

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. What were the names of Samson's mother and father?
2. What prompted Samson to marry a Philistine woman?
3. In what manner did Samson terrorize the Philistines?
4. What happened to Samson in Gaza?
5. Describe the circumstances of Samson's death.

This and much more will be addressed in the third lecture of this series:
“Samson: The Tormented Redeemer”.

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the lecture and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book were designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it, as well, as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

**This lecture is dedicated to the merit and honor of Dr. and Mrs.
Avi and Beth Adler and their family**

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series XVI Lecture #3

SAMSON: THE TORMENTED REDEEMER

I. Samson and His First Encounter with the Philistines

A.

(1) וַתֵּלֶד הָאִשָּׁה בֶן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ שַׁמְשׁוֹן וַיִּגְדַּל הַנַּעַר וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ד': וַתְּחַל רוּחַ ד' לְפַעֲמוֹ בְּמַחְנֵה דָן בֵּין צִרְעָה וּבֵין אֶשְׁתָּאוֹל: שׁוֹפְטִים יג:כד-כה

And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the L-rd blessed him. And the spirit of the L-rd began to stir him in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. **Judges 13:24-25**

(2) ותחל רוח ד' וגו' - א"ר חמא בר' חנינא: חלתה נבואתו של יעקב אבינו, דכתיב: (בראשית מט) יהי דן נחש עלי דרך. לפעמו במחנה דן - א"ר יצחק דבי רבי אמי: מלמד, שהיתה שכינה מקשקשת לפניו כזוג, כתיב הכא: לפעמו במחנה דן, וכתיב התם: (שמות כח) פעמון ורימון. בין צרעה ובין אשתאול - אמר ר' אסי: צרעה ואשתאול שני הרים גדולים היו, ועקרן שמשון וטחנן זה בזה. סוטה ט:

“And the spirit of the L-rd began (*vatohel*), etc.” (Judges 13:15) R. Hama b. Hanina said: Yaakov's prophecy became fulfilled (*haltha*), as it is written (Genesis 49:17), “Dan shall be a serpent in the way [an adder in the path, that bites the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O L-rd.]” “To stir him (*lefa'amo*) in Mahaneh-Dan.” (ibid.) R. Yitzchak of the Yeshiva of R. Ammi said: This teaches that the Shechinah kept ringing in front of him like a bell; it is written here to stir him [*lefa'amo*] in Mahaneh-Dan, and it is written elsewhere (Exodus 28:34), “A golden bell [*pa'amon*] and a pomegranate.” Between Zorah and Eshtaol (ibid.) R. Assi said: Zorah and Eshtaol are two great mountains, and Samson uprooted them and ground one against the other. **Sota 9b**

B.

(1) וַיִּסְפוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ד' וַיִּתְּנֵם ד' בְּיַד פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה: שׁוֹפְטִים יג:א

And the people of Israel did evil again in the sight of the L-rd; and the L-rd delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. **Judges 13:1**

(2) (תהלים סח) בזר עמים קרבות יחפצו, מי גרם להם לישראל שיתפזרו לבין אומות העולם - קריבות שהיו חפצין בהן. פסחים קיה:

(Psalms 68: 27:31) “He has scattered the people that delight in approaches.” what caused Israel to be scattered among the nations? The approaches [to the nations] which they desired. **Pesachim 118b**

(3) יהי דן נחש עלי דרך שפיפון, כל החיות מהלכות זוגות וזוגות והנחש אינו מהלך בדרך אלא יחיד, ד"א יהי דן נחש עלי דרך, כשם שהנחש נקמץ כך היה שמשון, שנאמר (שופטים טז) ואנקמה נקם אחת. בראשית רבה פרשה צ"ב:

(Genesis 49:17), "Dan shall be a serpent in the way [an adder in the path]." All other animals travel in groups. The snake travels only alone. Another explanation of the verse, "Dan shall be a serpent in the way": Just as a snake is revengeful, so too was Shimshon, as it says (Judges 16:28), "May I be at once avenged [of the Philistines for my two eyes]." **Midrash Bereishis Rabbah Parshah 99:12**

(4) (שופטים יג) ויגדל הנער ויברכהו ד' - במה ברכו? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: שברכו באמתו, אמתו כבני אדם וזרעו כנחל שוטף. סוטה י.

"And the child grew, and the L-rd blessed him." (Judges 13:14) Wherewith did He bless him? Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: He blessed him through his male organ. It was like that of other men but his seed [flowed] like a fast-flowing stream. **Sota 10a**

(5) גלוי היה לפני הקב"ה שמשון היה הולך אחר עיניו לפיכך הזהירו בנזיר שלא יהיה שותה יין לפי שהיין מביא לידי זמה ומה בזמן שהיה נזיר הלך אחר עיניו אילו היה שותה לא היה לו תקנה לעולם מרוב שהיה רודף אחר זמה. במדבר רבה פרשה י"ה

It was revealed before the Holy One, blessed be He, that Shimshon was wont to go after his eyes. For that reason, in order to prevent him from drinking wine, which brings to licentiousness, he admonished him to become a Nazarite. Now, look how [he compromised himself and] went after his eyes, even in his state of being a Nazarite! Imagine what would happen had he actually drunk wine? He wouldn't have remained with any redeeming quality, since he was wont to pursue licentiousness. **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah Parshah 10:5**

(6) יהי דן נחש עלי דרך, מה נחש זה מצוי בין הנשים, כך שמשון בן מנוח מצוי בין הנשים. בראשית רבה פרשה צ"ב:

(Genesis 49:17), "Dan shall be a serpent in the way [an adder in the path]." Just as a snake is found amongst women, so too, Shimshon, the son of Manoah, was found amongst women. **Midrash Bereishis Rabbah Parshah 98:14**

C.

וַיֵּרַד שִׁמְשׁוֹן תְּמַנְתָּה וַיֵּרָא אִשָּׁה בְּתַמְנַתָּה מִבְּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים: וַיַּעַל וַיִּגְדַּל לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אִשָּׁה רְאִיתִי בְּתַמְנַתָּה מִבְּנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְעַתָּה קָחוּ אוֹתָהּ לִי לְאִשָּׁה: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ הֲאִין בְּבָנוֹת אַחֶיךָ וּבְכָל עַמֵּי אִשָּׁה כִּי אַתָּה הוֹלֵךְ לְקַחַת אִשָּׁה מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים הָעַרְלִים וַיֹּאמֶר שִׁמְשׁוֹן אֶל אָבִיו אוֹתָהּ קַח לִי כִּי הִיא יְשָׁרָה בְּעֵינָי: וְאָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי מִד' הִיא כִּי תֹאנָה הוּא מְבַקֵּשׁ מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים וּבַעַת הַהִיא פְּלִשְׁתִּים מְשָׁלִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: שופטים יד-א

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me as my wife. Then his father and his mother said to him, Is there no woman among the daughters of your brothers, or

among all my people, that you must take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said to his father, Get her for me; for she is proper in my eyes. But his father and his mother knew not that it was from the L-rd, that He sought an occasion against the Philistines; for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. **Judges 14:1-4**

D.

(1) ת"ר: שמשון בעיניו מרד, שנאמר: (שופטים יד) ויאמר שמשון אל אביו אותה קח לי כי היא ישרה בעיני, לפיכך נקרו פלשתים את עיניו, שנאמר: (שופטים טז) ויאחזוהו פלשתים וינקרו את עיניו. אינני? והכתיב: (שופטים יד) ואביו ואמו לא ידעו כי מד' היא כי אזל מיהא בתר ישרותיה אזל. **סוטה ט:**

The Rabbis taught: Shimshon rebelled with his eyes, as it says (Judges 14:3), "And Samson said to his father, Get her for me; for she is proper in my eyes." Consequently, the Philistines gouged out his eyes, as it says (Judges 16:21), "But the Philistines took him, and took out his eyes." But this is not so [that he committed a crime], for it says (ibid. 14:4), "But his father and his mother knew not that it was from the L-rd." When he went [to choose a wife], however, he was following his own sense of propriety. **Sota 9b**

(2) וכן אתה מוצא בשמשון הגבור במה שנתגאה לפניו בו נפרע ממנו שנ' ויאמר שמשון אל אביו אותה קח לי כי היא ישרה בעיני ואומר ואביו ואמו לא ידעו כי מד' וגו' (שופטים יד:ג-ד) וכתב ויאחזוהו פלשתים וינקרו את עיניו ויורידו אותו עזתה. מכילתא בשלח - שירה פרשה ב

Similarly, we find regarding Shimshon HaGibbor (the mighty), that he was punished through that which he prided himself, as it says (Judges 14:3), "And Samson said to his father, Get her for me; for she is proper in my eyes." And it says (ibid. 4), "But his father and his mother knew not that it was from the L-rd, etc." And it is written (ibid. 16:21), "But the Philistines took him, and took out his eyes." **Mechilta Beshalach - Shira Parshah 2**

(3) ויש לתמוה היאך מי שצוה עליו הבורא ית' להיות קדושתו מן הבטן איך נטמא בבנות הפלשתים והנראה בזה כי הנשים אשר לקח בתמנה ובעזה ובנחל שורק גייר אותן והשיבן לדת ישראל כי חלילה משופט ישראל ומושיעם להתחתן בפלשתים ועובר על לאו דלא תתחתן במ אשר חמור מאד ומביא את האדם לידי כפירה בבורא ית' ויתעלה כמו שאמר כי יסיר את בנך מאחרי ולא נמצא בכתוב שנענש על זה ולא נאמר עליו שעשה רע בעיני ד' והיה הבורא יתעלה מצליחו בכל אשר יפנה וכן אמר הכתוב כי מד' היא כלומר לקחתו אשה מבנות פלשתים מד' היתה ורצון הא-ל ית' היה בזה כי בודאי היה מגייר אותן ומשיבן אל דת ישראל ואף על פי כן סבה היתה מאת השם לקחת אשה מפלשתי' להנקם בהם כי נראה כי ישראל שבאותו הדור לא היו יריאים השם כל כך שיושיעם תשועה שלימה מיד פלשתים כי כל ימי שמשון היו מושלים פלשתים בישראל כי מה שאמר הכתוב ויתנם ד' ביד פלשתים ארבעים שנה עשרים של שמשון בכללם על כרחך לפי חשבון השנים ולא היו ישראל נלחמים בהם כי אם שמשון לבדו ולפיכך לא היה לפלשתים טענה להלחם בישראל מפני שמשון כי לא היה ברשותם והוא לבדו היה עושה הרעות בפלשתים ועם פלשתים היה שוכן בעוד שהיה מריע להם ומיראתם אותו גם כן היו נמנעים מלהלחם בישראל לפיכך כשבקשוהו פלשתים מבני יהודה כשהלך לסלע עיטם מסרוהו להם וכן עדת דבורים בגויית האריה ודבש וכן היות אשת שמשון למרעהו הכל סבה להנקם מפלשתים יתברך הא-ל אשר לו נתכנו עלילות וסבות ומאתו הכל אבל עונש נקירת עיניו לפי שאמר ותישר בעיני שמשון ואמר אותה קח לי כי היא ישרה בעיני ידמה כי חשק בה ליופיה וכן באחרות אשר חשק ולקח לתאווה אליהן והנה הפסי' כוונתו

הראשונה הטובה שהיתה רצון הא-ל כמו שכתוב כי מה' היתה כי תואנה הוא מבקש מפלשתים נראה לי בתחילה היתה כוונתו לטובה לבקש תואנה מפלשתים ואחר כך גברה עליו התאוה בראותו אותה וישרה בעיניו והפסיד כונתו הא-להית בכוונתו הגופנית הבהמית אשר התערבה בה ולפיכך נענש ונקרו פלשתים את עיניו מדה כנגד מדה ורז"ל אמרו כן אף על גב דכתיב כי מד' היא כי אזל מיהא בתר ישרותיה אזל ואף על פי כן עזרוהו מן השמים ונקם נקמת עיניו מפלשתים: רד"ק שופטים פרק יג פסוק ד

One wonders, how is possible that someone who was commanded by the Creator to become sanctified from the womb would become defiled by the daughters of the Philistines? The correct approach seems to be that women that he took in Timnah, Gaza and Nahal Sorek were first converted and embraced the Jewish religion. G-d forbid that the Judge of Israel and their Savior should intermarry with the Philistines and violate the prohibition (Deuteronomy 7:3), "And you shall not make marriages with them," a very grievous sin which leads the person to deny the Creator, as it says (ibid 4), "For they will turn away your son from following Me, [that they may serve other gods]." There is no evidence that Shimshon was ever punished for this [sin]. There is no statement regarding him that, "he did evil in the eyes of G-d." The Creator blessed him with success in all of his endeavors. Similarly, it says (Judges 14:4), ". . . it was from the L-rd." In other words, his taking a woman from the daughters of the Philistines was planned by G-d and fulfilled His will, and therefore he certainly converted them and prevailed upon them to embrace the Jewish religion. Even though [they willfully converted,] it was the fulfillment of G-d's plan that Shimshon take a Philistine wife in order to take revenge upon them, as Israel during that period did not [adequately] fear G-d and weren't worthy of being completely saved from the Philistines. Consequently, the Philistines dominated over Israel during the lifetime of Shimshon. According to the chronology, the forty years of Philistine domination must have included the twenty years of the Judgeship of Shimshon. Israel did not battle with them during this period. Shimshon did it by himself. Consequently, the Philistines had no excuse to battle Israel because of Shimshon, as he wasn't under their control and he, by himself, perpetrated all the evils against the Philistines and all the while was living with them. And because of their fear of him, the Philistines were reluctant to go to war against Israel. As a result, when the Philistines asked of the members of Yehudah to go to the rock of Etam, they handed him over to them. Similarly, the [incidents with the] swarm of bees in the body of the lion and the honey and when the wife of Shimshon was given over to his companion, were all reasons for Shimshon to seek revenge from the Philistines. This was all brought about by G-d, who is the prime mover and cause of all events. - The punishment of taking out the eyes, however, was because she was proper in Shimshon's eyes, and he said [to his parents, (Judges 14:3)] "Get her for me; for she pleases me well (lit. she is proper in my eyes.)" It seems that he desired her because of her beauty. Similarly, he desired the other [Philistine women] and took them to fulfill his personal desires. Behold, [by doing so,] he forfeited [the reward] of his primary motivation, which was positive, i.e. [to fulfill] G-d's desire, as it says (Judges 14:4), "it was from the L-rd, that He sought an occasion against the Philistines." It seems to me that his motivation was positive, i.e. to find an excuse [to avenge the evils of] the Philistines. Afterwards, though, his desire overcame him, when he saw her and found her pleasing (lit. proper) and he forfeited [the reward of] his G-dly motivation through his physical animal motivation which merged together with it. For that reason, he was punished, measure for measure. Our Sages said that although it was decreed by G-d, Shimshon, himself, sinned by going after what he deemed to be proper. Despite this, He was helped by Heaven and extracted revenge from the Philistines for taking out his eyes. **Radak, Judges 13:4**

(4) שמשון הלך אחרי עיניו כו' תני רבי אומר לפי שתחילת קלקלתו בעזה לפיכך עונשו בעזה והכתיב וירד שמשון תמנתה אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן דרך נישואין היו. תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת סוטה פרק א ה"ח

Samson rebelled [against G-d] through his eyes etc. Rabbi taught: the beginning of his degeneration occurred in Gaza, therefore he was punished in Gaza. But behold it is written: And Samson went down to Timnah! Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said: There they were [properly] married, [in contradistinction of what happened in Gaza]. **Yerushalmi, Sota 1:8**

E.

וירד שמשון ואביו ואמו תמנתה ויבאו עד כרמי תמנתה והנה כפיר אריות שאג לקראתו: ותצלח עליו רוח ד' וישפעהו כשסע הגדי ומאומה אין בידו ולא הגיד לאביו ולאמו את אשר עשה: וירד וידבר לאשה ותישר בעיני שמשון: וישב מימים לקחתה ויסר לראות את מפלת האריה והנה עדת דבורים בגוית האריה ודבש: וירדהו אל כפיו וילך הלוך ואכל וילך אל אביו ואל אמו ויתן להם ויאכלו ולא הגיד להם כי מגוית האריה רדה הדבש: שופטים יד-ה-ט

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath; and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the spirit of the L-rd came mightily upon him, and he tore him as he would have torn a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. - And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well (lit. and was proper in Samson's eyes). - And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion; - and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took of it in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they ate; but he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. **Judges 14:5-9**

F.

וירד אביהו אל האשה ויעש שם שמשון משתה כי כן יעשו הבחורים: ויהי כראותם אותו ויקחו שלשים מרעים ויהיו אתו: ויאמר להם שמשון אחודה נא לכם חידה אם הגיד תגידו אותה לי שבעת ימי המשתה ומצאתם ונתת לי לכם שלשים סדינים ושלשים חלפת בגדים: ואם לא תוכלו להגיד לי ונתתם אתם לי שלשים סדינים ושלשים חליפות בגדים ויאמרו לו חודה חידתך ונשמענה: ויאמר להם מהאכל יצא מאכל ומעז יצא מתוק ולא יכלו להגיד החידה שלשת ימים: ויהי | ביום השביעי ויאמרו לאשת שמשון פתי את אישך ויגד לנו את החידה פן נשרף אותך ואת בית אביך באש הלירשנו קראתם לנו הלא: ותבך אשת שמשון עליו ותאמר רק שנאתני ולא אהבתני החידה חדת לבני עמי ולי לא הגדתה ויאמר לה הנה לאביו ולאמי לא הגדת לי וקח אגיד: ותבך עליו שבעת הימים אשר היה להם המשתה ויהי | ביום השביעי ויגד לה כי הציקתהו ותגד החידה לבני עמה: ויאמרו לו אנשי העיר ביום השביעי בטרם יבא החרסה מה מתוק מדבש ומה עז מארי ויאמר להם לולא חרשתם בעגלתי לא מצאתם חידתי: ותצלח עליו רוח ד' וירד אשקלון ויך מהם | שלשים איש ויקח את חליצותם ויתן החליפות למגדי החידה ויחר אפו ויעל בית אביהו: ותהי אשת שמשון למרעהו אשר רעה לו: שופטים יד-י-כ

So his father went down to the woman; and Samson made there a feast; for the young men used to do so. - And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. And Samson said to them, I will now put a riddle to you; if you can tell me what it is within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments; But if you cannot tell me what it is, then shall you give me thirty sheets

and thirty changes of garments. And they said to him, Put your riddle, that we may hear it. And he said to them, Out of the eater came food, and out of the strong came sweetness. And they could not in three days tell what the riddle was. - And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said to Samson's wife, Entice your husband, that he may tell us the riddle, lest we burn you and your father's house with fire; Have you called us to take possession of our goods? - And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, You hate me, and love me not; you have put a riddle to the sons of my people, and have not told it to me. And he said to her, Behold, I have not told it to my father nor to my mother, and shall I tell it to you? And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted; and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she pressed him hard; and she told the riddle to her people. And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said to them, If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle. And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their booty, and gave change of garments to those who had told the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house. And Samson's wife was given to his companion, who was his friend. **Judges 14:10-20**

II. Samson Takes Revenge

A.

(1) וַיְהִי מִיָּמִים בְּיָמֵי קָצִיר חֲטִיִּים וַיִּפְקֹד שְׁמֹשׁוֹן אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ בְּגֵדֵי עֲזִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָאָה אֵל אִשְׁתִּי הַחֲדָרָה וְלֹא נָתַנּוּ אֲבִיהָ לְבוֹא: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִיהָ אֲמַר אֲמַרְתִּי כִּי שָׂנֵא שְׂנֵאתָהּ וְאֶתְנַנֶּה לְמַרְעֶךָ הֲלֹא אֶחְתֶּנָּה הַקְּטָנָה טוֹבָה מִמֶּנָּה תְּהִי נָא לְךָ תַּחְתִּיהָ: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמֹשׁוֹן נְקִיתִי הַפְּעַם מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי עָשָׂה אֲנִי עִמָּם רָעָה: וַיֵּלֶךְ שְׁמֹשׁוֹן וַיִּלְכֹּד שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שׁוּעָלִים וַיִּקַּח לְפָדִים וַיִּפֶן זָנָב אֶל זָנָב וַיִּשֶׂם לְפִיד אֶחָד בֵּין שְׁנֵי הַזָּנָבוֹת בְּתוֹךְ: וַיִּבְעֶר אֵשׁ בַּלְּפִידִים וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּקִמּוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּבְעֶר מִגְדֵּי־שׁוֹ וְעַד קָמָה וְעַד כָּרֶם זֵית: וַיֹּאמְרוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים מִי עָשָׂה זֹאת וַיֹּאמְרוּ שְׁמֹשׁוֹן חָתָן הַתְּמַנִּי כִּי לָקַח אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנָהּ לְמַרְעָהּ וַיַּעֲלוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּשְׂרְפוּ אוֹתָהּ וְאֶת אֲבִיהָ בָּאֵשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמֹשׁוֹן אִם תַּעֲשׂוּן כְּזֹאת כִּי אִם נִקְמַתִּי בְּכֶם וְאַחַר אֶחָדֶל: וַיֵּךְ אוֹתָם שׁוֹק עַל יָרֵךְ מִכָּה גְדוֹלָה וַיִּרַד וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּסַעֲיָף סָלַע עֵיטָם: שׁוֹפְטִים טו:א-ח

But it came to pass after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. - But her father would not allow him to go in. And her father said, I truly thought that you greatly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister fairer than she? Take her, I beg you, instead of her. And Samson said to them, Now shall I be blameless in regard to the Philistines, when I do them mischief. - And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, and turned tail to tail, and put a torch in the middle between two tails. And when he had set the torches on fire, he let them go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks, and also the standing grain, as well as the olive trees. Then the Philistines said, Who has done this? And they answered, *Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite*, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burned her and her father with fire. And Samson said to them, If this is what you have done, I will be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. And he struck them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; and he went down and lived on top of the rock Etam. **Judges 15:1-8**

(2) (שׁוֹפְטִים טו) וַיֵּלֶךְ שְׁמֹשׁוֹן וַיִּלְכֹּד שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שׁוּעָלִים - מֵאֵי שָׂנֵא שׁוּעָלִים? אֲמַר רַבִּי אִיבּוֹ בַר נַגְדִי א"ר חִיָּיא בַר אֲבָא, אֲמַר שְׁמֹשׁוֹן: יבא מי שחוזר לאחוריו, ויפרע מפלשתים שחזרו בשבועתן. סוטה י.

“And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes.” (Judges 15:4) Why just foxes? – R. Aibu b. Nagari said in the name of R. Hiyya b. Abba: Samson declared: Let [the animal] come which turns backward and exact punishment of the Philistines who went back on their oath. **Sota 10a**

B.

(1) ויעלו פלשתים ויחנו ביהודה וינטשו בלחי: ויאמרו איש יהודה למה עליהם עלינו ויאמרו לאסור את-שמשון עלינו לעשות לו כאשר עשה לנו: וירדו שלשת אלפים איש מיהודה אל סעיף סלע עיטם ויאמרו לשמשון הלא ידעת כי משלים בנו פלשתים ומה זאת עשית לנו ויאמר להם כאשר עשו לי כן עשיתי להם: ויאמרו לו לאסרך ירדנו לתתך ביד פלשתים ויאמר להם שמשון השבעו לי פן תפגעון בי אתם: ויאמרו לו לאמר לא כי אסר נאסרך ונתנוך בידם והמת לא נמיתך ויאסרהו בשנים עבתיים חדשים ויעלוהו מן הסלע: הוא בא עד לחי ופלשתים הריעו לקראתו ותצלח עליו רוח ד' ותהיינה העבתיים אשר על זרועותיו כפשתים אשר בערו באש וימסו אסוריו מעל ידיו: וימצא לחי חמור טריה וישלח ידו ויקחה ויך בה אלף איש: ויאמר שמשון בלחי החמור חמור חמרתים בלחי החמור הכיתי אלף איש: ויהי ככלתו לדבר וישלף הלחי מידו ויקרא למקום ההוא רמת לחי: ויצמא מאד ויקרא אל ד' ויאמר אתה נתת ביד עבדך את התשועה הגדלה הזאת ועתה אמות בצמא ונפילתי ביד הערלים: ויבקע א-להים את המכתש אשר בלחי ויצאו ממנו מים וישת ותשב רוחו ויחי על כן | קרא שמה עין הקורא אשר בלחי עד היום הזה: וישפט את ישראל בימי פלשתים עשרים שנה: שופטים טו:ט-כ

Then the Philistines went up, and camped in Judah, and made a raid on Lehi. And the men of Judah said, Why do you come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson have we come up, to do to him as he has done to us. Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What is this that you have done to us? And he said to them, As they did to me, so have I done to them. - And they said to him, We have come down to bind you, that we may deliver you to the hand of the Philistines. - And Samson said to them, Swear to me, that you will not fall upon me yourselves. And they spoke to him, saying, No; but we will bind you fast, and deliver you to their hand; but surely we will not kill you. And they bound him with two new ropes, and brought him up from the rock. And when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him; and the spirit of the L-rd came mightily upon him, and the ropes that were upon his arms became as flax that was burned with fire, and his bands melted from off his hands. And he found a new jawbone of a donkey, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men with it. And Samson said, With the jawbone of a donkey (*hamor*), heaps upon heaps, - with the jaw of a donkey (*hamor*) have I slain a thousand men. And it came to pass, when he had finished speaking, that he threw away the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath-Lehi. - And he was very thirsty, and called on the L-rd, and said, You have given this great deliverance through the hand of your servant; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But G-d split a hollow place that was in Lehi, and water came out; and when he drank, his spirit was restored and he revived; therefore he called its name Ein-Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years. **Judges 15:9-20**

(2) ויבקע א-להים את המכתש אשר בלחי. א"ר יצחק דבי רבי אמי: הוא איוה לדבר טמא, לפיכך נתלו חייו בדבר טמא. סוטה ט:

“But G-d split a hollow place that was in Lehi (the jawbone).” (Judges 15:19) R. Yitzchak of the Yeshiva of R. Ammi said: He [Samson] lusted for what was unclean; therefore his life was made dependent upon an unclean thing. **Sota 9b**

III. Samson and Delilah

A.

(1) וַיֵּלֶךְ שָׁמְשׁוֹן עִזְתָּהּ וַיֵּרָא שָׁם אִשָּׁה זֹנָה וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ: לְעִזְתִּים | לְאֹמֵר בָּא שָׁמְשׁוֹן הִנֵּה וַיִּסְבּוּ וַיֶּאֱרְבוּ לוֹ כָּל הַלַּיְלָה בְּשַׁעַר הָעִיר וַיִּתְחַרְשׁוּ כָּל הַלַּיְלָה לְאֹמֵר עַד אֹרֶן הַבְּקָר וְהִרְגָנָהּ: וַיִּשְׁכַּב שָׁמְשׁוֹן עַד חֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה וַיָּקָם | בְּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה וַיֶּאֱחַז בְּדַלְתוֹת שַׁעַר הָעִיר וּבִשְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וַיִּסְעֵם עִם הַבְּרִיחַ וַיִּשֶׂם עַל כַּתְּפָיו וַיַּעֲלֵם אֶל רֹאשׁ הַהָר אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי חֶבְרוֹן: שׁוֹפְטִים טז:א-ג

Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and went in to her. And it was told the Gazatites, saying, Samson has come here. And they surrounded him, and waited in ambush for him all night at the gate of the city, and were quiet all night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron. **Judges 16:1-3**

(2) תניא, א"ר שמעון החסיד: בין כתיפיו של שמשון ששים אמה היה, שנאמר: (שופטים טז) וישכב שמשון עד חצי הלילה ויקם בחצי הלילה ויאחז בדלתות שער העיר ובשתי המזוזות ויסעם עם הבריה וישם על כתיפיו, וגמירי, דאין דלתות עזה פחותות מששים אמה. סוטה י.

It has been taught: R. Shimon the Pious said: The width between Samson's shoulders was sixty cubits, as it is said (Judges 16:3), "And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders;" and there is a tradition that the gates of Gaza were not less than sixty cubits [in width]. **Sota 10a**

B.

