

Candlelight time 8:38, Sabbath ends 9:31

Scriptural Reading for Saturday

morning, June 5:

NASO: Numbers 4:21 — 7:89

HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

*THOUGHT OF THE WEEK: The "nazir" of Scripture (Nu. 6:1-21) is one who, by vow to God, distinguishes himself in behavior. He lets his hair grow uncut; he abstains from any intoxicants or vine products; he observes priestly rules of physical cleanliness ("tohora"). Apart from these three restrictions concerning his appearance, sobriety and mindfulness, the biblical nazirite is definitely no hermit or abstinent. He is involved in society, indulges in all its pleasures and certainly maintains family life. Asceticism, as a rule, is no virtue in Judaism. Saintliness is attained not by renouncing the world but rather perfecting it. The Torah, considering man's need to dramatize his religious feelings of remorse, gratitude or piety, prescribed the nazirite code, a modified way of voluntary abstention. But, as the talmud indicates, "man is held accountable for each enjoyment in this world he has declined." (Yerushalmi, Kidushin 4:12). Man's withdrawal from positive living is considered his defect. "He who detests good life in this world betrays a bad trait of ingratitude. He shows disregard for God's Creation, His care and generosity." (Seder Eliyahu Raba 15).*

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

Candlelight time 8:40 Sabbath ends 9:34

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 9:

NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89

HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

### Thought of the Week

• By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

*THE BIBLICAL NAZARITE ("nazir," Nu. 6:1-21) is one who, by vow to God, distinguishes himself in behavior: 1) lets his hair grow uncut; 2) abstains from any intoxicants or wine products; and 3) observes priestly rules of physical cleanliness ("tohora"). Apart from these three restrictions - concerning his appearance, sobriety and mindfulness - the nazir is involved in society, indulges in all its rightful pleasures and maintains normal family life. Saintliness and Judaism is attained by perfecting this world, rather than by renouncing it. Torah, however, allows man to demonstrate his religious feelings of remorse, gratitude and piety by the prescribed Nazarite Code - a modified way of voluntary abstention. But, as a rule, "Man is held accountable for each pleasure due him in this world that he failed to enjoy" (Talmud). Man is taught by Torah to enjoy life and show regard for this world and its Creator.*

Candlelight time 8:35 Sabbath ends 9:29

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 1:

NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89

HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

### ***Thought of the Week***

**By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda**

..CARRYING THE TABERNACLE during Israel's wandering in the desert was the task of the three Levite families: The Gershonites were assigned "the curtains, hangings and coverings;" the Merarites "the boards, posts and sockets;" and the Kohathites "the vessels of holiness: the Ark, Table, Menorah and the altars." In order to help the Levites in their load, the 12 tribal leaders presented a special gift (Num, 7:3): "Six covered wagons and 12 oxen." Instructed by God to accept this gift and allot it to the three Levite families, "each according to its task," Moses gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonites and four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarites (their load being twice as heavy as the former's). To the Kohathites, however, Moses gave none (v.9), "for theirs is the task of holiness - by shoulder let them carry!" Vessels of holiness are in fact heavy; but the spiritual zeal of their carriers endows them with added physical strength. The end provides for its means. The great goal engenders the power to pursue it and the ability to reach it. So says the Talmud (Sota 35a): "The Ark upholds its upholders."

**Candlelight time 8:28 Sabbath ends 9:22**

**Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, May 24:**

**NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89**

**HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25**

## ***Thought of the Week***

**By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda**

**THE JOY OF LIVING** is the heart of worship in Judaism. The ideal way is (Deut. 28:47) "with joyfulness and gladness of heart." Sadness and gloom are sinful and detrimental; and they spell destruction and doom and prevent Divine inspiration and spiritual growth. Only through the dynamics of positive and fulfilling living, man clings to God. By enjoying the plenty and beauty, the blessedness and splendor of the constantly renewed Creation, man joins in the constant adoration and glorification of the Creator. Man must not deny himself the delights and blessings of living, but enjoy them, rejoice in them and be grateful: "Man is held accountable for all the good things which his eyes behold but (of which) he refuses to partake." (Talmud Y.). The Nazarite, therefore, who abstains from wine, must atone (Nu. 6:11) "for mistreating himself;" for denying his "nefresh" (body-and-soul) innocent and rightful pleasures. Torah's way is not ignoring or transcending life, but enjoying and sanctifying it. Through the reality of living and with the entirety of being, man seeks and reveals divinity – man worships God.

