



# Likkutei Sichos

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## Blessings and Amens

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\*and *siyum* on tractate *Nazir*

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## 1.

### THREE KINDS OF NAZIR

This *parshah* addresses the laws of a *nazir*:<sup>1</sup> He may not drink any wine, “a razor shall not pass over his head,” and “all the days of his being a *nazir* for the sake of Hashem, he shall not come near a dead person.” (Additionally, he must shave his head and offer a sacrifice if he becomes ritually impure.) We derive that these laws apply to a “term” *nazir* (for a period of thirty days, or longer) and to a “permanent” *nazir* for his entire lifetime.<sup>2</sup>

The difference<sup>3</sup> between them is only that a “term” *nazir* cannot shave his hair until the end of his term, while a “permanent” *nazir* shaves (and offers a sacrifice, which is due when he shaves) whenever his hair becomes too long (every 12 months).<sup>4</sup>

There is a third category of *nazir* that the Torah does not mention, but is found in the *Prophets* (in the *Haftorah* of this *sedrah* — *Naso*): the Shimshon-like *nazir*. Regarding Shimshon, the verse says:<sup>5</sup> “A razor shall not come upon his head, for the boy shall be a *nazir* to Hashem from the womb.” He was also a “permanent” *nazir*, however, he was not subject to **all** the laws of *nazir*, because he could, and did, defile himself for the dead<sup>6</sup> (besides other laws that are different for a Shimshon-like *nazir* — as explained later.)

[Therefore, if a person says, “I am hereby a *nazir* like Shimshon,” Rabbi Yehudah maintains<sup>7</sup> — and Rambam rules<sup>8</sup> — that he is forbidden to drink wine and to shave, but he may defile himself for the dead.]

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<sup>1</sup> *Bamidbar* 6:3-6.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sifri* on *Bamidbar* 6:5,8,13; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Nazir* 4b, Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi’s opinion.

<sup>5</sup> *Shoftim* 13:5.

<sup>6</sup> *Nazir* 4a ff.; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Nazir* 4b.

<sup>8</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 14.

## 2.

### SHIMSHON AND SHMUEL

The final mishnah of tractate *Nazir* says:

Shmuel the Prophet was a *nazir*, in accord with the statement of Rabbi Nehorai, as it says,<sup>9</sup> “And a *morah* shall not come upon his head.” Regarding Shimshon, it says, “*morah*,”<sup>10</sup> and regarding Shmuel, it says, “*morah*.” Just as the word “*morah*” said regarding Shimshon implies he was a *nazir*, so, too, “*morah*” said regarding Shmuel implies he was a *nazir*. Rabbi Yossi asked, “But doesn’t ‘*morah*’ always mean fear of flesh and blood?” {מורא with the final letter א means fear, and מורה with a ה means fear.} Rabbi Nehorai replied, “But it says earlier,<sup>11</sup> ‘Shmuel said, *How can I go? If Shaul hears, he will kill me!*’ This verse shows that Shmuel already had *morah* (fear) of flesh and blood.” {Consequently, “*morah*” in the earlier verse must mean “a razor.” So Shmuel was indeed a *nazir*.}

We must clarify:

Rabbi Nehorai learns Shmuel was a *nazir* from a *gezeira shavah*<sup>12</sup> derived from a verse regarding Shimshon. Since the principle<sup>13</sup> is that “a *gezeira shavah* must be fully applied”<sup>14</sup> {all the laws must apply equally in both cases}, we conclude that Rabbi Nehorai maintains Shmuel was a Shimshon-like *nazir*.

Rambam rules,<sup>15</sup> however, that Shmuel was a “permanent” *nazir*; **all the** laws of *nazir* applied to him. As previously mentioned, a “permanent” *nazir* may not defile himself for the dead; when his hair becomes unmanageable,<sup>16</sup> he may shave his hair and offer three animals as a sacrifice.<sup>17</sup> (He may also attempt to have his vow annulled completely.)<sup>18</sup> A Shimshon-like *nazir*, however, may

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<sup>9</sup> *Shmuel I* 1:11. {This is the vow made by Chanah, Shmuel’s mother, when she prayed for a son.}

<sup>10</sup> {*Shoftim* 13:5.}

<sup>11</sup> *Shmuel I* 16:2.

<sup>12</sup> {A type of analogy, whereby details provided in one verse are applied to another verse on the basis of the two verses sharing a similar word.}

<sup>13</sup> *Zevachim* 48a.

<sup>14</sup> {In the Hebrew original, “אין גזירה שווה למחצה”; more literally, “a *gezeira shavah* is not applied only partially.”}

<sup>15</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 16.

<sup>16</sup> {Lit., “too heavy.”}

<sup>17</sup> (The mishnah on) *Nazir* 4a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Tosfos* on *Nazir* 4a, s.v. “*ma bein*.”

become defiled for the dead, but he may not cut his hair even if it becomes unmanageable (and he may not have his vow annulled).<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the Jerusalem Talmud<sup>20</sup> derives from the verse, “So he shall do, in addition to the law of his status as a *nazir*”<sup>21</sup> that the Shimshon-like *nazir* “is not from the Torah.” As Rambam rules, “Shimshon was not a complete *nazir*.”<sup>22</sup>

Considering this, how can we derive from Shimshon that Shmuel was a “permanent” *nazir*, for whom all the laws of *nazir* applied?

The commentators<sup>23</sup> explain: The comparison is not made by a full-fledged *gezeira shavah*, but by an informational exegesis<sup>24</sup> that *morah*, in the context of Shmuel, refers to a *nazir* just as it does regarding Shimshon (unlike the opinion of Rabbi Yossi that *morah* means “fear”). Consequently, it is clear that Shmuel’s mother intended to make him a *nazir* for his entire life.

However, {the above explanation is problematic, since} the mishnah’s diction is like what is used (usually) when teaching a *gezeira shavah*: “Regarding Shimshon, it says “*morah*,” and regarding Shmuel, it says “*morah*.” **Just as “*morah*” that is said regarding Shimshon means he was a nazir, so, too, “*morah*” that is said regarding Shmuel means he was a *nazir*.”** Furthermore, the main problem with this proposed answer:<sup>25</sup> The mishnah says, “Just as ‘*morah*’... {implies} a *nazir*... a *nazir*” (and not, “Just as ‘*morah*’... {implies} a razor... a razor” — {grammatically} not even functioning as the conclusion of the term, as in, “a metal razor,” or “a razor of a *nazir*”) implying that this teaching was not (just) an informational exegesis to clarify the meaning of the word “*morah*.” Rather, {using a *gezeira shavah* based on the word “*morah*”} we derive the ***nazir status*** of Shmuel from the ***nazir status*** of Shimshon.

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<sup>19</sup> *Nazir* 14a; *Makos* 22a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 14.

<sup>20</sup> *Nazir*, ch. 1, par. 2.

<sup>21</sup> {*Bamidbar* 6:21.}

<sup>22</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Radvaz* on *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Nazir*,” ch. 3, par. 16; *Tosfos Yom Tov* on *Nazir* 9:5.

<sup>24</sup> {In the original Aramaic, “*gilui milsa be’alma*.” More literally, “a disclosure of the matter.”}

<sup>25</sup> {I.e., what is presented in the *mishnah* is not a *gezeirah shavah* but rather an informational exegesis. }

### 3.

#### CONCLUSION OF TRACTATE NAZIR

The Gemara comments on this mishnah:

Rav said to his son, Rabbi Chiya, “Seize the opportunity and recite the blessing {over the cup of blessing for the Grace after Meals}.” Similarly, Rav Huna said to his son, Rabba: “Seize the opportunity and recite the blessing.” The Gemara asks: Is this to say that reciting a blessing is preferable to answering “amen”? But isn’t it taught in a *beraisa* that Rabbi Yossi says: “one who answers ‘amen’ is greater than the one who recites the blessing”? And Rabbi Nehorai said to him: “By the Heavens, it is so. Know that this is true, just as the common soldiers {descend to the battlefield and} start the battle, but the formidable warriors follow them and prevail.”<sup>26</sup> {The Gemara responds:} This is a dispute between *Tannaim*,<sup>27</sup> as a *beraisa* teaches, “Both the one who recites a blessing and the one who answers ‘amen’ are included {in the verse, “Declare the greatness of Hashem with me, and let us exalt His name together”}<sup>28</sup> but {from On High} they hasten to reward the one who recites the blessing first.

We must clarify: What is the connection between the Gemara’s comments to the mishnah in tractate *Nazir*? The Gemara discusses the topic of  **blessings** which is related to tractate ***Berachos*** {blessings}; in fact, this passage is also quoted in tractate *Berachos*!<sup>29</sup>

Commentators<sup>30</sup> suggest that following the teaching of Rabbi Nehorai in the mishnah {regarding *nazir*}, the Gemara quotes another teaching from Rabbi Nehorai {regarding *berachos*}, since his teachings are seldom quoted in the Talmud. Additionally, this specific teaching also quotes Rabbi Yossi, similar to the mishnah.

This explanation is problematic, because:

- a) The Gemara does not quote the teaching starting with Rabbi Yossi, “The one who answers ‘amen’ is greater than the one who recites the blessing,”

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<sup>26</sup> {Responding *amen* following a blessing is compared to the mighty who join the war after the assistants, illustrating that responding *amen* is more significant than reciting the initial blessing.}

<sup>27</sup> {Sages of the era of the Mishnah.}

<sup>28</sup> {*Tehillim* 34:4., as explained by Rashi.}

<sup>29</sup> *Berachos* 53b.

<sup>30</sup> *Hagahos Yaavitz*.

(and only then quote the teachings of the later *Amoraim*),<sup>31</sup> but the teaching begins with “Rav said to his son, Rabbi Chiya.”

b) Why does the Gemara begin with quoting the teaching that argues with Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Nehorai?

c) In the mishnah, Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Nehorai disagree, while in the Gemara they hold the same opinion.

We must further clarify the conclusion of the Gemara:<sup>32</sup>

Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: “Disciples of the Sages increase peace in the world, as it says:<sup>33</sup> “And all your children shall be taught about Hashem, and great shall be the peace of your children.”

On the face of it, this teaching is totally unrelated to the mishnah and to the Gemara! Even if this is only quoted in order to “finish on a pleasant note,”<sup>34</sup> there must still be some connection to the previous discussion. Moreover, the previous teaching already had a positive message — the idea of blessings!<sup>35</sup> {So it could have served as the upbeat conclusion.}

#### 4.

MORE QUESTIONS

We must also clarify a few nuances in the Gemara’s wording:

a) What does Rabbi Nehorai intend to add to Rabbi Yossi’s teaching, “The one who answers ‘amen’ is greater than the one who recites the blessing,” by declaring, “By the Heavens” — with an oath — “it is so,” and offering

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<sup>31</sup> {Sages from the era of the Gemara.}

<sup>32</sup> {*Nazir* 66b.}

<sup>33</sup> {*Yeshayahu* 54:13. The Sages interpreted this verse homiletically: Do not read it as: “Your children (*banayich*),” but as, “your builders (*bonayich*). Torah scholars are those who build peace for their generation.}

<sup>34</sup> See Tosfos at the end of Niddah.

<sup>35</sup> *Chiddushei Aggados Maharsha on Berachos* 64a.

proof: “Know that this is true, just as the common soldiers {descend to the battlefield and} start the war and the formidable warriors follow them and prevail”?

- b) In several places, the Gemara quotes the teaching, “Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: “Torah scholars increase peace in the world...,” and adds, “do not say ‘children’, but ‘builders.’” Why is this clause omitted here, at the end of tractate *Nazir* (according to most versions)?

## 5.

### MORE QUESTIONS

We will clarify all the above by prefacing with a difficulty that Radak poses: How exactly did Shmuel become a *nazir*? We cannot say that it resulted from his mother Chana’s vow (“I shall give him to Hashem all the days of his life; and a razor shall not come upon his head”),<sup>36</sup> because: (a) since Shmuel still hadn’t been born, the vow had no effect on him; and (b) even if he had been born already, Chana’s vow would not have been able to establish Shmuel as a *nazir*, for the law is, “A man can make a vow to designate his son a *nazir*, but a woman cannot make a vow to designate her son a *nazir*.”<sup>37</sup>

If we would suggest that Elkanah {Shmuel’s father} also made a vow (after Shmuel had been born), then why does the verse speak of Chana’s vow, which was **not** effective in making Shmuel into a *nazir*, and omit the primary point — Elkanah’s vow?

We also cannot suggest that after Chana made the vow, her husband, (Elkanah) affirmed it, because the question still stands: How could the vow have taken effect if Shmuel had not been born yet?

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<sup>36</sup> *Shmuel I* 1:11.

<sup>37</sup> *Nazir* 28b.

Even if Shmuel had already been born, we still need to clarify: When a husband affirms **his wife's vow**, he affirms the **vow** itself, and obligates the **one who made the vow** to keep their word. How could Elkanah accomplish something novel (imposing a vow on his son) that the original vow did not have the power to accomplish (for “a woman cannot make a vow to designate her son a *nazir*”)?

## 6.

### WHO MADE HIM A NAZIR?

We can ask a similar question regarding Shimshon: Rambam says that “Shimshon was not a **complete nazir.**” This implies that Shimshon (not only **behaved** as a *nazir* and **refrained** from drinking wine and shaving; he) possessed the sanctity of a *nazir*. However, he was not a **complete nazir**. We must clarify: Since “he had not taken the *nazir* vow, but the **angel kept him away** from anything impure,”<sup>38</sup> how could the angel induct Shimshon to (actually) become an (even incomplete) *nazir*? An angel (or emissary) can convey a command or a mitzvah regarding a person's behavior, he can foretell future events, or the like; where do we find that an angel can confer sanctity — in this case, induct a person as a *nazir*?

