Parshas Naso - שלום

Hashem bestow favor upon you and grant you peace!	יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם: (במדבר ו, כו)
Hashem found no vessel that could contain blessing for בני ישראל except for peace	אָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן חֲלַפְתָּא, לֹא מָצָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא כְּלִי מַחֲזִיק בְּרָכָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּא הַשָּׁלוֹם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (תהלים כט), ה' עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן ה' יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בַשָּׁלוֹם: (עוקצין ג, יב)

Instructions For Teaching This Lesson:
Present to your class the importance and value of שלום.

Step 1:
Explain to the students how without שלום, any ברכות in life are worthless. Show how we end ברכת כהנים with שלום.

Step 2:
Discuss with the students how Hashem is willing to forgo His own honor for the sake of שלום בית. Explain how we learn this from the case of אשה סוטה. Share examples of how our sages learned from Hashem's example and emulated His ways. As always, use your judgment in determining whether this discussion is age-appropriate for your students.

Step 3:
Teach the students how much Hashem values שלום. Demonstrate though the stories from תנך. (Ex. דור הפלגה, the wars during אחאב, the receiving of the תורה)

Step 4:
Teach the students how far we must go for the sake of שלום, as we learn from אהרן הכהן. Share the story of the young man who demonstrated how valuable שלום truly is.

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A jug with a hole in it will slowly lose all of its water. No matter how much water gets put in, eventually it will all come out if there is a hole. The same with the ברכות that Hashem gives us. In order for the ברכות that Hashem gives us to remain, we need שלום. A family can have so many ברכות like health, wealth, and children, but without שלום - if they are always fighting - none of those ברכות can be enjoyed.

In this week's parsha is ברכת כהנים. The כהנים bless כלל ישראל. Why are all the ברכות written in singular form? Isn't it meant to bless our entire nation?

יברכ**ך** ה' וישמר**ך**

R' Moshe Leib of Sassov explains that this is to teach us that the greatest ברכה is togetherness!

This week's parsha also discusses אשה סוטה. When a husband suspects that his wife was not loyal to him, there is a special process where he takes her to the בית המקדש to find out the truth. The woman had to drink special water that was prepared by the כהן. The כהן writes פסוקים that include Hashem's Great Name on a scroll. He erases the words in the water and then the אשה סוטה drinks the water. If she did not sin, the water does not harm her and she gets blessed. But if she did sin, she dies a terrible death.

<u>במדבר ה, כג</u>

וְכָתַב אֶת־הָאָלֹת הָאֵלֶּה הַכֹּהֵן בַּסֵּפֶר וּמָחָה אֶל־מֵי הַמָּרִרִים׃

The כהן shall put these curses down in writing and rub it off into the water of bitterness.

Parshas Naso - שלום

To erase Hashem's name is a very serious thing. It is forbidden even if a סופר makes a mistake while writing a ספר תורה. There are special הלכות of a סופר on how to write Hashem's Name. If we end up with a piece of paper with Hashem's Name on it, we must put it in שמות. Even so, Hashem lets His Name be erased for שלום between a husband and wife because שלום is so important.

נדרים סו:

אֲמַר, קַל וָחוֹמֶר: וּמָה לַעֲשׂוֹת שָׁלוֹם בֵּין אִישׁ לְאִשְׁתּוֹ אָמְרָה תּוֹרָה שְׁמִי שֶׁנִּכְתַּב בִּקְדוּשָׁה יִמָּחֶה עַל הַמַּיִם הַמְאָרְרִים בְּסָפֵק, וַאֲנִי עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה.

Rabbi Yehuda let something degrading happen to him in order to keep the peace between a husband and wife. He said: If Hashem can let His Holy Name be erased for the שלום between a husband and wife, then how much more so me. And Hashem does it even in a case of where it is uncertain if this will bring peace between them, as she may or may not be guilty. I, all the more so, should waive my honor in order to bring peace to this couple.

נדרים סו:

There was a husband and wife who came from different places of origin, which caused the wife to have difficulty understanding her husband.

He ordered her to cook "two lentils" referring to two portions, but she took his words literally and prepared two tiny lentils.

Another time. he asked her for squash, and she gave him candles.

Enraged, he screamed, "What do I need these candles for - go break them on the gate."

She, however, thought that he wished her to break them on the head of Bava ben Butta, the greatest Torah Sage of the generation, because her husband had used the word bava for "gate".

