

Finally, let us focus on the third passuk of Yaakov's berachah to shevet Dan: **"For Your salvation do I long, Hashem!"** Once again let us refer to Rashi's commentary: **נתנבא שינקרו פלשתים את** — Yaakov prophesied that the Pelishtim would gouge out his eyes prompting Shimshon to say: "Please remember me and please give me strength, just this one time." It is apparent from these comments that Yaakov Avinu prayed to Hashem to assure Shimshon's success in toppling the building down on tens of thousands of Pelishtim.

Without a doubt, this terrifying event defies description. Here we find Shimshon HaGibor — the courageous one — a judge in Yisrael, who is labeled by a malach of Hashem even prior to his birth as a "nezir Elokim" (Shoftim 13, 5): **כי נזיר — אלקים יהיה הנער מן הבטן, והוא יחל להושיע את ישראל מיד פלשתים — 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.** Notwithstanding, the Pelishtim ultimately 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.

This is described by Scriptures as follows (ibid. 16, 28): **ויקרא שמשון אל ה' ויאמר אדני ה' זכרני נא וחזקני נא אך הפעם הזה האלקים ואנקמה נקם אחת משתי עיני מפלשתים, [רש"י: ושכר עין השנית הנח לי לעולם הבא]. וילפת שמשון את שני עמודי התוך אשר הבית נכון עליהם, ויסמוך עליהם אחד בימינו ואחד בשמאלו, ויאמר שמשון תמות נפשי עם פלשתים, ויט בכח ויפול הבית על הסרנים ועל כל העם אשר בו, ויהיו 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.**

Shimshon's Enigmatic Character

From all that we have just learned it is quite clear that Yaakov Avinu held his descendant Shimshon in high esteem. After all, he dedicated the entire berachah given to shevet Dan to praise Shimshon and to pray for his success — that he merit sacrificing his life for the sanctity of Hashem and topple the building on

the Pelishtim. Yet, according to this understanding, we must address a glaring discrepancy presented by the following Mishnah (Sotah 9b): **שמשון הלך אחר עיניו, לפיכך נקרו פלשתים את עיניו, שנאמר (שופטים טז-כא) ויאחזוהו פלשתים וינקרו את עיניו — Shimshon followed his eyes; therefore the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes, as it is stated: "The Pelishtim seized him and gouged out his eyes."** Elaborating on this point, we learn in the Gemara (ibid.): **תנו רבנן שמשון בעיניו מרד, שנאמר (שופטים יד-ג) ויאמר שמשון אל אביו אותה קח לי כי היא ישרה בעיני, לפיכך נקרו פלשתים את עיניו, שנאמר — the Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: Shimshon rebelled with his eyes . . . therefore the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes . . .**

This prompts the Gemara's question: **איני והכתיב (שם ד) ואביו — is this really so? For it is written (ibid. 4): "His father and mother did not know that it was from Hashem."** This passuk clearly indicates that it was ordained from above that he marry a Philistine woman. In fact, the passuk specifies the reason this was necessary (ibid.): **כי תואנה הוא מבקש מפלשתים — for he was seeking a pretext against the Pelishtim** — a pretext allowing him to kill large numbers of Pelishtim without the masses of Yisrael being held accountable. The Gemara answers this question: **כי אזל מיהא — כי אזל מיהא — בתר ישרותיה אזל** — 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 (Issurei Biah 13, 14-16) that Shimshon only married the Philistine women after converting them. So, how is it even conceivable that the man about whom Yaakov attests: **"דן ידין עמו כאחד שבטי ישראל"** -- he seeks justice for Yisrael like the One and Only of the Universe -- could behave in such a manner as to elicit Chazal's statement: **"Shimshon followed his eyes; therefore the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes"?**

The Name **ה דליל** Is an Acronym for **ד'די י'רד ל'גנו ל'ערוגת ה'בשם**

It is with great trepidation that I attempt to solve the puzzle represented by the character of Shimshon ben Manoach, the "nazir" of G-d. Although I am not worthy, I do so for the sake of Hashem's honor and that of His Torah. In the words of Shimshon, we beseech Hashem: **"Please remember me and please give me strength"** to follow the path of truth.

Let us begin our investigation by introducing an insight concerning Shimshon HaGibor from the wonderful teachings of the great Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin, zy”a, as presented in Irin Kaddishin HaShalem (part 2, page 357). He cites the Mishnah above in Sotah and states his bewilderment. After all, Shimshon was a “nezir Elokim” and was named after HKB”H. So, how is it possible that he was misled by his eyes?

To comprehend the matter, he introduces a principle discussed in our holy sefarim. As a result of Adam HaRishon’s sin, many neshamos fell into the depths of the klipos. They fell so deep that it is beyond the scope and power of the tzaddikim to retrieve them; only HKB”H can retrieve them. This fact is reflected by the passuk (Shir HaShirim 6, 2): **“דודי ירד לגנו לערוגת — הבשם — my Beloved has descended to His garden, to His fragrant flower beds.** This passuk alludes to the time of the geulah, when HKB”H himself will descend to His garden; **“לרעות — בגנים וללקוט שושנים — to graze in the gardens of exile and gather up roses —** to gather up the neshamos that fell deep into the realm of the klipos.

Concerning Shimshon, it is written (Shoftim 16, 4): **“ויאהב — אשה בנחל שורק ושמה דלילה — he loved a woman from Nachal Sorek; her name was Delilah.** The name **“דלילה”** is an acronym for: **“דודי ירד לגנו לערוגת ה'בשם — my Beloved has descended to His garden, to His fragrant flower beds —** alluding to the fact that Shimshon descended to such a lowly place within the depths of the klipos in order to elevate neshamos and sparks of kedushah — a place to which a tzaddik cannot descend; it is a place to which only HKB”H descends in order to gather up the fragrant roses.

This then is the meaning of Chazal’s statement: **“שמשון הלך — אחר עיניו”**—in other words, he entered a place exclusively visited by HKB”H, beyond the scope of human vision. He intended to apply his loving gaze to draw the sparks nearer to him so as to remove them from that undesirable location. He erred, however, because it is impossible for any tzaddik to elevate those neshamos; only HKB”H possesses that capacity. Therefore the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes.

Shimshon Descended to the Fiftieth Level of Tumah to Extract Sparks of Kedushah

Like a loyal servant grabbing onto the coattails of his master — the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy”a — I would like to expand on his notion. Shimshon descended into the depths of the klipos

— an area off limits even to tzaddikim — in order to retrieve fallen neshamos. Let us refer to that which is written regarding the exodus from Mitzrayim (Shemos 12, 39): **“ולא יכלו להתמהמה” — for they could not delay.** As the Arizal explains, Yisrael had sunk to the forty-ninth level of tumah during the exile in Mitzrayim. Had they remained in Mitzrayim even a moment longer, they would have sunk to the fiftieth level of tumah and would have never been able to leave.

The Shela hakadosh adds an explanation for this phenomenon. A given level of tumah can only be negated by a corresponding level of kedushah. Hence, the fiftieth level of tumah could only be overcome by the fiftieth level of kedushah.

It is well-known that the Gemara teaches us (R.H. 21b): **“חמשים שערי בינה נבראו בעולם, וכולן ניתנו למשה חסר אחד, שנאמר ותחסרהו — מעט מאלקים”** — of the fifty levels of binah created in the universe, Moshe was only granted forty-nine. Consequently, Moshe Rabeinu — who had only attained the forty-ninth level of binah — was only capable of extracting Yisrael from the forty-ninth level of tumah with his kedushah. Had they descended to the fiftieth level of tumah, he would have been incapable of taking them out of Mitzrayim.

It is worth adding an idea from the Yearos Devash (2, 9). Concerning the achievement of the fiftieth level of kedushah, HKB”H said to Moshe (Shemos 33, 20): **“לא תוכל לראות את פני כי — לא יראני האדם וחי”** — **you shall not be able to see My face, for no human can see My face and live.** By way of explanation, he writes: **“כי בהשיגו אור גדול כזה תתדבק נפשו למעלה ותתפרד מגוף, כי — תתאוה לאור עליון כנר קטן המתדבק באור גדול”** — were one to achieve this exalted level of enlightenment, one’s soul would remain attached above and would separate from its body, like a small flame joining a larger fire.

We can now better appreciate the insight provided by the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy”a. There is a place in the depths of the klipos which no tzaddik may enter, even for the sake of liberating sparks of kedushah; only HKB”H may do so. He is speaking of the fiftieth level of tumah. Only a being who has first achieved the fiftieth level of kedushah can descend to that realm to clarify sparks of kedushah. That is an impossible feat while a person is still alive: **“כי לא יראני האדם וחי” — for no human can see My face and live.** The word **“האדם”** employed in this passuk possesses a numerical value of fifty, alluding to the fiftieth level of tumah.

