

פרשיות נשא / Parashat Naso

Shabbat Sivan 14, 5769, June 6, 2009
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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The Heart and Mind of a Believer

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 4:21-7:89
הפטרה: Judges 13:2-13:25
הברית: Acts 21:17-26
החדשה

10 This week, I would like to take a closer look at the Hebrew text, its
organization and structure in sefer *Bamidbar / Numbers 6:1-27* which detail the
law of the Nazir (Nazirite) and ending with the Aaronic blessing. By looking at
the literary structure we will gain (i) insight on how we should be reading the
Bible, (ii) a deeper understanding on being a blessing, and (iii) the mindset/heart
15 we need to maintain while living for the Lord in his Mitzvot found in the Torah.

20 Within the legislation concerning the Nazir vow are references to meal
and drink offerings. (Note that *Bamidbar / Numbers 15* list the minutia on meal
and drink offerings and in our text this week there is only a reference made to the
meal/drink offerings.) The mere mention suggests that the details on the meal
offering must have been known or that the earlier parts of the text assume an
understanding of the later parts. This presents for us an interesting observation on
how Moshe laid out the text. Moshe understood the pattern in which HaShem
required and thus in the writing process placed some things within the text with
greater or lesser detail. This insight provides for us a textual basis that the books
25 of the Torah must be read in light of the whole for complete understanding. It is
not unusual for literature in general, including the Torah text to follow this kind of
literary technique. As we dig deeper into our analysis this week we will be
focusing upon the usage of the pronominal suffix, shown here in the meal
offerings.

30

Bamidbar / Numbers 6:15-17

35 *6:15 and a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and
unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and
their drink offering. 6:16 'Then the priest shall present them before the
Lord and shall offer his sin offering and his burnt offering. 6:17 'He shall
also offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord, together
with the basket of unleavened cakes; the priest shall likewise offer its
grain offering and its drink offering. (NASB)*

40 In the Hebrew text that follows, Moshe wrote the Torah using two types of
Hebrew Pronominal Suffixes which seem a bit confusing. The confusion results
from a comparison of *6:15* with that of *6:17*. The pronominal suffixes in *6:15*
are plural whereas in *6:17* they are singular. As you can see from the English

45 translation, the differences in the use of these suffixes leads one to assume the meal and drink offerings in 6:15 are indicative of something that follows all of the sacrifices. However, reading 6:17 the meal and drink offering appear to only be a part of the peace offering by the use of the possessive determiner “its” to associate possession to the peace offering “its grain offering and its drink offering.” The confusion occurs as a result of the purification offering because the purification offering is usually not followed by a meal or drink offering.

