

Daily Teaching
22 Kislev 5768
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Miketz #1

from Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

The tenth and the first

Parshat Miketz is the tenth *parshah* in the Torah. About the tenth there is a verse that says: "The tenth will be dedicated in holiness to God." Regarding the ten *sefirot*, *Sefer Yetzirah* says that "the end [the tenth *sefirah*] is enwedged in the beginning [the first *sefirah*]." This is a general principle for every enumerated group in the Torah: the tenth is always connected back to the first. Thus, there are a number of examples that clearly link *parshat Miketz*, the tenth *parshah*, with *parshat Bereisheet*, the first *parshah*.

The first noteworthy similarity is the number of verses. Both *Bereisheet* and *Miketz* have 146 verses. In a *chumash*, you will find that at the end of each *parshah* there is a *gematria* noting the number of verses in the *parshah*. These *gematriot* are ancient and are ascribed to the *Ba'alei Hamesorah*, the sages who finalized the text of the Bible in the 9th and 10th century. For *parshat Bereisheet*, they gave us two *gematrias* whose value is 146: Amatzyah אמציה and Yechizkiyahu יחזקיהו. In *parshat Miketz*, they gave us three. The two that were given for *Bereisheet* plus an additional *gematria* of 146: "He shall be my servant," יהיה לי עבד. Why the additional *gematria*? When they could find them, the *Ba'alei Hamesorah* preferred selecting words with the equivalent *gematria* that appear in the text of the *parshah* itself, towards its end. In this case, the words "He shall be my servant," יהיה לי עבד, come from the last verse of the *parshah*.¹

The king's beginning is his kingdom

In the rest of the Bible, the word "*bereisheet*" (meaning, "In the beginning") appears in reference to the sovereignty of a king; for instance: "In the beginning of the reign of Yehoyakim..." and "In the beginning of the reign of Tzidkiyahu." How does this affect our understanding of the first "*bereisheet*" in the Torah: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth?"

In the Talmud² we find that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (*Rashbi*) says that in the time of those two kings, Yehoyakim and Tzidkiyahu, God wanted to return the world to chaos. In the time of Yehoyakim it was Yehoyakim himself that instigated God's anger, but, says *Rashbi*, God looked at his generation, i.e., his people, and in their merit was pacified, as it were. In the time of Tzidkiyahu it was the other way around. God's anger



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was instigated by the generation, i.e., the people. But, in the merit of their king, Tzidkiyahu He was pacified. Thus, there is an intrinsic connection between the word “*bereisheet*,” the reign of a king, and his people. The bond between the people and the king is described in the sages’ adage that “there is no king without a people.” In other words, a king is not a king if he does not have a kingdom, i.e., subjects.

The connection to *parshat Bereisheet* is now clear. The world (whose creation is the subject of *parshat Bereisheet*) is the domain or kingdom of the Almighty. God created the world so that it serve as His domain. Indeed, according to the sages,³ this is one of the reasons for creation, because without a domain, without subjects, God would not have been able to reveal His Kingship. The final goal of creation is stated in the verse from Zachariah: “And God will be the King over the entire earth, on that day, *Havayah* will be one, and His name one.”⁴

(Re)Creation gives strength and steadfastness

Both Amazyah and Yechizkiyahu were kings from the House of David. Their two names are given as *gematrias* for the number of verses in *Bereisheet*. They remind us of the blessing God gave to Joshua, the first Jewish king to reign in the Land of Israel: חזק ואמץ, “Be strong (from the same root as Yechizkiyahu) and steadfast (from the same root as Amazyahu).” Every king must always be strong and steadfast, especially a king from the House of David because they are all offshoots of King David.

The sages reveal that King David himself had no time allotted to live. He was supposed to have been stillborn in a miscarriage. But, Adam and the three patriarchs gave him years of their own life. Adam gave him 70 years of his own corporeality. Between them, the patriarchs, with Joseph taking the place of Isaac, gave David 70 years of their spiritual life: Abraham gave 5 years, Jacob 28, and Joseph 37 years. Indeed, the difference between the length of Isaac’s life (180 years) and Joseph’s life (110 years) is exactly the span of David’s life (70 years) hinting that Joseph’s life was shortened when he ascended the throne of Egypt. So in order to stay alive a King from the House of David, and specifically the Mashiach himself, who like David is called a “miscarried child,” has to continually be strong and steadfast, which translates into being continually reborn, like the creation of the world, creation *ex nihilo*, something from nothing, at every single moment.

Divine and natural wisdom

The simplest word whose *gematria* is 146 and that is most obviously related to *parshat Bereisheet* is עולם, “world.” The numerical value of “world” is twice the numerical value of “wisdom,” חכמה. Multiplying wisdom by 2 alludes to the two verses: “You have created all with wisdom” and “*Havayah* with wisdom founded the earth,” where the word “with wisdom” in Hebrew is in both cases: בחכמה, or ב, 2 “wisdoms.” What are the two wisdoms? In Kabbalah and Chassidut they refer to the higher wisdom—the

Divine wisdom of the Torah—and the lower wisdom—the wisdom of nature also known as the Wisdom of King Solomon.

While the lower wisdom describes the processes of creation and the natural laws, the higher Divine wisdom describes the manner in which reality can be rectified—the wisdom of the Torah.

In a similar fashion, the word “*bereisheet*” בראשית can be divided into: ב ראשית, meaning 2 beginnings, where “*reisheet*” alludes to wisdom as in the verse: “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.” These two wisdoms—the higher Divine wisdom and the lower wisdom of nature—join together to fulfill the purpose of creation, to establish for God a kingdom here below. This is discussed in greater length in Chassidic explanations on the verse: “Wisdoms will sing outside,” חכמות בחוץ תרונה.

Finding God in exile

Though both types of wisdom are needed to make a kingdom for God (עולם, the 146 verses of creation)—the wisdom of nature brings the world into being, the wisdom of the Divine sustains and rectifies it—these two wisdoms truly come together only in our *parshah*, when Joseph is able to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams. The “world” (עולם, the 146 verses) of our *parshah*, *Miketz*, is a world of concealment (in Hebrew, it comes from a word meaning “concealed,” עלים), where Pharaoh’s dreams are like a metaphor for nature, where God remains concealed. By correctly interpreting the dreams, Joseph demonstrates his special ability and the task handed down to us from him—to correctly interpret the meaning of nature so that it can be understood as a vessel for the Divine.

Indeed, Pharaoh’s dreams are also a metaphor for the state of exile; the two words “And Pharaoh was dreaming,” ופרעה חלם, have the same numerical value as the word for “exile,” גלות! Thus, Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams is symbolic of being able to find the Omnipresence of the Almighty even within the deepest state of exile. Indeed, exile is described as a state of sleep, “I am asleep [in exile]” and King David describes exile as a dream state: “We were [in exile] as dreamers....” Thus, whereas in *Bereisheet* God conceals himself in the physical world, our *parshah* begins with God totally concealed within the exile.

¹. Genesis 44:17.

². *Sanhedrin* 103a.

³. *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 3.

⁴. For a full treatment of the reasons for creation, see *Sod Hashem leeyerei’av*, pp. ???.