

NASSO
Nazir, Worldly Pleasures and
Happiness Boosters

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Numbers 6:1-5

(1) The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (2) Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a nazirite's vow, to set himself apart for the LORD, (3) he shall abstain from wine and any other intoxicant; he shall not drink vinegar of wine or of any other intoxicant, neither shall he drink anything in which grapes have been steeped, nor eat grapes fresh or dried. (4) Throughout his term as nazirite, he may not eat anything that is obtained from the grapevine, even seeds or skin. (5) Throughout the term of his vow as nazirite, no razor shall touch his head; it shall remain consecrated until the completion of his term as nazirite of the LORD, the hair of his head being left to grow untrimmed.

במדבר ו'א-ה'

(א) וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
(ב) דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אֹו־אִשָּׁה כִּי יִפְלֹא
לְנַדֵּר נְדָר נְזִיר לְהִזְיֹר לַיהוָה: (ג)
מִיַּיִן וְשִׁכָר יִזְיֹר חֲמֵץ יַיִן וְחֲמֵץ
שִׁכָר לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה וְכָל־מִשְׁרַת עֲנָבִים
לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה וְעֲנָבִים לַחִים וַיִּבְשָׁים
לֹא יֵאָכֵל: (ד) כָּל יְמֵי נְזָרוֹ מִכָּל
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מִגֶּפֶן הַיַּיִן מִחֲרָצִנִים
וְעַד־זָג לֹא יֵאָכֵל: (ה) כָּל־יְמֵי נְדָר
נְזָרוֹ תַעֲר לֹא־יַעֲבֹר עַל־רֵאשׁוֹ
עַד־מְלֵאת הַיָּמִם אֲשֶׁר־יִזְיֹר
לַיהוָה קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה גְדִל פָּרַע שְׂעָר
רֵאשׁוֹ:



במדבר ו':י"א

(יא) וְעָשָׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶחָד לְחַטָּאת
וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה וְכָפַר עָלָיו מֵאִשׁ
חַטָּא עַל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְקִדַּשׁ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

Numbers 6:11

(11) The priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make expiation on his behalf for the guilt that he incurred through the corpse. That same day he shall reconsecrate his head

Rashi on Numbers 6:11:1

(1) מאשר חטא על הנפש [AND THE PRIEST ... MAKE EXPIATION FOR HIM] FOR THAT HE HATH SINNED BY THE DEAD — i.e.,

רש"י על במדבר ו':י"א:א'

(א) מאשר חטא על הנפש. שלא נזַהר מִטְמְאֵת הַמֵּת, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר הַקָּפָר אֹמֵר, שְׂצֵעַר עֲצָמוֹ מִן הַיּוֹם

that he has not been on his guard against defilement by a corpse. — R. Eleazer ha-Kappar said, “his sin consists in that he has afflicted himself by abstaining from the enjoyment of wine (Sifrei Bamidbar 30; Nazir 19a).

(ספרי; נזיר י"ט):

רמב"ן על במדבר ו':י"א:א'

Ramban on Numbers 6:11:1

(א) וטעם החטאת שיקריב הנזיר ביום מלאת ימי נזרו לא נתפרש. ועל דרך הפשט כי האיש הזה חוטא נפשו במלאת הנזירות כי הוא עתה נזור מקדושתו ועבודת השם, וראוי היה לו שיזיר לעולם ויעמוד כל ימיו נזיר וקדוש לאלהיו.... וכדכתיב (לעיל פסוק ח) כל ימי נזרו "קדוש הוא לה'" והנה הוא צריך כפרה בשובו להטמא בתאוות העולם:

Leviticus 19:2

(2) Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.

ויקרא י"ט:ב'

(ב) דִּבֶּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי
קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Taanit 11a:14-17

Shmuel said: Whoever sits in observance of a fast is called a sinner, as it is inappropriate to take unnecessary suffering upon oneself. The Gemara comments: Shmuel

תענית י"א א:י"ד-י"ז

אמר שמואל כל היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא סבר כי האי תנא דתניא ר' אלעזר הקפר ברבי אומר מה תלמוד לומר (במדבר

holds in accordance with the opinion of the following *tanna*, as it is taught in a *baraita*: **Rabbi Elazar HaKappar the Great says: What is the meaning when the verse states**, with regard to a nazirite: **“And he will atone for him for that he sinned by the soul [nefesh]”** (Numbers 6:11). **But with what soul did this nazirite sin? Rather**, the nazirite sinned by the **distress** he caused **himself when he abstained from wine**, in accordance with the terms of his vow. **And are these matters not inferred *a fortiori*? And if this nazirite, who distressed himself by abstaining only from wine, is nevertheless called a sinner and requires atonement, then with regard to one who distresses himself by abstaining from each and every matter of food and drink when he fasts, all the more so should he be considered a sinner. Conversely, Rabbi Elazar says: One who accepts a fast upon himself is called sacred, as it is stated with regard to the nazirite: “He shall be sacred, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long”** (Numbers 6:5). Here too, one can apply an *a fortiori* inference: **And if this nazirite, who distressed himself by abstaining from only one matter, wine, is**

