

# ACHIEVING SANCTITY

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 285, Sa'ar B'Isha Ervah? Good Shabbos!*

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**Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R. Yissocher Dov - In memory of Mrs. Adele Frand**

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## **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" [Shemos 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" [Bereishis 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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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (# 285). The corresponding halachic portion for this tape is: Sa'ar B'isha Ervah. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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