

While *פרשת נשא* contains several different themes, the *Haftorah* focuses on the topic of *Nezirut*, נזירות, specifically with the נזירות of Samson. What is the connection between *פרשת נשא* and Samson's נזירות?

Samson was a *Shofet*, one of the judges of Bnay Yisrael. He was the only judge of whom Hashem demanded נזירות. Not only was Samson forbidden to drink wine and eat unclean foods, his mother was forbidden to eat them as well throughout her pregnancy and birth of Samson, as Samson was to be a *Nazir* from conception, נזיר מבטן.

The Malbim comments that Manoach requested the angel return and instruct him what to do with the child that would be born to him. When Manoach's wife recounted her encounter with the angel, she only mentioned the restrictions placed on her that prohibited her to drink wine and consume grape derived products and to eat unclean (טמא) items. She did not mention the specific restrictions that applied to the child, for example that the child was forbidden to ever cut his hair. The angel returned and informed Manoach that the child was restricted from whatever he mentioned to his wife: to refrain from eating and drinking wine and grape products and unclean items and that the child shall never cut his hair. This last aspect was new to Manoach. He was now informed that the נזירות of Samson was distinct and unique from all other נזירות. A standard *Nazir* is restricted in 3 areas: drinking wine; defiling himself through touching an item that is טמא, e.g. touching a corpse, and cutting his hair. Samson was only forbidden to cut his hair and drink wine. Samson's נזירות was unique, making him unique as well, as he mentioned to Delilah that if his hair were to be cut he would lose his unique קדושה, sanctity, and be like any other man, without his special gifts and strength.

Why was Samson singled out as the only *Shofet* required to be a *Nazir* from cradle to grave? The answer lies in the analysis of the difference between Samson and the other Judges. All the other Judges, as well as the Kings of Israel and the High Priests, were sanctified with שמן המשחה, the special anointing oil, or when there was no שמן המשחה, they were consecrated through fulfilling the required tasks associated with their appointed roles, or in the case of the High Priest by putting on the additional garments of the *Kohen Gadol*. The Judges were characterized by leading the people in various campaigns and situations; however they were always joined by members of other tribes in their campaigns (for example, Gideon). The

participation of other tribes in their battles provided הסכם הצבור, an acknowledgement of their leadership as expressed by the people. This consecration via popular acclamation granted a certain sanctity to the *Shofet*.

Samson acted alone, without the help and assistance of his fellow Jews. What sanctified Samson and granted him his special status as Judge? What provided him with the special powers and abilities far beyond those of normal men to kill 10,000 Philistines at a time? It was his status as a *Nazir*, his hair that was unique and immediately recognizable, symbolic of his selection as *Shofet*, while simultaneously indicating his uniqueness as a *Shofet* who operated independently of the rest of the Jewish People.

It is noteworthy that when Samson revealed the source of his strength to Delilah, he mentioned that as a *Nazir* he was forbidden to cut his hair, and were he to cut his hair he would be rendered weak as a normal man. Why did Samson neglect to mention that as a *Nazir* he was also forbidden to drink wine? Because the hair of a *Nazir* is the central, obvious defining characteristic of his נזירות, as it says כי נזר אלקיו על ראשו. In fact, the hair of a *Nazir* who has completed his *Nezirut* is burned on the altar. It is forbidden to derive any benefit from it. That is why Samson told Delilah that his power derives from his hair as the symbol of his sanctity.

Jewish leaders of today must recognize this as well. They must appreciate and distinguish themselves through their unique sanctity. If one attempts to lead without appreciating this special sanctity, they become like Samson after his hair was cut. Samson went out to battle the Philistines as he always did, yet he did not realize that Hashem had left him. Leaders who have been successful in confronting our enemies, often forget that their mandate derives from a special sanctity. Failure on their part to maintain that sanctity, will lead to failure in their attempts to confront the Philistines of today.

In addition to his great strength, Samson possessed other gifts that enabled him to kill so many of his enemies. Apparently they were mesmerized by him and caught up in a panic that prevented them from escaping him. His mysterious spiritual power could be described as a magical aura that surrounded him in battle. The Philistines recognized that they were facing someone who possessed an

unidentifiable ability that went beyond great physical strength. The aura that surrounded him instilled fear and paralyzed his enemies. According to Chazal the secret of his aura was his נזירות as symbolized by his hair, כי נזר אלקיו על ראשו. The Philistines enlisted Delilah in an attempt to discover the secret of his aura, במה כחו גדול. Samson explained to Delilah that his hair is the secret through which he maintains the sanctity that makes him special, that makes him a *Shofet*. Without his hair he becomes like any other man, weak without the special aura that strikes fear in the heart of his enemies. Samson's hair functioned like the תפילין של ראש does for all Jews: וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ד' נקרא עליך ייראו ממך, And all the nations of the world shall see that the name of Hashem is upon you and they shall fear you.

The Rav noted that a similar paralysis was obvious in the 6 Day War in 1967, when the Arab armies were overcome by fear and fled in panic before the Israeli Army. This was a manifestation of the special sanctity that Bney Yisrael have. However if the leaders of the State of Israel transform it into a nation like all other nations of the world, they will relinquish the special sanctity that makes *Eretz Yisrael* unique and strikes fear in the hearts of our enemies.

One of the important messages in Parshas Naso is to be found in the verse ולבני קהת לא נתן כי עבודת הקדש עליהם בכתף ישאו. The children of Kehas were responsible for carrying the holy objects of the *Ohel Moed* on their shoulders. The power of the Jew rests in the fact that he is willing to carry the Holy Ark on his shoulders for all to see. This symbolizes the sanctity that is inherent in the Jewish People.

© Copyright 2019 Rabbi Josh Rapps. Permission to distribute this summary for individual use, with this notice, is granted. Distribution through electronic or printed media without the author's permission is prohibited.