

Was Samson a Promiscuous Man (Judges 13-16)? Viewing Samson as a Human Figure in a Theoretical Approach

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Abstract. This paper discusses the character of Samson as an historical figure within Judges 13-16 narratives in the Old Testament Bible. The main aim of this paper is to find out through theoretical inference whether there were circumstances surrounding Samson's sexual behaviour. Drawing from causal theory, the paper argues that there is a possible nexus between Samson's failed marriage and his subsequent relationship with other women. It shows that Samson's problem was not metaphysical but human induced and as such it is causal. It constructs, Samson as human figure in the narrative and analyses the text from the perspective of causal theory and concludes that Samson's failed marriage could be responsible for his subsequent relationship with a Harlot in Gaza and Delilah. In the Narrative, apart from the harlot in Gaza, the ex-wife and Delilah betrayed his love. Within this line of theoretical thought, Samson was seen as a victim of emotional catharsis, human intrigue, insensitivity, naivety and the woman power factor.

Key Words: Samson, Causal theory, Promiscuity, Judges 13-16, Human figure,

1. Introduction

Scholars in the discipline of biblical studies have often approached the study of Samson from a

purely literary point of view thereby treating Samson as a literary figure. One of the problems that might be encountered in seeing Samson as a literary figure is the tendency of considering the genre as a fiction and as such posing the possibility of explaining away the human problems encountered by him. Another possible problem in seeing Samson as a literary figure is the likely presentation of Samson as a Super Human who is above human emotions (feelings), mistakes or errors. Therefore, this paper intends to view Samson as a human figure in the historical narrative in Judges 13-16. This is why this paper argues that there is a possible nexus between Samson's failed marriage and his subsequent relationship with other women. The narrative of Samson's failed marriage is an issue that cannot be ignored. From the narrative, Samson's father-in-law did not allow Samson to have sex with his wife because he had given her in marriage to another man. This is a veritable prove that Samson was sexually deprived. Apart from being sexually deprived, his wife was married by one of his acolytes. This is another prove that shows the possibility of Samson being heart-broken, betrayed and depressed. These possibilities are also shown by Samson's anger and action of vengeance afterwards. Samson's situation is still prevalent in modern human society. Samson's case is therefore relevant to present day human sociological problem. It is obvious to us that Samson's

behaviour was causal on the ground that he was pushed by circumstances because prior to his failed marriage, we never heard of his relationship with women. It was after this incident of his failed marriage that the story of falling in love with the harlot at Gaza and Delilah surfaced. Therefore, this paper submits that there is a nexus between Samson's failed marriage and his subsequent love affairs with other women.

For those viewing Samson's situation from an immoral point and those viewing him as a literary figure, it should be understood that Samson's character in Judges' narratives is multifaceted (Exum 2014:13). The facet chosen by a scholar depends on what line of argument such scholar intends to prove. For Exum, Samson was a fool whenever he loves (Exum 2014:14). It was his attempt to prove his love to his Timnite wife and Delilah that led him to reveal his secrets. This made Exum to see him as a foolish hero. Samson's obsession with women was dominantly described in the narrative (Assis 2014:1). Some scholars have also portrayed the character of Samson from a negative point of view. He is being seen as a man who goes from one woman to the other due to sexual lust. Von Rad did not spare Samson when he claims that he was a waster of God's power because he failed to live up to the expectation of a Nazarite—a man of God (von Rad 1962:333-334). Klein (1988:117-118) also thinks in the direction of von Rad when she viewed Samson as a Judge who fails despite the deposit of God's Spirit in him. Klein's (1988:132) analysis compares Samson with other Judges who precedes him and draws a conclusion that despite the weakness of all of them Samson had an edge over the rest due to the Supernatural power bestowed on him which the others did not have. This deepens the disappointment on Samson's failure. It has been agreed by some scholars that the book of Judges emerged from 'extremely varied traditions' and as such, reminds the reader of the religious disunity in the Hebrew Bible' (Bal 1988: 282). If this is correct, it therefore means that a research on this theme is not going to be an easy task.

The above scholars approached the Samson's narrative from the view point of considering Samson as an ethical and a literary figure in Judges 13-16 in Old Testament literature. This may have informed the popular reading of Judges 13-16 in the context of Samson's promiscuity. But how true is this depiction? If the narrative about Samson in Judges 13-16 is viewed from the perspective of a human figure who experienced social and psychological problems of life within time and space, the likelihood of appreciating the sociological and psychological situation of Samson will be visible. Viewing Samson this way will help the reader to situate Samson in a real flesh and blood life situation in Biblical history. Those who see Samson as being promiscuous for visiting a harlot at Gaza and having a relationship with Delilah have ignored or refused to see Samson's failed marriage as a possible problem that may have precipitated his action. The sequence of Samson's action has shown that he was a reactionary person whose emotion can be aggravated by a corresponding action.

