



"AL HAPEREK"

A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

Shoftim Perakim 13-14

Perek 13 describes the tidings of the miraculous birth of Shimshon, a Nazirite from the time of conception. The tempestuous and enigmatic figure of Shimshon is revealed in all its power in Perek 14.

General Overview < "ויקראו בספר בתורת האלהים"

Perek 13

- ❶ Pesukim 1, 2, 23, and 24 create a double framework for the story of Shimshon's birth. How does this framework literarily reflect the prevalent issues of the period?
- ❷ How do the laws of the Nazirite detailed in Bamidbar 6:1-21 differ from the instructions given to the wife of Manoach concerning her future son? How do the changes in the laws enable Shimshon to fulfill his destiny?
- ❸ Why is the news about the predicted birth of a son brought specifically to the wife of Manoach? Why are both Manoach and his wife surprised by their encounter with the angel? Compare to Shoftim 6:11-19.

Perek 14

- 4 Women play an important role in the stories of Shimshon (14:2-4; 17; 15:1-3; 16:1-2, 4-5, and 17-18). How does the influence of these women on his life help shape Shimshon's unique path?
- 5 The phrases "went down" and "went up" are repeated several times in the perek. Examine the meaning of these terms in their respective contexts.

In-depth Study < "מִפְּנֵי שׁוֹם שְׁכָל" >

- 6 A barren woman and a Nazirite son are central themes in only two stories in Tanach. Compare the story of Shimshon's birth and deeds with the story of Shmuel's birth and his dedication to a life of service in the Temple at Shiloh (I Shmuel 1). Examine the different ways each man's destiny is brought to fruition.
- 7 Perek 14 is filled with revealed and hidden riddles. Identify the riddles in the perek. Does each have only one solution?

Appendix < "וַיְבִינוּ בַּמִּקְרָא" >

"Shimshon went down to Timnah" (14:1)

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said: It was the way to marriage. One verse says: "*Shimshon went down to Timnah.*" A different verse (Bereshit 38:13) says: "*Behold, your father-in-law went up to Timnah.*" Rav said: "*to Timnah*" means two women from Timnah--one was Yehuda's and one was Shimshon's. Rabbi Simon said: There was one woman from Timnah. Why, then, did it speak of her going down and coming up? Rather [to show] that Yehuda's, because she was for the sake of Heaven, it speaks of "going up" and Shimshon's, because she was not for the sake of Heaven, it speaks of "going down."

(Talmud Yerushalmi Sotah, page 7a, halacha 8)