

Shalom once again to everyone interested in where our Scripture really comes from.

Strange languages is not for every person, just like not everyone can cook a wholesome meal. However, whether or not you can cook, knit, make music or understand a strange language, the most important is that you should get to know your Creator in such a way as to serve Him the way He needs to be served. The only way to do that, is get to know His Character, His Authority, which also includes everything He bestows on us, without us deserving any of it.

While looking at *vav* last week, we realised how versatile every letter of the Hebrew *alephbet* can be. *Vav* is not only a letter, but a prefix, a suffix, a changer of tenses and more. It certainly is not the only letter that can be manipulated and used in this way, as we will learn while we work through the 22 letters and their final forms.

Looking at ז (*zayin*) on the superficial level, we will see that it is the symbol of spirit, sustenance and struggle. The numerical value of *zayin* is 7, and denotes spiritual values that were the purpose of Creation. *Elohim* created the known universe in six days and rested on the seventh. We saw last week that the number six represents man, but Creation was not completed until day seven, when even the Creator rested from what He was doing. We, as believers in and followers of *Yeshua*, consider the seventh day, the *Shabbat*, the day of rest, that *YAH* showed us in a very physical way. More about this, shortly.

Shabbat remains the eternal reminder that the vast and mighty universe cannot endure unless it is continuously permeated by the spiritual aspects represented by the seven, the symbolism of *YAH*'s own essence. This is the reason we also see seven being reflected in its mathematical properties. While the standard of most of the world is a decimal system, even the basis of *Torah*, we can look at a set of properties common to one and seven:

1. neither of these numbers can be expressed as the product of any two whole numbers other than itself and one;
2. neither is a prime factor of any other number between one and ten. This combination of properties can be found in no other number between one and ten. In this we experience the Oneness, the *echad*, we studied previously, of *Elohim*, and the spiritual presence He has instilled in Creation.

Alright, enough of mathematics and all the numbers that go with it. We deliberately started this study in a different way to get your attention. Being the seventh letter of the *alephbet*, it has the numeric value of seven, and in the ancient Hebrew this letter was the means of a weapon. In fact, Gesenius supports this when he says that even in the Syriac language this portrayed a weapon.

The letter ז is spelled *zayin*, *yud* and *nun sofit* (the final form of *nun*). The pictogram of *zayin* is that of a weapon, which could be an axe or a sword. This symbolises something used to cut or pierce. However, being the seventh letter, we have now also concluded the first series of letters portraying the *b'sorah*, the good news. Up to now, we have seen *aleph* representing *YAH*, revealing Himself through Scripture, which is represented by *bet*. From here *YAH* pleads to mankind through *Ruach HaQodesh*, the *gimel*, to the poor man who lives behind the door, the *dalet*. When the door opens and the truth of the *b'sorah* has been received, the person is filled with the *hei*, the Breath of *YAH*, and begins to grow in righteousness, becoming a new man. We mentioned before that the second, third and fourth letters, בְּנֶדֶד, spell the word *begeg*, which translates as garment. This suggests that the person who has received *Ruach HaQodesh* has begun to weave a garment of righteousness for the one new man, as we find:

Hazon 19⁷ "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him praise, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife prepared herself." ⁸ And to her it was given to be dressed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the set-apart ones.

Seeing *zayin* as a sword, we will find many references in translations of Scripture. The original Hebrew never makes use of this word in any way, but refers to a sword as **חֶרֶב** (*Che-rev*). The very first time we come across this word is directly after the fall of man:

*Berëshith 3*²⁴ and He drove the man out. And He placed kerubim at the east of the garden of *Ēden*, and a flaming sword (*cherev*) which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

A flaming sword had to be used to prevent sinful man going back into *Eden* and possibly eat from the fruit of the tree of life; this would spell disaster for mankind and *YAH* had to stop that. Throughout Scripture we read of battles where men used swords, even some individuals would use them, but every time it is used for killing another human. Possibly one of the most well-known parts in Scripture, where a sword is mentioned, can be found in the words of *Sha'ul* in *Eph'siyim* (Ephesians) 6:13-17. Due to time constraints, we will not go through those verses, but suggest you read this in your own time.