**Candlelight time 8:28 . Sabbath ends 9:22**

**Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, May 24:**

**NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89**

**HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25**

**Memorial day, Monday, May 26**

## **Thought of the Week**

**By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda**

### **JEALOUSY IN LOVE—A VIRTUE OR A FLAW?**

The emotion of jealousy, which drives a husband to suspect his wife and curtail her movements, is called by Torah (Nu. 5:14) "ruach kinah"—a spirit of jealousy. No husband acts this way, concludes Rabbi Ishmael, unless he is imbued with a "spirit." What kind of a "spirit?" This was debated in the talmudic academy of Rav Ashi in Babylon (Sura; 4th-5th c. C.E.). The students insisted it is a "spirit of impurity;" marital jealousy reflects a mistrustful and accusatory attitude and, in turn, inflames mutual rage and spitefulness between the spouses. The Master, however, disagreed: It is the "spirit of purity" that prompts jealousy and evokes genuine indignation against indecency. The view of the master, Rav Ashi, prevails in Jewish ethics (TB Sota 3a; Maimonides Sota 4:18). Nevertheless, this can be carried to excess. Obsessive jealousy, which reflects a sense of possessiveness and disrespect for the spouse as a free person, is condemned by the Rabbis (TB Gittin 90b). Rabbi Meir (2nd c. C.E.) mentions the notorious Pappus ben Yehuda as a deplorable case. So suspicious was Pappus of his wife that he would not leave her alone at home without locking the door. This is ridiculed as being both pedantic and futile.

## Thought of the Week

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By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

TO OFFEND PEOPLE IS TO OFFEND GOD (Nu. 5:6) After his affair with Bathsheba, and the pursuant rebuke of Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 12:1), David, King and Psalmist, confessed before God (Ps. 51:6): "Against You alone, I have transgressed!" Is that so? Assuming he felt he didn't hurt the woman, didn't he realize he killed her husband?

David did acknowledge that; but, in his appeal for forgiveness, he saw in his act an offense against God — Whose law he defied (Rashi). It is possible to transgress against God without offending people! But not the reverse. Offending a person defies God's law, and violates the divine image inherent in every human being.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

NASO

June 20, 1986

OFFENDING PEOPLE AND OFFENDING GOD (Nu. 5:6): In reality the two are almost always intertwined. After his affair with Bathsheba, and the pursuant rebuke of Nathan the prophet (II Sam. 12:1), David, King and Psalmist, confessed before God (Ps. 51:6): "Against You alone have I transgressed!" Is that so? Say he felt he didn't hurt the woman; didn't he realize he murdered her husband?!

David did; but having acknowledged his deplorable conduct, he saw in it ultimately an offence against God -- Whose law he defied (Rashi). It is possible to transgress against God, without offending people! But not the reverse. Any offence against a person is an offence against God. Every person represents divinity.

## Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

PERSONAL GROWTH is the idea implicit in the biblical verb "naso" (Numbers 4:22). This word, used for taking a census of people, literally means to raise up, to elevate the dignity and quality of the people. Human beings are not to be reckoned as static objects; the Torah esteems each individual as a dynamically growing person. A person who does not improve, our Sages teach, declines. No person can passively retain his status quo, physically as well as spiritually; he either progresses or regresses. To be human is to advance, make strides, go forward, move ahead—grow. A person must always be open to learn, constantly cultivate his knowledge and refine his conduct. In order to stay *good*, you must do *better*. You cannot expect to remain a good Jew or a good person, unless you diligently work to become a better Jew and a better person.