Apart from preachers, some scholars have followed the moral and literary line of thought too. Mark Greene for example, has described Samson as a kind of biblical Superman who had just one weakness (Greene 1991:54). It was not clear what Greene meant by 'one weakness' until his parallel analysis between Samson and the former 'Washington's mayor Marion Barry who was lured by a beautiful ex-model into a hotel room lavishly appointed with FBI surveillance equipment and, on his third visit, arrested for cocaine use!' (Greene 1991). But it soon dawned on Greene that 'the timelessness of some of the Samson story's themes and its broad appeal have however, not led to any consensus or even majority view about its meaning' thereby resulting to his submission of ambiguity (Greene 1991). The silence and unexplained suspense in the narrative show some form of ambiguity but in my thinking, this gives the room for theoretical analysis because of the innuendo associated with the narrative. For example, we were told that Samson visited a harlot in Gaza but what he did with her was not recorded. Exum (1983:36) has posed a divergent

argument in her work, 'the theological Dimension of the Samson saga.' Unlike Greene, Exum argues that Judges 13-16 gives a much more positive portrayal of Samson than is found in many sermons that treat the saga from a negative perspective (Exum 1983). Here Samson will be viewed as a human figure who experienced a real flesh and blood human situation in terms of marriage and his relationship with women.

2. Conceptual Argument

What does it mean to be promiscuous? The Encarta (2009) refers to promiscuity as indiscriminate sexual behaviour, that is, behaviour characterized by casual and indiscriminate sexual intercourse, often with many people. One aspect the Encarta did not explain is the time frame or frequency of indiscriminate sexual activities because in Africa where polygyny is accepted as norm and legally accepted in society, one cannot say such person is promiscuous. And in climes where serial marriage is accepted, one cannot say such persons are promiscuous. Whether the many people being referred to by the Encarta are serially or simultaneously, we are not being told. This makes this definition inappropriate especially in climes where polygyny or serial marriage is acceptable. Also, the online Merriam Webster dictionary also defined promiscuity as having or involving many sexual partners. This also did not tell us for how long. Moving further, scientists especially psychologists have thrown more light on the issue of promiscuity. Markey and Markey (2007) present a study that examines the interpersonal meaning of sexual promiscuity by using the Interpersonal Circumplex (IPC) to predict patterns of sexual behaviours and showed that promiscuity is a lifestyle of sexual pleasure in which an individual indulges in multiple sex partners at a time. Can we say that Samson had a multiple sex partners at a time? The narrative shows to us that Samson encountered the Timnath wife, the harlot at Gaza and Delilah at different intervals not simultaneously. Buss and Schmitt (1993) add another dimension to the argument. They added time duration stating that mating whether with a sex or multiple sex partners could be

temporal in terms of days, weeks, months and years. It appears the word promiscuity or promiscuous may not properly describe Samson's relationship with women.

Research has shown that there is a relationship or connections between promiscuity/prostitution and bad upbringing of a child especially child-abuse (victimization) due to poverty. Here promiscuity and prostitution seems to have a thin line demarcating them (Widom and Kuhns, 1996). However, prostitution can be seen as a full blown promiscuity. The Botswana experience as presented by Helle-Valle (2010) has shown that in Botswana there is a large, and increasing, number of women who do not marry but have one or several lovers simultaneously and have gifts from these men as an important part of their income. All of these scholars have given the idea of what promiscuity or being promiscuous means. In the context of our study, promiscuity can mean indiscriminate sex with multiple partners at a time or within a period of time. When Samson is placed in this context, he does not fit into this definition or description because he had relationship with one partner at a time. The story did not tell us if he had sex with them or whether he followed them simultaneously but there are traces of romantic involvement in the passage.

3. Theoretical Framework

Theoretically this study is based on causal theory. This theory states that every action attracts an explanation whether it appeals to reason or not. Salmon (2003:720) discourses causal explanations of human behaviour with the view that it is not all behaviour that appeal to reasons. However, Salmon (2003) shows that 'most discussions of causal explanations of behaviour focus on the problem of whether it makes sense to regard reasons as causes of human behaviour, whether there can be laws connecting reasons with behaviour, and the like.' Child (1996) buttresses this further that 'explaining an action is explaining why something happened, and an explanation of why something happened is always a causal explanation.' This is self-explanatory among Philosophers. From philosophical perspective

for instance, Alvarez (2016) highlights two types of reason for action: 'normative and motivating reasons.' While the normative reason favours or justifies an action, as judged by a well-informed, impartial observer, the motivating refers to reasons the 'agent' (that is, the person acting) takes to favour and justify her action and that guides her in acting (Alvarez, 2016). Causal theory has also been noted in Philosophical domain, that 'there are, in addition, "explanatory" reasons, reasons that explain an action without necessarily justifying it and without being the reasons that motivated the agent' (Alvarez 2016). Modern scholars have also reacted to the philosophical theory of human behaviour. For example, Dancy (2011) rejects the argument for normative and motivating reasons for action or behaviour on the ground that someone can act in ignorance. For Mitova (2016), both motivating and normative reasons are psychological states. For me, both the motivating and normative reasons for actions are based on rationalism. This is simply viewing causal theory from the perspective of logic or syllogism.

Other scholars have also made a lot of inputs on causal theory. They came out with various positions as well. These positions are not without some nuances. This is intended to give some insights into the possible cause of Samson's behaviour. From psychological perspective, LeBuffe (2015), drawing from Pinoza's Psychological Theory, highlights that Spinoza attempts to show 'that human beings follow the order of nature. Human beings, on Spinoza's view, have causal natures similar in kind to other ordinary objects...and that moral concepts, such as the concepts of good and evil, virtue, and perfection, have a basis in human psychology.' Spinoza's explanation implies that 'just as human beings are no different from the rest of nature, so moral concepts are no different from other concepts' (LeBuffe 2015). Drawing from R. G. Collingwood's writing about causation, Wide (2017), shows that there is interconnection between reason and ability to manipulate the world. Based on this interconnection, Wide concludes that (a) causality belongs to the realm of human praxis and that (b) causal analysis proper is well suited

for the social sciences. Also, Diego Fernandez-Duque of the University of Toronto and Mark L. Johnson of the University of Oregon carried out a research on 'cause and effect theories of attention: the role of conceptual metaphors' and their result showed that 'the crucial role of metaphors in cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and the efforts of scientists is to find a resolution to the classic problem of cause versus effect interpretations' (Fernandez-Duque and Johnson 2002:153). They explained further that scientific concepts are defined by metaphors and that these metaphors determine what attention is and what count as adequate explanations of the phenomenon. Before they arrived at the above result, they analyzed these metaphors within 3 types of attention theories: First is cause theories, in which attention is presumed to modulate information processing (e.g., attention as a spotlight; attention as a limited resource); second is effect theories, in which attention is considered to be a by-product of information processing (e.g., the competition metaphor); third is the hybrid theories that combine cause and effect aspects (e.g., biased competition models). This theory informs the cause of attention and as such it is plausible to agree that Samson's cause of erotic disposition calls for scholastic attestation. Mayne (2008:1) suggests that questions of cause and effect are critical to assessing the performance of programmes and projects and as such, there is the need to determine the specific cause-effect question being addressed. This postulation suggests a systematic approach to this type of research. In the same vein, using the theory of cause-effect inference on learning theory, Lopez-Paz, Muandet, Scholkopf, & Tolstikhin (2015) pose causal inference as the problem of learning to classify probability distributions. Also, Khoo, Chan & Niu (2002) presents a broad survey of the cause-effect relation, with particular emphasis on how the relation is expressed in text. Inferring cause-effect relations between events and statements has also been found to be an important part of reading and text comprehension, especially for narrative text. They opined that though, many of the cause-effect relations in text are implied and have to be inferred by the reader, there is also a wide variety of linguistic expressions for explicitly

indicating cause and effect. They added that, it has been found that certain words have ‘causal valence’—they bias the reader to attribute cause in certain ways and as such, cause-effect relations can be divided into different types. Within the context of Exum’s argument and the narrative before us, cause and effect means action that lead to another action. By this understanding, Samson’s action of violence and love were induced by human circumstances.

