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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Naso ✍️ Rabbi Moshae Katz

The Message of the Shel amim

In *Parshas Naso* we find the *Nazir*, a person who voluntarily accepts upon himself to live a more isolated and spiritually elevated life. During that time, he may not drink wine, cut his hair or come in contact with a corpse. At the end of the period, the *Nazir* brings a number of offerings, including a *Shelamim*. The meat of the *Shelamim* is cooked in a pot in the Temple.

Then the Torah says something that seems to defy understanding.

The Nazir must shave his head and place his hair on the fire that is under the Shelamim offering!

What could *possibly* be the meaning of this?

Rav Hirsch explains that the key to understanding it lies in the meaning of a *Shelamim* offering.

As opposed to an *Olah*, where the entire animal is burned on the altar, in a *Shelamim* offering, parts of the animal are burned, parts given to the *Kohanim* (priests) and the remainder goes to the person who brought the offering. He takes it home and eats it with his family and friends.

The *Olah* represents the idea of giving ourselves over *totally* to *Hashem*. Of allowing ourselves to be “consumed” in the service of G-d.

The *Shelamim*, however, represents a different idea.

We bring it home to eat. We elevate our physical life and infuse it with spirituality. Our home becomes like the Temple and our meal is transformed into a spiritual experience of serving G-d.

With this, Rav Hirsch explains the *Halacha* that, while a non Jew may bring an offering in the Temple? He can only bring an *Olah*, not a *Shelamim*. The *Talmud* in *Menachos* gives the reason for this as “*Nachri libo lashamayim, the heart of a non Jew is to heaven.*” What does this mean?

A non Jew can relate to the concept of an *Olah*. Of giving ourselves

over totally to G-d. In fact, when he thinks of “*spirituality*”, he “*looks towards heaven*”. He assumes that you have to renounce life on *earth*. That you need to avoid physical pleasure!

But the *Shelamim* idea?

That you can find “*spirituality*” in every day life? That G-d *wants* us to enjoy the physical world and use it as a vehicle to serve Him? That our *home* can become a *holy* place?

That's a uniquely Jewish idea!

With this in mind, Rav Hirsch explains, we can understand the procedure of the *Nazir*.

The hair of the *Nazir* is a symbol of his status. It represents the isolated and spiritually elevated life that he accepted upon himself. A life where he negated the physical and totally absorbed himself in the spiritual. And what is the Torah's attitude towards this?

It's meant to be temporary!

The norm of Jewish life is *confronting* the physical world, enjoying it within the parameters set by the Torah, elevating it and infusing it with spirituality.

The problem is that, given our nature, we can lose sight of the high level that we need to aspire to. We can get *absorbed* in physical pleasure. Becoming a *Nazir* is an opportunity to step back and regain focus so that we can *return* to the life represented by the *Shelamim* idea.

To express this, the *Nazir* takes his hair, the symbol of his life as a *Nazir* and puts it into the fire that is cooking the *Shelamim*.

His Nazirus is meant to be fuel for the life of Shelamim!

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

The Shabbos Stroll

Rabbi Pesach Gottesman

As we enjoy the summer weather and long summer days, we have extra hours to enjoy on Shabbos afternoons. Since many people make a habit of taking a Shabbos walk, now is a good time to reacquaint ourselves with some of the applicable halachos.

The Navi Yeshaya says (58:13) “Vichibadto me’asos derachecha, you shall honor Him by the way you travel.” Chazal explain that this means “your travel on Shabbos should be different than your travel during the week.” All of our actions done on Shabbos should be done in the Shabbosdik way so that we don’t forget for one moment the holiness of the day. Therefore, the Shulchan Aruch (301:1) writes that one should not walk hurriedly on Shabbos as he would during the week. However, since the day was given to enjoy, one may walk quickly or even run to a place where he will enjoy himself such as a Kiddush he wants to attend or the home of a close friend he wishes to visit. It is also permissible to rush to a mitzvah such as davening, attending a shiur, or participating in a shalom zachor. Shmiras Shabbos Kihilchaso (29:4) also permits running to avoid rain, in very cold weather, or to escape an unpleasant neighborhood. Children, for whom running around is their greatest pleasure, are always allowed to run and jump.

One who walks for health reasons, such as strengthening muscles or staying in shape, may do so in a leisurely fashion that does not resemble exercise. However, to power walk or jog is absolutely forbidden. Simple stretches are permitted (SSK 34:22, see note 93). It goes without saying that using exercise equipment is not permitted. (Someone who is instructed by a doctor to exercise should consult a Rov).

Grass and Trees

If one is passing through a field with tall grass, care must be taken not to run because doing so will definitely rip out grass. (Mishna Brura 336,25 see SSK Ch.26, note 64). Similarly one should not step on dry branches still attached to a bush that will definitely snap. It is permissible to touch a tree or branch as long as it doesn’t shake. One is also allowed to sit on the grass. One does not have to be concerned with brushing against a bush or tree even higher than three Tefachim as long as it is not likely that he will remove leaves through his actions. One must be careful not to spit on the ground in a place where vegetation grows.

Motion activated lights

Whether one is going to a Shalom Zachor or enjoying the evening air, a stroll on Shabbos evening runs the risk of triggering motion activated lights. Although one should definitely avoid passing close to homes that have these lights, one may continue on his way if

the lights are unavoidable. Since most city streets are anyways lit up, one is not getting any benefit from the light and may rely on P’sik Reisha D’lo Nicha and other factors. If it is a dark street and one does get benefit from the light, it is more serious and a Rov should be consulted. One who is passing through an unfamiliar neighborhood does not have to worry that perhaps he will trigger lights (see Shut R’ Akiva Eiger Vol I, 8).

The Countryside

Another halacha that must be considered when strolling in the countryside or even in rural communities is that of Techumim. Although a full treatment of the subject is beyond the scope of this paper, there are some basic halachos that must be addressed. A person is limited to traveling 2000 Amos (approximately a ½ mile) from where he sets his Shvisa (residence) at the beginning of Shabbos. Shvisa extends until the last home in the town, providing that there is no break of 70 Amos (about 125 feet) between the homes (O.C. 398,6). There is a way to extend the distance one may travel by placing an Eruv Techumim in the direction he wants to go. These halachos are very complicated and one must consult a Rov if he finds himself in such a situation.

Giving Directions

A common scenario that can come up during a Shabbos walk is for one to be asked directions by the driver of a passing car. If the majority of drivers in the neighborhood are not Jewish, one could safely assume the questioner is a goy and may give him directions to his destination. If the questioner is a Jew who is not yet observant, one is faced with a tremendous dilemma. On the one hand, giving him directions may appear as a validation of what he is doing. On the other hand, not giving directions will cause him to drive extra and further transgress the melacha of Mavier. (See Tzitz Eliezer Vol 15:18 where he applies the rule of Ha’alitehu Rasha V’yamus - let the sinner receive the punishment due to him.) Perhaps one should tell him directions, while mentioning (in a gentle way) that driving is not permitted.

Miscellaneous

- * One may wear shoe insoles for comfort in Rshus Harabim.
- * One should check his pockets before going outside in a place with no eruv, especially after Yom Tov when one might have used his pockets.
- * Even on Yom Tov, there are limitations on what may be carried, as discussed in a recent halacha encounters.

In conclusion, a Shabbos walk conforming to the halachos and spirit of the day can truly be termed a “Shabbos activity”.

Rabbi Gottesman is a full-time member of the kollel.