

## All the days of his abstinence he is holy to Hashem... The Kohen shall make one as a sin-offering. (6:8,11)

On the surface, the term *nezirus* begs elucidation. Is the *Nazir* a *tzaddik*, a righteous person, or is he, on some level, a sinner? The Torah refers to him as a *kadosh*, holy, to Hashem. Yet, he must bring a *Korban Chatas*, sin-offering, at the end of his period of *nezirus*. Surely, someone who is considered *kadosh* should not have to bring a sin-offering. What sin did he commit? Various opinions are stated concerning the *Nazir*'s "breach" in holiness. He should not have achieved this pinnacle through the vehicle of abstinence from wine. A person should override his gravitation toward pleasure, rather than avoid it. Wine is used for *kiddush*. In moderation, wine is good for a person. To abstain completely is an indication of weakness and vulnerability. A holy person transcends weakness and triumphs over frailty. Furthermore, once he achieves this apex of *kedushah* – he should maintain that level. The fact that he is ending his *nezirus* indicates a deficiency in his *kedushah*.

In *Drashos Bais Yishai* (54), *Horav Shlomo Fisher, zl*, presents an original insight regarding the *Nazir*'s *kedushah*. During the *Nazir*'s period of *nezirus*, he is compelled by virtue of the prohibitions placed upon him by his *nezirus*, to secede from the community at large. He looks different, his unshorn hair is a reminder that he is, to some degree, isolated from the community. He must stay clear of anywhere where he might come into contact with a corpse. The prohibition placed upon him with regard to drinking wine curbs his appetite for social interaction. This is all good, since it avails him the time and opportunity for personal reflection, which is the precursor to holiness to enable him to build his strength and develop. For the period of time that the *Nazir* is "out of commission" and, to a certain extent, apart from the community, his holiness is actually deficient. A *tzaddik* should be accessible – not insulated; reachable – not removed. In this context, *kedushah* aligns with the idea that, by actively contributing to the community, being a source of inspiration for them, one embodies holiness. *Kedushah* involves living a life of virtue, reflecting the highest standards of spiritual and moral values and virtues. It is about transcending personal pursuits to engage in actions that reflect Divine Principles within the context of community life. It is almost as if to suggest that it is easy to be a *tzaddik* when one is removed from the *Klal*.

*Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl* (commentary to *Bamidbar* 7:1) presents a similar idea. The Torah writes that, on the day that Moshe *Rabbeinu* finally set up the *Mishkan*, *Va'yimshach oso va'yikadesh oso, v'es kol keilav, v'es ha'Mizbeiyach v'es kol keilav, va'yimshacheim, va'yikadesh osam*; "He had anointed it and had sanctified it, and all its vessels, and also the Altar and all its vessels, and had anointed them and sanctified them." The *Sifri* addresses the apparent redundancy of the *pasuk*. They explain that we are being taught that, while each individual's vessel was individually anointed and sanctified, until all of them were likewise anointed and sanctified, the earlier ones were not completed. This means: The sanctification of any part of the Sanctuary was achieved only after the sanctification of the whole. It was either all or nothing.

Rav Hirsch explains that the sanctification of the whole *Mishkan* formed one idea which, as a whole, conferred sanctity on the meaning of every separate part. Each sole part, each individual vessel, lacking combination to the rest, is not in its own right fit to be the symbolic bearer of the *kedushah* which is its function to represent. Each part's sanctity is dependent on the complemented attachment to it of all the other parts. Equally so, the whole cannot achieve total sanctity without each and every one of its parts. Nothing is superfluous; each part is vital and necessary. Just as a sentence cannot be missing a word, a syllable, a letter, likewise no sentence, word, syllable or letter conveys any meaning in isolation.

The *Ribnitzer Rebbe*, *zl*, *Horav Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz*, was an otherworldly *tzaddik*, a man of miracles, whose *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, to serve Hashem became legend. He was the address for thousands from all over the world who were in dire need of a blessing. He *davened* for hours with great intensity. He accompanied his *davening* with fasting and immersion in the holy waters of the *mikveh* or any kosher body of water. He did this without fear of man, ignoring the bone-chilling cold of the Russian winter. He lived in this world, but his soul soared in the Heavens. Yet, despite his extreme sanctity, he was highly approachable and friendly to all. Humility was his language, righteousness his persona. The stories about him can fill a book – which they did. I was particularly inspired by the following vignette which demonstrates his openness and utter humility.

During a *tefillah*, while the *Aron HaKodesh* was open, the *Rebbe* did something unusual that previously had been uncharacteristic of him. Turning to those who were with him, the *Rebbe* spoke in an emotional urgent tone, "*Rabbosai*," he began, "I am begging each and every one of you to please *daven* for me right now! Please *daven* to Hashem, storm the Heavens, in my behalf. Pray that I, too, be blessed with children of my own!"

The *chassidim* that were present stood perplexed. Why would the *Rebbe*, whose blessings had helped thousands, need their *tefillos*? How could their prayers hold a candle to those of the *Rebbe*? He is so much closer to Hashem. Why could he not use his own nearness to ask for a child?

The *Rebbe* did not stop with one request: "Why are you all staring at me? Beg Hashem on my behalf. I beg for everyone else. Now is the time for you to petition for me!" The *Rebbe* went on, "Now is an *eis ratzon* (a time especially propitious to receive a positive response), so please *daven* and beg for me to also have a child. I, too, want to leave my legacy to someone who will remember me!"

Shortly thereafter, the *Rebbe* returned to his signature demeanor. The people that were present, never forgot their *Rebbe's* personal plea.