

[Tell a story](#)
Parsha and Haftara Nasso
by Julie Zhuk on 2023-06-03

[Comments](#)

Parsha Nasso

This parsha is about blessings, these blessings obviously are coming from G-d. The parsha mentions a term, Nazarite. There were a few people in biblical times who were a Nazarite, one of them was Samson and another was Samuel. Samson was a legendary Israelite warrior and judge, a member of the tribe of Dan, and a Nazirite. His immense physical strength, which he used for 20 years against the Philistines, derived from his uncut hair.

Samuel was born into being a Nazarite. Meaning he was not given the choice of this. Samuel's mother, Chana, was having a hard time having a child. She felt tormented, like most women it was what she desperately wanted. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the Lord for him." Baby Samuel lived with his family and they loved him very much. But when Samuel was old enough, Hannah made good on her promise to dedicate him to God. She took Samuel to the temple to live with the priests and Eli promised to take good care of him.

She prayed to G-d and said if she was to have a son, he would grow to be a Nazarite. The parsha talks about how things could have been different in his case had he been opposed to his mother's idea of him being a Nazarite. The parsha is focusing a lot on how parents can raise their children, to not have expectations of them to turn out to be or do something. The parsha does play devil's advocate in terms of Samuel growing up and not wanting to be a Nazarite in the first place.

The parsha asks readers on what basis did Chana take the liberty to swear her son's life to the idea of living a "proper life"? Chana understood the most important part of being a parent. The definition of parenting itself is one transmitting their values to their children. It says in the parsha that parents need to teach their children what they believe is important in life, otherwise children can learn these things elsewhere. In Judaism there is the concept of having "free choice." This means that parents have the responsibility to have a vision of their own values.

They take those values and transmit them to their children. When playing devil's advocate, the parsha highlights how children can make their own decisions, nothing is less tragic than that. In the long run, however parents raise their children, everything is up to G-d. The parsha wants us readers to walk away with one lesson from this story. Chana wasn't seeing things that were not there. She was aware it was out of her hands to force Samuel to become a nazir.

She knew when her son would grow up, he would become a nazir only if he wanted to become one. She still prayed to G-d and made a vow to train her son to become a Nazir. There is a message for parents in this Parsah, anything we do can only be controlled by our efforts. It can't be controlled by waiting for a set of results to come. From Chana, we learn that Torah is expecting us to put in the effort. Parents are not to make decisions for their children, but they do have a significant influence on their children. This significant influence that children get from their parents is important, they can use it when making their own decisions. Parents' influence helps children come up with their own decisions. Parents should try their best to raise children. In the process of raising children, parents should pray to G-d that whatever their method is!

Haftara Nasso

This week's parsha shared the story of Chana and her son Samuel who was a nazir. The haftara for this week comes from the book of Judges. The haftara is sharing the story of another prophet named Shimshon. The english translation for that name is Samson. He was known to be a lifetime nazirite. This week's haftara discusses all of the laws that pertain to being a nazirite. Just like Samuel's parents, Samson's parents were childless. They were known as Manoah and his wife, Tzlalponis. We find out her name from the Talmud. Manoah was from the Tribe of Dan. Being childless for years, one day there was an angel that came to Manoah's wife. The angel had news that she would become pregnant. The angel instructed Manoah's wife that the child would become a nazir.

Not only did the laws of being a nazir apply to a nazir, but also Manoah's wife. Considering she was going to be the one carrying him, she too had to stay away from specific foods and wine. Wine was considered ritually impure and she had to do this to stay pure. Women learn from this haftara how important it is to have high standards with keeping kosher. This applies to women who are pregnant. This way the baby has a holy spiritual advantage. A nazir also had to stay away from anything that was considered ritually impure. The angel told Manoah's wife that her future child would play a special role for the Jewish people. He would be the one to save them from the Philistine oppression that they were enduring.

Manoah ran over to the field where her husband was working. She was so excited and shared the news with him. Manoah was a bit jealous because the angel had come to speak to his wife and not him. Manoah felt he was the man of the house and asked G-d to send the messenger again to speak to him. G-d sent the angel and he repeated the same instructions. Manoah and his wife were so grateful to this angel, for bringing such joyous news. The couple decided to invite the angel to their home and share some of their food with him. They were prepared to cook up a meal for the angel, but the angel declined their invitation. The angel encouraged Manoah to offer a goat to G-d instead of trying to feed him. The angel suggested Manoah to slaughter a goat and give it up as a meal offering to G-d.

After sharing the instructions to the couple, the angel went back up to Heaven. He didn't just go up, he went up in a flame that devoured the sacrifice the goat. The couple witnessed the angel going up. Manoah believed they had seen G-d. Manoah caused them to believe they were for sure going to die. His wife, Tzlalponis disagreed. She went on to say that G-d would not have shown them all of these things through the angel. Furthermore, G-d wouldn't have allowed them to hear things like these.

From this reading, it seems Manoah was more on the nervous side. His wife, we sense had a bit more confidence within her. She was more confident than her husband that they had done everything G-d wanted of them. The haftara ends with Manoah's wife giving birth to a son and they named him Samson. As he grew up, G-d blessed him.