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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

THE NAZIR'S CROWN

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Part I. Lifted Up

The Man Who Separates

In this week's *sedrah*, the Torah describes the person who chooses that special path in the service of Hashem: **אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה כִּי יִפְלֵא – If a man is yaftli, לְנָזִיר נָזִיר, – to take upon himself the vow of a nazir, of separation (Bamidbar 6:2).** That's what the word *nazir* means, to separate, as in **וַיִּנָּזֵר** (Vayikra 22:2).

And for what purpose was this separation? **לְהַזִּיר לָהּ – He takes a vow of separation in order to separate himself for Hashem.** It means he separates himself from the usual behavior of those around him in order to be dedicated to the service of Hashem.

Now we have to study that for a moment because actually in the Torah there's no mention of any especial service of a *nazir*; nothing is stipulated

here what he has to do to serve Hashem. A *nazir* lived a normal life. He wasn't a monk who went out to hide in the caves in the wilderness. He lived in society; he worked. He was married – everybody was married – and so he had to provide for his family.

The Homebound Nazir

But still the *nazir* restrictions kept him aloof. First of all, he had to beware always of coming in contact with certain kinds of *tumah*, certain kinds of impurity that would cause him to profane his *nezirus*, and so he couldn't go to funerals or to cemeteries. He had to be careful not to go into a home or a building where there was a dead body, and so on.

Also, because he was forbidden from drinking wine, so going to weddings was a problem, of course, because they were pouring wine there in abundance. After all, the *halacha* is that we tell a *nazir*, **סָחֹר סָחֹר** – “Go around, make detours, **לִכְרֹמָא לֹא תִקְרַב** – don't come close to a vineyard”. It means that when the *nazir* is traveling on the road, he's told that he shouldn't even pass by a vineyard; he has to take a devious, roundabout route in order avoid the vineyard. And so to a place where they're pouring wine in abundance, surely he can't go.

But even to eat regular meals with *chaveirim* was a problem because wine was the staple drink in those days. The water wasn't so safe to drink, but the wine, because it was sterilized by the alcohol, was more safe from germs, and so everybody drank wine at their meals. And therefore all of these *seudos* were off limits to him.

It means that a *nazir* couldn't be convivial; he couldn't associate too much with people. And so whatever a *nazir* was – there's no mention of any special *avodah* he undertook – more than anything else he was separating himself from the people around him.

Time for G-d

Of course, it doesn't mean that's everything. Just to be a hermit, a recluse, that's nothing. It's like the man who wanted to be like the Vilna Gaon; the Vilna Gaon used to go into a room alone and close the shades and learn all day. But this man, he would close the shades and then fall asleep. No, that's not it.

We understand that the *nazir*, because of his circumstances, he is forced to remain aloof from the rest of the people, and he was therefore able to find more time which he devoted to meditating in the Torah. Also more *tefillah* too – he prayed to Hakadosh Baruch Hu longer than others did. He had time to contemplate, to reflect, to think about Hashem, to ponder the verities of life.

And yet even though all that is true – and much more – the one thing we see in the *pessukim* is that the *nazir* was separating himself from the crowd; lifting himself up from the humdrum, above the way of life of his fellow Jews. He wanted to become better.

Separating From the Best

Now we have to realize that when a man or woman in those days lifted themselves from the people, they weren't separating from a crowd of agnostics, *chas v'shalom*. They weren't separating from people who were disloyal. In those days, the entire Jewish people kept the Torah. Everybody ate kosher. Everybody kept Shabbos. Every Jew in those days had a fiery patriotism burning in his heart; they were proud of their nation. *Halevei oif unz gezogt!* And even the Jews who weren't as careful as others – the *amei haaretz* – they were all proud of their Torah. It was their constitution; they had no other code of laws except the Torah.

Now, there may have been some who were ignorant of some *halachos*. They maybe didn't know all the *shevusim d'Rabanan* in Shabbos. They didn't know all the *halachos* of *borer* on Shabbos maybe; but they were all Jews who practiced the Torah with *mesiras nefesh*. And therefore, when a *nazir* separated, he wasn't separating from a low multitude. He was separating from what today would be a very good public, people who would be admired today.