Obediently, she went to Bava ben Butta and hit him in the head with two candles.

"Why are you doing this to me?" He asked her.

"My husband told me so," she replied.

With his great wisdom and humility, the Sage told her, "You are a good wife for obeying your husband. May you give birth to two sons like Bava ben Butta!"

Parshas Naso - שלום

Story:

Reb Aryeh Levin, the Tzaddik of Yerushalayim, would spend a lot of time speaking to couples who had needed help with Shalom Bayis issues. He would meet with them in his house and give them a listening ear, and much encouragement. They would feel his sincere love and compassion. He was very successful in making Shalom between many husbands and wives. He would often tell a couple that he would be happy to meet them at midnight. He realized that a couple may be nervous and uncomfortable, afraid of being seen coming to Reb Aryeh and having people know that they had Shalom Bayis issues. If they came at midnight they would likely not be seen. Reb Aryeh never took a penny for his services. He was so happy to be making Shalom and in general he delighted in doing Mitzvos and doing chessed for fellow Jews.

He once spent a lot of time working with a specific couple, and he really changed their marriage. They ended up moving to the United States. The husband sent a nice check to Reb Aryeh with a letter thanking him for saving his marriage. Reb Aryeh, who was not a man of means at all, took the check and as was his usual way, sent it back to the husband. He included in the envelope a note of his own that said:

Thank you so much for this generous gift! It is my pleasure to help my fellow Jews. It's my Mitzva and I don't like to take payment for it. I have a great idea for you- please take this money and buy a nice piece of jewelry for your wife."

Parshas Naso - שלום

In פרשת נח, we have the stories of דור המבול and דור הפלגה. They both committed terrible עברות and were both punished. דור המבול was wiped off the face of this earth a punishment for their sins. דור הפלגה was punished by being separated and dispersed.

<u>רש"י בראשית יא, ט</u>
ומשם הפיצם. ....וְכִי אֵיזוֹ קָשָׁה, שֶׁל דּוֹר הַמַּבּוּל אוֹ שֶׁל דּוֹר הַפַּלָּגָה? אֵלּוּ לֹא פָּשְׁטוּ יָד בָּעִקָּר וְאֵלּוּ פָּשְׁטוּ יָד בָּעִקָּר לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ נִשְׁטְפוּ וְאֵלּוּ לֹא נֶאֱבְדוּ מִן הָעוֹלָם? אֶלָּא שֶׁדּוֹר הַמַּבּוּל הָיוּ גַּזְלָנִים וְהָיְתָה מְרִיבָה בֵּינֵיהֶם, לְכָךְ נֶאֱבְדוּ; וְאֵלּוּ הָיוּ נוֹהֲגִים אַהֲבָה וְרֵעוּת בֵּינֵיהֶם, שֶׁנֶּ' שָׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֲחָדִים, לָמַדְתָּ שֶׁשָּׂנְאוּ הַמַּחֲלֹקֶת וְגָדוֹל הַשָּׁלוֹם:

רשי asks: “Which sin was greater: that of the דור המבול or that of the דור הפלגה? The דור המבול did not fight against Hashem; the דור הפלגה did try to wage war against Hashem. Surely, then, that sin seems much greater. And yet the דור המבול were drowned and דור הפלגה did not perish from the world! Why is that so?
The reason is that the דור המבול were robbers and there was strife among them, and therefore, they were destroyed; but דור הפלגה conducted themselves in love and friendship, as it is said, “They were one people and had one language”.
We learn from this how hateful to Hashem is strife and how great is peace.

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When כלל ישראל came to הר סיני to receive the תורה in the מדבר, the תורה says:

<u>שמות יט, ב</u>

וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר׃

And ישראל rested there opposite the mountain.

The פסוק used the word 'ויחן' - 'He rested' instead of 'ויחנו' - and 'they rested'. רשי explains why the תורה used the singular form of the word:

<u>רשי:</u> ויחן שם ישראל. כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד

Like one person with one heart.

<u>ויקרא רבה ט, ט</u>

וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיַּחֲנוּ שָׁם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין כְּתִיב כָּאן אֶלָּא וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל, אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא הֲרֵי שָׁעָה שֶׁאֲנִי נוֹתֵן תּוֹרָה לְבָנָי.

כלל ישראל were באחדות at הר סיני and Hashem said, "This is when I want to give the תורה to My children."