Based on the argument that there is a nexus between Samson’s failed marriage and his subsequent relationship with other women, the causal theory in this case can suggest how a scholar can find out about the possible cause of Samson’s behaviour. It relates Samson’s subsequent encounter with the Harlot in Gaza and his relationship with Delilah with his failed marriage in the sense that prior to Samson’s marriage, there was no such relationships as could be seen from the entire narrative. This theory in relations to Samson, also help to insinuate that Samson is a victim of circumstance. It is based on the argument that promiscuity may not have been consistent with Samson’s life style because his problem began when he had problems with his marriage. After the failed marriage, he began to look for another woman. After the disappointment, he went to one woman at a time and when he found love he was determined to remain. First he visited a harlot at Gaza and left untimely due to security threat. Second he found Delilah at the Valley of Sorek who eventually betrayed and destroyed him. It should be noted that when he met Delilah, there was no record that he was going after another woman. Moreover, the time frame of the relationship was not even determined in the narrative. This makes it dicey to absolutely conclude that Samson is a promiscuous man. Even though the causal theory helps in determining Samson’s possible reason for his behaviour, it does not justify sexual misdemeanour. Samson could have gone through due and legal process of the time in seeking Delilah’s hand marriage like he did in the case of the Timnath girl. On the other hand, the effect of his failed marriage cannot be totally ruled out as a possible cause of his relationship with harlot in Gaza and Delilah. This is why

causal reality in Africa is explained with the slogan ‘there no smoke without fire.’ This simply means that nothing happens without a cause. By implication behind any smoke there is fire as the root-cause. Though it is basic to human thought, causality is a notion shrouded in mystery, controversy, and caution, because scientists and philosophers have had difficulties defining when one event truly causes another (Epilogue, 2009). This argument between scientist and philosophers pose the question of metaphysics and religious beliefs.

4. Constructing Samson as a Human Figure in the Narratives of Judges 13-16

Constructing Samson’s personality as a human figure is a complex one. It is complex because Samson Manaoha in the Old Testament is very controversial in the sense that the narrative is filled with paradoxes. One of such paradoxes lies between love and hate. Another lies between holiness and decadence. This raises the question of how the profane relate with the holy divine. Another paradox is between the strong and the weak. The Divine is strong and the human is weak. It therefore means that humans cannot be like the Divine. Human nature itself is full of limitations and as such full of human errors. Does it mean human errors should be excused? The answer as far of Samson’s case is concerned is no but the cause of human errors must also be considered in human race so that future occurrence of such mistakes can be corrected. Another reason why it is complex to determine Samson’s promiscuity is the ambiguities in the narrative. In the entire narrative, we were told of Samson’s relationships with women: the anonymous Philistine woman at Timnah (14:1), the anonymous harlot at Gaza and Delilah in the Valley of Sorek (16:4). His relationships with these women were interpreted by some as promiscuity. In the midst of the insinuation of sexual immorality do we absolutely conclude that Samson is promiscuous? Can we also conclude that modern serial marriage is promiscuity? Or can we say modern polygyny is promiscuity? These are very challenging questions. It is challenging because it involves religion, ethics and emotion.

One of the arguments that will help in proving the human figure of Samson within the narrative is to determine his real figure as a person. Samson can be seen from the narrative as a human figure. An attempt to make Samson a purely literary figure in Judges 13-16 will rather make the narrative a fiction and as such water down the real personality of Samson within time and space. Those who argue for this also have valid points. However, reading through the story with the reasoning of causal theory will bring about the human figure in Samson which many have ignored in scholarship for too long. This type of reading gives flesh and blood reality to the story. As such, it makes the narrative a real life situation in Biblical history. The followings are veritable proves that shows that Samson was a real human figure in biblical history.

First is the reality of the birth of Samson. Judges 13 gives the narrative of Samson's birth. He had real parents. He was born as ordained by Yahweh and instructions were given as to how he should live his life. Samson's genealogy is obviously outlined. According to (Beecher 1884:7) it begins with the regular formula: 'And there was a certain man, from Zorah, from the family of the Danite, his name being Manoah, and his wife being barren (but) the name of his wife and the date are omitted.' Even though the mother's name was omitted, at least his genealogy is known in Israel's history. This is why Smith (2005:425) thinks that 'the story of Samson begins with a clear focus on the theme of the family.' Second is the ability to eat food. This is one of the characteristics of living things. The story line captured how Samson killed a young lion while he was going with his parents to marry a Philistine girl who he loved. By the time they were rerunning there was honey in the carcass of the lion which he scooped and ate with his parents. Third is the fact that Samson had emotion. He could be provoked to love or hate. He was a great lover and a great fighter. He was violent when provoked. He falls in love when he sees reasons to. Samson expressed his emotions. He loves and well as hates. Whichever side he exhibited was causal. He expressed love and violence in his actions in reactionary manners. Apart from his mission to deter the Philistines from subjugating Israel, Samson can

be very violent if he is provoked. He also expressed violence to the family of his wife and the entire community when he was provoked by their trickeries and betrayals. Also, when Samson loves a woman, he gives all his heart to her. This is why it is very easy for a woman to take advantage of him. Fourth is sexual need. Why did Samson decide to marry? He decided to get married because as a man he wanted to fulfil his sexual desire. Samson's marriage issue was presented in Judges 14. Samson like any human being has sexual need. Marriage is one of the means through which such desire can be fulfilled. He followed due process in achieving that at Timnath but later failed.

