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This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Itka bas Dovid. "May her Neshama have an Aliya!"

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14 SIVAN

Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Yochanan Zweig

**PARSHAS NASSO** 

## **Letting Go**

Speak to Bnei Yisroel, and say to them, if any man's wife goes astray, and commits a trespass against him [...] (5: 12).

giving the Kohanim Teruma and manner? Ma'aser; for anyone who withholds from the Kohen the priestly gifts will find that he needs the Kohen (i.e. he will be obligated to come to the Kohen) and bring his wife to be tested through the Sotah waters.

fascinating question: 1) There are a controlling person doesn't just behave number of reasons that a person this way in business, he behaves like would need the service of a Kohen this in all aspects of his life including (e.g. tzoraas); why do we necessarily his personal life. The reason a woman associate the occurrence of Sotah to would go into seclusion, after being not giving the Kohen the priestly gifts? warned by her husband not to, is to 2) Why does the Torah introduce the demonstrate her independence. She is laws of Sotah with "if any man's wife rebelling against his overbearing and goes astray"? Why not just begin controlling personality. In other words, "when a married woman goes astray;" she is telling her husband "you're not why does the Torah introduce the man the boss of me." at all?

Kohen. This is a critical point is not in control. Essentially, a landowner has the obligation to distribute the priestly

Rashi (ad loc) quotes the Gemara in gifts to the Kohen. Yet someone who Brachos (63a) that explains why the withholds them is trying to exert Torah places the laws of Sotah (a influence over the Kohen; to make him woman who was warned by her come and beg for something that, in husband not to go into seclusion with reality, he is entitled to receive. Why another man) following the laws of would someone behave in such a

This is how a person with a controlling personality acts. Making someone come to him to ask for what is rightfully theirs is done to send a clear message of who is in charge. The Torah juxtaposes these two sections to teach Maharal (Gur Aryeh 5: 12) asks two us that they are interrelated. A

This is also why the Torah begins with After a careful reading of Rashi, one "any man's wife goes astray;" the can see how he understands what Torah is explaining the root cause of Chazal are teaching: Rashi doesn't say her disloyalty. Even if she never sinned that the man refuses to give the Kohen by being intimate with another man, the priestly gifts, rather Rashi says that by going into seclusion she is trying to the man withholds the gifts from the send her husband the message that he



#### Miami Edition



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# **Living in Denial**

Speak to Bnei Yisroel and say to them, when either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazirite, to separate themselves for Hashem [...] (6: 2).

Rashi (ad loc) quotes the Gemara in can this be accomplished by eschewing anything that he can identify as a risk Sotah (2a) that makes the well-known wine for only thirty days? comment: "Why is the law of the Nazir juxtaposed with the law of the Sotah? To teach us that anyone who sees a Sotah in her degradation should take a vow of abstinence from wine."

infidelity she is tested with the Sotah chilling sight: A car is overturned, there witnesses the shocking death of a waters. If she is indeed guilty, she will are emergency vehicles with flashing Sotah is actually unlikely to improve die a gruesome death. Chazal teach us lights, and there is the unmistakable himself as a result. He is far more likely that a witness to that death should shape of a human body lying to begin to rationalize away what he take a vow of Nezirus to prevent motionless on a stretcher at the scene witnessed. He will come up with any himself from succumbing to the of the crash. For just a moment, the number of reasons to assume that the temptation for immorality as the Sotah driver passing by will be shaken by Sotah's punishment has no bearing on did. Rashi explains that excessive what he has just observed. Yet it his life. Because of this very human drinking is a common cause of invariably takes less than a minute for tendency, Chazal teach us, the Torah licentiousness, and the Nazir's vow to a person to lapse back into all his calls for such a person to take a vow of abstain from wine will thus help a normal (less than cautious) driving Nezirus. person avoid committing an act of habits even after witnessing such a immorality.

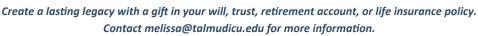
Nevertheless, it is hard to understand how a vow of Nezirus can have a The mind makes it very difficult for a the act of taking a vow of Nezirus is a greater impact than the sight of the person to handle seeing a disaster. The way for a person to acknowledge and Sotah's death itself. Surely, witnessing possibility that the same catastrophic internalize the fact that he, too, is such a shocking sight should itself be event might happen to him is so susceptible to the sinful drives that to deter anyone from daunting committing the same sin. Moreover, automatically even if it is not sufficient, it is difficult conjuring up one rationalization after will not shield a person from to imagine that becoming a Nazir will another to preserve the person's sense immorality for a lifetime, but those suffice in its place. A Nazir's vow of security. Deep down, every person days will drive home the message that generally takes effect only for thirty wishes to believe that he is immune to the Sotah's punishment is indeed days; after that time, the Nazir is freed whatever disaster he has seen befall relevant to him. Once he accepts that, of the restrictions associated with his someone else, and the mind will stop the very experience of seeing the vow, including the prohibition of at nothing to ward off any feelings of Sotah's death itself can then have a drinking wine. Chazal's intention is vulnerability. The driver passing the lifelong impact on him. obviously that a person who witnesses scene of a deadly accident will reason a Sotah's death should do something that the other car was made to inferior to reinforce his own standards of safety standards, or that the driver morality on a permanent basis. How was drunk or not wearing a seat belt -

Chazal give us a fascinating insight into human nature: Consider the case of a person who is speeding along a highway when he suddenly comes to the scene of an accident. Traffic slows When a woman is suspected of long enough for him to take in a For the same reason, a person who shocking sight. Why does the effect of the shock wear off so quickly?

> that the mind leap into

factor that does not pertain to him. Within seconds of witnessing the disaster, he will have a dozen reasons to believe that whatever happened to the other person has no bearing on

Obviously becoming a Nazir is not intended to serve as a permanent cure for the drive of licentiousness. Rather, will caused the Sotah's demise. True, the action, thirty days of abstinence from wine





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