

## "Speak to the Bnei Yisrael... man or woman who shall disassociate themselves by taking a Nazirite vow for the sake of Hashem." (6:2)

*Rashi* cites *Chazal* who give a practical reason for the juxtaposition of the laws of *Nazir* upon those of the *sotah*, the wayward wife. They comment that one who sees a *sotah* in her degradation should take a *Nazirite* vow prohibiting himself from drinking wine. Drinking wine in excess may cause one to lose control of his faculties, so that he sins. We may question this rationale. If one sees the tragic results of promiscuity and wanton behavior is it still necessary to become a *Nazir*? After all, would the horrible sight of the *sotah*'s debasement and death not be a sufficient deterrent?

**Horav Yosef Leib Bloch, zl**, infers from *Chazal* an insight into human nature. Indeed, when one witnesses the effect of sin, the punishment or the tragic results of errors in life, he can be influenced in one of various directions. The event can even be the catalyst for the spectator himself to turn to evil. The dark side of a human being, the iniquitous nature that remains concealed within the innermost recesses of one's mind, can apparently be aroused to sin.

*Horav* Bloch relates an anecdote that sends home a profound message. The children of a man who took his "drink" a drop too seriously made a number of attempts to convince him of the disastrous effect of his constant state of inebriation. They once took him outside to the street and showed him a drunk laying in the gutter, wallowing in his own filth. "See how disgusting this drunk appears!" they said to him. Suddenly the man went over to the drunk and asked, "Where did you get such fine whiskey?" Not only did he not take a lesson from the awful sight, but it in effect encouraged him to continue his drinking!

Consequently, when one is privy to perceive the effects of loose behavior clearly, he should immediately strengthen himself by making the appropriate safeguards. **Horav Reuven Grozovsky, zl**, often cited the **Rambam** in *Hilchos De'os* 6:5 who states that it is the nature of man to gravitate towards and be influenced by the philosophies and behavior of those around him. We are victimized by our environment. This means that man has a natural tendency to be provoked by the evil exploits of those in his close proximity. He compared this to sulphur, which ignites wherever it makes contact with fire. We are like parrots that imitate the actions of those around us.

A significant lesson can be derived from here. He who performs an *aveirah*, sin, is guilty not only of his own sin, but also of influencing others to follow suit. We can compare this to one who, after having knowingly contracted a dangerous disease, comes in contact with others to infect them. One who sins is contagious, because those around him do not have the ability to withstand the lures of his sin.