

# Brit Milah Yaakobi Family

24 Kislev 5774

(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh; additional footnotes provided after the class by Harav Ginsburgh)

## 1. The prophecy of Haggai: "Greater will be the honor of this last house..."

### Haggai's will that the second Temple indeed be the last (eternal) Temple

Today is the day of the Chanukah victory, the *Didan Natzach* of Chanukah. The prophet Haggai prophesizes about the second Temple, but doesn't say that it is about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple (by *pshat*, literally, he also didn't know that this would not be the final Temple and that it would eventually be destroyed) and he says, "Greater will be the honor of this last house than that of the first one, says *Havayah Tzevakot*, and in this place I will give peace, so vows *Havayah Tzevakot*" ( גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה האחרון מן הראשון אמר ה' (ה' צבאות ובמקום הזה אתן שלום נאם ה' צבאות).<sup>1</sup> He calls, the Ariel, the house, the Temple, the final

<sup>1</sup>. The verse begins with the words, גדול יהיה which equal 73, the value of "wisdom" (חכמה). The first two words then constitute a self-reference to the entire verse, which comprises altogether 73 letters. 73 divides in two different ways into 28 and 45 (the word חכמה is read as חמה, the power of "what," of nothingness, whose two words equal 28 and 45; in addition 28 and 45 are the golden section of 73; to this we add that 28 is the triangle of 7 and 45 the triangle of 9). Indeed the verse is divided by the *etnachta* into 45 letters ( גדול יהיה כבוד הבית הזה האחרון מן הראשון אמר ה' (ה' צבאות ובמקום הזה אתן שלום נאם ה' צבאות) and 28 letters (ה' צבאות), reflecting this division perfectly! This beautiful phenomenon in this verse reminds us of the verse in Proverbs, "With wisdom shall a house be built."

Given this analysis we can now picture the verse in the following form made up of the triangles of 9 and 7:



The letters in the corners of both triangles are גיתוחת, which equal "house house" (בית בית), alluding to the first and last "houses" (the First and Second Temple) and their unification. The

house (האחרון). Therefore, we have to understand that even the second can be the last relative to the first, but certainly what he wished was for the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple indeed be the final and eternal Temple.

By doing so, he also gives it strength, to the last Temple. Each of the words, “first” (ראשון) and “last” (אחרון) has 5 letters, 4 of which are identical. These 4 shared letters can spell either “ark” (ארון) or “awesome” (נורא). We just merited the mitzvah of circumcision. It says in *Tikunei Zohar* that the word “In the beginning” (בראשית) alludes to many important permutations, such as “covenant of fire” (ברית אש) and “house of Asher” (בית אשר). Some of these permutations of course include the word “house” (בית). In the word circumcision, the covenant (ברית) there is the word “house” (בית) and the letter ר so you could say it is either the first House/Temple (בית ראשון) but it can also be the final House/Temple (בית אחרון). The two words, “ark” and “awesome” are also strongly related. Above the Holy Ark is the main place where the Divine Presence appearing, the revelation of which Jacob refers to as “awesome” (מה נורא המקום הזה). Jacob says this specifically about the resting place of the Ark on the “foundation stone.” Indeed, in the Amidah, when we describe how God revealed Himself to each of the three patriarchs we say, “the great, mighty, and awesome God” (הא-ל הגדול הגבור והנורא), where the predicate “awesome” corresponds to God’s revelation to Jacob.

### Peace depends on the Holy Temple

In this verse from the prophecy of Haggai, the prophet says, “and in this place I will give peace, vows Havayah Tzevakot.” From this we learn that true peace depends on the building of the Temple. Therefore any of the nations of the world that really seeks to bring peace to the land of Israel must know that until there is not yet a dwelling place for the Almighty, there is no chance for peace. This is explicit in this verse, by the power of this House, there will be peace.

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letters in the middle column, גיהונקסצת, are equal to “peace in the home” (שְׁלוֹם בַּיִת), as the verse notes, that in this place God will bring peace.

The letters in the middle of the top triangle are זהוהוּמ, the letter in the middle of the bottom triangle is ם. All the letters apart from these middle letters equal 3728, or 8 times 466, where 466 is the value of “the honor of this house” (כְּבוֹד הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה). The first and last line of the two triangles equal 1127, or the product of 23 and 49, the value of the verse, “Havayah will be King over the entire earth; On that day, Havayah will be one and His Name one” (וְהָיָה ה' לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם) (הַהוּא יְהִיָּה ה' אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד).

The verse begins with the two words, “Great will be” (גְּדוֹל יְהִיָּה) and ends with the two words, “Havayah Tzevakot” (הוּי צְבָאוֹת). Together these 4 words equal 23 times 26, or “the living one” (חַיָּה) multiplied by *Havayah* (חוי). The words in between these 4 words equal 3283 = 7 times 469, where 469 is the number of words in the account of creation, and the 13<sup>th</sup> Shabbat (hexagonal) number. 469 is also equal to 7 times “understanding” (בִּינָה), or 7 times *zayin* (זין), the seventh letter, a beautiful division into 7 and 13!

## Victory and eternity

Twice in the verse, we find that Haggai uses the Name, Havayah Tzevakot (הוי צבאות), usually translated as “God the Lord of Hosts.” First in conjunction with the verb “to say” and next with the verb “to vow.”<sup>2</sup> In Kabbalah, this Name of God corresponds to victory, like today, the day of victory, the *sefirah* of *netzach*. It also fits with the two instances in the verse, because *netzach* means both victory and eternity. The first time, it refers to victory, victory over all the opposition that the people experienced during the building of the second Temple. The same is true today, when there is a lot of opposition for us reaching the Temple Mount. But, then the victory becomes eternal. The eternal candles in Judaism are the candles of Chanukah. To reach the state of the last House being greater than the first, first the victory is needed. But, then, in this place there will be peace—peace that is eternal like it says by the Mashiach, “and to infinite peace” (וּלְשְׁלוֹם אֵין קֵץ). Indeed “peace” (שְׁלוֹם) equals “for eternity and eternity” (לְנֵצַח וְנֵצַחִים), and this is the meaning of the second instance of *Havayah Tzevakot* that appears at the verse’s conclusion. Indeed, once there was victory like the victory of the Hasmoneans over the Greeks, the oil could last for 8 days, and we know that the number 8 also signifies infinity. Indeed, there is a question arising in scholarly discussions about Chanukah regarding what is that we celebrate: are we celebrating the victory or are we celebrating the 8-day miracle that occurred in the oil. Of course, as we now see, they depend on one another.

So let us first of all wish that in the merit of the newly circumcised child, Haggai Aryeh, we shall merit the inauguration of the final and eternal Temple

## The lion-like fire on the altar

When the Jewish people do God’s will, then the fire burning on the altar resembles a lion (which is why the altar is called Ariel). But, when we don’t do God’s will, it resembles a dog, so say the sages. There is a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe responding to the question of whether they actually saw the image of a lion and a dog, or that the way the fire burned, it resembled in some abstract way a lion—by the fire crouching (like a lion) close to the altar—or it resembled a dog who when he crouches is not as heavily set and close to the ground (the lion who fears nothing really crouches down). The Rebbe brings a number of different sources that they saw an actual image, meaning that they saw that the fire was in the form of an actual lion or dog when burning on the altar.

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<sup>2</sup> Both the values of “said” (אָמַר) and “the vow” (נָאֵם) are covenant numbers! “Said” is equal to 241, the covenant of 15 (15 squared plus 15 plus 1) while “the vow” equals 91, the covenant number of 9 (9 squared plus 9 plus 1). 15 is the value of God’s Name Kah (יִה) the Name that is victorious over Amalek (in fact, Amalek, עֲמֶלֶק with the *kollel* is equal to “said,” אָמַר), while 9 is the number that represents unchanging eternity, as explained elsewhere.

## Doing God's will: love that is with all your might

What does it mean to do God's will? Doing God's will means fulfilling the third form of love of God described in the Shema, "with all of your might" (בְּכָל מְאֹדָה), which the sages explain means serving God, "with all of your wealth"—by dedicating it all to the building of the Temple.

Now, the name given to the newly circumcised child is Haggai Aryeh (חגי אריה), which equals 237. What does this number equal? In Kabbalah there is the holy Name associated with a "space warp," literally what is known as "the path jumping" (קפיצת הדרך). This Name is learnt from Eliezer's words, "I came today to the wellspring" (וָאֵבָא הַיּוֹם אֶל הַעַיִן), whose initials are אהוה (not in order). This Name, אהוה, is also referred to as the goodly Name, since its value of 17, the value of "good" (טוב). The first time this acronym appears is in the Torah's first verse, in the words, "the heavens and the earth" (את השמים ואת הארץ), and so it also known as the Name that connected heavens and earth. And so, these 4 words, "I came today to the wellspring" (וָאֵבָא הַיּוֹם אֶל הַעַיִן) are equal to 237, the baby's new name!<sup>3</sup>

The connection is that this child is connected with jumping on one's path, being able to take shortcuts. Likewise, when it comes to building the Temple, coming to the Temple Mount, it should be with leaps and bounds, with shortcuts, not by traveling slowly slowly. How do we merit this? With the "good," since this is the goodly Name. Being good first of means being good Jews. To be good means to be good, both in respect to the heavens and to be good to other people. This is the good that can connect the heavens with the earth, spirituality with materiality. The sages say in Menachot, "May the good [Moshe Rabbeinu] come, and receive the good [the Torah], from the Good [the Almighty], for those who are good [the Jewish people]. When all these good things connect together, we merit קפיצת הדרך and the construction of the Temple all at once together with victory and then the 8 days of Chanukah.

All this is an introduction to how this small one, this baby, Haggai Aryeh, will be great. May he grow to be a chassid, a God fearing man, and a scholar (חסיד ירא שמים ולמוד). May his parents merit to raise him to Torah, to marriage, and to good deeds, all out of plenty.

## 2. Self-sacrifice for the new month, Shabbat, and circumcision

Now this evening is already Chanukah. The sages tell us that we merited the miracles of this holiday through the self sacrifice of the people over the three *mitzvot*, circumcision, Shabbat, and *Rosh Chodesh*. The first letters of these three commandments (חֲדָשׁ שַׁבָּת מִלָּה) are the first three letters of Hasmoneans (חשמונאים). It says in the *Sefat Emet*, from the Gerrer Rebbe, that the whole holiday of Chanukah is a fight against "oldness"

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<sup>3</sup> The child's name also equals the value of the two words "lion" (אַרְיָה) and "altar" (מִזְבֵּחַ). 273 equals 3 times "Amen" (אָמֵן), where Amen, which equals 91, is the unification of *Havayah* and *Adni* (91 = 26 plus 65).

If we perform the "dot-product" of lion and altar, we get 1500, the exact value of multiplying the letters of *Havayah*, in order, by one another (י times ה times ו times ה).

(הַתְּיַשְׁנוּת). The Greeks believed in an eternally old universe, while we believe in creation and continual recreation—God creates and is recreating the universe every day, every moment. It is a war between fixed static laws, and miracles, and a changing universe.

### **Renewal in three dimensions**

The *Sefat Emet* explains that apart from *Rosh Chodesh* (sanctifying the new moon) which is explicitly from the word new, these commandments represent newness in each of the three dimensions described in *Sefer Yetzirah*: world, year, and psyche (עוֹלָם שָׁנָה נַפְשׁוֹ). The newness in worlds is Shabbat, it is the sign of the world being created, a new world. *Rosh Chodesh* especially, which is about the new moon, is newness in the dimension called “year”, the dimension of time. The word “year” (שָׁנָה) in Hebrew means both change and “old” (יָשָׁן). That is why, we the Jewish people, have a special mitzvah to count the months as a year too (the year based on the lunar cycle begins with the month of *Nissan*; the year based on the solar cycle begins with the month of *Tishrei*), pulling the light of the *Chodesh*, the month, into that of the year. Finally, in the dimension of the soul, the circumcision allows a person to continually renew. Of all three, the most important of course is renewing in the dimension of the psyche and the soul. These three *mitzvot* were the reason for the victory over the Greeks and the Hellenism. Even in us, there are some elements of Hellenism, which we have to be victorious over. May we too be victorious over these elements in us, in merit of the *mitzvah* of circumcision.

If we permute the initials of these three commandments in another way, they also spell “happy” (שְׂמֵחָ), so may we not only be victorious, but we should experience victory with joy together: a joyous Chanukah.

### **Rosh Chodesh, Shabbat, and circumcision reveal all 5 levels of the soul**

The value of the names of these three commandments, *חֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת מִילָה* is 312 (which equals 12 times 26) plus 702 (which equals 27 times 26) and 85. The first two are multiples of Havayah, so they together equal 39 times 26 (the value of “dew” times Havayah, or the value of “Havayah is one” times Havayah). Their sum is then 1099, which is the value of the five levels of the soul: *נִפְשׁוֹ רִיחַ נְשָׁמָה חַיָּה יְחִידָה*. The *midrash* says that the soul has five names, and 1099 is the value of all five names, which are the five levels of the soul. Through these 3 *mitzvot* one can reveal all the levels of the Jewish soul. From the simple Jewish nature of the lowest level all the way to the *yechidah*, the power of self-sacrifice. To reach the highest level, one has to go through all five levels. The Mashiach too is described as going through 5 ascents (in the verse, הִנֵּה יֹשְׁבֵי עֲבָדֵי יְרוּסָה וְנִשְׂאָה (וְגִבָּה מֵאֲדָר). 1099 is also the value of, “My soul bless Havayah” (בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת ה'), a phrase that appears 5 times in the Book of Psalms. These 5 instances of the phrase themselves correspond to the five levels of the soul. The sages explain that King David said these after reaching and experiencing 5 different “worlds” or states of being. We have a nigan for this phrase, which repeats the phrase 5 times.

