

## Parashat Naso / פרשת נשא

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### Did you know the vow of the Nazir/Nazarite applies to you today?

#### **This Weeks Reading List:**

Torah: Numbers 4:21-7:89

Haftarah: Judges 13:2-13:25

B'rit HaChadashah: Acts 21:17-26

Parashat Naso contains the vow of the Nazir or Nazarite (נזיר) meaning "consecrated" or "separated". *Numbers 6:1 ADONAI said to Moshe, 6:2 "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'When either a man or a woman makes a special kind of vow, the vow of a nazir, consecrating himself to ADONAI; (CJB) A Nazir is a person in biblical times who had taken a strict vow of abstinence. The vow of a Nazir involved three things, (i) abstain from strong wine and strong drink, anything derived from the fruit of the vine (grapes), (ii) refrain from cutting the hair of the head during the entire length/period of the vow, and (iii) not to come in contact with a dead body (human or animal). After the period of the vow is complete, the Nazir is to come before the Lord in the Ohel Moed (Tent of meeting) and bring with him three things (i) a male lamb born within one year for a burnt offering, (ii) a female lamb born within one year for a sin offering, and (iii) a male ram as a peace offering along with a basket of matzah and their grain and drink offerings.*

#### ***Numbers 6:13-18***

*6:13 "This is the law for the nazir when his period of consecration is over: he is to be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting, 6:14 where he will present his offering to ADONAI - one male lamb in its first year without defect as a burnt offering, one female lamb in its first year without defect as a sin offering, one ram without defect as peace offerings, 6:15 a basket of matzah, loaves made of fine flour mixed with olive oil, unleavened wafers spread with olive oil, their grain offering and their drink offerings. 6:16 The cohen is to bring them before ADONAI, offer his sin offering, his burnt offering, 6:17 and his ram as a sacrifice of peace offerings to ADONAI, with the basket of matzah. The cohen will also offer the grain offering and drink offering that go with the peace offering. 6:18 The nazir will shave his consecrated head at the entrance to the tent of meeting, take the hair removed from his consecrated head and put it on the fire under the sacrifice of peace offerings.*

In the scriptures, there are only three people who are mentioned that became Nazir for life, they are Samson (*Judges 13:4*), Samuel (*1 Samuel 1:11*), and John the Baptist (*Luke 1:15*). Typically however the Nazir vow lasted between 30 and 100 days which symbolized a life devoted to HaShem and separated from all sin, a holy life.

If a Nazir fails to fulfill these three obligations there are consequences. All or part of the time/period of the vow may need to be repeated. The Nazir may be obligated to bring sacrifices such as is described in the following verses:

***Numbers 6:9-12***

*6:9 "If someone next to him dies very suddenly, so that he defiles his consecrated head, then he is to shave his head on the day of his purification; he is to shave it on the seventh day. 6:10 On the eighth day he is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the cohen at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 6:11 The cohen is to prepare one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering and thus make atonement for him, inasmuch as he sinned because of the dead person. That same day he is to re-consecrate his head; 6:12 he is to consecrate to ADONAI the full period of his being a nazir by bringing a male lam! b in its first year as a guilt offering. The previous days wil! l not be counted, because his consecration became defiled.*

Whether a Nazir is to repeat the time depends upon what part of the vow was transgressed. If the person becomes defiled by a corpse then he is to restart the entire Nazir period over again. For example, Queen Helena vowed to be a Nazir for seven years but became defiled twice near the end of her Nazir period forcing her to start over (*Mishneh Torah 6:1-3; Mishna Tractate Nazir 6:5*). This caused her to be a Nazir for a total of 21 years.

I believe the Nazir vow is a threefold representation of a believers life in Yeshua the Messiah in the following, (i) Sacrifice, (ii) shame, and (iii) separation.

**Sacrifice**

The first requirement of the Nazir vow was the observant person must not drink wine, grape juice, or eat anything which come from the vine. The symbology of yayin (wine) is quite broad in the scriptures. One of the symbols of the fruit of the vine in the Tanach is joy, such as the joy of the harvest.

***Psalms 4:7***

*4:7 You have filled my heart with more joy than all their grain and new wine. (CJB)*

***Psalms 78:65***

*78:65 Then Adonai awoke, as if from sleep, like a warrior shouting for joy from wine. (CJB)*

***Ecclesiastes 9:7***

*9:7 So go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God has already accepted your deeds. (CJB)*

This connects to the believer's life in the sense that he who separates himself to the service of Moshiach must be willing to give up the joys of his life for the sake of Yeshua. For example, *Luk9:23 Then to everyone he said, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him say 'No' to himself, take up his execution-stake daily and keep following me. (CJB)* To live a life that is pleasing to

HaShem, one that is in full service to Him, one must be willing to deny oneself of some of this earth's pleasures. Sinful pleasures certainly have to go, but HaShem may ask you to sacrifice something that may seem less important to you for His service. If you really want to serve Him, you have to be willing to sacrifice whatever he asks of you.

## Shame

The Nazir was not to cut his hair during the time of separation/vow. Depending upon the length of the vow, ones hair could become quite long. Something to take note of is what it says in 1 Corinthians 11:14:

### ***1 Corinthians 11:14***

*11:14 Doesn't the nature of things itself teach you that a man who wears his hair long degrades himself? (CJB)*

The vow of a Nazir runs the possibility that the hair would grow to a length that would be considered too long. Someone who has taken this upon himself demonstrates that he has conquered his pride. Likewise, as a believer in Yeshua, we must be willing to take this worlds scorn and shame for Yeshua Hamoshiach. The apostle Peter says: *1 Peter 4:13 Rather, to the extent that you share the fellowship of the Messiah's sufferings, rejoice; so that you will rejoice even more when his Sh'khinah is revealed. (CJB)* Therefore, true discipleship requires us to be willing to suffer shame for Yeshua's name.

## Separation

Finally, the vow to touch no dead body requires the Nazir to separate himself completely from death. Take note that this world is dead in trespasses and sins. In order to serve Adonai will all our hearts, all our strength, and all of our soul we must follow Yeshua in every area of our lives and turn our back upon the things of this world. To follow Yeshua Hamoshiach requires us to be separated from the deadness of this world. This is the very definition of holiness.

## Conclusion

You may never take the vow of a Nazir in your lifetime however; its requirements are a type and picture of the life of a believer in Yeshua Hamoshiach. What would G-d have you sacrifice to demonstrate His glory in your life? The pleasures of this world may bring you temporary joy, but the joy of obedience is even greater. What shame have you taken upon yourself for His name? The Torah has said time and time again, we are a people, holy and separated for G-d. May we all separate ourselves to be holy unto the Lord.

## Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever