



Two links

- Classes on the Book of Judges <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=8423>
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Layers of Betrayal

1. Of Others

- 14:3 The Philistine Wife
- 16:17 The Haircut
- 16:26 The Philistine Youth?

2. By Others

- 14:15 The riddle
- 14:20 His wife, given away
- 15:6 The Philistines who attacked his wife and in-laws?
- 15:12 The tribe of Judah
- 16:2 The *zonah*?
- 16:18 The haircut

3. Jerusalem Talmud, Terumot 8:4

We have learned: If groups of people were traveling on the road and they encountered non-Jews, who said, "Give us one of yours and we will kill him, or we will kill all of you," then even if all of them will be killed, they may not surrender a single life of Israel. If the attackers designated one, as happened with Sheva ben Bichri [who rebelled against the throne], they surrender him and are not killed.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Only if the victim is liable for death like Sheva ben Bichri.

Rabbi Yochanan said: Even if he is not liable for death like Sheva ben Bichri.

4. Jerusalem Talmud, Terumot 8:4

Ulla bar Koshev was demanded by the government, and he fled to Lod, to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. They surrounded the area and said, "If you don't give him to us, we will destroy the area!" Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi appeased him, and turned him over to them. Elijah, who is remembered for the good, was accustomed to appearing to him, and now he did not. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi fasted multiple fasts, and [Elijah] appeared to him. [Elijah] said to him, "Shall I appear to traitors?!" He replied, "Did I not follow the mishnah [lesson]?" He responded, "Is this the lesson of the pious?!"

5. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef (20th century Egypt, Israel), Yabia Omer 10:Yoreh Deah 6:2

It is also possible that they thought he would be saved from them, as happened in the end.

Samson's Faith

6. Judges 13:8

And Manoach appealed to Gd, saying: Please, my Master! The Man of Gd whom You sent, let him come to us again, and show us what we shall do to the youth who is to be born.

7. Expressions of Faith

- 14:3 "My eyes"
- 15:12 I'll go quietly
- 15:18 Gd, please send me water!
- 16:2 Here I am, come and get me!
- 16:17 Divulging his secret
- 16:20 I will rise!

8. Judges 16:20 (JPS 1985 edition, c/o sefaria.org)

She cried, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" And he awoke from his sleep, thinking he would break loose and shake himself free as he had the other times. For he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

9. Rabbi David Kimchi (12th-13th century France), Radak to Shoftim 16:20

Had he not told her his entire heart, knowing that when he would shave his strength would leave him...? But he forgot in his sleep that which he had told her... Or the meaning of "And he did not know" is that he knew that his strength had left him, but he did not know that Gd had left him, for he thought that even though his strength had left him, Gd would help him this time lest he fall into the hands of the Philistines.

Out of Chances

10. Judges 15:19 (JPS 1985 edition, c/o sefaria.org)

So Gd split open the hollow which is at Lehi, and the water gushed out of it; he drank, regained his strength, and revived.

11. Judges 16:15-20 (JPS 1985 edition, c/o sefaria.org)

Then she said to him, "How can you say you love me, when you don't confide in me? This makes three times that you've deceived me and haven't told me what makes you so strong."

Finally, after she had nagged him and pressed him constantly, he was wearied to death and he confided everything to her. He said to her, "No razor has ever touched my head, for I have been a nazirite to Gd since I was in my mother's womb. If my hair were cut, my strength would leave me and I should become as weak as an ordinary man." Sensing that he had confided everything to her, Delilah sent for the lords of the Philistines, with this message: "Come up once more, for he has confided everything to me." And the lords of the Philistines came up and brought the money with them. She lulled him to sleep on her lap. Then she called in a man, and she had him cut off the seven locks of his head; thus she weakened him and made him helpless: his strength slipped away from him. She cried, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" And he awoke from his sleep, thinking he would break loose and shake himself free as he had the other times. For he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

12. Prof. Yechezkel Kaufmann, Shoftim, pg. 243

Here we see magical substance change its nature, a magical idea clothed in the form of a religious idea... Beside the magical sign we find its Israelite translation. Immediately after "And his strength left him" it says, "that Gd had left him."

Samson Persists

13. Judges 16:21-30 (JPS 1985 edition, c/o sefaria.org)

²¹The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and shackled him in bronze fetters, and he became a mill slave in the prison. After his hair was cut off, it began to grow back.

²³Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon and to make merry. They chanted, "Our god has delivered into our hands Our enemy Samson." When the people saw him, they sang praises to their god, chanting, "Our god has delivered into our hands The enemy who devastated our land, And who slew so many of us." As their spirits rose, they said, "Call Samson here and let him dance for us." Samson was fetched from the prison, and he danced for them. Then they put him between the pillars.

²⁶And Samson said to the boy who was leading him by the hand, "Let go of me and let me feel the pillars that the temple rests upon, that I may lean on them." Now the temple was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, and there were some three thousand men and women on the roof watching Samson dance.

²⁸Then Samson called to the Lord, "O Lord Gd! Please remember me, and give me strength just this once, O Gd, to take revenge of the Philistines, if only for one of my two eyes." He embraced the two middle pillars that the temple rested upon, one with his right arm and one with his left, and leaned against them; Samson cried, "Let me die with the Philistines!" and he pulled with all his might. The temple came crashing down on the lords and on all the people in it. Those who were slain by him as he died outnumbered those who had been slain by him when he lived.

14. Malbim to Judges 16:22

It said this with a strong verb, because it grew unusually quickly. Otherwise we would be troubled: How were the Philistines not careful to shave him from time to time, knowing his strength depended on his hair?

15. Don Isaac Abarbanel to Judges 16:22

It would be inappropriate to think that Samson's strength was in the hair of his head, naturally, and that therefore it left when the hair left, and his strength returned when it started to grow again. But his strength was miraculous, when he kept his *nezirut*.

16. Prof. Yehuda Elitzur, Daat Mikra to Judges 16:25, 16:26

Samson went along with it with joy and desire; this was an opportunity for him... And it appears that Samson knew the building from before this.

17. Talmud, Sotah 10a

Samson said before Gd: Master of the Universe, remember for me the twenty years I judged Israel, and I never said to any of them, "Bring my staff from one place to another."

18. Ralbag to Judges 16, Lesson 22

He was suited for this due to his seduction by these lowly things, and therefore he asked to die with the Philistines, since he did not deserve a greater miracle then...

19. Rabbi Shemuel Eidels, Maharsha to Sotah 10a

One could also say, based on our Talmud's idea that he was punished with his eyes for rebelling with his eyes, that he said that it was enough for him to be punished with one of his two eyes. For the other, he said to give him revenge.

Review Questions

- (1) Where do we see Samson betraying others?
- (2) Where do we see Samson being betrayed by others?
- (3) What are three justifications for the tribe of Judah handing Samson to the Philistines?
- (4) Where do we see Samson express faith in Gd, before the story of his death?
- (5) Where do we see Samson express faith in Gd, in the story of his death?