

PSHUTO SHEL MIKRA

From the Teachings of Rav Yehuda Copperman zt"l

PARSHAT NASO

Pshat – and Drash – Reflect Halachah LeSha'ah

צו את בני ישראל וישלחו מן המחנה כל צרוע וכל זב וכל טמא לנפש.

Command B'nei Yisrael, and they shall send forth from the Camp anyone with tzoraat, any zav, and anyone contaminated by contact with the deceased. (Bamidbar 5:2)

In his **Introduction to Chumash Bamidbar**, the **Seforno** discusses the reason behind the inclusion of certain *parshiyot* specifically in this *Chumash*; among them, the *parsha* of sending those who are *tamei* out of the Camp:

The intention was that B'nei Yisrael should be able to enter Eretz Yisrael immediately and without the need for the use of weapons. In order to enable them to be deserving of this, (Hashem) arranged the watches of Kohanim and Levi'im,¹ and removed all those who were tamei from their camps.

According to the *Seforno*, the reason why this *parsha* is written in *Chumash Bamidbar* is that although the mitzvah to send those who are *tamei* out of the Camp applies *ledorot* — for future generations as well, nonetheless, it had a special significance for B'nei Yisrael in the

¹ As described in *Bamidbar Perek 4*.

Midbar as a prelude to entering Eretz Yisrael.

Pshat Reflects Halachah LeSha'ah

The *Netziv*, in the *Haamek Davar* (*Bamidbar* 5:2), takes this idea one step further. Not only was there an additional element in sending out those who are *tamei* during the period of the *Midbar*, but this also expressed itself in **the scope of the requirement** at that time. To understand how, let us consider the three *Machanot* and the respective requirements to distance those who are *tamei* from them. The three *Machanot* are:

1. *Machaneh Shechinah*: The area of the *Mishkan* itself.²
2. *Machaneh Levi'ah*: The area surrounding the *Mishkan* where the *Levi'im* were encamped.³
3. *Machaneh Yisrael*: The area surrounding these first two *Machanot*, were B'nei Yisrael were encamped.⁴

The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 67a) derives through *midrash halachah* that the three types of *tamei* individuals mentioned in our *pasuk* differ in terms of the *Machaneh* from which they must be sent out:

1. A *tzarua* must be sent out of all three *Machanot*, even *Machaneh Yisrael*.
2. A *zav* must be sent out of *Machaneh Shechinah* and *Machaneh Levi'ah*, but may remain in *Machaneh Yisrael*.
3. One who is *tamei* due to contact with a corpse need only be sent out from *Machaneh Shechinah*, but may remain in *Machaneh Levi'ah* or *Yisrael*.

In other words, in spite of the fact that the *pshat* of the *pasuk* seems to indicate that all three types of *tamei* people are sent out of all three *Machanot*, the *halachah* states that this is not the case; rather, the prohibited areas will be dependent on the type of *tumah* which affects the individual.

However, the *Netziv* explains that while the above distinctions apply *ledorot* (in subsequent generations), nonetheless, during the period that B'nei Yisrael were in the *Midbar*, **all three categories** of *tamei* people were indeed sent out from **all three *Machanot*** — *kipshuto!*

The elevated quality of the way B'nei Yisrael were encamped around the *Mishkan* required that those who were *tamei* would be distanced from the *Machaneh* beyond what the *halachah ledorot* would require. This was, perhaps, due to their being about to enter Eretz Yisrael, which required special *zechuyot*, as the words of the *Seforno* (quoted earlier) seem to indicate. Alternatively, perhaps it was an expression of the elevated status of these *Machanot* in the *Midbar* generally, similar to the words of the *Seforno* which we have quoted elsewhere who states that the *madreigah* of the *Mishkan* on any given day in the *Midbar* was equivalent to the

2 [In Eretz Yisrael, this *Machaneh* corresponds to the Courtyard of the Beit Hamikdash].

3 [In Eretz Yisrael, this *Machaneh* corresponds to Har HaBayit].

4 [In Eretz Yisrael, this *Machaneh* corresponds to the (walled) city of Yerushalayim].

tzoraat before Matan Torah, in which case they were tahor, as the Mishnah teaches in Masechet Nega'im in the beginning of Perek 77 ... nonetheless, in that generation, they were commanded to send out “כָּל צָרוּעַ — every tzarua.”

Thus, the (inclusive) connotation of the term “כָּל צָרוּעַ” is fully resolved in terms of the halachah as it related to that time. It is only with reference to subsequent generations that it was necessary to invoke the idea of “אידי.”

Resonance in the Rishonim

We have seen from the Gemara in *Pesachim* that the Torah may write the word “כל” even when there is no halachah to be derived from it in order to preserve symmetry within the *pasuk*. Let us conclude this discussion by referring to one of the *Rishonim* who applies this idea to a *pasuk* elsewhere, even though this was not mentioned there by Chazal themselves. The *pasuk* in the first *parsha* of *Shema* (*Devarim* 6:5) reads:

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדְךָ

You shall love Hashem, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your resources.”

The **Ramban** (*Devarim*, *ibid.*) refers to the *drashah* of Chazal (*Mishnah Berachot*, *perek* 9, *Mishnah* 5) on the words “בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךָ” as meaning “even if He takes your life,” i.e., even if it involves giving up your life. Ramban notes that according to this approach, whereas the first and third phrases require the word “כל,” i.e. to teach that one should love Hashem with all — not half — of his heart, and with all — not half — of his resources, the middle phrase does not require the word “כל.” Since there is no such thing as “half a *nefesh*,” the use of the word “נַפְשְׁךָ” alone denotes even if one needs to give up his life! However, Ramban explains:

Since it said “בכל לבבך” and “בכל מאדך,” it also said “בכל נפשך.”

In other words, since it was necessary to write the word “כל” with reference to the first and third cases, as there lessons to be derived therefrom, it wrote it in the middle case as well. This *peirush* of the Ramban is an application of the idea of “אידי” to the words of the Torah, which is clearly sourced in the Gemara *Pesachim* quoted above, commenting on our *pasuk*.⁸

B'virvat Chag Sameach!

7 [In which case, according to the standards of *halachah ledorot*, these *metzora'im* would not need to be sent out of the Machaneh.]

8 In an alternative explanation, the Ramban suggests that the word “כל” is necessary for the middle case as well, since the word “נַפְשְׁךָ” by itself could be taken as referring to suffering, or the loss of a limb, but not the loss of life itself.