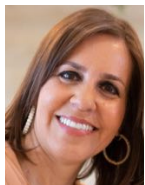


# Shabbat Spice

PARSHAT NASSO



## The Power of Beauty

By Rachele Nitzani

This week's parasha, Parshat Naso, discusses the concept of the *nazir*, the Jewish priest who takes separate measures from others in society to be holy.

As holy as this way of life is, a *nazir* must bring a *Korban Chatat*, a sin offering, when he finishes being a *nazir*, indicating that he still did something wrong by living such a holy life. His "wrong doing" lies in the fact that this separate life is not the ideal choice of a Torah Jew. A Torah Jew is meant to live in the physicality of this world and uplift every part of it.

Our Torah teaches us how to live a normal life for ourselves and with other people. Balance is one of the hardest things to achieve in life, but it is an important Torah value and something that Judaism holds in high regard.

A woman specifically is not meant to be a *nazir*, namely to cast aside her feminine uniqueness and beauty for the sake of holiness. On the contrary, a Jewish woman must and should use her beauty and physical qualities in order to bring love and holiness into her home. In doing so, she teaches her children a most powerful lesson: physical qualities and strengths should be used to put effort into the home, to care for the home and the beauty of the home, and make herself beautiful, thereby making herself and her home pleasant.

But she cannot cast aside the lesson of the *nazir* completely and forget to balance her physical characteristics and beauty with inner beauty as well. By living a life that does not cast aside beauty and physicality completely, and incorporates beauty and beautiful things in her outside life, a woman actually emerges with a renewed focus on the inside. By using her beauty to beautify her life on the outside, always in a modest way, she remembers to beautify the inside as well, focusing on her developing her inside beauty and her characteristics. She asks herself things like "Do I appear the same on the street as I do in my home?" and by working on inner beauty and balancing it with outer beauty, she is left with confidence and belief in herself.

It is a woman's duty to turn her attention inward as well and make sure that on the inside, she is beautiful. Indeed, the need to attract attention from the outside is subconsciously the need to receive the respect and recognition we all need. When a woman doesn't like herself, she will always depend on the likes of others. When she likes herself and believes in her inner beauty, she will not use her beauty for external recognition and instead, have the healthy balance of beauty.

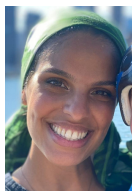
Essentially, a woman, by living a Torah life of this physical world, emerges with a balance between outer and inner beauty, without ever casting away the concept of physicality and beauty completely.

CANDLE LIGHTING 8:02PM | SHABBAT ENDS 9:12PM

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# Shabbat Spice

PARSHAT NASSO



## Lessons from Nazzirut By Mina Dilamani

Seven years, three months, nine days, eight seconds. Okay fine, I don't know how many seconds, but with sobriety we must count even the seconds! That's how long it's been since I've consumed any type of soda.

So how did this soda-less journey begin? A few years ago, I was sitting in Chumash class in Stern College and was learning about the interesting topic of the Nazzir, which is found in this week's parasha, Nasso. I was perplexed by the concept of becoming a *nazzir*. The Torah teaches that a person could volunteer to take *Nazzirut* upon himself, which entails abstaining from wine, letting your hair grow out, and not coming in contact with a dead body. Not only does a *nazzir* avoid wine; he cannot even eat grapes. The idea is to create a fence. A fence not only protects me from what causes me to sin, but protects me from what causes me to cause me to sin. For a *nazzir*, these fences were meant to keep him as pure and focused as possible.

I thought to myself, since when does Judaism condone abstinence? It seemed to contradict everything I learned about Judaism being a beautiful blend of both physicality & spirituality. We can use wine for *kiddush*. We can get a nice haircut *lichvod Shabbat*. We can go to a funeral to comfort a mourner. This is how we merge the physical with the spiritual. So the question becomes, is becoming a *nazzir* a good thing or not?

There are different opinions on this question. Some say it is ideal to become a *nazzir* (like the Ramban).

While others disagree, like the *Rambam*, who says the Torah completes us, so why do extra? Find the middle path and "do less, better." The opinion that stood out to me is that of the Rama, who basically describes *Nazzirut* as spiritual rehab. It's not for everyone. It's for those who are on one extreme and need balance, and as we know sometimes the only way to achieve that is to go to the opposite extreme. No one is meant to be in rehab forever. It's an opportunity for redemption.

I walked out of that class asking myself - "What is an area of my life I am extreme in?" I knew the answer immediately. I used to be a big soda drinker. I'm talking Coke for breakfast. It was horrible. I tried cutting down for years and I just couldn't. I decided that day I want to bring the lessons of the *nazzir* into my life and apply it to an area I felt addicted and out of control. *Nazzirut* is quite extreme, so I knew I had to be extreme. I went from drinking a shocking amount of soda everyday to completely cutting it out. For the first couple of years I didn't even touch seltzer because it felt like a gateway! I kept reminding myself I need to do this, I need to create these fences if I want to ever reach a state of balance and harmony with what I put in my body. It was very challenging for me. But I wanted to be a *nazzir* for my soda addiction. Thank You Hashem, we did it!

I never thought I could relate to the *nazzir* in any way, but I must say this parasha changed my life and continues to teach me the secrets to achieving peace. May we all find our own inner peace & merit peace as a nation B"H! Shabbat Shalom!

THANK YOU TO THE SHABBAT SPICE TEAM  
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