

# MESILLOT Pathways to the Soul 

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha by Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt" ${ }^{\prime}$

From the weekly lectures of his son, Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

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## Parashat Naso - Shmuel HaNavi Told Me



## Shmuel HaNavi Told Me

There was once an exceptional avrech who, after being blessed to marry a righteous woman, continued and excelled in his study of Torah. However, one thing bothered him and his wife. Since their marriage, the years passed, and they still had no children.

The couple sought out Gedolei HaDor, who honored them with their blessings, and even did all medically required of them, but their salvation had yet to come.

The father-in-law of that avrech was a very G-d fearing Jew. He advised his son-in-law to go to the hidden tzaddik, Rabbi Yosef Dayan, who would grant him his blessings.

Rabbi Yosef conducted himself very simply among other people. In the presence of others who didn't know him, he adopted basic speech, exhibiting naivety and sometimes ignorance. When
he sat in the Beit Midrash or visited the graves of tzaddikim, he would spend hours reading the Zohar or Tehillim with eloquence, and when guests appeared, he began to read with errors, which everyone would catch and fix, thus proving his ignorance. He never displayed himself as a talmid chacham, but rather dressed as a simple person like everyone else.
The avrech listened to his father-in-law about the greatness of Rabbi Yosef Dayan, but he wasn't convinced, saying, "If the Gedolei HaDor blessed me and I still haven't received salvation, how can that "simple" man help him ?"

However, as the days passed and their salvation wasn't in sight, his father-in-law decided to go himself to Rabbi Yosef Dayan and ask for a blessing for his daughter and son-in-law.

Rabbi Yosef listened to the father－in－law and responded， ＂Tell your son－in－law to come to pray at the gravesite of Shmuel HaNavi on Thursday，and we＇ll bless him there．＂${ }^{1}$

The father－in－law，who had the privilege of regularly participating in the prayers with Rabbi Yosef， told him that bringing his son－in－law，a diligent avrech， wouldn＇t be easy．Rabbi Yosef suggested，＂If so，tell your daughter to use her wisdom to convince him．＂

And so，it was．The avrech， after being pressured by his wife and father－in－law，agreed to go to the holy gravesite．

After the tikkun，his father－in－law introduced him to Rabbi Yosef．Rabbi Yosef looked at him and asked for his name and his mother＇s name，and after he
answered，Rabbi Yosef said，＂Wait here．I＇ll go and ask the Navi！！＂2
Rabbi Yosef walked around to the other side of the gravestone， and after a few minutes，he returned and said，＂Shmuel HaNavi said that if you come to pray here every Thursday until（so and so date），you＇ll
be privileged with children ！＂
Everyone was ecstatic，but that avrech，who wasn＇t used to such interactions，wasn＇t so amazed by Rabbi Yosef＇s holy words and disparaged all those around him in his heart．But with no other option，he started coming every Thursday to the prayers， more than once arriving late．．．

As the date that Rabbi Yosef mentioned approached，the avrech turned to his father－in－law and said，＂Look，I did my part．But we still haven＇t received good news．

I knew it．I told you．．．＂

## Welloprings of

1．Rabbi Yosef compiled a book of tikkunim called＂Vayavoh Ad Chevron＂and would learn it with a group of people at the gravesite of Shmuel HaNavi every Thursday，eve of Rosh Chodesh，and 15th of the month．

2．See Rabbi Avraham HaLevi’s book Od Yosef Chai（р．49），where he explains at length why Rabbi Yosef Dayan merited the level of being able to speak with Shmuel HaNavi while awake．

His father-in-law approached Rabbi Yosef and told him that the couple hadn't yet conceived. Rabbi Yosef asked, "What date did I tell you ?" They answered in unison, "In another two weeks." "Well," replied Rabbi Yosef, "we still have two more weeks."

Two weeks later, while they were at the holy gravesite of Shmuel HaNavi, the father-in-law asked his son-in-law, "Do you have any good news." The avrech replied emphatically, "No!" The father-in-law approached Rabbi Yosef and said, "You promised us salvation, and my son-in-law made a great effort to come to all the prayers you told him. But they still haven't received good news..."

Rabbi Yosef responded, "What, they still haven't received salvation?!" He walked around to the other side of the grave, and after a few moments, he returned and said to them, "Shmuel HaNavi just informed me that you've already conceived!"
The avrech heard his words but could no longer bear his suffering. He was sure that all his
efforts for a whole year had been in vain. He left irritably.

When he arrived home, he said nothing of what had happened. He just felt a sense of, "I knew that nothing would change." His father-in-law then arrived at his house and asked his daughter how she was. She also said that nothing had changed.

The father told his daughter what Rabbi Yosef had said in the name of Shmuel HaNavi. Thus, he advised her to visit the doctor and get an examination since he was sure she would receive good news.

Indeed, she returned home crying out in joy with positive results in her hand. The avrech had a hard time digesting the overwhelming good news. For a moment, he thought that his father had influenced his wife to have innocent faith in Rabbi Yosef, but when he saw the medical results indicating that he was on his way to becoming a father, he burst out in joy and felt boundless regret for his lack of appreciation and trust in the tzaddik.

## Parashat Naso－Shmuel HaNavi Told Me

The following Thursday，the avrech arrived first for the prayers and had time to privately hug the holy gravestone of Shmuel HaNavi with tears and gratitude for his salvation．
When Rabbi Yosef and his group arrived，the avrech fell at his feet and asked for forgiveness with tears that moved the entire congregation．Rabbi Yosef didn＇t understand what he was asking for forgiveness for，but the avrech didn＇t let him go until he said aloud for all to hear that he was forgiven for the disrespect he had treated him with and for the lack of trust he had placed in him．

## Rabbi Yosef still didn＇t

 understand what he needed to forgive him for，but he continued to beg，not allowing Rabbi Yosef to move until he forgave him wholeheartedly and expressed it aloud．The congregation，comprising avrechim who had to hurry to return to the kollel in the afternoon，urged Rabbi Yosef， saying，＂Rabbi Yosef，please tell him that you forgive him．Look how broken this Jew is．＂RabbiYosef then said，＂I forgive you．＂
Sensing that this was a time of heavenly mercy，the congregation asked Rabbi Yosef what she would have，a boy or a girl ？＂Let＇s ask the Navi，＂he replied．He walked around to the other side of the grave，and after a moment，he returned and announced that she would have a boy．When the avrech heard this，he excitedly declared，＂If so，our rabbi will be the sandak！＂