5. Genre of Judges 13-16

The narrative about Samson is found in Judges 13-16. Biblical literatures have been grouped into various genres. In this case, Judges 13-16 falls into the genre of narrative. The entire book falls into the genre of Historical narrative. So Judges 13-16 can be referred to as a narrative within a narrative. It is a narrative because it fits into a style of the time. It is also a tragedy because it gives the narrative of a heroic figure who started very strong but died weak as a result of betrayal and lack of self-discipline. The basic genre of Judges 13-16 is taken as history and this history seem to wear the gab of fiction (Greene 1991:55). The arrangement of the story and its resonance with its themes and meaning is a determinant of its genre. The story appears in segmented fragments showing redaction expertise and segmental disconnects. Marian Broida of Emory University has identified closure with Judges 13-16 narrative (Broida 2010). She drew her meaning from Abbot (2002:156-157) literary analysis of closure which is understood as having several types or levels. Broida buttresses that "much of what creates closure is conformity to expectations in three domains: text, genre, and the reader's real-life experience" (Broida 2010).

The entire narrative is expected to have a coherence between the beginning, middle and end. Judges as an historical book started from Joshua and continued to the books that captured the narrative of the anointing of David. The

renowned Biblical scholar, Willis J. Beecher succinctly puts it thus: “The history of the Judges, as recorded in the Bible, extends up to the time of the anointing of David...the history, as a literary production, passes continuously from the times of the Judges to those of David” (Beecher 1884). By implication, Judges as a book in the historical books of the Old Testament is a continuation of a long standing history transiting to another stage of the entire narrative. The narrative in Judges 13-16 focuses on a deliverer called Samson and how he succeeded and failed. Also, Tanner (1992) has also alluded that the book of Judges is consistent with Hebrew narrative style. Therefore, it is not out of place to situate the Narrative in Judges 13-16 in the context of Hebrew transition history. A history that started from Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, Israel’s conquest of the promised land, Israel’s apostasy and chastisement by Yahweh using other nations like the Philistines and God’s deliverance of Israel from the tyranny of such nation. It continued to the anointing of David and his defeat of the Philistines.

6. Quadripartite Pole Analysis of Judges 13-16 in Relation to Causal Theory

The first pole is the רוּחַ (*ruwach*) endowment of Samson. The Hebrew רוּחַ is translated as wind, spirit or breath. It was רוּחַ יְהוָה (the Spirit of God) that always come upon Samson especially at the time of danger. By this breath Samson was an approved man of God, called to carry out an assignment. John Roskoski, a Biblical scholar in St. Peter’s University has given us useful insight into this pole of thought which emphasizes the “Spirit of the Lord” (Roskoski 2017). In the narrative, it is said that Samson was endowed with the “Spirit of the Lord” on four occasions. First, at the camp of Dan (13:25); second, fighting the lion (14:6); third, the settling of the wager (14:19); and fourth, the battle at Ramath-Lehi (15:14). In the latter three instances, the text is exactly the same; the Spirit of the Lord rushed mightily upon him” (Roskoski 2017). This experience indicates God’s approval and empowerment to defend Israel against the powers of the Philistines. In a parallel reading,

David was also seen as receiving such approval by being endowed with the Spirit of Lord (1 Samuel 16:13). In another parallel reading Saul had a similar endowment (1 Samuel 10:6), though it was in connection with prophecy and not battles. We see the exact same construction; the Spirit rushing mightily. The only difference is that Samson’s endowments, or charisma, were transient and irrupted only in crisis. However, juxtaposing the experience of Moses and Samson, God did not show any disapproval in Marrying the women of their choices even though the women were originally not Israelites. The phrase רוּחַ יְהוָה signifies that God has always led His called servants to make pronouncements or make choices. His choice of wife was said to have a backing from God (14:4). It was all planned out by Yahweh as a strategy to make Israel dominate the Philistines. However, God did not take away the emotional need of Samson, that was why he could still fall in love with a woman of his choice. The spirit of God coming upon Samson was the cause of his heroic performance. It was this same Spirit of God that came upon David when he was anointed by Samuel (I Samuel 16: 1-11). The causal theory is also at work in Samson’s narrative. His power is also causal. The power of the Spirit of Yahweh was the source of his extraordinary powers. This is very clear when his covenant Nazarene hair was cut as a result of Delilah’s persuasion. The power left him until when the hair started growing again. The Spirit of God came on him again and he was able to destroy the Philistine temple where he was tied to do sport.

