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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת נשא

וְזָאת תּוֹרַת הַנָּזִיר בַּיּוֹם מְלֵאת יְמֵי נְזָרוֹ יָבִיא אֹתוֹ אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד. (במדבר ו, יג)
This shall be the law of the Nazir: on the day his abstinence is completed, he shall bring himself to the entrance of the Ohel Moed. (Bamidbar 6:13)

In this week's *Sidrah*, the Torah teaches the guidelines for a Nazir. A person who voluntarily chooses to elevate himself by accepting the status of a Nazir must adhere to specific restrictions. These include total abstinence from grapes and grape products, refraining from cutting hair, and avoiding contact with a corpse, which would render him *tamei*. After completing this period of abstention, the Nazir brings *korbanos*, and then regular behaviour becomes permitted once again.

The wording of the *possuk*, יָבִיא אֹתוֹ אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, translates literally as “*he shall bring him to the entrance of the Ohel Moed,*” which implies that the Nazir is bringing someone else to the Ohel Moed. What is the meaning of this seemingly misleading phrase?

Rashi is concerned about this nuance and explains that the *possuk* actually means that the Nazir is bringing **himself** to the Ohel Moed. He cites R' Yishmoel, who interprets it in this way. Additionally, we see other instances in the Torah where the unusual usage of the word אוֹתָם/אֹתוֹ - refers to the person “himself” or “themselves”.

While Rashi, based on Chazal, has clarified the meaning in these instances, it still requires an explanation of why the *possuk* uses such ambiguous language.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* offers an insight from the Meshech Chochmah to explain why the Torah specifically phrased the *possuk* in this manner. He notes that, interestingly, the duration of Nezirus is not defined by the Torah. While the minimum period is thirty days, there is no maximum limit prescribed. This absence of a fixed duration can be understood by examining the purpose of Nezirus.

The Nazir opts for a lifestyle of self-control to tame his inclination towards self-indulgence, which is often a root cause of sin. As highlighted in the Gemara (see *Nedarim* 9b), an individual may recognise the need to distance himself from traits like haughtiness and uncontrolled desires, leading him to adopt the status of a Nazir. By abstaining from wine, he curbs worldly pleasures, a significant factor contributing to immoral behaviour. Additionally, by allowing his hair to grow long and then shaving it completely at the end of the Nezirus period - as is required - the Nazir removes any thoughts of beautifying his appearance and the accompanying arrogant ideas associated with it.

Given the purpose of Nezirus, the Torah does not dictate a specific duration for the Nazir to change his habits. The time required to achieve the necessary level of rectification varies from person to person; for one individual, thirty days may suffice, while another might need one hundred days or

even several years to liberate themselves from earthly passions through the lifestyle changes associated with Nezirus.

So, how can an individual determine how long it will take to attain the *kedushah* and elevation needed? How can one objectively judge whether they have reached a point where their earthly desires will not lead them to sin? The answer lies in assessing oneself from an outside perspective. One should evaluate oneself as if judging another person, thereby minimising personal bias in the decision-making process.

Nezirus is akin to a medicine that should be used only when necessary. In fact, the Gemara (*Ta'anis* 11a) refers to the Nazir as a "sinner," as Hashem created the world for enjoyment in a balanced and moderate manner. Thus, the Nazir must carefully consider the necessity of balance while abstaining from worldly pleasures, weighing the need for elevation against the understanding that completely distancing oneself from physicality is not the Torah's approach.

To make an accurate and unbiased decision, the Nazir should imagine himself as someone else. Therefore, the Torah uses the ambiguous phrasing of **וַיָּבִיֵא אֹתוֹ אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד**, *he shall bring him to the entrance of the Ohel Moed*, to indicate that when making the crucial decision about whether he has achieved the desired spiritual improvement, the Nazir should consider his readiness to return to regular behaviour in the same way he would judge another person in this situation.

The Torah requires the Nazir to bring a unique set of *korbanos* at the end of his term: an **עֹלָה**, a **חֻטָּאת**, and a **שְׁלֵמִים**. The Meshech Chochmah emphasises that this combination is also found with the Nesi'im during the inauguration of the Mishkan. What is the reason for this similarity?

He explains that there is a common theme connecting the *korbanos* of both the Nazir at the conclusion of his Nezirus and the Nesi'im at the inauguration of the Mishkan. Just as the Nesi'im were initiating the Mishkan, a new place for serving Hashem, the Nazir bringing his *korbanos* symbolises the establishment of a new situation that is conducive to serving Hashem. As explained, the Nazir undergoes a significant process of purification during his Nezirus. He realigns his values and priorities, negating his base desires and physical cravings, ensuring that his life is governed by *ratzon Hashem*. In doing so, he creates a new personal **מְעַט מְקֻדָּשׁ** dedicated to Avodas Hashem. For this reason, the Nazir brings the identical *korbanos* as the Nesi'im did when they initiated the Mishkan.

Let us draw lessons from the laws of the Nazir about the importance of introspection in our lives and ensuring that our actions align with the teachings of the Torah. It is essential to recognise that sometimes it is necessary to restrain our earthly desires in order to enhance our spiritual development. Honest self-examination may come from evaluating ourselves through the same lens with which we judge others. May we continuously strive to grow and create an ever-improving personal place in our hearts for serving Hashem!

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל עה"ת and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@gyalumni.org.