The only weapon *Sha'ul* mentions here, is the sword – the rest is armour for protection. Here *Sha'ul* refers to “the sword of the spirit” and uses a specific Greek word for ‘sword’, which perfectly illustrates the power of the sword of the spirit – the Word of *YAH*. In the time of *Sha'ul* the sword was the weapon of choice. However, there were three types and *Sha'ul* only mentions one. While it is possible that *Sha'ul* is more likely referring to the armour of *YAH* as used in the *TaNakh*, we should keep in mind that the audience he was writing to, were more acquainted with what the Romans were using, being in control of the area. He therefore had to write about items that his readers could visualise, although he compared every item with something that would be part of the life of a believer.

One of the swords used during that time was the *ῥομφαία* (*romphaia*), a heavy, curved sword, but it had certain drawbacks. Another one was the *ξίφος* (*xiphos*), a long, straight sword with double edges, also with certain drawbacks, though. What *Sha'ul* uses to compare to “the sword of the spirit” is a *μάχαιρα* (*makhaira*). It was mainly used by the cavalry as it was easy to handle and extremely effective. This is the sword that *Sha'ul* refers to when writing to the believers in *Ephesos*, comparing it to “the sword of the spirit”. We find another reference, possibly another reason to think that *Sha'ul* could be the author of this epistle:

*Ib'rim 4*¹² For the Word of *Elohim* is living, and working, and sharper than any two-edged sword (*makhaira*), cutting through even to the dividing of being and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

As the cavalry of Rome conquered the world using the *makhaira*, we should earn ourselves the skill in the spiritual comparison made here with the Word of *YAH*. It is more powerful than any sword. A few weeks ago, we studied *bet*, learning that it is a house that represents Scripture, a place where the Word of *YAH* dwells. Now, getting to *zayin*, we encounter the Word in its power and authority.

There are many beautiful sections in Scripture, but one that stands out more, is the prayer of *Yeshua*, which is found in *Yohanan* 17. He prays to *YAH* for himself, then intercedes for his followers, until we read these words:

*Yohanan 17*¹⁷ “Set them apart in Your truth – Your Word is truth.

The word ‘truth’ is also mentioned by our famous poet and musician, *Dawid*, three times in *Mizmor* 119:142, 151 and 160. Here we see **אֱמֶת** (*`e-Met*), *aleph*, *mem* *tav*, the Hebrew word for truth. Interesting that this word encompasses the entire *alephbet*, using the first, the middle and the last letters, *aleph*, *mem* and *tav*. We learn from this that truth is not limited in any way, but that it includes everything. The opposite of truth is lie or falsehood, which we find in Hebrew as **שָׁקֶר** (*shê-qêr*), *shin*, *qaph* and *resh*. This word also uses only three letters, but instead of letters that would include others, we find these three letters at the end of the *alephbet*, with the exclusion of *tav*. Something else to consider, is that **אֱמֶת** uses letters that

have a solid base, they can stand on their own on a line without falling over. The letters used for שָׁקֵר have either round or pointed letters, something that will cause them to fall over when not supported by other letters. This teaches us that truth is stable, it supports itself, whereas falsehood and lies can easily be tumbled by truth. The letters for שָׁקֵר are also not in the correct order, typically as we would find with lies and falsehood.

Comparing the power of the Word of YAH to the sword of the spirit, we will realise that this is not only a figure of speech. YAH has indeed provided us a powerful and effective weapon. *Sha'ul* actually confirms this when addressing the Corinthians where we read:

Qorintiyim Bět 10 ⁴For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly but mighty in Elohim for overthrowing strongholds,

Mal'aki is in full agreement and states it as follows:

Mal'aki 4 ^{4a}Remember the *Torah* of *Mosheh*, My servant,

In the original Hebrew it reads: זָכְרוּ תוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עַבְדִּי. The Hebrew word for 'remember' is זָכַר (*za-Char*), and here we see an inflection of the word, now being *zichru*. In the *TaNakh* we find this verse to be chapter three, where it is printed with an enlarged *zayin*. Since *zayin* represents a weapon of the Spirit, remembering the *Torah* of *Mosheh* is therefore depicted here as a great weapon to be used in spiritual warfare in our lives.

