

## CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. Where are the Havoth Jair (Chavos Yair) located and who named them? When did he live?
2. Describe the circumstances that led to Jephthah (Yiftach) becoming the Judge (Shofet) over Israel.
3. How did Jephthah (Yiftach) counter the claims of the Ammonites?
4. How did Pinchas err in regards to Jephthah's (Yiftach's) daughter?
5. Describe the circumstances of Samson's (Shimshon's) birth.

This and much more will be addressed in the second lecture of this series: "**Jephthah and the Dearth of Inspired Leadership**".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the lecture and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

PLEASE NOTE: This outline and source book were designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it, as well, as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

**This lecture is dedicated to the merit and honor of the  
Schulman Family**

THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE  
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series XVI Lecture #2

JEPHTACH AND THE DEARTH OF INSPIRED LEADERSHIP

I. Interim Leadership in the Post Gideon Era

A.

וַיָּקָם אַחֲרָי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל תּוֹלַע בֶּן פּוּאָה בֶּן דּוֹדוֹ אִישׁ יִשְׁשׁוּכָר וְהוּא יָשָׁב בְּשָׁמִיר בְּהַר אֶפְרַיִם: וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עֶשְׂרִים וְשָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנָה וַיָּקָבַר בְּשָׁמִיר: וַיָּקָם אַחֲרָיו יָאִיר הַגִּלְעָדִי וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה: וַיְהִי לוֹ שְׁלֹשִׁים בָּנִים רֹכְבִים עַל שְׁלֹשִׁים עִירִים וְשְׁלֹשִׁים עִירִים לָהֶם לָהֶם יִקְרְאוּ | חֹת יָאִיר עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ הַגִּלְעָד: וַיָּמָת יָאִיר וַיָּקָבַר בְּקַמּוֹן: שׁוֹפְטִים י:א-ה

And after Abimelech there arose to defend (save) Israel Tola the son of Pua the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he lived in Shamir in Mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel twenty three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir. And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty two years. And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-Jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon. **Judges 10:1-5**

B.

במתניתא תנא: כל שמעשיו ומעשה אבותיו סתומין, ופרט לך הכתוב באחד מהן לשבח, כגון (צפניה א') דבר ד' אשר היה אל צפניה בן כושי בן גדליה בידוע שהוא צדיק בן צדיק. וכל שפרט לך הכתוב באחד מהן לגנאי, כגון (ירמיהו מ"א) ויהי בחדש השביעי בא ישמעאל בן נתניה בן אלישמע בידוע שהוא רשע בן רשע. מגילה טו.

In a Baraitha it was stated: If nothing is known about the character of a man or of his ancestors, and the Scripture mentions any one of them in connection with a praiseworthy action, as for instance (Zephaniah 1:1), "The word of the L-rd which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah," we may know that he was a righteous man son of a righteous man; and wherever the Scripture mentions any one of them in connection with a reprehensible action, as for instance (Jeremiah 41:1), "And it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama came," we may know that he was a wicked man son of a wicked man. **Megilah 15a**

C.

ספור זה להודיע סבת היותו שופט כי גדול היה ונכבד בעושר ובכנים וכבוד וכל אחד מבניו היה נכבד רוכב על עיר אתון. רד"ק לשופטים יד:

The purpose of this narrative is to let us know that the reason he became the Judge was because of his elevated status. He was distinguished by his wealth, children, and honor. Each of his sons was distinguished by riding on a donkey (*iyor*). **Commentary of Radak to Judges 10:4**

D.

וַיְהִי גְבוּלָם מִמַּחֲנַיִם כָּל הַבָּשָׁן כָּל מַמְלַכּוֹת | עוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן וְכָל חֹזֵת יְאִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּבֶשֶׁן שְׁשִׁים עִירִי: וְחֲצֵי הַגִּלְעָד וְעִשְׁתָּרוֹת וְאַדְרָעִי עָרֵי מַמְלַכּוֹת עוֹג בְּבֶשֶׁן לְבְנֵי מַכִּיר בֶּן מְנַשֶּׁה לְחֲצֵי בְנֵי מַכִּיר לְמִשְׁפְּחוֹתָם: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ יג-לא

And their border was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, sixty cities; And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, belonged to the sons of Machir the son of Manasseh, to the one half of the sons of Machir by their families. **Joshua 13:30-31**

## II. Return to Idolatry and Subjugation

A.

וַיִּסְפוּ | בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ד' וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֶת הַבְּעָלִים וְאֶת הָעִשְׁתָּרוֹת וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי אָרָם וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי צִידוֹן וְאֶת | אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי עַמּוֹן וְאֶת אֱלֹהֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים וַיַּעֲזְבוּ אֶת ד' וְלֹא עָבְדוּהוּ: וַיַּחַר אֵף ד' בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְכְּרֵם בְּיַד פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּבְיַד בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: וַיִּרְעֲצוּ וַיִּרְצְצוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁנָה הַחַיִּית שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂר שָׁנָה אֶת כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בְּגִלְעָד: וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן לְהִלָּחֵם גַּם בַּיהוּדָה וּבְבִנְיָמִן וּבְבֵית אֶפְרַיִם וּתְצַר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מְאֹד: וַיִּזְעְקוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל ד' לֵאמֹר חָטְאנוּ לָךְ וְכִי עֲזַבְנוּ אֶת אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְנַעֲבַד אֶת הַבְּעָלִים: שׁוֹפְטִים יו-י

And the people of Israel did evil again in the sight of the L-rd, and served Baalim, and the Ashtaroth, and the gods of Aram, and the gods of Sidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the L-rd, and did not serve Him. - And the anger of the L-rd was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the sons of Ammon. And that year they troubled and oppressed the people of Israel; eighteen years, all the people of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. And the Ammonites passed over the Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was very distressed. And the people of Israel cried to the L-rd, saying, We have sinned against You, because we have forsaken our G-d, and also served the Baalim. **Judges 10:6-10**

B.

וַיֹּאמֶר ד' אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הֲלֹא מִמִּצְרַיִם וּמִן הָאֱמֹרִי מִן בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וּמִן פְּלִשְׁתִּים: וְצִידוֹנִים וְעַמְלָק וּמְעוֹן לְחַצּוֹ אֶתְכֶם וּתְצַעְקוּ אֵלַי וְאוֹשִׁיעָה אֶתְכֶם מִיָּדָם: וְאַתֶּם עֲזַבְתֶּם אוֹתִי וַתַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים לְכֵן לֹא אוֹסִיף לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם: לָכוּ וְזַעְקוּ אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲרַתֶּם בָּם הֲמָה יוֹשִׁיעוּ לָכֶם בְּעֵת צָרַתְכֶם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל ד' חָטְאנוּ עֲשֵׂה אֵתָּה לָנוּ כְּכֹל הַטוֹב בְּעֵינֵינוּ אֲךָ הֲצִילָנוּ נָא הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: וַיִּסְּרוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַגֹּבֵר מִקֶּרֶב בָּם וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֶת ד' וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעַמְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: שׁוֹפְטִים יי-טז

And the L-rd said to the people of Israel, Did I not save you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the Ammonites, and from the Philistines? - The Sidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, oppressed you; and you cried to me, and I saved you from their hand. - Yet you have forsaken Me, and served other gods; therefore I will save you no more. Go and cry to the gods which you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your tribulation. And the people of Israel said to the L-rd, We have sinned; do to us whatever seems good to You; save us only, we pray You, this day. And they put away the foreign gods from among them, and

served the L-rd; and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. **Judges 10:11-16**

