

Daily Teaching  
25 Kislev 5768  
Tuesday, December 5, 2007

## Miketz #4

from Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

In our first teaching on *parshat Miketz*, we mentioned that the *Ba'alei Hamesorah* gave us a third *gematria* for the number of verses in the *parshah*: יהיה לי עבד, "[he] will be my servant." Though these words come from the final verse of our *parshah*, we still have to meditate on why it was chosen to represent the entire portion of *Miketz*. Moreover, following our discussion of the link between *Miketz* and *Bereisheet*, we have to understand what these words tell us about creation and its purpose.

We begin our mediation on these words by noting the mathematical self-reference that they contain. The letter-filling of the first two words יהיה לי "will be my..." is: יוד הא; its numerical value is 146, which is of course the value of all three words! This also means that the value of the letters that fill the original letters (called the "mother" letters) of these two words וד א מ ד ו ד א ו ד א is equal to the value of the third word: עבד, "servant."

The simple *gematria* of these two words יהיה לי, "will be my...", is 70, alluding to the 70 members of Jacob's household that would come down to be with Joseph. In the context of when it is said, "will be my servant" refers only to Benjamin who was accused of stealing Joseph's goblet. But, the *gematria* reveals that this statement is foreshadowing the arrival of all 70 members of Jacob's household in Egypt and that all of them will become, in a manner of speaking, "my servant..."

Now, note that this phrase appears twice at the end of our *parshah*. The first time is in the eighth to last verse: "He [Joseph's messenger] said: 'Now, it is as you have spoken; the one with whom [the goblet] is found **will be my servant**, and you will be cleared.'" The second time is in the very last verse: "He [Joseph] said: 'Far be it from me to do this! The man in whose possession the goblet was found he **will be my servant**, but as for you go up in peace to your father.'"

The difference between the first and second appearance of this phrase, "will be my servant," is that the second time, the word "he" appears explicitly (the first time it is only implied), whereas the first time, "he" is referred to by the clause "the one with whom [the goblet] is found." So really, the full phrase in the Torah is "he will be my servant." If we look at the numerical value of הוא יהיה לי עבד... יהיה לי עבד (both phrases together with the explicit "he" in the second) we see that it is 4 times the value of עבד, "servant." Since the word עבד, "servant," has 3 letters, then following the mathematical



GALEINAI PUBLICATION SOCIETY

2 Hausner St. • Jerusalem 96431 • tel.: 972.547.533770 • info@gpsociety.org

rule we learned a few weeks ago, 4 times the value of the word is equal to writing the word “front and back”:  $4 \cdot \text{עבד} = \text{עבד עב עבד}$ !

### Joseph and Benjamin: two *tzadikim*

Now, in the entire Bible, the phrase “will be my...” refers to a person only in one other context. When God promises King David that his son King Solomon will build the Holy Temple, He says: “[I will be his Father] and he will be My son.” This verse appears three times in the Bible, once in the Book of Samuel and twice in Chronicles.

In our *parshah*, the pronouns “he” and “my” refer to Benjamin (he) and Joseph (my), respectively. This is a beautiful example of how all the structures found in Kabbalah originate from a careful reading of the text of the Torah. This verse hints at an ideal relationship between Joseph and his brother Benjamin in which Joseph is the master and Benjamin the servant. What is the nature of this relationship? Joseph is described as a *tzadik* in the Bible and is therefore associated with the *sefirah* of foundation, which is called a “*tzadik*, foundation of the world.” However, the Talmud tells us that Benjamin is one of four people who did not die because of sins, but because of mankind’s punishment for having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge: “You shall surely die...,” hence, he too is a *tzadik* and should also be associated with the *sefirah* of foundation. But, being that Joseph is a master, responsible for the needs of his servant<sup>1</sup>—Joseph is the consummate *tzadik* who gives sustenance to all—he is defined as the archetypal soul of the foundation of *partzuf Ze’er Anpin*, the male principle, the giver. While Benjamin, his “servant” as it were, is the consummate *tzadik* who can receive and is therefore identified with the foundation of the *partzuf* of *Nukva*, the feminine principle that is coupled with *Ze’er Anpin* and receives its sustenance from it. In related terminology, Joseph and Benjamin are referred to as the higher and lower *tzadikim*.