We have mentioned before that some letters in the *TaNakh* have flourishes or crownlets. These are known as "*sha'atnezgetz*" letters, the reason being that the letters *shin*, *ayin*, *tet*, *nun*, *zayin*, *gimel*, *tsade* and *tsade sofit* (the final form) are all given this special treatment. Some of the sages are of the opinion that these crownlets are actually small '*zaynin*', since its form is very similar to the flourishes on these letters. Interesting that *Tehilah 91* is a poem that contains many references to YAH's protecting power. It describes YAH as a refuge and fortress for those who trust in Him:

Tehilah 91 ⁵ You are not afraid of the dread by night, Of the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ Of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Of destruction that ravages at midday.

Even though the inherent theme of this poem concerns warfare and rabbis use it when performing an exorcism, the entire 16 verses are totally void of the letter *zayin*. This is quite unusual, as *zayin* is commonly used through the rest of Scripture. However, it contains many *zayins* in the form of the *tagin*, the flourishes, of the other letters. Most scholars believe that this poem, when read aloud, will dispel evil forces by these little spiritual swords, these weapons that adorn the letters, more than *zayin* itself would have done.

The name of the letter *zayin* can be spelled in two ways. We see it normally spelled זַיִן (*zayin*, *yud*, *nun* [*sofit*]), which would translate as 'weapon'. However it can also be spelled זָן (*zayin*, *nun* [*sofit*]), without the *yud*. This will translate as 'nourish' or 'sustain'. We can therefore see two different concepts in one word: weapon and nourishment, which we can also think of in terms of war and bread. In English, and most other languages, these two concepts seem to belong to two different worlds. However, in Hebrew both bread and war are closely related. The Hebrew word for bread is לֶחֶם (*Le-chem*), but also used for food in general (cf. *Berëshith* 41:54; *Shemoth* 20:2 et al). The Hebrew word for war is מִלְחָמָה (*mil-cha-Mah*), where we notice the word *lechem* (*lamed*, *chet*, *mem*, spelling bread) smack in the centre! Hebraic thought sees success in battle measured by how much land is conquered, as land is seen as the source of sustenance. Put in a different way: winning land is winning bread or food. It is all about sustenance.

With *zayin* having two meanings, we also find two important benefits from the Word of YAH: He will provide spiritual nourishment as well as spiritual protection. The first concept is also quoted from *D'varim* 8:3 by our Messiah, when he reprimands *hasatan*:

Mattithyahu 4 ⁴But He answering, said, "It has been written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of יהוה.**' " [emphasis original]

The main objective of the Word of YAH is to provide spiritual nourishment for man. *Yeshua* is compared to the "bread of life", not as a 'sword'. We see a further illustration of this by the first two appearances of *zayin* in *Torah*: **מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע** (*maz-Ri-a Ze-ra*), which translates as "yielding seed", as we read:

Berēshith 1 ^{11a}And *Elohim* said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the plant that **yields seed**, [emphasis added]

As a result of the fall of man through *Adam* and *Chavah*, our spiritual enemy was given a place in this world, necessitating the Word of YAH to act both as our spiritual food and our spiritual weapon. However, at some stage in time, a day decided by YAH, our spiritual enemies will be a threat no longer and we won't need the Word of YAH as a sword. This is prophesied by the greatest prophet of all when he sees the end of warfare:

Yeshayahu 2 ⁴And He shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many peoples. And **they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks**. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither teach battle any more. [emphasis added]

Both swords and spears are instruments of warfare, but these will be changed into plows and pruning hooks, both implements of nourishment. After this, the Word of YAH will only remain our source of nourishment. We'll get to pruning shortly.

The sages see things in a similar light and claim that *zayin* actually has two faces, one to the left and one to the right, where one face is seen as warfare and the other as nourishment. They picture this in a letter we studied a few weeks ago, **ג** (*gimel*). Examining a *gimel* as seen in a *Torah* scroll, we can clearly see a *zayin* with a *yud*, depicting the foot. We learned that *gimel* represents *Ruach HaQodesh* walking, even running, to the door of *dalet*, the poor man. When **ג** approaches **ד**, which face of **ז** will he show? He may be coming to warn of punishment or to appeal in gentleness. Either way, YAH desires repentance.

In the appeal that *Sha'ul* makes to the Romans, he insists on pointing out the goodness of YAH:

Romiyim 2 ⁴Or do you despise the riches of His kindness, and tolerance, and patience, not knowing that the kindness of *Elohim* leads you to repentance?

In Corinth he had different types of people, whereby *Sha'ul* reminds them that they only came to YAH by sadness that came along their way:

Qorintiyim Bēt 7 ^{9b}For you were made sad according to *Elohim*, so that you suffered no loss from us.
^{10a}For sadness according to *Elohim* works repentance to deliverance, not to be regretted,

We therefore see in the two faces of *zayin* both the kindness and severity of YAH, two faces of Scripture. While one person studies Scripture, he may experience conviction, whereas another person may experience comfort. This also paints another picture, where one person sees *Yeshua* as a lion, while the other sees him as a lamb.

The best part in Scripture where this could be explained and understood more clearly than ever, is found in the words of *Yeshua*, where we experience him as the lamb, penned by *Yoḥanan*:

Ḥazon 3 ¹⁹"As many as I love, I reprove and discipline. So be ardent and repent.

We also experience *Yeshua* as the lamb:

Ḥazon 3 ²⁰"See, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I shall come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Here we see *Yeshua* as ז coming to knock on the ד, the door. Once again, quoting the words of Grant Luton:
“As *Yeshua* approaches the door of your heart, which face of *zayin* does he offer? Does he come as a lamb, or as a lion? Does he come to nourish, or does he come wielding a sword? Kindness and sorrow can each provoke repentance, but the decision as to which one it shall be is chiefly yours.”

While looking at ז as nourishment, a provider of sustenance, we find the number 7 that ז represents, pointing us to the seventh day, *Shabbat*, the only day that *YAH* blessed and set apart. *Shabbat* is indeed a fountain of blessing and set-apartness. Rabbi Saadiah Gaon states:

“Blessing and honouring *Shabbat* prophetically refers to those who observe the sanctity of the day, as those who observe it correctly will also be blessed and honoured. Simultaneously, the significance of *Shabbat* is established by Israel’s translation of its commandments into practise.”

The way that *Shabbat* influences the rest of the week, elevates the soul above the fluctuation of this world, giving it stability. This teaches us that ז is figuratively compared to a lighthouse seen from afar, enabling the captain to guide his ship safely to its destination. Here we find the ship representing the soul and the lighthouse representing the Word of *YAH*, pointing the true believer to the *olam haba*, the world to come.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this study, and now with *Shabbat*, the numeric value of ז is 7, something that seems to have significant meaning in Scripture. Through the *midrash* (*Vayiqra Rabbah* 29:10) we learn that all sevens are blessed, seeing that Scripture uses it so frequently and in so many ways when we look at blessing, completeness, fullness and rest. During our *Shabbat* teachings, we refer to these sevens as “hidden *m’norot*”, *m’norahs* hidden Scripture. In Hebrew, seven uses the word שִׁבַע (*shê-Vah*), something else we will get to in time when looking at numbers. This word can also be pronounced as *savah*, which will then translate as “to be full” or ‘satisfied’. This is illustrated when we see that *YAH* rested on the seventh day after creating our home in six days, when He was satisfied. The word in *Berēshith* 2:2 for ‘rest’ is an inflection of שָׁבַת (*sha-Bat*), taken from the same root as *shevah*.

