

“HE WHO SHALL NOT BE NAMED”

Ramban on Parashat Mikeitz

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Genesis 43:14

and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release unto you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.'

ספר בראשית מ"ג:י"ד

וְאֵל שְׂדֵי, יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים לְפָנַי הָאֵישׁ, וְשִׁלַּח לָכֶם אֶת-אֲחֵיכֶם אַחֵר, וְאֶת-בְּנֵימִין; וְאֲנִי, כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַח לְתִי שְׁכַלְתִּי.

Ramban on Genesis 43:14

פרוש הרמב"ן על ספר בראשית מ"ג:י"ד

THAT HE MAY SEND AWAY YOUR OTHER BROTHER, AND BENJAMIN. In line with the literal interpretation of Scripture, it would seem that Simeon was not a favorite of his father because of the Shechern affair. This was why he did not say, “My son Simeon, and Benjamin,” as he would not mention him by name, and as he left him in Egypt for a long time. Indeed, had there been food in his house, he would not yet have sent Benjamin, and he would have left him [Simeon] in Egypt.

(יד) וְשִׁלַּח לָכֶם אֶת אֲחֵיכֶם אַחֵר וְאֶת בְּנֵימִין. נִרְאָה עַל דֶּרֶךְ הַפְּשֻׁט כִּי לֹא הָיָה שְׂמֵעוֹן רְצוּי אָבִיו בְּעֵבֹר דְּבַר שָׂכָם, וְלִכְּפֹי לֹא אָמַר אֶת שְׂמֵעוֹן בְּנֵי וְאֶת בְּנֵימִין, כִּי לֹא יִזְכְּרוּנוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹ, וְכַאֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם יָמִים רַבִּים, אֱלוֹ הָיָה בְּבֵיתוֹ לָחֵם לֹא שִׁלַּח עֲדִין אֶת בְּנֵימִין וַיִּנְחָהוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם:

Now Rashi wrote, “The other one: the spirit of prophecy was enkindled within Jacob so as to include Joseph.” In Bereshith Rabbah they also said: “That he may send away your brother: this refers to Joseph. The other one: this refers to Simeon.” This is correct, for at the moment of prayer, Jacob directed his heart to pray in a general manner for the other one [Joseph] also, for perhaps he is still alive.

וְרִשְׁוֹי כְּתַב רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ נִצְנָצָה בּוֹ לְרַבּוֹת אֶת יוֹסֵף. וּבְכִרְאִשִּׁית רַבָּה (צ"ב ג') גַּם כֵּן אָמְרוּ וְשִׁלַּח לָכֶם אֶת אֲחֵיכֶם, זֶה יוֹסֵף, אַחֵר, זֶה שְׂמֵעוֹן. וְנִכּוֹן הוּא. כִּי נִתֵּן דַּעְתּוֹ בְּעֵת הַתְּפִלָּה לְהַתְּפַלֵּל סֵתָם גַּם עַל הָאֲחֵר אוֹלֵי עוֹדְנוּ חַי:

There in Bereshith Rabbah, the Rabbis expounded on the verse in yet another way, saying, “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi interpreted the verse as alluding to the exiles: ‘And God Almighty give you compassion before the man’ this is a reference to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, The Eternal is a man of war, and it is written, And ‘He shall give them compassion before their captors.’ ‘That he may send away your brother’ this alludes to the Ten Tribes exiled by the Assyrians. ‘The other one, and Benjamin’ this refers to the exile of Judah and Benjamin. And as for me, bereaved by the First Destruction [brought about by the Babylonians], I am bereaved by the Second Destruction [caused by the Romans], but no more will I be bereaved.” This is the language of the Rabbis, may their memory be blessed. The intent of this text is to suggest that Jacob's going down to Egypt alludes to our present exile at the hand of Edom, as I will explain, and the prophet [Jacob] saw this matter at its very inception, and so he prayed about it in a general way, which was applicable to the moment as well as to the future.

This verse, according to their interpretation, contains a great mystic thought. Jacob was saying: “And God Almighty, by the Divine attribute of justice, give you the compassion that is before Him,” meaning that “He should direct you upward from the Divine attribute of justice to that of compassion.” The student versed in the mystic teachings of the Torah will understand.

וְלִשׁוֹן אַחֵר דָּרְשׁוּ שֵׁם בְּבְרָאשִׁית רַבָּה,
אָמְרוּ רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי פֶתַר
קָרָא בְגִלְיוֹת, וְאֵל שְׁדֵי יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים
לִפְנֵי הָאִישׁ, זֶה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שְׁנֵאמַר
(שְׁמוֹת ט״ו ג׳) ה' אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה, וּכְתִיב
(תְּהִלִּים ק"ו מ"ו) וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם לְרַחֲמִים. וְשִׁלַּח
לָכֶם אֶת אַחֲיֵיכֶם, אֵלֹהֵי הַשְּׂבָטִים, אַחֵר וְאֵת
בְּנֵימִין, זֶה יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵימִין. וְאֲנִי כְּאִשֶּׁר
שְׁכַלְתִּי בְּחֶרֶב רֵאשׁוֹן שְׁכַלְתִּי בְּחֶרֶב שְׁנִי,
לֹא אֲשַׁכַּל עוֹד. זֶה לְשׁוֹנָם ז"ל. וְהַפְּנֵה כִּי
יֵרִידת יַעֲקֹב לְמִצְרַיִם יִרְמֹז לְגִלוּתָנוּ בְּיַד
אֱדוֹם כְּמוֹ שְׁאַפְרָשׁ (רִישׁ פְּרָשַׁת וַיַּחֲ), וְרָאָה
הַנְּבִיא הָעֲנִין מִתְחַלְתּוֹ וְהַתְּפִלָּל סֵתֵם
לְשַׁעָה וּלְדוֹרוֹת:

וְהַפְּתוּב זֶה כְּפִי מִדְרָשׁם יֵשׁ לוֹ סוּד
גְּדוֹל. כִּי אָמַר וְאֵל שְׁדֵי, בְּמִדַּת
הַדִּין, יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים שְׁלִפְנָיו, יַעֲלֶה
אֶתְכֶם מִמִּדַּת הַדִּין לְמִדַּת רַחֲמִים.
וְהַמְשָׁפִיל יָבִין: