

## Parshat Naso: Three Types of Evil

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

In Parshat Naso we read, "You shall send out of the camp the leper, and those defiled by bodily emissions, and those contaminated by a corpse." This verse teaches us that there are three levels of impurity with varying ramifications. The metzora was barred from all three camps: the Shechina camp, the Levite camp, and the Israelite camp. The zav was prohibited from entering both the Shechina and the Levite camps; while a person contaminated by a corpse was barred only from the Shechina camp. What made one tumah more severe than the other and why were they banned from the various camps?

The Avnei Nezer explains that man has three levels of the soul, nefesh, ruach, and neshama. The brain symbolizes intellectual power, which relates to neshama. The heart is the seat of emotions which is ruach, and the liver is the physical aspect of the soul which is nefesh. The liver is an impure organ. It cleanses contaminated blood and sends out freshly purified blood to the rest of the body. The heart is a pure organ, but it can be contaminated from the outside with impure blood. The brain is completely pure and the cleanest form of blood reaches it.

The Shechina camp corresponds to the brain – neshama, the Levite camp signifies the heart – ruach, and the Israelite camp relates to the liver – nefesh. The metzora is compared to the liver as it is a total impurity and corruption of the very foundation of the Jew. Therefore, the metzora was barred from all three camps. The zav is an inner contamination which affects the heart of the nation. He was banned from both the Shechina and Levite camp. The tamei meit is like the brain, it is only an external contamination. The person himself remains pure; it is only the corpse that he contacted that is impure. Therefore, he was only barred from the Shechina camp.

The Shem MiShmuel expounds on this idea further. The Gemara in Brachot says there are three strategies to defeat the yetzer hara: engaging in Torah study, reading the Shema, and remembering the day of death. Why are three different tactics needed? The Shem MiShmuel answers that there are three varying types of yetzer hara and each requires a different form of defense. The yetzer hara of chamor, physicality (also known as the nefesh habahamit – the animalistic urge), is found in the liver. The

emotional yetzer hara, the illogical force within man, is a foreign entity also known as the Satan or the Malach Hamavet. This force resides within the heart of man. The external yetzer hara, the kochot chitzonim, or the outside cultural and social pressures that pull man to do evil, stems from the brain.

The Avot focused on correcting the three levels of the soul. Avraham signified middat hachessed, giving without rationalization, which defeats the physical yetzer hara. Yitzchak symbolized selflessness and total devotion to Hashem, which can win over our illogical notions and weaknesses of the heart. Yaakov represented the power of correct Torah thinking, which rectifies sins resulting from confusion of the intellect. Torah is the antidote for false thinking. Kriat Shema and kabalot ol malchut shamayim, subjugates the ego and the internal aliens of the heart. Thinking about the day of death conquers our physical urges.

This three-pronged strategy will help us defeat our yetzer hara. Evil can only prevail when it has a place within us. May we defeat our evil inclinations and rise victorious to

## My Soul Thirsts for You

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

David Hamelech wrote Tehilim, Chapter 63 when he was on the run from Shaul Hamelech, in the Judean desert. The last place he visited was Nov, a city of refuge populated by kohanim bordering the desert. Kohanim couldn't inherit arable land or engage in agriculture so they served the people as teachers, religious leaders and advisors. David found refuge in the town of Nov, but knew he was endangering the people, so he left quickly. A band of approximately 400 men gathered around him. Shaul advanced after David. On the way, Shaul stopped off in Nov and murdered every inhabitant because they had offered David food and water. He wanted to make an example of them so that nobody would dare offer David help again. David sends his family away and he too eventually seeks refuge in Moav.

In this particular mizmor he feels far away from Hashem and his people. He is in physical and spiritual exile as well. In the very opening he addresses Hashem as Elokim, an expression of judgement. "I seek You. My soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You, in an arid and thirsty land, without water." Ashachareka comes from the root word shachar which is dawn. As the night wanes, he hopes for dawn with a certainty knowing the sun will soon rise in the east. Ayef usually means tired. In this case it connotes exhaustion and lacking all resources both physical and spiritual as water is the symbol of Torah. David and his family find temporary shelter in Moav among an immoral nation. He really can't feel safe at all among Israel's age-old enemies. The dryness of the land he describes is simply symbolic of his arid emotional and spiritual state. He feels empty of Torah, without

anything that would give him succor and encouragement.

"Ken bakadosh chaziticha l'rot uzecha u'kevodecha- As I saw You in the Sanctuary, [so do I long] to see Your strength and Your glory." I once saw a prophetic vision of You when I was in the Mishkan and felt Your presence and saw your strength and glory. Rav Hirsh says, David saw the aron kodesh, which represented Hashem's presence in our midst, being carried to battle. He saw the shulchan upon which the 12 loaves were brought every week which represented material satiety. He saw the menorah which symbolized wisdom and all the flames pointing towards the middle which represented the light of Hashem that we can see through the Torah. Rav Hirsh explains, David is recalling what it was like to be at the Mishkan and to experi-

Continues on Page 2



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Continues from Page 1

ence that incredible feeling of one's soul departing one's body.

"Your kindness is palpable and better than life itself; my lips will praise you." Seforno doesn't interpret this as a memory of a particular event. Instead he says, I once envisioned your existence when things were good, when I experienced victory. When your hopes are fulfilled, you have a sense that someone's behind you holding you up. But at the moment, he feels utterly alone and depleted and begs and yearns for that feeling of closeness again. "Then I shall bless You in my lifetime; in Your name I shall lift my hands." David intimates,

Hashem I'm holding on to you with whatever I can. Redak says, David expresses his deep faith- I will hold Your name in my palm as I go out to war against my enemies, not just with supplication, but also as I hold the sword in my hand, so I hold on to my faith that you will be at my side.

"May he be dragged by the sword; they will be the portion of foxes." Rashi explains, the inciters and those that instigate hatred will bring King Shaul down. But David still has empathy for him. He knows he's being exploited by those who know how to play on his weaknesses. They are destroying the kingdom and the king and so David Hamelech curses them that the foxes should consume

them.

"And may the king rejoice with Hashem; may all who swear by Him boast, for the mouth of those who speak lies will be closed." Rashi says the king here refers to David Hamelech himself as Shmuel Hanavi had already anointed him years before. David Hamelech curses the libelous people around King Shaul who have brought about this civil war as he tries to escape it, hoping for his salvation. Seforno, Ibn Ezra and Rav Hirsh says that it refers to King Shaul. David Hamelech refers to him as the anointed one, the one he will not try to usurp or assassinate. He begs Hashem to expose the instigators around Shaul and allow the king to heal and attain peace.

## Honorable Mentchen: The Evil of Humiliation

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hanoach Teller

The Gemara teaches that humiliating someone in public is tantamount to murder. Rabbeinu Yonah explains that the blood leaves the person's face and he turns white as a cadaver. It is as if one kills the person.

There was once a guest chazzan in the Bluzhever Rebbe's shul. He kept repeating words of the prayer to fit the melody he was singing and people were displeased by it. Some went so far as to openly show their disapproval. As soon as the davening was over the chazzan ran out of the shul in shame. The Rebbe then said, "We know that you may not embarrass someone in public and if you do you forfeit your portion in the World to Come. But nowhere does it say that you forfeit your portion in the World to Come if you repeat words from the nusach hatefilah." Humiliating someone is considered an offense not only against the person but against Hashem. This is because when you mock someone, you're also mocking Hashem, in whose image the person was created.

The story of Tamar teaches us the severity of humiliating someone in public. Tamar refused

to shame Yehuda publicly and was ready to be burnt to death. The Rabbis learn from this that it is better to be thrown into a fiery furnace rather than shame someone publicly.

In Baronovitch, it was the job of the caretaker to stoke the furnace so that the shul was heated when people came in to pray in the morning. The caretaker argued that all the meshulachim who slept in the shul rent-free should take care of this chore. The meshulachim countered that it was the caretaker's duty. Every day the shul was cold. One day all the arguments stopped. Rav Lubchansky, the mashgiach of the Baranovitch Yeshiva, would get up early each morning, take in the timber, light the furnace, and disappear. The caretaker thought the meshulachim were finally doing what he told them to do. The meshulachim thought the caretaker was finally doing his job. One morning the wood was wet from the snow and Rav Lubchansky had a hard time getting the fire going. He had his face in the oven and was blowing hard, when the caretaker walked in. Thinking it was one of the meshulachim trying to stoke the flames, he gave the man a good kick. Rav Lubchansky realized that if he got up and the caretaker saw who it really was

he would be terribly ashamed. So he hid his face deeper in the furnace and waited until the caretaker left. When he finally removed his head, his beard had been badly singed by the fire.

In today's society, humiliation often happens when newspapers, magazines, and other media broadcast scandalous information about people that the public has no right to know. Likewise, political candidates have no qualms revealing irrelevant information about their opponents. Lawyers commonly cast aspersions on the character of their opponent to exonerate their clients. Other examples of humiliation include poking fun at physical and mental handicaps, using unpleasant nicknames, and ridiculing children.

The Gemara in Brachot recounts that when Rabbi Elazar Hagadol was on his deathbed, his students asked him, "Teach us an ethical credo to live by." Rabbi Eliezer answered, "Hizharu b'kovod chavero." Be careful with your friend's honor.