

With 176 verses, *Naso* is the longest single *Parashah* in the Torah. R' Yitzchak Meir Rotenberg-Alter z"l (1799-1866; first *Gerrer Rebbe*, known as the "*Chiddushei Ha'Rim*") observes that the *Midrash Rabbah* on this week's *Parashah* is significantly longer than on any other *Parashah*. Also, the *Zohar* on this week's *Parashah*, while not the longest, contains some of the most noteworthy sections (known as the "*Idra Rabbah*").

The *Chiddushei Ha'Rim* explains: *Naso* is nearly always read on the *Shabbat* after *Shavuot*. Every year, on *Shavuot*, Hashem, in His goodness, renews the Giving of the Torah for the coming year. This renewal enables us to plumb the depths of the Torah, as recorded in the *Midrash*, and to see the light of the Torah, as reflected in the *Zohar*. (He notes that the *Zohar* frequently uses the expression "*Ta chazi*" / "Come and see," in contrast to the *Talmud Bavli*'s "*Ta shema*" / "Come and hear.")

The *Chiddushei Ha'Rim* continues: Referring to the Torah's "light," we say in the blessing before *Kri'at Shema*, "Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah." However, our intention is not to derive personal benefit from that "light." Rather, we continue, "Attach our hearts to Your *Mitzvot*." (*Sefer Ha'zechut*)

R' Tzaddok Hakohen Rabinowitz z"l (1823-1900; *Chassidic Rebbe* in Lublin, Poland) adds: *Parashat Naso* includes "*Birkat Kohanim*" / the blessing the *Kohanim* give to the Jewish People. When one gives a blessing, he gives what is at the root of his soul. The *Kohanim* are meant to be the teachers of the nation; thus, their blessing leads to increased Torah study, as reflected in a longer *Midrash* and a very deep section of the *Zohar*. (*Pri Tzaddik: Naso 7*)

Shabbat

This week, we discuss "*Melaveh Malkah*"--the meal eaten after *Shabbat* to escort the day out. The following sources are from *Sefer Melaveh Malkah: Birkat Eliyahu* by R' Eliyahu Elharar shlita, rabbi of Modi'in, Israel:

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 119b) relates: Rabbi Elazar said, "A person should always set his table on *Shabbat* Eve (i.e., for Friday night) even though he needs only a *Ke'zayit* / a small amount to eat."

Rabbi Chanina said, "A person should always set his table on *Motzai Shabbat* / when the Sabbath departs even though he needs only a *Ke'zayit*." [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Rashi z"l explains: It honors *Shabbat* to accompany it when it departs as one would accompany a king who departs the city.

Midrash Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael states: The Torah says (*Shmot* 20:8), "*Zachor* / Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it," and (*Devarim* 5:12), "*Shamor* / Guard the Sabbath day to sanctify it." "*Zachor*" and "*Shamor*" were said together--Remember it when it arrives and guard it when it departs. [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R' Yaakov Reischer z"l (1661-1733; rabbi in several European cities) writes in his work *Iyun Yaakov*: This *Midrash* is the source for the *Gemara* quoted above, which uses identical language when speaking of the Friday night meal and *Melaveh Malkah* and which requires equal displays of honor when *Shabbat* enters and when it departs.

R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*) writes: One should eat bread on *Motzai Shabbat*, just as on Friday night, for the *Gemara* discusses the two meals in identical terms.

R' Avraham Danzig z"l (1748-1820; author of *Chayei Adam* and other influential *Halachic* works) writes: Praiseworthy is one whose fourth meal--i.e., *Melaveh Malkah*--includes bread. However, if one cannot eat bread, he should at least eat foods whose blessing is "*Mezonot*." This is an absolute obligation.

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“Speak to Aharon and his sons, saying: ‘So shall you bless *Bnei Yisrael, Amor/ say to them*’.” (6:23)

The *Berachah* the *Kohanim* recite before performing the *Mitzvah* of *Birkat Kohanim* / the Priestly Blessings is different in several ways from all other *Birchot Ha'mitzvah* / blessings recited before performing *Mitzvot* (e.g., *Lulav, Tefilin, Tzitzit, Shabbat Candles*). One of these differences is that the *Kohanim* say: “He commanded us to bless His nation *Yisrael* with love.” No other *Mitzvah* is expressly required to be performed “with love.” What is the source that the *Kohanim* must bless the nation “with love”?

