

Brief summary

- Chapter 13
  - Shimshon's mother, and then his father, are informed by a malach (or Pinchas) of his impending birth
  - Shimshon's mother is to observe restrictions during pregnancy, and Shimshon will be a form of nazir despite the absence of a vow
  - Shimshon's nezirut may be for self-control, and may also co-opt magical images for a religious lesson
  - Shimshon's mother's righteousness is contrasted with the three Philistine women in Shimshon's life
- Chapter 14
  - Shimshon falls for a Philistine woman; his intentions are much-debated, but Gd wants this to lead to war
  - The relationship seems to be shallow, based on the visual at least at the outset
  - Shimshon's parents are not supportive of this relationship; even if intermarriage with Philistines is not prohibited at this stage, it is seen as a betrayal of the Jews
  - En route to Timnatah, Shimshon kills a lion, and later he finds honey in it, giving him the basis for a wager/riddle at the wedding party
  - The Philistines cannot solve the riddle and they ask his wife to have Shimshon back off of the wager, but she gives them the answer to the riddle

14:18-20 The Ill-Fated Party (continued)

1. Beloved calves Shemuel II 3:5, Hosheia 10:11

2. Talmud, Sanhedrin 21a

אמר רב: עגלה זו מיכל, ולמה נקרא שמה עגלה - שחביבה עליו כעגלה

Rav said: *Eglah* is Michal. Why was she called *Eglah*? Because she was beloved to him, like a calf.

3. Troubled calves Bereishit 15:9 vs. Shemot 32:4

4. Radak to Shoftim 14:19

קבלו רבותינו ז"ל כי מותר היה לו ליטמא למתים אף על פי שהיה נזיר... ולולי קבלתם היינו יכולין לומר כי היה מכה בפלשתים באבן... או נוכל לומר כי היה נזהר מלהטמא למת אלא במקום מצוה והמלחמה בפלשתי' מצוה היתה להלחם בהם ולהושיע את ישראל מידם, ומד' ה' הכל כמו שכתוב "כי מד' הוא", והנה קבלו רבו' ז"ל כי נזיר מטמא למת מצוה:

Our Rabbis had a tradition that Shimshon was permitted to become *tamei* for the dead, even though he was a *nazir*... And if not for their tradition, we could say that he struck the Philistines with a rock... Or we could say that he was careful not to become *tamei* from the dead other than in the case of a mitzvah, and the war with the Philistines was a mitzvah, to fight them and to rescue Israel from their hand. It was all from Gd, as it said, "for it was from Gd." And our Rabbis had a tradition that a *nazir* may become *tamei* for a *met mitzvah*.

5. Summary of Perek 14

- Why did Shimshon pursue romance in Timnatah?
- Why did Gd send the lion and the bees?
- The moral of the riddle story

15:1-8 Revenge, and a Third Fight

6. Talmud, Sotah 10a

מאי שנא שועלים? אמר רבי איבו בר נגדי א"ר חייא בר אבא: אמר שמשון: יבא מי שחוזר לאחוריו ויפרע מפלשתים שחזרו בשבועתן. Why foxes? Rabbi Eivo bar Nagri cited Rabbi Chiya bar Abba: Shimshon said, "Let the one that retreats come punish the Philistines, who retreated from their oath."

7. Radak to Shoftim 15:4

למה שועלים? לפי שהשועל מנהגו לחזור לאחוריו, לפיכך היה דבק הלפיד בין שתי הזנבות, כי כל אחד מהם היה חוזר לאחוריו ולא היה נפרד מחבירו ומתוך כך היה הלפיד דבק בהם, ואלולי כן היה זה הולך לפניו וזה לפניו והלפיד נופל מביניהם. ורז"ל דרשו...  
Why foxes? Because foxes customarily retreat. Therefore, the torch would stay between their two tails, for each would retreat and would not separate from the other, and so the torch would stay with them. Otherwise, this one would go forward and that one forward, and the torch would fall from between them. And our sages taught...

8. Ralbag to Shoftim 15:2

ולאחור תנועת השועלים היה בוער האש בכל מקום שיעברו בו טרם עברם ממנו.  
Because the foxes' motion would be slow, the fire would burn everywhere they would go, before they would move on.

9. Malbim to Shoftim 15:4

רמז להם כי כן שמו לפיד בין שני רעים, כמ"ש (משלי ו:כז-כט) "היחתה איש אש בחיקו וכו' כן הבא אל אשת רעהו."  
He hinted to them that they had placed a fire between two friends, as Mishlei 6:27-29 says, "Can a person stoke a fire in his lap... So, too, one who lives with his friend's spouse."

10. Rashi to Shoftim 15:7

אם תעשון כזאת - ושמא רגילין אתם בכך לתת אשתו של זה לזה:  
"If you do thus" – Perhaps you routinely do this, giving this person's spouse to another.

11. Malbim to Shoftim 15:7

אם תעשון כזאת. ר"ל כי מה ששרפו אותה לא היה בעבור המעשה שזנתה, רק להשקיט כעס שמשון, אמר "אני חשבתי שדי בעונש ממון, אבל אחר שאתם תעשון כזאת להעניש בעונש נפשות א"כ גם אני אבקש מכם נפשות כמנהגכם."  
"If you do thus" – Meaning, burning her was not [punishment for] her infidelity, but to appease Shimshon's wrath. He said, "I thought it would suffice to punish you financially, but now that you have done thus, executing capital punishment, I will also take lives as you do."

12. Radak to Shoftim 15:8

ת"י "פרשין עם רגלאין", "שוק' הוא הרגלי ו'ירך' הוא הרוכב. ויש לפרש "שוק על ירך" על הנופלים בנוסם, כלו' כי לא הפך אחד מהם פניו אליו ולא עמד איש בפניו, אלא כלם נסו מפניו, והכה אותם בנוסם. ונופלים שוק על ירך כי הנס ונופל על פניו מתהפך שוקו על ירכו:  
Yonatan explained, "charioteers with infantry," for *shok* refers to the infantry and *yerech* refers to the rider. And one could explain *shok al yerech* regarding those who fell while fleeing, meaning that none of them turned to face [Shimshon] and none of them stood before him, but all of them fled from him, and he struck them when they fled. They fell *shok al yerech* because when one flees and falls on his face, his *shok* flips over his *yerech*.