### III. Jephthah and the Salvation of Israel

#### A.

וַיִּצְעֲקוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן וַיִּחַנוּ בְּגִלְעָד וַיֹּאסְפוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּחַנוּ בְּמִצְפָּה: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעָם שְׂרֵי גִלְעָד אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ מִי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַחַל לְהִלָּחֵם בְּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן יִהְיֶה לְרֹאשׁ לְכָל יִשְׂבֵי גִלְעָד: שׁוֹפְטִים יִיז-יח

Then the Ammonites were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the people of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpah. - And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he who will begin to fight against the Ammonites? He shall be chief over all the inhabitants of Gilead. **Judges 10:17-18**

#### B.

וַיִּפְתַּח הַגִּלְעָדִי הָיָה גִבּוֹר חַיִל וְהוּא בֶן אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה וַיּוֹלֵד גִּלְעָד אֶת יִפְתָּח: וַתֵּלֶד אִשָּׁת גִּלְעָד לוֹ בָּנִים וַיִּגְדְּלוּ בְנֵי הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּגְרְשׁוּ אֶת יִפְתָּח וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ לֹא תִנְחַל בְּבֵית אָבִינוּ כִּי בֶן אִשָּׁה אַחֶרֶת אָתָּה: וַיִּבְרַח יִפְתָּח מִפְּנֵי אָחָיו וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ טוֹב וַיִּתְלַקְטוּ אֵל יִפְתָּח אֲנָשִׁים רִיקִים וַיֵּצְאוּ עִמּוֹ: שׁוֹפְטִים יא-א-ג

And Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead fathered Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bore him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they threw out Jephthah, and said to him, You shall not inherit in our father's house; for you are the son of a strange woman. Then Jephthah fled from his brothers, and lived in the land of Tob; and there were gathered idle (unworthy) men to Jephthah, and went out with him. **Judges 11:1-3**

#### C.

וַיְהִי מִיָּמִים וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר נִלְחָמוּ בְנֵי עַמּוֹן עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלְכוּ זָקְנֵי גִלְעָד לְקַחַת אֶת יִפְתָּח מֵאֶרֶץ טוֹב: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְיִפְתָּח לְכֹה וְהָיִיתָ לָנוּ לְקָצִין וְנִלְחַמְתָּה בְּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן: וַיֹּאמֶר יִפְתָּח לְזָקְנֵי גִלְעָד הֲלֹא אַתֶּם שָׂנֵאתֶם אוֹתִי וַתִּגְרְשׁוּנִי מִבֵּית אָבִי וּמִדּוּעַ בָּאתֶם אֵלַי עִתָּה כַּאֲשֶׁר צַר לָכֶם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ זָקְנֵי גִלְעָד אֵל יִפְתָּח לְכֹן עִתָּה שְׁבֵנו אֵלֶיךָ וְהִלָּכְתָּ עִמָּנוּ וְנִלְחַמְתָּ בְּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן וְהָיִיתָ לָנוּ לְרֹאשׁ לְכָל יִשְׂבֵי גִלְעָד: וַיֹּאמֶר יִפְתָּח אֵל זָקְנֵי גִלְעָד אִם מְשִׁיבִים אַתֶּם אוֹתִי לְהִלָּחֵם בְּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן וְנָתַן ד' אוֹתָם לְפָנָי אֲנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם לְרֹאשׁ: וַיֹּאמְרוּ זָקְנֵי גִלְעָד אֵל יִפְתָּח ד' יִהְיֶה שְׁמֵעַ בִּינוֹתֵינוּ אִם לֹא כְדָבָרְךָ כֹּן נַעֲשֶׂה: וַיִּלְךְ יִפְתָּח עִם זָקְנֵי גִלְעָד וַיִּשְׁימוּ הָעָם אוֹתוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם לְרֹאשׁ וּלְקָצִין וַיִּדְבֵר יִפְתָּח אֶת כָּל דְּבָרָיו לְפָנָי ד' בְּמִצְפָּה: שׁוֹפְטִים יא-ד-יא

And it came to pass in the course of time, that the Ammonites made war against Israel. And it was so, that when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah from the land of Tob; And they said to Jephthah, Come, and be our captain (*katzin*), that we may fight with the Ammonites. - And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, Did not you hate me, and expel me from my father's house? And why have you come to me now when you are in distress? - And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to you now, that you may go with us, and fight against the Ammonites, and be our chief over all the inhabitants of Gilead. - And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, If you bring me home again to fight against the Ammonites, and the L-rd delivers them before me, shall I be your chief? (or alternately: I shall surely be your chief.) - And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, The L-rd be witness between us, if we do not do according to your words. Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him chief and captain over them; and Jephthah uttered all his words before the L-rd in Mizpah. **Judges 11:4-11**

D.

וַיִּשְׁלַח יִפְתָּח מַלְאָכִים אֶל מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן לֵאמֹר מַה לִּי וְלָךְ כִּי בָאתָ אֵלַי לְהִלָּחֵם בְּאַרְצִי: וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶל מַלְאָכָיו יִפְתָּח כִּי לָקַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת אַרְצִי בְּעֵלוֹתוֹ מִמִּצְרַיִם מֵאַרְנוֹן וְעַד הַיַּבֵּק וְעַד הַיַּרְדֵּן וְעַתָּה הֵשִׁיבָה אֶתְהֶן בְּשָׁלוֹם: וַיֹּסֶף עוֹד יִפְתָּח וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אֶל מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ כֹּה אָמַר יִפְתָּח לֹא לָקַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב וְאֶת אֶרֶץ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: כִּי בְּעֵלוֹתֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם וַיֵּלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבָּר עַד יַם סוּף וַיָּבֵא קְדֵשָׁה: וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְאָכִים | אֶל מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם | לֵאמֹר אֲעֵבְרָה נָא בְּאַרְצְךָ וְלֹא שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְגַם אֶל מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב שָׁלַח וְלֹא אָבָה וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשׁ: וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּמִדְבָּר וַיִּסָּב אֶת אֶרֶץ אֲדוֹם וְאֶת אֶרֶץ מוֹאָב וַיָּבֵא מִמִּזְרַח שָׁמֶשׁ לְאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב וַיַּחְנוּן בְּעֵבֶר אַרְנוֹן וְלֹא כָאוּ בְּגָבֹל מוֹאָב כִּי אַרְנוֹן גְּבוּל מוֹאָב: וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְאָכִים אֶל סִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבּוֹן וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל נְעַבְרָה נָא בְּאַרְצְךָ עַד מְקוֹמִי: וְלֹא הֶאֱמִין סִיחוֹן אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עֵבֶר בְּגָבֹלוֹ וַיֹּסֶף סִיחוֹן אֶת כָּל עַמּוֹ וַיַּחְנוּ בִּיהַצָּה וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיִּתֵּן ד' א-לֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת סִיחוֹן וְאֶת כָּל עַמּוֹ בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּכּוּם וַיִּירֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל אֶרֶץ הָאֱמֹרִי יוֹשֵׁב הָאֶרֶץ הַהִיא: וַיִּירֶשׁוּ אֶת כָּל גְּבוּל הָאֱמֹרִי מֵאַרְנוֹן וְעַד הַיַּבֵּק וְעַד הַיַּרְדֵּן וְעַתָּה ד' | א-לֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הוֹרִישׁ אֶת הָאֱמֹרִי מִפְּנֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶתְהָ תִירֶשְׁנוּ: הֲלֹא אֶת אֲשֶׁר יוֹרִישְׁךָ כְּמוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אוֹתוֹ תִירֶשׁ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ ד' א-לֹהֵינוּ מִפְּנֵינוּ אוֹתוֹ נִירֶשׁ: וְעַתָּה הַטּוֹב טוֹב אֶתְהָ מִבְּלֶק בֶּן צְפוּר מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב הַרּוֹב רַב עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם נִלְחַם נִלְחַם בָּם: בְּשִׁבְתְּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן וּבְבַנּוֹתֶיהָ וּבְעֶרְעוֹר וּבְבַנּוֹתֶיהָ וּבְכָל הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר עַל יַד אַרְנוֹן שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וּמִדּוּעַ לֹא הִצַּלְתֶּם בְּעַת הַהִיא: וְאַנְכִי לֹא חָטָאתִי לָךְ וְאֶתְהָ עֲשֵׂה אֵתִי רָעָה לְהִלָּחֵם בִּי יִשְׁפֹּט ד' הַשִּׁפֹּט הַיּוֹם בֵּין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבֵין בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: וְלֹא שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶל דְּבָרֵי יִפְתָּח אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח אֵלָיו: שׁוֹפְטִים יֵאָבִיב-כַּח

And Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, What have you to do with me, that you come against me to fight in my land? And the king of the Ammonites answered to the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up from Egypt, from Arnon to Jabbok, and to the Jordan; now therefore give back those lands peacefully. - And Jephthah sent messengers again to the king of the Ammonites; And said to him, Thus said Jephthah, Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the Ammonites; But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness to the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh; Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I beseech you, pass through your land; but the king of Edom would not listen to it. And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab; but he would not consent; and Israel stayed in Kadesh. Then they went along through the wilderness, and around the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and camped on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab; for Arnon was the border of Moab. - And Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, Let us pass, we beseech you, through your land into my place. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his border; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and camped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. And the L-rd G-d of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people to the hand of Israel, and they defeated them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. And they possessed all the borders of the Amorites, from Arnon to Jabbok, and from the wilderness to the Jordan. - So now the L-rd G-d of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel, and should you possess it? Will not you possess that which Kemosh your god gives to you to possess? So whoever the L-rd our G-d shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. - And now are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, While Israel lived in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that are along the borders of Arnon, for three hundred years? Why therefore did you not recover them during that time? - Therefore I

have not sinned against you, but you do me wrong to war against me; the L-rd the Judge be judge this day between the people of Israel and the Ammonites. - And the king of the Ammonites listened not to the words of Jephthah which he sent him. **Judges 11:12-28**

E.

וַתְּהִי עַל יַפְתָּח רוּחַ ד' וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת הַגִּלְעָד וְאֶת מְנַשֶּׁה וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת מִצְפָּה גִלְעָד וּמִמְצַפָּה גִלְעָד עָבַר בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: וַיְדַר יַפְתָּח נָדָר לַד' וַיֹּאמֶר אִם נָתַן תַּתֶּן אֶת בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן בְּיָדִי: וְהָיָה הַיּוֹצֵא אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִדְלַתִּי בְּיָמַי לְקִרְאָתִי בְּשׁוּבִי בְּשָׁלוֹ' מִבְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וְהָיָה לַד' וְהַעֲלִיתִהוּ עוֹלָה: וַיַּעֲבֹר יַפְתָּח אֶל בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן לְהִלָּחֵם בָּם וַיִּתְּנֵם ד' בְּיָדוֹ: וַיִּכֶם מְעֹרֹעֵר וְעַד בּוֹאֵךְ מְנִית עֲשָׂרִים עִיר וְעַד אֲבֵל כְּרָמִים מִכָּה גְדוֹלָה מְאֹד וַיִּכְנְעוּ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: שׁוֹפְטִים יֵאָכֵט-לג

Then the spirit of the L-rd came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed over to the Ammonites. And Jephthah vowed a vow to the L-rd, and said, If you shall without fail deliver the Ammonites into my hands, Then it shall be, that **whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the Ammonites, shall surely be the L-rd's, and (or) I will offer it up for a burnt offering.** So Jephthah passed over to the Ammonites to fight against them; and the L-rd delivered them into his hands. And he struck them from Aroer, till you come to Minnith, twenty cities, and to the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel. **Judges 11:29-33**

#### IV. Jephthah's Daughter

A.

וַיָּבֹא יַפְתָּח הַמְצַפָּה אֶל בֵּיתוֹ וְהָיָה בָתוֹ יֹצֵאת לְקִרְאָתוֹ כְּתַפִּים וּבְמַחְלוֹת וְרַק הִיא יְחִידָה אֵין לוֹ מִמָּנוּ בֶן אוֹ בַת: וַיְהִי כִרְאוֹתוֹ אוֹתָהּ וַיִּקְרַע אֶת בְּגָדָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵהָה בְּתִי הַכְרַע הַכְרַעַנִי וְאֵת הָיִית בְּעַכְרִי וְאֲנֹכִי פְצִיתִי פִי אֶל ד' וְלֹא אוֹכַל לָשׁוּב: וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אָבִי פְצִיתָה אֶת פִּיךָ אֶל ד' עָשָׂה לִי כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּיךָ אַחֲרַי אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָךְ ד' נְקָמוֹת מֵאֵיבֶיךָ מִבְּנֵי עַמּוֹן: וַתֹּאמֶר אֶל אָבִיהָ יַעֲשֶׂה לִי הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה הַרְפָּה מִמְּנֵי שָׁנִים חֲדָשִׁים וְאַלְכָה וַיְרִדְתִּי עַל הַהָרִים וְאַבְכָּה עַל בְּתוּלֵי אֲנֹכִי וַרְעוֹתַי: וַיֹּאמֶר לָכִי וַיִּשְׁלַח אוֹתָהּ שְׁנֵי חֲדָשִׁים וַתֵּלֶךְ הִיא וַרְעוֹתֶיהָ וַתִּבְכְּ עַל בְּתוּלֶיהָ עַל הַהָרִים: וַיְהִי מִקֶּץ | שָׁנִים חֲדָשִׁים וַתִּשָּׁב אֶל-אָבִיהָ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהּ אֶת נְדָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר נָדָר וְהִיא לֹא יָדְעָה אִישׁ וַתְּהִי חֹק בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: מִיָּמִים | יְמִימָה תִלְכְּנָה בָנוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְתַנּוֹת לְבַת יַפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי אַרְבַּעַת יָמִים בְּשָׁנָה: שׁוֹפְטִים יֵאָלֵד-מ

And Jephthah came to Mizpah to his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances; and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! you have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of trouble to me; for I have opened my mouth to the L-rd, and I cannot go back. And she said to him, My father, if you have opened your mouth to the L-rd, do to me according to that which has come from your mouth; seeing that the L-rd has taken vengeance for you of your enemies, of the Ammonites. And she said to her father, Let this thing be done for me; let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my friends. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her companions, and wept for her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed; and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year. **Judges 11:34-40**

B.

