



## Understanding the Parsha

### B'midbar 6:1-21

We will Learn how to

- 1) interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) make thematic connections to that Parsha (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.

## The Nazirite Vow

This week we will look into the seventh Parsha, a Parsha P'tuchah, Numbers 6:1-21. So, first, let's make our general outline of the Parsha. Read the indicated Scripture and write in the outline below

**Read Numbers 6:1-4**— Laws forbidding the f fruit of the v vine, whether grapes, raisins, new wine or old wine.

**Read Numbers 6:5**— Laws forbidding the s shaving of the h hair.

**Read Numbers 6:6-12**— Laws forbidding contact with the d dead and instructions to follow if one suddenly contacts the dead.

**Read Numbers 6:13-21**— Completion of the Nazirite v vow.

The Hebrew word for Nazirite is nazir, נָזִיר, which means to separate. This was a special vow of separation to Adonai. The vow could be for any amount of time; however the Mishnah ("Mishnah" the law which was handed down from person to person orally) specifies a minimum period of 30 days. [Mishnah Nazir 1:3.] We need to use thematic analysis in order to completely understand the purpose of the Nazirite vow. As we begin to do so, this instruction that seems strange to us will unfold into a beautiful illustration of the glory of Adonai.

**A. What passage, teaches about contact with the dead, and is thematically related to Numbers 6:6-12?**

Read Numbers 5:2 anyone who comes into contact with a C \_\_\_\_\_ must be put O \_\_\_\_\_ of the camp.

In Parashat Tazria (Leviticus 12:1-15:33), we learned that there were certain things that made a person ritually unclean or tamei (טמא). And, we learned that THE CORE ISSUE -(The most important part) taught by Leviticus is how one may draw near to Adonai. We already know that Israel HAD TO APPROACH ADONAI THROUGH BLOOD SACRIFICE.

The Hebrew word for offering is corban (קרבן).

This word, corban, is used many times throughout Parashat Vayikra. The root for the word offering/corban is קרב, which means coming near! That's right. Normally when we think of an offering, we think of the word sacrifice. The word sacrifice makes you think of giving up something of value. But this IS NOT the meaning of an offering presented in the Scriptures. As its root indicates, an offering is not about giving up something of value. An offering is about drawing nigh to Adonai! Lastly, we learned one becomes tamei, or ritually impure, by sinning (disobeying the commandments) or by coming into contact with DEATH or by some form of the loss of life. When one is tamei they cannot come into Adonai's holy presence. That is absolutely forbidden. You can only approach Adonai when you are ritually clean or tahor (טהור).

If you put this all together, you just learned that the Nazirite is someone who has taken a V \_\_\_\_\_ of separation in order to be C \_\_\_\_\_ to Adonai!

The thematic connections do not stop here, though. Read Numbers 6:6-8. Did you notice the wording of those sentences? Have you seen another passage similar in wording and content before?

Leviticus 21:10-12 says that the High Priest could not defile himself by contact with the d \_\_\_\_\_—not even for his father or mother.

Leviticus 21:10-12 clearly is thematically linked to the Nazirite vow! We know that the regular priests were not allowed to contact corpses; but, they were allowed to defile themselves for the sake of a close relative, like a father or mother. The High Priest, who had to keep a higher level of holiness than the other priests, were not even allowed to contact the corpse of mother or father.

What importance does this information have for the person who takes a Nazirite vow?

The Nazirite's S \_\_\_\_\_ is equal — in some manner— to the separation of the High Priest!





This teaching is very deep. A normal person can reach the holiness of the High Priest through the Nazirite vow. So, the Nazirite vow is very important!

Read Leviticus 21:10-12 again. What else in this passage is thematically related to the Nazirite vow?

The importance on the crown, or a anointing upon the v head!

Both passages emphasize **the head!** The High Priest has the “consecration of the anointing oil of his God” upon his head and the Nazirite has his hair as the “crown of his God” upon his head. So we see that the hair of the Nazirite is thematically connected to the anointing oil of Adonai on the High Priest.

Concerning the hair of the Nazirite, how else is it thematically related to the work of a priest?

In Leviticus 21:5-7, it says the priest is **not to** s shave h his h hair, as is the prohibition for the Nazirite!

Amazing! Do you see how the Torah has used these themes to connect the vow of the Nazirite to the priesthood, especially the work of the High Priest?

Read Numbers 6:2-4 and Leviticus 10:9. What is the thematic connection in these verses involving the priests?

None of the priests are supposed to d drink intoxicating liquor when they enter the Mishkan (Tabernacle).

Once again, the Torah intentionally relates the Nazirite to the priesthood!

What is the subject of the next few short Parshiot (verses)?

The priestly b blessing which is also called the Aaronic benediction!

Do you think it's a coincidence that the Parshiot concerning the Nazirite and the Priestly blessing are found next to each other? Of course not.

Read Numbers 6:13-21. Although many may think the lists of sacrifices listed in this passage are boring, those of you who are beginning to use thematic analysis will now understand how the number and types of sacrifices can be used to shed light on a passage.

We have come across many lists of sacrifices that were offered for different reasons; can you remember ever seeing a list of offerings similar to this one?

Exodus 29:1-37 lists the sacrifices the priests must offer during their C consecration. They

are almost identical to those offered by the Nazirite! Note: the High Priest had to offer animals that were more expensive than the Nazirite ( a bull for a sin offering as opposed to an ewe as a sin offering for the Nazirite). However, the types of sacrifices are the same.

Once again we see a connection between the Nazirite and the priesthood. **Yes Adonai, we get the message!**

### To Sum It Up

We have learned that the Nazirite V<sup>vow</sup> enabled the average Israelite to have a degree of holiness equal to the  
H<sup>High</sup> P<sup>Priest's</sup> 's.

Knowing these facts, we may also come to the conclusion that the Nazirite may have taken on some kind of intercessory role - like a High Priest would have (to pray on behalf of another before Adonai)?

The purpose of the V<sup>vow</sup> was so that the individual could draw C<sup>closer</sup> to Adonai during the period of S<sup>separation</sup>.

As you can see, thematic analysis helps us understand passages that might seem confusing. By making the thematic connections we can see the relationship between the Nazirite and the High Priest. Without thematic analysis we would never see the connection. **AND, we would not understand the wisdom Adonai has for us!** This method of connecting the Scriptures is intentional and represents the wisdom of our God!



### Can you find the words from this Parsha?

A N O I N T I N G V C H  
 A A M U R A T A R E O O  
 Y S T A R M N Z A A R W  
 A O Q S A E A I P R P I  
 K I H Y E I Z R E O E H  
 H N A V N I I A S M S E  
 E H A T W V R O H A T A  
 L H I B A A I P T I V D  
 S A K O R V T Y H K R A  
 N T E T D O E S I G I K  
 W I N E R O C R U S I R  
 S E P A R A T E R S E H

ANOINTING  
 VOW  
 HIGH PRIEST  
 NASO  
 DRAW NEAR  
 NAZIRITE  
 SHAVE  
 GRAPES  
 CORPSE  
 CORBAN  
 TAMEI  
 TAHOR  
 SEPARATE  
 NAZIR  
 HEAD  
 WINE