

12:8-15 Three Mini-Shoftim (continued)

1. Rabbi Michael Rotenberg, **בועז הוא אבנן – למשמעותו של הזיהוי**

Introduction to Shimshon

2. Outline of Perakim 13-16

- Chapter 13 – The instruction of Hatzlelponit regarding Shimshon
- Chapters 14-15 – Shimshon and the woman from Timnat
  - 14:1-9 – Courting the woman
  - 14:10-20 – The ill-fated party
  - 15:1-15:8 – Revenge with 300 foxes
  - 15:9-20 – Jewish betrayal, and recovery
- 16:1-3 – Shimshon and the zonah
- 16:4-20 – Shimshon and Delilah
- 16:21-31 – Shimshon's End

3. Identity of the Philistines Successful invaders

4. Bereishit 21:32; Shemot 13:17; Shemot 23:31; Shemuel I 6:18

וַיִּכְרְתוּ בְרִית בְּבֶאֱר שִׁבְעֵי וַיִּקְּמוּ אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֵל שֶׁר צָבְאוֹ וַיָּשְׁבוּ אֶל אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים:  
וַיְהִי בְשִׁלַּח פָּרְעֹה אֶת הָעָם וְלֹא נָחַם אֱלֹקִים דְּרֹךְ אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים...  
וַשְׁתִּי אֶת גְּבֻלָּה מִיַּם סוּף וְעַד יָם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּמִמְדְּבָר עַד הַנֶּהָר...  
וַעֲבָרֵי הַזֶּהָב מִסָּפֵר כָּל עָרֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְחֻמֶּשֶׁת הַסָּרְנִים...

5. Amos 9:7

הֲלוֹא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּפְלִשְׁתִּיִּים מִכַּפְתּוֹר וְאַרְם מִקִּיר:

Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Crete and Aram from Kir?

6. Vayikra 22:2

דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל בָּנָיו וַיִּנָּזְרוּ מִקֹּדְשֵׁי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל...

Speak to Aharon and his sons, and they will separate from the consecrated items of the Children of Israel...

7. Talmud, Rosh haShanah 25a-b

ויאמר שמואל אל העם ד' אשר עשה את משה ואת אהרן, ואומר וישלח ד' את ירבעל ואת בדן ואת יפתח ואת שמואל - ירובעל זה גבעון ולמה נקרא שמו ירובעל? שעשה מריבה עם הבעל. בדן זה שמשון ולמה נקרא שמו בדן דאתי מן יפתח כמשמעו. ואומר משה ואהרן בכהניו ושמואל בקראי שמו. שקל הכתוב שלשה קלי עולם כשלשה חמורי עולם, לומר לך: ירובעל בדורו - כמשה בדורו, בדן בדורו - כאהרן בדורו, יפתח בדורו - כשמואל בדורו. ללמדך שאפילו קל שבקלין ונתמנה פרנס על הצבור - הרי הוא כאביר שבאבירים

- "And Samuel said to the nation [after coronating Saul]: Gd, who made Moshe and Aharon, (Samuel I 12:6)"
- "And Gd sent Yerubaal [Gidon] and Bedan [Shimshon] and Yiftach and Samuel (Samuel I 12:11)" – Yerubaal is Gidon, and why was he called Yerubaal? For he fought with Baal. Bedan is Shimshon, and why was he called Bedan? For he was from Dan. Yiftach is as he sounds.
- "Moshe, and Aharon with his priests, and Samuel among those who call out in His Name (Psalms 99:6)".

The text equated the world's three lightweights with the world's three heavyweights, to tell you: Yerubaal in his generation is as Moshe in his generation, Bedan in his generation is as Aharon in his generation, Yiftach in his generation is as Samuel in his generation. To teach you that even the lightest of the light, if appointed as community leader, is like the mightiest of the mighty.

8. Prof. Yehuda Elitzur, Daat Mikra edition of Shoftim, pg. קלו

עקר הלקח שספר שופטים מבקש לשנן לבאי עולם הוא כי יש מנהיג לבירה זו ושום דבר אינו מתרחש בלעדי ד'. כאשר ישראל נמסרים ביד אויב הרי זה משום שעשו את הרע בעיני ד', וכאשר הם נושעים מידי שוטיהם וצורריהם, הרי זה משום שקצרה נפשו בעמל ישראל כי זעקו אליו. שונים הם האנשים המושיעים את ישראל אף על פי שכולם בשם 'שופטים' יקראו. הצד השווה בכלם כי ד' הקים אותם ורוחו היתה עליהם...

The essential message which the book of Shoftim seeks to repeat/sharpen for all who enter this world is that there is a Director of this building, and nothing happens without Gd. When Israel are given into the hand of the enemy, it is because they have done that which is evil in Gd's eyes, and when they are rescued from their raiders and foes it is because Gd has tired of the struggles of Israel for they have cried out to Him. The rescuers of Israel are varied, even though all of them are called "Shoftim". The common denominator for all of them is that Gd established them, and His spirit was upon them...

9. Don Isaac Abarbanel, Commentary to Shemuel I 12:10

ואפשר לומר עוד שזכר מהשופטים אחד נביא ממדרגה שפלה כירובעל גדעון, ואחד נפעם השכל כשמשון, ואחד משכיל ונבון כיפתח ולא נביא, ואחד נביא מובהק כשמואל, וזכר אם כן כל מיני השופטים, נביא קטן גדעון, נביא גדול שמואל, שופט משכיל יפתח, שופט סכל שמשון, וזה להודיע שאין מעצור לד' להושיע ברב או במעט...