במדבר 6:12-27

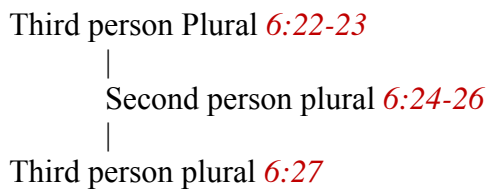
12 חָטָא עַל־הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְקָדַשׁ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא: וְהִזִּיר לַיהוָה אֶת־יָמָיו נִזְרוֹ וְהָבִיא כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ לְאַשָׁם וְהִנְמִים הָרֵאשִׁימִים יִפְלוּ כִּי טָמֵא נִזְרוֹ: וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הַנִּזְוֵר בַּיּוֹם מִלֵּאֵת יָמָיו נִזְרוֹ יָבִיא אֹתוֹ אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְהִקְרִיב אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ לַיהוָה כֶּבֶשׂ בֶּן־שָׁנָתוֹ תָּמִים אֶחָד לַעֲלֹה וְכִבְשֵׂה אֶחָת בַּת־שָׁנָתָהּ תָּמִימָה לְחִטָּאת וְאֵיל־אֶחָד תָּמִים לְשִׁלְמִים: וְסֵל מִצֹּאת סֹלֶת חֲלֵלָה בְּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן וְרִקְקֵי מִצֹּאת מִשְׁחִים בַּשֶּׁמֶן וּמִנְחָתָם וְנִסְפְּיָהֶם: וְהִקְרִיב הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־חֲטָאתוֹ וְאֶת־עֲלֹתוֹ: וְאֶת־הָאֵיל יַעֲשֵׂה זִבְח־שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה עַל סֵל הַמִּצֹּאת וַעֲשֵׂה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־מִנְחָתוֹ וְאֶת־נִסְבוֹ: וְגִלַּח הַנִּזְוֵר פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֶת־רֹאשׁ נִזְרוֹ וְלָקַח אֶת־שֵׁעַר רֹאשׁ נִזְרוֹ וְנָתַן עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תַּחַת זִבְח־הַשְּׁלָמִים: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַזֹּרֵעַ בְּשִׁלְהָ מִן־הָאֵיל וַיַּחֲלֵל מִצֵּה אֶחָת מִן־הַסֵּל וְרִקְקֵי מִצֵּה אֶחָד וְנָתַן עַל־כַּפְּי הַנִּזְוֵר אַחֲרֵי הַתְּנַלְחוֹ אֶת־נִזְרוֹ: וְהִנִּיף אוֹתָם הַכֹּהֵן וַתִּנּוּפֶה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לִפְנֵי עַל חוּהָ הַתְּנוּפֶה וְעַל שׂוֹק הַתְּרוּמָה וְאַחֲרַיִם יִשְׁתֶּה הַנִּזְוֵר יַיִן: וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הַנִּזְוֵר אֲשֶׁר יִדֹר קָרְבָּנוֹ לַיהוָה עַל־נִזְרוֹ מִלֵּבָד אֲשֶׁר־תִּשְׁנֶה יָדוֹ כִּפִּי נִדְרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִדֹר כֵּן יַעֲשֵׂה עַל תּוֹרַת נִזְרוֹ:

22 ׀ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו
 23 לֵאמֹר כֹּה תִּבְרַכּוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמוֹת לָהֶם:
 24 יִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:
 25 יֵאָר יְהוָה וּפָנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּחַנֶּךָ:
 26 יְהוָה וּפָנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֶׁם לָךְ שְׁלוֹם:
 27 וְשָׂמוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָנֹכִי אֲבָרְכֶם:

Bamidbar / Numbers 6:12-27
 6:12 and shall dedicate to the Lord his days as a Nazirite, and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering; but the former days will be void because his separation was defiled. 6:13 'Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall bring the offering to the doorway of the tent of meeting. 6:14 'He shall present his offering to the Lord: one male lamb a year old without defect for a burnt offering and one ewe-lamb a year old without defect for a sin offering and one ram without defect for a peace offering. 6:15 and a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and their drink offering. 6:16 'Then the priest shall present them before the Lord and shall offer his sin offering and his burnt offering. 6:17 'He shall also offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord, together with the basket of unleavened cakes; the priest shall likewise offer its grain offering and its drink offering. 6:18 'The Nazirite shall then shave his dedicated head of hair at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and take the dedicated hair of his head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. 6:19 'The priest shall take the ram's shoulder when it has been boiled, and one unleavened cake out of the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his dedicated hair. 6:20 'Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. It is holy for the priest, together with the breast offered by waving and the thigh offered by lifting up; and afterward the Nazirite may drink wine.' 6:21 'This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the Lord according to his separation, in addition to what else he can afford; according to his vow which he takes, so he shall do according to the law of his separation.' 6:22 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:23 'Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: 6:24 The Lord bless you, and keep you; 6:25 The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; 6:26 The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.' 6:27 'So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.' (NASB)

55 The use of the pronominal suffix may also provide for us further insight
on the Aaronic Blessing (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27*) which concludes the
section on the laws of the Nazir. (Note, the Aaronic blessing concludes the
section of Torah dealing with the bulk of Yisrael's priestly legislation and
60 implicitly promises that if the Torah is kept the blessing of HaShem will follow.)
Examining the Aaronic Blessing usage of the pronominal suffix here we find the
use of the third person masculine plural form where the blessing itself shifts to
second person masculine singular form in the middle. The construction of the
Aaronic Blessing is shown below.

65 Structure (literary form)



This type of struction isn't uncommon, the blessings in the Tanach vary
widely in their construction such as what we see here in the Aaronic blessing. For
75 example, many blessings use the second person masculine singular (see *Devarim /*
Deuteronomy 7:13-14, 28:3-6, and *1 Shmuel / Samuel 2:20*), others use the
second person masculine plural (see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:1, Yehoshua /*
Joshua 23, and *1 shmuel / Samuel 23:12*) and the third person masculine singular
(see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:8-11*). There is even a mix of second and third
80 persons as in our text this week *Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27* (see also *Devarim /*
Deuteronomy 33:24-25). Remember also that one needs to distinguish between
the blessings which call for future goodness and that which looks to the blessings
that presently exist (see *Tehilim / Psalms 1:1-2*). One should also distinguish
between the blessing in which HaShem is the giver of good gifts and the praise
85 speech in which he is the receiver of praise for those good gifts. HaShem is the
one who is able to bless his faithful people as is indicated in *6:22*. HaShem says
explicitly that "*I will bless them*" in *6:27*, and thus G-d is the source for all
blessings. This can be understood by the use of the pronominal suffix and
repetition found in the Aaronic blessing structure. Therefore, the Torah provides
90 for us a sort of literary relationship between HaShem and His blessing.

A biblical understanding on the basic meaning of "to bless" (לְבַרֵךְ) relates
to the ability to be fertile and abundant and there are many examples of this found
in the sacred text (the Bible). To bless and to be a blessing are one of the primary
95 points of interest found within the text of the bible. Therefore, the most important
lesson we can take away from this week's study is to understand the differences
between being blessed, being a blessing to others, and being a blessing unto G-d.

Today we understand what it means to be blessed by G-d. We can all
enumerate the various ways HaShem has blessed us in our daily lives. We also
understand what it means to be a blessing to others. There is quite a bit of
100 disagreement however on what it means to be a blessing to G-d. Just for example
the differences between the Messianic community (Torah plus grace) and the

Christian community (grace alone no Torah). There have been a lot of disagreements between these two groups on how to honor and obey G-d and this indeed is a very important topic. Following the Torah prescribed manner in which we should live our lives is directly related to our being a blessing to HaShem. There is a concern that I have though I have noticed amongst the Torah Messianic Communities where living the Torah has become something that is opposite of being a blessing to HaShem.

The concern I have is related to the motivation behind and attitudes for living the Torah. The tell tale sign of a corrupted mindset behind observing Torah is found in what is called “lashon harah” (evil speech) that follows many who claim to be followers of Yeshua and Torah observant. What is the reason one desires to follow the Torah? What are the motivating factors? What kind of attitude (heart) should one have for living according to the Torah? The kind of attitude I have seen in the Torah observant Messianic communities is the following:

Typical teaching attitudes

1. *“I am better than you because I observe the Torah and you don’t”*
2. *I observe Torah more rabbinic than you do and that is what is more correct.*
3. *I don’t believe you are saved because you don’t want to follow the Torah.*
4. *I believe those people who don’t follow Torah are going to hell.*
5. *I don’t have a problem judging someone’s salvation if they don’t want Torah they are not saved.*
6. *The church doesn’t do this; the church doesn’t do that (anti-church attitude).*

Have you heard these phrases before? A true teacher of G-d’s word should be instructing believers over the use of the Word of G-d and its application for our lives. Now you may be wondering “so what is the problem with church bashing?” The problem is the spirit and attitude that is being passed on to fellow congregants (believers) about our brothers and sisters in Yeshua the Messiah. The consistent bashing over the church’s lack of Torah observance has become evident to me and I am beginning to believe this is likely the result of a faulty hermeneutic in the Messianic community. The return to Torah and the beauty of a Torah life that has been experienced by numerous people and even by many who have no Jewish lineage should be the teaching objective and its relationship to Yeshua the Messiah. Discovering the biblical way of interpreting the Scriptures (hermeneutics) and addressing the conflicting “identity crisis” that follows from Christian and Messianic groups do indeed need to be addressed/considered but not with the centrality focusing upon the negative and

150 judgmental attitudes I have seen that are so prevalent today. Rather, we must see
ourselves as Jew or non-Jew, Christian or Messianic, as equal members in the
household of G-d for we are all adopted into His family. Our adoption is sealed
in the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of G-d, without blemish or spot. It is in Yeshua
that we find our way to the Father, whether Jew or non-Jew, Christian or
155 Messianic. Thus, we are established in the family of G-d by faith, through grace,
and it is HaShem's loving teaching of Torah that should be equally enjoyed by all
believers. We find our identity in HaShem's promises illustrated and sealed in
His Son (Yeshua), written on our hearts by His Holy Spirit, and lived out in His
Torah.

160 **Following the Torah should be motivated by a heartfelt
desire to know the heart and will of G-d and to be strengthened in
our faith to rely upon His sovereignty for the outcome of His will
in our lives.**

165 Have you seen this taught at your local Messianic congregation? Have I
seen this taught in the Messianic community? NO! Believe it or not I have
actually heard someone say: *"I know the Torah and you are stupid for not
knowing and obeying."* This is a serious problem in light of our understanding on
being a blessing to G-d. Do you feel you will control or even persuade HaShem
170 through your observance of Torah? If you survey the Tanach on the heart, all of
the occurrences in the Holy Scriptures on G-d "desiring mercy rather than
sacrifice" is the result of a heartfelt longing for closeness to the Lord being lost in
the people of G-d. Has it been lost again today? Do you stand secure in your
Torah observance or in the blood of Yeshua the Messiah?

175 **Conclusion**

180 Every believer in Yeshua the Messiah should follow G-d's ways for holy
living which are found in the Torah. Interestingly I am finding less and less
teaching on this and more and more complaining about those who don't follow
the Torah or those who refuse to follow the Torah because of their traditional
understanding of the Bible. There needs to be more teaching on what it means to
live for and being a blessing to G-d. It is time to stop judging, start loving, and
reaching out to others for the Word of G-d and most of all start teaching in love.
185 Reaching out in love and patience is the true mark of a follower of Yeshua the
Messiah. Remember and understand the meaning of "long suffering" for HaShem
is long suffering on our behalf. We too should be long suffering for our friends
and neighbors, brothers and sisters.

190 Heavenly Father,

I have had a real problem with attitudes of judgment towards others.
Human nature is always one which wants to look down on others, make myself
look better or feel better. I ask that you would take from me this human nature

195 and give to me your Spirit and help me to change my mind and attitudes to one of
love, patience, and kindness for others. Help me to be gentle in my approach to
teaching the Word of G-d to others. I thank you for all you have done for me, the
blessings and wonderful salvation you have provided in the blood of Yeshua the
Messiah. Help me to be a blessing to you and to others.

200 I pray all these things in Yeshua's name. Amen.

Final Thoughts

205 There are a couple of verses I feel are very pertinent to our discussion on
being a blessing to G-d and its relationship to the attitude or mindset of the
Messianic believer. Yeshua and John made some interesting comments drawing a
parallel between anger and murder. See the following verses.

210 ***Matthew 5:21-22***
*5:21 'You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit
murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 5:22
'But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be
215 guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-
nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You
fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. (NASB)*

220 ***1 John 3:15***
*3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no
murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (NASB)*

225 In the text of ***Matthew 5:21-22***, Yeshua draws a parallel between one who
commits murder being liable to the court, and one being angry with his brother
shall also be guilty before the court. What is most interesting is Yeshua saying
everyone being angry with his brother is liable to the court. What earthly court is
capable of judging a person's heart? Have you ever thought about that? Yeshua
further qualifies this at the end of ***Matthew 5:22*** saying one who says "you fool"
shall be guilty of hell fire. The point Yeshua was making is we are accountable to
230 a heavenly court based upon our thoughts and specifically being angry towards
others. John said in ***1 John 3:15*** everyone who hates his brother is a murder.
From these two sources in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) it is very
clear our attitudes are being watched and judged from heaven. Fostering an
attitude of hatred and anger towards the Christian church is harboring a spirit of
235 murder just as it is warned against here in the scriptural text. Could this
continuous attitude cause a person to be in danger of hell fire? One thing is for
sure, this kind of attitude is not honoring G-d in any way. The spirit of hatred /
murder is a very serious problem and will be judged by G-d. It is up to us today
whether we will humble ourselves and live by the leading of G-d's Ruach
240 HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) while teaching Torah, rather than via a spirit of murder.

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever