



“For Your salvation, I long, Hashem”

The Lesson of Faith to Be Learned from Shimshon Who Toppled the Support Pillars of the Pelishtim Only after Losing His Powers

This week's parsha is parshas Vayechi. We will focus on the mysterious berachah Yaakov Avinu bestowed upon shevet Dan before passing away. The entire berachah relates to Shimshon ben Manoach, who was a judge from shevet Dan. Here are the relevant pesukim (Bereishis 49, 16): **“דן ידין עמו כאחד שבטי ישראל. יהי דן נחש עלי דרך שפיפון עלי אורח”** **Dan will gain justice for his people, as one, the tribes of Yisrael. Dan will be a snake on the highway, a serpent on the path, that bites a horse's heels, so its rider falls backward. For Your salvation, I long, Hashem!** Here is Rashi's commentary based on the Midrash:

“Dan will gain justice for his people”—He will avenge the vengeance of his people from the Pelishtim. “As one the tribes of Yisrael”—All Yisrael will be as one with him, and he will vindicate them all. He (Yaakov) prophesied this nevuah about Shimshon. “That bites a horse's heels”—Such is the way of a snake. He (Yaakov) compared him (Dan) to a snake that bites a horse's heels. “So its rider falls backwards” even though it (the snake) did not touch him. This is analogous to Shimshon (Shoftim 16, 29) who toppled the building's two support pillars, and those on the roof died, without Shimshon touching them. “For Your salvation, I long, Hashem”—He (Yaakov) prophesied that the Pelishtim would gouge out his eyes, and he would be destined to proclaim (ibid. 28), “Please remember me, and please give me strength, just this once.”

The Rashbam, Rashi's grandson and one of the Tosafists, disagrees vehemently with his holy grandfather's comments without mentioning him by name. Here is a translation of what he writes:

The commentator who says this is about Shimshon did not understand the simple meaning of the passuk, at all. Would Yaakov prophesy about a person who was captured by the Pelishtim, had his eyes gouged out, and died a terrible death, chalilah?! Rather, he was prophesying about the shevet of Dan—the one who trailed and gathered the stragglers of all the other camps . . . He had to fight off all the nations that pursued them . . . For, they were brave and mighty. Hence, Yaakov said, “Dan will gain justice for his people”—meaning that he would avenge his people; “as one the tribes of Yisrael”—means that he exacted vengeance for them and protected them from those pursuing them.

Nevertheless, we will stick with the commentary of Rashi—**ר'בן ש'ל ישראל** (acronym)—who chose to interpret these three pesukim according to the teachings of Chazal in the Gemara and the Midrashim that we will refer to. In fact, the following Midrash states explicitly (Bamidbar Rabbah 14, 8): **Yaakov's berachah to Dan was solely about Shimshon.** Thus, it is incumbent upon us to reconcile the objections of the Rashbam to this interpretation.

“As one the tribes of Yisrael”—Like HKB”H the Only One of the World

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing the intriguing statements of Chazal concerning Shimshon's greatness. As mentioned, this is alluded to by the first passuk of Yaakov Avinu's berachah to Dan: **“דן ידין עמו כאחד שבטי ישראל”**. Here is what they expounded in the Gemara (Sotah 10a): **אמר רבי יוחנן שמשון דן את ישראל כאביהם**

Rabbi Yochanan said: Shimshon judged Yisrael like their Father in Heaven, as it states, “Dan will judge his people as one.” In other words, they learn from the word “כאחד”—**as One**—that the passuk is alluding to HKB”H, the One and Only. They also expounded in the Midrash (B.R. 98, 13): **“Dan will avenge his people, the tribes of Yisrael will be united as one” . . . Just as the Only One of the world requires no assistance, similarly, Shimshon ben Manoach did not require assistance.**

Now, Yaakov Avinu, the elite of the Avos, personified “emet,” as it is written (Michah 7, 20): **“תתן אמת ליעקב”—grant “emet” to Yaakov.** He attested via his “ruach hakodesh” that Shimshon would judge Yisrael “כאחד”—like HKB”H, the unique One and Only. Furthermore, in the Gemara just cited, Rabbi Yochanan continues to extol the praises of Shimshon: **“ואמר רבי יוחנן שמשון על שמו של הקב”ה נקרא, שנאמר כי שמש ומגן ה’ אלקים וגו’... מזה הקב”ה מגין על כל העולם כולו, אף שמשון מגין בדורו על ישראל.”** **Shimshon was named after HKB”H.** In Tehillim (84, 12), HKB”H is described as a sun and a shield, Who protects the entire world; **so, too, Shimshon**—whose name is related to word “shemesh,” meaning sun—**shielded and protected Yisrael in his generation.**

