

PARSHAS NASO

By Rabbi Yaakov Feitman, Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi

In many Chassidic circles, this Shabbos has a special name. It is called the “*Shabbos noch Shavuos*.” Now this can actually mean one of two opposites. Either it means literally “the Shabbos after Shavuos” or, paradoxically it can also mean “the Shabbos which is another Shavuos,” the Yiddishe word *nach* meaning “again” or “more” (see Sefer *Yagdil Torah*, page 74). One explanation of this strange phenomenon might be that Parshas Naso is not only the longest Sedra, but its Zohar and Medrash Rabbah contain the longest commentaries of any Sedra. Perhaps this doesn’t seem surprising, since if the Sedra is long it makes sense that the drashos and explanations would be lengthy as well. However, a good deal of the seeming profuseness stems from the fact that the korbanos of each of the *Nesi’im* are repeated verbatim, although they seem to be identical in content. It is therefore actually surprising that this Sedra should contain so many explications. The *Chidushei HaRim* (*Sefer Hazechus*) suggests that since Parshas Naso arrives right after Mattan Torah, the excitement, joy and gratitude for receiving this monumental gift from heaven generates a multiplicity of interpretations and *peshatim* in our first encounter with the Torah.

This concept will help us understand an unusual and perhaps unique paradox relating to the relationship between Torah *Shebichsav* – the Written Torah – and *Torah Shebaal Peh* – the Oral Torah – of our Sedra. It has often been noted that in Parshas Naso the saga and Halacha of the Sotah comes before that of the Nazir. However, in the order of Mishnah and Gemara, Nazir precedes Sotah. In fact, to sharpen the apparent deviation of the Mishnah’s order from that of the Chumash, Rashi quotes the Gemara that Sotah precedes Nazir because “whoever sees a Sotah in her degradation will become a Nazir [to avoid the spiritual dangers of intoxication]”. Our original question thus becomes all the more inexplicable. Why would Rebbe Yehudah Hanosie switch the order when Chazal explain the sequence as quite logical?

The *Chidushei Harim*’s great-grandson, the *Imrei Emes*, whose 70th Yahrzeit we commemorated on Shavuos, gives a fascinating answer. The Torah teaches, he explains, that we should first seek to accomplish *sur mei’rah* – rejecting evil – and then *aseh tov* – doing good. Therefore, the Torah ordains that one cannot become a Nazir, who is called holy, unless one has repudiated and abandoned all evil and sin. However, the *Chachomim* realized that, with the passage of time and the *churban* Bais Hamikdash, it was too difficult for anyone to totally abandon any semblance of sin so they devised a new plan. This was to begin performing acts of goodness even before achieving personal perfection. Thus, Nazir could precede Sotah, since a person could work so hard on achieving holiness that he would never sin in the first place. The *P’nei Menachem*, son of the *Imrei Emes* added that since Rebbe lived after the *churban* when one could no longer become a Nazir, without access to the proper sacrifices, it was necessary to reverse the order and achieve kedushah through studying the teachings of Nazir and thus avoid Sotah entirely. We now have a dramatic example of the interplay between Torah Shebaal Peh and Torah Shebichsav, as mentioned earlier. The Torah itself places Sotah first because that leads to one becoming a Nazir. However, the Torah also knew that there would come a time when the order would have to be reversed.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5778

PARSHAS NASO

BY RABBI YAAKOV FEITMAN

KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

Now that the summer is close by, many people will be traveling to various destinations so many Tefilas Haderech shaalos have arisen. Following are some of the most common questions and their answers:

Question: Does one have to say Tefilas Haderech from one place in the mountains to the other?

Answer: Yes. It has reliably been reported that Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l himself recited Tefilas Haderech if he was traveling more than a parsah in the mountains which is approximately 3 miles. If there is a doubt about the distance, one *should* recite it anyway. Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l explained that Tefilas Haderech is a prayer not a bracha where we hold *safek berachos lehakel* – we do not recite a bracha out of doubt – but when in doubt about a tefilah we do say it.

Question: Can one person be *motzie* another in Tefilas Haderech or must everyone say it for themselves?

Answer: This is actually a major machlokes between contemporary Poskim. Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky was machmir that every person should say Tefilas Haderech himself. It is reported in his name (Bimechitzas Rabbeinu, page 60) that in a car if it is impossible to stop long enough to say Tefilas Haderech, the driver *only* can be *yotzi* with someone else. It has been reported that Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg zt"l and Rav Tuvya Goldstein zt"l agree that everyone should say it for themselves. However, it has also been reported that Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (Kuntres Tefilas Haderech, page 60) and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l (see Halichos Shlomo 21:5) hold that it is permissible. If the passengers are saying along with a recording, it is certainly best for *everyone* to say the words. However, if the driver feels that he cannot do so and drive safely, he may be *yotzi* with someone else. When possible, it is best to follow Rav Kamenetzky's chumra. When not, one can certainly rely upon the lenient opinions.

Question: Do we say Tefilas Haderech when traveling between the various boroughs such as Brooklyn to Manhattan or Staten Island?

Answer: No. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l often traveled between his two Yeshivos on the lower East Side and Staten Island and did not recite Tefilas Haderech because they are all considered New York City (quoted from Rav Reuvein Feinstein shlita in Kuntres Tefilas Haderech, page 110). It is interesting to compare this ruling with the first one above regarding the Catskills. It is obvious that Rav Moshe held that in addition to the question of distance (a Parsah – 3 miles), one also must be traveling to a different city.

Question: Based upon this, when would one recite Tefilas Haderech when traveling from the Five Towns to Lakewood?

Answer: Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky shlita and Rav Yisrael Belsky zt"l hold that one should not say it until the Outerbridge Crossing. If using the Verrazano Bridge, one should *not* say it there because he is still "in town." However, when traveling to the mountains or Monsey he should say it on the George Washington Bridge which enters into a different city and State. To be continued iyH.