In our case, we can also not presume that (at least according to Rambam) his father, Manoach, imposed a vow of *nazirism* upon Shimshon, for Rambam clearly says, “for he had not taken the *nazir* vow, **but the angel** separated him from impurity.”

Furthermore, this is proven by the story itself: Earlier, the angel instructed Manoach's wife how to conduct herself: “Now be careful not to drink wine or other intoxicant, or to eat anything impure,”<sup>39</sup> and also instructed her regarding the child: “A razor shall not **come upon his head**, for the boy shall be a *nazir* to

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<sup>38</sup> *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Nazir*, ch. 3, par. 13.

<sup>39</sup> {*Shoftim* 13:4.}



Hashem from the womb.”<sup>40</sup> Subsequently, however, when Manoach asked the angel, “What should be the conduct of the **boy** and his **behavior**?”<sup>41</sup> the angel responded with instructions for **his wife**: “She shall **observe** everything that I commanded her,”<sup>42</sup> with no instructions for Shimshon himself.”

Another point: If Shimshon and Shmuel had attained the status of a *nazir* because “a man can make a vow to designate his son a *nazir*,” why is this law considered a *halachah l’Moshe miSinai*,<sup>43</sup> as Rambam says, “there is no Scriptural support or hint for this”?<sup>44</sup> There is an **explicit** narrative in the *Prophets*!

## 7.

### THE SANCTITY OF NAZIR

The explanation:

We cannot say that Shimshon and Shmuel became *nezirim* because they took *nezirus* upon themselves because: (a) We find no Scriptural hint to support this; and, (b) Rambam clearly says about Shimshon, “for he had not taken the *nazir* **vow**.”

Conversely, the mishnah’s wording implies that it was the angel’s command and Chana’s vow that made Shimshon and Shmuel into *nezirim*:

As it says: “And a *morah* shall not come upon his head.” Regarding Shimshon, it says, “*morah*,” and regarding Shmuel, it says “*morah*.” Just as the word “*morah*” said regarding Shimshon means he was a *nazir*....

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<sup>40</sup> {*Shoftim* 13:5.}

<sup>41</sup> {*Shoftim* 13:12.}

<sup>42</sup> {*Shoftim* 13:14.}

<sup>43</sup> {Lit., “a *halachah* given to Moshe at Sinai.” This refers to a *law* for which there is no biblical reference or source, but was passed down orally as a teaching of Moshe at Mt. Sinai.}

<sup>44</sup> *Commentary on Mishnah*, tractate *Nazir*, ch. 4, *mishnah* 6.

Since the angel's command and Chana's vow by themselves would not confer the status of *nezirus*, as discussed above, we conclude that the angel's command and Chana's vow served as a quasi-cause, as explained later.

To preface with a law that illustrates a similar idea:

A *ger*<sup>45</sup> who is a child {who comes to convert alone} (or if he comes to convert together with his father) immerses in a *mikvah* with the consent of the court.<sup>46</sup> The stipulation is that “when the minors mature, they can object {and annul their conversion}.”<sup>47</sup> As soon as they mature, however, if they do not object immediately, they may not object later on.

If a minor becomes a Jew when he is converted by the court, how can he object later on and relinquish his Jewish status, and become a gentile as he was initially?

The rationale: Since the conversion occurred when he was a minor, it is considered (merely) a perfunctory conversion; he does not become sanctified with the holiness of the Jewish people until he matures. Once he matures, if he does not object, he is sanctified with the holiness of the Jewish people **retroactively**. Consequently, there is no need to immerse in a *mikvah* a second time (or perform a partial *bris milah*).<sup>48</sup> Rather, his perfunctory conversion as a minor (begun by the court or his father) suffices.

In a similar vein — albeit not exactly — any convert who has been circumcised, but who has still not yet immersed in a *mikvah*, can retract and revert to his original status as a gentile even if he has already “recited<sup>49</sup> {the blessing} ...to circumcise the convert,” and later the blessing, “...to circumcise... my covenant day and night...”

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<sup>45</sup> {In this context, a convert-candidate, not a non-Jew who has already converted.}

<sup>46</sup> *Kesuvos* 11a, Rashi, s.v. “*Higdilu*”. *Tur and Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 268, par. 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Kesuvos*, *ibid.*; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” sec. 10, par. 3; *Tur and Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” *loc cit.*, par. 7-8.

<sup>48</sup> {*Hatofas Dam Bris*.}

<sup>49</sup> *Tur and Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 268, par. 5.

Furthermore — according to what Ramban explains<sup>50</sup> — we specifically **delay** the immersion to give him an opportunity to repudiate his conversion!

The *Achronim*<sup>51</sup> have discussed at length the *halachic* parameters of the circumcision of an (adult) convert.

**Similarly**, in our discussion:

The angel’s command, “a razor shall not come upon his head, for the boy shall be a *nazir* to Hashem from the womb,” could not confer Shimshon with the sanctity of *nezirus*. The command merely obligated Shimshon to behave as a *nazir* — Shimshon could neither shave nor drink wine.

Chana’s vow, “a razor shall not come upon his head,” also only obligated {her to *conduct*} *herself* {regarding her son} as a *nazir*. Furthermore, even regarding treating him as a *nazir*, Chana’s vow had no effect at all on Shmuel, for Shmuel never took such a vow upon himself. Chana took a vow upon **herself** to ensure that Shmuel would conduct himself as a *nazir* “all the days of his life.”<sup>52</sup>

Once Shimshon and Shmuel matured, they did not object. On the contrary, they continued to conduct themselves as *nezirim*. This sanctified them with the holiness of *nezirus* retroactively — Shimshon, who “was forbidden to drink wine and to shave,” and Shmuel, who became a “permanent” *nazir* in all respects.

This was not on account of their own vows, for a vow is made orally, or at least is committed to consciously. Rather, it was by continuing to conduct themselves as *nezirim* as they had until then (without objecting) that conferred them with the **holiness** of *nezirus* **retroactively**.

[This is similar to the above ruling regarding a minor convert. He does not need a second act of conversion when he matures; the perfunctory conversion that took place when he was a minor is sufficient.]

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Taz, *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yorah Deah*,” *loc cit.*, *sub-par. 4*.

<sup>51</sup> {The later halachic authorities, from approx. 1600 CE to present.}

<sup>52</sup> {*Shmuel I* 1:11.}

## 8.

### A FULL GEZEIRA SHAVAH

On this basis, we understand why Rabbi Nehorai derives Shmuel's *nazir* status from Shimshon even though Shimshon was not a "complete" *nazir* — and he was "permitted to defile himself for the dead...."

This is not derived by (just) an informational exegesis, clarifying that *morah* means "razor," but rather, by a full-fledged *gezeira shavah*<sup>53</sup> in all respects, as a simple reading of the mishnah suggests. From the episode with Shimshon, Rabbi Nehorai learns that by Shimshon **not objecting** {when her matured} to "a razor shall not pass over," which meant abiding by the **behavior** of a *nazir* (**not** a **quantitative** addition, i.e., more things now became forbidden to him [as was the case for Shimshon regarding becoming defiled for the dead,] but) a **qualitative** addition — his *nazir* status was upgraded. No longer was it a **mode of conduct**. It was now the **holiness** of *nazir* (**retroactively**).

This teaches us regarding Shmuel that by not objecting to Chana's **conduct** toward him until now — on account of **her vow** — Shmuel acquired the sanctity of *nazir* (**retroactively**).

## 9.

### THE EXPLANATION FOR THE GEMARA

On this basis, the gist and import of Rabbi Nehorai's teaching is as follows: Concurring with and extending the main part and foundation of something is more potent than the beginning and foundation of the matter itself.

The Gemara brings an example of this — a discussion and explanation of the **mishnah's** ruling:

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<sup>53</sup> {See fn. 14.}

Rav said to his son, Rabbi Chiya: “Seize the opportunity and recite the blessing {over the cup of blessing for the Grace after Meals}.” Similarly, Rav Huna said to his son, Rabba: “Seize the opportunity and recite the blessing.”

The **one who recites a blessing** is the one who expresses the blessing, while the one who responds “amen” simply concurs. This is comparable to the discussion above about the concept of *nazir* {as it applied to Shimshon and Shmuel}. It had a foundation, and later, concurrence. However, since Rav and Rav Huna said, “Seize the opportunity and recite...,” (one should eagerly take advantage of the opportunity, and say the **blessing**), we see that the one who starts the foundation<sup>54</sup> is more important than the consent that follows.

The Gemara continues and {rhetorically} inquires, “Is this to say that {according to all opinions} one who recites a blessing is preferable {to one who responds ‘amen’}!?” The teaching implies that regarding blessings, the blesser, the initiator, is stronger than and superior to the one who concludes that blessing and responds “amen.” {This is not the case, because} “We learnt in a *beraisa*...,” which shows that Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Nehorai also in this regard adhere to their respective perspectives.

The explanation: The dispute between Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Nehorai regarding whether Shmuel was a *nazir* is not only a technical dispute, whether the word “*morah*,” in the verse regarding Shmuel, refers to a razor. Rather, it is also a dispute in logical reasoning: Rabbi Yossi maintains that consent can only add, bolster the original foundation, but it cannot effect something new, or a (qualitative) completion in the original matter to which the person consents. Therefore, he maintains only Shimshon became a *nazir* by not objecting because:

- a) Even before he consented, Shimshon was warned to conduct himself as a *nazir*.

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<sup>54</sup> {In the original, “*ikar hadavar*”; lit. “the core matter.”}

b) After his consent, he was still not a “**complete**” *nazir*. He lacked the **consummate** holiness of *nezirus*.

Rabbi Nehorai disagrees. He maintains that consent itself is {conceptually} a distinct act, and it can effect a new class, which is (qualitatively) stronger than the original foundation, even affording completeness to the original foundation. Therefore, Shmuel also became a *nazir* by not objecting, although:

- a) before he consented, Shmuel had no obligation to behave as a *nazir*; (only Chana was obligated [on account of her **vow**] to raise him as one); and
- b) by not objecting, Shmuel gained the holiness of a “complete” *nazir* {i.e., he was bound by all the laws} — and by fully applying this logic in this situation — the *nezirus* to which Shmuel did not object to {and thereby ratified, was his being} — a “**permanent**” *nazir*.

They both follow their respective opinions as it applies to responding “amen” — concurring with the blessing recited:

Rabbi Yossi says, “The one who answers ‘amen’ is **greater**<sup>55</sup> than the one who recites the blessing.” Concurrence has an advantage over the foundational core and beginning of the blessing. However, the “amen” does not bring a new class, or quality, or completion to a blessing.

Rabbi Nehorai says, “By the Heavens — he swore — it is so,” (expressing the potency of this qualitative change). The superiority of responding “amen” is not only that it is “greater.” Rather, the “amen” introduces {into the blessing} something new, placing it into a different class, relative to {its initial state, as set by} the one who recited the blessing. To prove this, the Gemara says, “as the common soldiers (who are weak) start the war, the formidable warriors follow them and prevail.”

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<sup>55</sup> {Just relatively, though, as will be explained.}

The difference between the initiator and those who concur later on is reflected in the difference between the “weak” ones who begin the **battle** and the warriors who follow them and **prevail**. The “weak” ones reflect Chana’s vow, which did not create any obligation for Shmuel; this is like the one who recites the blessing. At this point, the endeavor is incomplete (they have not yet prevailed); it is yet possible for the converted child to mature and object, thereby nullifying the entire procedure. The one who responds “amen,” however — the one who concurs with what was begun at the outset is like the warriors in the analogy. He doesn’t just bolster the endeavor, but he “**prevails**”; he creates a new concept (a new reality). The one who responds “amen” completes the “blessing” (prevails), just as Shmuel was **sanctified** with a “permanent” *nazir* status.

## 10.

### THE GEMARA’S CONCLUSION

In light of this, we understand why the Gemara concludes, “Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: “Disciples of the Sages increase peace in the world, as it says: *And all your children shall be taught about Hashem, and great shall be the peace of your children.*” Seemingly, the Gemara should have said, “Sages increase peace,” why does the Gemara specify, “disciples of the Sages?”

The difference between “disciples of the Sages” and “Sages”: “Sages” refers to the exponents of Mishnah, as it says, “the Sages taught in the Mishnah,” “the Sages taught in the language of the Mishnah.”<sup>56</sup> “Disciples of the Sages” refers to the students of the (*mishnaic*) Sages — it is they who “increase peace in the world.”

The reason: The Gemara says, “The *Tannaim* erode the world... because they issue halachic rulings based {only} on their knowledge of Mishnah.”<sup>57</sup> Since when studying Mishnah, the reasons for the laws aren’t completely spelled out, it

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<sup>56</sup> *Avos* 6:1.

<sup>57</sup> *Sotah* 22a.

might happen that they will mistakenly compare two unrelated concepts and may end up ruling incorrectly.<sup>58</sup> As our Sages said, “Neither was there any peace...<sup>59</sup> this refers to one who forsakes the study of Gemara to learn Mishnah.”

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This {focus, in the Gemara’s conclusion, on the disciples} underscores a similar explanation of the opinion of (Rabbi Yossi and) Rabbi Nehorai:

Analogous to the discussion concerning what the mishnah says about the *nezirus* of Shmuel and Shimshon, and to the discussion concerning what the Gemara says about one who answers “amen” after a blessing: Although Shmuel and Shimshon attained the status of *nezirus* based on Chana’s vow and the angel’s command, respectively, what they themselves did — their consent to their *nezirus* status — created a qualitative advantage over the original status, a new class. Likewise, for one to respond “amen” requires a blesser. And the responder only concurs with the blessing made by the blesser. Yet one who answers “amen,” accomplishes more than the blesser himself.

This is comparable to the disciples of the Sages: Although disciples are subordinate to the Sages, the exponents of the Mishnah, they accomplish more than the Sages themselves. It is they who proliferate peace in this **world**. In contrast, from the approach of the Sages themselves, not only is there no increase of peace in this world, but on the contrary, they “erode the world,” as mentioned above.

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<sup>58</sup> *Sotah*, loc. cit.; Rashi, s.v. “*shimorin*”.

<sup>59</sup> {*Zechariah* 8:10.}

<sup>60</sup> *Chagigah* 10a.

<sup>61</sup> {Whereas the reasoning of the Gemara is *relatively* clear, the Mishnah cites legal rulings without explaining the reasoning.}



## 11.

### A DEEPER CONNECTION

There is a deeper connection between the teachings of the Gemara and the mishnah. It will be understood after prefacing with an explanation why this concept that consent accomplishes more than the beginning of a matter is explained specifically in the context of *nazir*:

Torah **itself** establishes certain limitations and prohibitions. A *nazir* assumes additional prohibitions and limitations which the Torah itself does not require. This brings greater holiness upon himself and to the entire world. Chassidus explains<sup>62</sup> that a *nazir* draws down Hashem's light<sup>63</sup> that is **beyond** *seder hishtalshelus*,<sup>64</sup> **into** the realm of *seder hishtalshelus*.

Consequently, the concept of *nazir* itself emphasizes the superior quality of, and the additional benefit conferred by, a *mekabel*,<sup>65</sup> over a *mashpia*<sup>66</sup> or an initiator.

This is the superior quality of the one who responds "amen" over the blesser.:

The blesser draws down<sup>67</sup> bounty from "Above" to "below," which reveals *yichuda ilaah*<sup>68</sup> in this world, i.e., the effects of *is'hapcha*<sup>69</sup> because of this Divine revelation.

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<sup>62</sup> *Likkutei Torah*, "Emor," 31d.

<sup>63</sup> {Light as used in Chassidus, connotes Divine revelation and manifestation.}

<sup>64</sup> {This refers to the chain-like descent of spiritual worlds until this world. Each spiritual world denotes a complete realm of existence, resulting from its general proximity to or distance from Divine revelation.}

<sup>65</sup> {Lit. "the recipient." Generally, a feminine characteristic. This refers to the party in a relationship that receives from the other and transforms what it has received into something infinitely greater.}

<sup>66</sup> {Lit. "the provider." Generally, a masculine characteristic. This refers to the party in a relationship that initiates and provides for the other *mikabel*.}

<sup>67</sup> {In the original Yiddish, "*macht di brachah*"; lit. "makes the blessing." The word *blessing*, etymologically, alludes to the process of divine bounty being drawn down, since *bracha* is cognate with *maurich*, as in *lowering* a vine into the ground.}

<sup>68</sup> {A higher level of unity between Hashem and existence that is expressed by Hashem from "above."}

<sup>69</sup> {Lit., "transformation" the *avodah* of a person transforming his negative impulses and urges into good.}

The one who responds “amen” concurs with the blessing. “Down here,” we concur with the “blessing” — Divine revelation. This expresses the concept of *yichuda tataah*,<sup>70</sup> from “below” to “Above” — the *avodah* of *iskafya*.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, “the one who answers *amen* is greater than the one who recites the blessing.” The *yichuda tataah* and *iskafya* accomplished (by a *mekabel*) has an advantage over the *yichuda ilaah* and *is’hapcha* (by a *mashpia*).

## 12.

### TWO STAGES OF “AMEN”

Regarding the advantage of the one who responds “*amen*,” there are two stages: Nowadays, during exile, *iskafya* and *avodas ha’beirurim*<sup>72</sup> performed in this world do have an advantage. Nevertheless, since they are not achieved in the acme of perfection, therefore, relative to *iskafya*, the primary advantage is in *is’hapcha*.