Nine months later，a son was born to the happy couple．When Thursday arrived，the avrech arrived at the prayer and announced to everyone about the birth of his son，and honored Rabbi Yosef to be the sandak of his firstborn son．

Rabbi Yosef began to debate， ＂Look，your father－in－law is standing next to me，and what about your father？Why don＇t you honor them？＂But the avrech was firm in his opinion that only Rabbi Yosef would be honored with this mitzvah since the child was born because of him．Even his father－in－law，who was present then，told Rabbi Yosef that the honor of being the sandak is entirely his．

Parashat Naso - A Good Deal

The joyous brit occurred at the kabbalist yeshiva of "Nahar Shalom." When the avrech arrived, Rabbi Yosef was already waiting in the Beit Midrash along with some of the participants of the tikkun at the gravesite of Shmuel HaNavi. When they saw the avrech, they welcomed him with singing...

Afterward, Rabbi Yosef gathered them in the small kitchen of the yeshiva, called the avrech in, and said to him, "You gave me the mitzvah of being the sandak, correct? If so, if this mitzvah is really mine, I would like to give it to a certain Jew, who is childless, who is present now in the Beit Midrash."

The avrech replied, "Rabbi Yosef, I want to honor you and no one else." But Rabbi Yosef insisted, "If you want to honor me, that is my honor." He then added, "Look how many years you didn't
have children. You yourself know how much sorrow it is. Know, that this man has been waiting for children for more than ten years, and if he merits to sit as the sandak of your son's brit, he will be granted salvation very soon."
The avrech asked Rabbi Yosef if he were sure he would have a child, and Rabbi Yosef stated with complete confidence that in the merit of this precious, lofty mitzvah, he would have a child by next year !
The brit was performed with great joy, and the mitzvah of the sandak was given to that Jew, with Rabbi Yosef standing by his side, begging for his salvation. The newborn was given the name "Yosef" after Rabbi Yosef Dayan...

After about a year, the Jew who sat as sandak was blessed with a beautiful, healthy child... ${ }^{3}$

## A Good Deal

Rabbi Shmuel Darzi zt"l, the former head of the kabbalistic
yeshiva "Nivat Berama" used to give a lesson every Friday night

## Wellsprings of Wisdom

3. Mofet L’Shabbat (Shemot, p. 227)

Parashat Naso－A Good Deal

in Idra Rabba and Idra Zuta with the commentary Matok LaNefesh by Rabbi Yehuda Petaya zt＂l．He would always simplify the lessons so everyone present could understand and leave with something practical to strengthen their avodat Hashem．

Among the listeners was a soldier who served at an air force base in the south of the country． One of the base commanders had already been married for twelve years，but he and his wife had yet to have children．The commander and his wife ran from doctor to doctor and spent a great deal of money，but to no avail．
Seeing the commander in great sorrow，the soldier advised him to go to Jerusalem to receive a blessing from Rabbi Shmuel Darzi．The commander and his wife agreed and went to the Rabbi＇s Beit Midrash．After they arrived，they were amazed at his tremendous modesty．
When Rabbi Shmuel asked them what they needed，the commander expressed his and his wife＇s grief．They had just
celebrated their $12^{\text {th }}$ anniversary but still had no children．Rabbi Shmuel asked the commander， ＂Do you keep Shabbat？＂The commander replied in the negative．Rabbi Shmuel then offered him a deal，＂If you accept upon yourself to keep Shabbat，I promise that you＇ll soon receive your desired salvation ！＂
The commander consulted with his wife．After she consented， they wholeheartedly agreed to keep Shabbat according to Halacha．

Rabbi Shmuel asked them for their names．The commander replied that his name was＂Herzl．＂ Rabbi Shmuel then informed him that he should add another name． He said，＂We＇ll add you the name ＂Chai．＂The commander agreed， and Rabbi Shmuel placed his hand on the commander＇s head and blessed him that he should receive good news immediately ！Everyone answered with a fervent＂Amen！＂

The commander returned to his base and told everyone that the name＂Chai＂had been added to his name．He also changed his

Parashat Naso－A Good Deal

name at the Ministry of Interior so that it would be written on his ID．

Indeed，after a year，twins were born to the happy couple，a boy and a girl，and a tremendous Kiddush Hashem（sanctification of Hashem＇s name）occurred throughout the entire base，which then numbered about five thousand soldiers．Word of the tzaddik＇s blessing became known，and since then，countless soldiers from that base came to his

Torah lesson on Friday night．
The soldier who initiated the contact with the rabbi and his commander，who regularly showed up for the Friday night lesson， said that on one of the occasions when he and his friends got into their car on Thursday afternoon to leave their base as they did every week，they came across a red gate prohibiting any exit from the base．

The soldiers，for whom the rabbi＇s lesson was like oxygen， didn＇t know what to do．That soldier encouraged his friends and called Rabbi Shmuel＇s house phone．When the rabbi picked up the phone and listened to his
student＇s words，he ordered him and his friends to say together the following verse three times，
with the well－known kavana，
 הוּאי
＂We put our hope in Hashem， He is our help and our shield＂
（Tehillim 33：20）．
The soldiers fulfilled the command of their rabbi and said the verse enthusiastically three times， and lo and behold，before their astonished eyes，the gate opened before them．They continued on their way but suddenly reached the second closed gate．They called Rabbi Shmuel again，and he replied， ＂Say the verse that I informed you of earlier one more time．＂The second gate then opened for them as well．This happened again when they reached the third gate．．．

When they arrived at the rabbi’s Beit Midrash in Jerusalem， the soldier approached him， interested in the origin of this segula．Rabbi Shmuel told him that he received it from the son of the Ben Ish Chai，Rabbi Yaakov Chaim，who himself once had to
cross a river on a raft, and in order not to cross safely, said this verse... ${ }^{4}$

In the first story, we saw the immense power of prayer, and in
the second story, we learned about the power of a blessing.
About the difference between them in our discussion... ${ }^{5}$

## The Place

Before the creation of the world, Hashem's infinite truth shone openly. There was no place (not a "place" in the physical sense, rather in a spiritual sense which is beyond our grasp) for the worlds and creations that conceal (עלְלם (world) comes from the word הֲֶּלֵם (concealment)) the revelation of Elokut and perceive their own reality, to be created.

