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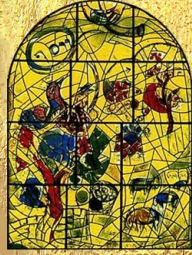
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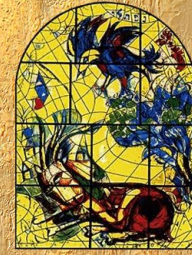
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A Ramification of Yaakov's Glory

The *Torah* tells us that when *Yaakov* came to Egypt, his son *Yosef*, the Viceroy of Egypt went out to meet him. The *Torah* states, “*Yosef* harnessed his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in *Goshen*.” Although *Yosef* was the Viceroy of Egypt and the most powerful person in the world, he personally harnessed his own chariot to go out to greet his father *Yaakov*.

The *Midrash* states, “*Reb Yehudah* says in the name of *Reb Eivo*, ‘There are two individuals who saw a level of honor and glory that no other person had seen. Who were they? They were *Yisro* and *Yaakov*. The *Torah* states when the Jewish people were in the desert, ‘*Moshe* had gone out to greet his father in law, *Yisro*.’ Is it possible that *Moshe* should go out and others should not follow? The ones who were appointed to be responsible for the thousands, hundreds, and tens of

people also went out with *Moshe*. Was it possible that if these individuals went out and the seventy elders of Israel did not go out? Thus, the seventy elders also went out. If others saw the seventy elders go out would they not go out? *Aaron*, the High Priest went out.... The entire Jewish people went out to greet *Yisro* in the desert.

Similarly, when *Yaakov* had come to Egypt, *Yosef* his son went out to greet his father. Is it possible that the Viceroy of Egypt goes out to greet *Yaakov* and others do not go out? Thus, the subjects of Pharaoh and the elders of Egypt went out to greet *Yaakov*. Subsequently the entire Egyptian people went out to greet *Yaakov*...The level of glory that *Yisro* and *Yaakov* had experienced teaches us that, ‘The wise will come to inherit honor.’...” What was the value of honor and glory that was afforded to *Yaakov*?

The people who went out to greet *Yaakov* in Egypt did not understand or appreciate his innate holiness. They did not have the capacity to any degree to fathom his dimension of being. During the exodus from Egypt, at the splitting of the Sea, *Chazal* tell us “what the maidservant witnessed at the sea was not witnessed by *Yechezkel* the prophet.” Despite this level of revelation that was witnessed by the maidservant, because of her limited spiritual capacity she remained a lowly maidservant after witnessing such a revelation. Similarly, the people of Egypt who came out to greet *Yaakov*, although they had no relevance to appreciating his level of holiness; nevertheless, the *Midrash* tells us that all of Egypt bestowed great honor upon the wise, *Yaakov*.

Chazal tell us that the famine that had come upon the world was meant to last for seven years. However, after two years of famine when *Yaakov* descended to Egypt, the famine ceased. In addition, when *Yaakov* met Pharaoh, he blessed him that the Nile should rise before him to irrigate the land. Because of *Yaakov*’s impact and effect on the physical condition of Egypt (and the world), he was perceived as one who could dictate and control nature.

Before *Yaakov* had arrived in Egypt, he was unknown to Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. He was unassuming and concealed from the world. He was fully immersed in his *Torah* study as the *Torah* attests to this, “The perfect man who dwelt in the tent (of *Torah*).” However, after he had arrived in Egypt and received the greatest honor in the history of mankind, *Yaakov*’s dimension was no longer concealed. The Egyptian people were fully aware that the famine ceased because of this special individual, who was the father of their Viceroy.

The *Torah* states, “The time approached for Israel to die, so he called for his son, for *Yosef*, and said to him - Please - if I have found favor in your eyes, please place your hand under my thigh... please do not bury me in Egypt.” The *Midrash* explains that *Yaakov* requested of *Yosef* and adjured him that he would not be buried in Egypt. One of the reasons that is offered by the *Midrash* as to why *Yaakov* was opposed to being buried in Egypt was because he was concerned that he would be deified by the Egyptian people after his death.

The Egyptian people perceived *Yaakov* as a spiritual and holy person who had divine power. Prior to his coming to Egypt, the world was in a precarious state

due to the famine. After *Yaakov* had come to Egypt, the famine that faced the world ceased. Due to *Yosef*’s going out to greet his father *Yaakov*, he had become world-renown. Thus, the Egyptians would begin to deify him because of the miracles that had taken place. *Yaakov* thus needed to request of *Yosef* to not bury him in Egypt.

We see the severe consequence of honor in the context of *Yaakov*. Although it was a level of honor and glory that was well deserved by *Yaakov*; nevertheless, the negative ramifications that came out of that glory would have been detrimental to *Yaakov*’s spiritual being. He thus requested not to be buried in Egypt.

Yosef’s Ascent to a Position of Leadership

The *Torah* tells us that *Yaakov* summoned *Yosef* his son, the Viceroy of Egypt and asked to take an oath that he should not be buried in Egypt, but rather, he should be buried in the land of Canaan. The *Torah* states, “(*Yaakov* said to *Yosef*) But as for me - when I came from *Paddan*, Rachel died on me in the land of *Canaan* on the road, while there was still a stretch of land to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the road to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.”

Rashi in his commentary cites the *Midrash*, “*Yaakov* said to *Yosef*, ‘Although I am inconveniencing you to bury me in *Canaan*... I did not bring your mother Rachel even into Bethlehem, but rather I buried her on the way. I know that you have a claim in your heart against me. However, you should know that it was only because of Divine Dictate that I buried her there, so that she should be of assistance to her children when *Nevuzaradan* will take them into exile. When the children of Israel will pass by her grave on that road, she will come out and cry and beseech G-d for Mercy on their behalf.... and G-d will respond - and the children will return to their border (homeland).”

If *Yaakov* understood that *Yosef* harbored ill feelings in his heart towards him for many years since the passing of his mother, why did *Yaakov* not explain to *Yosef* the basis for his decision sooner? It could not have been because *Yosef* did not have the intellectual capacity to understand the basis of *Yaakov*’s decision at an earlier age because the *Torah* refers to him at the age of seventeen as “*ben zikunim*”, which means that he

was the wisest of all of *Yaakov's* children. If so, why did *Yaakov* withhold the reason for his decision from *Yosef* to dispel his claim until the time immediately before his passing? Why did *Yaakov* allow *Yosef* to harbor such ill feelings for him for so many years?

Of all of *Yaakov's* children, *Yosef* was the only one qualified to father tribes as *Yaakov* had done. As the *Torah* states *Yaakov* said to *Yosef*, "*Ephraim* and *Manasseh* shall be mine like *Reuvain* and *Shimon*." Meaning, that although *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* were only *Yaakov's* grandchildren, he nevertheless designated them to be the equivalent of his own sons *Reuvain* and *Shimon* to be established as tribes. After *Yaakov* designated the sons of *Yosef* as tribes, did he explain to him that he had buried his mother *Rachel* "on the way."

Very often one has the ability to understand something intellectually, but because one has not yet attained a certain level of maturity or responsibility one may not have the capacity to fully grasp and internalize why things happen as they do. There is no question that if *Yaakov* would have shared his reason for burying *Rachel* "on the way" before this point in time with *Yosef*, he would have understood the rationale for his father's decision. Because *Rachel* was not buried in *Bethlehem* he was not able to internalize the justification for that decision and thus he harbored ill feelings towards his father.

However, after *Yosef* was summoned by *Yaakov* and his two sons designated as tribes, he assumed a position as *Yaakov's* successor to be fully responsible for the fate of the Jewish people. Thus, being in a position of leadership and responsibility *Yosef* had the capacity to grasp and internalize the value of *Rachel* being buried "on the way." It was essential for the return of the Jewish people from exile to pass by her grave and she should supplicate G-d on their behalf for their return to the Land. As the leader of the Jewish people one merits special Divine Assistance to have the foresight and capacity to function as a responsible leader.