In the Future Era,<sup>73</sup> the advantage of the *avodah* done specifically in this lower world will be revealed. Because then, this *avodas ha’beirurim* will be perfectly complete. (“I will eradicate the spirit of impurity from the Land.”)<sup>74</sup> This is *is’hapcha* which comes about through *iskafya*. At that time, therefore, the soul will work with and in the body,<sup>75</sup> specifically; and the soul will draw its sustenance from the body {demonstrating the body’s superiority}.

These two stages parallel the two opinions of Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Nehorai:

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<sup>70</sup> {A lower level of unity between Hashem and existence that is expressed by Hashem’s creations down in this world.}

<sup>71</sup> {Lit., “bending,” the *avodah* of a person repressing his negative impulses and overcoming his urges.}

<sup>72</sup> {The process of refining all of the G-dly sparks embedded in this physical world.}

<sup>73</sup> {During the Messianic Era.}

<sup>74</sup> *Zechariah* 13:2.

<sup>75</sup> {In contrast to Rambam, who says that in the Future Era, there will no longer be physical bodies, Kabbalah maintains that the ultimate Divine revelations that characterize the Future Era will be experienced specifically by souls clothed in physical bodies. All physicality, in the Future Era, however, will be highly refined.}

Rabbi **Yossi** — whose name shares the same numerical value of *Elokim*<sup>76</sup> (which shares the same numerical value<sup>77</sup> of “the nature”)<sup>78</sup> — maintains that “the one who answers “amen” is greater than the one who recites the blessing.” (And Shimshon, by not objecting, added a new degree of *nazir* sanctity to what the angel’s command had accomplished.) This reflects the advantage of *iskafya* and the *avodah* by beings in this lower world over the blesser — an effusion from Above. Nonetheless, the name *Yossi* is related to the name *Yosef* in *Lashon HaKodesh*,<sup>79</sup> which is emblematic of an effusion and revelation from Above.

Consequently, Rabbi Yossi speaks about this quality as it exists {during the first stage} nowadays. Now {before the coming of Moshiach}, *yichuda tataah* and *iskafya* are not incomparably superior to the “blesser,” *yichuda ilaah* and *is’hapcha* (as reflected by the fact that Shimshon was not a complete *nazir*), because an effusion from Above that effectuates *is’hapcha* still possesses an advantage.

In contrast, the name of Rabbi **Nehorai** is not *Lashon Hakodesh*<sup>80</sup> — a name in *Lashon Hakodesh* reflects the revelation of Torah in its purity, as the Torah is Above. — Rather, his name is one that was translated into a foreign language of one of “the seventy nations” {i.e., Aramaic}, but as this name is elevated and refined in the Torah.<sup>81</sup>

Notwithstanding, Rabbi **Nehorai** is translated as **light**<sup>82</sup> (not in *Lashon Hakodesh* — “Meir”<sup>83</sup> — but) in Aramaic.

Therefore, he addresses this quality of the one who responds “amen” as it exists {during the second stage} in the Future Era. Then, “amen” will be incomparably greater than the blessing, “**by the Heavens**” — “**they prevail.**”

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<sup>76</sup> *Zohar*, vol. 3, p. 223a.

<sup>77</sup> {י.ו.ס.י=86=הטבע.}

<sup>78</sup> *Pardes*, “*Shaar*” 12, ch. 2.

<sup>79</sup> {Lit. “the Holy Tongue.” This refers to the Hebrew used in the Torah and by commentators.}

<sup>80</sup> {The fact that his name is in Aramaic expresses a greater degree of concealment, i.e., “down below,” and has the superior quality of *iskafya*.}

<sup>81</sup> *Torah Or*, “*Mishpatim*,” 77d ff.

<sup>82</sup> See *Eruvin* 13b: “why was he called by the name Rabbi Nehorai? It is because he enlightens [manhir] the eyes of the Sages in matters of the halacha.”

<sup>83</sup> See *Eiruvim*, loc cit.: “Rabbi Meir was not his name; rather, Rabbi Nehorai was his name.”

For then the advantage of *avodas ha'beirurim* in this world, and the refinement of the (languages of the) world of seventy nations, will be completely revealed. So much so, the *avodah* down here will also possess the quality of revealed light (Nehorai) — the advantage of *is'hapcha*. This is *is'hapcha* that comes through *iskafya* — the union of *yichuda tataah* and *yichuda ilaah*.

— From talks delivered on 12 *Tammuz* and 5 *Menachem Av*, 5725 (1965)<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> The conclusion of *kaddish* on behalf of the Rebbe's mother, *Chana*. She passed away 11 months earlier on 6 *Tishrei*, 5725.