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## Scripture Exposes Her: Solving the Mystery of Shelomit bat Dibri

Tuesday 24 December 2024 - 16:15-17:10

### Leviticus 24:10-23

There came out among the Israelites a man whose mother was Israelite and whose father was Egyptian. And a fight broke out in the camp between that half-Israelite and a certain Israelite. The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name in blasphemy, and he was brought to Moses—**now his mother's name was Shelomith daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan**— and he was placed in custody, until the decision of YHVH should be made clear to them. And YHVH spoke to Moses, saying: Take the blasphemer outside the camp; and let all who were within hearing lay their hands upon his head, and let the community leadership stone him. And to the Israelite people speak thus: Anyone who blasphemes God shall bear the guilt; and one who also pronounces the name YHVH shall be put to death. The community leadership shall stone that person; stranger or citizen—having thus pronounced the Name—shall be put to death. If any party kills any human being, that person shall be put to death. One who kills a beast shall make restitution for it: life for life. If any party maims another [person]: what was done shall be done in return— fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The injury inflicted on a human being shall be inflicted in return. One who kills a beast shall make restitution for it; but one who kills a human being shall be put to death. You shall have one standard for stranger and citizen alike: for I YHVH am your God. Moses spoke

וַיֵּצֵא בֶן-אִשָּׁה יִשְׂרָאֵלִית וְהוּא בֶן-אִישׁ מִצְרִי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְצוּ בַּמִּחָנֶה בֶּן הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִית וְאִישׁ הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי: וַיִּקְבּוּ בֶן-הָאִשָּׁה הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִית אֶת-הַשֵּׁם וַיִּקְלֹל וַיִּבְרִיאוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ שְׁלֹמִית בַּת-דִּבְרִי לְמַטֵּה-דָן: לְוַיִּנְחָהּוּ בַּמִּשְׁמֶר לְפָרֹשׁ לָהֶם עַל-פִּי יְהוָה: פֶּן וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לְאַמֵּר: הוֹצֵא אֶת-הַמְקַלֵּל אֶל-מַחֲוִיל לְמִחָנֶה וְסָמְכוּ כָּל-הַשֹּׂמְעִים אֶת-יְדֵיהֶם עַל-רָאשָׁיו וְרָגְמוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל-הָעֵדָה: וְאֵל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּדַבֵּר לֵאמֹר אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי-יִקְלַל אֱלֹהָיו וַיִּנְשָׂא חֲטָאוֹ: וְלִקְבּוּ שֵׁם-יְהוָה מוֹת יוֹמָת רָגוּם וְרָגְמוּ-בּוֹ כָּל-הָעֵדָה כֶּגֶר כְּאֲזַרְח בְּנִקְבוֹ-שֵׁם יוֹמָת: וְאִישׁ כִּי יַכֶּה כְּלִגְפֹשׁ אָדָם מוֹת יוֹמָת: וּמַכֶּה גִפְשׁ-בְּהֵמָה יִשְׁלַמְנָה גִפְשׁ תַּחַת גִּפְשׁ: וְאִישׁ כִּי-יִתֵּן מוֹם בְּעַמִּיתוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בֶן יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ: שֹׁכֵר תַּחַת שֹׁכֵר עֵינָיו תַּחַת עֵינָיו שֹׁן תַּחַת שֹׁן כְּאֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן מוֹם בְּאָדָם בֶּן יִגְתֹּן בּוֹ: וּמַכֶּה בְּהֵמָה יִשְׁלַמְנָה וּמַכֶּה אָדָם יוֹמָת: מִשְׁפָּט אֶחָד יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כֶּגֶר כְּאֲזַרְח יִהְיֶה כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וַיִּדְבֹּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיּוֹצִיאוּ אֶת-הַמְקַלֵּל אֶל-מַחֲוִיל לְמִחָנֶה וַיִּרְגְּמוּ אֹתוֹ אָבֹן וּבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה:

thus to the Israelites. And they took the blasphemer outside the camp and pelted him with stones. The Israelites did as YHVH had commanded Moses.

#### Leviticus Rabbah Emor 4

“Shelomit” - as Rabbi Levi said, that she would chatter, “Shalom to you,” “Shalom to you [plural],” a “Shalom” to everyone. Rabbi Yitzchak said, “Bat dibri’ - that she brought death on her son.

