

Shelo Asani Aved - Relationship with God, Relationship with Man

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There are many famous characters found within the text of the Megillah. Some are definite heroes and villains, some are debated amongst the *mefarshim*, and others don't quite fit into either category. Amongst these characters emerge two groups of seeming little significance that, in fact, both play very vital roles in the larger picture.

The first group is the *avdei hamelech*, the king's servants.

(2) All the king's servants at the king's gate would bow down and prostrate themselves before Haman, for this is what the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordechai would not bow down nor prostrate himself. (3) So the King's servants at the king's gate said to Mordechai, 'Why do you disobey the king's command?' (4) Finally, when they said this to him day after day and he did not heed them, they told Haman, to see whether Mordechai's words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Esther Chapter 3

(ב) וְכָל עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ
כִּי רָעִים וּמְשַׁתְּחִוּיִם לְהִמָּן כִּי כֹן צִוָּה לוֹ
הַמֶּלֶךְ וּמְרַדְּכֵי לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה:
(ג) וַיֹּאמְרוּ עַבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעַר
הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמְרַדְּכֵי מִדּוּעַ אַתָּה עוֹבֵר אֶת
מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ: (ד) וַיְהִי [בְּאִמְרָם] כְּאִמְרָם
אֵלָיו יוֹם וַיּוֹם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּגִּדוּ
לְהִמָּן לְרָאוֹת הַיַּעֲמָדוֹ דְּבַרֵי מְרַדְּכֵי כִּי
הִגִּיד לָהֶם אֲשֶׁר הוּא יְהוּדִי:
אסתר פרק ג

Interestingly, Mordechai's response to the king's servants is never recorded in the text, but this anonymous faction reports to Haman what he supposedly told them. According to a simple analysis of the text, this report lends to Haman's increasing dislike of Mordechai and consequent decree of annihilation upon his people.

The second group is the *naarei hamelech*, *meshartav*, the king's pages.

(1) That night sleep eluded the king so he ordered that the record book, the annals, be brought and read before the king.
(2) There it was found recorded that Mordechai had denounced Bigsana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains of the guardians of the threshold, who had plotted to lay hands

(א) בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא נִדְּדָה שְׁנַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר
לְהִבְיֵא אֶת סֵפֶר הַזִּכָּרֹנוֹת דְּבַרֵי הַיָּמִים וַיְהִי
נִקְרָאִים לְפָנָיו הַמֶּלֶךְ: (ב) וַיִּמְצָא כְּתוּב אֲשֶׁר
הִגִּיד מְרַדְּכֵי עַל בִּגְתָנָא וְתֵרֶשׁ שְׁנֵי סְרִיסֵי
הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁמֵרֵי הַסֵּף אֲשֶׁר בִּקְשׂוּ לְשַׁלְּחֵהוּ יָד

on King Achashveirosh. (3) 'What honor or dignity has been conferred on Mordechai for this?' asked the king. 'Nothing has been done for him,' replied the king's pages.

Esther Chapter 6

בְּמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ: (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה
נַעֲשֶׂה יְקָר וְגִדּוּלָה לְמַרְדֵּכַי עַל זֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ
נַעֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִשְׁרָתָיו לֹא נַעֲשֶׂה עִמּוֹ דְבָר:
אֶסְתֵּר פָּרָק ו

The king finds that Mordechai has not been repaid for saving him from an attempted assassination plot, but only through the word of these *naarei hamelech*. Subsequently, they mention that Haman is in the courtyard, which is the lead-in to his ultimate demise.

What is so important about these two parties? While they may have been involved in the turning points of the story, why are they worth any particular mention? Moreover, what is the real difference between the two groups? They both seem to perform the same function as subjects of the monarchy. Why the distinction in title?

As much as both these groups seem to be very peripheral to the general events taking place, there is a deep lesson to be gained from them, and the differences between them, which extends far beyond the confines of the Purim story.

Let us look at the root of the distinctive titles given to each of these groups, and how each identity has developed through the text of our tradition. What is the Torah's perspective regarding these positions within the realm of human relationship?

What does it mean to be an *eved*, a servant? The first time there is reference to an *eved* is within the context of the curses that Noach bestows upon his son Cham and grandson Canaan.

(24) Noach awoke from his wine-induced sleep, and he realized what his youngest son had done to him. (25) And he said, "Cursed is Canaan! He shall be a slave's slave to his brothers!"

Bereishit Chapter 9

(כד) וַיִּיקָץ נֹחַ מֵיֵינּוֹ וַיִּדַע אֶת אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה לוֹ בְּנוֹ הַקָּטָן: (כה) וַיֹּאמֶר
אָרוּר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יִהְיֶה לְאֶחָיו:
בְּרֵאשִׁית פָּרָק ט

From the outset we see that the status of *eved* has a negative connotation in the realm of history.

Moving further, we have *eved* Avraham, often referred to as *ha'eved*; the example par excellence of a servant in the Torah. In most of the *mefarshim* we find Eliezer to be an extremely pious person. He is a prestigious member of the short list of people who went straight to Gan Eden while still alive.

And some say that there are those individuals of the human race that enter, during life, into the Garden of Eden ... Chanoch, Serach bat Asher, Batyah bat Pharaoh, Chiram the king of Tzur, Eliezer the servant of Avraham, Oved the king of the Kushites, the servant of Rabbi Yehudah, Yaavetz, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, all the offspring of Yonadav, and the offspring of Milchas Ha'of. ... Eliezer the servant of Avraham is the son of Cham the son of Noach and when he heard the curse of his father he gave himself over to Avraham and was righteous and he is in the Garden of Eden ...

Otzar HaMidrashim

ויש אומרים אנשים מבני אדם נכנסו
בחיים בגן עדן. ... חנוך וסרח בת
אשר, ובתיה בת פרעה וחירם מלך צור,
ואליעזר עבד אברהם ועבד מלך הכוש,
ועבדו של רבי יהודה, ויעבץ, ורבי
יהושע בן לוי, וכל זרע יונדב וזרעו של
מלחם העורף ... אליעזר עבד אברהם
הוא בנו של חם בן נח וכששמע קללת
אביו מסר עצמו לאברהם והיה צדיק
והוא בגן עדן ...

אוצר המדרשים

אלפא ביתא דבן סירא עמוד 50

Interestingly enough, this same source ties Eliezer to the original root of *avdus* mentioned earlier as a descendant of Cham the son of Noach.

However, if we look more closely, we may find somewhat of a different view of Eliezer hiding in the wings. Within the story of finding a bride for Yitzchak, Avraham is extremely adamant about whom Yitzchak can marry and where she can come from. Rashi explains:

Perhaps the woman will not go – [The word *Ulai*] is spelled *Eilai*, “to me.” Eliezer had a daughter and he was searching to find a pretext so that Avraham would tell him to turn to himself, to marry his daughter [to Yitzchak]. Avraham said to him, “My son is blessed, and you are cursed, and one who is cursed cannot cleave to one who is blessed.”

Rashi, Bereishit 24:39

אלי לא תלך האשה: אלי כתיב, בת היתה לו לאליעזר והיה מחזר למצוא עילה שיאמר לו אברהם לפנות אליו להשיאו בתו, אמר לו אברהם בני ברוך ואתה ארור, ואין ארור מדבק בברוך:
רש"י בראשית כד:לט

Eliezer was hopeful that the plan to find a wife for his master's son would fail so that Yitzchak would marry his own daughter, forever connecting him to the Jewish family. Avraham, however, was not interested in this proposition.

In a more extreme example of *avdus* gone wrong, we have the story of Gechazi, servant of Elisha.