והעליתיהו עולה – דעת רז"ל בזה ידוע וא"א ז"ל פירש והעליתיהו הוי"ו במקום או ופירש והיה לד' הקדש אם אינו ראוי לעולה או העליתיהו עולה אם ראוי לעולה וכמו זה הוי"ו מכה אביו ואמו או אמו ויפה פי' וכן נראה מהפסוק כי לא המיתה שאמר (שלא אמר) ואבכה על נפשי לאות כי לא המיתה אך לא ידעה איש כמו שאמר והיא לא ידעה איש ומה שאמר גם כן ויעש לה את נדרו אשר נדר ולא אמר ויעלה עולה לאות כי פרושה היתה וזהו את נדרו אשר נדר והיה להשם כך נראה לפי פשטי הפסוקים ודברי רז"ל אם קבלה היא בידם עלינו לקבלה: פ' רד"ק לשופטים יא:לא

The opinion of our Sages is well known. My master, my father, of blessed memory, explained that the "vov" of the word "v'ha-alisihu" is to be understood to mean "or" i.e. the object should become sanctified, if it is not fit to be a sacrifice, **or**, if it is fit to be a sacrifice (i.e. a cow or a sheep) then it should be brought as a burnt offering. This is similar to the "vov" in the phrase, "makeh oviv v'imo." which is translated, he who hits his father *or* mother. He explained this very well, as it is evident from the verse that he did not kill her, as it [does not] say, "I will bewail my soul." [Rather it says, "I will bewail my virginity."] This indicates that he didn't kill her, but rather she abstained from marital relations, as it says (Judges 11:39), "and she knew no man." And from that which it says (ibid.), "he did with her according to his vow which he had vowed;" and not, "he offered her as a sacrifice," is indicative that she became an ascetic. This is the meaning of, "he did with her according to his vow which he had vowed," i.e. "shall surely be the L-rd's". This is what seems to be the simple meaning of the text. If the words of our Sages are based upon a chain of tradition, then we are duty bound to accept them. **Radak, ibid.**

C.

היינו דקאמר להו נביא לישראל: (ירמיהו ח') הצרי אין בגלעד אם רופא אין שם. וכתוב (ירמיהו י"ט) אשר לא צויתי ולא דברתי ולא עלתה על לבי. אשר לא צויתי - זה בנו של מישע מלך מואב, שנאמר (מלכים ב' ג') ויקח את בנו הבכור אשר ימלך תחתיו ויעלהו עלה, ולא דברתי - זה יפתח, ולא עלתה על לבי - זה יצחק בן אברהם. תענית ד.

This is what the prophet had in mind when he said to Israel (Jeremiah 8:23), "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? [Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored? Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the *slain* of the daughter of my people!]" And it is further written (ibid. 19:5), "Which I commanded not, nor spoke of it, neither came it to my mind." "Which I commanded not." This refers to the sacrifice of the son of Mesha, the king of Moab, as it is said (Kings II 3:27), "Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead and offered him for a burnt-offering." "Nor spoke of it." This refers to the daughter of Jephthach. "Neither came it to my mind." This refers to the sacrifice of Isaac, the son of Abraham. **Taanis 4a**

D.

וזה היה טעותו של יפתח בבתו, כי חשב כאשר חרם נגיד ישראל חל וקים להמית אנשים או העובר על חרמו חייב מיתה, כן אם נדר בעת מלחמה לעשות מאיש או אנשים זבח יחול הנדר, ולא ידע כי חרם המלך והסנהדרין חל על המורדים לכלותם או על העובר גזירתם ותקנתם, אבל לחול הנדר לעשות עולה מדבר שאין ראוי לד' חס וחלילה ולכן אמר בב"ר (ס ג) שאפילו הקדש דמים לא היה חייב ונענש בדמה: ואל תהיה נפתה בהבלי ר"א האומר כי פירוש והעליתיהו עולה (שופטים יא לא), או והעליתיהו, לומר אם יהיה היוצא מדלתי ביתי איש או אשה והיה לד' קודש שיהיה פרוש מדרכי העולם לעמוד לשרת בשם ד' בתפלה והודות לא-להים, ואם יהיה דבר ראוי ליקרב אצלנו עולה, ועשה בית לבתו מחוץ לעיר והתבודדה שם וכלכלה כל ימיה ואיש לא ידעה והיתה בתו צרורה ואלה

דברי רוח, כי אם נדר שיהיה לד' איננו שיהיה פרוש, אבל יהיה כמו שמואל שאמרה אמו ונתתיו לד' (ש"א א יא) והיה משרת בבית ד', לא פרוש וכפי משפטי התורה אין ביד האדם שידור ביוצאי פתח ביתו שיהיו פרושים, כאשר אין בידו להעלותם עולה ואם הדבר כן, היתה בתו הבוכה על בתוליה ורעיותיה עמה כזונות לקלס אתנן, וח"ו שיהיה חק בישראל לתנות לבת יפתח ארבעת ימים בשנה מפני שלא נשאת לבעל והיתה עובדת את ד' בטהרה אבל הדבר כפשוטו, וטעותו היה ממה שאמרתיו: פירוש הרמב"ן ויקרא כז:כט

The error of Yiftach regarding his daughter is that he thought that just as a leader of Israel has the power to institute a *cherem* which is a decree to directly put someone to death or to put one to death if he violates a decree. Similarly, if [the leader] makes a vow during wartime to offer an individual or individuals to become a [human] sacrifice, the vow would take effect. [His error was] that he didn't realize that the *cherem*, instituted by the king or the Sanhedrin only takes effect upon rebels, in order to eliminate them, or upon those who violate their decrees or legislation. G-d forbid to think that [a leader], through a vow, could validate something that is otherwise unfit to become a burnt sacrifice. For that reason it is stated in the Midrash Bereishis Rabbah (60:3) that he could not even sanctify her monetary value, [let alone offer her as a sacrifice] For that reason he was punished for shedding her blood. And don't be led astray by the nonsense of R. Avraham ibn Ezra who said that explanation of the phrase (Judges 11:31), "*v'ha-alisihu*" is to be understood to mean that if a man or woman would walk out of the house, then they, "shall surely be the L-rd's", i.e. they should separate themselves from the ways of the world and serve G-d through prayer and thanksgiving. And if that which leaves the house would be fit to become a sacrifice then I will bring it for a burnt offering. [In the end,] he made a house for his daughter outside the city in which she meditated and he provided for her needs there. No man "knew her" and she remained confined her whole life. These words [of R. Avraham ibn Ezra] are absurd. [First of all,] if he had vowed that a person would be sanctified to G-d, it would not mean that he would be an ascetic. He would rather be like Shmuel, whose mother said about him (Samuel I 1:11), "I have given him to G-d." Shmuel served in the House of G-d, but he was not an ascetic. [Second of all,] according to the laws of the Torah it is not within a person's power to impose upon those who leave his house that they become ascetics, just like it is not within his power to offer them up to become a burnt offering. [Third of all,] if this would be true, that his daughter bewailed her virginity as well as her friends, they were acting like harlots, praising the gifts [of carnal knowledge]. G-d forbid that there be a custom in Israel to bemoan the daughter of Yiftach four times a year because she didn't marry a husband and she served G-d in purity. The matter, however, is to be understood literally, and his mistake is as I previously stated. **Ramban, Vayikra 27:29**

