thus, **Yitzchak's primary tafkid (purpose) in life was to strengthen that which Avraham initiated. His tachlis (purpose) and contribution to the world wasn't chiddushim (new religious insights).** Had Yitzchok introduced his own chiddushim, perhaps the rest of the world would never have accepted them. The Mishna in Avos (4, 1) states who is the strong one? He who conquers his evil inclination (איזהו גבור? הכובש את יצרו). Yitzchok had the desire to be mechadesh (create insights), but he nevertheless overcame his yeitzer hara (evil inclination). Yitzchak did this for the betterment of the Jewish people. Only after there were deep and strong roots did Yaakov Avinu (who represents the third generation) introduce new ideas into the world and became the father of klal Yisroel.
Similarly, the Gemara in Tanis (31a) relates that **on Tu B'Av (15th of the month of Av), the non-married Jewish females would go out and attempt to find their shidduch (spouse). The minhag (custom) was that they would borrow clothing regardless of their socioeconomic status in order to eliminate any potential embarrassment to those who couldn't afford nice clothing.** (כל ישראל שואלין זה מזה כדי שלא לבייש את מי שאין לו.) Since everyone would be borrowing clothing, it was unrecognizable who was borrowing clothing because they needed it or because of the enactment.

Based on the aforementioned information we can definitively conclude that **we need to strive to avoid causing even a potential for jealousy to enter and exist amongst the Jewish people.** The tribal princes offering identical korbanos, Yitzchok following exactly in Avraham's ways and the females on Tu B'Av wearing each other's borrowed clothing all teach the same message; **simplicity, conformity and unity.** The classic phrase regarding history that is commonly uttered is history tends to repeat itself. Based on the tribal princes, Gemara in Kesubos and Tanis, we clearly see **the potential concern of jealousy, competition and putting people in a potential**

negative unaffordable escalation. If these holy people were concerned about this then surely we (because of yeridas hadoros (decline with every following generation)) must be cautious and concerned.