

דרכים בפרשה נשא

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ועשה הכהן אחד לחטאת ואחד לעלה וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש וקדש את ראשו ביום ההוא *The kohen shall prepare one for a chatas and one for an olah and atone on his behalf for sinning by coming into contact with the dead, and he shall sanctify his head on that day. (6:11)*

Upon completion of his Nezirus, the Nazir brings two turtledoves or two young doves to the kohen. Rav Shamshon Refoel Hirsh explains that birds represent the capacity to soar upward to spiritual perfection. By using them as karbonos, the Nazir symbolizes ascent from the ways of tumah and readiness to begin anew.

In the very next possuk, **וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש**, the Torah calls this same person that just went soaring high, a sinner. The meforshim are bothered by this description. What sin did the Nazir commit? If anything, this man is a tzaddik because he accepted upon himself to live a higher life that was not asked of him. Rashi cites two opinions of Chazal. A) Perhaps this is talking about someone that sinned by not taking better precautions to avoid becoming tamei. (Sifri) B) The Nazir sinned by depriving himself of the pleasure of drinking wine. HaShem gave us a beautiful world, and He wants us to enjoy it. Abstinence is not the way of the Torah. Of course, at times it is a necessary evil, but the Torah is teaching us that is not the preferred way of living. The better way is to take in all that HaShem has created, and to recognize the stamp on every item in the world, that proclaims, “Made by HaShem”.

The Ramban answers that this Nazir lived a level of higher devotion to HaShem. Specifically for this reason, when that period is coming to an end, as he steps back into a more mundane life, he needs a kapara, for it is a tragedy when great levels of achievement get lost.

Similarly, in possuk 20 the Torah tells us about the day after: **ואחר ישתה הנזיר יין** – and afterward the Nazir may drink wine. The Avnei Neizer wonders why we are still calling him a Nazir. Didn't he already complete his term? He answers that the goal of Nezirus was to achieve spiritual gain and to retain it; as long as he is a better person, the Torah honours him with the title of Nazir.

According to the Rashi we mentioned earlier that the sin of the Nazir is that he abstained from the wine,

perhaps we can answer along the same lines as follows: the Torah is telling him: “You made a decision to become a Nazir. You lived higher, now on your way out, take that holiness with you, but this time, use it while drinking the wine. Enjoy the world, but this time through the eyeglasses of holiness.”

We just concluded the Yom Tov of Matan Torah. This Yom Tov really began already seven weeks earlier on the night of Pesach. We climbed level upon level during the Sefirah, until finally arriving at that great crescendo, the day of Shavuot. As we depart from Yom Tov and enter back into the mundane, we must ascertain that we bring the great levels that we achieved with us, not letting the inspiration slip away. Let us do what we can and hold onto it, not needing the atonement of the Nazir.

But practically speaking, how do we hold onto it? Doesn't inspiration just come and go? Quoting a possuk in Shir Hashirim (3:5), the Vilna Gaon gives us a practical way to retain our elevated frame of mind and really utilize what we have accomplished. The possuk says, **ואם תעירו ואם תעוררו את האהבה עד שתחפץ** – if you will wake or rouse the love until it pleases. Homiletically, the Gaon looks at the word **שתחפץ** (it pleases/desires) and sees in it the word **חפץ** which can also refer to an object. Zugt the Gaon, if you have love for HaShem and you want it to last; if you feel really inspired and want to take it to the next level, you must concretize it, and by doing so it will become real. How do we do that? The secret is in the word **חפץ** – place that inspiration onto something tangible. Don't allow it to remain as just another good speech or yet another forwarded whatsapp message. By stopping for a moment to reflect and accept on ourselves something real, in that manner it becomes ours. By doing so, it has the power to remain with us indefinitely.

The Baal Hatanya teaches that a spark of *kedusha* is given to us to spread light, but if kept hidden, it will fade. The Vilna Gaon adds that Torah and inspiration must be made concrete, for without action, they are like seeds that never sprout.

Just as the Nazir completes his *neder* by bringing a korban—a tangible step back into the world—so too must we take our moments of *aliya b'ruchniyus* and root them in real actions. Only then will our inspiration endure and continue to shine.

מרכי אפפעי, Good Shabbos