And yet, when a man separates in order to become better, Hakadosh Baruch Hu approves of him. After all, it takes a person of remarkable character, remarkable drive, to be better. To lift yourself beyond the normal Orthodox living was especially favored by Hashem.

The Natural Crown

How favored was he? As a result of this, the *nazir* was given a special mark of honor – a big shock of hair on his head. Everyone knows that the *nazir* was forbidden from cutting his hair.

Now, one of the reasons for that was the element of not following the fashions of the times. Because cutting the hair in a certain way is always done by people who are dandies, people who are fastidious about their appearance and want to make an impression. And so the *nazir*, in order to lift himself up above those more base attitudes, he cannot do anything to his hair. He can't cut anything. He can't even pull out a hair from his head. And so his hair grew. And it was not styled or coifed; it just fell down over his shoulders any which way and it served therefore as an antidote to the *yetzer hara* of ostentation, of following the ways of the world.

But actually that's not the most important element; in the matter of not cutting the hair the primary purpose is to give him a crown: **נֶזֶר אֱלֹהִיו אֵל** – *The crown of Hashem is on his head* (ibid. 6:7). The word *nazir* and the word *nezer* are both the same; both words are related because the *nazir* has to know that he's wearing the crown of Hashem on his head. The long hair falling down over his shoulders was intended as a diadem to demonstrate that he was chosen, especially beloved by Hashem.

Hashem's Prince

Hakadosh Baruch Hu crowns him in order to demonstrate His approval of people who want to get ahead of themselves. People who don't want to remain in a rut and instead they try to lift themselves out of their ordinary routine, their ordinary environment, and they seek to do things that other people would not do.

You're going to devote yourself to that program for thirty days? For a year? A lifetime? Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "I consider the hair growing on your head as a crown that demonstrates that you are close to Me. Anybody who is willing to separate from the ways of the world and come closer to Me, that's My special child."

Now, we must understand that this principle of **לְהַזִּיר לָהּ**, of wearing the crown of *nezirus*, was intended as a model for our nation. Because even if one isn't actually going to accept upon himself all the restrictions of *nezirus* – you can't do it today anyhow because you cannot bring your *korban nezirus*; so don't think of trying it today – but the ideal of why a person would choose that, of what might inspire him to do that, was intended for everyone. And I want to take a few minutes now to explain that.

The Opposite of Nazir

The Gemara (Sotah 2a) says, **לָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פָּרֶשֶׁת נָזִיר לְפָרֶשֶׁת סוֹטָה** – *Why was the parsha of nazir placed right after to the parsha of the sotah?* In the Torah, immediately preceding the *nazir*, the Chumash tells us about a woman whose husband warned her not to go into any private places with a certain man and then she did it anyhow; she went someplace with that man and now her husband suspects her of doing an *aveirah*. It's the opposite of a *nazir's* crown; we're talking now about a woman whose crown of glory is removed from her and she is disgraced in public.

What would they do? It was a big procedure. She was forced to come to Yerushalayim, into the courtyard of the Beis Hamikdosh, where the Sanhedrin Hagedolah was sitting and she had to go through a humiliating ceremony. She had to drink a certain water in which they erased a *megillah*.

They wrote a *megillas sotah*, in which a curse with the name of Hashem was inscribed, and that ink was dissolved in the water and she was supposed to drink it.

And then if she was guilty, it would happen a miracle to her and she would be smitten with an illness immediately – a miraculous punishment. And if she's innocent, she would survive. It wasn't like the Church's "trial by water", where a person needed a miracle to survive. Just the opposite – the *sotah* procedure meant that there was nothing that would convict her except a miracle. But the ordeal of going through such a test was a great disgrace; and it was something she brought upon herself by means of her promiscuous behavior.

Connecting the Dots

Now, our Sages made note of the fact that this *parsha* of the *nazir* who crowns himself by going above and beyond, comes immediately after the story of the *sotah* and so they asked about that. לָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פְּרִשַׁת נָזִיר לַפְּרִשָּׁה סוֹטָה – Why is it that right after the story of this disgraced woman, the Torah comes along and teaches us about a *nazir*? What's the connection between the two?

And the answer they give is that the Torah is teaching us an important lesson here about how to succeed in this world: לֹאמַר לְךָ שֶׁכָּל הָרוּאָה סוֹטָה – To teach us that when someone sees the disgrace of the *sotah*, he should become a *nazir*; he should separate from wine. Because if you are witness to a downfall like that, it requires that it should wake you up from your slumber, from your sleepwalk through life, and you should separate from whatever was the cause of that disgrace.

Now, that answer included a very important principle, an important way of living, that has many ramifications for ourselves. Only that it has to be understood properly and that's going to be our subject now.

Part II. Lifting Yourself

A Spur for Change

Now there are two ways of understanding this *maamar*, two separate *peirushim*, and we'll take them one at a time. The first is according to the way *meforshim* generally say, as follows: When people are witness to the effects of intemperance – you see what happens when a person is too loose in their life, when people don't have a check on their behavior and then misfortune happens – it requires that you should take action.

And so, if you see a *sotah b'kilkulah*, in her disgrace, you should take it as a warning from Heaven of what could happen. If it happened to this *frum* woman it could happen to anybody – and so you become obligated to think, “Oy vey! *Chas v'shalom*, that could have been me! *Chas v'shalom, chas v'shalom!* מִן הַיַּיִן עֲצָמוֹ לִי. No more wine for me! No more intemperance for me!”

After all, one of the contributing factors for a downfall of an otherwise decent person is drinking, intoxication. That's one of the things that the Mishnah (Sotah 1:4) says about the *sotah*; הַרְבֵּה יַיִן עוֹשָׂה – *wine does very much*. It can accomplish things that wouldn't happen otherwise. What people do when they're intoxicated is unimaginable to the sober person.

Intemperance and Abstinence

Of course, we understand there were other things besides the wine. הַרְבֵּה שְׂחוֹק עוֹשָׂה הַרְבֵּה יִלְדוֹת עוֹשָׂה הַרְבֵּה שְׂכֵנִים הָרָעִים עוֹשָׂה (*ibid.*) It's how a person dresses, places a person looks, mingling with the wrong people – all types of ‘innocent’ behaviors. That, by the way, is the great ‘virtue’ of coming to cocktail parties – it's all ‘benefits’ wrapped up in one. The way people are dressed, the men and women mingling, and in addition they drink intoxicating liquors. And so there's every temptation in order to lead men into sin or women into sin. So מָה יַעֲשֶׂה הַבֵּן וְלֹא יִהְיֶה?

Now when a man sees what could happen as a result of too much drinking, too much mingling, too much *pritzus* and intemperance, what should he do? Just to say “Tsk, tsk,” and go on? No; the Torah's advice is that he should take upon himself a vow to become a *nazir*. A *nazir*?! Yes! Because now you can't drink and you can't mingle and you won't get into trouble. That's why the two are together, to tell you that if you see what happened as a result of intemperance, then you must take a vow of temperance, of abstinence.

Seeing is Believing

Now the question is asked: Why do you have to wait for the *sotah* to demonstrate it? If we know that wine could cause such a thing, why do you have to wait until we see that it actually happened? Even without that, anybody who reads the Torah, the *parsha* of the *sotah*, should immediately take stock of himself. Right after the *baal korei* reads the story of the *sotah* we should all become *nezirim*. But no, it says “Anyone who sees the *sotah* in her disgrace should separate from wine.”

And so we'll say that the idea is like this. Once you see it, it's not theoretical anymore; it's real. It's a different kind of knowledge that Hashem is sending you and it therefore puts a much bigger burden on you. When

you see it actually happen, then it becomes an obligation on you more than ever before.

Drunk Driving Lessons

After all, don't we know that young people are killed on the highway every day while speeding under the influence of liquor? It's no longer news today. Not only are they killed, but they kill others too. Drunken driving is maybe more dangerous than homicide. Despite the climbing figures of homicide, drunken driving is even bigger. And the drivers themselves are also victims. We don't take it to heart, however.

But suppose somebody tells you, "You know so-and-so from the synagogue? His son just died in a crash from drunk driving on a highway", then it should have an effect. It happened in my synagogue once; during *davening* three policemen came in and they had to tell one of the congregants that his son was killed in a drunk driving accident. He was a boy who refused to go to Hebrew School and he became a hippie – in the olden days, they called it a hippie. And he used to take a great deal of booze and he wouldn't listen to anyone. He was a *chacham b'einov*; he looked down on all the *frumme* that he ever saw. "They don't know anything." Because he was a wise man who understands life. And he understood that life includes the pleasure of drinking.

And so one day, police came into our synagogue, they're looking for me. What do they want? "This man," they said, "was driving on the highway and he had an accident and he was killed." They wanted me to inform his father.

Message Received

When something like that happens, when you see that, you must take action. You have to think, "Why did Hashem make me see such a thing? Isn't that telling me something?"

Now, the truth is that just from walking down the avenue, it's already telling you something. Liquor stores everywhere! A crazy world! A liquor store is a sign that there are crazy people in the world. You need liquor like you need a hole in your shoe. So why are there so many liquor stores? That's already a message that something is wrong.

And if you're a rabbi, you get the messages from all over, the tragedies, all over! In Orthodox Jewish life, Modern Orthodox Jewish life, it's one after the other – you see what happens to people who follow in the ways of the gentiles under a *hechsher* of the UO. They have kosher food, yes, but otherwise their gatherings are gentile gatherings.

Disgraced at the Therapist

And therefore when you see what happens to those who are lax with the *dinim* of *yichud* that forbid a man to be alone with a woman, how they become victims of circumstances that are tragic – besides making them broken people morally their lives are ruined – so you have to say, “By me, never! I’ll never be lax with these *dinim*.”

How many times have we seen a woman who chooses to go to a therapist and terrible things happen?! I could tell you stories of ruined families, ruined children. And so *ha’roeh*, when you see that, *yazir*, take that lesson! Men shouldn’t be involved with women and women shouldn’t be involved with men. Beware of psychologists and psychiatrists! Beware of therapists! A woman should choose a woman, and a man goes to a man. No exceptions! Never!

When you see something like that you can’t remain thick-headed and ignore it. That story was put next to you, it was *nismacha* to you, so you should swear off all of those foolish attitudes and gentile practices that caused that to happen. Don’t think such things happen in a vacuum.

Health Warnings

Now, once you understand this Torah principle of seeing the downfall *chas v’shalom* of others and utilizing that, so you’ll be able to make use of it in other ways too, many other ways. Because don’t you see today people with health problems, sicknesses that could have been avoided?

I was once in Boro Park and across the street I saw a man who I knew, who was standing with a Yerushalmi. So I went across the street and this Yerushalmi tells me that he’s very ill. He came to America for treatment because his lungs are diseased. He’s telling me this while he’s puffing on a cigarette.

So I said to him, “Why don’t you stop smoking?”

“Don’t tell me that,” he says to me in Yiddish. “No, don’t tell me that.” Another puff.

The Disgraced Dog

Mishlei talks about a person like that: *כְּכֶלֶב שָׁבַע עַל קִאֵּוֹ* – Like a dog who returns to what he vomited out, *כְּסִיל שׁוֹנֶה בְּאַלְתּוֹ* – so is a fool who repeats his foolishness (26:11).

Here’s a dog and he’s hungry. And because he’s not fastidious either, so when he finds something on the street which is very far from appetizing, he swallows it. But even he cannot keep it down, so he regurgitates. So he wanders around, comes back again and he eats it again. Oh, that stupid

dog! בְּכֶלֶב שָׁב עַל קָאוּ – You eat what you vomited out?! You see that you have lung cancer but you go back a second time. And a third time. At least the dog has an excuse – he only has the brains of a dog.

And so when you see that disgrace, you have to tell yourself, “I’ll never touch a cigarette! I won’t do it.” And if you’re a smoker, stop. Stop! Stop! There are ways, yes, there are ways. I already mentioned here once a way to do it. If you’re interested, call me on the phone and I’ll tell you the details.

The Disgraced Drunk

Drinking too. Some people are slaves to drinking alcohol. I know a man who drinks and becomes inebriated. A *shikur*. A *frum shikur*. His wife calls me on the phone; what should she do, she wants to know. It’s a problem now, a big problem. And she’s worried about her children too. There are people like that. They’re slaves to the bottle and it’s a disgrace for them.

Or overeating. You see people coming out of the cake stores, bakeries, carrying big paper boxes full of cakes. Pastries with icing. It’s poison. Now, I’m not the one to say you can’t eat cake once in a while if you need a lift but don’t you see what happens again and again when people eat with intemperance? People are ruining their health, ruining their teeth, ruining their stomachs. And you see the results. You hear stories. This one died young, diabetes. Another one, he died young from a heart attack.

No Sugar, No Whiskey

And so יִזִּיר עֲצָמוֹ מִן הַיַּיִן – he should separate from all other factors that cause people’s downfall. When you see that, you should change something in your lifestyle. Why do I have to drink liquor? Why do I have to eat sugar and sugar and more sugar? It’s time I raise myself up above what others are doing – I’ll stop with all the garbage.

Other things too. I recommend every day you should take a brisk forty-five minute walk. You should eat your meals on time every time, and go to sleep on time every day. You should drink a glass of water every morning before *davening*. And of course, be careful to avoid sugar and sweets; don’t overeat!

And so you see that the examples of applying this *maamar Chazal* are abundant. Only that you have to be willing to open your eyes. When you see things that happen, people whose behavior leads them to trouble, to degradation – whether it’s the man who loses his job because he can’t keep off the booze or the man who loses his wife because he can’t keep his mouth shut, or a thousand other scenarios – you should take that as a lesson for yourself. You should use that sight to be inspired to lift yourself up above others by keeping away from the causes of all these troubles.

Part III. Lifting the Nation

A Nazir for Others

Now, although everything we said till now is a true *peirush* in the words of the Chachomim and we should seek to apply it in our lives as much as possible, I want to add something to the discussion now. Because the Chovos Halevovos, he says a different *pshat*; he gives it a little twist. Because according to him it's not merely that a person is lifting up himself – he's lifting up everyone else too; he's raising up the whole nation.

How is that? He explains it like this: הַרֹאָה סוֹטָה בְּקִלְקוּלָהּ – When you see a *sotah* in her downfall, it's a symptom of a bigger problem. A symptom, you have to know, is not an isolated phenomenon – *it's a sign there's something wrong in society.*

After all, how could it be that in a *frum* community, in a Torah society, such a thing should happen? A married woman should be so disloyal to her husband that she ignores his warning? Maybe she did nothing, but still, to go into seclusion with a strange man against her husband's admonishment? It's a sign of corruption creeping in among us. And if such a thing could happen, it shows that the nation – not only this woman herself, *but the nation as a whole* – is straying away from the original, authentic Torah ideals.

Healing Societal Ills

And therefore, what should be the reaction of the people who see that? יִזְרַע עֲצָמוֹ מִן הַיֵּין – You should separate yourself from whatever might be causing the symptoms. But not merely, like the first *pshat*, so that you shouldn't fall into the same thing. It's much more than that – *you're trying to restore the general health of that body of the people.* Just like this symptom, the *sotah*, shows there's a rot in the body of the nation that caused those symptoms to develop, so you're going to start now creating vitamins for the body to heal that rot.

And by behaving in a way that's more than the usual norm of decency, that's going to cause the balance to weigh against what is weighing it down on the wrong side. You're trying to increase the *kedusha* of the generation in order to be *machria*, to outweigh, the not-*kedusha* of others.

A Satmarer Litvak

I remember I once spoke to a *chaver* of mine, a *Litvak*, a real *Litvak*. He came to America and he put his daughter into Beis Rochel, into the Satmar girls' school. I said, "What's the matter? A man like you?"

So he said, “Times are different today.” And he gave a *mashal*. When you're walking on a clear day and there's no wind blowing so you can walk regular, standing straight. But when there's a wind storm and a strong wind blowing against you it's not enough to walk erect. You have to walk bent over; otherwise, the wind will knock you down. You have to bend over against the wind in order to maintain your balance.

And so today when the winds of depravity and materialism and *apikorsis* and *leitzanus* are blowing, it's not enough to walk straight up; you have to bend over in order to gather strength. Otherwise, the strong winds are sure to cause you to swerve from the path.

But not only will you be saving yourself – you'll be saving the nation. That's the point here. When you see a generation that is turning more and more to evil things – things that once upon a time even *goyim* didn't do, today they do it openly. And they boast about it! Wicked things! And so it's not enough for the good ones to be observant Orthodox Jews. Today is the time for everybody to become more strict in morality, more and more strict in *tzniyus*, more strict in keeping away from *gashmiyus* and gentile attitudes, more and more strict in keeping everything in the Torah.

No Internet Homes: Saving the Nation

That's why if a young man marries a young woman today and he says, “Look; on one condition. No radio in our house”, so she might be somewhat surprised because her parents always had a radio. They didn't have a television; that much she understands – a television is a sewer pipe that brings all the filth into your home – but a radio?

The answer is today it's different! It's not the same radio! The things you hear on the radio today are already outrageous things! And so because he understands this lesson of the Sages and he says, “No radio,” she shouldn't be surprised. And it should be done with pride! We shouldn't be ashamed to be the *nezirim* today who say, “No! We don't want it! Don't you see the *sotah b'kilcula*, the nation becoming corrupted? We have to be stricter today!”

And if you're married already thirty years, same thing. Say to your wife, “Chana, don't you see what's going on in the world? We can't just be the same as we were yesterday, as when we married. We have to cut loose from the media. How can we continue bringing into our home all of these things that we see are destroying the world?”

A Holier Home

Epecially in the home! Don't you see what's doing outside? Divorces! *Ay yah yay!* Children who imitate the gentile ways. Children who go away

from Torah. Broken homes on all sides. We never had so much as we have today. And it's because of the influx of the influence of the gentiles around us. The world today is more uncivilized than it ever was, and it seeps in. Absolutely it comes in. And therefore we have to be especially careful, *especially careful*, more than in previous generations.

The good Jews should add more to their *kedushas bayis* than there ever was before. Those who are loyal to the Torah should add *chumros* upon *chumros* in order to make an example, and to send out a message of *kedusha*, of what we want the Jewish home to look like. Today, more than any other time, it's a *chiyuv* on the Jewish people to try to reinforce the *kedusha* of the home and to make the house into a Beis Hamikdash.

Fighting Pollution

I'll give you an example. There was a law in the Gemara that if a woman has a husband in town and somebody comes, let's say a *meshulach* comes in; he wants to eat. So she can give him a meal in her home because there is a deterrent for evil doing. **בַּעֲלָהּ בָּעִיר** – She has a husband in town and he might come at any moment. She's afraid of her husband.

That was in the good old days. Today, absolutely not.

Besides, **בַּעֲלָהּ בָּעִיר** meant in those days, when it was a small town. If he's in Manhattan and she's in Brooklyn, it's not called **בַּעֲלָהּ בָּעִיר**. But even if he's in Brooklyn, no. These rules don't hold good anymore. You have to be *machmir* in *dinei yichud* much more than once upon a time because not only the woman has her mind polluted by the air, but the *meshulach* also has his mind polluted. Even if he comes from Yerushalayim but even in Yerushalayim there's pollution – the bad smell of Tel Aviv goes to Yerushalayim. And so even though the woman is a *tzaddeikes* and he's a *tzaddik* – you're both *tzaddikim* – no matter! Keep away!

Keep away because even the best people today are spoiled. Today we need more *harchakah* than ever before. When people are hearing songs all the time and seeing suggestive things in literature, so it's in the air and it enters the mind; they're constantly thinking about the wrong thoughts.

Even though people are kosher in *maasim* but their minds are corroded with wrong thoughts. Today the minds are as *tamei* as could be and therefore all the things that our forefathers were permitted to do, we are not permitted anymore. And I know what I'm saying. A bit of experience has taught us that we have to be especially careful today.

Standing Up to Materialism

Same thing with all the materialism of today, all the *gashmiyus*. There's so much to eat, so much abundance of everything. It's the old story of **וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ** – if you'll eat and be satiated, **פֶּן יִפְתָּה לְבָבְךָ** – be on guard so that your heart will not turn foolish (Devarim 11:15-16). Today, the satiation is like never before. Ice cream, candy, pizza. Stores and stores. Not only food; everything. It's a generation where Jewish boys and girls have so much, too much, and what are the results? We see the results, the *kilkul*.

And therefore it's important for some of us, the good ones, to see that and **יִזְרַע עֲצָמוֹ מִן הָעֵין**, to lift ourselves up from the masses. We should try to raise our children without luxuries. Children should be raised as if you were all poor. Children shouldn't have cars. Working girls should not have much spending money. They shouldn't have much candy and ice cream and cake and another *nosherie*, good times and traveling.

I see fathers and mothers buying their children expensive watches, all kinds of expensive toys. A father buys his child a \$95 toy. A *meshugene*! When a child comes and visits me sometimes, I can't give him my 25 cent toys anymore. A child is ruined by expensive toys.

Now, we're not responsible for the entire world, but among ourselves at least, the good Orthodox ones must learn to live frugally. The children too; they shouldn't think they're losing out. They're the vanguard of the nation, the elite, the ones protecting the nation.

Just Say No

Don't waste even though you could afford to waste. Don't spend even though you could afford to spend. Say no to travel; traveling – such a stupid luxury. What will you find at the end of the rainbow that you imagined there's something glorious far away?

And even going back and forth to Eretz Yisroel, I disapprove of that. You can go if you're going *leshem mitzvah*, but to use Eretz Yisroel as a second Florida and back and forth and back and forth? I don't agree with that. I say stay here and send your money over there. We have to live like poor people and our children should be raised like poor boys and girls and that's going to be their salvation.

And that's what it's telling us, this *maamar*. Both *peshatim* are as true as can be. Because absolutely, like all the *meforshim* say, if you see a misfortune, a disgrace, then take action. For your own sake you must! Otherwise you can't survive. You're saving yourself a lot of *tzaros* – in both worlds.

But even more than that, you're saving the nation. If you see that this happened, it means that society needs a special strengthening, it needs fortification with vitamins. You supply the vitamins by being different, by being more extreme to the side of righteousness and that's going to help society regain its balance.

Be From the Special Ones

Now, what you heard from me are just a few suggestions, a few examples of this lesson **בְּלִירוּאָה סוֹטָה בְּקִלְקוּלָה יִזִּיר עֲצָמוֹ מִן הַיֵּין**. There's much more and they're all important. Now, is everyone going to do it? No. Not everyone understands this. Not everyone learned this. And even if you did, there are a lot of weaklings; people who see *sotah b'kilkula*, a society in decline, a society of degenerates, and they don't want to respond. I know that I won't be obeyed by most of you, but I'm telling you anyhow because that's the only remedy.