R' Yissachar Ber Eilenburg *z"l* (Central Europe; 1570-1623) writes: *Midrash Tanchuma* teaches that the word “*Amor*” in our verse is “full”--i.e., spelled with a “*Vav*” (וַ) --as if to say: “Do not bless *Yisrael* in a hurried fashion. Rather, bless them with *Kavanat Ha'lev* / fully focusing your heart.” [Until here from the *Midrash*]

This, writes R' Eilenburg, is the source of the obligation to bless the nation “with love.” (*Be'er Sheva: Sotah* 39a)

R' Avraham Abele Gombiner *z"l* (Poland, died 1682) writes in his *Halachic* work “*Magen Avraham*” that the requirement to bless “with love” is based on the *Zohar*, which states: “Any *Kohen* who does not love the people, or the people do not love him, may not bless the nation.”

R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv *z"l* (1910-2012; Yerushalayim) asks: Is this only a concern regarding *Birkat Kohanim*? Is it otherwise permitted to hate another Jew?

R' Elyashiv answers: The simplest explanation is that it is not adequate for a *Kohen* to not hate his fellow Jews. Rather, he must develop a great love for the Jewish People! (*He'arot: Sotah* 39a)



“When Moshe arrived at the *Ohel Mo'ed* to speak with Him [*Hashem*], he heard the Voice speaking to him from atop the Cover that was upon the Ark of the Testimony, from between the two *Keruvim*, and He spoke to him.” (7:89)

R' Yitzchak Arieli *z"l* (1896-1974; *Mashgiach* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; author of *Enayim La'mishpat*) writes: It is fitting that the *Mishkan* was dedicated in the month of *Nissan*, the month in which the Patriarch Avraham was born. As our verse indicates, the *Mishkan* was the place from which prophecy emanated. Avraham was the first person to demonstrate the “legitimacy” of prophecy -- to the extent that he was willing to offer his son Yitzchak as a sacrificial offering at the behest of a prophecy.

(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha'geulah* p.5)

“A man or woman who shall dissociate himself by taking a Nazirite vow of abstinence for the sake of *Hashem*.” (6:1)

The *Gemara* (*Nazir* 4b) relates that Shimon *Ha'tzaddik*, the *Kohen Gadol*, said: I never ate from an *Asham* offering brought by a *Nazir* who became *Tamei* / ritually impure except once, when a man came from the south with beautiful locks of hair, neatly arranged. I saw that he was very handsome, and I asked him, “My son! Why did you decide to destroy your beautiful hair?” [A *Nazir* must shave his head completely at the end of his term of *Nezirut*.] He answered: “I was a shepherd for my father in his city. Once, I went to draw water from the spring and I saw my reflection. My evil inclination immediately became impulsive and sought to uproot me from the world. I said to him (the *Yetzer Ha'ra*), ‘Evil one! You take pride in a world which is not yours? I swear that I will shave my hair for the sake of Heaven!’”

Shimon *Ha'tzaddik* concluded: Immediately I stood up and kissed him on his head, and I said, “May there be many *Nezirim* like you in the world!” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R' Isaac Sher *z"l* (1875-1952; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Slobodka Yeshiva in Lithuania and Bnei Brak) asks: If the “man from the south” thought that his beautiful locks would lead him to sin, why did he not just cut them off? Why did he need to take a vow to be a *Nazir*?

R' Sher answers: At the root of the *Mitzvah* of *Nezirut* is *Kedushah* / holiness. A *Nazir* is not someone who accepts upon himself not to drink wine; not drinking wine is just one of the laws that applies to a *Nazir*. Another law is that a *Nazir* may not come in contact with the deceased. These two laws are meant to distance the *Nazir* from extremes--from the extreme levity that can come from drink, and from the extreme sadness that can come from contact with the dead. But those are tools, not the essence. The goal is to rise above the mundane aspects of this world in order to assume a holier existence.

R' Sher continues: When one feels his *Yetzer Ha'ra* pulling him down, it is not enough to fight back and repel the evil inclination. One must also crown himself (a play on the words *Nazir* and *Nezer* / crown) with a crown of holiness--i.e., he must accept upon himself some act of holiness as a weapon against the *Yetzer Ha'ra*. That is why the man from the south did not just cut his hair, but rather became a *Nazir*.

Elsewhere, R' Sher writes: In fact, drinking wine also can be an act of holiness. Thus, the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 71a) states that giving wine to a Torah scholar is equivalent to pouring a wine libation on the *Mizbei'ach*. When a person understands that his true identity is his intellectual soul, not his body, then his mundane acts assume a holy nature.

(*Lekket Sichot Mussar* III p. 652 & 585)