<u>דברים רבה ה, י</u>

תֵּדַע לְךָ דְּאָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחְמָן דּוֹרוֹ שֶׁל אַחְאָב עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים הָיוּ וְהָיוּ יוֹצְאִין לַמִּלְחָמָה וְנוֹצְחִין, וְלָמָּה כֵן, שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה בֵּינֵיהֶן דֵּילָטוֹרִין, לְפִיכָךְ הָיוּ יוֹצְאִין לַמִּלְחָמָה וְנוֹצְחִין, תֵּדַע לְךָ כְּשֶׁבִּקְּשָׁה אִיזֶבֶל לַהֲרֹג כָּל נְבִיאֵי ה', מָה עָשָׂה עֹבַדְיָה הִטְמִין אוֹתָן בַּמְּעָרוֹת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (מלכים א יח, יג): וַאֲחַבֵּא מִנְּבִיאֵי ה' מֵאָה אִישׁ חֲמִשִּׁים חֲמִשִּׁים אִישׁ בַּמְּעָרָה, וְלֹא הָיָה אָדָם שֶׁאָמַר לְאַחְאָב כָּךְ וְכָךְ עָשָׂה עֹבַדְיָה,

The people of the generation of אחאב were idol worshippers, yet they would go out to war and win the wars.

Why was it so? Because they did not have informers in their midst. That is why they would go out to war and emerge victorious. When איזבל sought to kill all the נביאי ה', what did Ovadya do? He concealed them in caves, as he said to אליהו הנביא: "I concealed one hundred men of the נביאי ה', fifty men to a cave".

The entire time that עובדיה was hiding the נביאים, there was not one person from בני ישראל who told on him to אחאב and איזבל. That שלום between them is the reason that Hashem made them win their wars. Hashem loves שלום so much that even though they were עובדי עבודה זרה, they won their wars!

Parshas Naso - שלום

In פרשת בחוקותי, the תורה lists all the ברכות that כלל ישראל will receive if they follow the תורה and do the מצוות. The תורה promises food, rain, and safety. The ברכות end with this פסוק:

ויקרא כו, ו
וְנָתַתִּי שָׁלוֹם בָּאָרֶץ וּשְׁכַבְתֶּם וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חַיָּה רָעָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְחֶרֶב לֹא־תַעֲבֹר בְּאַרְצְכֶם׃
I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone; I will give the land respite from vicious beasts, and no sword shall cross your land.

רשי: ונתתי שלום. שֶׁמָּא תֹּאמְרוּ, הֲרֵי מַאֲכָל וַהֲרֵי מִשְׁתֶּה, אִם אֵין שָׁלוֹם אֵין כְּלוּם, תַּ"לּ אַחַר כָּל זֹאת "וְנָתַתִּי שָׁלוֹם בָּאָרֶץ"; מִכָּאן שֶׁהַשָּׁלוֹם שָׁקוּל כְּנֶגֶד הַכֹּל, וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר (ישעיה מ"ה) "עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל":

Hashem promises food and safety, but someone could argue, “Well, there is food and there is drink; but if there is no peace, then all this is nothing!” Nothing is worth anything without שלום. Therefore, the תורה states after all these promises “I will give peace in the land”.
We learn that שלום is equivalent to everything else. Like it says: “He who makes peace and creates all things".

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ויקרא רבה ט, ט
גָּדוֹל שָׁלוֹם שֶׁכָּל הַבְּרָכוֹת וְטוֹבוֹת וְנֶחָמוֹת שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְבִיאָן עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, חוֹתְמִין בְּשָׁלוֹם,
שלום is so great that all the blessings, goodness, and consolations that Hashem brings upon כלל ישראל conclude with peace.

For example:
The last part of Bentching, שמונה עשרה, and קדיש is שלום
ברכת המזון - ה' עוֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, ה' יְבָרֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בַּשָּׁלוֹם:
שמונה עשרה - בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּשָּׁלוֹם:
קדיש - עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

שלום is so integral that no matter what we are asking Hashem for we conclude with Hashem blessing us with שלום because שלום is the vessel for all other ברכות.

