



BETTER THAN BEFORE

Erev Shabbos Parashas Naso 5783

Dear Parents,

An intriguing facet of Torah life is detailed in this week's *Parsha* – that of the *Nazir*, one who voluntarily takes upon him or herself additional restrictions not required by basic Torah law. The acceptance of these restrictions is for a finite amount of time, and at the end of the prescribed time period, among the various rituals leading to purification and a return to 'normal' life, the *Nazir* is instructed to bring a *Korban Chatas* – a sin offering. (*Bamidbar 6:14*)

“...once a person enters the exalted state of being a Nazir, he should really remain a Nazir for the rest of his life.”

The *Ramban* questions the appropriateness of a sin offering in this situation. After all, what sin was committed that requires atonement? The *Ramban* explains that in truth, once a person enters the exalted state of being a *Nazir*, he should really remain a *Nazir* for the rest of his life. Leaving this elevated state of sanctity, and becoming once again more susceptible to impurity and temptation is therefore considered a sin, thus requiring the sin offering.

The *Ramban's* words are seemingly bewildering. The person has elevated himself and committed an exalted act of being a *Nazir*. The time for that is now expired. What did he do wrong? He stepped up to perform an act of greatness, and now he's returning to the level he occupied beforehand. Where's the sin?

Perhaps the insight the *Ramban* is teaching us is that the *Nazir* didn't merely go through an experience, or simply project himself upward in a temporary burst of spiritual energy. What occurred is that the *Nazir* became transformed! Through his experience on a higher level he became a different person, and there is now an accounting for his slipping back to exactly where he was before the *Nezirus* experience.

“...the person becomes a new, more elevated being.”

This means that when a person strives for spiritual growth, he or she is not merely performing a *Mitzvah*, doing one act of *Chesed* or learning for a certain amount of minutes. Rather, what is happening is that the person becomes a new, more elevated being. Every word of Torah and every act of *Mitzvah* impacts positively on a person's spiritual essence. Performing one exceptional act of spiritual strength goes way beyond the specific incident – it is to whatever degree, a transformative experience. The person is no longer the same one as before. By pushing one's own limits, he or she accomplishes amazing things!

For children, this conveys a message of great hope and encouragement. Children struggle in many areas, but all children have moments of triumph. In the spiritual realm, these moments of success are not fleeting or temporary. They leave an indelible imprint deep within the soul of the child. When children perform an act of spiritual fortitude – perhaps they davened nicely and slowly even though they were about to leave for a trip to the park, they helped clean up a mess made by their little sister, they learned extra minutes even though they were so tired, or they spoke respectfully to *Ima* even though she just denied a request - then they have made a huge imprint, potentially a permanent improvement in who they are. They have become that much greater than they were before because of this act.

“They leave an indelible imprint deep within the soul of the child.”

By celebrating our children's day-to-day victories in the area of serving Hashem we invest their actions with permanence. By communicating to them the connection to long-lasting growth, we will be giving the gift that Hashem Himself provides – endless opportunities to progress on the road to spiritual perfection that life is all about.

Have an uplifting *Shabbos*!



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