



Parashat Naso

With 176 *pesukim*, *parashat Naso* is the longest *parasha* in the Torah. Although the *parasha* deals with many different topics, *Chazal* attempt to find the *keshet* that exists between each of them. For example, in our *parasha* the Torah deals with the laws of the *nazir*. The *parasha* immediately preceding the *parasha* of the *nazir* is that of the *sotah*. *Rashi* explains that the reason behind the juxtaposition of these two *parshiot* is that one who sees the *sotah b'kilkulah* (in her undoing) will swear to abstain from wine. A bit later in the *parasha* the Torah deals with the *korbanot* of the *nesi'im*, followed by the *parasha* of lighting the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan* at the beginning of *parashat Beha'alotcha*. Here, too, there is a thematic *keshet* between these two topics, leading to their juxtaposition, as *Rashi* points out: since *Aharon* was upset because he and his *shevet* did not get to participate in the *chanukat hamizbeach*, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* told him, "Your portion is greater than theirs, since you light and clean the *neirot*."

Immediately after the *parasha* of the *nazir*, the Torah instructs the *kohanim* how to bless the nation, *birkat kohanim*. Here, too, *Chazal* point out a *keshet*, although it is a *halachic keshet* rather than a thematic *keshet*: Just as a *nazir* is forbidden to drink wine, so a *kohen* may not drink wine at the time of his *avodah*. This leads us to ask our first question: There is a *halachic keshet* between *parashat nazir* and *parashat birkat kohanim*; is there no thematic *keshet* between these two *parshiot* as well? Our second question: At the termination of his *nezirut*, the *nazir* must bring a *korban chatat*, among other *korbanot*. This *korban* atones for the sin he committed "*al hanefesh*" (*BaMidbar* 6:11). The *Ramban* asks: What sin did the *nazir* commit that requires him to bring a *korban chatat*? He explains that it is his return to normal life, which naturally contains a higher level of *tumah* than his life of abstention as a *nazir*, that obligates a *korban chatat*. *Rabbeinu Bechayei*, an 11th-century *rishon*, challenges the *Ramban's* explanation, pointing out that nowhere do we find that a person must bring a *korban chatat* before he actually sins; entering a situation more conducive to *tumah* cannot be enough to obligate the *nazir* to bring a *korban chatat*. Why, then, must the *nazir* bring a *korban chatat*? The *haftarah* of *parashat Naso* deals with *nezirut Shimshon*. We have a principle that the *haftarah* is always related to the *parasha*, with the exception of the special *haftarot*, such as the *sheva d'nechemta*. Our third and final question, then, is: How does the *haftarah* of *nezirut Shimshon* relate to the *parasha*? After all, *nezirut Shimshon* is not even directly comparable to the *nezirut* of our *parasha*, as there are *halachic* differences between the two types of *nezirut*!

Rather, when we read in the *navi* the entire story of *Shimshon haGibbor*, of his tremendous might and his colossal downfall, it is clear that the *navi* wishes to teach us that there is no *gevurah* without *kedushah*. The moment the *gevurah* is no longer attached to *kedushah*, it vanishes. Therefore, when a person ascends to the *Beit HaMikdash* and witnesses a *sotah b'kilkulah*, drinking the water in which the Name of *Hashem* was erased, her stomach blowing up and the *kohanim* rushing her out of the *Mikdash*

as she suffers a horrible and painful death, he has witnessed a clear instance of a sin and its punishment. This inspires him to accept upon himself extra *kedushah* and *yirat shamayim*. Seemingly, this is a good thing. However, when it comes time for the *nazir* to end his *nezirut*, it becomes clear that the *kedushah* he originally accepted upon himself was one that isolated him from the *tzibbur*. In other words, this is a *nazir b'kilkulo*. When a person accepts additional *kedushah* upon himself, that *kedushah* must strengthen his connection to the *tzibbur*, not weaken it. This is the *kilkul* for which the *nazir* must bring a *korban chatat*.

Perhaps this is the thematic *kesher* between the *parasha* of the *nazir* and that of *birkat kohanim*. One who sees a *nazir* terminating his *nezirut* is witnessing a *nazir b'kilkulo*; the *tikkun* for this is *birkat kohanim*, through which the *kohen* uses his unique *kedushah* not to isolate himself from the *tzibbur*, but to contribute to the *tzibbur*. Although his blessing of the *tzibbur* is because *Hashem* commanded him to do so, he does it with love and affection, sharing his *kedushah* with the entire *tzibbur*. As we stand at the foot of *Har Sinai*, so close to *Kabbalat haTorah*, we must remember that the Torah is given to us, human beings, in order to create the proper balance in life, infusing every aspect of the Creation and every one of our actions with *kedushah*. Once we accomplish this we will truly be a *mamlechet kohanim v'goy kadosh* – a *goy* on the one hand, leading a normal life, but also *kadosh*, infusing normal life with *kedushah*.

Today, more than ever, we see that *gevurah* cannot exist without *kedushah*. We must pray for *gevurah* on this *Shavuot*, *haba aleinu l'tovah*, and accept upon ourselves the yoke of Torah with the pleasantness of Torah, in a way that it connects to every aspect of our lives. As it says in the *Yerushalmi*, "*Kol hamekabel ol torah mochalim lo al kol avonotav*, All who accept the yoke of Torah upon themselves are forgiven for all their sins."

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Shavuot Sameach!
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