

Source Sheet Parshat Matot-Maasei



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ַרַבִּי נָתָן אוֹמֵר: הַנּוֹדֵר — כְּאִילּוּ בָּנָה בָּמָה, וְהַמְקַיְימוֹ — כְּאִילוּ מַקְרִיב עָלָיו קרָבָן.

Rabbi Natan says: One who vows is considered as having built a 'bama' [*viz.* a private altar for offering sacrifices outside of the Temple; an act which is generally forbidden by Jewish law]. One who fulfills [a vow without instead seeking its annulment] is considered as having offered a sacrifice upon a bama.

### Nedarim 22a

מִי שֶׁנָּדַר נְדָרִים כְּדֵי לְכוֹנֵן דֵּעוֹתָיו וּלְתַקֵן מַעֲשָׁיו הֲרֵי זֶה זָרִיז וּמְשֵׁבָּח. כֵּיצַד. כְּגוֹן מִי שֶׁהָיָה זוֹלֵל וְאָסַר עָלָיו הַבָּשָׂר שָׁנָה אוֹ שְׁתַּיִם. אוֹ מִי שֶׁהָיָה שׁוֹגֶה בַּיַין וְאָסַר הַיַּין עַל עַצְמוֹ זְמַן מְרֵבָּה. אוֹ אָסַר הַשִּׁכְרוּת לְעוּלָם. וְבַן מִי שֶׁהָיָה רוֹדֵף שַׁלְמוֹנִים וְנִבְהָל לְהוֹן וְאָסַר עַל עַצְמוֹ הַמַּתָּנוֹת אוֹ הַנָיַת אַנְשֵׁי מְדִינָה זוֹ. וְכֵן מִי שֶׁהָיָה מִתְגָּאָה בְּיָפִיוֹ וְנָדַר בְּנָזִיר וְכַיּוֹצֵא בְּנָדָרִים אֵלוּ. כַּלָן דָרָהָל לְבוֹן וָאָסַר וּבְנִדְנִים אֵלוּ וְכַיּוֹצֵא בְּנָדָרִים אֵלוּ. כַּלָן דֶרָה מְתָגָּאָה בְּיָכִיוֹ וְנָדַר בְּנָזִיר וְסַיּוֹצָ וּבְנִדְרִים אֵלוּ וְכַיּוֹצֵא בָּהָן אֶמְרוּ חַכָמִים נְדָרִים סְיָג לְפְרִישׁוּת:

If a person has made vows in order to adjust his characteristic traits and to improve his behavior, he is indeed zealous and praiseworthy. Examples: One who was a glutton forbade himself meat for a year or two; or one who was addicted to drinking forbade himself wine for a long time, or vowed never to become intoxicated. So too, one who ran after bribes, hastening to get rich, forbade to himself the gifts or the favors coming from the residents of a particular town. So too, one who became arrogant because of his good looks vowed to become a nazirite. Such vows are designed to serve God, and concerning them the sages declared: "Vows are a fence around self-restraint" (Mishna Avot 3:17).

# Mishna Torah, Hilkhot Nedarim 13:23

ַעַל־פִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יוֹרוּד וְעַל־הַמִּשְׁפֶט אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרוּ לְדָ הַעֲשָׁה לָא תָסוּר מִן־הַדָּבֶר אֲשֶׁר־יַגִּיִדוּ לְדָ יָמִין וּשְׂמָאל:

You shall act in accordance with the instructions given you and the ruling handed down to you; you must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you either to the right or to the left.

# Deuteronomy 17:11

נָחִיתָ כַצֹּאן עַמֶּךָ, מַהוּ פַּצֹּאן, אֶלָּא מַה הַצֹּאן הַזֶּה אֵין מַכְנִיסִין אוֹתָה לְצֵל הַקּוֹרָה, כָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה שֶׁעָשׂוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר לָא נִכְנְסוּ לְצַל הַקּוֹרָה, לְכָף נִמְשְׁלוּ פַּצֹּאן. דָּבָר אַחֵר, נָחִיתָ כַצֹּאן עַמֶּךָ, מַה הַצֹּאן אֵין כּוֹנְסין לָה אוֹצָרוֹת אֶלָּא רוֹעִים אוֹתָה בַּמִּדְבָּר, כָּך יִשְׁרָאַל כָּל אַרְבָּעִים שְׁנָה שֶׁהָיוּ בַּמִּדְבָר נִזּוֹנוּ בְּלֹא אוֹצָרוֹת, לְכָף נִמְשָׁלוּ פַּצֹּאן. דָּבָר אַחַר, נָחִיתָ כַצָּאן אַין כּוּנְסין לָה אוֹצָרוֹת אָלָא רוֹעִים אוֹתָה בַּמִּדְבָר, כָּד יִשְׁרָאַל כָּל אַרְבָּעִים שְׁנָה שֶׁהָיוּ בַּמִדְבָּר נִזּוֹנוּ בְּלֹא אוֹצָרוֹת, לְכָף נִמְשְׁלוּ פַּצֹּאן. דָּבָר אַחֵר, נָחִיתָ כַצֹּאן, מָה הַצֹּאו מַנְהִיגָה הִיא נִמְשָׁכָת אַחֲרָיו, כָּד יִשְׁרָאֵל כָּל מָקום שֶׁהָיוּ משָׁה וְאַהָרוֹעָה מַסִּיעִים אוֹתָם הָיוּ נוֹסְעִים אַחֲרָיה, נָזית כַצָּאן מַנְהִיגָה הִיא נִמְשָׁכָת אַחֲרָיו, כָּד יִשְׁרָאָל כָּל מָקום שֶׁנָה שָׁרָיון מַסּקינים אָנָר בָּי

"You led Your people like a flock" (Psalms 77:21): What is [the significance of the] flock [metaphor]? Just like one does not bring a flock under the shade of a roof (indoors), so too Israel when they were in the wilderness were not brought under the shade of a roof for forty years. Hence they were compared to a flock. Another interpretation of, "You led Your people like a flock": Just like a flock does not have storerooms collected for them but rather only graze

from the wilderness, so too Israel for the forty years that they were in the wilderness were fed without storehouses. Hence they were compared to a flock. Another interpretation of, "You led Your people like a flock": And just like a flock follows to anywhere that the shepherd leads them, so too Israel journeyed to any place that Moses and Aaron took them, as it is stated, "These are the journeys of the Children of Israel" - in order to fulfill that which is stated, "You led Your people like a flock through Moses and Aaron" (Psalms 77:21).

### Numbers Rabbah 23:2

When we try to say what a metaphor "means," we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention . . . How many facts or propositions are conveyed by a photograph? None, an infinity, or one great unstatable fact? Bad question. A picture is not worth a thousand words, or any other number. Words are the wrong currency to exchange for a picture.

# Donald Davidson "What metaphors mean"