(20) *Gechazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, thought [to himself], “Now, my master prevented [me] from accepting [the gift] which Naaman the Aramean had brought! As God lives, I will run after him and take something from him!” [...]*
(25) *He returned and stood before his master. Elisha asked him, “From where [have you come], Gechazi?” “Your servant has not gone anywhere,” he replied. (26) [Elisha] said to him, “Didn’t my spirit accompany you when the man turned away from his chariot to greet you? Is now the time to take money and clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, slaves and maidservants? (27) Naaman’s leprosy will cling to you and your children forever!” [Gechazi] left him, leprous as snow.*

Melachim II Chapter 5

(כ) וַיֹּאמֶר גֵּיחֲזִי בְעַר אֱלִישָׁע אִישׁ הָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה חִשַׁךְ אֵד נִי אֶת נַעֲמָן הָאֲרָמִי הַזֶּה מִקַּח מִיָּדוֹ אֶת אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיא חֵי ה' כִּי אִם רִצְתִי אֲחַרְיוּ וְלִקְחֹתִי מֵאֲתוֹ מֵאוֹמָה: [...] (כה) וְהוּא כֹּא וַיַּעֲמֵד אֵל אֵד נִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֱלִישָׁע <מֵאן> מֵאֵן גֵּיחֲזִי וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא הֵלַךְ עִבְדְּךָ אֲנִי וְאֲנִי: (כו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לֹא לִבִּי הֵלַךְ כְּאֲשֶׁר הִפַּךְ אִישׁ מֵעַל מְרִבְּתוֹ לְקַרְאֲתוֹ הַעֵת לְקַחַת אֶת הַכֶּסֶף וְלְקַחַת בְּגָדִים וְזִיתִים וְכַרְמִים וְצֹאֵן וְבָקָר וְעִבְדִּים וְשִׁפְחוֹת: (כז) וְצָרַעַת נַעֲמָן תִּדְבַּק בְּךָ וּבְזֶרְעֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וַיֵּצֵא מִלְּפָנָיו מִצָּרַע פֶּשֶׁלֶג:
מלכים ב פרק ה

Gechazi is a righteous and worthy servant of Elisha, until he directly goes against what Elisha says. He takes unwarranted gifts from Naaman and receives a curse of leprosy as a result. The Gemara takes this even further, proclaiming that Gechazi has no portion in the world to come¹⁸.

If we look at the primary portion in the Torah related to the laws of *avadim* we find an intriguing discussion there as well.

¹⁸ Sanhedrin 90a

(2) If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years, but in the seventh year, he is to be set free without liability. (3) If he was unmarried when he entered service, he shall leave by himself. But if he was a married man, his wife shall leave with him. (4) If his master gives him a wife, and she bears sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall remain her master's property. [The slave] shall leave by himself. (5) If the slave declares, "I am fond of my master, my wife and my children; I do not want to go free," (6) his master must bring him to the courts. Standing [the slave] next to the door or doorpost, his master shall pierce his ear with an awl. [The slave] shall then serve [his master] forever.

Shemot Chapter 21

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai expounded this verse as [pleasingly as] a packet of spices: What makes the ear unique among all the limbs in the body? The Holy One, Blessed is He, said, "An ear that heard My Voice at Mount Sinai at the time when I said, 'for the Children of Israel are servants unto Me,' and not servants of servants, [despite which] this person went and acquired a master for himself, his ear should be bored."

Kedushin 22b

(ב) כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עִבְרִי שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים יֵעֲבֹד וּבְשִׁבְעַת יֵצֵא לְחֻפְשֵׁי חָנָם:
 (ג) אִם בְּגֵפוֹ יָבֹא בְּגֵפוֹ יֵצֵא אִם בְּעַל אִשָּׁה הוּא נִינְצָאָה אִשְׁתּוֹ עִמוֹ:
 (ד) אִם אֵד אָדָּן נָיו יִתֵּן לוֹ אִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדָּה לוֹ בָּנִים אוֹ בָנוֹת הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדֶּיָה תִהְיֶה לְאֵד נְיָה וְהוּא יֵצֵא בְּגֵפוֹ: (ה) וְאִם אָמַר רַי אִמְרָה הָעֶבֶד אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶת אָדָּן נִי אֶת אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת בְּנֵי לֵא אֵצְא חֻפְשִׁי: (ו) וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֵד נָיו אֶל הָאֵל הַיָּם וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל הַדָּלֶת אוֹ אֶל הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֵד נָיו אֶת אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדוּ לְעֹלָם:

שמות פרק כא

רבן יוחנן בן זכאי היה דורש את המקרא הזה כמין חומר: מה נשתנה און מכל אברים שבגוף? אמר הקב"ה: און ששמעה קולי על הר סיני בשעה שאמרתי (ויקרא כה נה) כי לי בני ישראל עבדים - ולא עבדים לעבדים, והלך זה וקנה און לעצמו - ירצע.

מסכת קידושין דף כב:

What does this really mean? What is the underlying issue here?

One of Rav Soloveitchik zt"l's essays on the Megillah sheds light on this topic. The Rav posits that human society is constantly attempting to combat its limitedness. He states that this is a struggle that all man relates to throughout our existence, and works through how it manifests itself in the different chapters of history. Rav Soloveitchik is quoted saying:

Man is a limited being. He is burdened with a finiteness-awareness. He experiences existentially his incompleteness and imperfection, his closeness to nothingness. He knows that his power is restricted, his knowledge nil, his vigor ebbing with age, his years numbered, his successes few, his frustrations many, and his existential prospects bleak. [...] I have often remarked that mighty man, who has succeeded in landing astronauts on the moon, stands helpless and bewildered before a tiny cell that has gone berserk.

Man rejects finiteness-awareness. He wants to be more than he is in reality. He attempts to overreach himself; he wants to achieve vastness, boundlessness. He resents boundaries; he wants to disregard limitations and rush toward infinity.

Days of Deliverance (Pgs 30-31, 32)

This applies very well to the *avadim* in the Purim story. These *avdei hamelech* are interested in trying to escape their finitude by being the best subservient beings they can be, which means that they will attempt to dispose of anyone who is not similar to them, in this particular case to hand

Mordechai over to Haman. They hide behind the façade of being underlings, but in truth they are culpable of the same iniquities as the leading villains in our story. And perhaps worse, because they won't take responsibility for their actions, but rather hide behind those whom they call master.

We see a similar characteristic in Eliezer when he tries to enter into the Jewish family through marriage, rather than through his own merits. This trait carries through to what we view as his positive qualities as well. Eliezer is servile and thus creates an identity for himself exclusively as 'eved Avraham'. What is the reason for Eliezer going straight to Gan Eden? To understand why he does, we must first ask; who else falls into this category and what common attributes do they share? Many of these individuals are not those that we might have thought of if we had been compiling such a list; they are not, as it were, the major players of Jewish history. They play supporting roles, never taking the initiative that the main characters take. Because they never encounter the hazards that come along with said initiative and don't fall prey to the mistakes that arise from such risks, they are pure and enter Gan Eden alive, without prerequisite. While he was righteous, Eliezer does not take center stage and therefore he never gets burned in the process. In a sense, it is by default that Eliezer indeed goes straight to Gan Eden. Inaction as such is not why we are placed on this earth; we are here to act and, perhaps, even to err along the way.

We see this same idea of *avdus* with regard to Gechazi.

Similarly do we find it with Cain, Korah, Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, Gechazi, Absalom, Adonijah, Uziah and Haman, who set their eyes upon that which was not proper for them; what they sought was not granted to them and what they possessed was taken from them.

Sotah 9b

וכן מצינו בקין, וקרח, ובלעם, ודואג,
ואחיתופל, וגחזי, ואבשלום, ואדוניהו,
ועוזיהו, והמן, שנתנו עיניהם במה שאינו
ראוי להם, מה שביקשו לא ניתן להם,
ומה שבידם נטלוהו מהם.
מסכת סוטה דף ט:

Gechazi tried to take that which was not coming to him, and ultimately loses out by not only not receiving that, but also losing everything he had; his position as Elisha's right hand man. Ironically, here we also find ourselves comparing Gechazi to Haman.

Similarly, the *eved ivri* took that which was not his without any thought of being able to pay it back¹⁹. He ends up living comfortably with a family provided to him by his master. It is time for him to go and he just wants to sit pretty and enjoy?!

This is exactly what we don't want people to be - *eved la'avadim*. That is precisely the curse that Noach gives to Canaan – *eved avadim yihyeh l'echav* (Bereishit 9:25).

Within the story of the Megillah, it may even go one step further.

There were many Jews who protested that he was endangering the lives of all Israel because of his excessive personal piety, as is made clear in Aggadat Esther: "Israel said to him (Mordechai): 'You should know that you will bring about our

היו הרבה מישראל צועקים שמעמיד
בסכנת נפשות את כלל ישראל משום
חסידות פרטית יתירה, כמפורש
באגדת אסתר (פ' ג' אות ב') "א"ל

¹⁹ One of the ways in which a person becomes an *eved* is through stealing something from someone without having the ability to pay it back. (Shemot 22:2)

death by the sword of that wicked one (Haman).’ But he replied to them: ‘What then, should I bow down to an idol?’ and he refused to accept their words.”

Strive for Truth, Volume I, Pg 220

ישראל, תהא יודע שאתה מפילנו
בחרב של זה הרשע, אמר להם 'א"כ
אשתחוה לע"ז? ולא קיבל עליו."
מכתב מאליהו חלק א עמוד 76

Perhaps these Jews who were against Mordechai’s ideas were in fact the *avdei hamelech* we began with. What did they do? Tell the authorities a story they may not have even heard from Mordechai himself, but fabricated on their own in order to be seen in the right. Ultimately this only led the story down the very path that they predicted. In trying to be self-righteous and follow everything that the rulership put forth, they were leading themselves down the path to destruction.

Thus far we’ve seen that the nature of the *avdus* relationship is that of an underhanded individual interested in his own personal gain. Where can we find the appropriate deferential relationship? For this we can look to the other minor group referred to in the Megillah, the *naarei hamelech, meshartav*. What do they do to bring our story back on track?

When Achashveirosh asks the *naarei hamelech meshartav* if he has repaid Mordechai for his kindness, they answer honestly, telling the king he had not done so. One can only imagine the pressure they must have felt accusing the king of having done something wrong. Instead of getting lost in the king’s authority, they say what should be said instead of what he wants to hear. They feel a sense of moral responsibility and in turn disregard their personal well-being. This is what it means to be a *mesharet*, through truth and discussion, not through deceit in order to climb higher on the ladder of power without actually doing anything.

These *naarei hamelech* seem to be young, but as we see throughout Tanach, *naar* does not necessarily reflect one’s age. Yitzchak Avinu is referred to as a *naar* when he is near forty. The term *naar* refers to a youthful open mindedness that allows one to make decisions even in the face of a difficult situation.

The only individuals referred to by the title *naar mesharet* in Tanach are Yehoshua and Shmuel. At a young age, Shmuel is able to avoid the negative practices of those around him and continue to grow in the esteem of God and man (Shmuel I 2:25-26). When he gets older and becomes the leader of the Jewish people, he is renowned for his just and rightful ruling (3:19-20). Unfortunately, the clearest example of this is in the juxtaposition of Shmuel to his sons who took over after him. (8:1-5) What’s more is that Shmuel is referred to not only as the *mesharet* for Eli HaKohen, but *mesharet et Hashem* (2:11, 18, 3:1).

Similarly, Yehoshua always followed Moshe, but never as an *eved*. He never tried to undermine Moshe or anyone else through his position. A prime illustration of this is the account of the prophecy of Eldad and Medad.

(26) Two men remained in the camp, and the spirit [also] rested on them. The name of one was Eldad, and the name of the second was Medad. Although they were among those registered, they did not go out to the [Communion] Tent, but they spoke prophetically in the camp. (27) A young man ran to tell Moshe. “Eldad and

(כו) וַיִּשְׁאָרוּ שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים בַּמַּחֲנֶה שֵׁם
הָאֶחָד אֶלְדָּד וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי מֵיָדָד וַתִּבְנֶה
עֲלֵיהֶם הָרוּחַ וְהֵמָּה בְּכַתְּבִים נֹלְאִ
יָצְאוּ הֵאָּלָה וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ בַּמַּחֲנֶה:
(כז) וַיָּרֶץ הַנְּעָר וַיִּגֵּד לְמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶלְדָּד וּמֵיָדָד מִתְנַבְּאִים בַּמַּחֲנֶה:

Medad are speaking prophecy in the camp!" he announced. (28) Yehoshua bin Nun, Moshe's chosen attendant, spoke up. "My lord Moshe," he said. "Stop them!" (29) "Are you jealous for my sake?" replied Moshe. "I only wish that all of God's people would have the gift of prophecy! Let God grant His spirit to them [all]!"

