

# Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

Published Mantua 1778\*

## Chapter XXVII: Tazria (Lev. 12:1–13:59)

### Essay 11. The oath not to take a reward

**פסוק** "ויאמר חיה' אשר-עמדתי לפניו אמ-אקח ויפצר-בו לקחת וימאן". קושה איה סלקא דעתא דנעמן שאלישע יעבור על שבועתו חס ושלום, ולמה הפציר בו אחר שראה שגשבע.

The Haftorah relates that after being healed of the skin disease *tzara'at*, the Aramean army commander, Naaman, wanted to reward the prophet Elisha. A **verse** states: **“But he replied, ‘As the L-rd lives, whom I serve, I will not accept anything;’ he pressed him to accept, but he refused”** (II Kings 5:16). **It is difficult how it would enter the mind of Naaman that Elisha would break his oath, G-d forbid, and why he pursued him after he saw that he swore thus.**

ואמרין בפרק ג' דנדרים ארבעה נדרים התירו חכמים נדרי זירוזין פיצד הנה מוכר חפץ אמר קונים שאיני פוחת לך מן הסלע והלה אמר קונים שאיני מוסיף לך על השקל שניהם רוצים בשלשה דינרים, רבי אליעזר בן יעקב אומר אף הרוצה להדיר את חברו שיאכל אצלו וכו'.

### **It says in the third chapter of tractate Nedarim:**

**The Sages dissolved four** [types of] **vows** [without the requirement of a request to a halachic authority]: **Vows of exhortation**, vows of exaggeration, vows that are unintentional, and vows [whose fulfillment is impeded by] circumstances beyond one's control. [Regarding] vows of exhortation, **how is this** [formulated]? **One was selling an item and said: I will not lower** [the price] **for you** [to less] **than a sela**, as **that is forbidden**, as if [it were] **an offering** [for me]. **And the other one**, [the buyer,] **says: I will not raise** [my payment] **to you to more than a shekel**, as **that is forbidden** [for me].

**Both want** [to complete the deal] **at three dinars** [and they did not intend to vow but only exaggerated for purposes of bargaining].

**Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: Similarly, one who wants to take a vow** [regarding] **another, that he should eat with him . . .**

- Mishnah Nedarim 3:1

---

\* English translation: Copyright © 2022 by Charles S. Stein. Additional essays available at <https://zstorah.com>

ופירוש הרב, שהרי המוכר לא נדר אלא לזרו הלוקח וכן הלוקח לא נדר אלא לזרו המוכר, ולא נדרו בלב שלם ובנדריהם בעיניו שיהיו פיו ובלבו שוין, וכן הרוצה שיאכל תבירו אצלו ומסרב בו ומדירו נדרי זירוזין הוא עכ"ל.

**Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura<sup>1</sup> explained, that the seller only vowed to hasten the buyer, and similarly the buyer only vowed to hasten the seller, and they didn't make vows with full hearts and with vows with the desire that their "mouths and hearts are equal,"<sup>2</sup> and similarly on who wants another to eat with him, and he urges him to do so and makes a vow with regard to him, this vow is included in the category of vows of exhortation.**

ונדוע שמשפטי השבועות והנדריים שוים בדין זה, ולפיכך לא היה חושש נעמן לשבועה שעשה אלישע, מפני שהשב שנדרי זירוזין הן ואם רוצה אלישע עדיין היה יכול לקבל ומשום ה"כי" נ"פצרו בו לקחת", אכל עם כל זה אלישע לא רצה לקבל וזהו "נמאן".

**It's known that expressions of oaths and vows are the same with regard to this law, and therefore Naaman was not afraid of this oath that Elisha made, because he thought these were vows of exhortation and that if Elisha wanted, he could still accept a reward, and because of this, "he pressed him to accept," but nevertheless, Elisha didn't want to accept, and this is why the verse said, "he refused."**

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura (c. 1445–c. 1515), Italian rabbi.

<sup>2</sup> Mishnah Terumot 3:8.