In order to create the worlds, Hashem removed His immense light, so to speak. In other words, Hashem removed and hid the Divine truth, contracted His kedusha aside, and when Hashem's kedusha isn't felt, there's room for the reality of worlds and creations that perceive their own reality.

This is similar to a holy hidden tzaddik who conceals his true self from his surroundings so that the person standing next to him doesn't really "see" him. There's also the possibility that the person won't behave appropriately as one behaves in the presence of a tzaddik.

However, the contraction and removal of His light in and of themselves didn't create the worlds, rather only "gave room" and the possibility to create the worlds. For the worlds to come into existence, Hashem radiated from Himself a "faint," contracted light by which the worlds were actually created. ${ }^{6}$

## Wellsprings of Wisdom

4. Mofet L'Shabbat (Shemot, p. 128)
5. Our entire discussion is based on the words of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi zt"l. Those who
wish to delve deeper can refer to his book Likutei Torah (Parashat Korach,
p. 110).
6. Lilmod Ech LeHitpalel (Vol. 3, p. 257)

## Parashat Naso - The Two Sources

By radiating the "faint, contracted line," the possibility was given for the creation of a place (our world) where Elokut would be hidden and concealed (and our avodah, all our lives, would be to obtain emuna).

But we must know that even now, after the worlds
were created, they exist solely because Hashem constantly sustains them with life force, not because they exist on their own...

And the life force that Hashem sustains them with descends to the world stage after stage. We'll explain...

## The Two Sources

Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Avina said... ${ }^{7}$

Anyone who recites "A Psalm of David" (Tehillim 145) (what we call "Ashrei") three times a day, is guaranteed a place in the World to Come.

The reason for this is that this psalm contains two virtues.

1. There are 21 verses in this psalm, each verse beginning with a letter of the aleph bet (except for the letter ני which doesn't appear at the beginning of the verses), which is significant (we won't delve into this now).
2. The psalm contains the verse, "You open Your hands, and satisfy the desire of every living being" (Tehillim 145:16). We praise Hashem for sustaining every living being at all times.

When one says this verse, they should have the kavana, "He supervises, sustains, and provides for all."

The Shulchan Aruch rules... ${ }^{8}$ One must have kavana when saying the verse, "You open your hands," and if one didn't have kavana, they must repeat the verse [with kavana].
7. Brachot 4b
8. Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 51:7)

## Parashat Naso－The Two Sources

But what are Hashem＇s ＂hands＂that He opens？What is the meaning of opening hands？

And how do you do it？
Before we answer，we＇ll need a few introductions．

Just as human hands are the source of giving to others and their role is to do acts of kindness and help others，so are Hashem＇s hands the source of giving to the world．＂Your hands＂are the two hands of Hashem which allude to two sources from which kindness descends to the world．．．

1．The source in which the shefa （abundance of blessing）is created．

2．The source in which the shefa belongs and descends to the recipient．

An example of this．．．
A rabbi who teaches his student． First，the rabbi＂forms＂in his mind the learned knowledge，this is the first source that creates the shefa，and then the rabbi becomes the＂giver＂of the knowledge who transfers the shefa to the student．This is the second source of the giving of the
shefa．From this source，the rabbi teaches his student and conveys to him the shefa in practice．

Likewise，the shefa that comes down to the world descends from two sources．

The source in which the shefa is created is the sefira of chochma of the world of Atzilut，which is the＂beginning of revelation．＂

However，the shefa cannot descend from the sefira of chochma（the first sefira in the world of Atzilut）because just as the essence of a person＇s wisdom is exalted and has no room for others，just as a person who toils in wisdom tends to disconnect themselves from their environment and concentrate，so too，the sefira of chochma of the world of Atzilut is disconnected from the reality of the worlds，and is instead connected to the endless light above the created worlds． Thus，it cannot be a source of sustenance to the creatures who perceive their own，separate reality．

Therefore，the shefa descends from the sefira of chochma to the second source，the sefira of malchut
(the last sefira in the world of Atzilut), about which it is said, "There is no king without a people." Just as a king of flesh and blood cannot reign over his sons and close relatives but only over other people not related to the king who accept upon themselves the yoke of the king's majesty, so too, the sefira of malchut of the world of Atzilut requires that there be a "people," the creations in the lower world, who by nature aren't connected to Elokut, but feel themselves to be "something," an individual reality, and accept the Kingship of Hashem upon themselves.

Since the sefira of malchut functions precisely when there
are disconnected creations in the lower world, it is thus a suitable source for transferring the shefa to the distant, limited creations.

Summary: The sefira of chochma in the world of Atzilut is the first source in which shefa is created, but the shefa can't descend to our world from this source because it doesn't allow for any other reality; there's no place for other creations. Thus, there's a need for the second source, the sefira of malchut, which relates to the creations and has the ability to transfer the shefa to the creations. ${ }^{9}$

Let's move on to the second introduction...

## A New Light

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l once said in a lecture...

The Mishna says, ${ }^{10}$ "The 1st of Tishrei is Rosh Hashanah regarding years" - The beginning of a year is on the $1^{\text {st }}$ of Tishrei. The Gemara asks, ${ }^{11}$ "Regarding
which Halacha is this stated ?" Regarding which Halacha does the Mishna say that years must be counted from the 1st of Tishrei ?