**Candlelight time 8:38 Sabbath ends 9:31**

**Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 5:**

**NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89**

**HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25**

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, May 23:  
PSALM: Numbers 4:21-7:89  
AFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

## Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

PLEASURE – the human quality to enjoy and appreciate the gifts of life – is a virtue. The misuse and denial of pleasure are faults. Rav and Sheumuel (3rd c.), founders of the Talmud, denounced asceticism. Rav (TY Kid. 4:12): “Man must account before God for any enjoyment in this world he declined.” Shemuel (TB Eru. 54a): “Hurry and feast, for this world is like a fleeting banquet-hall.” The biblical Nazarite (Nu. 6:1f) did not deny himself the pleasure of woman, only of wine. Yet, for this self-denial, he is condemned as “hoteh” (v. 11), as being “at fault,” since he “missed” the purpose of God’s creation by rejecting a pleasure which, if used moderately, is beneficial and delightful. (TB Ta. 11a). Self-denial is often a form of escape from responsibility. Abstinence is an ungrateful response to God’s bounty and goodness. Kohelet, who deems everything under the sun futile, nonetheless claims that man’s ability to enjoy life “is a gift from God” (3:12). “Human pleasures are sparks of God’s love (Hassidut). Divine love must not be rejected, but embraced with human gratitude.

## Thought of the Week

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By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

**BIRKAT KOHANIM (Priestly Blessing; Nu. 6:22-27):**

(a) May the Lord bless you and protect you.

(b) May the Lord illuminate His face toward you, and grant you grace.

(c) May the Lord elevate His face toward you, and grant you *Shalom*.

Daily recited by the *kohanim* (priests) in the Temple, this Triple Blessing begins and ends with the social greetings common in biblical times. The greeting "May the Lord be with you!" would be answered with "May the Lord bless you!" (Ruth). The greeting *Shalom* – peace, fulfillment, wholeness – is to this day the most common greeting in Hebrew. The Priestly Blessing uses the metaphor of God's "face" to indicate His Presence: God will reveal ("illuminate") and enhance ("elevate") His care for you. This imagery conveys the idea of God "facing" humanity, in tender love.

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Candlelight time 8:35 Sabbath ends 9:40  
Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 1:  
NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89  
HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

**RABBI ZVI YEHUDA****BIRKAT KOHANIM**  
(The Priestly Blessing):*May the Lord bless you  
and watch over you;**May the Lord illuminate**His face for you and grant  
you grace;**May the Lord elevate  
His face for you and grant  
you Shalom.*

This blessing (Numbers 6:22-17) was proclaimed daily in the ancient Temple by the *kohanim* (priests). It begins and ends with common biblical greetings. Its beginning, "May the Lord bless you," was the social greeting when people would meet each other; and the single noun "Shalom" is, to this day, the most powerful and all-inclusive greeting in Hebrew. The word means peace, fulfillment and wholeness. The blessing uses the metaphor of God's "face" to indicate Divine Presence and providence. This imagery conveys the idea of God "facing" humanity, in loving care. The phrases, God will "illuminate" and "elevate" His face, means that God will reveal and enhance His care. The blessing ends with Shalom, which is the seal and epitome of all blessings.



## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

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### RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

BIRKAT KOHANIM (the priestly blessing; Nu. 6:22-27):

*May Hashem bless you and watch over you;*

*May Hashem reveal His care for you and be gracious to you;*

*May Hashem enhance His care for you and grant you shalom.*

Daily proclaimed by the *kohanim* (priests) in the ancient Temple, this blessing begins and ends with common social greetings.

Its beginning, "May Hashem bless you," was the social greeting in biblical times (Ruth 2:4), and *shalom* continues to serve to this day as an all-inclusive greet-

ing in Hebrew, conveying the multifaceted message of peace, fulfillment and wholeness.

The blessing consists of three lines, each starting with a verb followed by the subject (God; Hashem). The number of Hebrew words in each line grows incrementally from three to five to seven. The three verbs initiating each line are all propitious ones relating to blessing, illumination and elevation (*yevarekh; ya'er, yisa*). The last two lines use the idiom of "God's face" as a metaphor for divine care. This imagery conveys the idea of God "facing" humanity in loving attention and recognition. That God will "illuminate" and "elevate" His "face" means that God will reveal and enhance divine care and protection.

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Friday, June 16, 1989

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## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

BIRKAT KOHANIM, THE PRIESTLY BLESSING  
(NU. 6:22-27):

May *Hashem* bless you  
and watch over you.

May *Hashem* illuminate His Face toward you  
and grant you grace.

May *Hashem* elevate His Face toward you  
and grant you *Shalom*.

The blessing begins with a customary greeting in antiquity, "May *Hashem* bless you." The metaphor "His Face" (in the blessing's second and third parts) refers to God's presence, providence, protection and favor. The imagery conveys the idea of God "facing" humanity in loving care. The verbs "illuminate" and "elevate" with regard to "His Face" mean respectively that God will reveal and enhance His Presence.

The blessing was recited daily by the *kohanim* (priests) in the ancient Temple. As it starts with a greeting, so it concludes with *Shalom*, the most common, all-inclusive wish in Hebrew. *Shalom* means peace, fulfillment, and wholeness.

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## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

**NASO**

For Shabbat of June 10, 1995

***BIRKAT KOHANIM*** (the Priestly Blessing; Nu. 6:22-27):

God will bless you and watch over you;

God will reveal His "face" (care) for you and be gracious to you;

God will enhance His "face" (care) for you and grant you *shalom*.

This quintessential blessing, daily proclaimed by the *kohanim* (priests) in the ancient Temple, begins and ends with common social greetings. Its beginning, "God will bless you," was the customary social greeting in biblical times (Ruth 2:4). Its conclusion, *shalom*, continues to serve as the all-inclusive social greeting in Hebrew to this day. The word *shalom* conveys the multifaceted message of peace, fulfillment, and wholeness.

The Priestly Blessing consists of 3 lines. Each line in the original starts with the verb followed by the Subject (God; *Hashem*). The number of Hebrew words in each line grows incrementally from 3 to 5 to 7, all symbolically sacred numbers. The three verbs initiating each line are all propitious, relating to blessing, illumination, and elevation (*yevarekhekha; ya'er; yisa*). The last 2 lines use the idiom of God's "face" as metaphor for divine care. This imagery conveys the idea of God "facing" humanity in loving attention and recognition. The expressions that God will "illuminate" and "elevate" the Divine "face" mean that God will reveal and enhance divine care and protection.

## Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

**BIRKAT KOHANIM, The Priestly Blessing (Nu. 6:22-27):**

*May the Lord bless you and watch over you;*

*May the Lord reveal His care for you  
and grant you grace;*

*May the Lord enhance His care for you  
and grant you Shalom.*

Daily proclaimed by *kohanim* (priests) in the Temple, this blessing begins and ends with greetings. Its beginning was the social greeting in biblical times; and *Shalom*, to this day, is the most powerful and all-inclusive greeting in Hebrew; meaning peace, fulfillment, and wholeness. The blessing metaphorically uses the idiom God's "face" to indicate His Presence. This imagery conveys the idea of God "facing" humanity, in loving care. Literally, God will "illuminate" (*yaer*) and "elevate" (*Yisa*) His face, means: He will reveal and enhance His care.

**Candlelight time 8:36 Sabbath ends 9:29**

**Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 2:**

**NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89**

**HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25**

**Rosh Hodesh Sivan - Friday, June 1**

**Shavuot: June 6 and 7**

## Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE PRIESTLY BENEDICTION ("birkat kohanim") was pronounced in the ancient Temple twice a day, morning and evening, by the kohanim (descendants of Aaron). They would ascend a platform ("dukhan;" hence the Yiddish term "dukhenen"), raise their hands (as in Leviticus 9:22; hence the Hebrew term 'nesiat kapaim,' raising the hands), and recite before the assembled people the triple formula (prescribed in Numbers 6:24-26) in which God is beseeched to bless the people with protection, grace and peace. The underlying idea of this ceremony is the utter rejection of any presumed priestly power. Let not the people think that their blessings depend on the priests, nor the priests pretend that they are the dispensers of blessings to the people. God alone is Source of all blessings. When reciting the priestly benediction in the synagogue (daily in Israel) on the festivals in the Diaspora), the kohanim repeat it word for word after the Hazzan, a symbolic indication that the blessings do not originate from them.