ו, יא) וכפר עליו מאשר חטא על הנפש וכי באיזה נפש חטא זה אלא שציער עצמו מן היין והלא דברים קל וחומר ומה זה שלא ציער עצמו אלא מן היין נקרא חוטא המצער עצמו מכל דבר ודבר על אחת כמה וכמה ר' אלעזר אומר נקרא קדוש שנאמר (במדבר ו, ה) קדוש יהיה גדל פרע שער ראשו ומה זה שלא ציער עצמו אלא מדבר אחד נקרא קדוש המצער עצמו מכל דבר על אחת כמה וכמה

nevertheless **called sacred**, then with regard to **one who distresses himself** by abstaining from **every matter**, **all the more** so should he be considered sacred.

Nedarim 10a:8

§ Abaye said: Shimon HaTzaddik, Rabbi Shimon, and Rabbi Elazar HaKappar are all of the same opinion, that a nazirite is a sinner.

נדרים י"א:ח'

אמר אביי שמעון הצדיק ורבי שמעון ורבי אלעזר הקפר כולן שיטה אחת הן דנזיר חוטא הוי

מי השלוח, חלק ב, ספר במדבר, מטות ב'

Mei HaShiloach, Volume II, Numbers, Matot 2

(ב) **איש כי ידר נדר לה' וגו'.** הנה מצינו במס' אבות (פ"ב, מ"א) רבי אומר וכו' הסתכל בג' דברים ואין אתה בא לידי עבירה דע מה למעלה ממך וכו' וכן (פ"ג, מ"א) עקביא בן מהללאל אומר הסתכל בג' דברים ואין אתה בא לידי עבירה דע מאין באת וכו' וכל אלו הדברים המה עצות קודם התגברות התאוה שלא יבוא לידי עבירה, אבל מה היא העצה להאדם בעת שחס ושלום מתגברת עליו פתאום התגברות התאוה אשר אז בעידנא דיצר הרע לית מאן דמדכר ליצר טוב (נדרים ל"ב:), על זה נתנה התורה עצה איש כי ידור נדר לה'. היינו חי ה' אם אעשה זאת לעבור על רצון השי"ת חס ושלום, וכמו שמצינו בדוד המלך ובועז שליצרם נשבעו כדאיתא במדרש (רבה אחרי פכ"ג, י"א) וכמו שאיתא בש"ס (נדרים ט':) אמר שמעון הצדיק מימי לא אכלתי אשם נזיר טמא אלא אחד, פעם אחת בא אדם אחד נזיר וכו' וקווצותיו סדורות לו תלתלים אמרתי לו בני מה ראית להשחית את שערך זה הנאה

אמר לי וכו' ונסתכלתי בבבואה שלי ופחז עלי יצרי ובקש לטורדני מן העולם אמרתי וכו' העבודה שאגלחך לשמים וכו' אמרתי לו בני כמוך ירבו נוזרי נזירות בישראל עליך הכתוב אומר איש וגו' נזיר להזיר לה' (במדבר ו', ב') היינו אף שאין ראוי לנדור בנזירות, שאני הכא שנדר בעת צרה בעידנא דיצה"ר ונשבע לבטל הדבר אשר הביאו לידי הסתה ואמר העבודה שאגלחך לשמים, ואמר לו שמעון הצדיק כמוך ירבו נוזרי נזירות בישראל ומצוה קעבדת כי עליך אמר הכתוב איש וגו' נזיר להזיר לה'.

Chullin 109b:12-15

Yalta said to her husband Rav Nahman: Now as a rule, for any item that the Merciful One prohibited to us, He permitted to us a similar item. He prohibited to us the consumption of **blood**, yet He permitted to us the consumption of **liver**, which is filled with blood and retains the taste of blood... the Torah prohibits the consumption of the forbidden **fat of a domesticated animal**, but permitted the **fat of an undomesticated animal**, which has the same flavor. It is prohibited to eat **pork**, but one may eat **the brain of a shibuta** fish, which has a similar taste. One may not eat **giruta**, a non-kosher fish, but one may eat the **tongue of a fish**, which tastes similar. Likewise, the Torah prohibits sexual intercourse with