ושם אמו שלומית בת דברי למטה דן, שלומית, דאמר ר' לוי דהות פטטא בשלמא שלם לך שלם לכון בת דברי אמר ר' יצחק שהביאה דבר על בנה

#### Leviticus Rabbah Emor 4

Rav Huna said in the name of Bar Kapara, “For the sake of four things were Israel redeemed from Egypt: that they did not change their names, and they did not change their language, and they did not speak *lashon hara* and that there was not found one amongst them loose with regards to sexuality”...And there was not one of them found to be loose with regards to sexuality - to make known to you that it was thus, there was one, and scripture exposes her, as it is written, “And the name of his mother was Shelomit bat Dibri from the tribe of Dan” (Leviticus 24:11).

רב הונא אמר בשם בר קפרא בשביל ד' דברים נגאלו ישראל ממצרים שלא שנו את שמם ואת לשונם ולא אמרו לשון הרע ולא נמצא ביניהן אחד מהן פרוץ בערוה ... ולא נמצא אחד מהם פרוץ בערוה תדע לך שהיה כן אחת היתה ופרסמה הכתוב שנא' (ויקרא כד) ושם אמו שלומית בת דברי למטה דן

#### Tanhuma Emor 32

The taskmasters were from Egypt and the overseers were from Israel. A taskmaster was in charge of ten overseers, and an overseer over ten Israelites, [thus] a taskmaster would be found in charge of one hundred and ten Israelites. One time, a taskmaster woke an overseer early. He said to him, “Go, gather your ten.” When he [the overseer] left, he [the taskmaster] entered his house and he made light with Shelomit, the wife of the overseer. Her husband returned and found him [the taskmaster] leaving his house. When he knew that he had perceived him, he would strike him everyday. The

היו נוגשים משל מצרים, והשוטרים משל ישראל, הנוגש היה ממונה על עשרה שוטרים, והשוטר על עשרה ישראלים, נמצא הנוגש ממונה על (ק"י) [ק'] ישראלים, חד זמן קדמו נוגש לשוטר, א"ל זיל כנוש עשריותיך, כשהלך נכנס בביתו וקילקל עם שלומית אשתו של שוטר, חזר בעלה מצאו יוצא מביתו, כיון שידע שהרגיש בו, היה מכה אותו בכל יום, נצנצה רוח הקדש במשה, תלה עיניו למרום, אמר לו די לרשע זה שענינה את אשתו, אלא שחוזר ומכה אותו, מיד ויך את המצרי ויטמנהו בחול (שמות ב יב), אמר הקב"ה בעולם הזה בעונות אתם נמסרים ביד אומות העולם, אבל לעולם הבא והיו מלכים אומניך ושרותיהם מינקותיך [אפים ארץ ישתחוו לך ועפר רגליך ילחכו] (וידעת כי אני ה' אשר לא יבשו קוי) [ישעיה מט כג]

holy spirit was sparked in Moses. He raised his eyes on high. He said, "Was it not enough for this evil person that he violated his wife, that he returns and strikes him?" Immediately, "And he struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand" (Exodus 2:12). The Holy Blessed One said, "In this world, on account of wrongs, you are handed over into the hand of the nations of the world, but in the world to come, kings will provide your childcare and their princesses will be your wetnurses, and they will bow to you, noses to the ground, and they will lick the dust of your feet and you will know that I am YHVH - those who hope in me will not be ashamed" (Isaiah 49:23).

### Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 48

Rabbi Yose says, "The Egyptians would make the Israelites unclean, and their women with them. Know that the son of a son of Dan married a woman from his tribe, and her name was Shelomit bat Dibri. And that same night, the taskmasters of Pharaoh raped her and killed her husband and she became pregnant. And everything follows the seed, if sweet - to sweet, but if bitter - to bitter. And when Israel went out of Egypt, he started to revile and blaspheme, as it is written, "And the son of the Israelite woman pierced the Name and cursed" (Leviticus 24:11).

רבי יוסי אומר היו המצרים מטמאין את ישראל ואת נשיהם עמם. תדע לך, שכן בנו של דן נשא אשה משבטו ושמה שלומית בת דברי, ובאותו הלילה באו עליה נוגשי פרעה והרגו לבעלה, והרתה. והכל הולך אחר הזרע, אם מתוק למתוק, ואם מר למר. וכשיצאו ישראל ממצרים, התחיל מחרף ומגדף, שנאמר [ויקרא כד, יא] ויקב בן האשה הישראלית את השם ויקלל

### Leviticus Rabbah Emor 4

**The taskmasters were Egyptians and the overseers were Israelites. A taskmaster would be in charge of ten overseers and the overseer would be in charge of ten people, then a taskmaster would be found to be in charge of one hundred and ten people.** One time, a taskmaster woke up an overseer early. He said to him, 'Go, gather your ten!' When he went into his house, his [the overseer's] wife giggled at him [the taskmaster]." He said,