## V. The Tribe of Ephraim and the Reign of Jephthah

### A.

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף כִּי יָשִׁית אָבִיו יָד יְמִינוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּרְע בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּתְמָךְ יַד אָבִיו לְהִסִּיר אֶתָּהּ מֵעַל רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם עַל רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה: וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל אָבִיו לֹא כֵן אָבִי כִּי זֶה הַבְּכֹר שִׁים יְמִינְךָ עַל רֹאשׁוֹ: וַיִּמָּאֵן אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר יָדְעָתִי בְּנִי יָדְעָתִי גַם הוּא יִהְיֶה לְעַם וְגַם הוּא יִגְדֹּל וְאוֹלָם אֲחִיו הִקְטִין יִגְדֹּל מִמֶּנּוּ וְזָרְעוֹ יִהְיֶה מְלֵא הַגּוֹיִם: וַיְבָרְכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאֹמֹר בְּךָ יִבְרַךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יִשְׁמַךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת אֶפְרַיִם לְפָנֵי מְנַשֶּׁה: בְּרֵאשִׁית מַחִיט-כ

And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand, to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, Not so, my father; for this is the firstborn; put your right hand upon his



head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In you shall Israel bless, saying, G-d make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh; and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. **Genesis 48:17-20**

B.

וַיִּצְעַק אִישׁ אֶפְרַיִם וַיַּעֲבֹר צְפוֹנָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לִיִּפְתָּח מְדוּעַ | עָבַרְתָּ | לְהִלָּחֵם בְּבָנַי—עִמּוֹן וְלָנוּ לֹא קָרָאתָ לְלָכֶת עִמָּךְ בֵּיתְךָ נִשְׂרָף עָלֶיךָ בְּאֵשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר יִפְתָּח אֲלֵיהֶם אִישׁ רִיב הָיִיתִי אָנֹכִי וְעַמִּי וּבְנֵי עִמּוֹן מְאֹד וְאִזְעַק אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא הוֹשַׁעְתֶּם אוֹתִי מִיָּדָם: וְאָרְאָה כִּי אֵינְךָ מוֹשִׁיעַ וְאֶשְׁיִמָּה נַפְשִׁי בְּכַפִּי וְאֶעֱבְרָה אֶל בְּנֵי עִמּוֹן וַיִּתְּנֶם ד' בְּיָדִי וְלָמָּה עָלִיתֶם אֵלַי הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהִלָּחֵם בִּי: וַיִּקְבְּצוּ יִפְתָּח אֶת כָּל אַנְשֵׁי גִלְעָד וַיִּלָּחֶם אֶת אֶפְרַיִם וַיְכּוּ אַנְשֵׁי גִלְעָד אֶת אֶפְרַיִם כִּי אָמְרוּ אֶתְּמֹנִים אַתֶּם גִּלְעָד בְּתוֹךְ אֶפְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ מְנַשֶּׁה: וַיִּלְכְּדוּ גִלְעָד אֶת מַעְבְּרוֹת הַיַּרְדֵּן לְאֶפְרַיִם וְהָיָה כִּי יֹאמְרוּ פְּלִיטֵי אֶפְרַיִם אֶעֱבְרָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אַנְשֵׁי גִלְעָד הַאֶפְרַתִּי אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר | לֹא: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אָמֵר נָא שְׂבַלֶּת וַיֹּאמֶר סְבַלֶּת וְלֹא יָכִין לְדַבֵּר כֵּן וַיֹּאחֲזוּ אוֹתוֹ וַיִּשְׁחַטוּהוּ אֶל מַעְבְּרוֹת הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּפֹּל בְּעֵת הַהִיא מֵאֶפְרַיִם אַרְבַּעִים וּשְׁנַיִם אָלֶף: וַיִּשְׁפֹּט יִפְתָּח אֶת—יִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים וַיָּמָת יִפְתָּח הַגִּלְעָדִי וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּעָרֵי גִלְעָד: שׁוֹפְטִים יב:א-ז

And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said to Jephthah, Why did you pass over to fight against the Ammonites, and did not call us to go with you? - We will burn your house upon you with fire. - And Jephthah said to them, I and my people were at great strife with the Ammonites; - and when I called you, you did not save me from their hands. - And when I saw that you did not save me, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the Ammonites, and the L-rd delivered them into my hand. - Why then have you come up to me this day, to fight against me? - Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead struck Ephraim, because they said, You Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites. And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites; and it was so that when those Ephraimites who had escaped said, Let me cross over; that the men of Gilead said to him, Are you an Ephraimite? If he said, No; Then said they to him, Say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth; for he could not pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan; and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty two thousand. And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. **Judges 12:1-7**

C.

אין סבולת אלא לשון ע"ז כאדם שאמר לחבירו שא כל. תנא דבי אליהו רבה פרק יא

The word Sibboleth is an expression related to idolatry, as in the expression *so Bel* - lift up Bel (See Isaiah 46:1) **Tana d'Vei Eliyahu Rabbah Perek 11**

## VI. Judges During Times of Peace

A.

(1) וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אַחֲרָיו אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבָצָן מִבֵּית לָחֶם: וַיְהִי לוֹ שְׁלֹשִׁים בָּנִים וּשְׁלֹשִׁים בָּנוֹת שֶׁלַח הַחֻזָּה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים בָּנוֹת הֵבִיא לְבָנָיו מִן הַחוּץ וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים: וַיָּמָת אֲבָצָן וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּבֵית לָחֶם: שׁוֹפְטִים יב:ח-י

And after him Ibzan of Beth-Lehem judged Israel. And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-Lehem. **Judges 12:8-10**

(2) לפי דרך הפשט ספר הכתוב נשואי בניו ובנותיו לספר ההצלחה הגדולה שהיתה לו בבנים ובבנות כי כלם השיאם בחייו ובאמת היו בו דברים טובים אשר בשכרם הגיע לזאת ההצלחה ולמעלה גדולה להיותו שופט ישראל: רד"ק, שם

According to the simple sense of the text, Scripture is relating to us the marriages of his sons and daughters in order to inform us about the tremendous success he had with his sons and daughters, for we was able to marry all of them off in his lifetime. Truly, he must have accomplished great things that merited him such success and the attainment of the great status of being the Judge over Israel. **Radak, ibid.**

B.

וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אַחֲרָיו אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵילֹן הַזְּבוּלָנִי וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים: וַיָּמָת אֵלֹן הַזְּבוּלָנִי וַיִּקָּבֵר בְּאֵילֹן בְּאֶרֶץ זְבוּלֹן: שופטים יב-יא-יב

And after him Elon, a Zebulunite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. And Elon the Zebulunite died, and was buried in Ayalon in the country of Zebulun. **Judges 12:11-12**

C.