Candlelight time 8:44 Sabbath ends 9:38  
Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 17:  
NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89

JUNE 12, 1976

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning

NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89

HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25

### **Thought of the Week**

**By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda**

SHALOM, which means both peace and completeness, is central in the Jewish ethos. A common everyday greeting, the word is also considered a reverent name of God; it is therefore not permitted to say "shalom" in an unseemly place or situation (for example, in a locker room or a bathhouse). Shalom concludes the most sublime prayer in Scripture, "birkat kohanim" (Priestly Blessing; Num. 6:26), as well as the most authoritative code of oral law, the Mishnah (Ukzim 3:12). The whole Torah is for the sake of "darkei shalom," establishing ways for peace (Gitin 59b). God found no better vehicle for maintaining success and affluence than shalom. Shalom is not only a lofty prophetic aspiration but also a concrete, mundane human duty, a moral criterion for daily conduct and social interaction. Shalom is considered in Judaism not as a utopian ideal to be realized by supernatural Divine interference, but rather as an attainable goal to be achieved by human endeavor and investment. Man is called upon to be a "rodef shalom," a pursuer of peace: "Seek peace and pursue it."

Friday, June 1, 1990 CI

## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

**SAMSON-DELILAH AND RUTH-BOAZ:** The two stories share one theme – romantic love between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. The contrast between the two, however, is striking. Delilah the Philistine remained within her people and culture; Ruth the Moabite left her people and culture and joined Judaism. Delilah became the model of a seductive and destructive woman; Ruth of a kind and loyal woman. The Samson-Delilah affair, a bond of compulsive lust, was doomed from the start. The Ruth-Boaz relationship, a culmination of genuine devotion, was destined to be the root of royalty (King David). Samson, attracted to Delilah's beauty, followed his eyes and ended up losing them – his moral sightlessness leading to his physical blindness (*Mishna Sota 1.7*).

## Thought of the Week

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By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE ROMANCES OF SAMSON-DELILAH AND RUTH-BOAZ represent involvement between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. Ruth the Moabite joins the people and culture of her lover; Delilah the Philistine remains part of her people and culture. Ruth emerges as the model of the kind and loyal proselyte; Delilah the model of the seductive, destructive enemy.

The union between Ruth and Boaz led to the birth of the royal dynasty of David. But the entanglement between Samson and Delilah, a bond of compulsive lust, was doomed to catastrophe. Stunned by the Philistine beauty, Samson "followed his eyes" pursuing her; ironically, the Philistine "plucked his eyes" (*Mishna Sota* 1:7). Unable to live with the Philistines, Samson committed his suicidal heroism — killing himself together with them.

## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

### RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

**SAMSON-DELILAH AND RUTH-BOAZ:** The two stories share one theme: romantic love between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. The contrast between the two, however, is striking. Delilah, the Philistine, remained within her people and culture. Ruth the Moabite left her people and culture and joined Judaism. Delilah became the model of a seductive and destructive woman; Ruth of a kind and loyal woman. The Samson-Delilah affair, a bond of compulsive lust, was doomed from the start. The Ruth-Boaz relationship, a culmination of genuine devotion, was destined to be the root of royalty (King David). Samson, attracted to Delilah's beauty, followed his eyes and ended up losing them – his moral sightlessness leading to his physical blindness (*Mishna Sota* 1:7).

Ruth, on the other hand, was attracted to her deceased Jewish husband's way of life. Childless, she still clung to her bereft mother-in-law (Ruth 1:16-17): "Entreat me not to leave you and to refrain from joining you! For wherever you go, I go;

wherever you stay, I stay. Your people is my people and your God, my God. Wherever you die, I will die; and there will be buried. So I pledge: Nothing but death will separate me from you!"

Ruth thus became the example of a true *gera* (proselyte): A person who joins Judaism with complete love and loyalty.

After his affair with Bathsheba and the pursuant rebuke of Nathan the prophet (II Sam 12:1), David, king and psalmist, confessed before God (Ps. 51:6): "Against You alone, I have transgressed!"

"Is that so?" asks Nathan. "Assuming he did not hurt the woman; didn't he kill her man?"

David did acknowledge the latter but he saw in his act an offense against God, "whose law he defied" (*Rashi*). It is possible to transgress against God without offending people, but not the reverse. Offending a person defies God's law and violates the Divine image inherent in every human being. To offend people is always to offend God (Nu. 5:6).

## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

### **RABBI ZVI YEHUDA**

**TWO BIBLICAL "INTERMARRIAGES" – Samson and Delilah versus Ruth and Boaz:** These two biblical romances represent involvement between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. But the difference between the two is striking. Delilah stayed within her Philistine people. She did not join Samson; he followed her.

Ruth, in contrast, left her Moabite people. She clung to her late husband's culture and committed herself to build a new life with Boaz in Israel. Delilah became the model of a seductive and destructive woman; Ruth, of a kind and loyal woman. Samson and Delilah's relationship was doomed from the start. Ruth and Boaz's union was a culmination of pure devotion and love.

The relationship between Samson and Delilah was one of compulsive lust. Samson "followed

(that which appealed to ) his eyes" (Mishna Sota 1:7). Ruth, on the other hand, was attracted to the way of life of her deceased Jewish husband. Widowed and childless, she still clung to her bereft mother-in-law, entreating her (Ruth 1:16-17): "Do not urge me to leave you and refrain from joining you! For wherever you go, I go; wherever you stay, I stay."

Ruth, thus, became the pristine example of a true *ger* or *giyoret*: a person who joins Judaism with complete love and loyalty. The Ruth and Boaz bond became a blessing, the root of the David dynasty, the foundation of Jewish royalty and messianic aspiration.

Samson is destroyed by Delilah; Ruth, as she pledged, built her home with Boaz and his people. Samson, as he pledged, "died with the Philistines" – the people of Delilah.

## THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

### **RABBI ZVI YEHUDA**

THE TWO STORIES of Samson and Delilah (in Judges) and of Ruth and Boaz (in the Scroll) share a theme: Romantic love between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. However, the contrast between the two situations is striking. Delilah the Philistine remained with her people and culture and did not join Samson's. Ruth the Moabite left her people and culture and joined her husband's. The first woman, Delilah, became a model of a seductive and destructive woman. The second, Ruth, became a role model of a kind and loyal woman. The first relationship, of Samson and Delilah, was doomed from the start to catastrophe. The second, of Ruth and Boaz, was a culmination of devotion and love, and became the source of royalty – David the King of Israel.

The relationship between Samson and Delilah was one of compulsive lust. Attracted by her beauty, Samson "followed (what appealed to) his

eyes" (Mishna Sota 1:7). Ruth, on the other hand, was attracted to the way of life of her deceased Jewish husband. Widowed and childless, she still clung to her mother-in-law, entreating her (Ruth 1:16-17):

*Do not urge me to leave you and refrain from joining you, for*

*Wherever you go, I go;*

*Wherever you stay, I stay.*

*Your people is my people;*

*And your God, my God.*

*Wherever you die, I will die,*

*And there be buried.*

*So I pledge: Nothing but death*

*Will separate me from you!*

Ruth thus became the example of a true *ger* or *gera* (proselyte): a person who joins Judaism with complete love and loyalty.

## Thought of the Week

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By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE ROMANCES OF SAMSON-DELILAH AND RUTH-BOAZ represent involvement between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. Ruth the Moabite joins the people and culture of her lover; Delilah the Philistine remains part of her people and culture. Ruth emerges as the model of the kind and loyal proselyte; Delilah the model of the seductive, destructive enemy.

The union between Ruth and Boaz led to the birth of the royal dynasty of David. But the entanglement between Samson and Delilah, a bond of compulsive lust, was doomed to catastrophe. Stunned by the Philistine beauty, Samson "followed his eyes" pursuing her; ironically, the Philistine "plucked his eyes" (*Mishna Sota* 1:7). Unable to live with the Philistines, Samson committed his suicidal heroism — killing himself together with them.

## Thought of the Week

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By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

ROMANCE between a Jewish man and a Gentile woman is the theme of two biblical stories: Samson and Delilah; Boaz and Ruth. The former tells of compulsive lust based on physical attraction; the latter of gentle love forged by devotion and kindness. Involved with Samson, Delilah the Philistine remains part of her people; in contrast, Ruth the Moabite clings to the people of Boaz. Delilah emerges as a beguiling temptress; Ruth as a model of the true proselyte. Samson is destroyed by Delilah; Ruth and Boaz build together a family of royalty.

Ironically, Ruth -- who pledged "nothing but death will separate me from you!" -- happily lived with Boaz and his people. Samson, as he pledged, "died with the Philistines" -- the people of Delilah.

**Thought of the Week****Rabbi Zvi Yehuda****NASO**

May 24, 1991

**SAMSON AND DELILAH VERSUS RUTH AND BOAZ:** The two biblical stories share a common theme: Romance between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. But the difference between the two situations is striking. Delilah stayed within her Philistine people. She did not join Samson; he followed her. Ruth, in contrast, left her Moabite people. She clung to her late husband's culture and committed herself to build a new life with Boaz in Israel. Based on sheer lust, the Samson and Delilah affair was doomed from the start. A culmination of pure devotion and love, the Ruth and Boaz bond became a blessing, the root of the Davidic dynasty, the foundation of Jewish royalty and messianic aspiration.

While Delilah is an example of a seductive and destructive woman, Ruth is a model of a kind and loyal person. An enduring symbol of true loyalty and devotion.

## Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE STORIES of Samson and Delilah and of Ruth and Boaz share one theme: Romantic bond between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. The contrast, however, between the two situations is striking. Delilah the Philistine remained within her people and culture, and did not join Samson's. Theirs was a bond of impulsive lust; attracted to her beauty, Samson "followed what appealed to his eyes." Ruth the Moabite, on the other hand, was attracted to the way of life of her deceased Jewish husband. Widowed and childless, she still clung to her bereft mother-in-law, entreating her on her way from Moab to Judea (1:16-17): "Do not ask me to leave you and not join you! Wherever you go, I go; wherever you stay, I stay. Your people is my people, and your God my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there be buried. I pledge: nothing but death will separate me from you!" Ruth thus became the model of a person who joins Judaism with complete love and loyalty.

**Candlelight time 8:25 Sabbath ends 9:19**  
**Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, May 21:**  
**NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89**  
**HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25**

## **Thought of the Week**

**By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda**

**SAMSON** (Shimshon; Judges 13-16) appears to be one of the most colorful and fascinating, tragicomic and pathetic biblical heroes. Reckoned as one of the Shofetim (so-called Judges), he flourishes in the Shephelah on the border between Judea and Philistia at about the end of the 12th century B.C.E. A shofet during that period is not really a judge in the current sense; rather he is a gifted and inspired politico-military leader engaged in delivering his people from oppression and attack. A shofet (he who protects) is indeed the people's defender. As such Samson was destined to "start to rescue Israel from the hands of the Philistines" (13.5). This he certainly did; but unlike the other defenders (in Hebrew, shofetim) he fell into enemy hands, was blinded and imprisoned, ridiculed and tortured, and finally died an avenger and martyr in a splendidly valiant act of suicide, thus killing in his death more of the enemy than during his entire lifetime. A lustful Nazirite (Jewish ascetic), betrayed lover, lonely warrior, gullible strongman, Samson ended up being abused and subdued by Delilah, the Philistine woman he loved and trusted, who handed him over to his enemy. Samson left behind him a heartening legacy of unselfish and unremitting struggle against the adversaries of his people.

**Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 9:**

**..NASO: Numbers 4:21-7:89**

**..HAFTARAH: Judges 13:2-25**