

# MAN "AL HAPEREK"

## A Renewed Meeting with Tanach

### Shoftim Perakim 15-16

The turbulent character of Shimshon is revealed to us in these perakim through tales of wars, women, and entrapments that accompany the last judge to his tragic end.

### General Overview < "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים"

#### Perek 15

- ❶ What objects does Shimshon choose as his weapons of war? How do his choices reflect his overall attributes and character?
- ❷ a) How does the complex relationship between Shimshon and the people of Yehudah in pesukim 9-12 reflect the problems of the period? Note the geographic proximity of the two tribes.  
b) Examine the following pesukim in the book of Shoftim: 3:27-28; 4:10; 6:35; and 7:23-24. How do these pesukim help us understand the behavior of the people of Yehudah towards Shimshon?
- ❸ Throughout the perakim devoted to Shimshon's life, twice he turns to God in prayer (15:18; 16:28). What causes Shimshon to pray in precisely those two cases? What do his prayers teach us about his understanding of the source of his physical might?

## Perek 16

- 4 The "three-four" numerical pattern is a literary device in which the text deals with the same topic three times in a particular manner, and then on the fourth repetition a significant change occurs in the situation. How do we see this pattern utilized in the story of Shimshon and Delilah? Why does Shimshon try to hide the true source of his strength?
- 5 "...for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb" (13:5). What expectations do people have from a leader who is chosen before birth? What relationship exists between the Nazirite and God? See Yirmiyahu 1:4-11. Does Shimshon fulfill these expectations?

## In-depth Study < "מִפְנֵי שְׁשׁוֹם שְׁכָל"

- 6 What is the relationship between the number of years that Shimshon (16:31), Ehud (3:30), Devorah (5:31), and Gidon (8:28) judged (in their respective order)? How do the changes in the number of years reflect the development between the beginning and the end of this period?
- 7 The stories of Shimshon serve as a closing to the section of the individual judges. In this section, we encounter many unforeseen, anomalous leaders. What unusual characteristics does each of these leaders possess? How can this be explained as a reflection of the period as a whole?

## Appendix < "וַיְבִינּוּ בַּמִּקְרָא"

The whole story of Samson, then, confirms the biblical principle that all the positive powers in the world, no matter in what form or category, come from the single divine power. As it is written: "Let not thee wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me" (Jeremiah 9:23-24). The wise man glorying in his wisdom is the one who relies on his cleverness, who pretends to know it all, the politician who stands against the prophet, while the prophet is like a "child" receiving his inspiration from a higher wisdom. The figure of Samson expresses the idea of someone being chosen to function as an instrument of the Divine without the use of words. This is what makes him unique among the prophets of the Bible, who are for the most part prophets of wisdom or at least of wisdom of the heart.

(Rav Adin Steinsaltz, Biblical Images, p.132)



**Statue of Shimshon in Ashdod-in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust and in Israel's wars**

Artist: Baruch Vind • Photography: Anat Tziekler

מכון תורני לנשים ע"ש שרה בת יצחק יעקב רענגרט  
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