

“This is the law of the Nazir on the day his abstinence is completed.” (6:13)

At the conclusion of the Nazir's term he brings a sacrifice. The reason for this korban is enigmatic. Usually a sacrifice of this sort is a sin-offering, but how did the Nazir sin? One would think that at the completion of such a mitzvah, whereby the Nazir dedicates himself to Hashem on such a lofty spiritual plateau, that a Korban Chatas, sin-offering, would certainly not be necessary. Rabbeinu Bachya explains that since it appears that the Nazir is distancing himself from Hashem, he must bring a korban. Actually, he is only returning to his original state, but perception is what counts. If people might perceive him as faltering in his spiritual progression, he is to offer a korban as penance. Apparently, appearances are significant in regard to spiritual matters.

Horav A. Henach Leibowitz, Shlita, maintains that although our actions may very well be within the parameters of halachah, the mere appearance of impropriety is in itself a sin. Indeed, everything we do, regardless of its nature, has an impact on us. Because of our position as Klal Yisrael, we have a certain status to uphold, a specific standard to which to adhere. The way we eat, speak, or dress must be consistent to standards for an individual who is a member of Klal Yisrael. If it even seems that we are acting inappropriately, then we have sinned.

We may add that this is especially true in regard to parents and their relationship vis-à-vis their children. At times, we act in a manner that might fit into our “comfort zone” of respectability. Our children do not always realize this, however, and will either derive the wrong message from our actions or lose respect for us. Unknowingly, we continue along our merry way, blatantly disregarding what might be misconstrued by those nearest and dearest to us. Parents must bear in mind that they are constantly on the public stage with their children serving as the captive audience. We should seek their applause, not criticism.