



Parashat Nasso

In this week's Parasha, we read about the Nazir. The Nazir is quite puzzling. On one hand, by restricting himself from wine and worldly pleasures, the Torah calls him "holy". On the other hand, if he accidentally becomes impure, and upon completion of his vow, he must bring a sacrifice for "sinning". One opinion states that the Nazir sinned by restricting himself from wine.

So is restricting oneself considered holy or sinning?

The answer is both. A Nazir realizes the danger that can befall a person who loses himself in mundane pleasures. He therefore restricts himself so as not to lose his senses and his true goal in life. For this he is, of course, considered holy.

However there is a greater level. Hashem didn't place all His beautiful creations and pleasures in this world just for them to be out-of-bounds. Hashem wants us to enjoy them, but in a way that will assist us in serving Him. A greater level that the Nazir could have been on is, instead of restricting himself from wine, to use the wine to put joy and happiness in serving Hashem. By falling short of this, the Nazir is considered to have sinned.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch is famous for having said upon visiting the Swiss Alps, "Now, when Hashem asks me if I saw and enjoyed His Alps, I'll be able to say, 'Yes!'"

Summer is a time when people relax and enjoy themselves a little. We can use this time properly by knowing that we are rejuvenating ourselves in order to pray better, act better, and better serve Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom,
Shelomo Elnadav

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