The second pole is the love relationship of Samson. What could have caused the love relationship of Samson with women? The storyline gives the reader the understanding that Samson had love relationship with three women but got married to the first one from Timnah. But we have observed from the text that the same word was used for the three. The word is אִשָּׁה (*ishshah*) and it means woman, wife or female (14:2,15,16,20; 15:1,6; 16:1,4). Although, the same word אִשָּׁה was used for woman or harlot, they were distinguished by locations (a woman at Timnath, a harlot at Gaza, a woman in the Valley of Sorek-Delilah). In

Accordance with Biblical account, “Samson’s relations with these women were a means to be revenged upon the Philistines. Nonetheless, the Rabbis use these ties to denounce the attraction to foreign women prevalent at the time” (Kadari 2009). Judging from Kadari’s last sentence here, it appears the Philistine women were very beautiful and attractive. In 15:2, the Hebrew adjective טובה (tō-w-bāh- better, fairer) was used by Samson’s father-in-law to describe the beauty of Samson’s wife’s sister. He did this in order to patronise Samson for what he did to him. The Hebrew טובה is from the stem טוב (tob) that is good. Although, the word יפה (yophi-beauty) was not used, טובה could mean good looking. So, we can say that Samson was attracted by the beauty of the women. Moreover, for seeking to marry the Timnah woman, it means Samson was interested in companionship. Also, for seeking to marry it means Samson was interested in fulfilling his sexual desire. This desire was shown when he wanted to go in to meet with his wife of which he was deprived by his father-in-law (15:1-2). Some have accused Samson of derailment when he married a Philistine lady but nowhere in the narrative where God was angry with him about that. We were even told that it was the will of God for Samson to marry the woman (14:4). In 14:3, Samson’s respond to his parents about the issue was described with the phrase יאה שרה עיני (hī yā-šə-rāh bə-‘ê-nāy) meaning ‘she pleases me well.’ This means that what precipitated Samson’s love for her was beauty. Consequently, Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me.’ In the text, the name of the woman was not mentioned like that of Delilah. Could this girl be the same as Delilah? Even the name of the harlot at Gaza was not mentioned too. The character of the first girl who Samson married was not different from that of Delilah. Among these so called women, it was the harlot at Gaza that did not betray him. It appears the harlot was not a Philistine. In 14:16, it was the woman at Timnah that mentioned the word אהב (‘ahab) or אהב (‘ahab) in her bit to entice Samson to fall into her prank. The Hebrew word אהב as used in the passage means love (human love for another, family love, and sexual or romantic love). The expression of the Woman of Timnah showed that Samson loved her but she took undue advantage of Samson’s love. Also in

16:4, Samson expressed אהב for Delilah at the Valley of Sorek. The name דלילה (Deliylah) means feeble. According to the Encarta (2009), to be feeble means to be physically or mentally weak, that is, someone lacking physical or mental strength or health. Is the name Delilah a fiction’s figure or a real name of a woman in antiquity? Flavius Josephus mentioned Delilah in Jewish antiquity. In his narrative, Delilah was described as a harlot who had the power of suction. Samson was described as a victim of Delilah’s love antics (Josephus 1824:336-337). In the same vein, Newsom, Ringe and Lapsley (2012:139) agree that Delilah is mentioned in Jewish antiquity in the Talmud and she was associated with prostitution. While the Talmud paints the picture of Delilah getting Samson by sex, Ambrose argues that she did by her tears. Ambrose argument conforms to the Hebrew meaning of Delilah (feeble). This is consistent with Samson because the anonymous woman of Timnah did the same thing. Samson was a man who cannot bear the tears of a woman. Could this just be a different fragment of narratives picturing the same woman? This is topic for another day. On the other hand, if we say Samson had sex or did not have sex with Delilah we cannot substantiate because we were not told in the passage. However, we cannot deny the fact that Samson cannot resist her. On the other hand, it is plausible to assume that Samson was probably yet to have sex with her in the sense that both the woman of Timnah and Delilah could have used the promise of sex to pressurise him. It maybe that Samson could not control his sexual urge but could have been promised that his demand for sex will be met if he reveals his secrete. With this we can draw an inference that Samson was a very emotional person and sexually active. His emotion was controlled by circumstances. This is why his problem resonates with the causal theory.

