

## Parashat Naso: Nazarite Vow

### The Haphtarah: Judges 13, The Life of Samson and Numbers 4:21 up to Chapter 7

The Parashah for this week has a series of instructions and commandments as follows:

#### *1. The Many Duties of the Priests.*

a. The sons of Gershon had charge of the hangings, curtains, and the coverings of the dwelling and the court of the sanctuary or the Mishkan.

b. Everything in connection with all the vessels, which were sanctified. It is interesting that the name Gershon is derived from the expression "a ger there," or "I was a ger there," a promise to the gerim that though they were foreigners, in the Lord, they found a place in His Holy Place.

This is a promise for the true and humble gerim. Not for the ones who presume to have already arrived.

c. Aaron and his sons were to have complete authority over the Gershonites, as directed by Itamar.

d. The Merarites or the sons of Merari had the charge of all the solid and heavy objects.

#### *2. Lesson in the Holiness of the Tabernacle*

Following the set up of the Mishkan, the Lord commands Moses to remove all unclean individuals from the camp. This was to teach Israel that God's place is Holy and not to be defiled.

Years ago the rabbis of Israel wrote the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Ethics and Behavior for the Jews. In Chapter 13, we find the Laws concerning the Holiness of the synagogue. The duty of every Jew is to see that His House is kept clean and orderly. It is the duty of every man and woman to see that His synagogue is kept spotless.

#### *3. The Nazarite Laws*

These laws were only for those who wanted to give of themselves to the Almighty for a period of no more than 30 days, although there were some who made a Nazarite vow for a year or more. This vow consisted of:

- ✳ Not taking any intoxicating liquor, such as beer or wine, including any of the products of the grape or vinegar of any kind.
- ✳ They were to let the hair grow during that period of time.
- ✳ They were not allowed to be near a dead body.

The conclusion of this vow was made at the Mishkan entrance, later at the Temple door and a sacrifice was made. The hair, a symbol of man's strength, was burnt along with his sacrifice.

#### *4. New Testament Example*

In Acts chapter 21, Rabbi Shaul (or the Apostle Paul) is returning to Jerusalem to finish his Nazarite vow, which he had taken in Athens as he made his plans to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. (See Acts 18:1-21.)

While at Jerusalem, Paul offered the prescribed sacrifice along with other believers as advised by Jaacov (James). Not having a full understanding of Israel as raised by the Lord as the nation He created out of the loins of Abraham (Genesis 12:3), the "gentilizers," have used these verses as a so-called "weak moment in Paul's life by reverting to Jewish laws and traditions."

The Nazarite vow was never made after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. Orders to put out all lepers from the camp are given in chapter 5. These are instructions and requirements for cleanliness and sanctity required around the presence of God.

#### *5. The Priestly Blessing or Birchat Kohanim*

**Numbers 6:22.** Finally it is here where the Eternal, blessed be His Holy Name, instructs Moses to instruct Aaron the Cohen on the proper way to bless the sons of Israel. This blessing represents the guardianship

of the Eternal over Israel. The Soncino Chumash of Dr. J.H. Hertz, head rabbi of the British Empire, comments about the blessing (in parenthesis):

The Lord bless you and keep you. (With life, health and prosperity.)

The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. (In contrast, hide not thy face from me.)

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and grant you peace (or turn His attention and loving care upon thee.)

This is the only prayer so arranged by the Eternal as a command for the sons of Israel to be blessed by the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron. No other person has that authority. For the ones who have not been born Jews, this law continues to be obeyed to this day. After every Shabbat service, Cohanim arise to bless the sons of Israel, including those who have joined us, the gerim, with hands outstretched and with the fingers opened.

In the final dedication for the Temple, or the Mishkan, each head of each tribe now participates in the great donation to ADONAI, the free will offering as a symbol of the total dedication and acknowledgement of His Supreme Kingdom over Israel forever.

## **Haftorah Portion: Judges 13, 20-26**

This is the history of Sampson, the great Nazarite. Sampson lived in the days of the judges, a sad time in the history of Israel. He, along with Deborah, Gideon, and Jephtah, were foremost among those judges.

Sampson was made a Nazarite by God Himself, as a sign or *OT*, Hebrew for sign and a defender of Israel against the Philistines. He was not a perfect man, as a sign that no one is ever totally perfect before God.

Sadly enough, we are still fighting the Philistines in our day in the person of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). The saddest thing is. . . the whole world still appears to be siding with the Philistines of our day.