(1) ויהי אחרי כן ויאָהֵב אִשָּׁה בְּנַחַל שָׂרָק וּשְׁמָהּ דְלִילָה: וַיַּעֲלוּ אֵלֶיהָ סְרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ פְתִי אוֹתוֹ וְרָאִי בָמָה כַּחוֹ גְדוֹל וּבָמָה נוֹכַח לוֹ וַאֲסַרְנָהּ לְעַנְתּוֹ וְאֶנְחֵנוּ נִתֵּן לָךְ אִישׁ אֶלְפָּ וּמֵאָה כֶּסֶף: וַתֹּאמֶר דְלִילָה אֵל שָׁמְשׁוֹן הַגִּידָה נָא לִי בָמָה כַּחַךְ גְּדוֹל וּבָמָה תֹאסֵר לְעַנּוֹתֶךָ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ שָׁמְשׁוֹן אִם יֹאסְרֵנִי בְשִׁבְעָה יְתָרִים לַחִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא חָרְבוּ וְחַלְיִתִּי וְהִיִּיתִי כְאֶחָד הָאָדָם: וַיַּעֲלוּ לָהּ סְרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים שְׁבָעָה יְתָרִים לַחִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא חָרְבוּ וַתֹּאסְרֵהוּ בָהֶם: וְהָאֲרָב יָשָׁב לָהּ בַּחֲדָר וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו פְלִשְׁתִּים עָלֶיךָ שָׁמְשׁוֹן וַיִּנְתֵּק אֶת הַיְתָרִים כְּאֲשֶׁר יִנְתֵּק פְתִיל הַנְּעֻרָת בְּהִרְיָחוֹ אֵשׁ וְלֹא נֹדַע כַּחוֹ: וַתֹּאמֶר דְלִילָה אֵל שָׁמְשׁוֹן הִנֵּה הַתְּלַת בֵּי וַתְּדַבֵּר אֵלַי כְּזָבִים עָתָה הַגִּידָה נָא לִי בָמָה תֹאסֵר: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אִם אֶסוֹר יֹאסְרוּנִי בְעֵבְתִים חֲדָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לֹא נַעֲשָׂה בָהֶם מְלֹאכָה וְחַלְיִתִּי וְהִיִּיתִי כְאֶחָד הָאָדָם: וַתִּקַּח דְלִילָה עֵבְתִים חֲדָשִׁים וַתֹּאסְרֵהוּ בָהֶם וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו פְלִשְׁתִּים עָלֶיךָ שָׁמְשׁוֹן וְהָאֲרָב יָשָׁב בַּחֲדָר וַיִּנְתֵּק מֵעַל זְרַעְתּוֹ כַּחוֹט: וַתֹּאמֶר דְלִילָה אֵל שָׁמְשׁוֹן עַד הִנֵּה הַתְּלַת בֵּי וַתְּדַבֵּר אֵלַי כְּזָבִים הַגִּידָה לִי בָמָה תֹאסֵר וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ אִם תֹּאֲרָגִי אֶת שְׁבַע מַחְלְפוֹת רֹאשִׁי עִם הַמַּסְכָּת: וַתִּתְקַע בֵּיתָד וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו פְלִשְׁתִּים עָלֶיךָ שָׁמְשׁוֹן וַיִּיקֶץ מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיִּסַּע אֶת הַיְתָד הָאֲרָג וְאֶת הַמַּסְכָּת: וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֵיךְ תֹּאמֶר אֶהְבְּתֶיךָ וְלִבְךָ אֵין אִתִּי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים הַתְּלַת בֵּי וְלֹא הִגַּדְתָּ לִי בָמָה כַּחַךְ גְּדוֹל: וַיְהִי כִּי הִצִּיקָהּ לוֹ בְּדַבְרֶיהָ כָּל הַיָּמִים וַתֹּאֲלָצְהוּ וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁוֹ לְמוֹת: וַיִּגַּד לָהּ אֶת כָּל לְבוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מוֹרָה לֹא עָלָה עַל רֹאשִׁי כִּי נִזִּיר אֲנִי—לֵהִי אֲנִי מִבְּטָן אִמִּי אִם גְּלַחְתִּי וְסָר מִמֶּנִּי כַחֲזִי וְחַלְיִתִּי וְהִיִּיתִי כְכֹּל הָאָדָם: וַתִּרְאֵה דְלִילָה כִּי הִגִּיד לָהּ אֶת כָּל לְבוֹ וַתִּשְׁלַח וַתִּקְרָא לְסְרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים לְאֹמֵר עָלוּ הַפַּעַם כִּי הִגִּיד לִי אֶת כָּל לְבוֹ וְעָלוּ אֵלֶיהָ סְרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּעֲלוּ הַכֶּסֶף בְּיָדָם: וַתִּשְׁנֶה עַל בְּרַכְיָה וַתִּקְרָא לְאִישׁ וַתִּגְלַח אֶת שְׁבַע מַחְלְפוֹת רֹאשׁוֹ וַתְּחַל לְעַנּוֹתוֹ וַיִּסַּר כַּחוֹ מֵעַלָיו: וַתֹּאמֶר פְלִשְׁתִּים עָלֶיךָ שָׁמְשׁוֹן וַיִּיקֶץ מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲצַא כְּפַעַם בְּפַעַם וְאֶנְעֵר וְהוּא לֹא יָדַע כִּי ד' סָר מֵעַלָיו: וַיֶּאֱחַזוּהוּ פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּנְקְרוּ אֶת עֵינָיו וַיִּוֹרִידוּ אוֹתוֹ עִזְתָּהּ וַיֹּאסְרוּהוּ בְנַחְשֵׁתִים וַיְהִי טוֹחֵן בְּבֵית הָאֶסּוּרִים: שׁוֹפְטִים טז:ד-כא

And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, Entice him, and see where does his great strength lie, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to subdue him; and we will give you every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver. And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I beg you, where does your great strength lie, and with what you might be bound to subdue you. - And Samson said to her, If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings that are not yet dried, then shall I be weak, and be as any other man. Then the lords of the Philistines brought to her seven fresh bowstrings which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. And there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson. And he broke the bowstrings, as a thread of tow is broken when it touches the fire. So his strength was not known. And Delilah said to Samson, Behold, you have mocked me, and told me lies; now tell me, I beg you, with what might you be bound. And he said to her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were used, then shall I be weak, and be as any other man. Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him with them, and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson. And there were men waiting in the chamber. And he broke them from off his arms like a thread. And Delilah said to Samson, Until now you have mocked me, and told me lies; tell me with what might you be bound. And he said to her, If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web. And she fastened it with the pin, and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson. And he awoke from his sleep, and went away with the pin of the loom, and with the web. And she said to him, How can you say, I love you, when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where does your great strength lie. And it came to pass, when she harassed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was troubled to death; That he told her all his heart, and said to her, There has not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite to G-d from my mother's womb; if I am shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he has told me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she had him shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to torment him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines are upon you, Samson. And he awoke from his sleep, and said, I will go out like other times before, and shake myself free. And he knew not that the L-rd had departed from him. But the Philistines took him, and took out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of bronze; and he ground at the mill of the prison house. **Judges 16:4:21**

(2) (שופטים טז) ויהי אחרי כן ויאהב אשה בנחל שורק ושמה דלילה תניא, רבי אומר: אילמלא נקרא שמה דלילה, ראויה היתה שתקרא דלילה, דילדלה את כחו, דילדלה את לבו, דילדלה את מעשיו דילדלה את כחו, דכתיב: (שופטים טז) ויסר כחו מעליו דילדלה את לבו, דכתיב: (שופטים טז) ותרא דלילה כי הגיד לה את כל לבו דילדלה את מעשיו, דאיסתלק שכינה מיניה, דכתיב: (שופטים טז) והוא לא ידע כי ד' סר מעליו. סוטה ט:

“And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.” (Judges 16:4) It has been taught: Rabbi says: If her name had not been called Delilah, she was fit that it should be so called. She weakened his strength, she weakened his heart, she weakened his actions. She weakened his strength, as it is written (ibid. 19), “And his strength went from him.” She weakened his heart, as it is written (ibid. 18), “And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart.” She weakened his actions since the Shechinah departed from him, as it is written (ibid. 20), “But he knew not that the L-rd had departed from him.” **Sota 9b**

(3) (שופטים טז) ויהי כי הציקה לו בדבריה כל הימים ותאלצהו מאי ותאלצהו? אמר רבי יצחק דבי רבי אמי: בשעת גמר ביאה נשמטה מתחתיו. סוטה ט:

“And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him.” (Judges 16:16) What is the meaning of, “and urged him”? R. Yitzchak of the School of R. Ammi said: At the time of the consummation, she detached herself from him. **Sota 9b**

(4) (שופטים טז) ותרא דלילה כי הגיד לה את כל לבו. מנא ידעה? א”ר חנין א”ר: ניכרין דברי אמת. אביי אמר: ידעה בו באותו צדיק דלא מפיק שם שמים לבטלה, כיון דאמר: (שופטים טז) נזיר א–להים אני, אמרה: השתא ודאי קושטא קאמר. סוטה ט:

“And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart.” (Judges 16:18) How did she know this? R. Hanin said in the name of Rav: Words of truth are recognisable. Abaye said: She knew that this righteous man would not utter the Divine Name in vain; when he exclaimed (ibid. 17), “I have been a Nazirite unto G-d,” she said: Now he has certainly spoken the truth. **Sota 9b**

(5) ת”ר: שמשון בעיניו מרד, שנאמר: (שופטים יד) ויאמר שמשון אל אביו אותה קח לי כי היא ישרה בעיני, לפיכך נקרו פלשתים את עיניו, שנאמר: (שופטים טז) ויאחזוהו פלשתים וינקרו את עיניו. איני? והכתיב: (שופטים יד) ואביו ואמו לא ידעו כי מד’ היא כי אזל מיהא בתר ישרותיה אזל. סוטה ט:

Our Rabbis have taught: Samson rebelled [against G-d] through his eyes, as it is said (Judges 14:3), “And Samson said unto his father, ‘Get her for me, because she is pleasing in my eyes;’” therefore the Philistines put out his eyes, as it is said (Judges 16:21), “And the Philistines laid hold on him and put out his eyes.” But it is not so; for behold it is written (Judges 14:4), “But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the L-rd!” When he went [to choose a wife, however,] he nevertheless followed his own eyes (i.e. inclinations). **Sota 9b**