(1) וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אַחֲרָיו אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדֹּן בֶּן הַלֵּל הַפְּרָעְתוֹנִי: וַיְהִי לוֹ אַרְבָּעִים בָּנִים וְשִׁלְשִׁים בָּנֵי בָנִים רֹכְבִים עַל שִׁבְעִים עֵיִרִם וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנִים: וַיָּמָת עַבְדֹּן בֶּן הַלֵּל הַפְּרָעְתוֹנִי וַיִּקָּבֵר בְּפְרָעְתוֹן בְּאֶרֶץ אֶפְרַיִם בְּהַר הָעֵמֶלְקִי: שופטים יב-יג-טו

And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. And he had forty sons and thirty grandchildren, who rode on seventy donkeys; and he judged Israel eight years. And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites. **Judges 12:13-15**

(2) הספור הזה גם כן להודיע הצלחתו שראה בנים ובנות ובני בנים גדולים אנשים רוכבים על עיירים כלומר מרוב עשרם וגדולתם לא היו צריכין להתעסק במלאכה אחרת ובעבודת הארץ אלא רוכבים על עיירים ונתמנה שופט ישראל: רד"ק, שם

This narrative was also included in order to inform us about his tremendous success that he saw adult children and grandchildren riding on donkeys, i.e. this was a result of their wealth and privileged status. They didn't have to be involved in some other profession or in working the land but were privileged [aristocrats] who rode donkeys. [In addition he was privileged] to be appointed the Judge over Israel. **Radak, ibid.**

## VII. The Birth of Samson

A.

(1) וַיִּסְפוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ד' וַיִּתְּנֵם ד' בְּיַד פְּלִשְׁתִּים אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה: וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִצְרָעָה מִמְּשַׁפַּחַת הַדְּנִי וְשָׁמוֹ מְנוּחַ וְאִשְׁתּוֹ עֲקָרָה וְלֹא יָלְדָה: שופטים יג-א-ב

And the people of Israel did evil again in the sight of the L-rd; and the L-rd delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bore not. **Judges 13:1-2**

(2) אינו אומר משבט אלא ממשפחת הדני מלמד שהיה אביו מדן ואמו של מנוח מיהודה וע"ז אמר יעקב (בראשית מט) דן ידין עמו וגו' כמיוחד שבשבטים זה יהודה לכך הקישו ליהודה שמארץ יהודה היה ואמו היתה מיהודה וכן מנוח היה מדן ואשתו היתה מיהודה נמצא שמשון בא משבט דן ומשבט יהודה שכך אמרו אמיה דשמשון הצללפוני שמה והיא מיוחסת על שבט יהודה שנא' (ד"ה א ד) ושם אחותם הצללפוני. מדרש במדבר רבה י"ה

Scripture does not say, "from the tribe of Dan," but rather, "of the family of the Danites." This teaches us that his father was from Dan, but the mother of Manoah was from Yehudah. Regarding this did Yaakov say (Genesis 49:16-18), "Dan shall judge (revenge) his people, as (the special) *one* of the tribes of Israel. [Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that bites the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O L-rd.]" The special one of the tribes is Yehudah [from whom the ultimate redeemer will arise]. [The redeemer of Dan] is compared to Yehudah as he was from the land of Yehudah (Zorah straddled both Dan and Yehudah) and his mother was from Yehudah. Similarly, Manoah was from Dan and his wife was from Yehudah. Consequently, Shimshon (Samson) was from [both] the tribes of Dan and Yehudah. This is based upon the tradition that the name of Shimshon's mother was Hazeleponi, as it says (Chronicles I 4:1-3), "[The sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal. And Reaiah the son of Shobal fathered Jahath; and Jahath fathered Ahumai, and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites. And these were of the father of Etam: Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash:] and the name of their sister was Hazeleponi." **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5**

(3) למה נקרא שמו מנוח שזכה לדבר עמו מלאך והנבואה נקראת מנוחה שנא' (ירמיה נא) ושריה שר מנוחה מלמד שזכה ברוך בן נריה לרוח הקודש כמה דתימא (ישעיה יא) ונחה עליו רוח ד'. מדרש במדבר רבה י"ה

Why was his name Manoah? Because he merited that an angel spoke to him and prophecy is called *Menuhah* (rest), as it says (Jeremiah 51:59), "The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah (Baruch) the son of Neriah . . . And this Seraiah was the master of *menuhah*. We derive from this that Baruch ben Neriah merited to receive the Divine spirit, as it says (Isaiah 11:2), "And the spirit of the L-rd shall rest (*v'nahah*) upon him." **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5**

(4) ואשתו עקרה ולא ילדה מלמד שהיה מחלוקת בין מנוח לאשתו הוא אומר לה את עקרה ולכך אינך יולדת והיא אומרת לו את עקר ולכך לא ילדתי לא היה מנוח עקר. מדרש במדבר רבה י"ה

"His wife was barren, and bore not." This teaches us that there was a disagreement between Manoah and his wife. He claimed that she was infertile and that was the reason she was still childless. But she claimed that he was the one who was infertile and that is the reason she was childless. [The truth is, however, that] Manoah was not infertile. **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5**

B.

(1) וַיֵּרָא מִלֶּאךָ ד' אֶל הָאִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֶיהָ הִנֵּה נָא אֶת עֲקָרָה וְלֹא יִלְדֹת וְהָרִית וְיִלְדֹת בֵּן: וְעַתָּה הַשְּׁמֵרִי נָא וְאַל תִּשְׁתֵּי יַיִן וְשִׁכָר וְאַל תֹּאכְלִי כָּל טָמְאָ: כִּי הִנֵּךְ הָרָה וְיִלְדֹת בֵּן וּמִזְרָה לֹא יֵעָלֶה עַל רֵאשׁוֹ כִּי נָזִיר אֶּ–לֵהִים יִהְיֶה הַנֶּעֶר מִן הַבֶּטֶן וְהוּא יַחֲלֵ לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד פְּלִשְׁתִּים: וַתֵּבֵא הָאִשָּׁה וַתֹּאמֶר לְאִישָׁהּ לֵאמֹר אִישׁ הָאֶּ–לֵהִים בָּא אֵלַי וּמְרָאָהוּ כְּמְרָאָה מִלֶּאךָ הָאֶּ–לֵהִים נִזְרָא מְאֹד וְלֹא שְׂאֲלַתִּיהוּ אִי מְזָה הוּא וְאֵת שְׁמוֹ לֹא הִגִּיד לִי: וַיֹּאמֶר לִי הִנֵּךְ הָרָה וְיִלְדֹת בֵּן וְעַתָּה אֶל תִּשְׁתֵּי יַיִן וְשִׁכָר וְאַל תֹּאכְלִי כָּל טָמְאָה כִּי נָזִיר אֶּ–לֵהִים יִהְיֶה הַנֶּעֶר מִן הַבֶּטֶן עַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ: שׁוֹפְטִים יג:ז–

And the angel of the L-rd appeared to the woman, and said to her, Behold now, you are barren, and bear not; but you shall conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I beseech you, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing; For, behold, you shall conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head; for the child shall be a Nazirite to G-d from the womb; and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of G-d came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of G-d, very awesome; but I asked him not from where he was, nor did he tell me his name; But he said to me, Behold, you shall conceive, and bear a son; and now do not drink wine nor strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; for the child shall be a Nazirite to G-d from the womb to the day of his death. **Judges 13:3-7**