We can now interpret the Mishnah as follows: “שמִשׁוֹן הַלֶּךְ” — אַחַר עֵינָיו, לַפִּיכֶךְ נִקְרָו בַלְשָׁתִים אֶת עֵינָיו — Shimshon went to extract sparks of kedushah from the realm of tumah “אַחַר עֵינָיו” — a place accessible only to HKB”H’s eyes, off limits to human eyes. This phrase indicates that he wished to enter the fiftieth level of tumah; however, this is a feat only possible after achieving the fiftieth level of kedushah. As the passuk explicitly states: “כִּי לֹא” — “יִרְאֵנִי”; the passuk specifically employs the term “יִרְאֵנִי”, referring to the ability to see; therefore, the Pelishtim gouged out his eyes.

The Name “בלשת” Alludes to the Fiftieth Level of the Klipah

Continuing along this exalted path, let us endeavor to explain why Shimshon was willing to sacrifice his life in order to descend to the fiftieth level of the klipah. We will show that the Pelishtim represent the klipah corresponding to the fiftieth level — “sha’ar ha’nun.” This fact is alluded to by the very name “בלשת” (literally, the invasion of the “י” indicating that they penetrated the tumah corresponding to 50=10+40 “י”), alluding to the fiftieth level of tumah.

We learned this chiddush from the pesukim in parshas Beshalach (Shemos 13, 17): “יִהְיֶה בְשַׁלַּח פְּרַעְיָה אֶת הָעָם וְלֹא נִחַם אֱלֹקִים” דרך ארץ בלשתים כי קרוב הוא, כי אמר אלקים פן ינחם העם בראותם מלחמה וישבו “מִצְרַיִם” — after leaving Mitzrayim, G-d did not lead the people by way of the land of the Pelishtim, “because it was near; for G-d said, ‘Perhaps the people will reconsider when they see a war, and they will return to Mitzrayim.’” Incredibly, after taking Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, where they had sunk to the forty-ninth level of tumah, HKB”H intentionally did not lead them by way of the land of the Pelishtim--the reason being that the Pelishtim were the embodiment of the fiftieth level of the klipah. So, had they fallen, chas v’shalom, at the hands of the Pelishtim, they would never have been able to escape.

Now, come and witness the wonders of the Torah. Based on what we have learned, we can now explain a phenomenon concerning the Pelishtim, which we do not find concerning any other nation. They succeeded in taking the Aron HaBris — the Ark of the Covenant — hostage from Yisrael and placed it before their god, Dagon. They only returned the Aron to Yisrael after Dagon’s head and two hands were cut off. We can suggest an explanation for this phenomenon based on what the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy”a, writes in parshas Behaaloscha: “אֲרוֹן”

— אֲרוֹן — the word “אֲרוֹן” is an anagram for “אֲרוֹן” — the illumination of the “sha’ar ha’nun” — which shall be revealed to us.

Now, seeing as the Pelishtim -- “בלשת” — are the embodiment of the “sha’ar ha’nun” of the klipah, they had the audacity and incredible chutzpah to take the Aron HaBris hostage, in order to wage war against the “sha’ar ha’nun” of kedushah. For this very reason, they placed the Aron near the head of the klipah, “דגון”. The name of this deity ends with a final letter “nun,” because it represents the “sha’ar ha’nun” of tumah. Nevertheless, the אֲרוֹן of Hashem — embodying the אֲרוֹן of kedushah — felled the head of Dagon and its two hands. For, the fiftieth level of kedushah has the power to overcome and defeat the fiftieth level of the klipah.

We can now suggest, with the utmost reverence and adoration, that Shimshon HaGibor was chosen from above, even prior to his birth, to wage war against the Pelishtim. He was destined to descend, body and soul, to the depths of the “sha’ar ha’nun” of the klipah of the Pelishtim. There he would topple the two pillars supporting the temple of their deity Dagon — the root of the klipah of the Pelishtim--“בלשת” — the “sha’ar ha’nun” of the klipah.

Let us explain the significance of this momentous accomplishment. In truth, the fiftieth level of the klipah will not be abolished entirely until the time of the geulah and the coming of the Melech HaMashiach. He will reveal to Yisrael the “sha’ar ha’nun” of kedushah. This fact is alluded to by the name “משיח” — an acronym for מְשִׁיחַ יְגַלֵּה שְׁעַר הַמִּישִׁים — **Mashiach will reveal the fiftieth level** of kedushah. The name “משיח” is also an acronym for מְשִׁיחַ יְבַטֵּל שְׁעַר הַמִּישִׁים — **Mashiach will abolish the fiftieth level** of the klipah. Notwithstanding, HKB”H — the Omniscient One — knew that it was incumbent upon Shimshon to weaken the klipah of the “sha’ar ha’nun” by toppling the pillars supporting the klipah of the Pelishtim. Otherwise, Yisrael would not be able to withstand the lengthy galus and survive until the arrival of the geulah.