### ***3. The different aspects of Mashiach: the secret of the house***

#### **Food, clothing and dwelling**

Lately, we have explained that there are many *ma'amarim* from the Alter Rebbe where he explains what Mashiach is. We'll explain only one of them right now. It is connected to both the baby and to Chanukah. It appears in a *ma'amar* on the pasuk **מִזְמֹר** שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד, about the **חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת**, where he explains that Mashiach is a "house." There are three things that a person requires in order to be in the world, food, clothing, and a dwelling, **בֵּית**.

#### **Food, the inner light and the tzadik of tzelem**

In simple words, food is the inner light, the inner life-force, in the five levels of the soul it corresponds to the lower three levels, the nefesh, ru'ach, and neshamah, the **נִרְ"ן**. There is an important model in Kabbalah based on the word "image" (**צֶלֶם**). The letter **צ** represents all the encloded levels, the levels of the soul connected with the body itself, from the mind to the liver. When I eat, the food is what connects the soul with the body. Food strengthens the mind (like Rava says in the Talmud, that until I ate meat from a fat ox, I did not have a sharp mind), the heart, and the body's nature, located in the liver. There is a verse that says, **צַדִּיק אוֹכֵל לְשׁוֹבַע נֶפֶשׁוֹ**, so the letter **צ** is related to food.

#### **The near and far surrounding lights, the lamed and mem of tzelem**

Higher than the **צ** is the lamed (**ל**) of *tzelem* (**צֶלֶם**). From it we get the power to see that everything is being renewed every moment. It is something we have faith in, but it is more than just faith, it is a near surrounding light, which can be experienced.

Then there is the essential connection of the Jew with God's essence, light that is higher than the worlds, called far surrounding light. This is the **ם** of **צֶלֶם**, the far makif, which is revealed only intermittently in life (apart from certain *tzadikim* in whom this is constantly revealed). This is the same final *mem* of **לְסַרְבַּה הַמְשֵׁרָה** said about the Mashiach.

So again, food is the **צ**, the **נִרְ"ן** and the clothing is inspired by the *chayah*, the near surrounding light, the **ל** of **צֶלֶם**.

#### **Mashiach comes to build the house, the far surrounding light**

Finally, the Masiach is the **ם** of **צֶלֶם**. The Mashiach comes to close the **ב** the letter *beit* which has one open side and turn it into a **ם**. The Mahsiach comes to bring *teshuvah* to the *tzadikim*. The *Ba'al Teshuvah* is one who merits having a revelation of the final *mem* of *tzelem*. So the Alter Rebbe explains the Mahsiach is a revelation of a house. First of all, because he is constantly thinking about the building of Hashem's house, his *bayit*. The Mashiach is the one who will build the Temple, and every one of us should spend time thinking about this, since it awakens in us the spark of Mashiach in us. This is also the case when one thinks about how to make God a dwelling place below, this can be with every mitzvah, every good deed that I do. A good deed, is a mitzvah that shines, that illuminates my surroundings. Every thing we do should be to make God a dwelling

place below. So by thinking about the construction of the Temple and by thinking about making God a dwelling place below and also one who thinks about building a house in the land of Israel, all these awaken the spark of Mashiach in us. Every Jew should have a house, a parcel of land in the land of Israel. Each of the aspects of Mashiach is related to a particular sefirah.

### **Building the house is the Mashiach's tiferet**

The mentality of Mashiach that is about house building is the tiferet of the Mashiach, because it says, תפארת אדם לשבת בית, the beauty of a man is when he dwells in a house. The sages say that anyone who doesn't have a house is not a man. It also refers to one's wife, to have a home one must be married (a bachelor is not connected with the concept of house). The mentality of a married man is to build a בית נאמן בישראל. May all those who asked for a blessing to get married merit to indeed do so. Again, this is a sense about the sefirah of tiferet.

So now, we have covered another one of the sefirot of the Mashiach. May the new baby grow up in a Mashiach-oriented home, where they constantly think about building the Temple, about making God a dwelling-place below and about building houses in the land of Israel.

Lechaim lechaim.

### **Concluding words about the father's name**

What does Boaz (the circumcised child's father's name) mean? ב עז, a house of boldness. The Temple is called גאון עזכם, the peak of your boldness. Be bold like a tiger is related to Chanukah. The defiled boldness of the Greeks is likened to a tiger (נמר), which is defeated by our sacred boldness.

The Torah's first letter is a major beit. The three Temples correspond to the three patriarchs; the final house corresponds to Jacob. The value of "the first house, the second house, the final house" (בית ראשון בית שני בית אחרון), is 3 times "to do" (לעשות), the final word in the Torah's account of creation.

Lechaim, lechaim.

### **Building the house and circling the gates**

When we do circle the gates of the Temple Mount (Boaz is involved in this monthly event; *mg*) the intention in mind should be that we are creating a final mem, we are building the far makif, the yechidah, while at the same time we are pushing away the Tzfon (the evil inclination). We are victorious at that time, and through the victory we become eternal.