The Blessing of *Yaakov* to His Grandchildren *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*

The *Torah* tells us that when *Yosef* became aware that his father *Yaakov* was ill, he took his sons *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* to be blessed by him. The *Torah* states, "And *Israel* said to *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, 'May the angel

who redeems me from all evil bless the lads, and may my name be declared upon them, and the names of my forefathers *Avraham* and *Yitzhak*, and may they reproduce (*vayidgu*) abundantly like fish within the land.'" When *Yaakov* blessed his grandsons he chose the word "*vayidgu*" regarding proliferation, rather than the word "*vayirbu*" which means, "to increase in great number."

Rashi cites *Chazal* who explain the connotation of the word "*vayidgu*" is, "*Ephraim* and *Manasseh* should be as prolific as fish, which multiply in an unlimited number. Another interpretation of '*vayidgu*', is that they should not be susceptible to the evil eye (*ayin ha'rah*) as fish are concealed from the eye of man because they are located under the water." Why did *Yaakov* choose this particular blessing regarding *Yosef's* children?

Yosef, the son of *Rachel* was the epitome of physical beauty. In addition to his exceptional beauty, he possessed a level of intellect that was unique and bordered on the divine. *Yosef* rose to be the Viceroy of Egypt, and was thus empowered to be the ruler over the civilized world. Despite having the material world at his disposal, he remained devoutly righteous and holy. *Yosef* is referred to as "*Yosef* the ruler." He not only was the ruler over Egypt, he was first and foremost the ruler over himself. He had full control over his entire being.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Yomah* tells us that *Yosef*, due to his exceptional level of beauty and spiritual dimension will be a basis for prosecution for all those with exceptionally beautiful who transgress the *Torah* due. When they come before the heavenly court, they will be asked, "Why did you transgress the *Torah*?" They will respond, "Because we were endowed with such a level of beauty and thus had difficulty restraining our desires." The court will say to them, "Were you more beautiful than *Yosef*? Despite his exceptional level of beauty he remained devout and righteous." Although the wife of his master *Potiphar* unceasingly attempted to seduce *Yosef* as her slave, he did not succumb to her advances.

When one is affected by the evil eye (*ayin ha'rah*) it is a consequence of another individual gazing upon him with a degree of negativity or envy. Thus, one who lives his life as an unaffected being, not allowing the material surroundings to affect him, will be immune to the evil eye. *Yosef*, as one who was in total control over

his entire being, was one who could not be affected by external influences, rather he was one who affected others. He dominated and affected all that was exposed to him. Measure for measure, just as *Yosef* would not allow himself to be affected and influenced by any of the material realm, the blessing to his sons was that they should remain unaffected and not be susceptible to the evil eye.

The *Torah* tells us that as a result of the Great Flood all life that existed in the world came to an end. *Chazal*, however, tell us that the *Torah* is specific in its description of the destruction of existence to indicate that it was only the species that were on dry land perished. The fish in the sea were not destroyed by the waters of the Great Flood. The fish were not destroyed as the remainder of existence because they were under water and thus were not exposed to the evils of mankind and the species that lived on dry land. They thus did not need to be destroyed along with the rest of creation, which had become debased.

After the Great Flood, G-d blessed all living creatures again as He had originally done at the time of Creation saying, "Be fruitful and multiply". The fact that G-d repeated the original blessing is an indication that the world after the Great Flood was considered to be the beginning of a new existence and not a continuation of the initial Creation.

G-d created the world to be nearly perfect and spiritually pure. Existence was pristine. It was Adam's mission to bring existence to a perfected state by not succumbing to the temptation of the Tree of Knowledge. If he had succeeded, the world would have continued to exist eternally in a perfected state. However, because Adam failed and did succumb, physical existence became finite and purified. Ultimately, the world regressed to the point that it needed to be destroyed by the Great Flood.

The world that had existed prior to the Flood was created from a state of ex-nihilo with an unlimited potential and had relevance to eternity. It was because it was the handiwork of G-d. However, existence that followed the Great Flood, although in its physical make up was a continuation of what had previously existed, regarding its dimension of innate value, it was the equivalent of a new existence, a new beginning. This new world was limited and spiritually flawed.

