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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON NASO - 5761

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RABBI YISSOCHAR FRAND ryfrand@torah.org

"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Naso -

Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R.

Yissocher Dov - In memory of Mrs. Adele Frand -

The Nazir: Achieving Sanctity Through One's Own Efforts

Parshas Naso contains the laws of the "Nazir." Any Jew has the ability to accept upon himself the Kedusha [sanctity/holiness] of Nezirus, exceeding the sanctity of a regular Kohen, a priest. The pasuk [verse] says, "As long as he is a Nazir to G-d, he may not have any contact with the dead. He may not become Tameh [ritually impure] even when his father, mother, brother or sister dies, since his G-d's 'Nazir', crown, is on his head." [Bamidbar 6:6-7]. A Nazir may not even become Tameh for the "seven relatives" for whom a normal Kohen is allowed to become Tameh upon their death. Aside from the Nazir, only the Kohen Gadol [High Priest] may not become Tameh even upon the death of these immediate relatives.

In effect, the Nazir attains a holiness that is on par with that of the Kohen Gadol. The Avnei Nezer (Rav Avraham Bornstein of Sochaczew, 1839-1910) explains why the Kedusha of a Nazir is greater than that of a regular Kohen. The Kohen's Kedusha derives from his father. It is therefore only proper that one should defile that Kedusha for the honor of his father. When Kedusha comes via family, then Kedusha can be suspended by participating in the burial of family members. However, a Nazir's Kedusha (and the Kedusha of a Kohen Gadol) are not a result of family. Rather, Nezirus is the result of the person's personal voluntary aspiration for spiritual elevation. Since his Kedusha does not come via family, but through his personal endeavors and abstinence - his Kedusha in fact supersedes his own family. Therefore, he cannot become Tameh even for the sake of the "seven relatives" for which a normal Kohen does become Tameh.

The Shemen HaTov says in the name of the Sefas Emes (Rav Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger; 1847-1905) that implicit in this insight is more than just basic equity and fairness. This insight teaches us that the Kedusha which one attains on his own is more profound and more substantial than Kedusha which one attains through external sources or as a gift. That which one achieves by virtue of his own spiritual efforts is a far greater accomplishment than that which one receives because his last name just happens to be "Cohen".

Excuse the comparison, but there are two ways of obtaining money in this world: either one can inherit wealth from his father, or one can go out and earn money on his own, through his own accomplishments. Of course, the latter method says more about the person. Earning money on one's own is a far greater accomplishment than simply being a third or fourth generation Kennedy or Rockefeller or Vanderbilt.

That is the meaning of Nezirus. A Nazir has created Kedusha on his own. His holiness is therefore an even deeper and more profound Kedusha than that of a normal Kohen.

The Sefas Emes relates this idea to our Sages' teaching on the verse "A name is better than good oil..." [Koheles 7:1]. The Sages say that this pasuk is explaining the advantage that Chananya, Mishael, and Azariah had over Nadav and Avihu. The stature of the first three who were saved from the pit of fire [Daniel Chapter 3] was superior to that of Nadav and Avihu who were not saved from the "Strange Fire" [Vayikra 10:1-2].

Why was this so? Because Nadav and Avihu's Kedusha stemmed from "Good Oil". Namely, since G-d anointed Aharon and his children as Priests, Nadav and Avihu happened to possess the Kedusha of priesthood. Despite their righteousness, they basically attained their stature as a "present" by virtue of their lineage.

However, Chananya, Mishael, and Azariah achieved their Kedusha on their own. They did not achieve Kedusha through the "good oil", but through their own sterling reputation - the "good name" - which was strictly due to their own accomplishments.

One must always remember that there are two components involved in achieving a relationship with G-d. There is "This is MY G-d and I will glorify Him" and then there is "the G-d of my FATHER and I will exalt Him" [Shmos 15:2]. This is analogous to that which is written in Chassidic works that a person must always carry around with him two conflicting ideas. In one pocket he must put the sentence "I am dust and ashes" [Bereshis 18:27]. In the other pocket he must place the sentence "For my sake the world was created" [Sanhedrin 37a].

So too, a person must go through life thinking, "This is MY G-d". I have my own personal attachment to the Master of the Universe. I must explore and find my own personal approach and way to exalt G-d and to be His servant. But I must simultaneously remember that He is also the G-d of my forefathers. A person can not just cavalierly throw out all that he received by tradition from his parents. Everything that a person accomplishes in establishing a personal relationship to G-d must be built upon the traditions that he has received from his parents. However within that tradition, he must seek out new ways to make his own personal contribution to spirituality, which can even supersede the relationship of "the G-d of my father".

That is the meaning of Nezirus. The Nazir starts out on his own to build a Kedusha that is not necessarily only something that he inherited from his parents. The Nazir adds a Kedusha on his own that he himself has developed and achieved based on his own striving and Deveikus [clinging] to G-d.

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From: Shlomo Katz[SMTP:skatz@torah.org] Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Nasso Volume XV, No. 31 11 Sivan 5761
Sponsored by Yitzchok and Barbie Lehmann Siegel in memory of father Dr. Manfred R. Lehmann a"h and brother, Jamie Lehmann a"h
Today's Learning: Sotah 3:7-8 Orach Chaim 451:9-11 Daf Yomi (Bavli): Kiddushin 26

R' Moshe Isserles z"l ("Rema"; 16th century) notes that the custom in the diaspora is that the mitzvah of Birkat Kohanim is performed only on Yom Tov. In contrast, in most communities in Israel, Birkat Kohanim is performed daily. The reason for this distinction, explains Rema, is that the Jews of the diaspora find it too difficult to concentrate

on the performance of this Mitzvah.
(Mapah, O.C. 128)

This explanation is astonishing, writes R' Moshe Sternbuch shlita. Since when can we excuse ourselves from performing a mitzvah by saying that we can't concentrate? Besides, don't we want G-d's blessing?

He explains: Birkat Kohanim was part of the daily service that the kohanim performed in the Temple. Today, when the Bet Hamikdash does not stand, our prayers take the place of the Temple service. This is why Birkat Kohanim is recited as part of the chazan's Shemoneh Esrei.

However, not all prayers are equal. In fact, there are three categories of prayer. The lowest is "tefilat yachid" / the prayer of an individual. The second is "tefilah betzibbur" / prayer with a congregation. The third and highest level is "tefilat hatzibbur" / the prayer of the congregation. What is the difference between the second and the third types of prayer? The former is found when ten individuals pray together as a minyan, each reciting his own prayer silently; the latter occurs when one person prays and the others stand silently and listen.

Only the last type of prayer truly parallels the Temple service, for not every person brought the "korban tamid" / daily offering to the Temple. Rather, the kohanim, as agents of the nation, brought one sacrifice on behalf of all Jews.

It follows, therefore, that only in the context of "tefilat hatzibbur" (the third type of prayer) can Birkat Kohanim be recited, for only then does the blessing parallel the blessing which was recited in the Bet Hamikdash. However, says Rema, we in the diaspora, being unable to concentrate on our prayers, never attain the level of "tefilat hatzibbur" on a weekday. While the chazan is repeating the Shemoneh Esrei, each member of the congregation is off in a world of his own. One is reading from a sefer, another is talking to his friend, a third is dozing, and so on.

Only on Yom Tov, when the shul is full, are we sure to have at least a minyan that is paying attention to the chazan. Then, having achieved the level of "tefilat hatzibbur," we can perform Birkat Kohanim.

The situation in Israel is different for several reasons. Before the last century, the Jewish community in Israel consisted of two groups: Sephardim, whose ancestors were in Israel long before the practice arose for every member of the congregation to pray silently (they had only "tefilat hatzibbur"), and Ashkenazim, whose ancestors had arrived with one of the aliyot (e.g. the students of the Vilna Gaon or the Ba'al Shem Tov) that abandoned all material concerns and established communities in the Holy Land that adhered to the highest standards of observance. Both of these groups had no difficulty hnnnn maintaining a sufficient level of concentration to allow for "tefilat hatzibbur" and Birkat Kohanim. (Mo'adim U'zmanim: Yom Tov, ch. 31)

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From: RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY rmk@torah.org
To: drasha@torah.org Subject: Drasha - Parshas Naso - Eternal Gifts
Dedicated in memory of Irving I. Adelsberg by the Adelsberg Family
-- Reb Yitzchok Isaac ben R' Gedalia o'h 12 Sivan

What a person gives away seems forever lost. The Torah, in cryptic fashion, uses proper nouns and pronouns in a mysterious medley that teaches us a little about real property, about what you give and what one really has. The Torah tells us about tithing. "And every portion from any of the holies that the Children of Israel bring to the Kohen shall be his. A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his." What the Torah seems to tell us is that the donor has no further right to item given to the Kohen. So why not say it clearly? "What a

man gives to the Kohen belongs to the Kohen." Obviously, there is a dual reference attached to the pronoun. What lies within that double allusion?

Rabbi Betzalel Zolty, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, of blessed memory, related the following story:

The Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein was in America in 1924, raising much-needed funds for his Yeshiva. During his visit, he received an urgent telegram. The Lithuanian authorities were going to conscript the Slobodka students into the army. Rabbi Nosson Zvi Finkel, the founder and Dean of the Yeshiva, made a decision to open a branch of Slobodka Yeshiva in the ancient city of Chevron in Eretz Israel. He would send 150 students to Palestine to establish the Yeshiva, and in this way free them from service in the apostatizing, ruthless Lithuanian army. That monumental undertaking would require a sum of \$25,000 to transport, house, and establish the Yeshiva.

Rabbi Epstein was put to the task. He discussed the program with a dear friend of the Yeshiva, Mr. Schiff, who immediately decided to contribute the massive sum in its entirety.

Years later, in the early 1930s, the tide turned for Mr. Schiff. With the crash of the stock market, and plummeting real estate prices, it took only a few months before he was forced out of his own apartment, and was relegated to the cellar of a building that was once his, existing on meager rations.

