

**Close Reading Questions for High School Students on
Sefer Shoftim: Perakim Yud Dalet - Tet Vav
by Zvi Grumet**

פרק יד

1. Does שמשון want a פלשתי woman for personal or national reasons? What do his parents think of the שידוך?
2. What image is painted of שמשון through the description of his encounters with the lion and the bees?
3. Why does שמשון present his wedding guests with a riddle? Notice that we have an early clue of the weakness of this mighty man – and also notice that it is the very פרק which introduces us to his great strength alongside his great weakness!
4. This פרק starts and ends with שמשון's quest for a wife. What happens to שמשון's wife at the end of the פרק?
5. שמשון is introduced as a נזיר א-לוהים, yet his behavior seems anything but! How do you understand that apparent disparity?

פרק טו

1. Notice the similarities between this story and the story of יהודה ותמר in בראשית: לח שאול and דוד? What are the significant differences between them? Do you notice parallels to other stories in בראשית?
2. Is the image of שמשון in this פרק being moderated or strengthened? Explain! (Make sure to read through until the end of the פרק)
3. Notice the irony in the fate of שמשון's wife, particularly in light of the previous פרק!
4. Who wanted to hand שמשון over to the פלשתים? Why? What does that tell you about שמשון and the entire period in which he functions? What does that tell you about שמשון's leadership?
5. Which פסוק in this פרק seems completely out of place?