(6) תניא, רבי אומר: תחילת קלקולו בעזה, לפיכך לקה בעזה תחילת קלקולו בעזה, דכתיב: (שופטים טז) וילך שמשון עזתה וירא שם אשה זונה וגו’, לפיכך לקה בעזה, דכתיב: (שופטים טז) ויורידו אותו עזתה. והכתיב: (שופטים יד) וירד שמשון תמנתה תחלת קלקולו מיהא בעזה היה. סוטה ט:

It has been taught: Rabbi says: The beginning of his [Samson's] degeneration occurred in Gaza; therefore he received his punishment in Gaza. The beginning of his [Samson's] degeneration was in Gaza, as it is written (Judges 16:1), “And Samson went to Gaza, and saw there an harlot etc.,” therefore he received his punishment in Gaza, as it is written (Judges 16:21), “And they brought him down to Gaza.” But behold it is written (Judges 14:1), “And Samson went down to Timnah!” Nevertheless the beginning of his degeneration occurred in Gaza. **Sota 9b**

(7) (שופטים טז) ויהי טוחן בבית האסורים - א”ר יוחנן: אין טחינה אלא לשון עבירה, וכן הוא אומר: (איוב לא) תטחן לאחר אשתי, מלמד, שכל אחד ואחד הביא לו את אשתו לבית האסורים כדי שתתעבר הימנו. אמר רב פפא, היינו דאמרי אינשי: קמי דשתי חמרא - חמרא, קמי רפוקא גרידיא - דובלא. סוטה י.

“And he did grind in the prison house.” (Judges 16:21) R. Yohanan said: “Grind” means nothing else than [sexual] transgression; and thus it is stated, “Then let my wife grind unto another.” (Job 31:10) It teaches that everyone brought his wife to him to the prison that she might bear a child by him [who would be as strong as he was]. R. Papa said: That is what the proverb tells, “Before the wine-drinker [set] wine, before a ploughman a basket of roots.” **Sota 10a**

IV. Samson's Final Revenge

A.

וַיִּחַל שְׁעַר רֵאשׁוֹ לְצִמְחַ כְּאֲשֶׁר גָּלַח: וְסַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים נֶאֱסָפוּ לְזַבַּח זָבַח גְּדוֹל לְדָגוֹן אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וּלְשִׁמְחָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ נִתַּן אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיַדְנוּ אֶת שְׁמִשׁוֹן אוֹיְבֵינוּ: וַיֵּרְאוּ אֹתוֹ הָעָם וַיִּהְלְלוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי אָמְרוּ נִתַּן אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיַדְנוּ אֶת אוֹיְבֵנוּ וְאֵת מַחְרִיב אֲרָצֵנוּ וְאֲשֶׁר הִרְבָּה אֶת חַלְלֵינוּ: וַיְהִי כְּטוֹב לָבָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ קְרָאוּ לְשִׁמְשׁוֹן וַיִּשְׁחַק לָנוּ וַיִּקְרָאוּ לְשִׁמְשׁוֹן מִבֵּית הָאֲסוּרִים וַיִּצְחַק לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמִידוּ אוֹתוֹ בֵּין הָעַמּוּדִים: וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמִשׁוֹן אֶל הַנַּעַר הַמַּחְזִיק בְּיָדוֹ הַנִּיחָה אוֹתִי וְהַמְשִׁנִּי אֶת הָעַמּוּדִים אֲשֶׁר הַבַּיִת נִכּוֹן עֲלֵיהֶם וְאֲשַׁעַן עֲלֵיהֶם: וְהַבַּיִת מְלֵא הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׁים וְשָׁמָּה כָּל סַרְנֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וְעַל הַגֶּג כְּשִׁלְשַׁת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה הָרָאִים בְּשִׁחּוֹק שְׁמִשׁוֹן: וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמִשׁוֹן אֶל ד' וַיֹּאמֶר אֶ-דָּנִי י-הוָה זְכַרְנִי נָא וְחַזְקֵנִי נָא אֶךְ הַפֶּעַם הַזֶּה הָא-לֵהִים וְאֲנִקְמָה נֶקֶם אַחַת מִשְׁתֵּי עֵינַי מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים: וַיִּלְפַּת שְׁמִשׁוֹן אֶת שְׁנֵי | עַמּוּדֵי הַתְּוֹךְ אֲשֶׁר הַבַּיִת נִכּוֹן עֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּסְמְךְ עֲלֵיהֶם אֶחָד בְּיַמִּינוּ וְאֶחָד בְּשִׁמְאָלוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמִשׁוֹן תָּמוּת נַפְשִׁי עִם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיֵּט בְּכַח וַיִּפֹּל הַבַּיִת עַל הַסַּרְנָיִם וְעַל כָּל הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ וַיִּהְיוּ הַמֵּתִים אֲשֶׁר הָמִית בְּמוֹתוֹ רַבִּים מֵאֲשֶׁר הָמִית בְּחַיָּו: וַיִּרְדּוּ אָחִיו וְכָל בֵּית אָבִיהוּ וַיִּשְׂאוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיַּעֲלוּ | וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אוֹתוֹ בֵּין צָרְעָה וּבֵין אֲשֶׁתָּאֵל בְּקֶבֶר מְנוּחַ אָבִיו וְהוּא שָׁפַט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה: שׁוֹפְטִים טז:כב-לא

And the hair of his head began to grow back after he was shaven. And the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god has delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, who slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make sport for us. And they called Samson out of the prison house; and he made sport for them; and they set him between the pillars. And Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, Leave me alone, and let me feel the pillars on which the house is fixed, that I may lean upon them. And the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, who looked while Samson made sport. And Samson called to the L-rd, and said, O L-rd G-d, remember me, I pray you, and strengthen me, I pray you, only this once, O G-d, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and he supported himself on them, on one with his right hand, and on the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people who were in there. So the dead whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he slew in his life. And his brothers and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years. **Judges 16:22-31**

B.

(שׁוֹפְטִים טז) וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמִשׁוֹן אֶל ד' וַיֹּאמֶר ד' א-לֵהִים זְכַרְנִי נָא וְחַזְקֵנִי נָא אֶךְ הַפֶּעַם הַזֶּה . . . וְאֲנִקְמָה נֶקֶם אַחַת מִשְׁתֵּי עֵינַי מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים - אָמַר רַב, אָמַר שְׁמִשׁוֹן לִפְנֵי הַקַּב"ה: רַבש"ע, זְכוּר לִי עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה שִׁשְׁפַטְתִּי אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְלֹא אָמַרְתִּי לְאֶחָד מֵהֶם הֵעֵבֵר לִי מִקַּל מִמְקוֹם לְמִקוֹם. סוּטָה י.

“And Samson called to the L-rd, and said, O L-rd G-d, remember me, I pray you, and strengthen me, I pray you, only this once, O G-d, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.” (Judges 16:28) Rav said: Samson spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, “Sovereign of the Universe, Remember on my behalf the twenty years I judged Israel, and never did I order anyone to carry my staff from one place to another.” **Sota 10a**

C.

א"ר יוחנן: שמשון דן את ישראל כאביהם שבשמים, שנאמר: (בראשית מט) דן ידין עמו כאחד וגו'. וא"ר יוחנן: שמשון על שמו של הקב"ה נקרא, שנאמר: (תהלים פד) כי שמש ומגן ד' א-להים וגו'. אלא מעתה, לא ימחה אלא מעין שמו של הקב"ה, מה הקב"ה מגין על כל העולם כולו, אף שמשון מגין בדורו על ישראל. וא"ר יוחנן: בלעם חיגר ברגלו אחת היה, שנאמר: (במדבר כג) וילך שפי שמשון חיגר בשתי רגליו היה, שנאמר: (בראשית מט) שפיפן עלי ארח. סוטה י.

R. Yohanan said: Samson judged Israel in the same manner as their Father in heaven; as it is said, (Genesis 49:16), “Dan shall judge his people as One.” R. Yohanan also said: Samson was called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; as it is said (84:12), “For the L-rd G-d is a sun and a shield.” According to this argument, [his name] may not be erased! The intention is that [his name] was typical of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; as the Holy One, blessed be He, shields the whole world, so Samson shielded Israel during his generation. R. Yohanan also said: Balaam was lame in one leg, as it is said (Numbers 23:3) “And he went *shefi* (dislocated);” Samson was lame in both legs, as it is said (Genesis 49:17), *Shefifan* (lit. an adder but understood to also mean a double dislocation) in the path.” **Sota 10a**

V. The Cult of Michah

A.

ויהי איש מהר אפרים ושמו מיכיהו: ויאמר לאמו אלהי ומאה הכסף אשר לקח לך ואת אלתית וגם אמרת באזני הנה הכסף אתי אני לקחתיו ותאמר אמו ברוך בני לד': וישב את אלהי ומאה הכסף לאמו ותאמר אמו הקדש הקדשתי את הכסף לד' מידי לבני לעשות פסל ומסכה ועתה אשיבנו לך: וישב את הכסף לאמו ותקח אמו מאתים כסף ותתנהו לצורף ויעשהו פסל ומסכה ויהי בבית מיכיהו: והאיש מיכה לו בית אלהים ויעש אפוד ותרפים וימלא את יד אחד מבניו ויהי לו לכהן: בימים ההם אין מלך בישראל איש הישר בעיניו יעשה: ויהי נער מבית לחם יהודה ממשפחת יהודה והוא לוי והוא גר שם: וילך האיש מהעיר מבית לחם יהודה לגור באשר ימצא ויבא הר אפרים עד בית מיכה לעשות דרכו: ויאמר לו מיכה מאין תבוא ויאמר אליו לוי אנכי מבית לחם יהודה ואנכי הלך לגור באשר אמצא: ויאמר לו מיכה שבה עמדי והיה לי לאב ולכהן ואנכי אתן לך עשרת כסף לימים וערך בגדים ומחיתך וילך הלוי: ויואל הלוי לשבת את האיש ויהי הנער לו כאחד מבניו: וימלא מיכה את יד הלוי ויהי לו הנער לכהן ויהי בבית מיכה: ויאמר מיכה עתה ידעתי כי ייטיב ד' לי כי היה לי הלוי לכהן: שופטים יז-א-יג

And there was a man of Mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said to his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you, about which you cursed, and spoke of it also in my ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be you of the L-rd, my son. And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I [had] consecrate[d] the silver to the L-rd from my hand for my son, to make an engraved image and a molten image; now therefore I will restore it to you. And when he

had given back the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the silversmith, who made an engraved image of it and a molten image; and they were in the house of Micahyehu. - And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. - And there was a young man from Beth-Lehem of Judah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, - and he sojourned there. And the man departed from the city from Beth-Lehem of Judah to sojourn where he could find a place; and he came to Mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said to him, Where do you come from? And he said to him, I am a Levite of Beth-Lehem of Judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. And Micah said to him, Live with me, and be to me a father and a priest, and I will give you ten shekels of silver a year, and a suit of apparel, and your provisions. So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to live with the man; and the young man was to him like one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now I know that the L-rd will do me good, seeing I have a Levite as my priest. **Judges 17:1-13**

B.

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבַיָּמִים הָהֵם שָׁבַט הַדְּנִי מִבְּקֶשׁ לוֹ נַחֲלָה לְשִׁבְתָּ כִּי לֹא נִפְלְאָה לוֹ עַד-הַיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּתוֹךְ שְׁבֻטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנַחֲלָה: וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ בְנֵי דָן | מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתָּם חֲמִשָּׁה אַנְשִׁים מִקְצוֹתֵם אַנְשִׁים בְּנֵי חֵיל מִצְרַעָה וּמֵאֲשֶׁתָּאֵל לְרַגֵּל אֶת הָאָרֶץ וּלְחַקְרָהּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם לָכוּ חַקְרוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וַיָּבֹאוּ הֵרָ אֶפְרַיִם עַד בֵּית מִיכָה וַיְלִינוּ שָׁם: הִמָּה עִם בֵּית מִיכָה וְהִמָּה הַפִּירוֹ אֶת קוֹל הַנְּעַר הַלְוִי וַיִּסּוּרוּ שָׁם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ מִי הַבִּיאָךְ הֵלֶם וּמָה אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה בְּזֶה וּמָה לָךְ פֶּה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם כֹּזֵה וְכֹזֵה עֹשֶׂה לִי מִיכָה וַיִּשְׁכַּרְנִי וְאֵהִי לוֹ לְכֹהֵן: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ שְׂאֵל נָא בְּאֱלֹהִים וּנְדַעַה הַתְּצַלִּיחַ דְּרַכְנוּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנַחְנוּ הַלְכִים עֲלֶיהָ: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הַכְּהֵן לָכוּ לְשָׁלוֹ נִכַח ד' דְּרַכְכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכוּ בָהּ: וַיִּלְכוּ חֲמִשָּׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיָּבֹאוּ לְיִשָּׁה וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת הָעַם אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבָּהּ יוֹשְׁבֵת לְבִטָּח כְּמִשְׁפַּט צְדָנִים שִׁקֵּט | וּבִטָּח וְאֵין מַכְלִים דְּבַר בְּאָרֶץ יוֹרֵשׁ עֶצֶר וּרְחֻקִים הִמָּה מִצְדָנִים וְדָבַר אֵין לָהֶם עִם אָדָם: וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל אַחִיהֶם צְרַעָה וְאֲשֶׁתָּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם אַחִיהֶם מָה אַתֶּם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוּמָה וּנְעַלָה עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי רְאִינוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה טוֹבָה מְאֹד וְאַתֶּם מַחְשִׁים אֶל תַּעֲצְלוּ לְלַכֵּת לְבֹא לְרִשֵׁת אֶת הָאָרֶץ: כִּבְאַכֶם תָּבֹאוּ | אֶל עִם בִּטָּח וְהָאָרֶץ רַחֲבַת יָדַיִם כִּי נִתְּנָה אֶ-לֵהֶם בְּיַדְכֶם מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אֵין שָׁם מַחְסוֹר כָּל דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר בְּאָרֶץ: וַיִּסְעוּ מִשָּׁם מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת הַדְּנִי מִצְרַעָה וּמֵאֲשֶׁתָּאֵל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ חֲגוּר כָּלִי מִלְחָמָה: וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיַּחֲנוּ בְּקִרְיַת יַעֲרִים בִּיהוּדָה עַל כֵּן קָרְאוּ לְמְקוֹם הַהוּא מַחְנֵה דָן עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הִנֵּה אַחֲרֵי קִרְיַת יַעֲרִים: וַיַּעֲבְרוּ מִשָּׁם הֵרָ אֶפְרַיִם וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד בֵּית מִיכָה: וַיַּעֲנוּ חֲמִשָּׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהַלְכִים לְרַגֵּל אֶת הָאָרֶץ לִישׁ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל אַחִיהֶם הִידַעְתֶּם כִּי יֵשׁ בְּבֵתִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶפּוֹד וְתִרְפִּים וּפְסָל וּמִסְכָּה וְעֵתָה דַּעְוָה מָה תַּעֲשׂוּ: וַיִּסּוּרוּ שָׁמָּה וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל בֵּית הַנְּעַר הַלְוִי בֵּית מִיכָה וַיִּשְׁאָלוּ לוֹ לְשָׁלוֹ: וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ חֲגוּרִים כָּלִי מִלְחָמָתָם נִצְבִים פֶּתַח הַשַּׁעַר אֲשֶׁר מִבְּנֵי דָן: וַיַּעֲלוּ חֲמִשָּׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים הַהַלְכִים לְרַגֵּל אֶת הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ שָׁמָּה לְקַחוּ אֶת הַפְּסָל וְאֶת הָאֶפּוֹד וְאֶת הַתְּרַפִּים וְאֶת הַמִּסְכָּה וְהַכְּהֵן נִצַּב פֶּתַח הַשַּׁעַר וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת הָאִישׁ הַחֲגוּר כָּלִי הַמִּלְחָמָה: וְאֵלֶּה בָּאוּ בֵּית מִיכָה וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת פְּסָל הָאֶפּוֹד וְאֶת הַתְּרַפִּים וְאֶת הַמִּסְכָּה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵיהֶם הַכְּהֵן מָה אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ הַחֲרַשׁ שִׁים יָדְךָ עַל פִּיךָ וְלֹךְ עִמָּנוּ וְהִנֵּה לָנוּ לְאֹב וּלְכֹהֵן הַטוֹב | הַיּוֹתֵךְ כֹּהֵן לְבֵית אִישׁ אֶחָד אוֹ הַיּוֹתֵךְ כֹּהֵן לְשִׁבְט וּלְמִשְׁפָּחָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיִּיטֵב לָב הַכְּהֵן וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאֶפּוֹד וְאֶת הַתְּרַפִּים וְאֶת הַפְּסָל וַיָּבֹא בְּקִרְבַּ הָעַם: וַיִּפְּנוּ וַיִּלְכוּ וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת הַטֵּף וְאֶת הַמִּקְנֵה וְאֶת הַכְּבוֹדָה לְפָנֵיהֶם: הִמָּה הִרְחִיקוּ מִבֵּית מִיכָה וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵתִים אֲשֶׁר עִם בֵּית מִיכָה נִזְעָקוּ וַיִּדְבְּקוּ אֶת בְּנֵי דָן: וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל בְּנֵי דָן וַיִּסְבּוּ פָּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְמִיכָה מָה לָךְ כִּי נִזְעָקְתָּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְקַחְתֶּם וְאֶת הַכְּהֵן וּתְלָכוּ וּמָה לִּי עוֹד וּמָה זֶה תֹּאמְרוּ אֵלַי מָה לָךְ: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו בְּנֵי דָן אֶל תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלְךָ עִמָּנוּ פֶּן יִפְגְּעוּ בְכֶם אַנְשִׁים מְרִי נִפְשׁ וְאֶסְפַּתָּה נִפְשֶׁךָ וּנְפֹשׁ בֵּיתְךָ: וַיִּלְכוּ בְנֵי דָן לְדְרַכְכֶם וַיִּרְא מִיכָה כִּי חֲזָקִים הִמָּה מִמָּנוּ וַיִּפֶן וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶל בֵּיתוֹ: וְהִמָּה לְקַחוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר עֹשֶׂה מִיכָה וְאֶת הַכְּהֵן אֲשֶׁר הָיָה לוֹ וַיָּבֹאוּ עַל לִישׁ עַל עִם שִׁקֵּט וּבִטָּח וַיִּכּוּ אוֹתָם לְפִי חֲרָב וְאֶת הָעִיר

שָׂרְפוּ בְּאֵשׁ: וַאִין מְצִיל כִּי רְחוּקָה הִיא מִצִּידוֹן וְדָבַר אֵין לָהֶם עִם אָדָם וְהִיא בְּעֵמֶק אֲשֶׁר לְבֵית רְחוּב וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת הָעִיר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ: וַיִּקְרְאוּ שֵׁם הָעִיר דָּן בְּשֵׁם דָּן אֲבִיהֶם אֲשֶׁר יוֹלֵד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאוֹלָם לִישׁ שֵׁם הָעִיר לְרֵאשֹׁנָה: וַיִּקְיְמוּ לָהֶם בְּנֵי דָן אֶת הַפֶּסֶל וַיהוֹנָתָן בֶּן גֵּרָשָׁם בֶּן מְנַשֶּׁה הוּא וּבְנָיו הָיוּ כַהֲנִים לְשִׁבְטֵי הַדָּנִי עַד יוֹם גְּלוֹת הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּשְׁיְמוּ לָהֶם אֶת פֶּסֶל מִיֶּכָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה כָּל יְמֵי הַיּוֹת בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשִׁלָּה: שׁוֹפְטִים יח:א-לא

In those days there was no king in Israel; and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought for itself an inheritance to live in; for till that day all their inheritance had not yet fallen to them among the tribes of Israel. And the sons of Dan sent of their family five men from their borders, men of valor, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said to them, Go, search the land; who when they came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. When they were by the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young man the Levite; and they turned aside, and said to him, Who brought you here? and what do you do in this place? and what have you here? And he said to them, Thus and thus deals Micah with me, and has hired me, and I am his priest. And they said to him, Ask counsel, we pray you, of G-d, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. And the priest said to them, Go in peace; before the L-rd is your way wherever you go. - Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people who were there, how they lived in safety, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no one in the land that put them to shame in any thing, nor was there a hereditary ruler; and they were far from the Sidonians, and had no business with any man. And they came to their brothers to Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brothers said to them, What do you say? And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them; for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good; and are you idle? Do not be slow to go, and to enter to possess the land. When you go, you shall come to an unsuspecting people, and to a large land; for G-d has given it to your hands; a place where there is no lack of any thing that is in the earth. And from there went from the family of the Danites, from Zorah and from Eshtaol, six hundred men girded with weapons of war. And they went up, and camped in Kiriath-Jearim, in Judah; therefore they called that place Mahaneh-Dan till this day; behold, it is behind Kiriath-Jearim. And they passed from there to Mount Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah. Then answered the five men who went to spy out the country of Laish, and said to their brothers, Do you know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and an engraved image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what you have to do. And they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, to the house of Micah, and greeted him. And the six hundred men girded with their weapons of war, who were of the sons of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. And the five men who went to spy out the land went up, and came in there, and took the engraved image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and the priest stood in the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men who were girded with weapons of war. And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest to them, What are you doing? And they said to him, Hold your peace, lay your hand upon your mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest; Is it better for you to be a priest in the house of one man, or that you should be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the engraved image, and went in the midst of the people. So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who were in the houses near to Micah's house were called out, and overtook the sons of Dan. And they shouted to the sons of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said to Micah, What ails you, that you come with such a company? And he said, You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you go

away; and what have I more? and how then do you say to me, What ails you? And the sons of Dan said to him, Do not raise your voice among us, lest angry fellows run upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household. And the sons of Dan went their way; and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house. And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came to Laish, to a people who were quiet and unsuspecting; and they struck them with the edge of the sword, and burned the city with fire. And there was no savior, because it was far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with any man; and it was in the valley that lies by Beth-Rehob. And they built a city, and lived there. And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was Laish at the first. And the sons of Dan set up the engraved image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Ma(n)asseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set up for themselves Micah's engraved image, which he had made, all the time that the house of G-d was in Shiloh. **Judges 18:1-31**

C.

תניא, רבי נתן אומר: מגרב לשילה שלשה מילין, והיה עשן המערכה ועשן פסל מיכה מתערבין זה בזה. בקשו מלאכי השרת לדוחפו, אמר להן הקדוש ברוך הוא: הניחו לו, שפתו מצויה לעוברי דרכים. סנהדרין קג:

It has been taught: R. Nathan said: From Gareb to Shiloah is a distance of three mils, and the smoke of the altar and that of Micah's image intermingled. The ministering angels wished to thrust Micah away, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to them, 'Let him alone, because his bread is available for wayfarers.' **Sanhedrin 103b**