



In The Eye of The Storm
Parshas Nasoh

He was walking with friends, but was clearly unhappy. His situation continuously deteriorated, but even he doesn't understand why. His mother had no insight and his teachers were concerned.

It happened once a month; when everyone went home, and the dorms were closed at Midreshet Hagalil, Yanush would return to his bad habits, and would forget all the values and teachings he learned over the past weeks.

In general, Yanush was a good person who came from a broken home. His grandparents were both religious Jews. The Communists wreaked havoc on the younger generation. His father was stranded in Russia, still lost behind the Iron Curtain. Yanush had immigrated to Israel, and lived in the north, in an immigrant community, where things were not easy. Good friends directed Yanush towards Midreshat Hagalil, a school established especially for immigrants from the former USSR. Yanush excelled in his studies and amazed his teachers. He looked different from his classmates because he insisted on growing his hair long. His teachers tried to encourage him to cut his hair, but he was adamant.

On the weekends that the dorms were closed Yanush went home, got together with his old friends and hung out with them, he followed their lead with crass behavior, consuming large amounts of alcohol and wasting his time. On the weekend, while hanging out with his friends, he felt different. He couldn't understand why. He couldn't understand why he lost everything he had accumulated over the past month over just one weekend. I don't belong here, he thought to himself, why am I drawn by them? "Yanush, come have a drink", his friends offered. His body was with them, his soul was not. Suddenly, he began to perspire, feeling very uncomfortable. He leaped to his feet and fled the room.

Shimon Hatzadik¹ testified about himself that he never ate a trespass-offering brought by a defiled *Nazir*; a religious ascetic², except in one case. What was the exception? The Talmud tells us: "On one occasion a *Nazir* came from the South country, and

¹ Tractate Nedarim 9b.

² One who voluntarily took a vow described in Bamidbar 6:1–21. The term "nazirite" means "consecrated" or "separated". This vow required the man or woman to:

- Abstain from [wine](#), wine [vinegar](#), [grapes](#), [raisins](#), [intoxicating liquors](#) and vinegar distilled from such, and refrain from eating or drinking any substance that contains any trace of grapes.

- Refrain from cutting the hair on one's head.

- Not to become impure by corpses or graves, even those of family members.

After following these requirements for a designated period of time which would be specified in the individual's vow, the person would immerse in a [mikveh](#) and make three [offerings](#), a lamb as a [burnt offering \(olah\)](#), a ewe as a [sin-offering \(hatat\)](#), and a ram as a [peace offering \(shelamim\)](#), in addition to a basket of unleavened bread, grain offerings and drink offerings, which accompanied the peace offering. They would also shave their head in the outer courtyard of the Temple and then place the hair on the same fire as the peace offering.

I saw that he had beautiful eyes, was of handsome appearance, and with thick locks of hair symmetrically arranged. I said to him: 'My son, for what reason are you destroying your beautiful hair?' He replied: 'I worked as a shepherd for my father in my town. Once I went to draw water from a well, gazed upon my reflection in the water, whereupon my evil desires rushed upon me and sought to drive me from this world (through sin). But I said unto it my lust: "Wretch! Why do you vaunt yourself in a world that is not yours, with one who is destined to become worms and dust? I swear that I will shave off my beautiful hair for the sake of Heaven". I immediately arose and kissed his head, saying: 'My son, may there be many *Nazirites* like you in Israel! Of you the Holy Torah states: "A man or woman who sets himself apart by making a *Nazir* vow to abstain for the sake of the Lord".³ His words are most inspiring.

A *Nazir* is holy, nonetheless he is in a dangerous situation. Shimon Hatzadik appreciated the *Nazir's* dedication, but on the other hand, refrained from eating a *Nazir's* sacrifice to teach everyone that the vow is not a game, that one's words are of great consequence.

A trial is an experience sent by Heaven, but one needs guidance from Heaven to overcome the trial. We pray every morning not be placed in a tempting situation, because when one enters such a situation it is hard to know how one will emerge.

Our sages teach us: "Whoever sees an adulteress in her disgrace should vow to abstain from wine, for it leads to adultery".⁴ Wine is apparently a good thing, but it may lead to negative situations.

Head hair is a positive thing as well. There are various Mitzvos that relate to hair, but in certain cases, it can generate negativity.

A trial is a great thing, but can be very dangerous and requires much preparation spiritual fortitude and care. One should not enter a situation that may result in sin.

Yanush ran home, put his Kipah on, took his suitcase and ran to catch the bus to Migdal Ha'Emek.

Loud banging was heard at my door as I was sitting at my table. Yanush was standing at the door with tears in his eyes: "Do you have hair clippers?" he asked. I enquired about what happened. "It's my evil inclination. If I were to remove my mass of hair I would not think about hanging out with my friends. Now, I look like them and is drawn to them. No more!" Yanush cried. The clippers were brought, and indeed he was like a new person.

³ Bamidbar, 6, 2.

⁴ Tractate Sotah 2a.