At the same time, the health of Rabbi Epstein was failing, and he no longer had the strength to travel. His son-in-law, Rabbi Yechezkel Sarna, made the trip to America, in his stead, to raise funds for the Slobodka Yeshiva. He did not know of Mr. Schiff's situation until the man got up to speak at a parlor meeting on behalf of the Yeshiva.

"My dear friends," he began. "I do not wish my business misfortunes on anyone. I invested literally millions of dollars in all sorts of businesses, and they all failed. I have absolutely nothing to show for them. But there is one investment I made that continues to bear fruit. I gave \$25,000 to establish a Yeshiva in Chevron, and that investment is the best one I ever made. One must know where to invest."

When Rabbi Sarna, heard that Mr. Schiff was literally bankrupt, he cabled Rabbi Epstein, who quickly responded to arrange to give him a \$5,000 loan, in order to get him back on his feet and begin doing business again. Through some generous benefactors, Rabbi Sarna got a hold of the cash and went directly to the basement apartment where Mr. Schiff now resided. He explained to him that Rabbi Epstein insisted he take this money as a loan.

Mr. Schiff jumped up in horror, "What do you want from my life? The only money I have left is the \$25,000 that I gave the Yeshiva. Do you want to take that from me as well?"

In its mystical manner, the Torah teaches us the power of the eternal gift. "A man's holies shall be his, and what a man gives to the Kohen shall be his." We invest much in this world. We work. We buy. We build. We spend. But what do we really have? At the end of the hopefully long day, we call life, what can we say is eternally ours? Stocks crash, and buildings crumble. How real is our estate?

The Torah tells us, what the man gives to the Kohen shall be his. It does not say, "à will belong to the Kohen. It says, it shall be his! What we invest in the eternity of spirituality, in order to proliferate Hashem's eternal message, will never be relinquished. For what we invest for eternity, will be eternally invested. It shall always remain ours.

Good Shabbos 2001 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parabolic Reflections On a personal note: Best wishes to the Gevant family of Memphis -- Atlanta -- Baltimore Best wishes for a Speedy Recovery and good health to Karen Platkin of Boulder, Colorado

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From: listmaster@shemayisrael.com To: Peninim Parsha Subject:
PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
PARSHAS NASSO

But if the woman had not become defiled, and she is pure, then she shall be proven innocent and she shall bear seed. (5:28)

Rabbi Akiva, cited in the Talmud Sotah 26a says, "Then she shall be proven innocent and she shall bear seed." What does this mean? It refers to a circumstance in which a woman who previously had been unable to conceive, who had been wrongly accused of infidelity, will now be blessed with conception. Rabbi Yishmael questioned this, suggesting that every barren woman, therefore, will seclude herself. After being wrongly accused, she will be blessed with a child. A virtuous woman, who nonetheless remains loyal to her husband and avoids all suspicion, however, will continue to be barren! Is this fair? Thus, he interprets the pasuk to mean that if she previously had borne children in pain, she will now bear with ease; if she formerly had given birth to girls, she will henceforth give birth to boys; if previously her children had been short, they will now be tall; if formerly her children had been dark, she will now have fair children. In short, the woman who had wrongly been suspected of infidelity by her husband, such that this suspicion is broadcast throughout the community and she has undergone a process of public humiliation whereby her innocence is unequivocally proven, is rewarded. Indeed, she is a recipient of a miraculous reward from Hashem for her ordeal.

Humiliation is a terrible experience to undergo. Hashem recognizes the ordeal of one who suffers embarrassment, and He repays the victim in accordance with the extent of his personal suffering. Nachalas Tzvi cites a story that Horav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zl, related concerning Horav Yechiel Michel Heller, zl. Horav Heller would sign his name, "he'aluv, the lowly, Yechiel Michel ben Aharon." Why did he preface his name with such a shameful title?

It seems that Rav Yechiel Michel's grandfather was a very wealthy man. Whenever he left on a business trip, he would leave his business in the care of his daughter. Rumors began to slowly spread regarding her virtue. Indeed, it did not take long before her innocent name was besmirched. When she reached marriageable age, her parents could not find any prospective suitors for her. Everyone was "turned off" by her reputation. As she aged, her father decided that he must lower her standards and seek a simple young man from a common home. There was a young man in the community who fit the bill. His name was "Aharon Shmeisser," because he worked as an assistant to one of the wagon drivers, whereby he would "shmeiss," hit, the horses to get them to move. Understandably, this position did not require great acumen, and this young man "qualified" for the job.

Broken-hearted, the father attempted to convince his daughter to accept such a shidduch, match - if the young man would agree. It was not easy, but she finally acceded to her father's request. At first, the young man was not interested in the shidduch. Indeed, even his mind was poisoned by the vicious slander. After some convincing, he agreed to marry this "young" woman. As she stood beneath the chupah, the kallah looked Heavenward. In a proud, but broken voice she quietly said, "Ribono Shel Olam, You know the truth, that all of the rumors that were said about me were not true. They were nothing more than the work of evil people who envied my father's wealth. I am tahir, pure and chaste. Therefore, Ribono Shel Olam, I ask of You a special favor. Since I compromised and accepted this shidduch, in this merit, I implore that You grant me sons who will be righteous Torah scholars."

Rav Yechiel Michel's mother merited to have four sons whose Torah scholarship and virtue illuminated Klal Yisrael, all because of the humiliation she sustained. Hashem concerns Himself with the emotions and feelings of a human being. Should we not do the same?

Vignettes on the Parsha

To his father or his mother he should not make himself impure. (6:7) The Sochatshover Rav, zl, explains why a Kohen may be metameh, defile himself to his relatives, while a Nazir may not. The Kohen receives his sanctity as a result of his family lineage. He owes them. The Nazir reached this pinnacle on his own accord. He owes nothing to anyone. Likewise, the Kohen Gadol is not metameh to relatives, since his position is achieved by his own accord.

And to Bnei Kehas he did not give, because the service of the holy is upon them. They carry on the shoulder. (7:9) The Chafetz Chaim, zl, explains why Moshe Rabbeinu did not give oxen to Bnei Kehas by which to transport the Aron Kodesh. He says that the Aron miraculously carried its own carriers. It is not dignified for the holy Ark to carry animals.

Sponsored in loving memory of our dear father and zaidy on his second yahrtzeit Rabbi Shlomo Silverberg Zev Aryeh & Miriam Solomon & Family

From: [Ohr Somayach\[SMTP:ohr@ohr.edu\]](mailto:OhrSomayach@ohr.edu) To: weekly@ohr.edu
Subject: Torah Weekly - Naso

PLUS CA CHANGE...

"May Hashem illuminate His countenance..."(6:26)

It's interesting the perspective that time grants. Nearly four years ago, I wrote the following:

"When tragedy comes to the Jewish People, we could think that Hashem has abandoned us to our enemies. When we are beset by those who wish to destroy us and they seem to be unstoppable and we are powerless, and they kill us from morning till evening, let us remember this verse: "I will surely hide My face." (Devarim 2:18) "Hashem will never abandon us; rather, we feel that He has forsaken us because He has hidden His face. When Hashem hides 'His face' it means that we cannot see Him controlling events. It seems to us that chaos rules. "Nothing happens that He does not decree. The decree for every event that has happened this year was sealed last Yom Kippur: 'Who will live and who will die...' " "He is always with us. And if we look carefully at events, even though we cannot see Hashem's 'face,' we can, at least, discern His 'back', we can see the telltale footprints in the snow of history.. "However, when we feel depressed because we have failed G-d so totally and we feel that there is no way we can find our way back to Him, we should remember that He is always there behind the mask of the world, waiting for us to return through prayer and teshuva (repentance)."

Four years later, these words seem as apt as when I wrote them. As the French say, "plus ca change... the more things change, the more they stay the same."

"I will surely hide My face."

In the Hebrew language, the emphatic "to surely do" something is expressed by the repetition of the verb. That is, the literal translation of the phrase "I will surely hide My face" is "Hide - I will hide My face." The very structure of the Hebrew language gives us an insight into this "hiding." There are two kinds of concealment: A concealment where you know that someone is there but you just can't see them, and a concealment where you don't even know if they are there at all. In other words the very fact of their hiddenness is concealed. This is the ultimate hiding - where the very hiding is hidden.

When we are aware that G-d has hidden from us, He is not really concealed, because we realize that our hiding from Him has been

reciprocated by His hiding from us. It's like any relationship: When you act coldly towards your friend or spouse, they lose confidence in your friendship and they retreat. But if you honestly ask for forgiveness and promise that you really want to renew the relationship, they will take you back.

However, there's a deeper hiding of the "Face." In this hiding, the hiding is itself hidden. Then we don't see that we have a relationship with G-d at all. We think that this is the way the world is supposed to be. Then we are in big trouble, because nothing awakens us to return to Him. We think to ourselves: "This is the way things are supposed to be. Isn't it?"

One of the blessings that the kohen bestows on the Jewish People is that Hashem should "illuminate His countenance for you..." Obviously, G-d does not have a countenance, a face, in the physical sense. The meaning of this blessing is that we should see everything that happens in the world as directly coming from G-d, that there's no such thing as "natural causes." The blessing of the kohen is that we see "His face" in the world - that His presence be clear to all who choose to see it. Then we can shake ourselves from the bonds of our illusions, re-establish our relationship with Him and return to the Torah.

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[From last year] RABBI YAAKOV HABER

THE SOTAH AND THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

"V'nik'ta v'niz'r'a zara" -- "and she shall be [found] innocent and [subsequently] have children (5:28)." With these words, Hashem guarantees that a woman suspected of infidelity to her husband who is cleared of the charges through the test of the mayim ham'ar'rim -- the bitter waters -- will be blessed. If previously barren, she will now have children; if in the past, she had severe labor pains, now the birth-process will be easier (Rashi quoting from Sota 26a).

Historically, at least one woman threatened to utilize the sota process in order to be the beneficiary of this divine promise. The Talmud in B'rachot (31b) elaborates on part of Chana's famous prayer to the Ribono Shel 'Olam for children. "Master of the Universe," she cried, "you created in my body organs designed both to give birth to children and to nourish them; surely you did not create them in vain? If you do not grant me children, I will be forced to seclude myself with another man and go through the sotah process in order to force You to grant me children!" The Sages of the Talmud derive that Chana spoke audaciously to Hashem from the phrase: "Vatitpallel 'al Hashem" -- "and [Chana] prayed to [literally: on] G-d. (Samuel I 1:10)" The usage of 'al (on) rather than the more familiar 'el (to) indicates that "hiticha d'varim klapei ma'la" -- she thrust words up to heaven. Interestingly, though, Chana's prayer was answered immediately. Why would Hashem reward a brazen request with a speedy reply?

Furthermore, we find that Moshe Rabbeinu is described by the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 797) as being "maitiach dvarim klapei ma'la." In Parshat B'ha'alot'cha (11:2), after the episode of the mit'on'nim (complainers), the Torah relates the prayer of Moshe to stop the heavenly fire from consuming any more of B'nei Yisrael. "Va'yitpallel Moshe 'el Hashem." The Midrash comments that the word 'el should be read as 'al. This teaches us that Moshe "stuck words to heaven." Rav C. Y. Goldwicht zt"l, the founding Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, under whom I was privileged to study, noted that this Midrash seems to be illogical. Why should we accuse Moshe of praying brazenly by making substitutions in the text, if the text itself does not require such a reading?

These questions lead us to a totally different understanding of the phrase "maitiach dvarim klapei ma'la." According to Rav Goldwicht, this does not necessarily indicate chutzpa. Rather, it refers to the highest level of prayer. G-d, our Father, who greatly loves his beloved People, who are referred to as His children, is also compared to a loving Husband who wishes to shower His kalla, Kneset Yisrael with goodness always (see Our Master and Our Beloved: A Dual Approach to Avodat Hashem, by Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky). However, in order to allow Man to better himself, He instituted a system of reward and punishment to motivate Man to strive for perfection. Just as punishing a child causes the father suffering, so too the Shekhina "suffers" when limitless goodness cannot be granted to all of Bnei Yisrael (see, for example, B'rachot (3a) which records the Shekhina's "cry" over the destruction of the Temple and Sanhedrin (46a) concerning His "cry" over individual suffering). Of course, it should be noted, as the Rambam elaborates at length in Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah and in his Moreh Nevukhim, that human emotions do not apply to G-d, but nonetheless we use anthropomorphisms to describe the way in which G-d interacts with the world. When someone suffers, the most basic form of prayer is to ask G-d to remove the pain because it causes him (the person) pain. A higher level of prayer is to ask G-d to remove the trouble because that will remove the "tsa'ar haShekhina." "Maitiach dvarim klapei ma'la" means that the mispallel focused on praying for the "tsa'ar haShekhina." Chana's tefilla stressed the fact that Hashem's glory would increase if she were granted a child. Her current state of barrenness would cause a chillul Hashem, leading people to think that G-d's creations were not functional. If she were granted a child, all of the observers would become more aware of the fact that nothing in Hashem's creation is in vain. This would create a kiddush hashem -- a sanctification of the name of G-d. Indeed, Chana promised to dedicate the child's entire life to divine service, and, sacrificing the natural desire of a mother to take part in every step of her son's development, put the child under Eili, the Kohen Gadol's tutelage when Shmuel was but a child. This demonstrates the selfless nature of her request. In light of this interpretation, the phrase "'al Hashem" does not mean on G-d, implying brazenness toward Hashem, but rather for G-d, as she prayed in order to increase Divine Glory.

The same applies in the case of Moshe Rabbeinu's request. The Talmud in Sota (14a) states that when Hashem refused Moshe entry into Eretz Yisrael he stated: "I know that you only want to enter in order to receive reward for fulfilling the mitzvot ha't' luyot ba'aretz (commandments dependent on the land); I will view it as if you kept them." Now, this is very troubling. Antigonus from Socho teaches us in this week's Perek in Avot (1:3) that one should not serve G-d in order to receive reward. Surely Moshe Rabbeinu, the Master of all Prophets, would not serve G-d in this manner. Rather, Moshe Rabbeinu's goal in his prayer was to increase Divine happiness. Since G-d created Man in order to receive everlasting divine pleasure (see Mesillat Yesharim (beginning)), the reward granted to Moshe for the additional mitzvot he would be able to fulfill would cause nachat ruach to Hashem. From this, we can understand why the above-mentioned Midrash understood that Moshe was "maitiach dvarim klapei ma'la." The entire nature of his request to enter the Holy Land was G-d oriented, not self-oriented. Therefore, it is logical to assume that in the episode of the mit'on'nim, he prayed in a similar fashion. (See Ruach Chayim (3:2) for an elaboration of this theme.)

Clearly, this level of prayer that is totally dedicated to G-d and not for our own desires is one that is not easily achieved. However, we certainly can gather from the concept behind it the significance of selflessness. Thinking of the needs of other people and not just our own is the first step we can take to achieve this lofty goal. Indeed, some interpret that the reason that the commandment of loving a fellow-Jew as yourself is such a central pillar of Judaism (see Rashi to Vayikra 19:18

from Sifrei quoting R. Akiva) is that through recognizing the needs of others, we arrive at a fuller, more heightened awareness that we are not the center of the world. Ultimately, we become fully cognizant of the fact that G-d created the entire cosmos to allow Man to elevate his quintessential, spiritual nature by drawing nearer to Him, the true center of the universe.

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SHABBAT SHALOM: Transforming the evil impulse

By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(May 31) NASO Numbers 4:21-7:89

One of our staunchest supporters from the beginnings of Lincoln Square Synagogue was Wolf Reichard, who took upon himself the mitzva of providing the kiddush after the Shabbat service. The fact that he was a graduate of Auschwitz, whose experiences included cooking up shoe leather to provide sustenance, added to his pleasure in buying some of the best baked goods that Brooklyn bakeries could provide.

One Shabbat Reichard noticed that I wasn't eating. Surprised, he felt constrained to remind me that these chocolate cakes, from Gertel's in Brooklyn, had the most stringent kashrut supervision.

I explained that I had decided to go on a diet.

He looked at me with a half-smile. "Rabbi, understand that the yetzer hara [evil inclination] will always get his due. If you lock him out of one door, he'll come back through another. So if my rabbi has to have a yetzer hara, let it be for chocolate."

And then he added a singularly important lesson: our task in life is not to subdue the evil impulse, but rather to sublimate it into a yetzer tov, a good impulse!

Studying the laws of the Nazirite in this week's portion of Naso invariably makes me recall these wise words. In a sense, the Nazirite goes on a self-induced "diet," prohibiting himself from wine as well as haircuts and contact with the dead. Despite the fact that the ascetic is generally exalted in the religious tradition, Judaism is strangely ambivalent toward those who undertake added prohibitions.

First of all, at the conclusion of the Nazirite vow period - usually 30 days - the individual is obligated to bring a sin offering. In what way did he sin, if his only purpose was to become more righteous?

Secondly, there are primarily two kinds of vows an individual can make: a promise (neder) or an oath (shevua). An oath relates to the person - for example, that individual may not drink wine - whereas a promise relates to the object, so that only the particular flask of wine becomes prohibited.

Given this distinction, the language concerning the Nazirite's vow is surprising. "When either a man or woman shall clearly utter the promise of a Nazirite, to consecrate himself unto G-d, he shall abstain from wine and strong drink." (Num. 6:2) Why a promise and not an oath? Does not the Nazirite transform his entire persona, to the extent that he is even known by another name and given another status - that of nazir?

I believe we will best be able to understand the biblical attitude toward the nazir as well as the proper way to deal with our evil impulse by considering a curious commandment concerning Shavuot, which is almost always in close proximity to our Torah portion of Naso.

On the festival of Shavuot, the Torah commands us to bring "two wave-loaves baked with leaven, for first-fruits unto G-d." (Lev. 23:17) Now on Pessah, which we celebrated just seven weeks ago, all form of leaven had been expressly forbidden - and all commentaries identify this leaven with the "yeast in the dough," the hedonistic expansion of materialistic ambition, sexual excess and overweening pride.

But by the time we get to Shavuot, the leavened loaves are not only back in the pantry, but take center stage on the altar of the Holy Temple! What caused the switch?

From both a theological and historical perspective, Pessah celebrates our first glimmer of redemption when our nation was virtually in diapers; Shavuot, on the other hand, marks the culmination of the process, when a mature Israel brings the first fruits to the Temple. Matza is, after all, the early stage of dough and water before it ferments and develops into completed loaves. Small children must be warned never to touch fire, and the sexual stirrings of adolescence, fraught with danger, must be denied; but at the same time it was fire which - in the hands of mature scientists - contained the key to human creativity, and a married adult has the ability to utilize his/her sexual energy to provide family continuity.

On Pessah, in the infancy of our development, we destroy every trace of leaven; on Shavuot, the festival of our maturity, we sublimate and sanctify the leaven as our gift to Eternity and our connection to the Divine. It is not by accident that Shavuot also commemorates our acceptance of Torah, the fundamental tool by which we are enabled to elevate and ennoble our passions and our pride.

In a striking homily, the Talmud records that the Israelites once prayed to G-d that he destroy the yetzer hara. When G-d acquiesced, the result was chaos: instead of a longed-for era of peace, humanity merely stopped producing - even the chickens stopped laying eggs.

The moral is clear. On Shavuot, we must understand that our real challenge is not to obliterate the evil impulse, but rather to elevate it, sublimate it, and ultimately sanctify it.

