

"Anything in which grapes have been seeped he shall not drink." (6:3)

The *Torah* forbids the *nazir* to drink any intoxicating liquor or any beverage derived from grapes, even if it contains no alcohol. He may not even eat fresh or dried grapes. The prohibition includes water in which grapes had been briefly soaked, even if only a mere hint of the grapes had been present in the water. *Chazal* infer from this concept that the taste of a food is regarded as representative of the food itself, or the taste is like the substance. In the *Talmud Nazir* 37b, *Chazal* also derive from this *pasuk* that when a half-measure of permitted food is added to a half-measure of a forbidden food, the product is transformed into a whole measure of forbidden food. This process is described as the permitted is subsumed by the forbidden.

The *Noam Elimelech* asserts that these two conclusions allude to two moral principles. From the *halacha* of rehgf ogy, we learn that the mere taste of a sin, associating oneself even in thought, is considered contact with the sin itself. Indeed, in the area of morality, thought is the precursor of active sin. From the second *halacha*, we may conclude that if someone mixes money acquired from an honest commercial transaction with funds derived illegally, the entire enterprise becomes illicit.

Our relationship with others must reflect the loftiest level of veracity. Any alien tinge of an odious nature will compromise that relationship. As members of *Klal Yisrael*, we must be morally impeccable in every aspect of our lives. By seeking to maintain the hallmark of *kedushah*, holiness, we can aspire to the designated status of holy nation.