The blessing, which *Yaakov* had given to his grandchildren, equated them to fish because he intended to bless them with a blessing that had greater value than anything that had existed after the Great Flood. Fish were part of the original Creation that had come about through the Ten Utterances of G-d. They were the recipients of the original blessing of "Be fruitful and multiply."

Similarly, *Yosef*, being one who dominated every aspect of his being and thus dominated existence as "the ruler," was worthy of the blessing of the fish who remained unaffected by the evils of mankind before the Great Flood. It was because of this unique characteristic of *Yosef* that his sons merited to be blessed by *Yaakov* with the word "*vayidgu*." They were thus not subject to the influences to which the world is exposed.

The Bitter and Sweet that was Contained in Their Weeping

The *Torah* states after *Yosef* revealed himself to his brothers, "Then he fell upon his brother *Binyamin's* neck and wept; and *Binyamin* wept upon his neck." *Rashi* cites the *Midrash* that explains that when *Yosef* fell upon the neck of *Binyamin* he was crying over the destruction of the two Temples that were to be situated in the portion of *Binyamin*. When *Binyamin* cried upon the neck of *Yosef* he was crying over the destruction of the *Mishkan Shilo*, which in the portion of *Yosef*.

Yosef and *Binyamin* were the only children of Rachel. They were extremely close with one another because they shared the same mother. Although they had been separated from one another for twenty-two years, they only wept for the destruction of the two Temples and *Mishkan Shilo* when they were reunited. Why did they weep about these issues at this particular moment?

The *Torah* tells us that *Yosef* was the Viceroy of Egypt and was the provider of all sustenance to the world. Being in this position of power, he would create an insular spiritual environment for the Jewish people in Egypt. He was responsible to provide all the material that was needed to facilitate their spirituality to ensure their survival during the 210 years of exile in Egypt.

After *Yosef* revealed himself to his brothers, *Yaakov* descended to Egypt with seventy members of his

family who would evolve into becoming the Jewish people. Yosef's revelation of himself to his brothers precipitated Yaakov descending to Egypt, which was the beginning of the exile. The value of the Egyptian exile was so that Jewish people should be redeemed from Egypt to become qualified to receive the *Torah* at Sinai as the nation of G-d.

The Egyptian exile was a prerequisite for the Jewish people to become the chosen people of G-d. The objective of the *Mishkan* and the Temple was to be the medium for G-d to dwell in the midst of the Jewish people. If the Jewish people would not evolve to become G-d's chosen, there would be no context for G-d to dwell in this existence. G-d's Presence in physical existence was contingent on the existence of a Jewish people.

When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, it was an indication that the dynamic for the Jewish people to evolve had begun, to ultimately stand at Sinai and provide the location for the Divine Presence. The hosts of these locations were Yosef and *Binyamin*. *Mishkan Shilo* was in the portion of Yosef and the location of the Holy Ark in both Temples was the portion of *Binyamin*. At the moment of Yosef's revelation to his brothers, the dynamic of nationhood was put into motion, making it possible for a location of the Divine Presence. Simultaneously Yosef and *Binyamin* had seen the conclusion of those periods with the destruction of *Mishkan Shilo* and the first and second Temple. This is why they cried on each other's necks.

One's Relevance to Eternity

The *Torah* tells us that before Yaakov passed away he blessed his children, in a manner that secured the potential of each of the tribes. The *Torah* states regarding the blessing Yaakov had given his children, "Zevulon shall settle by seashores. He shall be at the ship's harbor...Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey..." Zevulon was meant to be the sea merchant who would travel and conduct trade, while Yissachar was meant to be totally dedicated to the study of *Torah*.

It was through this blessing that Yaakov, our Patriarch, established a partnership between his sons Yissachar and Zevulon, in which Zevulon would assume all financial and material responsibility for the support of Yissachar who would be fully dedicated to the study of *Torah*. The *Midrash* tells us that the level of

commitment that Zevulon had to Yissachar was to the degree that they "placed the food in the mouth of Yissachar." Meaning, Zevulon provided in a manner that Yissachar was not distracted for even an instant to be concerned for his own material needs. Because of his degree of immersion in *Torah* study, which was without any distraction, Yissachar possessed a unique level of clarity and *Torah* knowledge.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Yomah* tells us that if one sees one who is proficient in *Torah* to the degree that he is a decisor of Jewish Law, he is from the tribe of *Levy* or Yissachar. The *Gemara* asks, "If so, one could also be from the Tribe of *Yehudah* because he was a legislator of the law?" The *Gemara* answers that although *Yehudah* was a legislator, he did not possess the unique ability to determine the absolutely definitive *Torah* law. This ability was unique to *Levy* and Yissachar. Why was this so? It is because these two tribes were not involved in the material. *Levy* had no share in the Land because G-d was their portion and they were His officiants. Yissachar's material needs were fully provided by Zevulon and thus was able to be continuously immersed in *Torah*.

Sforno asks, "If Yissachar was continuously immersed in *Torah* and achieved a unique dimension of *Torah*, why is Yaakov's blessing to Zevulon mentioned before the blessing that was given to Yissachar? (One would think that since the study of *Torah* is the ultimate pursuit that the blessing to Yissachar should have been mentioned first.) It is because one cannot be immersed in *Torah* study unless his material needs are addressed. As it states in the *Mishna* in Ethics of our Fathers, 'im ein kemach, ein Torah – if there is no flour there is no Torah.'

If one provides for his fellow's material needs so that he should be able to engage in *Torah* study, as Zevulon had done for Yissachar, then the merit of that *Torah* study will accrue to both of them. Meaning, the one who had studied the *Torah* and the one who had enabled him to do so through his financial support, will both be fully accredited for the *Torah* that had been studied.

This is the intent of the *Torah* establishing the obligation of tithing one's produce to the *Kohen* (Priests) and the *Levy*. Since the Priests and Levites were the ones who were fully dedicated to the study of *Torah*, by providing them with their respective tithes, each Jew will have a share in the *Torah* that is studied by them.

Similarly we find regarding the blessing that was given by *Moshe* to the Tribe of *Levy*, 'Who are the ones who will teach and give direction to *Yaakov*? It is the Tribe of *Levy*.' By establishing such a partnership between every Jew and the tribe that consists of *Kohen* and *Levy*, the *Torah* is providing each Jew with an opportunity to have a share in the world to come. As it states in the *Mishna* in Tractate *Sanhedrin*, 'Every Jew has a share in the world to come.'"

The *Gemara* tells us at the end of Tractate *Kesubos* that if one does not engage in *Torah* study, he will not be resurrected at the end of time. This is because the *Torah* is the "dew of life (*tal chaim*).” The *Gemara* states, "If so then simple unlearned Jew (*aam haaretz*) will not merit a share in the world to come (to be resurrected)." The *Gemara* states that even the unlearned Jew who is not engaged in *Torah*, if he supports the study of *Torah*, he too will merit resurrection (share in the world to come).

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Shabbos* tells us that there was a significant minority of "aamei haaretz – a sect of Jews who were not meticulous and sensitive to many areas of Jewish Law" who did not give the tithe to the *Levy* because they were not willing to part with a significant percentage of their produce. Since this tithe had not particular level of sanctity they justified withholding it. They however realized that the tithe of the *Kohen* could not be withheld because of its level of sanctity and liability if they should eat it. Thus, even the *aamei haaretz* had a share in the study of *Torah*.

However, after the destruction of the Holy Temple there no longer is a context in which one has the opportunity to give tithes. (It is only the produce that is grown in the Land of Israel that must be tithed). How then is the unlearned Jew able to merit a share in the world to come if the mechanism of tithes is no longer in place? It is only if one supports the study of *Torah* of others will the unlearned Jew merit a share in the world to come.

Chofetz Chaim writes that just as one needs to eat every day in order to sustain himself, identically one must sustain his spirituality. Regardless if one had eaten sufficiently on one day, he must eat again another day in order to continue to survive. The body needs continuous sustenance to continue; however, the need to sustain the physical is only as long as the person is alive and therefore it is sufficient to have sustenance that has limitation. However in order for one's soul to come to the world to come, which is eternal, it must be given eternal sustenance. The spirituality that lies within *Torah* gives the Jew the ability to have relevance to eternity.



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