חולין ק"ט ב:י"ב-ט"ו

אמרה ליה ילתא לרב נחמן מכדי כל דאסר לן רחמנא שרא לן כוותיה אסר לן דמא שרא לן כבדא נדה דם טוהר חלב בהמה חלב חיה חזיר מוחא דשיבוטא גירותא לישנא דכורא אשת איש גרושה בחיי בעלה אשת אח יבמה כותית יפת תאר בעינן למיכל בשרא בחלבא אמר להו רב נחמן לטבחי זויקו לה כחלי

the wife of another man but permitted one to marry **a divorced woman in her previous husband's lifetime**. The Torah prohibits sexual intercourse with one's **brother's wife**, and yet it permits one to marry his *yevama*, i.e., his brother's widow when the brother dies childless.... Yalta concluded: The Torah prohibits the consumption of meat cooked in milk; **I wish to eat a dish that tastes like meat cooked in milk**. Upon hearing this, **Rav Nahman said to his cooks: Roast udders on a spit for her**. The Gemara asks: **But didn't we learn** in the mishna that one must **tear** the udder first? Rav Nahman did not tell his cooks to tear the udders.

Jerusalem Talmud Kiddushin 48b:1

Rabbi Hezkiya, Rabbi Cohen in the name of Rav: In the future, a person will give a judgement and an accounting over everything that his eye saw and he did not eat. Rabbi Elazar paid attention to this teaching and gathered small coins (that did not require change and could be spent immediately), in order to [purchase and] eat every kind [of produce] with them once a year.

תלמוד ירושלמי קידושין מ"ח

ב:א'

. רבי חזקיה ר' כהן בשם רב .
עתיד אדם ליתן דין וחשבון על
כל שראת עינו ולא אכל. ר' לעזר
חשש להדא שמועתא ומצמיח
ליה פריטין ואכיל בהון מכל מילה
חדא בשתא:

Ben-Shahar, Tal. *Happier* (p. 130). McGraw-Hill Education.

Meaningful and pleasurable activities can function like a candle in a dark room—and just as it takes a small flame or two to light up an entire physical space, one or two happy experiences during an otherwise uninspiring period can transform our general state. I call these brief but transforming experiences happiness boosters —activities, lasting anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours, that provide us with both meaning and pleasure, both future and present benefit. Happiness boosters can inspire and invigorate us, acting as both a motivational pull and a motivational push. For the single parent, a happiness booster in the form of a meaningful outing with her children over the weekend can change her overall experience of life—including the hours spent at work. The outing can motivate her and pull her through the week, giving her something to look forward to when she gets up for work in the morning. The same happiness booster can then energize her, providing her the push she needs by recharging her motivational stores for the following week. For the young investment banker, two hours a week helping her community center with its finances and spending one evening a week with friends can help her endure, and even enjoy, the two years of hard and largely unfulfilling work.

What are your happiness boosters? What brief activities can rejuvenate you by providing you with both meaning and pleasure?

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Ben-Shahar, Tal. *Happier* (p. 131). McGraw-Hill Education.

Introducing Change

Happiness boosters can also help in the difficult process of change; habits often persist even if we do recognize the need for a new or altered course of action. Seventeenth-century British poet John Dryden said that "we first make our habits and then our habits make us." And if we are in the habit of living as rat racers—having been conditioned to do so from an early age—it is extremely difficult to disembark from the treadmill. Similarly, a hedonistic lifestyle may be destructive, but it can also be addictive, difficult to give up. An easier, more manageable way of bringing about change in the quality of life is through the gradual introduction of happiness boosters.

Introducing relatively brief experiences of meaning and pleasure is less threatening than overhauling an entire life and will therefore meet with less resistance—both from the person trying to change as well as from his family, colleagues, and friends. Before making a career move from investing to teaching, a person may choose to volunteer once a week in an after-school program, in order to be certain that teaching does, indeed, provide both future and present benefit. Alternatively, a person who is not happy working in education and wants to pursue a career in the money market may want to spend some of his

free time playing around with stocks to assure himself, as much as is possible, that the change he has been imagining will, in fact, make him happier. By affording the opportunity for trial and error, with minimal risk, happiness boosters can help us hone in on what we want to do most.

Ben-Shahar, Tal. *Happier* (p. 132). McGraw-Hill Education.

The Value of Free Time

Ideally, we want our entire day to be filled with happy experiences. This kind of life is not always attainable, though, and it might be that we need to wait until evenings or weekends to pursue activities that provide present and future benefit. One of the common mistakes people make is that in their free time they choose passive hedonism over an active pursuit of happiness. At the end of a hard day at work or in school, they opt to do nothing or to vegetate in front of the television screen rather than engage in activities that are both pleasurable and meaningful. Soon after they engage in their mindless activity, they fall asleep, which further reinforces their belief that when they complete their daily chores they are too tired to do anything challenging. If instead of doing nothing when we come home from work we turn to our hobbies or other activities that challenge us, that we enjoy and that we care about, we are more likely to get a second wind and replenish our emotional bank. As the educator Maria Montessori has written, "To devote oneself to an agreeable task is restful." Happiness boosters, rather than enervating us, lead to ascending levels of energy.