**בס''ד**

**Miller’s Musings פרשת נשא**

Seeing a Sotah, a woman accused of adultery, enduring the shame and indignity of the process that ultimately exposed the truth about her alleged crime, was said by Chazal to be so harrowing that it triggered within a person the desire to become a Nozir.  A Nozir was one who vowed to abstain from all grape products, cutting one’s hair and defiling oneself through contact with a corpse. This explains why the section about the Sotah is juxtaposed to that of the Nozir.  But if we are to suppose that a Nozir is one who deems it necessary to withdraw to a degree from the pleasures of the body, surely seeing one disgraced in this dreadful manner, due to her indulgence of the flesh, would make artificial motivations less necessary for the one witnessing this episode, not more so?

Contained within every act are two elements.  The physical manifestation of the act itself, and the motivation and intention behind it.  A person witnessing something, says Rav Dessler zt’l, will always be more greatly influenced by the former irrespective of its rationale, even when the latter is perfectly understood.  With regard to the Sotah, although the cause of her appearance in the Temple courtyard may be for reasons of tremendous dishonour, the very sight of a person who may have committed such an awful sin, to some degree lessens within one’s mind the sensitivity towards the immorality of this transgression, notwithstanding the resultant ignominy.  This compelled a person who observed it to reinforce this sensitivity by refraining from certain worldly gratifications.

The experience of seeing something can often be underestimated in its impact.  We think that the mere sight of immorality cannot have any significant impact on our lives.  Yet this is so wrong and so damaging in its misjudgement.  The desensitisation that can be caused by viewing something for the first time can be immeasurable, and each additional time we see it, we become more and more unmoved by its sight.  Once seen, something can never be unseen, and the influence of that incident can reach further into the future than we could ever imagine.  This is so important to realise both for ourselves and for those whose lives we are to some degree responsible for.  This may be a sibling, a spouse, a child, a friend and needless to say ourselves.  If we have the potential to prevent this exposure to something harmful, not averting this irreversible damage, makes us culpable for that destruction of the soul we have ultimately enabled.

May the holiness of Shabbos shield us from all harm.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם