

life, the implications of which were not realized by those taking them. The widespread corruption of medieval monasticism was a natural result. God desires most of His people to live normal lives.

a. The requirements of the Nazarite vow (6:1-8)

Verse 2 points out the voluntary nature of the Nazarite ~~v~~ oath and defines it. It means that one separates himself to the Lord for a specific length of time. It may be noted that either a man or a woman can become a Nazarite. The obligations of the Nazarite are three in number. First, he separates himself entirely from any use of wine or strong drink. He must not use anything which comes from the grape vine at all, whether it be fermented wine, or vinegar, or even ordinary grape juice (mishrah, translated liquor (3), means simply 'juice'), or fresh grapes, or raisins.

The second requirement is to let the locks of the hair of his head grow (5). This is contrary to ordinary usage and becomes a public indication of the fact that he is sep apart.

The third requirement is to keep himself from any contact with a dead body. See note on Num. 5:1-4 above. His standard here is above that of the priest, and equals that of the High Priest (Lev. 21:1-3, 10-11). Not even his love for members of his family can lead him to make a break in this. He must not voluntarily touch any dead body.

Touching a dead body was not sinful in itself. Ordinarily it was to be expected that the family of a dead person would touch his body. There were cases in which a Jew was considered as having done a very holy thing in defiling himself in order to give someone decent burial. Such an incident forms the beginning of the apocryphal book of Tobit. However, the Nazarite was specifically sep apart to God and was forbidden voluntarily to enter upon any such uncleanness even in the case of his closest relative. All the days of his separation, he must be holy unto the Lord.