

# THE RAMBAN DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE TALMUD

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

## Parshas Naso & Shavuos

### The Ramban DOES NOT Contradict The Talmud's Description of a Nazir

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 815 - The Laws of Sotah, Still Very Relevant. Good Shabbos!*

A Nazir is a person who accepts upon himself added restrictions. He is compared in some ways to a Kohen Gadol. As a result of his added holiness, he is not allowed to drink wine, he is not allowed to cut his hair, and he is not allowed to come into contact with a dead person. After he finishes his period of Nezirus he must bring a series of korbonos [sacrifices].

Regarding the offerings brought by a Nazirite at the conclusion of his status of being a Nazir, the Torah says: [Bamidbar 6:11] "The Kohen shall make one as a sin-offering and one as an olah-offering, and he shall provide him atonement for having sinned regarding the soul..." We understand why a Nazir would bring a burnt offering. It seems he did a very virtuous thing by accepting upon himself the holiness of a Nazirite and an Olah offering would be in line with that idea. However the Talmud is bothered - what sin did the Nazir commit that requires him to bring a Korban Chatas [sin offering]?

The Gemara in Tractate Nedrim cites an opinion that the sin of the Nazir was the fact that he caused himself pain by abstaining from wine. The Ramban, in his Chumash commentary, says something which seems to fly in the face of that Talmudic teaching. The Ramban, after acknowledging that the Torah does not state why a Nazir brings a Korban Chatas, speculates that the reason for the Korban Chatas is that he knows he is going to re-enter the mundane world again and once again drink wine. After having elevated himself to the status of a Nazirite who abstains from these earthly pleasures, ideally he should have remained in that level of earthly separation. Terminating the Nezirus and resuming a life of normal earthly pleasures is the action -- according to the Ramban's speculation -- that triggers the requirement to bring a Korban Chatas.

Rav Simcha Zissel Broide asks how the Ramban can offer such an interpretation which seems to

contradict the Gemara which states that the Korban Chatas is for having abstained from wine in the first place?

Rav Simcha Zissel explains as follows: When this person started out as a regular person and accepted Nezirus upon himself he "pained himself from wine". However something happened to him in the course of his 30 days of Nezirus - he became a more elevated person. The person who started the Nezirus is not the same person who ended it. The "plain guy" who started the Nezirus is the type of person about whom the Torah says "Do not forbid upon yourself more than the Torah has already forbidden upon you." There is such a criticism for "regular Joes". However, once he has completed 30 days of elevated sanctity, he has reached a higher level. He is no longer a "plain guy" anymore. He is now standing at a level where such behavior becomes appropriate for him. Therefore, to pull the plug now on this level of sanctity and go back to being a "regular Joe" does require atonement.

We are supposed to grow through life. Maybe there are certain things in life that when we started out were not appropriate for us. But with time and experience, we grow and then greater things are expected of us.

This is why the Halacha views a person who has learned and has gone away from his learning (shanah u'peereish) with great disregard. Such a person knows better. He has achieved more. Nebech, a person who has never learned, does not know any better if he turns away from learning; but someone who has learned and knows better and then leaves it all - that is very bad.

## **Nachshon ben Aminadav Needed No Titles**

The second observation I would like to share with you is from Rav Shlomo Ganzfried, the author of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch.

Parshas Nasso is the longest parsha in the Torah with 176 pesukim. However, it is NOT the most difficult parsha to leyn (read out loud in shul) in the Torah because there is a 12 fold repetition of a series of pasukim dealing with the offerings brought by each of the princes of the various tribes during the 12 days of dedication of the Tabernacle. Each offering was exactly the same and consequently the pasukim are virtually identical. Thus, although the parsha is long, leyning it is, relatively speaking, a breeze.

Although the pasukim are virtually identical, there is one striking difference that we find in these descriptions. By each and every offering, the Torah uses the formula "On day number X the Prince from the Children of Y (name of Tribe): So-and-so." There is only one exception to this pattern. On the very first day, it says: "And it was the one who brought his offering on the first day was Nachshon ben Amindav of the Tribe of Yehudah." It never mentions that he was a Prince. The pattern is different from that of all the other tribes.

Rav Shlomo Ganzfried: explains that there are some people who do not need titles. By virtue of their

record until now, we know who they are. We need to be introduced to Nesanel ben Tzuar - we need to be told: He is the Prince; he is the leader. The same is true for Eliav ben Cheilon, etc. These are the names of the leaders of the tribes. However, none needs to be told about Nachshon ben Aminadav - he is the leader. We know he is the leader. How do we know he is the leader? It is because when Klal Yisrael was standing on the banks of Yam Suf and everyone was crying "What is going to be with us?" Nachshon ben Aminadav walked into the water and went in up to his neck and then after that, the sea split, and everyone else was able to follow his lead and be saved. Such a leader needs no further introductions.

There are certain Amoraim in Shas who do not have titles. There is Shmuel; there is Abaye. What happened to RABBI Abaye? Should we assume he did not stick around long enough in the Yeshiva to get semicha? Obviously not!

Some people do not need the title. It is ironic but two or three of the "Gedolei HaDor" (great men of the generation) did not have Rabbinic titles. It was "Reb Moshe". When one said "Reb Moshe" that was Rav Moshe Feinstein! Who was "Reb Yakov?" It was Rav Yakov Kamenetsky. They were not known as HaRav Moshe Feinstein or HaRav Yakov Kamenetsky. They were simply known as Reb Moshe and Reb Yakov. They did not need titles and they did not need abbreviations after their names. They were princes whose very names announced their greatness.

## **The Sefer Torah Was Waiting For Them At The Right Spot**

I heard the following story during Pessach and I saved it for Parshas Nasso. There was a Yeshiva bochur who went on a trip to Eastern Europe before Pessach. He took a tour of Vilna, Minsk, Lublin, and other cities with long Jewish histories. It was the month of Nissan. Chassidim have a custom that every day after davening during the first 12 days of Nissan they read the Torah portion of that particular day from Parshas Nasso. The dedication of the Mishkan started on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and every day for the first 12 days the prince of a different tribe offered his Korbonos as described at the end of the parsha.

The fellow who was leading the tour was a Chassidic Jew and he wanted to observe this custom of reading the "chapter of the princes" during the first days of Nissan. On Rosh Chodesh, they were in Vilna and they found a Sefer Torah in a shul, they took it out and read the section of the first day. The next day they were in Minsk. They went to a shul, they took out a Sefer Torah and they read the section from the second day. On the third day they were in Lublin, but they could not find a Sefer Torah. So they had to skip the reading that morning. Outside of Lublin was one of the Concentration Camps and they took a tour of the camp. Attached to the Concentration Camp was a Judaica museum in which they displayed artifacts from the Polish Jewish community. Lo and behold in this museum enclosed in a plastic case was a Sefer Torah... opened to Parshas Nasso: "On the third day the prince of the children of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon..." [Bamidbar 7:24]

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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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