Shimshon’s Relationship with Delilah Was Heavenly Ordained

Continuing our journey, we can only marvel at the wonderful intricacies of Hashem’s plans. Hashem makes Delilah, a Philistine woman, available to Shimshon HaGibor, “nezir Elokim.” She converts and it appears outwardly as if she

sets a trap for him on behalf of the Pelishtim. In fact, we are astonished by Shimshon's behavior. For, even after realizing that she has revealed his secret to the Pelishtim twice, he still cannot refrain from revealing to Delilah that the secret to his strength lies in the locks of his head. As a consequence, they shave off his locks and gouge out his eyes.

However, from what we learned from the great Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy" a, we begin to appreciate the incredible intricacies of Hashem's plans. Shimshon's relationship with Delilah, a daughter of the Pelishtim, is arranged from above. It required a woman from among the Pelishtim to cause the Pelishtim themselves to take Shimshon to the temple of their god — to the "sha'ar ha'nun" of the klipah; there he was able to topple the support columns of the fiftieth level of tumah. Therefore, as the Rabbi of Ruzhin, zy" a, taught us, she was called דליל"ה, an acronym for ד'ודי ירד לגנו ל'ערוגת ה'בושם. The name Delilah alludes to the fact that she was sent to Shimshon from the power above to achieve this end; she caused him to descend to the place that no tzaddik before him had ever gone.

My dear brothers and friends, the fact that these Pelishtim women were actually sent to Shimshon from above is stated explicitly in a passuk (Shoftim 14, 1): "וירד שמשון תמנתה וירא אשה בתמנתה מבנות פלשתים... ויאמר שמשון אל אביו אותה קח לי כי היא ישרה בעיני, ואביו ואמו לא ידעו כי מה' היא, כי תואנה הוא מבקש מפלשתים, ובעת ההיא פלשתים מושלים בישראל." Shimshon sets his eyes on this daughter of the Pelishtim and approaches his parents with his request to marry her. Then the passuk states: **"His father and mother did not know that it was from Hashem, for he was seeking a pretext against the Pelishtim."** Thus, we have clear-cut proof that HKB"H arranged these marriages for Shimshon.

Shimshon Invaded the Pelishtim's "Sha'ar Ha'nun"

It is a known fact from our holy sefarim -- as the Agra D'Kallah (Balak) explains at length -- that the klipos erect barriers around the forces of tumah. They wish to prevent the elements of kedushah from invading their territory and extracting the sparks of kedushah they conceal within. Thus, we can comprehend to what degree the Pelishtim attempted to protect the "sha'ar ha'nun" of the klipah. They went to great measures to protect the temple of their deity, Dagon, from invasion by the forces of kedushah — who would attempt to extract the sparks of kedushah from them.

In truth, as we have explained, it was impossible for any tzaddik to penetrate the Pelishtim's "sha'ar ha'nun" of tumah by natural means. Therefore, HKB"H devised a ploy to trick the Pelishtim; He arranged for Shimshon to take Delilah as his wife — a Philistine woman who converted. Thus, we find a situation similar to that of Yehudah and Tamar — where HKB"H deprived Yehudah of his "bechirah" (freedom of choice). In like fashion, Shimshon was deprived of his choice in this matter, forcing him to take Delilah as his wife. Only in this manner could he fulfill the mission of: ד'ודי ירד לגנו ל'ערוגת ה'בושם — descending into the precious, fragrant garden.

Then the Pelishtim came and pressured Delilah into uncovering the secret to Shimshon's prowess over them. She tried with all of her might to uncover Shimshon's secret; he tried with all of his might to prevent her from doing so. In fact, he lied to her twice so as not to reveal to her the true source of his incredible strength. This infuriated the Pelishtim even more, causing them to apply even more pressure on Delilah to obtain his secret. Since it was heavenly-ordained that this information be revealed to the Pelishtim, Shimshon was incapable of fending off her continued efforts. Ultimately, he revealed to her that the secret to his strength and courage lie in the locks on his head.

Subsequently, the Pelishtim came and shaved off his seven locks of hair and gouged out his eyes. As a result, Shimshon's superhuman physical strength vanished. This was all a ruse to convince the Pelishtim that they had succeeded in overcoming and subjugating Shimshon HaGibor. As a weak captive, deprived of his strength, they no longer feared him. Unsuspecting, they took him to the temple of their deity, Dagon — representing the "sha'ar ha'nun" of the klipah — to publicly ridicule him.