In the second passuk of the berachah Yaakov Avinu bestowed upon Dan, his love and esteem for Shimshon is also evident: **“Dan will be a snake on the highway, a serpent on the path, that bites a horse’s heels, so its rider falls backward.”** As they taught in the Midrash (ibid. 14), Yaakov Avinu sought “rachamim”—divine mercy—for his grandson (descendant) Shimshon. When Shimshon toppled the building down on thousands of Pelishtim, Yaakov did not want them to fall on Shimshon. Instead, they miraculously fell behind him, so that Shimshon’s brothers would be able to find his body easily and bury him properly among his own people. This is documented in the following passuk (Shoftim 16, 31): **“וירדו אחיו וכל בית אביהו וישאו אותו ויעלו ויקברו אותו בין צרעה ובין אשתאול בקבר”**—**his brothers and all his father’s household came down and carried him away; they brought him up and buried him between Tzor’ah and Eshtaol, in the burial plot of Manoach, his father.**

The Third Passuk of Yaakov’s Berachah to Dan

This takes us to the third passuk of the berachah bestowed upon Dan by Yaakov Avinu: **“לישועתך קויתי ה’—for Your salvation, I long, Hashem!”** Once again let us

refer to Rashi’s commentary: **Yaakov prophesied that the Pelishtim would gouge out his eyes prompting Shimshon to say: “Please remember me and please give me strength, just this once.”** It is apparent from these comments that Yaakov Avinu prayed to Hashem to assure Shimshon’s success and provide him with “chizuk”—moral support and fortitude—in those final moments of his life—when he sacrificed his life by toppling the building down on himself and thousands of Pelishtim.

What writer can accurately describe these tragic events! As we know, even before he was born, HKB”H sent a malach to inform his mother (ibid. 13, 5): **“כי הנך הרה וילדת בן ומורה לא יעלה על ראשו כי נזיר אלקים יהיה הנער מן הבטן והוא יחל להושיע את ישראל מיד פלשתים”—for you shall conceive and give birth to a son; a rason shall not come upon his head, for the child shall be a “nazir” of Elokim from the womb; and he will begin to save Yisrael from the hand of the Pelishtim.** Woe for the calamity! Notwithstanding, the Pelishtim ultimately revealed the key to Shimshon’s phenomenal strength through his wife Delilah’s betrayal. They succeeded in shaving off the seven locks of his head, gouging out his eyes, and binding him in copper chains. Then they transported him to the temple of their god, Dagon, to laugh at him and humiliate him. Here are the pesukim that chronicle these events (ibid. 16, 28):

“ויקרא שמשון אל ה’ ויאמר אדני אלקים זכרני נא וחסדני נא אך הפעם הזה האלקים ואנקמה נקם אחת משתי עיני מפלשתים. וילפות שמשון את שני עמודי התווך אשר הבית נכון עליהם, ויסמוך עליהם אחד כימינו ואחד בשמאלו, ויאמר שמשון תמות נפשי עם פלשתים, ויט בכח ויפול הבית על הסרגים ועל כל העם אשר בו, והיו המתים אשר המית במותו רבים מאשר המית בחייו.”

Shimshon called out to Hashem and said, “My Lord, Hashem! Remember me and strengthen me just this one time, O G-d, and I will exact vengeance from the Pelishtim for one of my two eyes.” Shimshon grasped the two central columns upon which the building rested, and he leaned on them—one with his right hand and one with his left hand. Shimshon said, “Let me die with the Pelishtim.” He leaned with force, and the building collapsed on the governors and on all the people inside it. The dead whom he killed at his own death were more than he had killed in his lifetime. Rashi comments on the words “vengeance . . . for one of my two eyes” that the merit of one of his eyes should suffice for the vengeance he was exacting

against the Pelishtim, and the merit of his other eye should be reserved for his reward in Olam HaBa.

Based on what we learned from Rashi, Shimshon succeeded in toppling the two central pillars upon a multitude of Pelishtim solely on account of Yaakov's berachah: "לִישׁוּעַתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה'". This is consistent with what they expounded in the Gemara (ibid. 9b) on the passuk (ibid. 13, 25): "וְתַחַל רוּחַ ה' לַפְעָמּוֹ בְּמוֹחָנָה דָּן וְגו', אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמַא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא "The spirit of Hashem began to resound in him in the camp of Dan etc." Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina said: The nevuah of Yaakov Avinu took effect.

The Enigmatic Personality of Shimshon

Thus, it is incumbent upon us to reconcile the glaring contradiction to this interpretation from what we are taught in the following Mishnah (ibid. 9b): "שִׁמְשׁוֹן הָלַךְ אַחֵר עֵינָיו, לְפִיכֵךְ—Shimshon followed his eyes; therefore, the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes, as it is stated (ibid. 16, 21): "The Pelishtim seized him and gouged out his eyes." The Gemara elaborates (ibid.): "תֵּנוּ רַבָּנֵי שְׁמִשׁוֹן בְּעֵינָיו מֵרָדָה, שְׁנֵאמַר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמִשׁוֹן אֶל אָבִיו אוֹתָהּ קַח לִי כִּי הִיא יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵינָיו, לְפִיכֵךְ נִקְרְאוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת עֵינָיו, שְׁנֵאמַר—וַיִּחְזְזוּהוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּנְקְרוּ אֶת עֵינָיו—the Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: Shimshon rebelled with his eyes, as it is stated (ibid. 14, 3): "Shimshon said to his father, 'Take her for me, for she is fitting in my eyes.'" Therefore, the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes, as it is stated: "The Pelishtim seized him and gouged out his eyes."

This elicits the following question: "איני והכתיב ואביו ואמו לא—is it so? But it is written (ibid. 4): "His father and his mother did not know that it was from Hashem." This clearly implies that it was orchestrated from above that Shimshon would marry a daughter of the Pelishtim. The text explains the reason for this (ibid.): "כִּי תוֹאֲנָה הוּא מִבְּקֵשׁ מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים"—for he was seeking a pretext against the Pelishtim—a pretext that would allow him to kill large numbers of Pelishtim without the masses of Yisrael being held accountable. The Gemara answers this question: "כִּי אֵזַל מִיָּהָא בְּתֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵזַל"—when he went to choose her, his motives were not entirely pure; he followed what was proper in his own eyes. In other words, although these events were heavenly ordained, nevertheless he was punished because he demonstrated an element of physical desire.

Even so, the commentaries are not totally satisfied with this answer. In fact, the Rambam writes (Hilchos Isurei Biah 13, 14-16) that Shimshon only married the Pelishtim women after converting them. Thus, it seems implausible that Chazal would say of him: "Shimshon followed his eyes." Furthermore, in relation to Zimri ben Salu and Korach and his assembly, Yaakov Avinu said (Bereishis 49, 6): "בְּסוּדָם אֶל תְּבוֹא נַפְשִׁי בִקְהָלָם אֶל תַּחַד כְּבוֹדִי"—into their design, may my soul not enter! With their congregation, do not unite. Not only did Yaakov not disparage Shimshon in this manner, but he actually praised him: "דָּן יִדִּין עָמּוֹ כְּאֶחָד שְׁבַטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל"—that he would judge Yisrael like our Heavenly Father. Yaakov even prayed: "וַיִּפֹּל רֹכְבוֹ אַחֲוָר"—that the enemies falling from the roof would not fall on him, so that he would be found and be buried in a Jewish grave. Lastly, Yaakov prayed that Shimshon's final wish would be granted: "לִישׁוּעַתְךָ קוּיָּתִי ה'".

So, even though it appeared that he went astray, and as a punishment, he was captured by the Pelishtim, his hair was cut, and his eyes were gouged out; this cannot be taken at face value. For, it is inconceivable that an explicit prophesy delivered to his mother by Hashem's malach would not ultimately be fulfilled in every aspect: "For the child shall be a "nazir" of Elokim from the womb; and he will begin to save Yisrael from the hand of the Pelishtim."

The Klipah of Pelishtim Is a Form of:

"כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה"

With the utmost awe and reverence, I would like to propose a wonderful explanation. To begin with, we will introduce a fundamental principle regarding the nature of the klipah of Pelishtim. It can be categorized along with the admonition (Devarim 8, 11):

"הַשְׁמַר לְךָ פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, פֶּן תֹּאכַל וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבָתִּים טוֹבִים תִּבְנֶה וּשְׂכָנִים וּבִקְרָךְ וְצֹאנֶךָ יִרְבִּיּוּ וְכֶסֶף יִרְבֶּה לְךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְךָ יִרְבֶּה, וְרָם לְבַבְךָ וּשְׁכַחְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים... וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְּךָ כֹּחִי וְעֹצֶם יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחֵיל הַזֶּה, וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא הִנּוּתָן לְךָ כַּח לַעֲשׂוֹת חֵיל".