Rav Nachman bar Itzchak said, "Regarding judgment, Hashem judges all of creation on

[^0]Parashat Naso－A New Light

that day and decrees what will happen to them during the entire year until the next Rosh Hashana，as it says，＂The eyes of Hashem Elokecha are always upon it，from the beginning of the year until the end of the year＂（Devarim 11：12），judgment is passed at the beginning of the year to decree what will happen at the end of the year．＂

We＇ll explain．．．
Every year on the eve of Rosh Hashanah，as the moon disappears，the sustenance that illuminated the world in the previous year departs and returns to its source，and thus the world remains in a state of obscurity until the next day．

Then，through our blasts of the shofar and our holy prayers， a new，sublime light of the new year，a light that has never shone before，descends into the world．

Since the light that illuminates and sustains the world is completely renewed on Rosh Hashanah，the entire reality of the world is completely renewed，and thus is the
reality of each and every person．
What＇s in the past is in the past．
On Rosh Hashanah，everything that will occur to every person next year，in all areas of life，is decreed to the most minute detail．

All that is decreed upon a person on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur descends from the sefira of chochma in the world of Atzilut to the sefira of malchut and stops there．

In order for the shefa in the sefira of malchut to descend to the person themselves，it must descend many stages，from world to world and from chamber to chamber，until it becomes physical，tangible shefa such as parnasa，health，children，etc．．．

But if one fails to draw down the shefa to this world，it remains in the upper worlds，and only after the person passes away will they receive the shefa（which
belongs to them）in Gan Eden．
After these introductions， we＇ll now ask two questions．．．

1．How does one draw down the shefa from malchut to our
world (so that it doesn't remain in the upper worlds) ?
2. What does a person do if they weren't decreed shefa on Rosh Hashanah?

We found two general methods to answer these questions, one through prayer and the other through blessing.

Let's start with a prayer...

## The Power of Prayer

As we already explained, during the days of judgment (the Ten Days of Repentance), all the shefa that is decreed upon a person for the entire year is drawn down from the sefira of chochma and is in a waiting period in the sefira of malchut. However, the shefa decreed upon them doesn't descend until that person prays. ${ }^{12}$

Every day when a person prays Amidah, they draw down upon themselves the shefa that was prepared for them specifically for that day.

In more detail...
Through tefillah, a person ascends and approaches Hashem, and according to the extent of

## Wellsprings of

## 11. Rosh Hashanah 8a

12. The Torah teaches us this principle right at the beginning of creation with Adam HaRishon.

It is written, "And the earth brought forth grass" (Bereshit 1:12) on the third day of creation, and it is written, "All the plants of the field were not yet on the earth, and all the grasses of the field had not yet sprouted, because Hashem Elokim had not brought rain upon the earth, for there was no person to work the soil" (Bereshit 2:5) on the sixth day of creation.

The Gemara says (Chullin 60b) that this teaches that the grass came forth and remained just below the surface, but it didn't emerge.

Rashi comments on the above-mentioned verse: "Because Hashem Elokim had not brought rain upon the earth" - What was the reason Hashem hadn't caused it to rain? "For there was no person to work the soil" - Thus, there was nobody to recognize the benefit of rain. But after Adam HaRishon was created and realized that rain was necessary for the world, he prayed for it, and it fell, and only then did the trees and grass begin to sprout.
their intention, they descend and draw down the shefa upon their soul. His kindness is drawn down in the form of the fulfillment of the person's requests, and Hashem's light (spiritual abundance) descends upon the soul of the person praying.
But not only does prayer have the power to draw down the shefa that was already decreed upon them, but even if there wasn't any shefa (or minute shefa) decreed upon a person that day, prayer has the power to create and draw down new shefa! Shefa that wasn’t decreed upon them on Rosh Hashanah !

This is the meaning of the wording in prayer, "May it be

Your Will" - Please, Hashem, I ask of You to change Your will and draw down upon me new shefa!
But despite the virtue of prayer, which has the ability to draw down not only the shefa that was already decreed upon them, but even to draw down new shefa which wasn't decreed upon them at all on Rosh Hashanah, it nevertheless has a "drawback" so to speak. There's a possibility that the person's request isn't accepted immediately, and they thus have to pray a great deal until their request is granted.... ${ }^{13}$
Let's move on to the second method, blessing...
> 13. In a lecture delivered by Rabbi Shimshon David Pincus zt"l he said the following...

What happens when we place our trust in Hashem? First let us see what happens when a person places his trust in, lehavdil, a weasel...

Said R. Ami: Come and see how it is to have emunah. From where do we see this? From the weasel and the pit. If it is so with someone who places his emunah in a weasel and a pit, someone who
places his emunah in HaKadosh Baruch Hu - how much more so ! (Taanit 8a).

Rashi there explains what this is all about:

There is a story in the Aggadah about a young man who said to a young woman that he would marry her, and promised her so, in all emunah. She said, "Who will be the witnesses [that you so promised me in all emunah] ?" There was a pit there, and a weasel, and the young man said, "The pit and the weasel are witnesses for this."

#  

Parashat Naso - The Power of Prayer

Some time passed by and he broke his emunah. He married a different woman, and fathered two children from her. One of them fell into a pit and died, and the other was bitten by a weasel and died. His wife said to him, "What is happening ? Why are our children dying in unusual ways?" He told her the story.

Here we have a young man who placed his trust in a weasel and a pit. He relied on them, even though a weasel and a pit do not seem particularly worthy of trust. And what happened in the end? The weasel and the pit killed his two children. In other words, they acted trustworthily and performed what was asked of them.

What do we learn from this story? That placing trust has tremendous power. It works even with a weasel and a pit. Certainly, this is so with Hashem! If we place our trust in Hashem, Hashem will surely honor our trust.

Placing our trust in Hashem is a key concept in the Torah. Hashem said to Moshe, "I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov as E-l Sha-dai, but by My Name 'Hashem,' I was not known to them" (Shemot 6:3).

This means that until now, God was known to the Jewish people only by the trait of E-1 Sha-dai. God promised but did not yet fulfill. God was not yet known to them by the trait of Hashem, which is God's trait of goodness - to fulfill His promises. So Rashi explains this verse.

We might ask: Why does God have two distinct traits, one of promising and one of fulfilling ? Why shouldn't it be one and the same trait, to fulfill what was promised?
R. Yerucham Levovitz, the mashgiach of Mir, explains that God's two processes of promising and fulfilling are separated from one another because something has to happen in between in order for the promise to be actualized. This something is emunah. When people believe in the promise, when they place their trust in it, only then can the promise be actualized and come to fulfillment.