The *frum* Jews today in this wicked generation who go all out to wear the crown of *nezirus*, the crown of lifting themselves up and separating from all of the causes of the *tumah* in the world today, they are the ones who are finding especial favor by Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Because they, not only are they saving themselves and preparing for themselves a great place in the World to Come but they are also the ones who are turning the tide for our nation, strengthening and invigorating our people in the face of the winds of corruption that are blowing stronger and stronger every day.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Keeping Away from "Wine"

"One who witnesses the disgrace of the Sotah must swear off wine". We are witness to the great moral decline of society at levels unheard of before. This means that we must bend over backwards to resist being influenced by the winds that are blowing. This week I will *bli neder* take one minute each day to think about what I can do to remain firmly entrenched in the camp of the *frumme*, what can I do to show my loyalty to Hashem and His Torah. May Hashem help us stand strong.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

495 – The Nazir | **744** – Restricting the Free Will | **780** – The Night of The Locked Doors | **E-50** – Ten Commandments Of Marriage II



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The Power of Shabbos Awareness

The word "Shabbos," coming from the word, shevisah, denotes cessation. On Shabbos, everything in the world stops. We remain alone with Hashem, "V'nisgav Hashem levado bayom ha-hu." **It is the time to increase our awareness of Hashem and to build a relationship with Him.**

In the olden times, there was a place to find Hashem – in the Beis HaMikdash. A Menorah burned there continually, and the loaves of bread in the Shulchan were always as fresh as when they came out of the oven. These mitzvos, demonstrated how Hashem's presence was real in the Beis Hamikdash. If you would go into a house and find the rooms empty, and dark, you would understand that no one lives there. But if you would see that the light is on, and there's fresh bread on the table, you would know someone is living there. When a Jew walked into the Beis Hamikdash, he felt Hashem's presence and love. He understood that Hashem is a "living G-d," not an abstract concept. **Today we cannot gain that awareness through the Beis HaMikdash, however we can attain it through Shabbos.** On Shabbos we can find Hashem; it is an opportunity we do not want to miss.

How do we create this lofty sense of being in Hashem's presence? We don't have to "create" it. It already exists. All we have to do is remember that today is Shabbos. The Torah tells us, "Remember the Shabbos day." (Shemos 20:7) One must be aware that this day is unique. On Shabbos, we may not have felt like we were in the Beis Hamikdash, and perhaps we've spend hundreds of Shabbosos not feeling Hashem's presence. That's because we weren't aware of it. We didn't tell ourselves – **"Right now I'm in the Presence of Hashem. And the more I think about that throughout this Shabbos, the more Hashem's existence will become a reality to me."** There is no question about it. If you seek Hashem and want to bring Him into your life, on Shabbos you will surely find Him.

This is the precious gift we look forward to receiving from Shabbos. This is the wealth that Shabbos Kodesh bestows upon us: that we can truly sense and understand the wonderful fact that Hashem exists. He's a living reality in our lives!

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QUESTION

You're always praising the *chassidim* in Williamsburg but I was there last week and I went to a shul to *daven* Shachris and it was a very fast *davening*?

ANSWER

This man is bringing up a claim against me that he was in a shul in Williamsburg where they *davened* fast. So I'll tell you that there are other shuls in Williamsburg where they *daven* slow. You went into the wrong place.

But let me tell you something about Williamsburg *shtiebels*. I walked into a *shtiebel* in Williamsburg. You can't get a word of *davening*. You have to hand out nickels every minute. The purpose of *davening* there is to hand out nickels. In other places, in Flatbush, you don't see that. Maybe Flatbush is getting better today but in the olden days they wouldn't stand for it. They'd throw you out on your back.

Everybody's asking for money – not for themselves. Going around begging for other people, for poor families. It looks like half of Williamsburg is begging and half is giving, and sometimes they change. After he finishes collecting, he starts *davening* and others collect from him.

Now, it disturbs the *davening* if every minute you have to hand out nickels but in Williamsburg, it looks like that's the purpose of *davening*. That's why they *daven* so fast over there. Sometimes it takes me three *minyanim* of theirs to get through my *davening*.

It's expensive to *daven* there. That's why they *daven* quickly. Otherwise they'd go broke from one long Shacharis.

June 1971

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