

TORAH

חומש

בראשית

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TORAH

CHUMASH BEREISHIT

The Book of Genesis

Parshat Vayechi

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*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe*

THE TORAH - CHUMASH BEREISHIT

WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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*With an Interpolated English Translation
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The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*

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The Book of Genesis

Parshat Vayechi



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770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213



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Chayei Sarah
Toldot
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ויחי Vayechi

Overview

The name of this *parashah*, *Vayechi*, means “he lived,” referring to how Jacob lived the last years of his life in Egypt. Since we know that the name of a *parashah* expresses the contents of the entire *parashah*, we would think that a *parashah* entitled “He Lived” would be devoted to an account of the major events of Jacob’s life. In fact, however, *parashat Vayechi* is devoted to the exact opposite: the events leading up to and following Jacob’s death. In this *parashah*, Jacob bestows his parting blessings on his children and grandchildren, breathes his last, and is buried by his sons in the Machpelah Cave; all this is then followed by the account of the death of his favorite son and designated successor, Joseph. *Parashat Vayechi* is thus reminiscent of *parashat Chayei Sarah*, whose name means “the life of Sarah” even though it focuses on the events that occurred in the wake of her death.

As we explained with regard to Sarah, we only attain true life when our ideals live on in those who come after us. Paradoxically, then, as long as we are physically alive, it is not at all clear if we are truly “alive”; the test of true life comes only after death. If our descendants remain true to the ideals we have imparted to them, it then becomes retroactively clear that we were also “alive” during our lifetimes. If not, then it follows that even while alive, we were essentially “dead.”

This perspective helps explain why here, in *parashat Vayechi*, the Torah’s mention of Jacob’s age when he died is prefaced by the phrase “Jacob lived seventeen years in the land of Egypt.” In *parashat Chayei Sarah*, there is no such prefatory phrase with regard to Sarah—we are simply informed how old she was when she died. The fact that Jacob lived seventeen years *in the land of Egypt* before he died—years that, as we are told, were the best years of his life, filled with true satisfaction at seeing his children and grandchildren loyal to his ideals—proves that he was truly “alive” during his lifetime. The fact that he succeeded in maintaining his own spirituality in the corrupt and idolatrous environment of Egypt, as well as in raising his children and grandchildren to do the same, testifies to the fact that he was indeed truly “alive” during his lifetime.

In fact, Jacob lived on so tangibly in the lives of his progeny that the Torah does not even employ the term “die” in recording his death; he is only referred to as having stopped breathing,¹ and the Talmud therefore asserts that, in essence, Jacob did not die!²

1. Below, 49:33. 2. *Ta’anit* 5b.

OVERVIEW OF VAYECHI

Furthermore, as we shall see, Jacob's death signaled the beginning of the descent that would conclude with the physical enslavement of all his descendants. The fact that the Jewish people remained loyal to Jacob's heritage even under such antagonistic circumstances is further proof that his death was the truest indication that not only was he was "alive" during his lifetime, but continued to remain so afterwards, as well.

As we have seen, from his youth, Jacob was the consummate Torah scholar.³ Together with absorbing the knowledge embodied in the Torah, Jacob absorbed its quality of transcendence, its unchanging, Divine essence that renders it intrinsically, universally, and eternally relevant to all facets of life. This is what enabled him to weather all the vicissitudes of life, to raise all his children to be righteous despite their diverse personalities, and to ensure that the years he spent in Egypt would be his best. The Torah, being the embodiment of God's will and wisdom, is truth; the study of the Torah is thus the pursuit of truth; and therefore, by extension, devotion to the Torah means uncompromising devotion to truth. The Torah was Jacob's key to eternal life, for truth, by definition, is eternal.

As such, the lesson of *parashat Vayechi* is that we, too, can weather all the remaining tribulations of exile, raise our children to be loyal to their heritage, and enjoy all the blessings of spiritual and physical abundance—essentially tasting the sweetness of the messianic future—even while still in exile, through studying the Torah and fulfilling its commandments.

It is thus fitting that the first book of the Torah ends with the message of *Vayechi*, "he lived." As the curtain closes on the groundwork laid by the patriarchs and we prepare to witness the maturation of their progeny into a full-fledged people who will assume the role of "a kingdom of nobles and a holy nation,"⁴ *parashat Vayechi* serves to remind us that the Book of Genesis is not simply literature, a sentimental or partisan tribute to our national ancestors who, impressive though they may have been, are dead and gone and therefore no longer relevant. No, they are alive, truly alive, and it is only by identifying with their aspirations and by internalizing and remaining loyal to their heritage that we, too, can be truly alive. As long as we remain in exile, we will continue to be beckoned by the dazzling enticements of the pseudo-life around us (and within us). But the Torah is "a Torah of life,"⁵ eternally challenging us to remain above these temptations and "choose life"⁶ by fulfilling God's commandments,⁷ thereby making our lives and the world around us into a home for God, the true⁸ "source of life."⁹

3. Above, 25:27, etc. 4. Exodus 19:6. 5. Liturgy, *Amidah*. *Avot d'Rabbi Natan*, chapter 34. 6. Deuteronomy 30:19. 7. Leviticus 18:5. 8. Psalms 36:12. 9. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 427-430; *Sefer HaSichot* 5749, vol. 1, pp. 164-172; *Sichot Kodesh* 5741, vol. 1, pp. 763-766; *Sefer HaSichot* 5751, vol. 1, pp. 225-227.

— ONKELOS —
 28 וַחַיָּא יַעֲקֹב בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם שְׁבַע עֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִין וְהוּוּ יוֹמֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁנֵי חַיְוֵהי מְאֵה וְאַרְבַּעִין וּשְׁבַע שָׁנִין; 29 וְקָרְבוּ יוֹמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִמְתָּהּ וְקָרָא לְבָרָה לְיוֹסֵף וַאֲמַר לָהּ אִם כָּעַן אֲשַׁכַּחֲתִי רַחֲמִין בְּעֵינֶיךָ שׁוּי כָּעַן יָדְךָ תַּחֲתֵי יָרְכִי וְתַעֲבִיד עִמִּי טִיבוּ וְקִשׁוּט לֹא כָּעַן תִּקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם:

47:28 וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁבַע עָשָׂר שָׁנָה וַיְחִי יְמֵי־יַעֲקֹב שְׁנֵי חָיָיו שְׁבַע שָׁנִים וְאַרְבַּעִים וּשְׁבַע שָׁנָה; 29 וַיִּקְרְבוּ יְמֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמוֹתָו וַיִּקְרָא אֶל בְּרָתּוֹ לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם־נָא מִצְאָתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ שִׂים־נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יָרְכִי וְעֲשֵׂיתָ עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְאַמֶּת אֶל־נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם:

— RASHI —

חי ארבע מאות שנים והוא חי שבעים: ויקרא לבנו ליוסף. למי שהיה יכלת בידו לעשות: שים נא ידך. והשבע: חסד ואמת. חסד שעושים עם המתים הוא חסד של אמת, שאינו מצפה לתשלום גמול: אל נא תקברני במצרים. סופה להיות עפרה בניס ומרחשין תחת גופי, ושאיני מתי חוצה לארץ חיים אלא בצער גלגול מחילות, ושלא יעשוני מצרים עבודה זרה:

28 וַיְחִי יַעֲקֹב. לָמָּה פָּרְשָׁה זוֹ סְתוּמָּה? לָפִי שְׂכִינֹן שְׁנַפְטָר יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ, נִסְתַּמּוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וּלְבָם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצְרַת הַשְּׁעָבוּד שֶׁהִתְחִילוּ לְשַׁעֲבָדָם. דָּבָר אַחֵר: שֶׁבִקֵּשׁ לְגַלוּת אֶת הַקֶּץ לְבִנָּיו, וְנִסְתַּם מִמֶּנּוּ. בְּבִרְאִית רַבְהִי: 29 וַיִּקְרְבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמוֹתָו. כָּל מִי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בּוֹ קְרִיבָה לְמוֹתָו, לֹא הִגִּיעַ לְיְמֵי אָבוֹתָיו. יִצְחָק חֵי מְאֵה וּשְׁמוּנִים, וַיַּעֲקֹב מְאֵה אַרְבַּעִים וּשְׁבַע. בְּדוֹד נֶאֱמַר קְרִיבָה, אָבִיו

1. נ, צ, א.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

children to remain true to God (to “live”) in Egypt as well.¹¹

But whereas Jacob remained completely aloof from the Egyptian outlook on life, his children, who were on a lower spiritual level than he, were aware of this consciousness. Even so, by studying Torah, they were able to remain unaffected by it.

By overcoming the challenge of Egypt, Jacob’s children grew in a way that is only possible through challenge. Although Jacob did not experience this directly—since Egypt did not present a challenge to him in the first place—he grew just as his children did since he facilitated their Torah study. His years in Egypt were therefore his *best* years, since never before did he derive the benefit that being Egypt afforded him.

Similarly, we often find ourselves in “Egypt,” in places of spiritual darkness. Like Jacob, through Torah study we can remain aloof from “Egypt” and reveal Godliness even there. Even if we have been influenced by “Egypt” (as Jacob’s children were, to some extent), or even seduced by it, we should not despair. By returning to God despite the challenges of Egypt, we not only emerge from the darkness but gain the spiritual advantage that results from overcoming spiritual adversity.

Those who have never been seduced by Egypt need not worry that they are missing out on this advantage. By helping those who *have* been seduced to return to God and the Torah, they, like Jacob, attain the advantage of those who have strayed and returned.¹²

29 Swear that you will do me the following act.... Please do not bury me in Egypt: While both Jacob and Joseph asked to be removed from Egypt, their requests differed significantly: Joseph asked to be taken out at

the time of the Exodus, which meant that his coffin would remain in Egypt then. In contrast, Jacob asked not to be buried even temporarily in Egypt.

The spiritual reason for this is as follows: As we have seen, Jacob was inherently transcendent from Egypt; Egypt did not “exist” in his world. This was manifested physically by the fact that he lived in a separate district of Egypt, Goshen. Joseph, on the other hand, truly “descended” into Egypt and at the same time maintained his Divine consciousness. Joseph was thus the one who embodies the ability to descend into the material realm and elevate the sparks of holiness therein. He lived in the Egyptian capital, in the midst of the distractions and intrigues of Egyptian political life.

Joseph therefore wanted his bones to remain with the Jewish people in Egypt so that he could be close to the Jewish people. He would thereby provide them a source of merit that would enable them to elevate the sparks of holiness embedded in Egypt.

Jacob provided a different sort of spiritual power. Our sages tell us that “a captive cannot free himself from prison”—someone on the outside must liberate him.¹³ In addition to the merit of a Joseph, the “integrationist,” the Jews also needed the merit of a Jacob, an “isolationist.” To leave and ultimately elevate Egypt, the Jews needed to be connected to a spiritual power that absolutely transcends Egypt, a consciousness in which Egypt does not exist. Jacob therefore had to remain distant and above Egypt.

Jacob wanted Joseph to swear that he would not bury him in Egypt for two reasons:

- (a) Since Joseph was an “integrationist,” removing Jacob from Egypt would go against everything

11. See *HaYom Yom*, 18 Tevet. 12. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 160 ff. 13. *Berachot* 5b.

Jacob Prepares for his Death

47:28 Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt (2238-2255). At the end of this period, **Jacob's days, i.e., the years of his lifetime,** totaled **one-hundred forty-seven years.** Thus, Jacob did not live as long as his grandfather Abraham (175 years) or his father Isaac (180 years).

29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph (who was still viceroy of Egypt at the time and thus had the authority to carry out his father's last requests) to come to Goshen. When Joseph arrived, Israel **said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please place your hand under my thigh and swear¹ that, upon my death, you will do for me the following act—which is one of genuine kindness—since I will be able to neither thank you for it nor repay you for it in this lifetime: Please do not bury me in Egypt.** I foresee that its soil beneath my body will swarm with lice when God will punish this country with plagues,² and I do not want to feel them. Furthermore, if you bury me here, then, when it comes time for the Resurrection of the Dead, I, along with all others who are buried outside the Land of Israel, will have to undergo the painful experience of rolling through underground channels until reaching the Land of Israel, where the Resurrection will occur. Finally, I know that Pharaoh will want me to be buried in Egypt in order that the merit of my presence continue to bring blessings of prosperity to his country after my death, just as it has during my lifetime.³ But I do not want to risk the Egyptians' making me into an object of worship after my death. True, they are already idolaters in any case, but I want to prevent them from transgressing this commandment to whatever extent I can.⁴

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

28 Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt: As we saw in the Overview, these were Jacob's best years.⁵ As we saw previously, when Jacob heard that Joseph was both alive and still loyal to the Torah, "the spirit of Jacob...revived."⁶ It would thus seem that Jacob's seventeen years in Egypt were the happiest in his life because he was there reunited with Joseph and proud that his son had been faithful to his instruction, withstanding all his tests—from those of slavery to those of public office.

Nonetheless, when Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (the *Tzemach Tzedek*) was a young boy, he asked his grandfather, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi: "How could it be that the best years of Jacob's life were those he lived in Egypt, the epitome of decadence?"

His grandfather answered: "It is written, '[Jacob] had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph, to make advance preparations in Goshen.'⁷ Rashi quotes the Midrash's interpretation of this verse: Jacob sent Judah to set up a house of study so he and his sons could study the Torah in Egypt.⁸ When we study the Torah, we become closer to God, so in this way it is possible to live good

years even in Egypt."⁹

Yet, if, indeed, it was the presence of a house of Torah study in Egypt—rather than being united with Joseph—that made Jacob's last years there his best, could he not have set up a house of study in the land of Israel all those years?

The answer is that the young Menachem Mendel, aware of how depraved the Egyptian environment was, felt that despite Jacob's joy in being reunited with Joseph and seeing him faithful to his ideals, the antagonistic atmosphere of Egypt should have nonetheless made Jacob's life miserable. Rabbi Shneur Zalman answered that the Torah is the antidote even to Egypt; because the Torah connects us to God Himself, who is beyond the limitations and evil of Egypt, when we study the Torah we are immune to the detrimental effects Egypt can otherwise have on us.¹⁰

Thus, like Joseph, it was by cleaving to God through studying the Torah that Jacob was able to remain aloof from the spiritual darkness of Egypt and thrive spiritually. The Torah academy he established enabled his

1. See above, 24:2. 2. Exodus 8:12-13. 3. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 213-214. 4. *Sefer HaSichot 5749*, vol. 1, p. 173, note 95. 5. See *Ba'al HaTurim*, *Likutei Torah* (Arizal), Alshich, and *Or HaChaim*. 6. Genesis 45:27. 7. Genesis 46:28. 8. *Tanchuma*, ed. Buber *ad loc.* 9. *HaYom Yom*, 18 Tevet. 10. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 10, pp. 160-162.