The verse in Yeshayahu (33:6) states, "The faith of your times will be the strength of your salvations, wisdom and knowledge..." The Gemara (Shabbat 31a) says that this verse alludes to the Shishah Sidrei Mishnah. The word "faith" alludes to Seder Zera'im - the Order of Seeds. This seder deals with things that are planted in the ground, that are seeded.

Why is Seder Zera'im referred to in the pasuk as "faith"?

Tosafos cites a Yerushalmi which explains as follows: "Someone who plants does so because he has faith in the One Who gives life to all the worlds."

The farmer takes good wheat kernels, which could have been milled into flour and baked into bread, and buries them in the ground. If we would ask him, "Why are you taking valuable food and throwing it in the dirt?" he

Parashat Naso - The Power of Prayer

would answer, "Don’t worry. Soon you will see it growing into nice, luscious stalks bearing heavy ears of grain!"

Let's say we stand there waiting and waiting. A few days pass by and nothing at all is sprouting from the ground. We grow impatient and start digging to see what is going on down there. We find that the wheat kernels are rotting away. They are decomposing. What's more, we ruined the whole planting because we dug it up. We holler at the farmer, "What kind of nonsense did you tell us? !"

Someone who places his trust in Hashem does not go and dig up the seeds. On the contrary, he brings water and irrigates the field. He invests time, effort, and money to work the field even if a week or two goes by and still nothing is growing. He keeps waiting, because he has faith in "the One Who gives life to all the worlds."

So to speak, he says to Hashem, "I am placing my grain in Your hands for safekeeping. I trust You to return it to me, with an increase in amount." In the end, he receives tall ears of waving grain. But what if he would break down in the middle of the process? What if he would lose faith and go dig up the seeds, or stop watering them?

Then he would not receive anything.
So it is regarding the Jewish faith. Hashem took the good seeds - the Jewish people and threw them into galus. Why ? Because in the end, they will sprout and blossom. The Jews who hold on to their faith, who don't break down, continue to water the seeds of redemption. They continue to cry
out Ani ma'amin, and V'lirushalayim ircha b'rachamim tashuv, and the day will come when they will reap the harvest. They will see the coming of the Mashiach and the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

And then there are the people who did not place their trust in Hashem, but rather gave up in the middle. They cried out year after year and did not see anything, so they gave up watering. They stopped saying Ani ma'amin. They will not see the Final Redemption. Without water, nothing can sprout.

If we want to sprout and grow, if we want to reach the stage where the promise is actualized, first we must go through the state of emunah.

We don't see immediate results from our actions; we need to go through the stage of emunah. Lack of immediate results is why some people break down in the middle.

If a person goes into a store, pays for his merchandise and walks out with it, he feels good. But what if a person pays and the storeowner tells him that the merchandise will not be delivered until tomorrow? Now he starts to hesitate. Who knows what the storeowner will do with the money in the meantime? He has to place trust in the storeowner.

Here is another example: Somebody pays a visit to the hospital and goes to see a patient who is very ill. He pours out his heart in prayer, "Hashem, give a refuah sheleimah to the sick ones among Your people!" Right away he

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notices an improvement in the patient＇s condition，and seeing this makes him feel very good．The patient is starting to recover．＂I prayed，and I was answered． How wonderful ！＂he thinks to himself．

The next day he visits the hospital again and goes to see another very ill patient．He cries and prays，but this time is not answered．The patient＇s condition continues to deteriorate．He feels as if his prayer was in vain．He placed his words in the hands of Hashem，but， where are they？The patient is not getting up from his hospital bed！

After such an experience he hesitates to pay another visit to the hospital．He doesn＇t even feel like praying for ill people at all．Yesterday he saw that his words did not help．His words disappeared without a trace．Maybe he should find something else to do，instead of muttering useless words which just vanish into the air．

This person is missing an important piece of information．He does not know that everything needs to go through the stage of emunah．If he would know that his words were deposited with Hashem for safeguarding－that they are safe and sound，and will take effect at the proper time－he would look at everything differently．

This person needs to realize that something good will sprout and grow from his words，even if he prayed without kavanah．In davening we do not say ki Atah shomea tefilas kol lev， but rather，ki Atah shomea tefilas kol peh．Hashem hears the words of our
mouths even if they are spoken without the kavanah of the heart．

Every word that a Jew speaks in prayer is a priceless seed entrusted in the hands of Hashem for safekeeping． The day will come when it will bring forth a generous harvest．

Even when it looks like our prayers were not accepted，this is not so．They were received and accepted，and were placed in Hashem＇s hands for safekeeping．We will see the results at another time，and perhaps in another area．

Before Hashem overturned Sedom，He said，＂How shall I hide from Avraham what I am doing？Avraham will surely be a great and powerful nation，and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him＂（Bereshit 18：17－18）．

The Maggid of Dubno asks：What does one thing have to do with the other ？Why should Hashem tell Avraham about the coming event simply because Avraham is destined to become a great nation？

He answers with a parable about an elderly man who went to the tailor to buy a suit，and was hesitating whether the suit was the right size or not．After him a youth came in and bought a suit，and then another suit，without even taking measurements． The elderly man asked him，＂How can you buy without checking the size？＂The youth answered，＂If the suit is not good for me today，it will be good for me tomorrow． And if it will not be good for me at all，it will be good for my children．In any case， the suit will be put to use．＂

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Thus, Hashem said, "How shall I hide from Avraham what I am doing - I will tell him about My decree to destroy Sedom." And lest we ask: What about all the heartfelt prayers that Avraham then prayed for Sedom, in order that it should be saved? If Hashem had already decided definitely to destroy Sedom, why did He cause Avraham to pray in vain? The answer is, "Avraham will surely be a great nation." The Jewish people will descend from him. Thus, Avraham's prayers are not in vain; they will be put to good use for his descendants.

Let's say we pray for an ill person, and he dies, chas v'shalom. We should not think that our prayers were not accepted, that they were said in vain. Prayers that do not help one ill person will help another one, or perhaps will help in other times of trouble. Maybe they will help the departed soul, who needs more merits as he stands before the Heavenly court. No word of prayer is turned away unanswered.