Take care lest you forget Hashem, your G-d, by not observing His mitzvos . . . lest you eat and be satisfied, and you build good houses and settle, and your cattle and sheep increase, and you increase silver and gold for yourselves, and everything that you have will increase—and your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land

of Egypt from the house of slavery . . . And you may say in your heart, "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!" Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it was He Who gave you strength to make wealth.

Reflecting on the matter, it is quite clear that what has driven the Pelishtim throughout the generations is the misguided notion of: **"כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה"**—**my strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!** This detestable, unfortunate tendency was on full display even in the times of the holy Avos, as we see in this narrative involving Yitzchak (Bereishis 26, 12):

"וַיִּזְרַע יִצְחָק בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַיָּא וַיִּמְצָא בִשְׁנָה הַחַיָּא מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ה'—**Yitzchak sowed in that land, and in that year he reaped a hundredfold; thus had Hashem blessed him.** Yitzchak Avinu believed sincerely and wholeheartedly that his incredible success was attributable to Hashem. The narrative continues (ibid. 13): **"וַיִּגְדַּל הָאִישׁ וַיִּלְךְ הַלֹּךְ וַגְּדוֹל"**—**עד כי גדל מאד, ויהי לו מקנה צאן ומקנה בקר ועבודה רבה ויקנאו אותו פלשתים**—**the man became great and kept becoming greater until he was very great. He had acquired flocks and herds of cattle and much enterprise; and the Pelishtim envied him.** Since the Pelishtim only believed in the strength and might of their own hands, they were envious of Yitzchak's success. As a result (ibid. 15): **"וַיִּכַּל"**—**הַבְּאֵרוֹת אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ עֲבָדֵי אֲבִיו בַּיָּמִי אֲבִרָהֶם אֲבִיו סָתְמוֹם פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיִּמְלֹאוּם עֹפֶר"**—**all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Avraham his father, the Pelishtim stopped up and filled them with dirt.**

Instead of admonishing his people to desist from doing this, Avimelech, the King of the Pelishtim, urged Yitzchak to leave (ibid. 16): **"וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל יִצְחָק לֵךְ מֵעִמָּנוּ כִּי עֲצַמּוֹת מִמֶּנּוּ מֵאָדָּם"**—**Avimelech said to Yitzchak, "Go away from us, for you have become much more powerful than us"**—we cannot have peace of mind with you among us, seeing how powerful you have become with the strength and might of your own hands. This trend continued throughout all of the battles that ensued between the Pelishtim and Yisrael on account of their misguided belief of **"kochi v'otzem yadee."** This was most evident when they chose Golyat (Goliath) as their champion to combat Yisrael.

HKB"H Sent Shimshon to Uproot the Klipah of the Pelishtim from Yisrael

We can now address the difficult period during which Shimshon lived. Even before he was born, the situation

is described in the Navi as follows (Shoftim 13, 1): **"וַיֹּסִיפוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' וַיִּתְּנֵם ה' בְּיַד פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה"**—**Bnei Yisrael continued to do what was evil in the eyes of Hashem, and Hashem delivered them into the hand of the Pelishtim for forty years.** To what evil is the passuk referring? The answer is provided earlier in the text (ibid. 10, 6): **"וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת הַבְּעָלִים וְאֶת הָעִשְׁתֵּרוֹת וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי אֲרָם וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי צִידוֹן וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי עַמּוֹן וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּעֲזֹבוּ אֶת ה' וְלֹא עָבְדוּהוּ."** **They worshipped the Baalim, the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moav, the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Pelishtim; they forsook Hashem and did not serve Him.** The wrath of Hashem flared against Yisrael, and he delivered them into the hand of the Pelishtim and the hand of the children of Ammon.

This suggests that by worshipping the gods of the Pelishtim, they also succumbed to the klipah of the Pelishtim of **"kochi v'otzem yadee."** This prompted HKB"H to send the neshamah of Shimshon to eradicate this klipah from Yisrael and to inculcate in them that which is written: **"You shall remember Hashem, your G-d, that it was He Who gave you strength to make wealth."** This was inherent in the message the malach conveyed to Shimshon's mother: **"For the child shall be a "nazir" of Elokim from the womb; and he will begin to save Yisrael from the hand of the Pelishtim."** He specifically mentions the **"hand,"** alluding to their klipah of **"kochi v'otzem yadee"**—the might and strength of their hand. Eradicating their klipah would also free Yisrael from the subjugation to the Pelishtim.