— ONKELOS —

30 וְאֶשְׁכֹּב עִם אֲבֹהָי וְתִטְלַנְנִי מִמִּצְרַיִם וְתִקְבְּרַנְנִי בְּקְבוּרַתְהוֹן וְאָמַר אָנָּה אֶעֱבֹד כְּפִתְגָמְךָ: 31 וְאָמַר קָם לִי וְקִיִּים לֵה וְסָגִיד יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל רִישׁ עֲרֶסָא: 48:1 וְהוּהָ בְּתַר פִּתְגָמֵיא הָאֵלִין וְאָמַר לְיוֹסֵף הָאֵבֹרָב שְׂכִיב מִרְעָה וְדַבֵּר יֵת תְּרִין בְּנוֹהֵי עֲמָה יֵת מְנַשָּׁה וְיֵת אֶפְרַיִם: 2 וְחַוֵּי לְיַעֲקֹב וְאָמַר הָאֵבֹרָב יוֹסֵף אֲתִי לְחַרְף וְאִתְקַרְף יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִתִּיב עַל עֲרֶסָא: 3 וְאָמַר יַעֲקֹב לְיוֹסֵף אֵל שְׂדֵי אֲתָגְלִי לִי בְּלוּז בְּאֶרְעָא דְכַנְעַן וּבְרִירָף יֵתִי: 4 וְאָמַר לִי הָאֵבֹרָב מִפִּישׁ לָךְ וְאִסְגַּנְךָ וְאִתְגַּנְךָ לְכַנְשֵׁת שְׂבִטִין וְאִתְּנִין יֵת אֶרְעָא הָדָא לְבְנֵיךָ בְּתַרְךָ אֲחִסְנַת עֹלָם:

30 וְשָׁכַבְתִּי עִם־אֲבֹתַי וְנִשְׁאַתְנִי מִמִּצְרַיִם וְקִבְרַתְנִי בְּקְבֻרַתְּם וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אֶעֱשֶׂה כְּדַבְרְךָ: 31 וַיֹּאמֶר הַשֹּׁבֵעַ לִי וַיִּשָּׁבַע לוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה: פ

48:1 וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ חָלָה וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶת־אֶפְרַיִם: 2 וַיִּגַּד לְיַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בְנֵךְ יוֹסֵף בָּא אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּתְחַזַּק יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשָּׁב עַל־הַמִּטָּה: 3 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יוֹסֵף אֵל שְׂדֵי נְרָאָה־אֵלַי בְּלוּז בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתִי: 4 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הֲנִנִי מִפְּרֹד וְהִרְבִּיתֶךָ וְנִתְתִּיד לְקָהֵל עַמִּים וְנִתְתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְרֹעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אַחֲזֹת עֹלָם:

— RASHI —

מְקַרָּא קְצַר. וַיֵּשׁ אֹמְרִים: אֶפְרַיִם הִיָּה רִגִיל לְפָנַי יַעֲקֹב בְּתַלְמוּד, וְכִשְׁחָלָה יַעֲקֹב בְּאֶרֶץ גֶּשֶׁן, הִלֵּךְ אֶפְרַיִם אֲצֵל אָבִיו לְמִצְרַיִם לְהַגִּיד לוֹ: וַיִּקַּח אֶת שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ. כִּדְּי שִׁיבְרַכְם יַעֲקֹב לְפָנַי מוֹתוֹ: 2 וַיִּגַּד. הַמְּגִיד לְיַעֲקֹב, וְלֹא פָּרַשׁ מִי, וְהִרְבֵּה מְקַרְאוֹת קְצָרֵי לְשׁוֹן: וַיִּתְחַזַּק יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמַר: אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁהוּא בְּנִי, מִלֵּךְ הוּא, וְאֲחַלֵּק לוֹ כְּבוֹד. מִכָּאֵן, שְׁחֹלְקִין כְּבוֹד לְמַלְכוּת. וְכֵן מִשָּׁה חֵלֵק כְּבוֹד לְמַלְכוּת: "וַיִּרְדּוּ כָל עֲבָדֶיךָ אֵלָה אֵלִי", וְכֵן אֲלֵהוּ: "וַיִּשְׁנֵם מִתְּנִי" וְגו': 4 וְנִתְתִּיד לְקָהֵל עַמִּים. בְּשִׁרְנֵי שְׁעֵתִידִים לְצֵאת מִמִּנִּי עוֹד קָהֵל וְעַמִּים. וְאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁאָמַר לִי: "גֹּי וְקָהֵל גֹּיִם", "גֹּי" אָמַר לִי עַל בְּנֵימִין, "קָהֵל גֹּיִם", הִרִי שְׁנִים לְבַד בְּמִבְנֵימִין, וְשׁוֹב לֹא נוֹלַד לִי בּוֹ, לְמִדְּנֵי שְׁעֵתִיד אַחַד מִשְׂבָּטֵי חֻלְק. וְעַתָּה, אוֹתָהּ מִתְּנָה אֲנִי נוֹתֵן לָךְ:

30 וְשָׁכַבְתִּי עִם אֲבֹתַי. וַיִּזוּ זוֹ מְחַבְּרַת לְמַעֲלָה לְתַחֲלַת הַמְּקַרָּא. "שִׁים נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי" וְהַשֹּׁבֵעַ לִי, וְאֲנִי סוֹפִי לְשָׁכַב עִם אֲבֹתַי, וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁאַנִּי מִמִּצְרַיִם. וְאִין לֹא־מֵר "וְשָׁכַבְתִּי עִם אֲבֹתַי" — הַשֹּׁבֵעַ עִם אֲבֹתַי בְּמַעֲרָה, שְׁהִרִי כְּתִיב אַחֲרָיו: "וְנִשְׁאַתְנִי מִמִּצְרַיִם וְקִבְרַתְנִי בְּקְבֻרַתְּם". וְעוֹד, מְצִינֵנוּ בְּכָל מְקוֹם לְשׁוֹן שְׂכִיבָה עִם אֲבֹתָיו הִיא הַגְּוִיעָה וְלֹא הַקְּבוּרָה, כְּמוֹ: "וַיִּשְׁכַּב דָּוִד עִם אֲבֹתָיו", וְאַחַר כֵּן: "וַיִּקְבַּר בְּעִיר דָּוִד": 31 וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל. תַּעֲלָא בְּעַדְנָה, סָגִיד לָהּ: עַל רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה. הַפָּרַע עֲצָמוֹ לְצַד הַשְּׂכִינָה. מִכָּאֵן אָמַר, שֶׁהַשְּׂכִינָה לְמַעֲלָה מִרְאֲשׁוֹתָיו שֶׁל חוֹלָה. דְּבַר אַחַר: "עַל רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה", עַל שֶׁהִיָּתָה מִשְׁתּוֹ שְׁלֵמָה וְאִין בַּהּ רִשְׁעֵי, שְׁהִרִי יוֹסֵף מִלֵּךְ הוּא, וְעוֹד שְׁנִשְׁבָּה לְבֵין הַגֹּיִם, וְהִרִי הוּא עוֹמֵד בְּצַדְקוֹ: 1 וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף. אַחַד מִן הַמְּגִידִים, וְהִרִי זֶה

2. מלכים א, ב, ג. 3. מגילת טו, ב. 4. שבת יב, ב. 5. שמות יא, ח. 6. מלכים א, יח, מו. 7. בראשית לה, יא.

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Joseph stood for. Joseph would be inclined to bury Jacob in Egypt so that Jacob's merit would help the Jews sublimate Egypt. Jacob therefore had him take an oath, which binds a person to a commitment in a way that transcends rational considerations.

- (b) As we mentioned, the Jews had to be connected to an "isolationist" as well in order to succeed in elevating Egypt. By taking an oath that he would remove Jacob from Egypt, Joseph bound himself with Jacob's consciousness of transcendence from

Egypt. He thus connected all of the Jews with this consciousness and gave them the spiritual fortitude to ultimately leave and elevate Egypt.¹⁹

In our own exile, being connected to Jacob means that even if we have achieved material and spiritual success in "Egypt"—as the Jews did in their initial stay in Goshen—we must remember that Egypt is not our home and we must feel the constant, urgent desire to, like Jacob, be immediately removed from exile, articulating our belief in the messianic redemption and our prayers for its immediate arrival.²⁰

19. See Zohar 1:222a: "Jacob was afraid...." 20. Likutei Sichot, vol. 25, pp. 270-274.

30 For I am going to soon lie down with my fathers, i.e., die, and then you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” Joseph replied, “I will do as you say.” He promised, but he did not swear, for he felt that his promise was sufficient surety.

31 Nonetheless, Jacob knew that firstly, it would not be easy for Joseph to resist Pharaoh’s insistence that he be buried in Egypt. Secondly, since they were under foreign rule in Egypt, circumstances could change in the future, making it difficult for Joseph to keep his word. Finally, he knew that Joseph himself would be more inclined to bury him in Egypt so the merit of his presence could continue to protect his descendants there even after his death. So, aware that someone who takes an oath to do something needs to remain constantly alert to changing circumstances and plan his strategies judiciously in order to ensure that he be able to fulfill his oath,¹⁴ **he said, “Swear to me that you will fulfill my request.” So Joseph swore to him.**

Even though they both knew that Israel was Joseph’s spiritual superior, **Israel prostrated himself** before Joseph in order to arouse his son’s sense of power and grant him the confidence he would require to carry out his request.¹⁵ Before prostrating himself, he positioned himself to face **toward** the Divine Presence, which was resting on **the head of the bed**, just as it rests on the head of the bed of all sick people, in order to prostrate himself before God while simultaneously doing so before Joseph. By prostrating himself before Joseph, Israel was fulfilling his part in Joseph’s second dream.¹⁶ By prostrating himself before God, Israel was thanking Him that all his children, conceived on his bed, had remained loyal to his religious ideals.

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

48:1 Joseph’s son Ephraim studied Torah regularly with Jacob in Goshen. When Jacob took ill **some time after these** above-recounted events, Ephraim went and **told Joseph, “Your father is ailing.”** So Joseph **took his two sons with him: Manasseh**, who was 25 years old, **and Ephraim**, who was 24, to be blessed by their grandfather.

2 When Joseph arrived, Ephraim **told Jacob, “Your son Joseph has come to you,”** so **Israel**, in deference to Joseph’s position as viceroy,¹⁷ **summoned his failing strength and sat up in bed.**

3 **Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me in Luz, in Canaan, and blessed me.”**¹⁸

4 **He said to me, ‘I will make you fruitful and numerous and, besides the family you already have, I will make of you a nation,’** referring to my then-unborn son Benjamin, ‘**and a community of peoples,**’ referring to the fact that one of my sons already born would be the progenitor of two tribes instead of only one. Although this privilege should properly be given to Reuben, my firstborn, I have elected to give it to you instead. God further told me, ‘**I will give this land to your descendants after you as their permanent estate.’**

¹⁴ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 270-273, vol. 35, pp. 211-215. ¹⁵ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 214. ¹⁶ Above, 37:9-10; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 159. ¹⁷ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, pp. 214-215. ¹⁸ Above, 35:9-12.

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5 וּבָעֵן תִּרְיַן בְּנֵיךָ דְאִתְלִידוּ לָךְ בְּאַרְעָא דְמַצְרַיִם עַד מֵינִי לְוַתְּךָ לְמַצְרַיִם דִּילִי אֲנוּן אֲפָרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כְּרֵאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן זְהוּן קְדָמִי 6 וּבְנֵין דִּי תוֹלִיד בְּתַרְיָהוּן דִּילָךְ זְהוּן עַל שׁוּם אַחֵוּהוּן יִתְקַרוּן בְּאַחְסַנְתְּהוּן: 7 וְאָנָּא בְּמֵינִי מִפְּדֹן מֵיַתַּת עָלִי רַחֵל בְּאַרְעָא דְכַנְעַן בְּאַרְחָא בְּעוֹד כְּרוּב אֲרַעָא לְמֵיעַל לְאַפְרַת וְקַבְרֵתָהּ תִּמְן בְּאַרְחָא אֲפָרַת הִיא בֵּית לָחֶם:

5 וְעַתָּה שְׁנֵי-בָנֶיךָ הַנּוֹלָדִים לָךְ בְּאַרְצָן מִצְרַיִם עַד-בְּאֵי אֵלֶיךָ מִצְרַיִמָּה לִי-יָהֵם אֲפָרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה בְּרֵאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ-לִי: 6 וּמוֹלַדְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר-הוֹלַדְתְּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם לָךְ יִהְיוּ עַל שֵׁם אֲחֵיהֶם יִקְרָאוּ בְּנַחֲלָתָם: 7 וְאֲנִי | בְּבֹאֵי מִפְּדֹן מִתְּהָ עָלַי רַחֵל בְּאַרְצָן כַּנְעַן בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּעוֹד כְּבֵרֶת-אֲרָץ לְבֵא אֲפָרַתָּה וְאֶקְבְּרָהּ שָׁם בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲפָרַת הִוא בֵּית לָחֶם:

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רבי משה הדרשן. ולא תאמר לי שעכבו עלי גשמים מלהולידה ולקברה בחברון, עת הגרד היה, שהארץ חלולה ומנוקבת כקברה: ואקברה שם. ולא הולכתיה אפלו לבית לחם להכניסה לארץ, וידעתי שיש בלבר עלי, אבל דע לך שעל פי הדבור קברתיה שם, שתהא לעורה לבניה כשיגלה אותם נבזווארון והיו עוברים דרך שם, וצאת רחל על קברה ובוכה ומבקשת עליהם רחמים, שנאמר: "קול ברמה נשמע" וגו'. והקדוש ברוך הוא משיבה: "יש שקר לפעלתך נאם ה' וגו' ושבו בנים לגבולם". ואנקלוס תרגם: "כרוב ארעא", כדי שיעור חרישת ארץ. ואומר אני, שהיה להם קצב שהיו קורין אותו כדי מחרשה אחת, קרואיד"א בלעז", כדאמרין: כרוב ותניי", כמה דמסיק תעלא מבי כרבא:

5 הַנּוֹלָדִים לָךְ וְגו' עַד בְּאֵי אֵלֶיךָ. לִפְנֵי בּוֹאֵי אֵלֶיךָ. כְּלוּמַר, שְׁנוֹלְדוּ מִשְׁפָּרְשֶׁת מִמֶּנִּי עַד שְׁבָאֵתִי אֶצְלָךְ: לִי הֵם. בְּחֻשְׁבוֹן שְׂאֵר בְּנֵי הֵם, לְטַל חֶלֶק בְּאַרְץ אִישׁ כְּגִדְדוֹ: 6 וּמוֹלַדְתְּךָ וְגו'. אִם תּוֹלִיד עוֹד, לֹא יִהְיוּ בְּמִנְיַן בְּנֵי, אֲלֵא בְּתוֹךְ שְׁבֹטֵי אֲפָרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה יִהְיוּ נִכְלָלִים, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לָהֶם שֵׁם בְּשִׁבְטֵים לְעֵנֵן הַנַּחֲלָה. וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׁנַחֲלָקָה הָאָרֶץ לְמִנְיַן גְּלוּלוֹתָם, כְּדָכְתִּיב: "לָרֵב תִּרְבֶּה נַחֲלֹתוֹ", וְכֹל אִישׁ וְאִישׁ נִטַּל בְּשׂוּה חוּץ מִן הַבְּכוֹרִים, מִכָּל מְקוֹם, לֹא נִקְרָאוּ שְׁבֹטֵים אֲלֵא אֵלוֹ, לְהַטִּיל גּוֹרֵל הָאָרֶץ לְמִנְיַן שְׁמוֹת הַשְּׁבֹטִים, וְנִשְׂאֵא לְכֹל שְׁבֵט וְשִׁבְט, וְדָגְלִים לְוַה וְלִוָּה: 7 וְאֲנִי בְּבֹאֵי מִפְּדֹן וְגו'. וְאֵף עַל פִּי שְׁאֲנִי מְטַרְחַת עֲלֶיךָ לְהוֹלִיכֵנִי לְהַקְבֵר בְּאַרְץ כַּנְעַן, וְלֹא כִּן עֲשִׂיתִי לְאַמּוֹךְ, שֶׁהָרִי מִתְּהָ סְמוּךְ לְבֵית לָחֶם: כְּבֵרֶת אֲרָץ. מִדַּת אֲרָץ, וְהֵם אֲלֵפִים אִמָּה כְּמִדַּת תְּחוּם שְׁבֵת, כְּדָבָרִי

8. במדבר כו, נד. 9. ירמיה לא, יד. 10. שם, טרטו. 11. מדה קצובה. 12. בבא מציעא קז, א. 13. יומא מג, ב.

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spirituality.

Women, in contrast, being the bedrock of the home, are freed from the obligation of certain commandments so they can better occupy themselves with the spiritual and material well-being of their families.²⁹ Women thus relate to the soul's essence, which transcends revealed spiritual experience.

(This is why a child's status as a Jew is defined by the mother, whereas tribal affiliation within the Jewish community, i.e., the child's specific role within the Jewish people, is designated by the father. This is because our Jewishness relates to the essence of the soul and women are in touch with the essence. Our specific roles, in contrast, relate to revealed spiritual experience, which is primarily man's realm.)

This is the deeper meaning of what Jacob explained to Joseph:

"As a man," he was saying, "I need to be buried in the Cave of Machpelah, a place of revealed holiness. Your mother, however, willingly sacrificed her resting place beside me due to her essential connection to her chil-

dren, to pray for them—even for those who will sin and be sent into exile!"

By exhibiting her essential connection to her children, Rachel aroused God to reveal His essential connection to His children—the Jewish people—which remains intact even when they sin, thus ensuring that all Jews will experience the future redemption.³⁰

But now, in light of my request that you bury me in the Machpelah cave, it probably pains you that your mother did not merit to be buried there, also: So although Joseph trusted his father's judgment completely, he was not at ease until the matter was explained to him.

The lesson here is that students must be bothered by their teacher's puzzling decisions. Despite trusting the teacher completely,³¹ they must seek to understand the teacher's ways and teachings.

This is the necessary approach to Torah study in general. Although it is important to trust the wisdom of the Torah's teachings, that alone is not enough; we must appreciate and understand the Torah's wisdom.³²

29. Kidushin 29ab; Abudraham, Seder Tefillot shel Chol; Kol Bo 73, beginning. 30. Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, p. 239-240. 31. See Sanhedrin 110a. 32. Hitvo'aduyot 5746, vol. 2, p. 312.

5 Now, your two sons who were born to you in Egypt before I came to live with you, to Egypt, shall be considered mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be to me like my own sons, Reuben and Simeon, in that each of them will found their own tribe that will possess its own unique portion in the Promised Land, have its own prince,²¹ and be mustered under its own banner.²² Thus, in this regard, I am transferring the firstborn's right to receive a double portion from Reuben to you. Reuben, however, will retain the other privileges of primogeniture: inheriting a double portion of my estate, serving as the priest,²³ and being counted first in the order of my sons.²⁴

6 Any offspring born to you after them, however, shall be considered yours; when they inherit their portion of the Promised Land, they shall be included under their brothers' names as part of their tribes.

7 If you are wondering why I selected you for this distinction, the reason is as follows: **When I was coming from Padan Aram, your mother Rachel died on me in Canaan;** as you know, I did not bury her in our ancestral burial plot in Hebron, although I could easily have done so, **for we were still only a stretch of land** equal to one day's plowing, or 2000 cubits [less than 25 kilometers or 15 miles] **short of reaching Efrat,** which is not all that far from Hebron. The rain also did not prevent me from bringing her to Hebron for burial, for it was still so dry then that **the ground was riddled** with potholes. Moreover, I did not even bury her in the city of Efrat itself, but instead **I buried her right there,** where she died, **along the road to Efrat, which is Bethlehem.** I know that you do not hold this against me, since you realize that I did not treat your mother in this seemingly disrespectful fashion without reason. But nonetheless, I am equally sure that you resent the fact that she was not buried there and hold me at least partially responsible, since it was through me that this occurred. And now that I am asking you to bury me in the Machpelah cave—thereby highlighting the importance of being buried there—the fact that your mother did not merit to be buried there probably pains you all the more. Therefore, know that I buried her where I did because God commanded me to do so, in order to enable her to later play a pivotal role in the eventual redemption of our people.²⁵ Furthermore, I knew at the time that not only would she have agreed to this, but also insisted on it. It is because of her self-sacrifice on behalf of her descendants that I have selected you, her son—out of all my sons—to be privileged to father two tribes."²⁶

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

5 Who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you, to Egypt: With these words, Jacob intimated why he considered Ephraim and Manasseh his own sons. These two grandchildren were born and raised in Egypt before Jacob was there and nonetheless grew up true to his ideals. Therefore, he considered them as loyal to him and his ideals as his own children.²⁷

7 I buried her where I did...to enable her to play a pivotal role in the eventual redemption of our people. Furthermore, I knew...she would have...insisted

on it: As we have seen,²⁸ Rachel gave up the privilege of being buried for thousands of years in the Cave of Machpelah for her descendants' sake. Rachel thus epitomized the spiritual sacrifices all mothers make for their children.

Men need to seek self-affirmation and spiritual satisfaction through manifestly spiritual experiences. They are thus required to study the Torah and perform the commandments every moment—unless they are busy earning a living—so that they can experience revealed

21. Numbers 1:4-16, etc. 22. Numbers 1:52, etc. 23. But see below, 49:4. 24. Rashi on 35:23, above. 25. Above, 35:19. 26. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, pp. 236-239. 27. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, p. 435. 28. On 35:19, above.

— ONKELOS —

8 וְחָזָא יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵת בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וְאָמַר
 מֵאַן אֵלֵינוּ: 9 וְאָמַר יוֹסֵף לְאֲבוּהֵי
 בְּנֵי אֲנֹחַ דִּיהֵב לִי יְיָ הֵבָא וְאָמַר
 קָרִיבִנּוּן כְּעַן לְוֹתֵי וְאֲבָרְכֶנּוּן:
 10 וְעֵינֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְרָן מִסִּיבּוֹ לֹא
 יִכִּיל לְמַחְזֵי וְקָרִיב יִתְהוּן לְוֹתָהּ
 וְנִשְׁקִיף לְהוּן וְנִפְיָף לְהוּן: 11 וְאָמַר
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לְיוֹסֵף לְמַחְזֵי אֲפִיף לֹא
 סְבָרִית וְהָא אֲחֻזֵי יְתֵי יְיָ אֵף יֵת
 בְּנִיךָ: 12 וְאֲפִיק יוֹסֵף יִתְהוּן מִן
 קְדֻמוּהֵי וְסָגִיד עַל אֲפוּהֵי עַל
 אֲרַעָא: 13 וְדַבֵּר יוֹסֵף יֵת תְּרוּיְהוּן
 יֵת אֲפָרִים בִּימִינָהּ מִסְמָאלָא
 דִּישְׂרָאֵל וְיֵת מִנְשָׁה בְּסִמְלָלָהּ
 מִימִינָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל וְקָרִיב לְוֹתָהּ:
 14 וְאוֹשִׁיט יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵת יְמִינָהּ וְשׁוּי
 עַל רִישָׁא דְאֲפָרִים וְהוּא זְעִירָא
 וְיֵת סְמָאלָה עַל רִישָׁא דְמִנְשָׁה
 אֲחֻזֵימִינֵי לִידוּהֵי אָרִי מִנְשָׁה
 בְּבָרָא: 15 וְבָרִיף יֵת יוֹסֵף וְאָמַר יְיָ
 דִּי פְלַחוּ אֲבָהֵי קְדֻמוּהֵי אֲבָרְכֶם
 וְיִצְחָק יְיָ דָּוֵן יְתֵי מִדְּאִיתְנֵי עַד יוֹמָא
 דְּהוּן: 16 מְלָאָךְ דִּי פִרְק יְתֵי מִכָּל
 בִּישָׁא יִבְרַךְ יֵת עוֹלָמֵיָא וְיִתְקָרִי
 בְּהוּן שְׁמֵי וְשׁוּם אֲבָהֵי אֲבָרְכֶם
 וְיִצְחָק וְכַנּוּנֵי יָמָא יִסְגּוּן בְּגוּ בְּנֵי
 אֲנָשָׁא עַל אֲרַעָא:

8 וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף וַיֹּסֶף וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵלֶּה: 9 וַיֹּאמֶר
 יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֲבֹתָיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לִי אֱלֹהִים בְּזֶה וַיֹּאמֶר
 קַח־סָנָא אֵלַי וְאֲבָרְכֶם:
 שְׁנֵי 10 וְעֵינַי יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּבְדּוּ מִזְּקֵן לֹא יוּכַל לְרַאות וַיִּגַּשׁ
 אֶת־עַלְוֵי וַיִּשָּׁק לָהֶם וַיִּתְבַּק לָהֶם: 11 וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֶל־יוֹסֵף רְאֵה פָנַיךָ לֹא פָלַלְתִּי וְהִנֵּה הִרְאָה אֶתִּי
 אֱלֹהִים גַּם אֶת־זַרְעֶךָ: 12 וַיּוֹצֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־עַם מִעַם בְּרַכְוֵי
 וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לְאִפְוֵי אֲרַעָה: 13 וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת־שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת־
 אֲפָרַיִם בִּימִינוֹ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־מִנְשָׁה בְּשִׁמְלָלוֹ
 מִימִין יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו: 14 וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְמִינוֹ
 וַיָּשֶׁת עַל־רֹאשׁ אֲפָרַיִם וְהוּא הַצֶּעִיר וְאֶת־שְׁמָאלוֹ עַל־
 רֹאשׁ מִנְשָׁה שְׂכַל אֶת־יָדָיו כִּי מִנְשָׁה הַבְּכוֹר: 15 וַיִּבְרַךְ
 אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְכּוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו
 אֲבָרְכֶם וַיִּצְחָק הָאֱלֹהִים הִרְעִיָה אֶתִּי מַעוֹדֵי עַד־הַיּוֹם
 הַזֶּה: 16 הַמְּלָאָךְ הַגָּאֵל אֶתִּי מִכָּל־זֶעַ יִבְרַךְ אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים
 וַיִּבְרָא בָהֶם שְׁמֵי וְשׁוּם אֲבֹתֵי אֲבָרְכֶם וַיִּצְחָק וַיְדַגּוּ לְרַב
 בְּקָרֵב הָאָרֶץ:

— RASHI —

כְּדִי לִישְׁבֹם זֶה לִימִין וְזֶה לְשִׁמְלָל, לְסִמּוּךְ יָדָיו עַל־הֵיכָל
 וּלְבָרְכֶם: וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לְאִפְוֵי. בְּשִׁחְזוֹר לְאַחֲרוֹיו מִלְּפָנֵי אֲבֹיו:
 13 אֶת אֲפָרַיִם בִּימִינוֹ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל. הֵבָא לְקָרָאת
 חֲבָרוֹ, יְמִינוֹ כְּנֶגֶד שְׁמָאל חֲבָרוֹ, וְכֵן שִׁיָּהָא הַבְּכוֹר מִיָּמֵן
 לְבָרְכָהּ: 14 שְׂכַל אֶת יָדָיו. כְּתַרְגוּמוֹ: "אֲחֻזֵימִינֵי",
 בְּהַשְׂכֵּל וְהַכְּמִה הַשְׂכֵּיל אֶת יָדָיו לְכַף וּמִדְּעַת, כִּי יוֹדֵעַ
 הָיָה "כִּי מִנְשָׁה הַבְּכוֹר", וְאֵף עַל כֵּן לֹא שָׁת יְמִינוֹ
 עָלָיו: 16 הַמְּלָאָךְ הַגָּאֵל אֶתִּי. מְלָאָךְ הַרְגִיל לְהַשְׁתַּלַּח
 אֵלַי בְּצַרְתִּי, כְּעֵינֵן שְׁנַאמְרֵי: "וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי מְלָאָךְ
 הָאֱלֹהִים בְּחִלוֹם יַעֲקֹב וְגו' אֲנִי הָאֵל בֵּית אֱלִי", וַיִּבְרַךְ
 אֶת הַנְּעָרִים. מִנְשָׁה וְאֲפָרַיִם: וַיְדַגּוּ. כְּדָגִים הִלְלוּ שְׁפָרִים
 וְרִבִּים וְאִין עֵין הִרְעַ שׁוֹלֵטת בָּהֶם:

8 וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף. בִּקֵּשׁ לְבָרְכֶם, וְנִסְתַּלְקָה
 שְׂכִינָה מִמֶּנּוּ, לְפִי שְׁעֵתִיד יִרְבְּעֵם וְאֲחָאָב לְצֵאת
 מֵאֲפָרַיִם, וְהוּא וּבְנָיו מִמִּנְשָׁה: וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אֵלֶּה. מִהִיכָן
 יֵצְאוּ אֵלַי, שְׁאִינֵן רְאוּיִין לְבָרְכָהּ: 9 בְּזֶה. הִרְאָה לוֹ
 שְׁטַר אַרוּסִין וְשְׁטַר כְּתוּבָה, וּבִקֵּשׁ יוֹסֵף רַחֲמִים עַל
 הַדָּבָר וְנָחָה עָלָיו רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ: וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־סָנָא אֵלַי
 וְאֲבָרְכֶם. זֶה שְׁאָמַר הַכְּתוּבִי: "וְאֲנִי תְרַגְלֵתִי לְאֲפָרַיִם,
 קַח־סָנָא עַל זְרוּעֹתַי". תְּרַגְלֵתִי רוּחִי בְּעַקֵּב בְּשִׁבִיל אֲפָרַיִם,
 עַד שְׁלִקְחֶם עַל זְרוּעוֹתַי: 11 לֹא פָלַלְתִּי. לֹא מְלָאָנִי
 לְבִי לְחֻשׁוֹב מִחֻשְׁבָּה שְׁאָרְאָה פָּנָיךָ עוֹד: פָּלַלְתִּי. לְשׁוֹן
 מִחֻשְׁבָּה, כְּמוֹ: 15: "הִבִּיאֵי עֶצֶה עֲשֵׂי פְלִילָה": 12 וַיּוֹצֵא
 יוֹסֵף אֶת־עַם. לְאַחַר שְׁנַשְׁקֶם הוֹצִיאֵם יוֹסֵף מִעַם בְּרַכְוֵי.

15. הוֹשַׁע יֵא, ג. 16. יִשְׁעִיָה טו, ג. 17. בְּרַאשִׁית לֵא יֵא יִג.

and Isaac, and may they propagate like fish—who propagate without danger of incurring the evil eye³⁹ because they are hidden from sight underwater—among humanity on earth."

39. See above, 21:14.

8 So Israel saw Joseph's sons and prepared to bless them, but just then, his Divine inspiration left him. He understood that this meant that they were not worthy of being blessed, and therefore asked Joseph, "Who are these sons of yours, whom I thought I knew so well? Why are they unworthy of my blessing? Is it perhaps because they were born and raised in this country, which is infamous for its lechery?"³³ In fact, God withdrew Jacob's inspiration on account of the unworthy descendants that would descend from Joseph's sons—King Yehu³⁴ and his sons from Manasseh, and King Yeravam³⁵ and Achav³⁶ from Ephraim—but Jacob did not know that his Divine inspiration was withdrawn for this reason.³⁷

9 In order to prove that his sons were worthy of Jacob's blessing, Joseph replied to his father, "Precisely because the Egyptians are notoriously lecherous, I went out of my way to ensure that the integrity of my marriage be beyond reproach by following the norms dictated in the Torah, even though we have not yet been formally required to do so, and even going beyond them. Specifically, I had my marriage contract written out, as the Torah requires, and I also had a document written attesting to my engagement, even though the Torah does not require this." Joseph then proceeded to produce these documents. He continued, "So you see, they are my sons, whom I made sure God gave me in accordance with His highest standards of marital integrity, even though they were born in this licentious country. Thus, they are truly worthy of your blessing."³⁸ Joseph then prayed to God to once again grant Jacob the inspiration to bless them, which He did. So Jacob said, "If you would, bring them to me so that I may bless them."

◆ *Second Reading* 10 Israel's eyesight was impaired due to old age and he could not see, so Joseph brought his sons near him and positioned them between Jacob's knees. Jacob kissed them and embraced them.

11 Israel said to Joseph, "I dared not even hope to see your face, yet now God has even shown me your children."

12 Joseph then withdrew them from between his father's knees in order to later position them to Jacob's right and left so he could place his hands on their heads and bless them. Joseph stepped back from his father and prostrated himself toward him, with his face to the ground.

13 Joseph then took them both—Ephraim with his right hand, to stand at Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand, to stand at Israel's right—and brought them close to him. Since Manasseh was the firstborn, he deserved the primary blessing, which Jacob would convey through his right hand.

14 Israel extended his right hand and rested it on Ephraim's head, even though he was the younger son, and rested his left hand on Manasseh's head. He crossed his hands deliberately, even though he knew that Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 He blessed Joseph and said, "May God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd from my earliest days until this day,

16 and has always sent me the angel who delivers me from all harm, bless the lads. May they bear my name, together with the names of my fathers Abraham

33. Above, 12:19. 34. 2 Kings 9 ff. 35. 1 Kings 11:26 ff. 36. 1 Kings 16:28 ff. 37. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, p. 241. 38. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 30, pp. 241-247.

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17 וחזא יוסף ארי שוי אבוהי יד מינה על רישא דאפרים ובאיש בעינוהי וסעיד ידא דאבוהי לאעדאה יתה מעל רישא דאפרים לאנחותה על רישא דמנשה: 18 ואמר יוסף לאבוהי לא כן אבא ארי דין בכרא שו מינה על רישא: 19 וסריב אבוהי ואמר ידענא ברי ידענא אף הוא יהי לעמא ואף הוא יסגי וברם אחוהי ועירא יסגי מנה ובנהי יהון שליטין בעממאי: 20 וברכנון ביזמא ההוא למימר בך וברך ישראל למימר ישוה יי באפרים וכמנשה ושוי ית אפרים קדם מנשה: 21 ואמר ישראל ליוסף הא אנא מאית ויהא מימרא די בסעדכון ויתיב יתכון לארעא דאבתכון: 22 ואנא יתבית לך חלק חד יתיר על אחיך די נסיבית מידא דאמוראא בעלותי ובבעותי: 49 וקרא יעקב לבנהי ואמר אתבנשו ואחוי לכון ית די יערע יתכון בסוף יומיא:

שלישי 17 וירא יוסף כי יושית אביו ידמינו על ראש אפרים וירע בעיניו ויתמך ידאביו להסיר אתה מעל ראש אפרים על ראש מנשה: 18 ואמר יוסף אל אביו לא כן אבי כיוה הבכר שים ימינה על ראשו: 19 וימאן אביו ואמר ידעתי בני ידעתי גם הוא יהיה לעם וגם הוא יגדל ואולם אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו וזרעו יהיה מלא הגוים: 20 ויברכם ביום ההוא לאמור בך וברך ישראל לאמר ישמך אלהים באפרים וכמנשה וישם את אפרים לפני מנשה: 21 ואמר ישראל אלי יוסף הנה אנכי מת והיה אלהים עמכם והשיב אתכם אל ארץ אבותיכם: 22 ואני נתתי לך שכם אחד על אחיך אשר לקחתי מיד האמרי בחרבי ובקשתי: פ רביעי 49:1 ויקרא יעקב אל בניו ויאמר האספו ואגידה לכם את אשר יקרא אתכם באחרית הימים:

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העלו בני ישראל ממצרים קברו בשכם: שכם אחד על אחיך. שכם ממש היא תהיה לך חלק אחד יתרה על אחיך: בחרבי ובקשתי. כשהרגו שמעון ולוי את אנשי שכם, נתכנסו כל סביבותיהם להודו להם, וחרג יעקב כלי מלחמה כנגדן. דבר אחר: "שכם אחד", הוא הבכורה, שישלו בניו שני חלקים, ו"שכם" לשון חלק הוא בתרגומו, והרבה יש לו דומים במקרא: "כי תשיתמו שכם", תשית שונאי לפני לחלקים, "אחלקה שכם", "דרך ירצחו שכם" 20, איש חלקו, "לעבדו שכם אחד": אשר לקחתי מיד האמרי. מיד עשו שעשה מעשה אמורי. דבר אחר: שהיה צד אביו באמרי פיו: בחרבי ובקשתי. היא חכמתי ותפלותי: 1 ואגידה לכם. בקש לגלות את הקץ, ונסתלקה ממנו שכנה, והתחיל אומר דברים אחרים:

17 ויתמך יד אביו. הרימה מעל ראש בנו ותמכה בידו: 19 ידעתי בני ידעתי. שהוא הבכור: גם הוא יהיה לעם וגם הוא יגדל. שעתיד ג'דעון לצאת ממנו, שתקדוש ברוך הוא עושה גם על ידו: ואולם אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו. שעתיד יהושע לצאת ממנו, שינחיל את הארץ וילמד תורה לישראל: וזרעו יהיה מלא הגוים. כל העולם יתמלא בצאת שמעו ושמנו, כשיעמיד חמה בגבעון וירח בעמק אילון: 20 בך וברך ישראל. הבא לברך את בניו יברכם בברכתם, ויאמר איש לבנו: "ישמך אלהים באפרים וכמנשה": וישם את אפרים. בברכתו "לפני מנשה", להקדימו בדגלים ובחנכת הנשיאים: 22 ואני נתתי לך. לפי שאתה טורח להתעסק בקבורתי, וגם אני נתתי לך נחלה שתקבר בה, ואי זו, זו שכם, שנאמר: "ותא עצמות יוסף אשר

18. יהושע כד, לב. 19. תהלים כא, יג. 20. תהלים ס, ח. 21. הושע ו, ט. 22. צפניה ג, ט.

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19 But his younger brother will become greater than he: As we have seen,⁴⁷ Manasseh represents our obligation to protect ourselves from the negative influences of our surroundings (and our own inner baseness). Ephraim, in contrast, represents our obligation to in-

fluence our surroundings, to introduce the truths of Judaism to the world, to transform what is dark and evil into something Godly and good. Manasseh corresponds to the call of "turn from evil,"⁴⁸ Ephraim to the call of "do good."⁴⁹

47. On 41:52-51, above. 48. Psalms 34:15. 49. Psalms, loc. cit.

- ◆ *Third Reading 17* When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim, he was displeased, so he lifted his father's hand in order to move it from the head of Ephraim on to the head of Manasseh.

18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this is the firstborn; place your right hand on his head."

19 His father declined and said, "I know, my son, I know that he is the firstborn. He, too, will become a nation, and he, too, will rise to greatness through his descendants—specifically Gideon, who will win a military victory even though greatly outnumbered.⁴⁰ But his younger brother will be greater than he, for his descendant Joshua will lead our people in their conquest of the Promised Land and instruct them in the teachings of the Torah, and the renown of his same descendant, Joshua, will spread and fill all the world's nations when he makes the sun stand still."⁴¹

20 On that day, he blessed them and said, "With your names shall the Israelites invoke God's blessings on their sons, saying to them, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh,' " mentioning Ephraim's name before that of Manasseh. By having mentioned Ephraim first, Jacob gave him precedence over Manasseh in all tribal enumerations⁴² and in the tribal marching order.⁴³

21 Israel then said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you, and He will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover, in consideration for your efforts in burying me, I am giving you, too, a specially designated burial place, in the city of Shechem⁴⁴—this land inheritance being one portion over and beyond what you will receive on an equal par with your brothers—which I conquered from the Amorites with my sword and bow."⁴⁵

Jacob Blesses His Sons

- ◆ *Fourth Reading 49:1* Jacob foresaw that the final Redemption would only occur thousands of years in the future, delayed by the misdeeds of the intervening generations. He thought that if he would tell his sons about this, it would encourage them to urge their progeny to refrain from misbehavior and to augment their performance of good and positive deeds in order to hasten the Redemption. After all, Jacob had seen firsthand how a negative decree could be shortened when he ended the foreordained seven years of famine after only two years. He was not worried that his sons would become disheartened upon hearing that the Redemption was millennia off; he knew them to be righteous and strong of character, and was therefore confident that they would use this knowledge constructively and keep it to themselves in case their progeny would not be able to cope with it.⁴⁶ Jacob therefore then called for his other sons and said, "Assemble yourselves, and I will tell you what will befall you at the End of Days." But God did not want Jacob to divulge this information, so He withdrew it from him.

40. Judges 7-8. 41. Joshua 10:7-14. 42. E.g., Numbers 2:18-21, 7:48-59, etc. 43. Numbers 10:22-23. 44. See Joshua 24:32. 45. Above, 34:26. 46. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 228-231.

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2 אֲתִבְנֶשׁוּ וְשָׁמְעוּ בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב וְקִבְּלוּ אֹרְלָפָן מִן יִשְׂרָאֵל אָבוֹבוּן: 3 רְאוּבֵן בְּכָרִי אֶת חִילִי וְרִישׁ תְּקִפִי לִךְ הַזֶּה חָזִי לְמַשָּׁב תִּלְתָּא חֲלָקִין בְּכִירוּתָא כְּהִנְתָּא וּמְלֻכְוִתָּא: 4 עַל דְּאֲזֹלַת לְקַבֵּל אַפִּיקָּהּ הָא כְּמֵיא בְּרַם לֹא אֶהְיִית חֲלָק יִתִיר לֹא תִסָּב אַרִי סְלִקְתָּא בֵּית מִשְׁבְּבֵי אָבוּךְ בְּכֵן אֶחְלָתָא לְשׁוּוּיֵי בְּרִי סְלִקְתָּא: 5 שְׁמַעוֹן וְלוֹי אֶחָיו גְּבַרִין גְּבַרִין בְּאַרְעַ תּוֹתְבוּתְהוֹן עֲבָדוּ גְבוּרָא:

2 הַקִּבְּצוּ וְשָׁמְעוּ בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב וְשָׁמְעוּ אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיכֶם:

3 רְאוּבֵן בְּכָרִי אֶתְהָ פַחִי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת וְיִתֵּר עָז:

4 פָּחוּ כַמִּים אֶל־תּוֹתֵר כִּי עָלִית מִשְׁבְּבֵי אָבִיךְ אִזְ חֲלָלְתָ יְצוּעֵי עֲלֶה: פ

5 שְׁמַעוֹן וְלוֹי אֶחָים כָּלִי חָמֶס מְבַרְתִּיהֶם:

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עֲרַשׁ יְצוּעֵי²⁶, "אם וכִּרְתִּיךְ עַל יְצוּעֵי²⁷:" 5 שְׁמַעוֹן וְלוֹי אֶחָים. בְּעֵצָה אַחַת עַל שְׂכָם וְעַל יוֹסֵף: "וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל אָחָיו וְגו' וְעַתָּה לָכוּ וְנִהְרָגְהוּ"²⁸. מִי הֵם? אִם תֹּאמַר: רְאוּבֵן אוֹ יְהוּדָה, הֲרִי לֹא הִסְכִּימוּ בְּהִרְגָתוֹ. אִם תֹּאמַר: בְּנֵי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת, הֲרִי לֹא הִיְתָה שְׁנֵאָתָן שְׁלָמָה, שְׁנֵאָמְרוּ²⁹: "וְהוּא נִעַר אֶת בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת בְּנֵי וּלְפָה" וְגו'. וְשֶׁשֶׁכֶר וּזְבוּלוֹן לֹא הָיוּ מְדַבְּרִים בְּפִנֵּי אֶחָיהֶם הַגְּדוּלִים מֵהֶם. עַל כִּרְחָךְ, שְׁמַעוֹן וְלוֹי הֵם, שְׁקֵרָאֵם אֲבִיהֶם "אֶחָים": כָּלִי חָמֶס. אֲמָנוֹת זוֹ שֶׁל רְצִיחָה חָמֶס הוּא בִּידְיֶכֶם, מְבַרְכֶת עֲשׂוּ הִיא זוֹ, אֲמָנוֹת שְׁלוֹ הִיא. וְאַתֶּם חֲמַסְתֶּם אוֹתָהּ הִימְנוּ: מְבַרְתִּיהֶם. לְשׁוֹן כָּלִי וַיֵּן, הַסִּיף בְּלִשׁוֹן יוֹנֵי מִכִּי"ר. תְּנַחֲמוּמָא³⁰. דְּבַר אַחֵר: "מְבַרְתִּיהֶם", בְּאַרְץ מְגוּרְתֶם נִהְגוּ עֲצָמָן בְּכָלִי חָמֶס, כְּמוֹ³¹: "מְבַרְתִּיךְ וּמְלֻדְתִּיךְ", וְהוּא תִרְגוּם שֶׁל אֲנָקְלוֹס:

3 וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי. הִיא טְפָה רֵאשׁוֹנָה שְׁלוֹ, שְׁלֹא רָאָה קָרִי מִמִּי: אוֹנִי. כּוּחִי, כְּמוֹ: "מְצַאֲתִי אוֹן לִי"²², "מֵרַב אוֹנִים"²³, "וּלְאִין אוֹנִים"²⁴. יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת. רְאוּי הֵייתָ לְהִיּוֹת יִתֵּר עַל אֶחִיךָ בְּכִהְנָה, לְשׁוֹן נְשִׂאוֹת כְּפִים: וְיִתֵּר עָז. בְּמִלְכוּת, כְּמוֹ²⁵: "וַיִּתֵּן עֹז לְמַלְכוֹ". וּמִי גָרַם לִךְ לְהַפְסִיד כָּל אֶלֶּה: 4 פָּחוּ כַמִּים. הַפְּחוּ וְהִבְהִלָּה אֲשֶׁר מִהֲרַת לְהִרְאוֹת כְּעֶסֶךְ, כְּפִים הִלְלוּ הִמְמַהְרִים לְמְרוּצָתָם, לְכָף: אֵל תּוֹתֵר. אֵל תִּרְבֶּה לְטַל כָּל הַיְתָרוֹת הִלְלוּ שְׁהִיוּ רְאוּיּוֹת לָךְ. וּמָהוּ הַפְּחוּ אֲשֶׁר פָּחוּתָ: כִּי עָלִית מִשְׁבְּבֵי אָבִיךְ אִזְ חֲלָלְתָ. אוֹתוֹ שֵׁם שְׁעָלָה עַל יְצוּעֵי וְהִיא הַשְּׂכִינָה, שְׁהִיָּה דְרָבָה לְהִיּוֹת עוֹלָה עַל יְצוּעֵי: פָּחוּ. שֵׁם דְּבַר הוּא, לְפִיכָךְ טַעַמוֹ לְמַעְלָה, וְכֵלּוֹ נְקוּד פִּתּוּחַ. וְאֵלּוֹ הִיָּה לְשׁוֹן עֶבֶר, הִיָּה נְקוּד חֲצִיזוֹ קִמְץ וְחֲצִיזוֹ פִּתּוּחַ וְטַעַמוֹ לְמַטָּה: יְצוּעֵי. לְשׁוֹן מִשְׁבָּב, עַל שֵׁם שְׁמִצְעִיעִים אוֹתוֹ עַל יְדֵי לְבָדִין וְסֻדִּינִין. וְהִרְבָּה דוּמִים לוֹ: "אִם אֶעְלָה עַל

23. יהושע י, ו. 24. ישעימ, כו. 25. שם, כט. 26. שמואלא ב, י. 27. תהלים קלב, ג. 28. תהלים ס, ז. 29. בראשית לו, יטכ. 30. שם, ב. 31. ויחי ט. 32. יחזקאל טז, ג.

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wise, and these additional merits might well have hastened the redemption. Nonetheless, knowing when the Redemption was to occur would have bolstered their efforts "from without," so to speak, and they would not have had to call upon their own latent powers of dedication to the same extent in order to persist in their mission. This, in turn, would have negatively affected the nature of their dedication to their Divine mission, and therefore would have lessened the effect of their efforts. The redemption earned by their efforts would therefore not have been complete, for in order for the Redemption to be absolute and eternal, it has to be brought about by dedication to the Divine mission that is likewise absolute and eternal, able to withstand all the tests of exile on its own—including the test of not knowing how long the exile will endure. Jacob understood this, of course, but he wanted his descendants to spend as little time in exile as possible, even if the help he sought to offer them would mean that their redemption would not be as total and final.⁶³ Nonetheless, God insisted that the Redemption be final, and therefore withdrew the knowledge of the date

of redemption from Jacob. Alternatively, Jacob knew that had the Jewish people merited, God would have them led directly into the Land of Israel after the Exodus from Egypt, without having to go through the desert. According to the Zohar,⁶⁴ such a redemption would have been unconditional and eternal, like God Himself; no exile could have followed it, and their entry to the Land of Israel would have been the beginning of the messianic era, "the End of Days." On a deeper level, then, it was this scenario of the "End of Days" that Jacob wished to reveal, thereby inspiring his children to behave righteously so they would expedite the redemption—perhaps causing it to occur in their own lifetime. As for the fact that this knowledge would adversely affect the quality of their efforts, as above, in turn affecting adversely the quality of the redemption, Jacob perceived his sons to be on the same spiritual level as he was, having already completed their Divine mission, so the issue of summoning their latent powers was irrelevant.

63. Cf. above on 33:13-14 64. 3:221a. See Eiruvim 54a; Shemot Rabbah 32, etc.

2 So instead, he said, “**Gather together and listen, sons of Jacob, listen to your father Israel**, and I will tell you about the future events that will befall your progeny.⁵⁰

3 **Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strength, and the very first seed of my virility** since I had no seminal emission before conceiving you. As such, you should receive all the privileges of primogeniture. However, because you interfered in my private, marital affairs,⁵¹ I am denying you the privilege of becoming the progenitor of two tribes.⁵² Furthermore, because of your meddlesome behavior, I am likewise depriving you of two additional privileges that also should have been yours as the firstborn.⁵³ You should have been **foremost in rank** by becoming the progenitor of the priestly tribe **and foremost in power** by becoming the progenitor of the royal line of kings.

4 But you showed yourself to be **impetuous as running water** by allowing your indignation to compel you to act impulsively, and this propensity to exhibit anger toward others renders you unfit both for the priesthood and for the kingship. Regardless of the people’s faults, the priest must always seek to bless them out of his great love for them;⁵⁴ likewise must the king always feel responsible for his subjects’ welfare out of his self-effacing humility. Therefore, **you will not be foremost** in either of these areas; the priesthood will eventually be transferred to Levi⁵⁵ and the kingship to Judah. You exhibited just such anger **when** you moved my bed from Bilhah’s tent to your mother’s, thereby committing a sin as unconscionable as if **you had mounted your father’s bed**. In doing so, not only were you implying that I had acted improperly, you were also implying that God had misplaced His trust in me. Thus, **you then profaned** the Name of God, whose presence **resided over my bed**.

I know that you have repented⁵⁶ and confessed⁵⁷ for this misdeed, but nonetheless, Judah has exhibited behavior that shows him to be better suited for the kingship.⁵⁸

5 **Simeon and Levi** acted as **partners in crime** in plotting together against the inhabitants of Shechem⁵⁹ and against Joseph.⁶⁰ **Their skill with weapons is a craft stolen** from Esau, who was blessed by my father to live by the sword;⁶¹ such behavior does not befit my sons. **Wherever they went, they used weapons of violence**.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

Since before we attempt to refine the world, we must take measures to ensure that we are immune to its temptations, Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh, and wished to give him precedence in receiving Jacob’s blessing, as well.

In granting his blessing, however, Jacob focused on the *purpose* of our descent into exile: not mere survival, but the ascent that follows our successful encounter with exile. By transforming the exilic state into one of redemption, we achieve a greater degree of Divine consciousness than we began with. Furthermore, we have to summon deeper spiritual powers to transform exile

than we do merely to survive exile. Jacob therefore wished to give precedence to Ephraim.

Likewise, in our own exile, although Manasseh is the firstborn—securing our Jewish identity is the first step—we must recognize that our purpose is to be an Ephraim, to influence the world around us.⁶²

1 **But God did not want Jacob to divulge this information:** Jacob’s strategy might well have worked: divulging the date of the Redemption might well have inspired his children to redouble their efforts to accrue merits and to encourage their descendants to do like-

50. Rashi here and on 47:28, above. 51. Above, 35:22. 52. Above, 48:4. 53. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 439-445. 54. See Numbers 6:22-27. 55. Exodus 32:29. 56. Above, 35:22. 57. Above, 38:26. 58. Below, v. 9. 59. Above, 34:25. 60. Above, 37:19. 61. Above, 27:40. 62. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 432-434, vol. 5, pp. 459 ff. See Rashi on 25:26, above. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 241-242.

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6 בְּרוּחוֹן לֹא הוּת נַפְשִׁי בְּאַתְפְּנוּשִׁיהוֹן לְמַהֲרָא לֹא נְהִיתִית מִן יָקָרִי אָרִי בְּרוּחוֹן קְטִלוּ קְטוּל וּבְרַעוּתְהוֹן תְּרַעוּ שׁוּר סַנְאָה: 7 לִיט רְגוּזְהוֹן אָרִי תַקְרָא וְחִימְתְהוֹן אָרִי קִשְׂיָא אֶפְלַגְנוֹן בִּיעֻקֵּב וְאַבְדְּרוֹן בִּישְׂרָאֵל: 8 יְהוּדָה אֶת אוּדִיתָא וְלֹא בְהִיתָא בְּרִי יוּדוֹן אַחֲרֵי יָדָא תַתְקַף עַל בְּעַלֵי דְבִבְרָא יִתְבַדְּרוֹן סַנְאָר יְהוֹן מַחֲזִירִין קִדְלָא קְרַמְרָא וְיְהוֹן מְקַדְמִין לְמַשְׁאֵל בְּשִׁלְמָא בְּנֵי אַבְרָהָ:

6 בְּסֻדָּם אֶל־תִּבְא נַפְשִׁי בְּקַהֲלָם אֶל־תִּחַד כְּבֹדִי כִּי בְּאַפְּם הִרְגוּ אִישׁ וּבְרַצְנָם עֶקְרוּ־שׁוּר: 7 אָרוּר אַפְּם כִּי עָזוּ וְעִבְרַתְם כִּי קִשְׂתָּה אַחֲלֵקְם בִּיעֻקֵּב וְאַפִּיצֵם בִּישְׂרָאֵל: פ
8 יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יוּדוּךָ אַחֲרֵי יָדָךָ בְּעֶרְףְּ אִיבִיךָ יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לָךְ בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ:

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לְעֶצְמוֹ, בְּאַפְּם הִרְגוּ כָּל אִישׁ שֶׁכָּעֶסּוֹ עָלָיו, וְכֵן: "וַיִּלְמַד לְטָרֵף טָרֵף אָדָם אֶכְלֵ": וּבְרַצְנָם עֶקְרוּ שׁוּר, רָצוּ לְעַקֹּר אֶת יוֹסֵף שֶׁנִּקְרָא "שׁוּר", שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "בְּכוֹר שׁוּרוֹ הִדָּר לוֹ". "עֶקְרוּ", אִישִׁירִיטִי"ר בְּלַעֲזוֹ, "לְשׁוֹן "אֶת סוּסִיָּהֶם תִּעַקְרֵם": 7 אָרוּר אַפְּם כִּי עָזוּ, אֶפְלוּ בְּשַׁעַת תּוֹכְחָה, לֹא קָלַל אֶלְא אֶת אַפְּם, וְהוּוּ שֶׁאָמַר בְּלַעֲמֵם: "מָה אֶקַּב לֹא קְבָה אֵל": אַחֲלֵקְם בִּיעֻקֵּב. אֶפְרַיִם וְזֶה מִזָּה, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לוֹי בְּמִנְיַן הַשְּׂבָטִים, וְהָרִי הֵם חִלּוּקִים. דְּבַר אַחֵר: אֵין לָךְ עֲנִיִּים וְסוֹפְרִים וּמְלַמְדֵי תִינוּקוֹת אֶלְא מִשְׁמַעוֹן, כְּדִי שִׁיְהִיו נְפוּצִים. וְשֶׁבִטּוֹ שֶׁל לוֹי עֲשָׂאוּ מַחֲזֵר עַל הַגְּרָנוֹת לְתַרּוּמוֹת וּלְמַעֲשָׂרוֹת, נִתֵּן לוֹ תְּפוּצָתוֹ דְּרָף כְּבוֹד: 8 יְהוּדָה אֶתָּה יוּדוּךָ אַחֲרֵי. לְפִי שֶׁהוֹכִיחַ אֶת הָרַאשׁוֹנִים בְּקִנְטוּרִים, הַתְּחִיל יְהוּדָה לְסוּג לְאַחֲזָרָיו, שֶׁלֹּא יוֹכִיחֵנוּ עַל מַעֲשֵׂה תַמָּר, וְקִרְאוּ יַעֲקֹב בְּדַבְּרֵי רַצְוִי: יְהוּדָה, לֹא אֶתָּה כְּמוֹתָם: יָדָךְ בְּעֶרְףְּ אִיבִיךָ. בִּימֵי דָוִד: "וְאִיבֵי תִתֶּה לִּי עֶרֶף": בְּנֵי אָבִיךָ. עַל שֵׁם שֶׁהָיוּ מְנַשִּׂים הַרְבֵּה, לֹא אָמַר "בְּנֵי אִמְךָ" כְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁאָמַר יַצְחָק: 45

6 בְּסֻדָּם אֶל תִּבְא נַפְשִׁי. זֶה מַעֲשֵׂה זְמִיר, כְּשֶׁנִּתְקַבְּצוּ שְׂבָטוֹ שֶׁל שְׁמַעוֹן לְהִבִּיא אֶת הַמִּדְיָנִית לְפָנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ: זֶה אֶסְוֶה אוֹ מִתְּרַת? אִם תֹּאמַר אֶסְוֶה, בַּת יִתְרוֹ מִי הַתִּירָה לָךְ? אֵל וְזָכַר שְׁמִי בְּדָבָר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "וְזָכַרְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם אֶת שְׁמִי לְפָנֵי יְהוָה" וְלֹא כִתְבָה "כִּי יַעֲקֹב": בְּקַהֲלָם. כְּשִׁיִּקְהִיל קָרַח שֶׁהוּא מִשְׂבָּטוֹ שֶׁל לוֹי, אֶת כָּל הָעֵדָה עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אֶהֱרֹן: אֵל תִּחַד כְּבֹדִי. שֵׁם, אֵל וְיִתְחַד עִמָּהֶם שְׁמִי, שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "קָרַח בֶּן יִצְהָר בֶּן קָהַת בֶּן לוֹי", וְלֹא נֶאֱמַר "בֶּן יַעֲקֹב". אֶבְל בְּדַבְּרֵי הַיָּמִים: כְּשֶׁנִּתְחַסְּרוּ בְּנֵי קָרַח עַל הַדּוּכָן, נֶאֱמַר: "בֶּן קָרַח בֶּן יִצְהָר בֶּן קָהַת בֶּן לוֹי בֶּן יִשְׂרָאֵל": אֵל תִּחַד כְּבֹדִי. "כְּבוֹד" לְשׁוֹן זָכַר הוּא, וְעַל כֵּן קָרַח אֶתָּה צְרִיף לְפָרֵשׁ כְּמַדְבַּר אֵל הַכְּבוֹד, וְאוֹמַר: אֶתָּה כְּבוֹדִי, אֵל תִּתְחַד עִמָּם, כְּמוֹ: "לֹא תִחַד אֶתָּם בְּקִבוּרָה": כִּי בְּאַפְּם הִרְגוּ אִישׁ. אֵלוֹ חֲמוּר וְאַנְשֵׁי שְׂכָם, וְאֵינָן חֲשׁוּבִין בְּלָם אֶלְא כְּאִישׁ אַחַד, וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמַר בְּגִדְעוֹן: "וְהִפִּיתִי אֶת מִדְּוִן כְּאִישׁ אַחַד", וְכֵן בְּמִצְרַיִם: "סוֹס וְרַכְבּוֹ רָמָה בָּיָם", זֶהוּ מִדְּרָשׁוֹ: וּפְשׁוּטוֹ: הַרְבֵּה אֲנָשִׁים קוֹרָא "אִישׁ", כָּל אַחַד

33. במדבר כה, יד. 34. במדבר טו, א. 35. דב"א ו, כב"ג. 36. ישעיה יד, כ. 37. שופטים ו, טו. 38. שמות טו, א. 39. בראשית רבה צט, ו. 40. יחזקאל יט, ג. 41. דברים לג, יז. 42. לכת את גידי השוק. 43. יהושע יא, ט. 44. במדבר כג, ח. 45. שמואלב כב, מא. 46. בראשית כז, כט.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

Even though God does not reveal to us when the Messiah will come, on some level He deeply wants to, and in fact, did.

By seeking to reveal the date of the Redemption to us, Jacob instilled within us the ability to live to a certain extent in an aura of redemptive reality, free from the constraints of exile, from servitude to foreign masters, and from our own inner baseness.⁷² Although we live temporarily in exile, we can and should be focused on and be mentally and emotionally rooted in the Redemption.⁷³

5-6 **They killed men (lit. 'a man')**: The Torah's use of the singular "man" allows for an incorrect interpreta-

tion, i.e., that Jacob was referring to some other killing committed by Simeon and Levi, one that the Torah does not speak of. That such a conclusion could be reached teaches a valuable lesson: When we harm another, even with the holiest motives (as was the case with Simeon and Levi), we can acquire a destructive nature, so much so that we can justifiably be suspected of harming yet others.

Conversely, when we act generously toward others, even if at first we seem to be motivated by selfish considerations, we eventually become truly generous people, whose only desire is to bestow goodness to all.⁷⁴

72. This is also why many sages throughout the generations predicted when the Redemption would occur. 73. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 228-234. 74. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 260.

6 **Let my soul not enter**, i.e., let my name not be mentioned as their ancestor, in the account of **their** progeny's **conspiracy**." Here, Jacob was referring prophetically to the conspiracy of Zimri, prince of the tribe of Simeon, against Moses.⁶⁵ "Similarly, **let my honor have no part**, i.e., let my name not be mentioned as their ancestor, **in** the account of **their** progeny's **assembly**." Here, Jacob was referring prophetically to the assembly of Korach, Levi's great-grandson, who challenged Moses' authority.⁶⁶ In neither of these incidents is Jacob's name mentioned in their central characters' lineages. However, his name *is* mentioned as the head of Korach's lineage when Korach is mentioned honorably—as an ancestor of one of the Levite clans who served in the Temple.⁶⁷

"**For in their anger** against the inhabitants of Shechem, **they killed** all the city's **men** as matter-of-factly as if they were killing just one man, and their anger did not abate until **they had killed** every last **man**."⁶⁸ By right, they should have only killed Shechem himself, since he alone had actually committed the crime; they should have left the other men—who were guilty only by implication—to be sentenced to death by the regional legal authorities.⁶⁹ **And they wanted to maim** Joseph, who is like **an ox**." Here, Jacob was referring prophetically to Moses' parting blessing to the people, in which he calls Joseph an "ox."⁷⁰

7 **Cursed be their rage, for it is fierce, and their fury, for it is harsh**." Even when Jacob was reproving Simeon and Levi, he only cursed their rage and not them. "In order to prevent them from doing any more harm, **I will separate them** from one another by removing Levi from the count of the twelve tribes **of Jacob**. In this way, he will have no land inheritance. **I shall also scatter them both among Israel** by making their descendants wander throughout the land to earn their livelihood. Nonetheless, the dispersion that I am imposing on Levi's descendants will be more honorable than Simeon's, for Simeon's descendants are destined to earn their living mainly as itinerant scribes and teachers, whereas Levi's descendants will earn their livelihood by collecting dues from the populace in exchange for serving in the Temple."

8 Having heard his father rebuke his three older brothers, Judah assumed that Jacob would now rebuke him for the dubious incident with Tamar. When Jacob noticed Judah shying away, he said, "Do not worry, **Judah**, you are not deserving of such rebuke. On the contrary, **your brothers will praise you**. **Your** descendant's **hand** shall be figuratively holding **onto the neck of your fleeing enemies**, i.e., he will vanquish them." This prophecy was fulfilled in King David, when his enemies fled from him.⁷¹ "You are to be the progenitor of the royal line, so the descendants of **your father's sons**—i.e., of all your brothers—**shall bow down to** the kings who are destined to issue from **you**."

— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

Jacob, like all the patriarchs and matriarchs, was a vehicle for God's will; his thoughts and desires always

reflected God's. Thus, even though God did not allow him to reveal when the Redemption would occur, his desire to do so reflected a similar desire on God's part.

65. Numbers 25:1-15 (in particular, 25:14). 66. Numbers 16:1-17:5 (in particular, 16:1). 67. 1 Chronicles 6:22-23. 68. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, pp. 251-260. 69. Above, 34:30. 70. Deuteronomy 33:17. 71. Cf. 2 Samuel 22:41.

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9 שִׁלְטוֹן יְהוֹי בְּשִׁירוֹיָא וּבְסוֹפָא יִתְרַבֵּא מְלַכָּא מְדִבִּית יְהוּדָה אַרְי מְדִין קְטִילָא בְּרִי נַפְשָׁךְ סְלִקְתָּא יְנַח יִשְׂרָי בְּתַקּוּף בְּאַרְיָא וּכְלִיתָא וְלִית מְלִכּוּדָתּוֹ עוֹנֵנָה: 10 לֹא יַעֲדִי עֶבֶד שׁוֹלְטָן מְדִבִּית יְהוּדָה וְסִפְרָא מִבְּנֵי בְּנֵהוּי עַד עֲלָמָא עַד דִּי יִתִּי מְשִׁיחָא דְדִילָהּ הִיא מְלִכּוּתָא וְלָהּ יִשְׁתַּמְעוֹן עַמְמִינָא:

9 גֹּר אַרְיָה יְהוּדָה מְטָרְף בְּנֵי עֲלִית כָּרַע רַבִּץ בְּאַרְיָה וּבְלִבְיָא מִי יְקִימָנוּ: 10 לֹא יִסּוּר שִׁבְט מִיְהוּדָה וּמִחֶקֶק מִבֵּין רְגָלָיו עַד כִּי יָבֵא שִׁילֹה וְלוֹ יִקְהֶת עַמִּים:

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וכן תרגם אנקלוס. ומדרש אגדה⁵¹: "שילוי", שי לו, שנקאמר⁵²: "יובילו שי למורא". ולו יקהת עמים. אספת העמים, שהיו"ד עקר היא ביסוד, כמו⁵³: "יפעתך", ופעמים שנופלת ממנו. וכמה אותיות משמשות בלשון זה, והם נקראים "עקר נופל", כגון נוי"ל של "נוגף" ושל "נושף", ואל"ף שב"אחותי באוניכם"⁵⁴, ושב"אבחת קרב"⁵⁵, ו"אסוף שמו"⁵⁶. אף זה "קהת עמים", אספת עמים, שנקאמר⁵⁷: "אליו גוים ידרשו". ודומה לו⁵⁸: "עין תלעג לאב ותבוז ליקהת אם", לקבוץ קמטים שפפניה מפני זקנתה. ובגמרא: דיתבי ומקהו אקהתא בשוקי דנהרדעא, במסכת יבמות⁵⁹. ויכול היה לומר "קהת עמים":

9 גֹּר אַרְיָה. על דוד נתבא, בתחלה "גור", בהיות שאול מלך עלינו אתה היית המוציא והמביא את ישראל⁴⁶, ולבסוף "ארניה", בשהמליכוהו עליהם. והו שתרגם אנקלוס: "שלטון יאה בשרויאי", בתחלתו: מטָרְף. ממה שחשדתיך ב"טרף יוסף חיה רעה אכלתהו"⁴⁷, והו יהודה, שנמשל לארניה: בְּנֵי עֲלִית. סלקת את עצמך ואמרת⁴⁸: "מה בצע" וגו'. וכן מהריגת תמר, שהודה⁴⁹: "צדקה ממני". לפיכך, "כרע רביץ" וגו', בימי שלמה, "איש תחת גפנו" וגו'⁵⁰. 10 לֹא יִסּוּר שִׁבְט מִיְהוּדָה. מדרד ואילך, אלו ראשי גליות שבבבל שרודים את העם בשבט, שממנים על פי המלכות: ומחוקק מבין רגליו. תלמידים, אלו נשיאי ארץ ישראל: עד כי יבא שיליה. מלך המשיח, שהמלוכה שלו,

47. שמואלב ה, ב. 48. בראשית לו, לג. 49. שם, כו. 50. בראשית לח, כו. 51. מלכים א ה, ה. 52. בראשית רבה ז, י. 53. תהלים עו, יב. 54. יחזקאל כח, יו. 55. איוב יג, יו. 56. יחזקאל כא, כ. 57. מלכים ב, ב. 58. ישעיה יא, י. 59. משלי ל, יו. 60. קו, ב.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

Furthermore, the difference between self-involvement and care for others can spell the difference between exile and redemption: Reuben's preoccupation with his own spiritual state indirectly contributed to Joseph's sale to Egypt and the eventual exile in Egypt, the precursor of all future exiles.⁸² Judah's repentance, in contrast, may not have been as profound as Reuben's, but it saved three lives, one of which was the ancestor of the Messiah, who will end all exile.⁸³

10 Until the coming of Shiloh, which is one of the names for the Messiah: "Shiloh" alludes also to the person who began the process of redemption that the Messiah will complete—Moses. The numerical value of "Shiloh" (345, שילה) is thus numerically equivalent to the name Moses (*Moshe*, משה).

By leading us from Egypt and then to receive the Torah at Sinai, Moses gave us the potential to bring about the ultimate redemption—the "coming of Shiloh," i.e., the actualization of what Shiloh/Moses began. The numerical value words for "coming of Shiloh" (358, יבא שילה) are thus numerically equivalent to the word for Messiah (*Mashiach*, משיח).⁸⁴

In order for us to actualize the redemption, to get from Shiloh/Moses to the coming of Shiloh, i.e., the Messiah, we must unite, particularly by making the Messiah and the Redemption the foremost topics of public dis-

course. By giving these urgent topics the precedence they deserve, we can in fact hasten the Redemption. This is alluded to by the fact that the numerical value of the word for "coming of" (13, יבא) is numerically equivalent to the word for "one" (אחד).⁸⁵

9-27 Judah is a young cub... In his blessings, Jacob compares some of the tribes to wild beasts (e.g., Judah to a lion, Benjamin to a wolf) and others to domestic animals (e.g., Issachar to a donkey, Joseph to an ox). Those compared to wild animals are characterized by passionate love for God and a yearning to escape the earthly realm to cleave to Him. Those compared to domestic animals—whose nature is to dutifully accept the work given to them—are characterized by submission to the task of revealing Godliness within the physical realm.

The Temple was therefore situated in Benjamin's portion of the Land of Israel, since Benjamin, the "wolf," was one of the tribes that personified yearning for God and elevation of self, which is expressed in prayerful worship.

Conversely, the tribe of Issachar, which is compared to the obedient donkey, was distinguished by its selfless devotion to studying and absorbing God's Torah, bringing heavenly wisdom down into the human mind.⁸⁶

82. See *Bereishit Rabba* 16:4. 83. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 442-446. See below, on 49:3. 84. *Ba'al HaTurim*. 85. *Sefer Ha'Sichot* 5696-5670, pp. 329-330; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 11, pp. 8 ff; *Sefer HaSichot* 5748, vol. 1, p. 351, and note 46 ad loc. 86. *Or HaTorah*, *Bereishit*, vol. 5, pp. 1983-1985.

9 Although **Judah's** descendant will begin his royal career **as a young cub**, subordinate to another king, upon assuming the throne he will fight like **a lion**." This prophecy was fulfilled in King David, who began his royal career as a subordinate Saul, a descendant of Benjamin.⁷⁵

"I am conferring upon you the honor of the royal line as a reward for your exemplary behavior in two incidents. Firstly, when I suspected you of having killed Joseph,⁷⁶ I later found out that **you raised yourself, my son**, from stooping to participate in your brothers' plot against him, recoiling **from** treating your brother Joseph like **prey**, and thereby saving his life.⁷⁷ Secondly, **you raised yourself, my son, from** the infamy of letting Tamar fall **prey** to the accusations leveled against her, even though your doing so entailed publicly repenting and thereby shaming yourself.⁷⁸ Although it is true that your elder brother Reuben also tried to save Joseph, nevertheless he did not save his life, as you did; he merely kept the brothers from killing him with their own hands. And, although it is similarly true that he also repented for this sin, his repentance did not save anyone's life, whereas yours did. Thus, both cases proved you to be more worthy of the kingship, since the role of the king is to assume responsibility for the welfare of his subjects.⁷⁹

As further reward for your concern for your fellow, during the reign of one of your descendants, our people **will** figuratively **crouch and lie down like a lion**, even **like an awesome lion**, dwelling securely and in peace—**who will dare rouse it?**" This prophecy was fulfilled during the entire reign of King Solomon, which was undisturbed by wars.⁸⁰

10 "Even when the Jewish people no longer have an independent kingdom, **the scepter** of regency **shall not depart from Judah**." This prophecy was fulfilled during the Babylonian exile, when the descendants of King David continued to serve as the acknowledged rulers of the Jewish people. "**Nor shall lawgivers**—scholars who render rulings in Jewish law—**cease from among his descendants**." This prophecy was fulfilled in the presidents of the Sanhedrin, who also were descended from King David. "Judah's preeminence shall continue **until the coming of Shiloh**—one of the names for the Messiah, who shall also be a descendant of Judah—**before whom nations shall assemble** to hear his teachings.⁸¹

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

9 Your elder brother Reuben also tried to save Joseph: Reuben's intentions in saving Joseph also seem nobler than Judah's: Reuben wanted to save Joseph and bring him back to his father; Judah saved Joseph only so that he could be sold into slavery.

Similarly, Reuben's repentance seems far superior to Judah's. Firstly, Judah simply admitted that he was guilty, whereas Reuben repented through fasting and other forms of penitence for many years. Secondly, Judah knew that if he did not admit his guilt, three lives would have been taken unjustly; no comparable conse-

quence compelled Reuben to repent.

Nonetheless, Judah's deeds actually helped people, whereas Reuben's did not. (In fact, had Reuben not been preoccupied with his personal repentance, he might have been able to save Joseph.) Therefore, Reuben lost the kingship to Judah and the priesthood to Levi, for the primary function of the king and the priest is to serve others.

This teaches us that we cannot be satisfied with devoting ourselves only to our own spiritual perfection; we must also engage in helping others.

75. Cf. 2 Samuel 5:2. 76. Above, 37:35. 77. Above, 37:26. 78. Above, 38:26. 79. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 439-445. 80. Cf. 1 Kings 5:5. 81. Cf. Isaiah 11:10.

