

The importance of this narrative below in 1st Samuel, is in its illustration of the immediate reaction by the Israelites, to any and all external threats. Importantly, while the narrative does show a strategic reaction (as in the call to war) in the face of these threats of humiliation (i.e. the gauging of eyes as a humiliation coupled with the threat of subsequent slave-like conditions) -- the overall import of the narrative is used to demonstrate the immediate aftereffect of the threat to humiliate the Jewish people.

The narrative of 1st Samuel 11 has come to represent, as a statement of Am Yisrael, in the face of threat and humiliation, both a call to unity and path to resolve, to this day.

One People, one resolve -- oh, that it should forever be so.

Am Yisrael Chai . . .

1 Samuel Chapter 11 / שְׁמוּאֵל א

- א וַיַּעַל, נַחֲשׁ הָעַמּוֹנִי, וַיַּחֲנוּ, עַל-יָבִישׁ גִּלְעָד; וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל-אֲנָשֵׁי יָבִישׁ, אֶל-נַחֲשׁ, כְּרַת-לָנוּ בְרִית, וְנַעֲבֹדְךָ.
- 1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh (i.e. Israelites) said unto Nahash: 'Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.'
- ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם, נַחֲשׁ הָעַמּוֹנִי, בְּזֹאת אֶכְרַת לָכֶם, בְּנִקּוֹר לָכֶם כָּל-עֵין יָמִינוּ; וְשַׁמְתִּיהָ חֲרָפָה, עַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.
- 2 And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them: 'On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.' (i.e. as a Nahash / Ammonite -demonstration attempting to impose subjugation and humiliation on the Israelites)
- ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו זִקְנֵי יָבִישׁ, הֲרַף לָנוּ שְׁבַעַת יָמִים, וְנִשְׁלַח מְלָאכִים, בְּכֹל גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל; וְאִם-אֵין מוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתָּנוּ, וַיֵּצְאוּ אֵלֵינוּ.
- 3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him: 'Give us seven days' (i.e. akin to a time of Shiva) respite, that we may send messengers unto all the borders of Israel; and then, if there be none to deliver us, we will come out to thee.'

ד וַיָּבֹאוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים גְּבַעַת שְׂאוֹל, וַיְדַבְּרוּ
הַדְּבָרִים בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם; וַיִּשְׂאוּ כָּל-הָעָם
אֶת-קוֹלָם, וַיִּבְכוּ.

4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah-Shaul, and spoke these words in the ears of the people; and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept (demonstrating the Israelite willingness to accept a slave-like status / weakness).

ה הִוְהָה שְׂאוֹל, בָּא אַחֲרֵי הַבָּקָר
מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה, וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוֹל, מַה-לָּעָם כִּי
יִבְכוּ; וַיִּסְפְּרוּ-לוֹ--אֶת-דְּבָרֵי, אֲנָשֵׁי יַבֶּשׁ

5 And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said: 'What aileth the people that they weep?' And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh.

ו וַתִּצְלַח רוּחַ-אַלֹּהִים עַל-שְׂאוֹל,
בְּשִׁמְעוֹ (כְּשִׁמְעוֹ) אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה;
וַיַּחַר אַפּוֹ, מְאֹד.

6 And the spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly.

ז וַיִּקַּח צֶמֶד בָּקָר וַיִּנְתְּחֵהוּ, וַיִּשְׁלַח
בְּכָל-גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיַד הַמַּלְאָכִים לֵאמֹר,
אֲשֶׁר אֵינְנֹו יֵצֵא אַחֲרֵי שְׂאוֹל וְאַחֲרֵי
שָׁמוּאֵל, כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה לְבָקְרוֹ; וַיִּפֹּל
פַּחַד-יְהוָה עַל-הָעָם, וַיֵּצְאוּ כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying: 'Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen.' And the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man.

ח וַיִּפְקְדֵם, בְּבֶזֶק; וַיְהִי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל
שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אָלֶף, וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה שְׁלֹשִׁים
אָלֶף.

8 And he numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

ט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לַמַּלְאָכִים הַבָּאִים, כֹּה
תֹּאמְרוּן לְאִישׁ יַבֶּשׁ גִּלְעָד, מָחָר
תִּהְיֶה-לָּכֶם תְּשׁוּעָה, בַּחֹם (כַּחֹם)
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ; וַיָּבֹאוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים, וַיִּגִּדּוּ לְאֲנָשֵׁי
יַבֶּשׁ--וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came: 'Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead: To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance.' And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

י וַיֹּאמְרוּ אַנְשֵׁי יַבֵּשׁ, מָחָר נֵצֵא אֵלֵיכֶם; וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָנוּ, כְּכֹל-הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם. {ס}

10 And the men of Jabesh said: 'To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.' {S}

יא וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרָת, וַיֵּשֶׁם שָׁאוּל אֶת-הָעָם שְׁלֹשָׁה רָאשִׁים, וַיָּבֵאוּ בְּתוֹךְ-הַמַּחֲנֶה בְּאֲשֶׁמֶרֶת הַבֶּקֶר, וַיִּכּוּ אֶת-עַמּוֹן עַד-חַם הַיּוֹם; וַיְהִי הַנִּשְׁאָרִים וַיִּפְצּוּ, וְלֹא נִשְׁאָרוּ-בָם שְׁנַיִם יַחַד.

11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day; and it came to pass, that they that remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

יב וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעָם, אֶל-שָׁמוּאֵל, מִי הָאִמָּר, שָׁאוּל יִמְלֶךְ עָלֵינוּ: תָּנוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים, וְנָמִיתָם.

12 And the people said unto Samuel: 'Who is he that said: Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.'

יג וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל, לֹא-יוֹמֶת אִישׁ בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: כִּי הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה-יְהוָה תְּשׁוּעָה, בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.

13 And Saul said: 'There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the LORD hath wrought deliverance in Israel.'

יד וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁמוּאֵל אֶל-הָעָם, לָכוּ וְנִלְכָה הַגִּלְגָּל; וְנִחַדַּשׁ שָׁם, הַמְּלוּכָה.

14 Then said Samuel to the people: 'Come and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.'

טו הַגִּלְגָּל, וַיִּמְלְכוּ שָׁם וַיִּלְכוּ כָל-הָעָם טו אֶת-שָׁאוּל לְפָנֵי יְהוָה בְּגִלְגָּל, וַיִּזְבְּחוּ-שָׁם זִבְחִים שְׁלָמִים, לְפָנֵי יְהוָה; וַיִּשְׂמַח שָׁם שָׁאוּל וְכָל-אַנְשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל, עַד-מָאד. {פ}

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. {P}