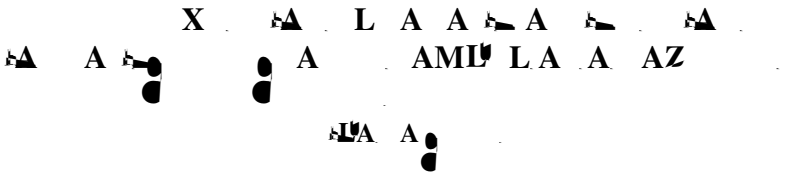

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them: When either man or woman shall clearly utter a vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to consecrate himself unto the Lord, he shall abstain from wine and strong drink . . . All the days of his Naziriteship shall he eat nothing that is made of the grape-vine, from the pressed grapes even to the grape-stone. All the days of his vow of Naziriteship no razor [ta'ar] *shall come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in which he consecrateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long* (Num. 6:1-5).

The Book of Samuel relates the story of childless Hannah who, at the tabernacle in Shiloh, cries bitterly and prays to the Lord. *And she made this vow: 'O Lord of Hosts, if You will look upon the suffering of Your maidservant and will remember me and not forget Your maidservant, and if You will grant Your maidservant a male child, I will dedicate him to the Lord for all the days of his life; and no razor* [morah] *shall ever touch his head'* (I Sam. 1:11). The Mishnah in *Nazir* (9:5) debates whether or not Samuel was a Nazirite. Those that say he was a Nazirite derive it from the use of the word *morah* (razor), as in the case of Samson: *For you are going to conceive and bear a son; let no razor* [morah] *touch his head, for the boy is to be a Nazirite to God from the womb on* (Judg. 13:5). Others state that the meaning of *morah* is "fear", indicating that Samuel will fear Heaven and not fear man (see Rashi, quoting *Targum Jonathan*). While Malbim brings both opinions, *Metzudat Tziyyon* translates *morah* as "razor" and both *Metzudat David* and Maimonides (*Hilkhot Nezirut* 3:16) indicate that Samuel was a Nazirite.

The first question is: How could Hannah consecrate a yet unborn male child as a Nazirite? Generally, there is no legal mechanism to consecrate something that does not yet exist. Commentators indicate that when Eli the Priest says, *'Then go in peace . . . and may the God of Israel grant you what*

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