Actually, when Shimshon first began his mission, he inculcated this emunah in the people of Yisrael. He was able to do so, because he had been endowed with supernatural strength and bravery. HKB"H endowed him with these traits, because he was sanctified as a **"nazir of G-d"**; he abstained from wine and refrained from cutting his hair. Here is one of his superhuman feats chronicled in Scripture (ibid. 14, 5): **"וַיֵּרֶד שִׁמְשׁוֹן וְאֲבִיו וְאִמּוֹ תִּמְנָתָה וַיָּבִיאוּ עִד כְּרִמִּי תִּמְנָתָה וְהִנֵּה כְּפִיר שׁוֹאֵג לִקְרָאתוֹ, וַתִּצְלַח עָלָיו רוּחַ ה' וַיִּשְׁעֶהוּ"**—**So, Shimshon and his father and mother went down to Timnath. They reached the vineyards of Timnath and behold—a young lion was roaring toward him. The spirit of Hashem came over him, and he tore it apart, as one tears apart a kid, though he had nothing in his hand.**

In reality, his exploits did not suffice to completely eradicate the klipah of the Pelishtim that had plagued them and corrupted them for forty years. After all, Shimshon was a mighty, heroic figure who was able to kill Pelishtim with his immense power. Therefore, instead of Yisrael recognizing that as a **“nazir of G-d,”** his great power came from HKB”H, they only recognized him as a mighty warrior. Hence, they were once again susceptible to the klipah of **“kochi v’otzem yadee”**—the false doctrine that everything depends on a person’s abilities and power.

Now, a fundamental principle is taught in the Chassidic literature that if the people at large sin, it exerts a negative effect on the leader of the generation. For example, it is written (Vayikra 4, 3): **“אם הכהן המשיח יחטא לאשמת העם”**—**if the anointed kohen will sin to the guilt of the people.** The Be’er Mayim Chaim (Emor) interprets this to mean: **If the people sin with transgressions and reprehensible deeds, it will naturally affect the leader of that generation, the prince of the people—so that he, too, will sin to some minor degree, since all of Yisrael are a single body.**

This then is what Chazal are teaching us in the Mishnah cited above: **Shimshon followed his eyes; therefore, the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes.** Although he was righteous and believed wholeheartedly that his strength and courage came from Hashem; nevertheless, the **“guilt of the people”** also affected him. Shimshon, the leader of that generation, fell prey to the delicate character flaw of being led astray by his eyes—to attribute his awesome power to himself to some small degree. Since we know (Yevamos 121b) that HKB”H holds tzaddikim to a higher standard, **therefore, the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes.**

**“He Who sits in heaven will laugh;
the Lord will mock them”**

Following this line of reasoning, we can begin to comprehend the mysterious ways of Hashem. In the words of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (Tehillim 92, 6): **“מזה גדלו”**—**how great are Your deeds, Hashem; extremely profound are Your thoughts.** We see that even after the Pelishtim had gouged out Shimshon’s eyes, HKB”H continued to assist him to complete his sacred mission—to uproot the klipah of the Pelishtim—**“kochi v’otzem yadee”**—from Yisrael. This

was accomplished by sending him Delilah, a Pelishtim woman, who had converted.

Let us introduce a fascinating insight from the great Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, zy”a, brought down in Irin Kadishin (Part II). The name **דלילה** is formed by the first letters of the passuk (Shir HaShirim 6, 2): **“דודי ירד”**—**my Beloved has descended to His garden, to His fragrant flower beds.** We can deduce from this that she, too, was sent to him by Hashem. This is also apparent from the passuk (Shoftim 14, 4). When Shimshon decided to marry a Pelishtim woman who had converted, it says: **“His father and mother did not know that it was from Hashem, for he was seeking a pretext against the Pelishtim; at that time the Pelishtim were ruling in Yisrael.”**

Based on this fascinating insight, we can resolve a puzzling question. The text describes how Shimshon tested Delilah three times. She kept asking him to divulge the source of his incredible strength; he kept telling her lies, which she communicated to the Pelishtim. Ultimately, he was persuaded to reveal the truth to her (ibid. 16, 16): **“ויהי כי הציקה לו בדבריה כל הימים ותאלצהו ותקצר נפשו למות, ויגד לה את כל לבו ויאמר לה מורה לא עלה על ראשי כי נזיר אלקים אני מבטן אמי, אם גולחתי וסר ממני כוחי וחליתי והייתי ככל האדם.”** **It happened that after she tormented him with her words every day and pressed him, he became exasperated to death. So, he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, “A razor has never gone up upon my head, for I am a ‘nezir’ unto G-d from my mother’s womb. If I would be shaven, my strength would leave me; I would become weak and be like any other man.”** Then, whilst he slept, Delilah shaved off the seven locks of hair on his head and handed him over to the Pelishtim.

This is beyond belief! We know that Shimshon was very wise and was a judge in Yisrael. How did he not discern Delilah’s treachery? After all, she had failed on three previous occasions to reveal the truth and had communicated the false information to the Pelishtim all three times. On all three occasions, the Pelishtim had tried to capture him and had failed. Yet, on the fourth occasion, he revealed the truth to her, enabling the Pelishtim to take him prisoner and gouge out his eyes. How are we to make sense of this?! Clearly, these events were ordained by Hashem; he took away

Shimshon's freedom of choice, compelling him to reveal the true source of his strength to her.

"How long will You hide Your countenance from me?"

I would like to explain the matter by introducing a precious teaching from the impeccable teachings of the esteemed Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, zy"a. In his own sacred way, he interprets the words of David HaMelech (Tehillim 13, 2): **"עַד אַנְה תַּסְתִּיר אֶת פְּנִיךָ מִמֶּנִּי, עַד אַנְה אֲשִׁית עֵצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי"** — **how long will You hide Your countenance from me? How long will I continue to seek counsel within my own spirit?** With this interrogative, David HaMelech wished to teach us a valuable lesson regarding our emunah and trust in Hashem. When a Jew seeks salvation from Hashem, he must first understand that he is totally helpless on his own; his salvation depends solely on Hashem. As long as he believes that he has a solution of his own, his emunah and trust in Hashem are lacking, and he will not receive salvation from Hashem.

So, David HaMelech inquires: **"How long will You continue to conceal Your presence from Me?"** How much longer must I endure this hopeless situation, and what can I do to repeal this "hester panim"—divine concealment? To which, he provides a definitive answer: **"How long will I continue to seek counsel within my own spirit?"** As long as I delude myself into thinking that I am capable of resolving dilemmas with my own counsel and devices, the "hester panim" will continue; but the moment I recognize with certainty, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that I lack any such wisdom or ability, the "hester panim" will cease, and Hashem's salvation will arrive instantaneously.

This enlightens us as to why HKB"H arranged for Shimshon to no longer be able to withhold the truth from Delilah; she was actually sent to him by Hashem and

was part of the divine plan. As we learned from the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, her name, דלילה, is an acronym for דודי ירד לגנו לערוגות ה'בושם. As long as Shimshon was in full possession of his strength and faculties, he was incapable of completely eradicating the Pelishtim's klipah of **"kochi v'otzem yadee"** from Yisrael, because they relied on his phenomenal strength. Therefore, it was necessary for the Pelishtim to relieve Shimshon of his powers. This included gouging out his eyes, so that he would no longer follow his eyes, believing in his own incredible might.

Amazingly, it was only after Shimshon had lost his powers and was taken by the Pelishtim to the house of their god, Dagon, that he fully comprehended HKB"H's profound intent for choosing him to be **"nezir Elokim."** He sanctified himself throughout his entire life in preparation for these final moments of his life. Deprived of his powers, he reinforced Yisrael's belief in the omnipotence of Hashem. The Pelishtim took him there to mock him and to display the veracity of their faith in the klipah of **"kochi v'otzem yadee."** Instead, he toppled the support pillars, brought down the house of their god, and shattered the klipah of **"kochi v'otzem yadee."**

In the final analysis, Shimshon did indeed fulfill his mission. Despite his tragic death, he succeeded in trampling the Pelishtim both physically and spiritually. Thus, we can view his life and the nevuah HKB"H sent to his mother by means of a heavenly malach from a novel perspective: **"You shall conceive and give birth to a son; a rason shall not come upon his head, for the child shall be a "nazir" of Elokim from the womb; and he will begin to save Yisrael from the hand of the Pelishtim."** For, in truth, only in the merit of being a **"nezir Elokim"** was he imbued with the tremendous kedushah that enabled him to topple the support pillars of the Pelishtim.

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