(2) וַיֵּרָא מִלֶּאךָ ד' אֶל הָאִשָּׁה מִכָּאֵן אַתָּה לְמַד שְׂאִשְׁתּוֹ שֶׁל מְנוּחַ צְדָקָת הִיתָה שִׁזְכָּתָה לְדַבֵּר עִמָּהּ מִלֶּאךָ וּלְשׁוֹם שְׁלוֹ' בִּינָה לְבֵין בְּעֵלָה וּלְהוֹדִיעָה שֶׁהִיא עֲקָרָה וְהִיא מוֹנַעַת הַהֲרִיּוֹן וְלֹא בְעֵלָה לְכַךְ דַּבֵּר עִמָּהּ וּלְפִי שְׂרָאָתָהּ בְּמִלֶּאךָ נִקְרָאת שְׂמָה צְלַלְפוֹנִי שֶׁהִיא פּוֹנָה בְּמִלֶּאךָ וְאִין צְלַל אֵלָא מִלֶּאךָ כְּמָה דְתִימָא (בְּרַאשִׁית יט) כִּי עַל כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצַל קוֹרְתֵי לְהִלְךְ שֶׁהִיא לוֹט צְדִיק יוֹתֵר מֵאִשְׁתּוֹ בָּאוּ הַמִּלְאָכִים בְּצַל קוֹרְתוֹ וְלֹא בְּצַל קוֹרְתָהּ. בְּרַם הַכָּא שְׂבָא הַמִּלֶּאךָ אֲצִלָּה לְפִי שֶׁהִיתָה צְדָקָת לְכַךְ נִקְרָאת הַצְּלַל לְמָה נֹאמֵר הַצְּלַל וְלֹא אִמֵּר הַצַּל לְפִי שְׁשֵׁתִי פַעֲמִים נִרְאָה לָהּ לְאִשָּׁה אַחַת בְּעִיר וְאַחַת בְּשָׂדֵה. מְדַרְשׁ בְּמִדְבַר רַבָּה י:ה

“And the angel of the L-rd appeared to the woman.” From this we derive that the wife of Manoah was righteous, for she merited to speak with an angel and that it was he who created peace between them and to inform them that it was she who was infertile and not her husband. For that reason the angel spoke to her. And because she [merited to see] an angel, she was called Tzelalponi (Hazelelponi), for she turned (*poneh*) to the angel. The word *tzelal* refers to an angel, as it says (Genesis 19:8), “. . . seeing that they have come under the shadow (protection) of my roof.” Since Lot was more righteous than his wife, the angels came to him to seek protection under *his* roof and not under *her* roof. In this case, however, the angel came to her, as she was a righteous person. The reason that she was called, Hazelel, and not Hazel, was because the angel appeared to her twice. Once in the city and once in the field. **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5**

(3) (שׁוֹפְטִים יג) וְעַתָּה הַשְּׁמֵרִי נָא וְאַל תִּשְׁתֵּי יַיִן וְשִׁכָר וְאַל תֹּאכְלִי כָּל טָמְאָ - מֵאִי כָּל טָמְאָ וְתוֹ, עַד הַשְּׂתָא דְבָרִים טָמְאִים קָאכְלָה? א"ר יִצְחָק דְבִי רַבִּי אַמִּי: דְבָרִים הָאִסּוּרִים בְּנִזְרִי. סוּטָה ט:

“Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing.” (Judges 13:4) What is the meaning of, “any unclean thing”? Furthermore, had she [Samson's mother] up to then eaten unclean things? R. Yitzchak of the Yeshiva of R. Ammi said: [She had hitherto eaten] things forbidden to a Nazirite. **Sota 9b**

(4) (שופטים יג) והוא יחל להושיע את ישראל - אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: הוחל שבועתו של אבימלך, דכתיב: (בראשית כא) אם תשקר לי ולניני ולנכדי.

“And he shall begin (*yachel*) to save Israel.” (Judges 13:5) R. Hama b. Hanina said: The oath of Avimelech became void (*huchal*), as it is written (Genesis 21:23), “That you shall not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son.” **Sota 9b-10a**

(5) והוא יחל להושיע את ישראל מיד פלשתים בו תהיה חלה נבואות יעקב שאמר (בראשית מט) דן ידין עמו וגו' יהי דן וגו' (שופטים יג) ותבא האשה וגו' ויאמר לו הנך הרה וגו' אבל מה שאמר לה הנה נא את עקרה לא גלתה לו שלא רצתה לגלות קלקולה כי נזיר א-להים יהיה הנער מן הבטן עד יום מותו היא הוסיפה עד יום מותו לפי שלא ידעה מה שעתידי אבל המלאך שהיה יודע שעתידי הוא לאבד נזירותו על ידי דלילה לכך לא אמר עד יום מותו. מדרש במדבר רבה י:ה

“And he shall begin (*yachel*) to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines.” (Judges 13:5) Through him will the prophecy of Yaakov take effect, as it says (Genesis 49:16-18), “Dan shall judge (revenge) his people, as (the special) *one* of the tribes of Israel. [Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that bites the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O L-rd.]” - “But he said to me, Behold, you shall conceive . . .” (Judges 13:7) However, that which he told her, “Behold now, you are barren,” she did not reveal to him, as she didn't want to reveal her defect. - “. . . for the child shall be a Nazirite to G-d from the womb to the day of his death.” (ibid.) She added this to his statement because she wasn't aware of the future. The angel, on the other hand, who knew that he would lose his Nazirite status through Delilah, didn't say, “to the day of his death.” **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5**

C.

(1) ויעֲתֶר מְנוּחַ אֶל ד' וַיֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲ-דוֹנֵי אִישׁ הָאֶ-לֵהִים אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַחְתָּ בָּוֹא נָא עוֹד אֵלֵינוּ וַיֹּרְנוּ מֵהַ נַעֲשֶׂה לְנַעַר הַיֶּלֶד: וַיִּשְׁמַע הָאֶ-לֵהִים בְּקוֹל מְנוּחַ וַיָּבֹא מְלֶאכֶד הָאֶ-לֵהִים עוֹד אֶל הָאִשָּׁה וְהִיא יוֹשֶׁבֶת בַּשָּׂדֶה וּמְנוּחַ אִישָׁה אֵין עִמָּה: וַתִּמְהַר הָאִשָּׁה וַתִּרְץ וַתִּגַּד לְאִישָׁהּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּה נִרְאָה אֵלַי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּא בְיוֹם אֵלַי: וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ מְנוּחַ אַחֲרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ וַיָּבֹא אֶל הָאִישׁ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הֲאֵתָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ אֶל הָאִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי: וַיֹּאמֶר מְנוּחַ עֲתָה יָבֹא דְבַרְיֶךָ מֵהַ יְהִי מִשְׁפַּט הַנַּעַר וּמַעֲשֶׂהוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר מְלֶאכֶד ד' אֶל מְנוּחַ מְכַל אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֶל הָאִשָּׁה תִּשְׁמַר: מְכַל אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִגִּפְן הַיַּיִן לֹא תֹאכַל וַיִּינֵן וְשָׁכַר אֶל תְּשֻׁתָּ וְכָל טַמְאָה אֶל תֹּאכַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיָּהּ תִּשְׁמַר: שופטים יג-ח-יד

Then Manoah entreated the L-rd, and said, O my L-rd, let the man of G-d whom you sent come back to us, and teach us what we shall do with the child who shall be born. And G-d listened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of G-d came back to the woman as she sat in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said to him, Behold, the man, who came to see me the other day, has appeared to me. And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said to him, Are you the man who spoke to the woman? And he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let your words come to pass. What shall be the rule for the child, and what shall be done with him? And the angel of the L-rd said to Manoah, Of all that I said to the woman let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that comes of the vine, nor let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe. **Judges 13:8-14**