It is also possible that [Shemuel] mentioned from the judges one who was a prophet on a low level, like Yerubaal/Gidon, and one of weak intellect like Shimshon, and one who was insightful and wise like Yiftach, who was not a prophet, and one who was a brilliant prophet like Shemuel. And so he mentioned all kinds of judges – a small prophet Gidon, a great prophet Shemuel, an insightful judge Yiftach, a foolish judge Shimshon. This informs us that nothing prevents Gd from rescuing via great or small...

10. Prof. Yechezkel Kaufmann, Sefer Shoftim, pg. 243-244 (my tr.)

Many scholars have tried in various eras to give the stories of Shimshon a mythological explanation and to demonstrate that Shimshon is only an incarnation of the god of the Sun or of sons of a Sun god. Their template is Melqart, Heracles and the like. This is hinted by the name Shimshon. Shimshon splits a young lion, and the lion represents the Sun god. Also, Gilgamesh and Heracles, sons of Sun gods, kill lions. And in the lion's body Shimshon finds honey, and honey is the gift of the Sun god. The Greek Aristaeus, discoverer of honey, is also an image of the Sun god. Finding honey in the lion's body is meaningful, for the bee gives its honey when the Sun is in the constellation of Leo. The foxes, which Shimshon sends into the Philistine fields, represent blight, which the Sun's glare inflicts on the standing grain. The locks of Shimshon's head, in which his strength is stored, represent the rays of the Sun, storing the strength of the Sun. Gilgamesh, Heracles, Helios and the like have locks or [long] hair. And so on. But this explanation is intellectually unsatisfying.

The name Shimshon may be rooted in service of the Sun god, and it may be Canaanite – but this demonstrates nothing regarding the nature of Shimshon himself. And the proofs from the stories are only *midrashim mepulpalim*. The gods of the nations live and act like people, and for every human affair and deed one could find a model in the mythological stories, or explain them mythologically. Shimshon splits a lion, and the mythological heroes also kill lions. But David killed a lion, and the Assyrian kings gloried in killing lions. And had Shimshon killed an ox or donkey, one could also have found a mythological model for this. Gilgamesh killed the ox of the heavens. And the donkey has a special connection with the Sun god. Honey is a gift of the Sun god, but every other food is also a gift of the Sun god or the Earth god or some other god...

Shimshon's mother

11. Midrash, Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5

מנוח היה מדן ואשתו היתה מיהודה, נמצא שמשון בא משבט דן ומשבט יהודה, שכך אמרו אמיה דמשון הצללפוני שמה, והיא מיוחסת על שבט יהודה...

Manoach was from Dan and his wife was from Yehudah, so that Shimshon came from the tribe of Dan and the tribe of Yehudah, for they said, "Shimshon's mother's name was Hatzlelponi," and she was associated with Yehudah...

## 12. Divrei haYamim I 4:1-5

(א) בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה פָּרִיז חֲצֵרוֹן וְכַרְמֵי וְחֹר וְשׁוּבָל: (ב) וּרְאֵיָה בֶן שׁוּבָל הוֹלִיד אֶת יַסָּת וַיַּסָּת הוֹלִיד אֶת אַחֲוֵי וְאֶת לֵהָד אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת הַצָּרְעָתִי: ס (ג) וְאֵלֶּה אֲבֵי עֵיטָם יִזְרְעָאֵל וְיִשְׁמָא וְיִדְבָּשׁ וְשֵׁם אַחֲוֵיהֶם הַצָּלְפֹּנִי: (ד) וּפְנוּאֵל אֲבִי גֵדֵר וְעֶזֶר אֲבִי חוּשָׁה אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי חֹר בְּכוֹר אֶפְרָתָה אֲבִי בֵית לָקָם:

## 13. Radak to Divrei haYamim I 4:3

מה שהזכיר אחותם וכן הזכיר למעלה בבני זרובבל ושלמית אחותם, אולי לא היתה להם עוד והזכירם, או היו בעלות השם בדורם ונשים חשובות לכך הזכירם כמו סרח בת אשר:

It mentioned their sister, and it likewise mentioned "And their sister Shlomit" earlier with the sons of Zerubavel. Perhaps they had no others and it mentioned these, or they had reputations in their generation and they were women of stature, and so it mentioned them, like Serach daughter of Asher.

## 14. Midrash, Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5

הרשעים קודמים לשמם – "נבל שמו" "גלית שמו" "שבע בן בכרי שמו". אבל הצדיקים שמן קודמם "ושמו אלקנה" "ושמו ישי" "ושמו בועז" "ושמו מרדכי" "ושמו מנוח" דומין לבוראן "ושמו ד".

The wicked precede their names – "Naval was his name" "Goliath was his name" "Sheva ben Bichri was his name". But with the righteous, their name precedes them, "And his name was Elkanah" "And his name was Yishai" "And his name was Boaz" "And his name was Mordechai" "And his name was Manoach" – like their Creator, "And His Name is Gd."

## 15. Midrash, Pesikta d'Rav Kahana 20:1

שבע עקרות הן, שרה רבקה רחל ולאה ואשתו של מנוח וחנה וציון.

There are seven *akarot*: Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, Leah, Manoach's wife, Chanah and Zion.