Starting to wind down, we want to look at a few words starting with or containing the letter *zayin*. First of all, and also the longest description, is the word (*z’mān*), which translates as time. Scripture actually slices time in many places, as divisions of time, the first being the seven-day week. This makes plenty of sense, since the seventh letter is depicted as a sword, something to slice with or which can cause division. We find a few examples from Scripture:

- 🥂 Week of Days – six days of work, followed by a *Shabbat*, a day of rest
- 🥂 Week of Weeks – the festival day of *Shavu’ot* always falls 49 (7 times 7) days after the wave offering of First Fruits (cf. *Wayyiqra* 23:15-21)
- 🥂 Week of Months – the seven festivals commanded by *YAH* fall within a period of seven months
- 🥂 Week of Years – six years of sowing and harvesting are followed by the *sh’mītah*, a year of rest for the land during which it lies fallow (cf. *Wayyiqra* 25:1-5)
- 🥂 Week of Weeks of Years – Forty-nine (7 times 7) years followed by the *Yovel*, year of jubilee, wherein debts are cancelled and slaves are freed (cf. *Wayyiqra* 25:8)
- 🥂 Week of Millennia – six thousand years of human history followed by one thousand years of Messiah’s kingdom, something we discussed last week as well

This last point is the final *Shabbat*, reserved for those who follow the instructions of *YAH* in total obedience, and explained by the writer(s) of the epistle to the Hebrews:

Ib`rim 4⁹ So there remains a Sabbath-keeping for the people of *Elohim*. ¹⁰For the one, having entered into His rest, has himself also rested from his works, as *Elohim* rested from His own. ¹¹Let us therefore do our utmost to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.

Another word starting with *zayin* is זָר (*zur*), which translates as stranger, even enemy. There are instances where this word in the original text is simply spelled זַר, without the *vav*, but still the same meaning. The

word picture describes an enemy as a man with a weapon. Here we read the words of one of the minor prophets:

Yo'el 3^{17b} And *Yerushalayim* shall be set-apart, and foreigners (*zarim*) shall not pass through her again.

Another instance we can see ז as an instrument for cutting, is the word זמר (*za-Mar*), which translates as 'prune' of 'trim'. The word picture tells us that by pruning, we cut off the bitterness or we cut off the rebel. One of the verses we can cite here, refers to something we looked at while examining *z'man*, time, as it has to do with the *sh'mitah* year:

Wayyiqra 25³ Six years you sow your field, and **six years you prune your vineyard**, and gather in its fruit, [emphasis added]

The original text here reads: וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְמַר כְּרֶמְךָ (*v'shesh sha-Nim toz-Mor kar-Me-cha*). Ironically the word *zamar* can also be translated as 'sing', as the motion of plucking a lyre or harp was similar to that of plucking to prune. The word picture is saying that both pruning and music can remove chaos and bitterness. We find this in an acrostic poem:

Mizmor 9^{11a} Sing praises to יהוה,

Here the original text reads: זַמְרוּ לַיהוָה (*zam'Ru l'יהוה*). Now, for the last word, we would also like to give a little advice, something that people should be aware of, sometimes a tactic of the enemy to lead us away from the instructions of YAH. The word is זמה (*zee-Mah*) and translates as 'lewdness' or "bad counsel". The word picture tells us that bad counsel or lewdness is the weapon of chaos, something that will backfire if used. For this we hear the words of one of the greatest prophets:

Yeshayahu 32⁷ And the methods of the scoundrel are evil – **he has devised wicked plans to destroy the poor with words of falsehood**, even when the needy pleads for right-ruling. [emphasis added]

The original text for the emphasis we added reads: הוּא זִמּוֹת יַעַץ לְחַבֵּל בְּאִמְרֵי שֶׁקֶר (*hu zi-Mot ya-Atz lê-cha-Bel b'im-rei Shê-qêr*). This is where the enemy will make use of any unprincipled means, any wicked plan or device, to accomplish his purpose.

However, we don't want to end this study on a negative vibe. From all the examples we've looked at, we need to remember that seven closes a cycle. This is what has happened here, similar to how *Shabbat* ends the weekly cycle and a new week starts. This should make us excited, though, since the end of a cycle means there will be a new beginning, and that is exactly what we will be looking at next week. The start of another letter, *chet*, letter number 8, but also a new cycle that starts. We should therefore *zamru l'יהוה*, sing praises to YAH, and on that note we will end this study. May you keep on singing praises to YAH for the entire week, bringing Him esteem, while thanking *Yeshua* for what he accomplished on our behalf. Shalom!