It will make it easier for us to place our trust in Hashem if we know that our prayers are being guarded safely, if we know that they are deposited in a lofty and secure treasure house.

The following allegory illustrates this point. At the time of harvest, a farmer reaps in tremendous quantities of grain. An onlooker asks him, "What are you going to do with so much grain ? How much can a person eat? Isn't a few pounds of grain enough for you?"

The farmer answers, "Look, there is a long winter ahead of us. A whole year will pass by before we have another harvest. This has got to last us until then, so we will store it up."

All the effort the farmer goes through is worthwhile only if he has a good place to keep the grain. He toils and sweats during the harvest, but when the winter days come he will be calm in the knowledge that he has enough food to last through the winter.

Yet, what if he doesn't have a good storehouse for the grain? What if he stuffs it all into some leaky old barn that is infested with mice? Then his effort during the harvest would have been in vain. Nothing will be left of the grain. In such a case, he indeed would have been better off to harvest just a few pounds for immediate use, rather than work hard for nothing.

We should know that our prayers are being kept in top quality storage conditions. We should know that Hashem Himself is watching over them. Not even one little word is forgotten about or lost. Hashem is keeping them for the day when they will be used.

Knowing this will motivate us to put in our best efforts. Another prayer and another prayer, and the time will come when Hashem in His great kindness will answer them all.

- Nefesh Shimshon - Gates of Emunah (p. 40)

Parashat Naso - Blessing - Drawing Down Abundance

## Blessing - Drawing Down Abundance

"בְּרָכָה" (blessing) comes from the word "בְּכְּרָכה" (pool). A person needs to open the valve connected to the pool of water so that the water reaches the other end. And, of course, only a person near the water source can open the pool valve and cause the water to flow to the other side.

So it is in the upper worlds. There are pools of shefa. Sometimes, a person is allotted a certain amount of shefa... Children, health, parnasa, or spiritual abundance, but the valve is closed, and the shefa remains above, at the source, and doesn't come down.

This is where blessings come into play. A tzaddik, who's knowledgeable in the upper worlds and is near the "pool," bestows his blessing, and by doing so, he opens the "valve" and draws down the shefa.

Blessing (בְּרְכָה) also means "forcing down" from the verse "He forced the camels to kneel
 24:11). Thus, the tzaddik "blesses"
and forces the shefa down even when the person being blessed doesn't deserve the shefa.

However, all of this is possible on the condition that a certain amount of shefa has been allotted to the person being blessed, and the only problem is drawing it down.
Thus, blessing also has a "drawback" in relation to prayer since blessing can’t create new shefa which wasn't decreed upon the person. But it nevertheless has an "advantage" over prayer in that it's fulfilled immediately and with certainty (unlike prayer, in which its fulfillment is sometimes delayed, and the person needs to pray several times).

After we've understood the difference between prayer and blessing, we must ask: Is there a way to create and draw down new shefa and force it to descend upon us with certainty?
The answer to that is yes! The blessing of the Kohanim has this special power ! But before we explain why, we'll give some background...

## Blessing from The Heart

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes... ${ }^{14}$

In our parasha, we read about Hashem's command to Aharon and his descendants after him until the end of all generations to bless Am Israel with the Birkat HaKohanim (blessing of the Kohanim).

In truth, already at the beginning of parashat Shemini, in the Book of Vayikra, we find that Aharon HaKohen blesses Am Israel with the Birkat HaKohanim even before he was commanded to do so. As the Torah tells us that after Aharon had finished offering his sacrifices on the day the Mishkan was erected, "Aharon raised his hands toward the people and he blessed them" (Vayikra 9:22). Rashi comments that he blessed them with the Birkat HaKohanim, "May Hashem bless you...", "May Hashem cause His countenance to shine upon...", "May Hashem lift His countenance to you..."

In parashat Shemini, Aharon HaKohen blessed Am Israel on his own initiative and goodwill, and ruach hakodesh shone within him to bless the people precisely with these words. Only after he blessed them out of his own goodwill did Hashem later command him and his descendants after him to do so for all generations.

But in order to understand where this goodwill of Aharon HaKohen to bless Am Israel came from, we must first preface:

In parashat Ki Tisa, in the Book of Shemot, we read about the sin of the golden calf. When Moshe Rabbeinu "delayed" in descending Mount Sinai, the people turned to Aharon HaKohen and demanded of him firmly, "Get up, make us gods that will lead us" (Shemot 32:1), and Aharon HaKohen conceded and made the calf for them.

Chazal reveal ${ }^{15}$ to us that before Am Israel approached

[^1]15. Sanhedrin 7a

## Parashat Naso - Blessing from The Heart

Aharon, they first directed their request to Chur, Miriam's son, but since he refused, they murdered him. When Aharon HaKohen saw what they had done to Chur, he feared that if he also refused, they would kill him as well. Thus, he decided to concede to their demand and make them the calf.

But don't be deceived into thinking that Aharon HaKohen did so because he wasn’t willing to give up his life like Chur. Chas v'shalom to think such a vain thought against Hashem's holy one, Aharon HaKohen HaGadol !

Rather the explanation for this is that Aharon HaKohen was afraid that if he refused, and they killed him, the verse, "When, in the Sanctuary of Hashem, a Kohen and prophet is murdered" (Eicha 2:20) will be fulfilled, for he was a Kohen and Chur was a prophet. Am Israel would then never have a tikkun for such as sin. ${ }^{16}$ Thus, he preferred to listen
to them, even though he knew he would receive stern rebukes from Moshe and be severely punished. He'd rather lose his share in the World to Come, provided that Am Israel would have a tikkun. Thus, he essentially did give up his life...

And as Aharon HaKohen thought, so it was. When Moshe came down from Mount Sinai and saw what had happened, he reprimanded Aharon saying, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them ?" (Shemot 32:21). It was then decreed upon him that all four of his sons would die, as it says, "Hashem was furious at Aharon, to destroy him" (Devarim 9:20), and there is no destruction but the extermination of one's children, ${ }^{17}$ as it says, "I destroyed his fruit from above" (Amos 2:9). Only that Moshe's prayers lessened the decree, and only two of his sons died. ${ }^{18}$ They were greatly angered at him in heaven,
16. See Sanhedrin 7a
17. Vayikra Rabbah 10:5
18. See Rashi (Devarim 9:20)
but nevertheless，Aharon felt in his heart that it was better that he receive all the suffering in the world，provided that Am Israel would have a tikkun．

After the Mishkan was erected，Moshe commanded Aharon HaKohen to take＂a young calf，for a sin－offering＂（Vayikra 9：2） and sacrifice it to atone for the sin of the golden calf he had committed．${ }^{19}$ And when Aharon finished sacrificing his sin－offering，he lifted his hands and blessed Am Israel with boundless love．This was to show that the extent of his love and affection for Am Israel was enough for him to accept upon himself all the suffering in the world，and even the actual sacrifice of his soul，as long as it would benefit Am Israel．

When Hashem saw the immense love for Am Israel that was in Aharon HaKohen＇s heart at the time that he blessed them－ love that emerged from true
mesirut nefesh－He decided to make it a mitzvah for him to bless them，and He even continued the power of his love and good eye to his descendants after him，granting them the power to bless Am Israel．

Since the Kohanim merited this blessing due to the greatness of Aharon HaKohen＇s love for Am Israel，the Kohanim must therefore bless Am Israel precisely with love，as they say in the blessing， ＂and commanded us to bless His people，Israel，with love．＂

The Zohar says ${ }^{20}$ that a Kohen that chas v＇shalom doesn＇t love the people or the people don＇t love him，he is forbidden to lift his hands and bless them，for there is no benefit in his blessing，
and it may even cause harm．
For the secret of the blessing depends on the good eye and the love of the blesser for Am Israel，as it says，＂One who has a good eye will be blessed（יְברְּ－yevorach）＂ （Mishlei 22：9），and chazal say， 21 ＂Do

Parashat Naso - Blessing from The Heart

not read it, will be blessed, rather, will bless (יְבַרָּ- - yevarech)."

That is, only he who has a good eye and possesses in his heart true love for Am Israel can bless them, and such a blessing will surely ascend and yield positive results. But if, chas $v$ 'shalom, the blesser doesn't have a good eye for Am Israel and doesn't love them with genuine love, by no means should he bless them, and if he nevertheless insists on blessing, he angers Hashem...
Before the Kohanim lift their hands, they bless, "Blessed are You, Hashem Elokeinu, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aharon, and commanded us to bless His people, Israel, with love." Also, when the Beit HaMikdash still stood, before the Kohanim would eat terumah or zevachim, in addition to the customary blessing over food, they would bless, "Who
has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aharon, and commanded us to eat terumah/zevachim."

This is astonishing! For the purpose of the blessing is to bless Hashem, "Blessed are You, Hashem Elokeinu, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us... and commanded us..." How then is it possible that in the middle of the blessing dedicated to Hashem, the name of flesh and blood suddenly enters, "Who has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aharon, and commanded us... ? !"

Rather our holy Sages, the instituters of the blessings, wanted to teach us that he who loves Am Israel with all his heart ${ }^{22}$ and is ready to give up his life for Am Israel's benefit, his honor is equal to the honor of Hashem, and Hashem is ready to set that person's name in the blessing dedicated to Him !

Now, we can understand why the blessing of the Kohanim is the ideal blessing...

## Welloprings of Wisdom

22. There is nobody in the whole world who does not possess at least a spark of the faculty of giving. This may be seen for instance at times of family rejoicing, when people of the most grasping natures
still feel the urge to involve their friends in their celebration. No one's joy is complete unless he can share it with others. Similarly, everyone has a deep-seated need for social life of some

Parashat Naso - Blessing from The Heart

sort. (This is why solitary confinement-separation from the company of one's fellow-men-is considered such a severe punishment.) What is the nature of these yearnings? - sparks of the faculty of giving.

We all want to have children. Two motives may be distinguished here. We want children to give us a sense of continuity; we feel that death is not quite so final if we have left children behind us. But perhaps an even stronger motive is the need to have someone on whom to lavish our love and affection. This is why childless couples will often adopt orphan children and bring them up as their own. Some will even lavish their affection on a dog or other pet animal, and treat it almost like a child. This too is an indication of the hidden depths of the power of giving in the human soul.

Here we come to an interesting question. We see that love and giving always come together. Is the giving a consequence of the love, or is perhaps the reverse true: is the love a result of the giving?

We usually think it is love which causes giving because we observe that a person showers gifts and favors on the one he loves. But there is another side to the argument. Giving may bring about love for the same reason that a person loves what he himself has created or nurtured: he recognizes in it part of himself. Whether it is a child he has brought into the world, an animal he has reared, a plant he has tended, or even a thing he has made or a house he has built - a person is bound in love to the work of his hands, for in it
he finds himself. I have been shown a source in the sayings of our Rabbis which may indicate that they held the opinion we have just put forward: that love flows in the direction of giving. They say in the tractate Derech Eretz Zuta: "If you want to keep close to the love of your friend make it your concern to seek his welfare."

Love of this kind can go very deep indeed. Let us observe what is written in God's Torah. (This is the only source from which we can learn the true depths of the human heart, for only the Creator knows the secrets of the human soul that He has created.) We find there that among the categories of men permitted to return home before a battle are the following:

Whoever has built a new house and not consecrated it... and whoever has planted a vineyard and not redeemed it... and whoever has wedded a woman and not taken her to his home

All are treated in exactly the same way: the builder of the house and the planter of the vineyard equally with the new husband who is involved in the most intimate of human relationships. The Torah thus reveals to us that the love we bear to the fruit of our labors is directly comparable with the love of a man for his betrothed. There can be no doubt that this is an example of the love produced by the power of giving.

Here is a case which I personally observed. I knew a young married couple whose little son was the delight of their lives. War overtook the town where they lived and they were forced to flee. It so happened that the young mother was

# ...e $\wp$ PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL 

Parashat Naso - Unbounded Kindness

## Unbounded Kindness

When Hashem commanded Aharon (and his sons) to bless His people, Israel, He gave them the power to immediately draw down shefa from the loftiest place (called VeRav Chesed) through all the worlds, with nothing preventing or hindering it (which is the power of blessing, as explained above).