Bamidbar Chapter 11

(כח) וַיַּעַן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון מִשְׁרֵת מֹשֶׁה מִבְּחֻרָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי מֹשֶׁה כָּלְאֵם: (כט) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה הַמְקַנָּא אֶתְּהָ לִי וּמִי יִתֵּן כָּל עַם ה' נְבִיאִים כִּי יִתֵּן ה' אֶת רוּחוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם: במדבר פרק יא

Rashi takes this reaction of Yehoshua to a whole new level.

Stop them: ... Because they were prophesying Moshe would die and Yehoshua would bring Israel into the Land.

Rashi, Bamidbar 11:28

כלאם: [...] לפי שהיו מתנבאים משה מת ויהושע מכניס את ישראל לארץ: רש"י במדבר יא:כח

Yehoshua was so concerned for the honor of his teacher that he could not stand to hear of his demise, even if it was through the medium of prophecy and included that he would be the next leader of the nation.

This last point may assist in explaining a peculiar ruling with regard to the particular timing of the holiday of Purim.

The Megillah is read on the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, or the 15th; no less and no more. Cities surrounded by a wall from the time of Yehoshua bin Nun read on the 15th, villages and large cities read on the 14th, except that the villages move up to the day of entry.

Megillah 1:1

מגילה נקראת באחד עשר בשנים עשר בשלשה עשר בארבעה עשר בחמשה עשר לא פחות ולא יותר כרכין המוקפין חומה מימות יהושע בן נון קורין בחמשה עשר כפרים ועיירות גדולות קורין בארבעה עשר אלא שהכפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה: משנה מסכת מגילה א:א

Why is it that walled cities reading on the 15th of Adar need to date back to the time of Yehoshua and not to the time of the actual events being commemorated? Perhaps because when we are dealing with fortification and protection, the way to do it is not through connection to those leaders of Shushan who hid behind others to gain power and prestige, but through a connection to the true *naar mesharet*, the example to us all of how to be a proper student.

While Yehoshua is not on the list of people who went straight to Gan Eden, we do understand that no one sinned during his reign over the Jewish nation. It appears that the reasoning behind this stems from his being *mesharet* Moshe and the relationship that entailed, which also gained him the rare appellation at the end of his life, the same one that Moshe got at the end of his life, and the only true way to be an *eved*; an *eved Hashem*, a servant of God.

We see from here that the title *eved* is solely appropriate when it is coupled with the holiness and sanctity of Hashem. At such a point, one's entire life becomes partnered with the message of God that permeates their world.

A Servant of Hashem – One who focuses all energy and efforts in Hashem, and even in dealing with worldly matters the intent is toward the service of

עבד ה' - מי ששם כל כחו וכונתו וכל השגחותיו בשם יתעלה ואף בהתעסקו בענייני העולם מתכוין לעבודת הא-ל יתעלה הוא יקרא

God; he is called an *Eved Hashem*...

Radak, Yehoshua 1:1

עבד ה' [...]'
רד"ק יהושע א:א

This is an extremely elevated level to attain, exemplified by the fact that so few have merited such distinguished designation. And even those so called, only in their passing²⁰.

Avdei Hashem Anachnu, V'lo Avadim l'Avadim – we have to be very careful who we consider to be HaMelech; that title is reserved for the King of Kings. *Mesharet* is the proper relationship for us to build between people, as a *naar*, always with open eyes and an objective understanding of what is right and true. Not as an *eved*, looking toward artificial agendas and personal gain.

Through our understanding of the story of Purim and our profound tradition, may we merit to actualize and develop meaningful relationships with both God and man.

²⁰ See Toldos Yitzchak, Devarim 34:5