

נאוס דשע Naos Deshe

An Adaptation of Rabbi Shmuel Dov Asher Leiner's Naos Deshe by Rabbi Reuven Boshnack
Questions? Comments? Dedications? Email ReuvenBoshnack@gmail.com

Neos Deshe Chayei Sarah

And Avraham added another wife and her name was Ketura (Bereshis 25:1)

The midrash comments that

Hence it says: *And I will praise You, yet more and more* ([Tehillim 71:14](#)). The Rabbis maintained that this verse speaks of Abraham. He said to the Holy One, blessed be He: "You told me: *For in Isaac shall seed be called unto you* ([Bereshis 21:12](#)). You have multiplied Your blessings upon me, and I have borne many sons." Hence it is said: *And Abraham added another wife*.

Neos Deshe asks, why is taking another wife seen as a positive thing? Weren't the children of Ketura wicked?

Furthermore, we see that Avraham gave everything to Yitzchak and gave the children of Ketura gifts and sent them to the east. (Bereshis 25:5-6) Rashi says that he gave them the name of Tuma (impurity.) This could be understood as magic or idol worship.

Why would Avraham, whose entire life was consumed with spreading the message that there is only one power in the world, Hashem, Master of heaven and earth, give knowledge of idolatry or magic to his own children?

Avraham and Yitzchak had two distinct ways of serving Hashem. Avraham was through kindness, growth and moving forward. Yitzchak's was restraint, awe, and boundaries. When the Torah tells us that Avraham gave Yitzchak everything, it means from that point forward, that their ways of serving Hashem would be linked forever. They would not be contradictory, rather they are two parts of a whole composing the picture of Avodas Hashem.

However, children of Ketura kept only to the way of Avraham, and did not incorporate Yitzchak's way at all.

Therefore, the Torah explains that the name of impurity means their lack of growth in Avodas Hashem. Neos Deshe notes that the children of Midian, grandchildren of Avraham, had names which hinted to Avraham's legacy. However, since they did not grow further, this was the impurity. The word tuma indicates a blockage, as opposed to tahara, which indicates movement and ascent.

Neos Deshe illustrates this concept further with the example of a matzeva- an altar made of a singular stone. While the Avos made use of them frequently, the idolaters began to use them as well. The Torah commands us not to use a matzeva in sefer Devarim (16:22) saying that Hashem despises them, as they had become synonymous with idolatry. Neos Deshe concludes that this is a prime example of tuma.

נאוס דשא Naos Deshe

An Adaptation of Rabbi Shmuel Dov Asher Leiner's Naos Deshe by Rabbi Reuven Boshnack
Questions? Comments? Dedications? Email ReuvenBoshnack@gmail.com

While resting only on the heritage of Avraham, but not seeking to progress further, they became the opposite of what their grandfather stood for.

When we cling only to the memories of the past to guide us in Avodas Hashem, even the most holy, it can become a blockage to our future growth. Our expectations of "how it was," which then translate into what things "have to be" become an altar of blockage and anti-growth. Our job is serve Hashem like Avraham, in a way that "I wil praise you more and more."