נוגשין היו מצרים ושוטרים היו ישראל נוגש היה ממונה על י' שוטרים ושוטר היה ממונה על י' בני אדם נמצא נוגש ממונה על ק' בני אדם חד זמן קדם נוגש גבי שוטר א"ל זיל כנוש לי חבורתך כיון שנכנס שחקה לו אשתו אמר דהדין גברא היא יצא והטמין עצמו לאחורי הסולם כיון שיצא בעלה נכנס וקלקל עמה הפך לאחוריו וחמתיה נפק מן גו ביתא כיון דידע דחמתיה נפק לגביה והוי מחי ליה כל ההוא יומא וא"ל לעי טבאית לעי טבאית מתכוין בעי למקטלי באותה שעה הציץ רוח הקדש במשה

“Aha! She belongs to this guy!” He went out and hid himself behind the ladder, when her husband went out, he entered and made light with her. He [the overseer] turned around and saw him [the taskmaster] leaving from inside his house. When he [the taskmaster] realised that he [the overseer] saw him leaving his house, he [started] beating him all day, and saying to him, “Work properly! Work properly!” and he intended to seek to kill him. At that very hour, the holy spirit came forth to Moses, this is [why it is written], “And he turned this way and that” (Exodus 2:12). What is “and he turned this way and that”? Rather, he saw what he did to him at home and what he was going to do to him in the field. He said, “Was it not enough for him that he made light with his wife, that he seeks to kill him?!” Immediately, “and he saw there was no man around” (ibid.).

ה"ד (שמות ב) ויפן כה וכה מהו כה וכה אלא ראה מה עשה לו בבית ובשדה אמר לו לא דיו שקלקל עם אשתו אלא שהוא מבקש להרגו מיד וירא כי אין איש

### Exodus Rabbah 1:28:2

One time, the Egyptian taskmaster went to the house of an Israelite overseer and set his eyes upon his wife who was shapely and beautiful, without blemish. He arose at cock-crow and brought him out of his house and the Egyptian went back and went unto his wife and she believed that it was her husband and became pregnant by him. [When], her husband returned, he found the Egyptian leaving his house. He asked her: “Did he touch you?” She said to him: “Yes, and I believed that he was you.”

פעם אחת הלך הנוגש המצרי אצל שוטר ישראל ונתן עיניו באשתו שהיתה יפת תואר בלי מום. עמד לשעת קריאת הגבר והוציאו מביתו וחזר המצרי ובא על אשתו והיתה סבורה שהוא בעלה ונתעברה ממנו. חזר בעלה, מצא המצרי יוצא מביתו. שאל לה: נגע בך? אמרה לו: הן, וסבורה הייתי שאתה הוא.

### Sekhel Tov Shemot 2:11

The Egyptian went to his house and did not find him. He asked his wife and she replied to him with, “Shalom.” Immediately, the Egyptian persuaded her and solicited her to do a sinful thing, and she listened to him wilfully. After he left, he found her husband and struck him and Moses became zealous because of him and killed him. And similarly, she was not found in the house of Israel, since she replied to him with “shalom,” he abused her.

בא המצרי אל ביתו ולא מצאו, שאל לאשתו והשיבה לו אשתו שלום, מיד הורגל המצרי אליה ותבעה לדבר עבירה, והשמיעה לו לרצון, לאחר שהלך ומצא את בעלה היה מכהו ונתקנא בו משה והרגו, וכיוצא בה לא נמצאת בבית ישראל שלפי ששלום השיבה נתעלל אליה

**Excerpt from Student Rabbi Yael Tischler's Dvar Torah on Parashat Emor 5783:** <https://lbc.ac.uk/d-var-torah/parashat-emor-12/>

Both women sit under the too-bright stars. The silence is thick and heavy and full. Shelomit speaks first. "You wanted to know what I was doing."

"Yes."

"Listening."

"For what?"

"The voice of my son's blood cries out to me from the ground. So, I'm listening."

"You come here every night. That's what I heard. To the place where..."

"You can say it. Where they killed him."

"Do you hear anything?"

"No."

"Then why do you come?"

"Because I keep hoping I will. You can't hold a child to your breast, wipe his bottom, sing him to sleep, watch him grow into a man, without loving him. No matter what he did or didn't do. I saw them pelt him with stones. I hate every last one of them. It was like my insides were being ripped out. But I still don't fully believe he's dead. So I'm listening."

**Excerpt from "The Retelling of Shelomit bat Dibri" by Claire Helman**

When she heard of his death she sought  
Revenge  
Cursed those who  
Stoned him.  
Their crops shrivelled  
Their wives left them  
In her dreams  
Her son came  
Told her to  
Gather her community of women around her  
They gathered, campaigned, and  
Fought the law on stoning  
She led the fight  
With a peaceful approach in her heart.