

This shall be the law of the nazir: on the day his abstinence is completed... He shall bring his offering to Hashem... one unblemished ewe in its first year as a sinoffering. (6:13,14)

The nazir completes the time limit of his own abstinence and brings varied korbanos. One of the nazir's korbanos is a chatas, sin-offering. The Ramban explains that the nazir is considered a "sinner" solely because he ended his vow of abstinence. Having achieved such a lofty spiritual perch he should have remained there, ensconced in spirituality. Why did he leave? Why did he return to a mundane life? Once a person takes a giant step forward/upward, he indicates that he is special. Why not stay in that position? Returning is an indication of weakness, warranting a sin-offering.

Ish or isha ki yafli lindor neder l'hazir l'Hashem, "A man or woman who shall dissociate himself by taking a nazirite vow of abstinence for the sake of Hashem (ibid. 6:2)." Ibn Ezra defines yafli (dissociate) as: doing something wondrous, acting out of character, going against normal convention. The rest of the world follows their passions and desires. It is almost to be expected. After all, they are only "human." We – as Jews – are different. Our Torah guides and instructs us as to what is (to be) considered appropriate behavior. Nonetheless, for most of us, it is a great and difficult challenge. Thus, when a person stands up and declares, "I am going to be different. I will no longer fight my yetzer hora, evil inclination. I am taking myself out of the ring. My desires and passions are, as of this moment, off limits." Such a person is truly different, having been able to swim against the current of contemporary "acceptable" behavior. This is why he is worthy of being crowned with the nezer Elokim, crown of G-d. Such spiritual nobility should be prolonged, continued, transformed into a way of life. When one returns and settles back into everyday life, he is considered a chotei, sinner.

We must set up spiritual barriers, parameters which we may never transgress, for, once we pass the rampart that protects us from the yetzer hora, there is very little that we can do to triumph over sin. We fall right in where he wants us. A Jew must set up boundaries, and, if I may add, they should be personalized boundaries. We are not all alike. Some are more easily convinced/persuaded. Others require greater, more creative forms of persuasion. All, however, can fall in, unless they have set up a gevul, boundary, fence, which may never be crossed.

At the seminal event which we refer to as the Revelation, when Hashem gave us the Torah, we were instructed Hagbeil es hahar v'kidashto, "Bound the Mountain (Har Sinai) and sanctify it" (Shemos 19:23). We must place boundaries around the mountain; otherwise, we might breach the perimeter and fall prey to the yetzer hora. We have no idea of the hold that the yetzer hora has over us. This hold, however, occurs only when the yetzer hora is able to ensnare us into its net. If we maintain safe distance by not breaching the fence that we have erected around the mountain, the kedushah will endure.

The Satmar Rav, zl (cited by Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl), commented concerning Moshe Rabbeinu's debate with the Ministering Angels who did not want the Torah to be given to Klal Yisrael. In the end, Moshe triumphed, and we are the fortunate beneficiaries of his success. It was his final argument that bested them and turned the tide in our favor. He posited that the Angels were not worthy of receiving the Torah, since, when they visited Avraham Avinu, they partook of a meal that included milk and meat – which is clearly prohibited by the Torah.

The Rebbe observed, "Because of one misplaced eating, the Ministering Angels lost out on the Torah. One error is all it takes for all to be lost. Once the line is crossed, it is difficult to return. If one can wear the crown of G-d and still return to a mundane life, what should we say?"