

# Parsha Ponders

Nasso | June 13, 2024 | 8 Sivan 5784

## Nazirite novelties<sup>1</sup>

וזאת תורת הנזיר ביום מלאת ימי נזרו יביא אתו אל-פתח אהל מועד

This is the law of the Nazir on the day that he completes his Nazirite vow. He shall bring him to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting<sup>2</sup>

A Nazir is someone who takes a vow to refrain from consuming grape products, coming in contact with the dead, and from cutting their hair. Upon completion of their vow, which can be for as short or as long as they want, they bring offerings to the Temple and resume a normal life. The Torah describes the Nazir as *יביא אותו*, “he will bring him” to the Temple. Who is bringing whom? Rashi tells us<sup>3</sup> that in fact, the Nazir is to bring himself. This is one of the three times in the Torah that *אותו* is interpreted to mean oneself<sup>4</sup>. If that’s the intent, why did the Torah write it this way<sup>5</sup>? Why not just write that the Nazir will go to the Temple?

Perhaps the answer is based on a concept that a father can impose a Nazirite vow upon his son. This privilege even applies to a newborn baby<sup>6</sup>. An unspecified Nazirite vow lasts for thirty days. If so, it’s possible for a thirty-day baby to be obligated to go to the Temple and to bring offerings. Obviously, such a baby can’t bring themselves to the Temple. To account for this case, the Torah specifies that, “he will bring him”. Usually, it means the Nazir will bring himself, but it also means that the father will bring the son if he can’t bring himself. This would be the case of a baby Nazir.

Another question on this verse is why does it specify the *entrance* of the Tent of Meeting? Why not simply say that the Nazir is to go to the Tent of Meeting, a reference to the Temple? One could suggest an explanation based on a ruling of the Rambam<sup>7</sup>. The Torah states a prohibition against *Kohanim* going to the Temple with unkempt hair<sup>8</sup>. The Rambam extrapolates from this a prohibition upon all Jews from entering this way, due to the lack of reverence it shows<sup>9</sup>.

Now, an unspecified Nazir vow, as already stated, lasts thirty days. A Nazir doesn’t cut his hair, and that amount of time is already considered unkempt, forbidding entry to the Temple<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, the Torah couldn’t have written that the Nazir enters the Tent of Meeting. He’s not allowed to go there! The furthest he can go is the entrance, and once he’s there he can end his vow by bringing the requisite offerings<sup>11</sup>. Good Shabbos

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Ta’amah D’Kra to Numbers 6:13

<sup>2</sup> Numbers *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ad. loc.*, quoting Sifrei Bamidbar § 32 and Bamidbar Rabbah 10:17

<sup>4</sup> The other two times are Leviticus 22:16 regarding a non-Kohen eating *Terumah* and Deuteronomy 34:6 regarding Moshe burying himself. See Rashi to Deuteronomy, who brings a disputing opinion which says that Hashem buried Moshe

<sup>5</sup> This question is equally valid for the other two places

<sup>6</sup> See Mishneh Torah *Hilchos Nezirus* 2:13

<sup>7</sup> Mishneh Torah *Hilchos Bias Mikdash* 1:17

<sup>8</sup> Leviticus 10:6; Sefer HaMitzvos Lo Sa’aseh § 163

<sup>9</sup> See Kesef Mishnah *ad. loc.*

<sup>10</sup> Mishneh Torah *loc. cit.* § 11

<sup>11</sup> See the end of Ta’amah D’Kra, who discusses the case of a Nazir who became impure, and thus already shaved his head when he goes to the Temple. According to the above, the Torah should have said he go to the Tent of Meeting itself, and yet it says the entrance