The story is told about an individual seeking rabbinic ordination from the Maggid of Mezeritch. After all, he possessed only one thin white robe, he would roll in the snow to freeze his passions and he fasted every Monday and Thursday.

The Maggid pointed out a horse in the pasture: "It, too, rolls in the snow, has but one thin coat, and due to a poor and stingy owner, fasts at least three days a week. Would you suggest that I grant the horse ordination?"

Added prohibitions do not necessarily change one's personality, and so the nazir is considered to have made a promise and not an oath. Indeed, rejecting wine rather than sanctifying it - as we are ordained to do on each Shabbat and Festival - may even be considered a sin, and so the Nazir must bring a sin offering.

Our task is not to reject, but rather to refine, transform and transcend. Shabbat shalom

From: Kollel Iyun Hadaf KORNFIELD@netvision.net.il] Subject: Insights to the Daf: Kidushin 17-22 THE YISRAEL SHIMON TURKEL MASECHES KIDUSHIN INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF brought to you by Kollel Iyun Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>

KIDUSHIN 17 - dedicated in honor of the marriage of Yitzchak Kramer to Naomi Katz, 2 Sivan 5761, Yerushalayim. May they be "Boneh Bayis Ne'eman b'Yisrael"! Please send your D.A.F. contributions to : D.A.F., 140-32 69 Ave., Flushing NY 11367, USA

Kidushin 18 THE PROOF THAT A NOCHRI INHERITS FROM HIS FATHER QUESTION: The Gemara proves that a Nochri inherits a Yerushah from his father mid'Oraisa from the verse that says that Hashem gave Har Se'ir to Esav as a Yerushah (Devarim 2:5). The Gemara rejects this proof, saying that perhaps a Jewish apostate (i.e. Esav) is different than a Nochri, and a Nochri does not have a Yerushah, as the Rosh explains it, "A Jew who sinned is still a Jew." The Gemara therefore cites another verse to prove that a Nochri inherits from his father.

If the Gemara considers Esav a Jew, then why does the Gemara initially think that we can prove from Esav's inheritance that a Nochri has Yerushah? (Although the Rishonim and Acharonim discuss whether the Avos had the status of Bnei Noach or the status of Bnei Yisrael (see PARASHAS DERACHIM #1, and RAMBAN, end of Parshas Emor), nevertheless it does not seem that the Gemara's original proof is based on considering the Avos to be Bnei Noach, since it brings its proof specifically from Esav and not from any of the Avos. The Ramban, in fact, cites this Gemara to prove that the Avos did have a status of Bnei Yisrael.)

Second, why does the Gemara indeed consider Esav to be a Jew? Are all of his descendants also considered Jews? And if his descendants are not Jews because he was married to Nochrivos, then how can he bequeath a Yerushah to his children, even if he himself was a Jew? They should not be able to inherit from him because they were not Jews and thus they are unable to inherit from him! (MAHARIT, RASHASH)

ANSWERS: (a) The REMA MIPANO (Ma'amar Chikur Din, end of 2:22) writes that certainly Esav was not a Jew. The Gemara's initial proof was correct. When the Gemara rejects the proof saying that perhaps Esav was a Jew, it is merely rejecting the proof with any slight refutation ("Dechayah b'Alma").

We may add that the Gemara might have been alluding to the logic that Rava uses at the end of the Sugya. Rava suggests that even if a Nochri does not have Yerushah, perhaps those closely related to Avraham Avinu were granted a Yerushah out of deference for Avraham Avinu. When the Gemara says that Esav was a Jewish apostate, it is saying that a Nochri grandson of Avraham might have been given a Yerushah out of deference for Avraham. The Gemara therefore proves from Lot that a Nochri is Yoresh, for his relation to Avraham was more distant than Esav's relation.

(b) How does the Gemara understand the verse that says that Har Se'ir was a Yerushah for Esav? Does it mean that Esav bequeathed it to his children, or that Esav himself inherited from his father? The ROSH explains that it means that Esav gave Har Se'ir to his children as a Yerushah. However, Rashi on the Chumash on this verse explains that Esav received it as a Yerushah from his father, Yitzchak. According to Rashi, we may explain that the Gemara means that when Esav received Har Se'ir, he still had the status of a Yisrael. The reason is as follows:

The BRISKER RAV (Parshas Toldos) explains that Esav was not cast off from Klal Yisrael the same way that Yishmael was. Yishmael never had a role in Klal Yisrael. From the start he was considered to be "Ben ha'Amah," the son of a maidservant -- the child of Hagar and not the child of Sarah. Esav, on the other hand, had the potential to become part of Klal Yisrael, because Hashem told Avraham, "b'Yitzchak Yikarei Licha Zera" (Bereishis 21:12) -- *part* of Yitzchak's progeny will be considered your children, but not all of them ("b'Yitzchak' v'Lo Kol Yitzchak"). Hashem, though, did not inform Avraham Avinu which part of his progeny would be his spiritual heir. Only later would it be determined which son would be the spiritual heir of Avraham Avinu. Yitzchak was given two lands to bequeath to his children: Eretz Yisrael to the one who would be Avraham's spiritual heir, and Har Se'ir to the other one. At the time that he would give the Berachah to his first-born son, he would then determine that that son would receive Eretz Yisrael and would be the spiritual heir of Avraham. That is why Rivka found it necessary to intervene and to ensure that Yakov received the Berachah making him the spiritual heir of Avraham.

Hence, at the moment that Esav received Har Se'ir, it was still not yet determined that he was not a Ben Yisrael. It was only after that moment that he was chosen to be left out from the nation of Yisrael, due to his apostasy. That is why the Gemara says that he was able to receive Har Se'ir as a Yisrael Mumar, a Jewish apostate, since it was only after he received it that he lost the status of a Ben Yisrael. (M. Kornfeld)

KIDUSHIN 22 (7 Sivan) - L'Iyuy Nishmas Mrs. Grune Fradl bas ha'Rav Shmuel David Levinson (who passed away on 7 Sivan 5753), a true 'Isha Yir'as Hashem.' Dedicated by her son.

Kidushin 22 AGADAH: MOSHE RABEINU'S SECOND REQUEST TO ENTER THE LAND OF ISRAEL The Gemara teaches that an Eved must make two requests to stay with his master in order to become Nirtza, one request before the last Perutah's worth of work, and one request at the end of the last Perutah's worth of work.

RAV YEHOSHUA LEIB DISKIN uses this to explain the verses in the beginning of Parshas Va'Eschanan. After Moshe Rabeinu beseeches of Hashem to let him enter Eretz Yisrael, Hashem tells Moshe Rabeinu "Al Tosef..." -- do not request again to go into Eretz Yisrael. The commentators explain that it seems from the verse that if Moshe Rabeinu would have requested an additional time, Hashem would have had to acquiesce to his request (see also DIVREI ELIYAHU in the name of the Zohar, and NACHAL KEDUMIM, end of Be'ha'aloscha). Why would the second request add more than his first request? Why would Hashem have had to acquiesce to a second request?

MAHARIL DISKIN cites the Midrash (Tanchuma #4) at the beginning of va'Eschanan, which says that Moshe Rabeinu told Hashem, "You called me an 'Eved' (Devarim 34:5), and You wrote in the Torah that if an Eved says that he loves his master, his wife and his children and therefore he does not want to go free, that he remains an Eved." Moshe Rabeinu told Hashem that, "I love my

Master (Hashem), and my wife and children (the Jewish people), and thus I do not want to go free ('Chofshi,' as in 'Chofshi Min ha'Mitzvos,' a state of being free of the obligation to perform Mitzvos, i.e. death). Our Gemara says that an Eved Ivri is only Nirtza when he makes a second request, at the end of his last Perutah's worth of work. Moshe Rabeinu had reached the end of his life, the end of his last Perutah's worth of work as the leader of the Jewish people and the dedicated servant of Hashem, and thus he requested a second time at that point, in accordance with the laws of an Eved Ivri who wishes to become Nirtza and to stay with his master, to stay with the Master he loves and with the Jewish people he loves. Had he made the request at that point, Hashem would have had to give in to his request.

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From:Mordecai Kornfeld[SMTP:kornfeld@NETVISION.NET.IL] To: daf-discuss@shemayisrael.co.il Subject: Re: Siyum - Rav Papa and his sons THE DAFYOMI DISCUSSION LIST Brought to you by Kollel Iyud Hadaf of Yerushalayim daf@dafyomi.co.il, <http://www.dafyomi.co.il>

Re: Siyum - Rav Papa and his sons >>>Where can I find the reasons for mentioning Rava Papa and his 10 sons at every Siyum Massechet ? I know one reason but I have heard there are many.<<

Mark Bergman <mlb@syseca01.demon.co.uk> asked: I think I once heard that there might have been more than one Rav Papa. Any comment? Mark Bergman Manchester UK

The Kollel replies: The SEFER HA'ESHKOL (Hilchos Sefer Torah #19) and SEFER HA'YUCHASIN (end of #4) writes that they seem to have been the sons of two or three different Rav Pappas (since some lived in the times of Rav, such as Daru and Rachish bar Papa, while others lived in the times of Rava and Abaye, mentors of the more familiar Rav Papa). This is in contrast to SEDER HA'DOROS (Tana'im and Amora'im, letter Peh) and PNEI YEHOSHUA (Berachos 8) who imply that all ten sons were born to one Rav Papa, either Rav Papa Saba (Talmid of Rav -- Seder ha'Doros) or the more familiar Rav Papa who studied under Rava (Pnei Yehoshua). (Gleaned from Hadar Yitzchak, pp. 148-151.) -Mordecai Kornfeld

Joel Schnur <jschnur@mindspring.com> writes: I had heard th at the reason Rav Pappa and his sons are mentioned at every sium is because he had the zechus of raising 10 children who were all talmidei chachomim in their own right and that is what we are talking about when we say that the Torah will not be forgotten "mipi zaree u mipi zaray zaree ad olam." All the best and keep up the great work. Joel Schnur

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