ויקרא רבה ט, ט
בַּר קַפָּרָא אָמַר חוֹרֵי גָּדוֹל שָׁלוֹם, מַה אִם הָעֶלְיוֹנִים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם לֹא קִנְאָה וְלֹא שִׂנְאָה וְלֹא תַּחְרוּת וְלֹא מַצּוֹת וְרִיבוֹת וְלֹא מַחְלֹקֶת וְלֹא עַיִן רָעָה צְרִיכִין שָׁלוֹם, הֲדָא הוּא דִכְתִיב (איוב כה, ב): עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו, הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים שֶׁיֵּשׁ בָּהֶם כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת הַלָּלוּ עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה.
Great is peace. If the מלאכים who do not have jealousy, hatred, rivalry, strife, quarrels, dispute, or the evil eye require peace – as it says: "He makes peace in His heavens"; how much more do us human beings, who do have all these traits, need to be blessed with peace.

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שופטים ו, כד
וַיִּבֶן שָׁם גִּדְעוֹן מִזְבֵּחַ לה' וַיִּקְרָא־לוֹ ה' שָׁלוֹם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עוֹדֶנּוּ בְּעָפְרַת אֲבִי הָעֶזְרִי:

שלום is one of the Names of Hashem.

אבות א, יב
הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר: הֱוֵי מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן: אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם, וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם, אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת, וּמְקָרְבָן לַתּוֹרָה

Hillel says: You should be students of אהרן הכהן, and learn from his traits: be someone who loves peace and pursues peace by helping others to make peace, one who loves all fellow creatures and brings them close to the תורה.

ברטנורא
הֱוֵי מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם. פֵּרְשׁוּ בְּאָבוֹת דְּרַבִּי נָתָן, כֵּיצַד הָיָה אַהֲרֹן אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם, כְּשֶׁהָיָה רוֹאֶה שְׁנֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם מִתְקוֹטְטִים הָיָה הוֹלֵךְ לְכָל אֶחָד מֵהֶם שֶׁלֹּא מִדַּעַת חֲבֵרוֹ, וְאוֹמֵר לוֹ רְאֵה חֲבֵרְךָ אֵיךְ הוּא מִתְחָרֵט וּמַכֶּה אֶת עַצְמוֹ עַל שֶׁחָטָא לְךָ, וְהוּא אָמַר לִי שֶׁאָבֹא אֵלֶיךָ שֶׁתִּמְחַל לוֹ, וּמִתּוֹךְ כָּךְ כְּשֶׁהָיוּ פּוֹגְעִים זֶה בָּזֶה הָיוּ מְנַשְּׁקִים זֶה אֶת זֶה.
When אהרן הכהן would see two people quarreling, he would go to each one of them separately without the knowledge of the other person and say to him, “Behold, how your friend is regretting and afflicting himself that he sinned against you; and he told me that I should come to you and ask you to forgive him.” אהרן did this to each of the friends. And as a result of this, when they bumped into each other, they would make up and forgive each other and kiss each other.

Parshas Naso - שלום

Story:

A wealthy man boarded a bus in Israel, paid his fare, and took a seat. A few minutes into the ride, he returned to the front of the bus holding the change he had received.

"You gave me 50 shekels too little," he told the driver.

The bus driver immediately defended himself, insisting that he had given the correct amount. The argument quickly grew heated. Each man was convinced he had been wronged, and before long, the exchange became personal. The wealthy man even threatened to report the driver.

At that point, a young kollel man sitting nearby decided to intervene quietly. In his pocket were 200 shekels he had been saving to buy his wife a gift for יום טוב. Without anyone noticing, he dropped one of his 50-shekel notes onto the floor near the front of the bus.

Then he stood up suddenly and called out, "Look! There's a 50-shekel note on the floor here!"

The wealthy man turned around. "Oh! I must have dropped it on my way to my seat," he exclaimed.

Embarrassed, he apologized profusely to the bus driver for accusing him and returned to his seat.

A passenger who had witnessed the entire exchange — and had seen the young kollel man drop his own money — approached him and asked why he had done it.

"The money was meant for a gift for my wife," the young man replied, "but it is more important that there be שלום between two people."

A few minutes later, the wealthy man came back to the front of the bus once again. After recounting his money, he realized that he had made a mistake all along — he actually had an extra 50 shekels.

Now both the wealthy man and the bus driver were confused. Where had the extra money come from?

The bystander then explained what had really happened.

Deeply moved by the young man's willingness to sacrifice his own money for the sake of שלום, the wealthy man took out his checkbook, wrote a check for $5,000, and handed it to him.

"Here," he said, "go buy your wife something really special this יום טוב."