

# STRANGE VERBIAGE CONTAINS A BEAUTIFUL INSIGHT

*by Rabbi Yissocher Frand*

## Parshas Naso

### Strange Verbiage Contains A Beautiful Insight

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #595 - Chazonim and Chazanus. Good Shabbos!

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Parshas Nasso contains within it the laws of the Nazir. The Nazir is prohibited from drinking wine and consuming grape products. He is not allowed to cut his hair. Finally, he is not allowed to come in contact with the dead -- even his immediate relatives.

A person theoretically becomes a nazir as a means of abstaining from the passions of this world. The person decides not to indulge in certain normal worldly pleasures. Nazirus may be thought of as a type of "spiritual diet" one undertakes when he feels he is "too overweight" with the temptations and indulgences of "olam hazeh" [this world]. The nazir remains on this diet until he feels he has things back under control.

The Torah says that when the Nazir completes his designated period of Nezirus, he must bring a set of karbonos [sacrifices]. The pasuk [verse] states "yavee oso el pesach Ohel Moed". The pasuk means to say that the nazir brings them to the door of the Tent of Meeting. However, literally the pasuk states "he brings HIM to the door of the Tent of Meeting." Rather than state in a straightforward manner "yavo el Ohel Moed" [he comes to the Tent of Meeting], the Torah utilizes a strange syntax. Who is the "him" referred to in the pasuk and what is the message of this strange expression?

The Meshech Chochmah (Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk) offers a beautiful idea: The Torah does not offer any set time for the duration of Nezirus. Although there is a law that Nezirus of unspecified duration lasts 30 days, a person can specify any length of time beyond 30 days up to and including the concept of a "Nazir Olam" [one who accepts being a Nazir for the rest of his life]. What determines how long one's Nezirus will last? Rav Meir Simcha answers -- "however long the person

thinks it will take him to get back under control".

Here again, it is like a diet. A person who needs to lose 10 pounds may be able to do it in 4 weeks. If he needs to lose 25 pounds, it will take much longer. Fifty pounds will take longer than that. It all depends on how long one expects it will take to arrive at the weight he wishes to achieve. Nezirus also takes as much time as is necessary for a person to reach the spiritual point where he is in control of his passions rather than his passions being in control of him.

The goal of Nezirus is to reach the point whereby one views the physical side of himself as if he is a different person. For this reason, the pasuk speaks of the Nazir "bringing HIM to the door of the Tent of Meeting". It is as if I am speaking about myself in the third person. "Him" is "me". That "other person" within me needs to have certain needs met, but "I" am in control! When the Nezirus concludes, it is "I" who brings "him" to the Ohel Moed, because now "I" am in charge of "him."

### **It Is Not So Simple To Utter The Priestly Blessing**

Parshas Nasso also contains the Birkas Kohaim [Priestly Blessing]. When the Kohanim finish blessing the Jewish people, they recite a short prayer that contains the words "Master of the Universe we have done what You have decreed upon us. You also do what you have promised us. Look down from Your sacred dwelling, from the heavens, and bless Your people Israel."

Rav Matisyahu Solomon questions use of the words "mah she'gazarta aleinu" [what You have decreed upon us]. Gezeira usually connotes a harsh decree. In what sense is the command that the Kohanim bless the Jewish people a decree? Birkas Kohanim is the greatest thing! Why is it called a gezeira?

To answer the question Rav Matisyahu Solomon points to the blessing recited by the Kohanim PRIOR to blessing the people. "...who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron and has commanded us to bless His people Israel with LOVE." Not only are the Kohanim commanded to bless the people, they are commanded to do so with LOVE, with graciousness, with generosity!

Guess what? That is a hard mitzvah. To bless someone else that he should have all the blessings in the world and to do it with love and with graciousness is almost a super-human task. It is certainly no easy matter to accomplish.

This Kohen, who may be healthy or may not be healthy, who may be successful or may be having a difficult time, is asked to bless others who may already have more than he has, in a heartfelt fashion, full of love and empathy! It is not so simple at all.

When the Kohen finishes, he honestly tells G-d: We have done that which you DECREED upon us. We did it, but it was not easy. Now, please You also do what you have promised that you would do for us.

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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. The complete list of halachic portions for this parsha from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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