Indeed, numerically, the words  $\text{יהיה לי לבן}$  “will be My son” (the phrase as it appears in Samuel) equals 2 times the value of  $\text{עבד}$ , “servant,” indicating that hidden within the son (“He will be My son”) is a servant. We will explain this in a moment. But, notice also that the average value of the two phrases in our *parshah*:  $\text{יהיה לי עבד}$ , “...will be my servant,” and  $\text{הוא יהיה לי עבד}$ , “he will be my servant,” is also  $\text{עבד עבד}$  (2 times “servant”). But amazingly,  $\text{עבד עבד} = \text{בנימן}$ , “Benjamin.”<sup>2</sup> The name “Benjamin” itself stems from the word “son”  $\text{בן}$ , and literally means “the son of the right.” Thus, hiding within the servant are references to a son.

What do these numerical equivalencies mean? Throughout the Bible and the Oral tradition, the Jewish people, as a nation, are described as the wife of the Almighty. But, as an individual, one is described as either the son of the Almighty or as the servant of the Almighty. The relationship of a son with his father (especially given that the “father” in this case is God) is very different than the relationship of a servant with his master. Just after we blow the *shofar* during the *Rosh Hashanah Musaf* service we say: “Today He will cast judgment upon all creatures of the world; whether as sons, whether as servants.

If [we are] as sons, be merciful with us as a father is with his children. If [we are] as servants, our eyes hang on You until You favor us....” Therefore, there is a tremendous deal of attention given in Chassidic teachings to these two states: son and servant. It is explained in length that every individual must inter-include both aspects. The servant must also be a son and the son must also be a servant. This last inter-inclusion is hinted at by the words: “And he shall be My son,” which actually would be translated “And he shall become My son,” indicating that at first he [Solomon] was a servant and is now taking on the aspect of being a son.

Tallying all the verses, we see that we have two instances of “will be my servant” and three instances of “will be My son,” which means that we have a five-stage process of a son who becomes a servant, then a son again, then a servant, and finally ends as a son. But, mathematically, we gain even further insight, because 3 times “son,” **בן**, is equal to the *gematria* of “Joseph,” **יוסף**, and 2 times “servant,” **עבד**, as we saw, is equal to “Benjamin,” **בנימין**! Meaning, that Joseph’s relationship with God embodies the Father-son aspect, while Benjamin’s relationship the Master-servant.

Together, these two formats for a relationship with the Almighty constitute the essence and purpose of creation. Through these two types of relationship, we are able to create for God a dwelling place below in our reality.

## Benjamin and the Temple

One of the ways in which Benjamin embodies the role of the servant of God is that the Holy Temple was built in his territory, something that we discussed in greater length in our teachings on *parshat Vezot Habrachah*. The Temple represents the epitome of the service of God.

Let us end with a saying of the sages that we will consider in detail, God willing, tomorrow:

A friend the son of a friend shall come, and he shall build a friend for a friend in the territory of a friend, and friends shall be forgiven in it. A friend is King Solomon, as it says: “And He sent the prophet Natan and he named him [Solomon] Yedidyah [meaning, the friend of God], for God.” The son of a friend is Abraham, as it says: “What does My friend come to My house....” And he shall build a friend is the Holy Temple, as it says: “How pleasant [lit., friendly] are the dwellings of the God of Hosts.” For a friend is the Blessed Holy One, as in the verse: “I will sing for my Friend.” In the territory of a friend is Benjamin about whom the verse says: “To Benjamin he said: [You are] the friend of God.” And friends shall be forgiven are the Jewish people, as it says: “I have given the friendships of my very self in the hands of her enemy.”

---

<sup>1</sup>. As was explained in regard to Abraham and Eliezer, in a master-servant relationship, the Torah places the burden of responsibility for the other’s needs squarely on the shoulders of the master. The service rendered by the servant is a means to rectify him, not to take advantage of his situation.

---

<sup>2</sup>. This is how Benjamin's name is spelled in the majority of its appearances in the Bible. We discussed this point in our teachings on *parshat Vezot Habrachah*.