And the shefa they draw down is new shefa, which wasn't
allotted to the person on Rosh Hashanah (which is the power of prayer, as explained above).

We find that the Birkat HaKohanim has both virtues... The virtue of prayer (creating new shefa) and the virtue of blessing (drawing down the shefa immediately). As chazal say... ${ }^{23}$ "You will decree, and it will be fulfilled" (Iyov 22:28). A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills. That is, even
cos Wellosuingo
away from home on that day; the father fled with his little boy in one direction while the mother was forced to take the opposite route, and so the family was separated by the warring armies. And so they remained, separated in sorrow and yearning, all the years of the war. At last the battlefronts grew quiet, peace returned, and they were re-united - and what a happy family reunion that was!

But a remarkable thing came to light. They could no longer make good that which the years had taken away. The love between the father and his son was deeper and closer than that of the mother for the son. Was it because she had parted from him as a small boy and found him grown up? Was she still yearning for the little son she had left behind? But this is only imagination.

The cruel fact was that the potential "giving" of all those years was lost beyond recall. It was the father who had trained and reared the child and had lavished on him the thousand-and-one acts of tender care which normally fall to the lot of the mother. The love which springs from all that giv-ing had passed completely to the father.

To sum up: that which a person gives to another is never lost. It is an extention of his own being. He can see a part of himself in the fellow-man to whom he has given. This is the attachment between one man and his fellow to which we give the name "love."

[^2][^3]
## Parashat Naso－Shabbat Shalom！

when Hashem says one thing， and the tzaddik says the opposite， the tzaddik＇s words are fulfilled．

But how can a tzaddik oppose Hashem？From where can he draw new shefa if not from Hashem？

Rather the meaning of this is， that Hashem created an order of descent of shefa down the worlds． Indeed，according to the order of descent，there is no shefa in the ＂pool．＂Therefore，the tzaddik comes（in our case，the tzaddik is every Kohen，the descendant of Aharon），and through his power（for Hashem gave him this power），he reaches lofty levels above the order of descent，above the
＂pool，＂and decrees that new shefa be created．And this unbounded shefa descends upon the Jew．

These are the two virtues of the Birkat HaKohanim．．．

First，new shefa is created，like in prayer．And second，since the Kohen is，at that moment，in the aspect of a tzaddik，he has the power to force the blessing to descend upon the Jew with certainty．${ }^{24}$

From this，we learn how important it is for every Jew to ＂trouble＂themselves and look for a minyan in which the Birkat HaKohanim is blessed，${ }^{25}$ and thus they＇ll receive all the blessings in the world，with certainty ！

## Shabbat Shalom ！

## Welloprings of Wisdom

## 24．Lilmod Ech LeHitpalel（Vol．1，p．118）

25．Rabbi Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman zt＂l writes．．．

I＇m always astonished by what individuals do when they need divine assistance．They chase and seek blessings， frequently going great distances to obtain them．Yet the blessings they obtain come with no guarantees！Many are unaware that every day they are guaranteed，with certainty，a particular blessing，which

Hashem promised has power and draws His Divine blessing．It＇s the daily blessing made by the Kohanim！Yet nobody bothers to seek out the Birkat HaKohanim．
－BeOrchotecha Lamdeni（p．38）．
It＇s known that when Rabbi Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman zt＂l would travel outside of Eretz Israel，he would go to a Sephardi shul which recites the Birkat HaKohanim daily．．．

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Parashat Naso - The Pathway...

## She Pathway...

1. Before the creation of the world, Hashem's infinite truth shone openly. There was no place (not a "place" in the physical sense, rather in a spiritual sense which is beyond our grasp) for the worlds and creations that conceal (yוֹדְ (world) comes from the word הֶעִלם (concealment)) the revelation of Elokut and perceive their own reality, to be created.
2. In order to create the worlds, Hashem removed His immense light, so to speak. In other words, Hashem removed and hid the Divine truth, contracted His kedusha aside, and when Hashem's kedusha isn't felt, there's room for the reality of worlds and creations that perceive their own reality.
3. This is similar to a holy hidden tzaddik who conceals his true self from his surroundings so that the person standing next to him doesn’t really "see" him. There's also the possibility that the person won't behave appropriately as one behaves
in the presence of a tzaddik.
4. However, the contraction and removal of His light in and of themselves didn't create the worlds, rather only "gave room" and the possibility to create the worlds. For the worlds to come into existence,

Hashem radiated from Himself a "faint," contracted light by which the worlds were actually created.
5. By radiating the "faint, contracted line," the possibility was given for the creation of a place (our world) where Elokut would be hidden and concealed (and our avodah, all our lives, would be to obtain emuna). But we must know that even now, after the worlds were created, they exist solely because Hashem constantly sustains them with life force, not because they exist on their own, and the life force that Hashem sustains them with descends to the world stage after stage.
6. Hashem created an order of descent of shefa down the worlds. Indeed, according to the order of descent, there is no shefa in the "pool." Therefore, the tzaddik comes (in our case, the tzaddik is every Kohen, the descendant of Aharon), and through his power (for Hashem gave him this power), he reaches lofty levels above the order of descent, above the "pool," and decrees that new shefa be created. And this unbounded shefa descends upon the Jew.
7. These are the two virtues of the Birkat HaKohanim. First, new shefa is

She Pathway．．．
created，like in prayer．And second， since the Kohen is，at that moment， in the aspect of a tzaddik，he has the power to force the blessing to descend upon the Jew with certainty．

8．From this，we learn how important it is for every Jew to＂trouble＂ themselves and look for a minyan in which the Birkat HaKohanim is blessed，and thus they＇ll receive all the blessings in the world，with certainty ！


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## Ask The Rabbi!



## Media

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[^0]:    9. Lilmod Ech LeHitpalel (Vol. 3, p. 55)
    10. Rosh Hashanah 2a
[^1]:    14. Imrei Noam (Naso, Maamar 6)
[^2]:    -Strive for Truth (Vol. 1, p. 126-129).

[^3]:    23. Taanit 23a
