Rabbi Immanuel Bernstein 2023 / 5783



PARSHAT NASO

Pshat – and Drash – Reflect Halachah LeSha'ah

צַו אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וִישַׁלְּחוּ מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל צָרוּעַ וְכָל זָב וְכֹל טָמֵא לָנָפֶשׁ.

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, 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.

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.].

At any rate, whatever way we understand the reason behind it, we have before us a classic example of an idea we have discussed numerous times throughout this *sefer*,⁶ namely, that the divergence between the *pshat* and the *drash* is often a reflection of the fact that the *drash* derives the *halachah ledorot*, while the *pshat* expresses the *halachah lesha'ah*.

However, as we will see, in this instance the Netziv takes the discussion one stage further, and explains how *halachah lesha'ah* will complete our understanding **in the realm of** *drash* **as well**.

Midrash Halachah and the Extra "כל"

The Gemara (Pesachim 67a) discusses the three terms mentioned in our pasuk: "בָּל צָרוּעַ"." According to the principles of drash, the word "כֹל יָב וְבֹל יָב וְבֹל יָבְה לְנָפֶשׁ can as including something beyond that which has been mentioned explicitly. Thus, for example, in our case, the words "בָל יָב" include sending out a "bal keri," and the words "כֹל יָבְשׁ יְבְּיָּב יִב" include one who came into contact with a sheretz. The question remains: what is to be included by the word בו in the first phrase, "בְּל צָרוּעַ"? There doesn't seem to be an extra category of metzora that could be included. To this the Gemara responds:

איידי דכתיב כל זב כתיב נמי כל צרוע

Having written "every zav," (the pasuk) writes also "every tzarua."

The answer of the Gemara is quite remarkable, and represents a rare — if not unique — phenomenon in the words of Chazal. The idea of "א״ד״ means that although we do not derive any halachah from this word, it was nonetheless included for purposes of preserving symmetry. Having mentioned the word "τς" with reference to the two other types of tamei individuals — from which we do derive extra halachot, it is written with the third as well — even though we do not derive any halachah from it! What is so unusual here is that the idea of preserving symmetry is one which would seem to belong entirely to the realm of pshat, seeing as it relates to matters such as language, form, and syntax. To find this idea being applied in the realm of drash is quite a chiddush indeed!

The **Netziv**, however, maintains that being mindful of the idea that the *halachah lesha'ah* may have been different will allow us to "complete" the *drash* and find a category which is included by the "כל" written by *tzarua* (*Haamek Davar*, ibid.):

It appears that even though this parsha is stated for that time as well as for future times, nonetheless, it differed in its application at that time from its application in subsequent generations. For (in subsequent generations) they were only required to send those metzora'im who are tamei, while a metzora who is tahor does not need to be sent out. However, the metzora'im of that generation included those who contracted

⁵ See Parshat Acharei-Mot, Chapter 66.

⁶ See e.g. Parshat Acharei-Mot ibid.

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 "בָל צְּרוּצֶי — every tzarua."

Thus, the (inclusive) connotation of the term "כָּל צָּרוּעַ" 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 "אַידי"."

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:

וְאַהַבְתַּ אָת יִהוָה אֵלהֵיךְ בְכַל לְבַבְךְּ וּבְכַל נַפְשֶׁךְ וּבְכַל מִאֹדֶךְ

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 "בְּכֶל וַמְשֶׁךְ" 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 "בֹּל," 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 "בֹל". Since there is no such thing as "half a nefesh," the use of the word "נפשך" 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 לבבך."

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'virkat 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 "נפשך" by itself could be taken as referring to suffering, or the loss of a limb, but not the loss of life itself.