The Pelishtim were unaware, however, that they were victims of the dictum (Tehillim 2, 4): "יושב בשמים ישחק ה' ילעג למו" — **He Who sits in heaven will laugh; the Lord will mock them.** By gouging out his eyes, they actually enabled him to enter the "sha'ar ha'nun" of kedushah. For, concerning the "sha'ar ha'nun," it states: "כי לא יראני האדם וחי" — it is off limits to live, human eyes. Nevertheless, as the Gemara explains (Nedarim 64b), a blind person is considered as dead. So, by gouging out Shimshon's eyes, he took on the status of a dead person. This enabled him to achieve the "sha'ar ha'nun" of kedushah in order to subdue the "sha'ar ha'nun" of tumah.

Shimshon Proclaims “זכרני נא וחזקני נא”

In this light, let us examine Shimshon’s dying plea and prayer (Shoftim 16, 28): “ויקרא שמשון אל ה' ויאמר אדני ה' זכרני נא וחזקני נא אך הפעם הזה האלקים” — Shimshon called out to Hashem and said, “My Lord, Hashem Elokim! Remember me and strengthen me just this one time, O G-d. Referring to the writings of the divine Mekubal, the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (50), he addresses words of prayer uttered by Moshe Rabeinu before his death (Devarim 3, 25): “אעברה נא ואראה את הארץ הטובה” — please let me cross and see the good land. According to the Megaleh Amukos this is Moshe’s plea to attain the “sha’ar ha’nun” — also referred to as ג'תיב איתן, the mighty path. In other words, the word נ"א in this passuk — which is an abbreviation for ג'תיב א'חד (the singular path) and also ג'תיב איתן — is interpreted as an allusion to the “sha’ar ha’nun.”

Now, we can apply this idea to interpret Shimshon’s prayer to Hashem: “זכרני נא וחזקני נא אך הפעם הזה האלקים”. Shimshon is aware that the moment of the geulah and the revelation of the “sha’ar ha’nun” are not yet at hand. Nevertheless, he beseeches Hashem: “זכרני נא וחזקני נא” — allow me access to the “singular and mighty path”--ג'תיב איתן-- the “sha’ar ha’nun,” so that I can utilize its power of kedushah to subdue the Pelishtim’s “sha’ar ha’nun” of tumah. This is also alluded to by the name אלהי"ם employed by the passuk, which can be broken down to form אלה י"ם — implying that these belong to the fiftieth level (י"ם as noted above equals fifty).

This enlightens us as to why Yaakov Avinu compares Shimshon to HKB”H by stating: “דן ידין עמו כאחד שבטי ישראל” — he will exact justice for his people like the One and Only of the

Universe. For, he would descend to a place only HKB”H could descend, in order to avenge Yisrael against the Pelishtim. This is also why Yaakov prayed on behalf of Shimshon: “לישועתך קויתי ה'” — that Hashem should ensure his success in toppling the pillars on top of the Pelishtim. For, only HKB”H possesses the capacity to descend into those fragrant flower beds to gather up the sparks of kedushah from the “sha’ar ha’nun” of the klipah. This also explains why he prayed for Shimshon: “הנושך עקבי סוס” — that the Pelishtim he would kill fall behind him and not on top of him — so that he would remain pure and untainted, unaffected by their tremendous tumah, chas v’shalom.

Let us conclude with the words of the Midrash (B.R. 98, 14): “לפי שהיה יעקב אבינו רואה אותו וסבור בו שהוא מלך המשיח, כיון שראה אותו. Additionally, it states (ibid.): “לפי שהיה יעקב אבינו רואה אותו, וסבור בו שגאולה מגעת בימיו, כיון שראה שמת מיד אמר לישועתך קויתי ה'.”

When Yaakov saw that Shimshon would topple the pillars supporting the “sha’ar ha’nun” of tumah, he initially thought that Shimshon was destined to be the Melech HaMashiach. [As we learned מ'שיח י'בטל ש'ער ה'מישים is an acronym for משיח — Mashiach will abolish the fiftieth level.] Yet, when he realized that that was not yet the time for the geulah, and that Shimshon’s job was merely to begin the process of Yisrael’s salvation — from the Pelishtim, in that instance — he prayed to Hashem: “לישועתך קויתי ה'” — for Your salvation do I long, Hashem! He prayed that Hashem assist Shimshon to topple the supporting structures of the “sha’ar ha’nun,” even though the time of the geulah was not yet at hand.



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