The third pole is the expression of Anger: This is emotional issue. He was provoked to anger as a result of betrayal. The Hebrew word אף (‘aph) weave the situation in a real man experience. The term אף meaning anger or wrath, expressed how Samson felt when he was betrayed. It was expressed facially and through body language. Samson’s face changed in anger. He was

angered as a result of the betrayal of his wife. He knew it was the doing of his in-laws. John Sunil Manoah summarizes the narrative of Samson's cause of anger, thus:

After Samson got wedlock with a Philistine woman in Timnah, he gave seven days of feast to them as it was customary for a bridegroom in those days, he puts a riddle over them for which the reasons were not clear but assumed to be in three possibilities, (i) To make some profit, (ii) To prove his heroic which was a general quality of mankind, (iii) may be God's plan to create vengeance between Philistines and Samson, in which most of the Christians will stick to the third one. Since the Philistines are unable to find the answer for the riddle they plowed Samson's wife to coax the answer for the riddle putting her and her family in the threat of death, that caused her to press Samson consistently to reveal her the answer in which she finally succeed. This scene discloses the determination of a woman and her tactics in getting things done in her favor and also portraits man's common weakness towards woman. When Philistines gave the answer for the riddle Samson realized, how they managed to get it done, he also understood the general characteristics of women (Manoah 2016).

The first cause of the anger was explained in 14:11-19. Samson returned to his home town in anger. Before he could recover from his previous anger, the worst happened when he returned to take his wife. Still in the act of trickery, his father in law gave his wife to his best *ra'ah*-friend). This second action angered Samson the more. The narrative of the second cause of Samson's anger could be seen in 14:10-15:3. The intensity of Samson's anger was portrayed with the *qal asah* meaning to harm or carry out a harmful action. This he demonstrated in 15: 4-6. Both the woman, her family and the Philistines provoked Samson to anger. These also resonate with the theory of 'cause and effect.'

The fourth pole is the expression of Revenge. He was frustrated by his woman and her family. His expression of revenge shows that he was aggrieved by certain actions carried on him by those he trusted. The main ministry of Samson is to avenge Israel's forty years maltreatment by

the Philistines but this case gave him more reason to be merciless. In 15:7 the Hebrew word *naqam* was used to mean avenge, vengeance, revenge, etc. In 15:8, he carried out an action that made the Philistines to feel the impact of their action. The other instance of provocation that led Samson to seek revenge was the betrayal of Delilah, a supposed lover and the plucking of his eyes and humiliation by the officials of the Philistines (16:4-21). Like the last kick of a dying horse, Samson sought to avenge the ill treatment of the Philistines on him and Israel. He made a last wish from Yahweh when he realized that his *se'ar*-hair) has started to *tsamach*-sprout) and his power gradually gathering momentum (16:22,28). Yahweh granted his prayers for revenge and defeated the Philistines in a historical epoch (16:29-30). It was an outstanding revenge indeed because all the lords and officials of the Philistine died when Samson broke the pillar of their temple. Samson's quest for vengeance was caused by provocation. This also resonates with causal theory.

7. Some Socio-Psychological Implications

There are some socio-psychological implicit issues in the passage. Such issues did not appear at the surface of the text. These issues give the socio-psychological implication of the text. These issues are raised bellow.

7.1 Emotional Catharsis

Samson was a man full of and driven by emotional situation. He loves so much when the situation goes to the direction of love, he gets angry so much when provoked to anger. 14:1-17 shows Samson's love for his fiancée and 14:18-20 shows Samson's anger when he was provoked either by beauty to love or by the negative treatment of those around him. Here he was provoked to anger as a result of the deceit of his in-laws. His riddles were unveiled by falsehood and as such he felt cheated. Is Samson not justified by feeling this way when it is obvious that he was cheated upon by those he respected and trusted?

7.2 Intrigue and Victimization

Samson was a victim of intrigue. The wife he found in Timnah was taken away in falsehood. He reacted to this in anger. All these landed Samson into deeper trouble with the Philistines. He was also a victim of love. All the women he ever loved deceived and destroyed him in one way or the other (14:15-17, 15) except the one at Gaza. Are those blaming Samson in any way saying that he does not have the moral right to love and to be loved? Why should Samson be Judged for this. The woman in Timnah and Delilah from the Valley of Sorek formed alias with Samson's adversaries to destroy him. They got him by playing pranks on him. Being that he trusted his lovers, he confined in them his personal secretes which they eventually took advantage of. First was the answer to his Riddles in Timnah during the marriage rite of his wife; the second was the incident of his wife taken from him and given to his best man by his father-in-law; and third was his betrayal by Delilah. All of these people were loved by him but they turned out to betray him. This is why Samson can be referred to as a victim of intrigue, insincerity and foes.

7.3 Insensitivity and Naivety

Samson was Psychologically insensitive. He was deceived several times almost with the same patern according to the narrative. First, he was deceived by the woman at Timnah demanding the answer to his riddles and second was Delilah who was also asking for the secret of his powers. Delilah deceived him several times yet he took for granted all the actions of the woman in asking for the secret of his powers. He never took into cognizance how he has been deceived by this woman with a circle of sequences. If we follow the narrative the way it was presented, it implies that Samson was a crazy, stupid, naïve and careless lover. Samson's entire life was lived within the ambit of emotions. His emotions cover his sense of critical reasoning, Philosophical acceleration and good sense of judgments. Can Samson be Judged for this? It is critical to see him here as a true lover. Did he do wrong for loving a woman with true love? Samson's type of love is not easy to find in modern world of today but it was marred with foolishness, insensitivity and naivety. No wonder Exum (2014: 14,30) called Samson a

foolish hero. He was being referred as a foolish hero because he was been seen as a very rash man.

7.4 Insensitivity to Security Threats

Delilah's several moves constitute serious security threat to Samson's life. He was too careless to notice that several failed attempts to hand him over to his adversaries, the Philistines were made by Delilah. Unknown to him, he still went ahead to tell his secret to Delilah. This eventually led to his untimely death. Did Samson do anything wrong for opening his heart to the one he loved. This allude to a parallel reading in the New Testament understanding that "love fears nothing" (1 John 4:18). However, Samson was insensitive to security threat, probably due to overconfidence that he can always rise up and defeat his advisories as usual. No matter how fortified a person or a nation might be, security threat should not be taken for granted.

7.5 The Woman Power factor

Pnina Galpaz-Feller has pointed out the woman factor in two perspectives in relationship to Samson's experience; the mother and wife-lover factor (Galpaz-Feller 2006:25). His mother's influence may have taught him how to respect and listen to a woman. This could have probably made Samson to be easily influenced by a woman. Delilah seemed to have mastered the act of romantic influence on men. The sexuality and romance of a beautiful woman is highly imparting and influencing on a man. It could be used as either tool of development or destruction on the man. Samson was a victim of this scenario. Delilah influence on him was very strong. She knew Samson's emotional needs and was able to satisfy him romantically and sexually hence Samson decided to remain with her. It is obvious that Samson was trying to recover from a heartbreak and Delilah ability suggested to him that she was the right person. In Samson's judgment, Delilah was the type of woman that could help him recover from his emotional predicaments. It was just unfortunate that he was betrayed by the one he loved and trusted. Some have seen this art of Delilah as a mission of revenge because the story of men's betrayal by women was not strange in antiquity.

‘Many commentators refer to three other Hebrew stories which speak of women taking revenge on men: Yael and Sisera, Esther and Haman, and Judith and Holofernes’ (Sasson 1988: 339, note 5). Moreover, in Sasson’s point of view:

the motifs in each differ from each other, let alone from the story of Samson and Delilah. Moreover, while a case can be made that all three share a similar point of view (neutralizing an enemy), these narratives cannot be compared with regard to the perspective that informs our story.

Sasson’s argument still point to the woman power factor playing on Samson’s intelligence and even his personality. Her grip over Samson was so strong that he could not resist her night and day plea for his release of secret. At last Samson bowed to her pressure and the secret was let out of the bag. This cost Samson a lot. What do we call Samson, a fool or a lover? He is both a lover and a fool.

8. Conclusion

Drawing a relationship between Samson’s failed marriage and his subsequent relationships with a harlot in Gaza and Delilah, the paper has shown that Samson’s later relationship with the above two women is causal. Therefore, using Samson’s serial relationship with the harlot in Gaza and Delilah to conclude that Samson was a promiscuous man is tantamount to reading the story disjointedly. One must start from the story of his birth to his death so as to get the complete story. This paper has shown this. Second, the human factor of Samson’s experience cannot also be ignored. Those who blame Samson for visiting a harlot at Gaza and for falling in love with Delilah seem to disconnect Samson human nature from his experience. If one sees Samson as a man with human emotional needs like any other human being, we will see Samson’s dilemma and even appreciate the narrative the more. Samson’s love story has shown that he was a fool whenever he loves (Exum 2014:14) and as such, he often falls victim to the intrigue of the one he loves. He was a victim of multiple betrayals by those he loved and trusted. Although, Samson’s problem could be situated as usual in human domain, he cannot be

completely exonerated from lack of self-control in the sense that he allowed his emotions to becloud his senses whenever he falls in love. Rather than just handling the outcomes of behaviours in human domain, the causes of such behaviours should also be of great concern so as to prevent the reoccurrence of such behaviour in the future.

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