(2) ויעתר מנוח אל ד' ויאמר בי אדוני איש וגו' אמר רשב"ל למה נמשלה תפלת הצדיקים לעתר לומר לך מה עתר זה מהפך את התבואה בגורן ממקום למקום כך תפלתן של צדיקים מהפכין מדת אכזריות למדת רחמניות (שם) וישמע א-להים בקול מנוח למה חזר המלאך אצל האשה ולא בא אצל מנוח שלא לפסול דבריו הראשונים שאמר לאשה ד"א כדי לחבבה בעיניו (שם) ותמהר האשה ותרץ וגו' מלמד שכל מעשה הצדיקים במהירות (שם) אשר בא ביום אלי אינו אומר היום אלא ביום מלמד שלא נראה המלאך אליה עד למחר לפי שמנוח לא התפלל עד למחר בתפלת הבקר כמה דתימא (תהלים ה) ד' בוקר תשמע קולי וגו' . . . ויאמר מלאך ד' אל מנוח מכל אשר אמרתי אל האשה לחלק כבוד לאשה ולחבבה בעיניו. מדרש במדבר רבה י:ה

“Then Manoah entreated (*vayetar*) the L-rd and said, O my L-rd, . . .” Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Why are the prayers of the righteous compared to a pitchfork (*atar*)? This is tell you that just like a pitchfork turns around the grain in the granary from place to place, so too the prayers of the righteous turn around the attribute of justice to the attribute of compassion. “And G-d listened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of G-d came back to the woman as she sat in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her.” Why did the angel return to the wife and not to Manaoh? This was in order not to negate the original words that he had spoken to [his] wife. Another explanation: This was in order to endear her to him (lit. in his eyes, i.e. that she was worthy of repeatedly being visited by an angel). “And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband . . .” This teaches us that all of the actions of the righteous are done with alacrity. [“Behold, the man,] who came to see me the other day . . .” [Note that] it doesn’t say, “today,” but rather “the other day”. This teaches us that the angel did not appear to her until the next day. This was because Manaoh didn’t pray until the next day, during the morning prayers, just as it says (Psalms 5:4), “You shall hear my voice in the morning, . . .” - “And the angel of the L-rd said to Manoah, Of all that I said to the woman let her beware.” This was in order to endear her to him. **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 10:5**

D.

(1) ויאמר מנוח אל מלאך ד' נעצרה נא אותך ונעשה לפניך גדי עזים: ויאמר מלאך ד' אל מנוח אם תעצרני לא אכל בלחמך ואם תעשה עליה לד' תעלנה פי לא ידע מנוח פי מלאך ד' הוא: ויאמר מנוח אל מלאך ד' מי שמך פי יבא דברך וכבדנוך: ויאמר לו מלאך ד' למה זה תשאל לשמי והוא פלאי: ויקח מנוח את גדי העזים ואת המנחה ויעל על הצור לד' ומפלא לעשות ומנוח ואשתו ראים: ויהי בעלות הלהב מעל המזבח השמימה ויעל מלאך ד' בלהב המזבח ומנוח ואשתו ראים ויפלו על פניהם ארצה: ולא יסף עוד מלאך ד' להראה אל מנוח ואל אשתו אז ידע מנוח פי מלאך ד' הוא: ויאמר מנוח אל אשתו מות נמות כי א-להים ראינו: ותאמר לו אשתו לו חפץ ד' להמיתנו לא לקח מינדנו עליה ומנחה ולא הראנו את כל אלה וכעת לא השמיענו כזאת: ותלד האשה בן ותקרא את שמו שמשון ויגדל הנער ויברכהו ד': ותחל רוח ד' לפעמו במחנה דן בין צרעה ובין אשתאל: שופטים יג:טו-כה

And Manoah said to the angel of the L-rd, I beseech you, let us detain you, until we shall have prepared a kid for you. And the angel of the L-rd said to Manoah, Though you detain me, I will not eat of your bread; and if you will offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the L-rd. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the L-rd. And Manoah said to the angel of the L-rd, What is your name, that when your sayings come to pass we may do you honor? And the angel of the L-rd said to him, Why ask you thus after my name, seeing it is hidden? So Manoah took a kid with a meal offering, and offered it upon a rock to the L-rd; and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven

from off the altar, that the angel of the L-rd ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the L-rd did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the L-rd. And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen G-d. But his wife said to him, If the L-rd would have been pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt offering and a meal offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would have told us, at this time, such things as these. And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the L-rd blessed him. And the spirit of the L-rd began to stir in him in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. **Judges 13:8-15**

(2) א"ר יוחנן: שמשון דן את ישראל כאביהם שבשמים, שנאמר: (בראשית מט) דן ידין עמו כאחד וגו'. וא"ר יוחנן: שמשון על שמו של הקב"ה נקרא, שנאמר: (תהלים פד) כי שמש ומגן ד' א-להים וגו'. אלא מעתה, לא ימחה אלא מעין שמו של הקב"ה, מה הקב"ה מגין על כל העולם כולו, אף שמשון מגין בדורו על ישראל. סוטה י.

R. Yohanan said: Samson judged Israel in the same manner as their Father in heaven; as it is said, (Genesis 49:16), "Dan shall judge his people as One." R. Yohanan also said: Samson was called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; as it is said (84:12), "For the L-rd G-d is a sun (wall) and a shield." According to this argument, [his name] may not be erased! The intention is that [his name] was typical of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; as the Holy One, blessed be He, shields the whole world, so Samson shielded Israel during his generation. **Sota 10a**

(3) ותחל רוח ד' וגו' - א"ר חמא בר' חנינא: חלתה נבואתו של יעקב אבינו, דכתיב: (בראשית מט) יהי דן נחש עלי דרך. לפעמו במחנה דן - א"ר יצחק דבי רבי אמאי: מלמד, שהיתה שכינה מקשקשת לפניו כזוג, כתיב הכא: לפעמו במחנה דן, וכתיב התם: (שמות כח) פעמון ורימון. בין צרעה ובין אשתאול - אמר ר' אסי: צרעה ואשתאול שני הרים גדולים היו, ועקרן שמשון וטחנן זה בזה. סוטה ט.

"And the spirit of the L-rd began (*vatohel*), etc." (Judges 13:15) R. Hama b. Hanina said: Yaakov's prophecy became fulfilled (*haltha*), as it is written (Genesis 49:17), "Dan shall be a serpent in the way [an adder in the path, that bites the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O L-rd.]" To stir him (*lefa'amo*) in Mahaneh-Dan. (ibid.) R. Yitzchak of the Yeshiva of R. Ammi said: This teaches that the Shechinah kept ringing in front of him like a bell; it is written here to stir him (*lefa'amo*) in Mahaneh-Dan, and it is written elsewhere (Exodus 28:34), "A golden bell (*pa'amon*) and a pomegranate." Between Zorah and Eshtaol (ibid.) R. Assi said: Zorah and Eshtaol are two great mountains, and Samson uprooted them and ground one against the other. **Sota 9b**

(4) (שופטים יג) ויגדל הנער ויברכהו ד' - במה ברכו? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: שברכו באמתו, אמתו כבני אדם וזרעו כנחל שוטף. סוטה י.

"And the child grew, and the L-rd blessed him." (Judges 13:14) Wherewith did He bless him? Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: He blessed him through his male organ. It was like that of other men but his seed [flowed] like a fast-flowing stream. **Sota 10a**