ONKELOS

11 יסחר ישראל לקרתה עמא יבנון היכלה יהון צדיקיא סחור סחור לה ועבדי אוריתא באולפן עמה יהי ארגון טב לבושהי כסותה מילא מילא צבע זהורי וצבעונין: 12 יסמקון טורוהי בכרמוהי יטופון נעוהי בחמר יחורן בקעתה בעבור ובעדרי ענא: 13 ובלון על ספר יממיא ישרי והוא יכבש מחוזין בספינן טוב ימא ייכול ותחומה יהי מטי עד צידון: 14 יששכר עתיר בנכסין ואחסנתה בין תחומיא: 15 וחזא חולקא ארי טב וית ארעא ארי מעבדא פירין ויכבש מחוזי עממיא וישעי ית דיריהון ודאשתארון בהון יהון לה פלחין ומסקי מסין: 16 מדבית דן יתבחר ויקום גברא ביומהי יתפריק עמה ובשנהי ינחון כחדא שבטיא דישראל:

11 אסרי לגפן עירה {עירי} ולשרקה בני אתגו כבס
ביין לבשו וברם ענבים סותה {סותו}: 12 חכלילי
עינים מיין ולבן שנים מחלב: פ
13 זבולן לחוף ימים ישבן והוא לחוף אנית וירכתו
על צידון: פ
14 יששכר חמר גרם רבין בין המשפתיים: 15 וירא
מנחה כי טוב ואת הארץ כי נעמה ויט שכמו לסבל
ויהי למס עבד: ס
16 דן ידיו עמו באחד שבטי ישראל:

RASHI

"חוף" בתרגומו: ספר, מרק"א בלעז⁶¹. והוא יהיה מצוי תדיר על חוף אניות, במקום הנמל שאניות מביאות שם פרקמטיא, שהיה זבולון עוסק בפרקמטיא וממציא מזון לשבט יששכר והם עוסקים בתורה, הוא שאמר משה: "שמח זבולן בצאתך, ויששכר באהליך", וזבולון יוצא בפרקמטיא, ויששכר עוסק בתורה באהלים: **וירכתו על צידון**. סוף גבולו יהיה סמוך לצידון. "ירכתו", סופו כמו⁶²: "ולירכתי המשכן": 14 **יששכר חמר גרם**. חמור בעל עצמות. סובל על תורה, בחמור חזק שמטעינין אותו משאוי כבד: **רבין בין המשפתיים**. בחמור המהלך ביום ובלילה ואין לו לינה בבית, וכשהוא רוצה לנוח, רובץ בין התחומין, בתחומי העירות שמוליך שם פרקמטיא: 15 **וירא מנחה כי טוב**. ראה לחלקו ארץ מבורכת וטובה להוציא פרות: **ויט שכמו לסבל**. על תורה: **ויהי**. לכל אחיו ישראל: **למס עבד**. לפסוק להם הוראות של תורה וסדרי עבודתו, שנאמר⁶³: "ומבני יששכר יודעי בינה לעתים, לדעת מה יעשה ישראל, ראשיהם מאתים" — מאתים ראשי סנהדראות העמיד, וכל אחיהם על פיהם: **ויט שכמו**. השפיל שכמו, כמו: "ויט שמים"⁶⁴, "הטו אונכסם"⁶⁵. ואנקלוס תרגמו בפנים אחרים: "ויט שכמו לסבל" מלחמות ולכבש מחוזות, שהם יושבים על הספר, "ויהי" האויב כבוש תחתיו "למס עבד": 16 **דן ידיו עמו**. נקום נקמת עמו מפלשתים, כמו⁶⁶: "כי ידיו ה' עמו": **כאחד שבטי ישראל**. כל ישראל יהיו כאחד עמו, ואת כלם ידיו. ועל שמשון נבא נבואה זו. ועוד יש לפרש: "כאחד שבטי ישראל", כמיוחד שבשבטים, הוא דוד שבא מיהודה:

11 אסרי לגפן עירה. נתנבא על ארץ יהודה שתהא מושבת יין כמעין איש יהודה יאסר לגפן עיר אחד ויטעננו מגפן אחת. ומשורק אחד בן אתון אחד: **שרקה**. זמורה ארבה, קורייד"א בלעז⁶⁷: **כבס ביין**. כל זה לשון רבוי יין: **סותה**. לשון מין בגד הוא, ואין לו דמיון במקרא: **אסרי**. כמו אוסר, דגמתו: "מקימי מעפר דל"⁶⁸, "הישבי בשמים"⁶⁹, וכן "בני אתנו" בענין זה. ואנקלוס תרגם במלף המשוח: "גפן", הם ישראל. "עירה", זו ירושלים. "שורקה", אלו ישראל, "ואנכי נטעתיה שורק"⁷⁰: **בני אתנו**. "בנון היכלה", לשון "שער האיתון" בספר יחזקאל⁷¹. ועוד תרגמו בפנים אחרים: "גפן", אלו צדיקים. "בני אתנו", עבדי אוריתא באולפון, על שם "רכבי אתנות חרות"⁷². "כבס ביין", "יהא ארגון טב לבושהי", שצבועו דומה לין. "וצבעונין" הוא לשון "סותה", שהאשה לובשתן ומסיתה בהן את הזכר לתן עיניו בה, ואף רבותינו פרשו בגמרא לשון הסתת שכרות, במסכת כתובות⁷³. ועל היין שמא תאמר: אינו מרנה, תלמוד לומר: "סותה": 12 **חכלילי**. לשון אדם, בתרגומו. וכן⁷⁴: "למי חכלילות עינים", שכן דרך שותי יין עיניהם מאדימין: **מחלב**. מרב חלב שיהא בארצו מרעה טוב לעדרי צאן. וכן פרוש המקרא: אדום עינים יהא מרב יין, ולבן שנים יהא מרב חלב. ולפי תרגומו "עינים" לשון הרים, שמשם צופים למרחוק. ועוד תרגמו בפנים אחרים: לשון מעינות וקלות היקבים, "נעוהי", יקבים שלו. ולשון ארמי הוא במסכת עבודה זרה⁷⁵: נעוה ארמחו. "יחורן בקעתה", תרגום של שנים, לשון "שני הסלעים"⁷⁶: 13 **לחוף ימים**. על חוף ימים תהיה ארצו.

61. עירי — שורה של גפנים על גדר וכן ויצרות בעין סכה. 62. תהלים קיג, ו. 63. תהלים קכג, א. 64. ירמיה ב, כא. 65. מ, טו. 66. שופטים ה, י. 67. א, 68. משלי כג, כט. 69. עד, ב. 70. עייף שמואלא יד, ד. 71. גבול. 72. דברים לג, יח. 73. שמות כו, כב. 74. דבה"א יב, לג. 75. שמואלב כב, י. 76. תהלים עח, א. 77. דברים לב, לו.

87. Jeremiah 2:21. 88. Zechariah 9:9. 89. Cf. I Chronicles 12:32. 90. Judges 13-16. 91. See on 45:13. 92. Sefer HaMa'amarim 5699, pp. 58-59; see Torah Or 46c-d.

11 Your portion of the Promised Land will be so fertile that your typical descendant **will tie his donkey to a single vine** by loading the donkey up with the grapes of only one vine. Furthermore, he will tie **his donkey-foal to a single vine branch** by loading it up with the grapes of only one branch. Wine will be so plentiful that **he will launder his clothes in wine and his cloak in the blood-colored juice of grapes.**

In the future, the Messiah **will bring all the Israelites** (symbolized by the vine⁸⁷) **to surround Jerusalem**, where **they will build the Temple. The righteous** (symbolized by the vine) **will surround** the Messiah, who will enter Jerusalem astride **his donkey**,⁸⁸ **and those who teach the Torah will study with him. His garments will be dyed fine purple, and his clothes will be of wool dyed crimson and other colors.**

12 The **eyes** of your typical descendant will be **flushed from** drinking so much **wine**; his flocks will produce so much milk that **his teeth** will be **white from** drinking **milk. His mountains** will appear **red from** being covered with **vineyards**, and **his winepresses** will **drip with wine**; **his valleys** will appear **white from** the abundance of **grain and flocks** growing in them.

13 The tribe of **Zebulun shall dwell by the seashores** of the Promised Land. It will be constantly busy at its **harbor** where its ships load and unload their merchandise. It will donate part of its income to support the Torah scholars from among the tribe of Issachar. **Its northern border shall reach Sidon.**

14 The tribe of **Issachar** will ably bear the rigors of Torah study, as **a strong-boned donkey** ably bears its load. It will study assiduously, forsaking the comforts of luxurious living, similar to how a pack-donkey, having no permanent stable, **rests only between the towns** along its journeys.

15 **It will choose** a place to **rest** in the Promised Land **that is good**, suited to produce an abundance of fruits, **and a land that is pleasant. It will bend its shoulder to accept the burden** of rigorous Torah study, **and thereby do its duty** to the other tribes **like a faithful laborer**, rendering legal rulings and calculating when to intercalate the year.⁸⁹

But when the time comes to wage war, **it will bend its shoulder** to take up arms in battle, since it lives on the border, **and conquer the enemy, making it into a servant paying tribute.**

16 The tribe of **Dan will avenge its people** of their enemies; **the other tribes of Israel will unite** behind it." This prophecy came true with regard to Samson, who vanquished the Philistines.⁹⁰ "Through this leader, the tribe of **Dan will avenge its people** as ably as **will the most distinguished of the tribes of Israel**—Judah—under the king from their tribe." The king whom Jacob was prophetically referring to here was King David.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

11 **He will launder his clothes in wine:** Every time we observe a commandment, we create a spiritual garment for our souls.⁹¹ The garments, however, must be "laundered in wine," i.e., our fulfillment of the commandments must be imbued with joy.

This joy can be attained through studying the inner di-

mension of Torah, the "wine of Torah," which inspires us with love for God and the desire to cleave to Him through observance of His commandments. When we observe the commandments with the awareness that we are thereby cleaving to God, we are filled with joy—our "clothes" are laundered in "wine."⁹²

ONKELOS

17 יהי גברא דיתבחר ויקום מדבית דן אימתה תתירמי על עממא ומחמה תתקף בפלשתאי כחוי חורמן ישרי על ארזא ובפתנא יבמון על שבילא יקטל גברי משרית פלשתאי פתשין עם רגלאין יעקר טוטרן ורתפין וימארי רוכביהון לאורא: 18 לפרקנך סברית יי: 19 מדבית גר משרית מניין פד יעברון ית ירדנא קדם אחיהון לקרבא ובנקסין סגימין יתובון לארעהון: 20 דאשר טבא ארעה והוא מרביא בתפנוקי מלכין: 21 נפתלי בארע טבא יתרמי עדבה ואחסנתה תהי מעבדא פירין יהון מודן ומברכין עליון: 22 ברי דיסיג יוסף ברי דיתברך בגפן דנציב על עינא דמא תרין שבטין יפקון מבגודי יקבלון חולקא ואחסנתא:

17 יהי־דן־נחש־עלי־דרך־שפיפן־עלי־ארח־הנשך־עקבי־
 סוס ויפל רכבו אהור: 18 לישועתך קויתי יהוה: ס
 חמישי 19 גר גרוד יגודנו והוא יגר עקב: ס
 20 מאשר שמנה לחמו והוא יתן מעדני־מלך: ס
 21 נפתלי אילה שלחה הנתן אמרי־שפר: ס
 22 בן פרת יוסף בן פרת עלי־עין בנות צעדה עלי־
 שור:

RASHI

אנשי לודקיא לשמן וכו': 21 אילה שלחה. זו בקעת גינוסר, שהיא קלה לבשל פרותיה, באילה זו שהיא קלה לרוץ. "אילה שלחה", אילה משלחת לרוץ: הנתן אמרי שפר. כתרזומו. דבר אחר: על מלחמת סיסרא נתנבא, "ולקחת עמו עשרת אלפים איש מבני נפתלי" וגו', והלכו שם בוריוות. וכן נאמר שם לשון שלוח: "בעמק שלח ברגליו": הנתן אמרי שפר. על ידם שרו דבורה וברך שירה. ורבותינו דרשוהו על יום קבורת יעקב, כשערער עשו על המערה, במסכת סוטה⁸⁵. ותרגומו: "יתרמי עדבה", ופול חבלו, והוא יודה על חלקו אמרים נאים ושבח: 22 בן פרת. בן חן, והוא לשון ארמי: אפריון נמטיה לרבי שמעון, בסוף בבא מציעא⁸⁶. בן פרת עלי עין. חנו נטוי על העין הרואה אותו: בנות צעדה עלי שור. בנות מצרים היו צועדות על החומה להסתכל בפינו, בנות הרבה, צעדה כל אחת ואחת במקום שתוכל לראותו משם. דבר אחר: "עלי שור", על ראיתו, כמו⁸⁷: "אשורנו ולא קרוב". ומדרשי אגדה יש רבים, וזה נוטה לישוב המקרא: פרת. ת"ו שבו הוא תקון הלשון, כמו⁸⁸: "על דברת בני האדם", שור. כמו "לשור". דבר אחר: "עלי שור", בשביל לשור. ותרגום של אנקלוס: "בנות צעדה עלי שור", תרין שבטין יפקון מבגודי וכו'. וכתב "בנות" על שם בנות מנשה בנות צלפחד, שנטלו חלק בשני עברי הירדן. ברי דיסיג יוסף, "פרת" לשון פריה ורביה. ויש מדרשי אגדה המתנשבים על הלשון: בשעה שבא עשו לקראת יעקב, בכלן קדמו האמהות ללכת לפני בניהם להשתחוות, וברחל כתיב⁸⁹: "נגש יוסף ורחל וישתחוו", אמר יוסף: רשע זה עינו רמה, שמא יתן עיניו באמי. יצא לפניו, ושרב קומתו לכסותה. והוא שברכו אביו: "בן פרת", הגדלת עצמך יוסף "עלי עין" של עשו, לפיכך זכית לגדלה: בנות צעדה עלי שור. להסתכל בך בצאתך על מצרים. ועוד דרשוהו לענין שלא תשלט בורעו עין רעה. ואף כשברך מנשה ואפרים, ברכם כדגים, שאין עין רעה שולטת בהם:

17 שפיפן. הוא נחש. ואומר אני, שקרוי בן על שם שהוא נושף, כמו⁹⁰: "ואתה תשופנו עקב". הנשף עקבי סוס. כך דרכו של נחש, ודמהו לנחש הנושף עקבי סוס, ונפל רכבו אהור, שלא נגע בו. ודגמתו מצינו בשמשו⁹¹: "ויילפת שמשון את שני עמודי התורף" וגו', ושל על הגג מתו. ואנקלוס תרגם: "כחוי חורמן", שם מין נחש שאין רפואה לנשיכתו, והוא "צפעוני", וקרוי "חורמן" על שם שעושה הפל חרם. "ובפתנא", כמו פתן. "יכמון", יארב: 18 לישועתך קויתי ה'. נתנבא שניקרו פלשתים את עיניו, וסופו לומר⁹²: "זכרני נא וזקני נא אך הפעם" וגו': 19 גר גרוד יגודנו. כלם לשון גרוד הם, וכך חברו מנחם. ואם תאמר: אין גרוד בלא שני דלתין? יש לומר: "גרוד" שם דבר צריך שני דלתין, שכן דרך תבה בת שתי אותיות להכפל בסופה, ואין יסודה אלא שתי אותיות, וכן אמר⁹³: "בצפור לנוד", מגזרת⁹⁴: "ושבעתי נודים". "שם נפל שוד" ⁹⁵, מגזרת⁹⁶: "ישוד צהרים". אף "יגוד" "יגודנו" ו"גרוד", מגזרה אחת הם. וכשהוא מדרב בלשון "יפעל" אינו כפול, כמו: "יגוד" "נוד" "ירום" "ישוד" "ישוב", וכשהוא מתפעל או מפעיל אחרים — הוא כפול, כמו: "יתגודד" "יתרומם" "יתבולל" "יתעודד". ובלשון "מפעיל" — "יתום ואלמנה יעודד"⁹⁷, "לשובב יעקב אליו"⁹⁸, "משבב נתיבות"⁹⁹. "יגודנו" האמור כאן, אינו לשון שפיעילוהו אחרים, אלא כמו "יגוד הימנו", כמו¹⁰⁰: "בני יצאני", יצאו ממני. גר גרוד יגודנו, גרודים יגודו הימנו, שיעברו הירדן עם אחיהם למלחמה כל חלוץ עד שנכבשה הארץ: והוא יגר עקב. כל גרודיו ישובו על עקבם לנחלתם שלקחו בעבר הירדן, ולא יפקד מהם איש: עקב. בדרבם ובמסלותם שהלכו וישבו, כמו¹⁰¹: "ועקבותיה לא נדעו", וכן¹⁰²: "בעקבי הצאן". בלשון לעז טרצ"ש¹⁰³: 20 מאשר שמנה לחמו. מאכל הבא מחלקו של אשר יהא שמן, שיהיו זיתים מרבים בחלקו והוא מושך שמן כמעין. וכן ברכו משה¹⁰⁴: "וטבל בשמן רגלו", כמו ששנינו במנחות¹⁰⁵: פעם אחת הצרכו

78. בראשית ג, טו. 79. שופטים טו, כט. 80. שופטים טו, כח. 81. משלי כו, ב. 82. איוב ז, ד. 83. שופטים ה, כז. 84. תהלים א, ו. 85. תהלים קמו, ט. 86. ישעיה מט, ה. 87. ישעיה נח, יב. 88. ירמיה י, כ. 89. תהלים עז, כ. 90. שיר השירים א, ח. 91. עקבות. 92. דברים כד, לג. 93. פה, ב. 94. שופטים ד, ו. 95. שופטים ה, טו. 96. יג, א. 97. קיט, א. 98. במדבר כד, יז. 99. קהלת ג, י. 100. בראשית לג, ז.

17 **Let the tribe of Dan be to its enemies like a snake on the road, a viper on the path, biting the horse's heel so that the rider falls backward** off the horse and dies without the snake ever having touched him." This prophecy, too, came true with regard to Samson, for when he toppled the temple of Dagon, those standing on the roof fell off and died without Samson ever having touched them.⁹³

18 When Jacob foresaw that God would have to restore Samson's lost strength in order for him to be able to topple the temple, he prayed, **"I hope for your salvation, O God!**

- ◆ *Fifth Reading* 19 "Although Gad himself might be weak,⁹⁴ his descendants will be valiant. **Troops will march forth from the tribe of Gad, and they shall return on their same tracks** after conquering their enemies without having suffered any casualties." This prophecy was fulfilled in the men of the tribe of Gad who, after having taken possession of their inheritance to the east of the Jordan River, accompanied the other tribes to its west bank and helped them conquer and settle their territories, only afterward returning to their own lands.⁹⁵

20 **"From the territory of the tribe of Asher shall come forth the richest foods,** because its land will be blessed with many olive trees, whose oil they will use to prepare food. Therefore, this tribe **shall provide the king's delicacies.**

21 The fruit growing in the territory of the tribe of **Naphtali** will ripen as fast as a **deer set loose**; for this, the tribe of Naphtali will be the **one who offers words of praise** and thanks to God. When the time comes to wage war, the tribe of **Naphtali** will rush to do battle as fast as a **deer set loose**; for its decisive help in the battle, the commander of the army will be the **one who offers words of praise** and thanks to God." This prophecy was fulfilled when ten thousand men from the tribe of Naphtali quickly answered the call of Deborah and Barak to fight Sisera,⁹⁶ and Deborah composed a song of praise after the battle was won.⁹⁷

"Even **Naphtali** himself will prove to be as swift as a **deer set loose, providing choice words** as soon as the need arises." This prophecy came true when Jacob's sons arrived in Hebron to bury him and sent Naphtali to bring the deed of ownership of the Machpelah cave, as will be related presently.⁹⁸

22 **"Joseph is a charming man, charming to the eye; I know that the Egyptian girls used to walk along the wall in order to gaze upon his beauty.** When I met my brother Esau, **Joseph stood** in front of his mother Rachel and **drew himself up to his full height** to protect her **from the covetous eye** of Esau.⁹⁹ As a reward for rising to his full height to protect his mother, he rose to greatness as viceroy of Egypt. Thus his charm became well-known, and whenever he went forth to oversee the affairs of the country, the Egyptian **girls used to walk along the wall in order to gaze upon his beauty.**

The descendants of **Joseph will be as prolific as a grapevine planted near a spring**; they will be so prolific that two **tribes**, both of them comparable in size to the other tribes, **will issue from them.** Nonetheless, they will be **immune to the evil eye.**¹⁰⁰

93. Judges 16:23-30. 94. Above, 47:2. 95. See Numbers 32:1-38; Joshua 1:12-18, 22:1-9. 96. Judges 4. 97. Judges 5. 98. 50:13, below. 99. Above, 33:7. 100. Above, 48:16.

23 Joseph's brothers **embittered his life and became his assailants**; they **hated him**—even though they were his brothers, **destined to share** my estate with him—mocking him **with their arrow-sharp tongues**. Potiphera and his wife **embittered his life** as well, by accusing him falsely and incarcerating him.

24 His prophecy concerning his brothers **was fulfilled** because **he relied on God's might**. **His power was authoritatively established** when one of **the arms of his hands** was **bedecked with Pharaoh's gold ring**, **by the agency of God, the Mighty One of Jacob, who sustains the people of Israel**. **From then on, he became a shepherd of me, his father, the founder of the people of Israel**, by providing for my welfare.

He further deserves greatness because, when he was seduced by Potiphera's wife, **his procreative organ was stopped** by his sudden resolution not to sin, and **his seed** miraculously **dispersed through the fingers of his hands**.¹⁰¹

25 Addressing Joseph directly, Jacob continued, "You succeeded in resisting her thanks to the help you received **from the God of your father, who will** continue to **help you** in the future. He came to your aid because your heart remained **with Him, the Almighty**, loyal to Him, when she tried to seduce you. **He will bless you with blessings of dew from heaven above and blessings of springs flowing from the depths that lie below**, as well as **with blessings of fertile insemination** for your male progeny **and of wombs** that do not miscarry for your female progeny.

26 **The blessings** bestowed by God **upon me, your father, have surpassed the blessings** He bestowed upon **my forebears**, for whereas He blessed Abraham only to inherit the Land of Israel¹⁰² and then repeated this same blessing to Isaac,¹⁰³ He blessed me to spread out beyond its borders, **to the utmost bounds of the eternal hills**.¹⁰⁴ These were the blessings that **my mother longed for me to receive**.¹⁰⁵ **May these blessings rest upon the head of Joseph, upon the head of the one who was separated from his brothers**.

101. Above, 39:12. 102. Above, 13:14. 103. Above, 26:3. 104. Above, 28:14. 105. Above, 27:5 ff.

ONKELOS

27 בנימין בארעה תשרי שכינתא
 ובאחסנתה יתבני מקדשא בצפרא
 ובפניא יהון מקרבין פהניא קרבניא
 ובעדן רמשא יהון מפלגין מותר
 חולקיהון משאר קדשיא: 28 כל אלין
 שבטיא דישראל תרין עשר ודא די
 מליל להון אבוהון ובריה יתהון גבר די
 כברכמה ברה יתהון:

שטי 27 בנימין זאב יטרף בכקר יאכל עד ולערב
 יחלק שלל: 28 כל אלה שבטי ישראל שנים עשר
 וזאת אשר דבר להם אביהם ויברך אותם איש
 אשר כברכתו ברך אתם:

RASHI

תרגם על שלל הכהנים בקדשי המקדש: 28 וזאת
 אשר דבר להם אביהם ויברך אותם. והלא יש מהם
 שלא ברכם אלא קנטרין? אלא, כך פרושו: "וזאת אשר
 דבר להם אביהם", מה שנקמר בענין. יכול שלא ברה
 לראובן שמעון ולוי, תלמוד לומר: "ויברך אותם", כלם
 במשמע: איש אשר כברכתו. ברכה העתידה לבא
 על כל אחד ואחד: ברה אתם. לא היה לו לומר אלא
 "איש אשר כברכתו ברה אותו", מה תלמוד לומר:
 "ברך אותם"? לפי שנתן ליהודה גבורת ארי, ולבנימין
 חטיפותו של זאב, ולנפתלי קלותו של איל, יכול שלא
 כללן כלם בכל הברכות, תלמוד לומר: "ברך אותם":

27 בנימין זאב יטרף. הוא זאב אשר יטרף, נבא על
 שיהיו עתידין להיות חטפנין, ויחטפתם לכם איש
 אשתו¹²¹, בפילגש בגבעה. ונבא על שאול שיהיה נוצח
 באויביו סביב, שנקמר¹²². "ושאול לכד המלוכה וילחם
 במואב ובאדום וגו' ובכל אשר יפנה ירשיע": בבקר
 יאכל עד. לשון בזה ושלל, המתרגם "עד אה". ועוד
 יש לו דומה בלשון עברית¹²³: "אז חלק עד שלל". ועל
 שאול הוא אומר, שעמד בתחלת פריחתו וזריחתו של
 ישראל: ולערב יחלק שלל. אף משתשקע שמשן של
 ישראל על ידי נבוכדנצר שזיגלם לכבל: יחלק שלל.
 מרדכי ואסתר שהם מבנימין, יחלקו את שלל המן,
 שנקמר¹²⁴: "הנה בית המן נתתי לאסתר". ואנקלוס

122. שופטים כא, כא. 123. שמואל א יד, מז. 124. ישעיה לג, כג. 125. אסתר ח, ז.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

Nevertheless, as we have seen,¹¹⁶ Benjamin is associ-
 ated with penitence. According to the *Zohar*,¹¹⁷ when
 Rachel saw that Benjamin's birth would coincide with
 her death, she assumed that he stemmed from the
 "left side," the realm of evil, which is characterized by
 lifelessness. She therefore called him, "son of my sor-
 row."¹¹⁸ Jacob, however, called him "son of the right,"
 meaning that he would be of the right side (holiness)
 not the left (evil). Jacob saw that Benjamin would be
 able to transform "sorrow" to "right" through repen-
 tance.

Benjamin is thus the fulfillment of Rachel's prayer (af-
 ter the birth of Joseph): "May God add another son for
 me,"¹¹⁹ which, spiritually, as we have seen, means "May
 God transform one who is considered 'another'—i.e.,
 one who is estranged from God—into a 'son'." Benja-
 min, like the penitent, is the "another" who becomes a
 "son."

Thus, while Benjamin himself was a saint, his mode of
 spiritual worship paralleled that of the penitent, since,
 just as penitents struggle with human weakness and
 eventually transform their failings into catalysts for
 growth, so, too, Benjamin's focus was on refining and
 elevating the physical (as opposed to drawing holiness
 downward into the world, which was Joseph's focus).

Benjamin's association with penitence is likewise re-
 flected in the stones of the high priest's breastplate,
 each of which was engraved with the name of one of

the twelve tribes:¹²⁰ The name of Joseph, who personi-
 fies the saint, was engraved on the onyx a stone that is
 naturally brilliant; Benjamin, in contrast, was inscribed
 on the jasper, a stone that must be cleaned and pol-
 ished before it can shine.¹²¹

Thus, Jacob's blessed Benjamin to be "like a wolf that
 grabs," i.e., to possess such intense soul-powers that
 even in the face of extreme decadence—the incident at
 Givah—they will be able to "grab" hold of themselves
 and return to the path of holiness.

Similarly, through repentance Benjamin's tribe will
 "grab" the Divine sparks hidden in evil, since, as our
 sages teach, through repentance we transform sins to
 merits.¹²² This power of Benjamin to transform dark-
 ness to light was demonstrated when Mordechai and
 Esther foiled Haman's plot and were given his estate:
 the very house that Ahasuerus had given to Haman,
 the embodiment of evil, was transferred to Esther, i.e.,
 to the domain of holiness.¹²³

**28 He blessed them, giving each one the blessing ap-
 propriate to him, and giving them all the blessings he
 gave each one individually:** The sharing of the bless-
 ings manifested itself in several ways:

- (a) The tribes did not actually internalize the quali-
 ties unique to the others, but only benefited from
 them. For example, the land inherited by Judah's
 progeny produced barley and that of Benjamin's
 produced wheat, but they shared the produce

116. On 44:2, above. 117. 2:67b. 118. 35:18, above. 119. 30:24, above. 120. See Exodus 28:21. 121. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5661, p. 163. 122. *Yoma* 86b. 123. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 275-284.

- ◆ **Sixth Reading 27** The tribe of **Benjamin** will be like a **wolf that grabs.**” This prophecy came true in the incident involving the concubine at Givah,¹⁰⁶ in which the other tribes went to war against the tribe of Benjamin over a moral issue. After the initial conflict, the tribe of Benjamin, instead of stubbornly refusing to relent, quickly “grabbed” the opportunity to repent. In order to survive, those remaining from the tribe of Benjamin then needed to marry women from other tribes in order to replenish their numbers, but the other tribes had sworn not to allow their women to marry into the tribe of Benjamin. So the other tribes allowed the tribe of Benjamin to “grab” wives for themselves.¹⁰⁷

Jacob continued, “At a later date in the future, a descendant of **Benjamin** will fight his enemy like a **wolf that grabs** its prey away from its owners, ‘grabbing’ this unsavory form of conduct and appropriating it for holy purposes.¹⁰⁸ **In the morning**, i.e., the early period of the Jewish people’s monarchy, this descendant of Benjamin **will devour the plunder.**” This prophecy was fulfilled in Benjamin’s descendant, King Saul, Israel’s first king, who fearlessly vanquished the fledgling kingdom’s enemies.¹⁰⁹ “**In the evening**, i.e., at the end of this period, another descendant will **distribute the enemy’s spoils.**” This prophecy was fulfilled in Mordechai and Esther, who lived after the destruction of the first Temple, when they foiled Haman’s plot and were given his estate.¹¹⁰

“The altar of the Temple, which will be located in the territory of the tribe of **Benjamin**, will be like a **wolf that mauls**, consuming the sacrifices offered up on it: **In the morning** and evening, **it will consume** the daily sacrifices,¹¹¹ **and in the evening** the priests will **distribute** their portions of the sacrificial food among themselves.”

28 All these are the tribes of Israel, twelve in all. This is what their father said to them, and even though it appears that he did not bless Reuben, Simeon, or Levi, **he actually blessed them all, giving each one the blessing appropriate to what would befall him and his tribe in the future, and giving them all the blessings that he had given each one individually.** Thus, they all received Judah’s lion-like strength, Benjamin’s wolf-like rapacity, Naphtali’s deer-like speed, and so on, although each tribe’s dominant blessing was the one Jacob mentioned specifically with reference to it.¹¹²

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

27 Benjamin will be like a wolf that grabs: Benjamin, like his brothers, was a perfectly righteous saint. The Talmud counts him as one of the four guiltless persons

who would have therefore lived forever were it not for Adam and Eve’s sin of the Tree of Knowledge, because of which life cannot be eternal.¹¹³

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[27] Benjamin will be like a wolf that grabs: Because Benjamin’s blessing relates to penitents, whose achievements transcend those of the completely righteous,¹¹⁴ it therefore begins a new

reading (*aliyah*), setting it apart from the previous blessings, which relate primarily to the ways of the completely righteous.¹¹⁵

^{106.} Judges 19:1-21:25. ^{107.} Judges 21:21. ^{108.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 275-281. ^{109.} 1 Samuel 14:47. ^{110.} Esther 8:7. ^{111.} Numbers 28:1-10. ^{112.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 285-292. ^{113.} *Shabbat*, 55b. ^{114.} See *Berachot* 34b. ^{115.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 279-

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29 ופקיד יתהון ואמר להון אנא מתבניש לעמי קברו יתי לות אבהתי במערתא די בחקל עפרון חתאדה: 30 במערתא די בחקל כפלתא די על אפי ממרא בארעא דכנען די זבן אברהם ית חקלא מן עפרון חתאדה לאחסנת קבורא: 31 תמן קברו ית אברהם וית שרה אתתה תמן קברו ית יצחק וית רבקה אתתה ותמן קברית ית לאה: 32 זביני חקלא ומערתא די בה מן בני חתאדה: 33 ושיעי יעקב לפקדא ית בנוהי וכנש רגלוהי לערסא ואתנגיד ואתבניש לעמה:

29 ויצו אותם ויאמר אלהם אני נאסף אל עמי קברו אתי אל אבותי אל המערה אשר בשדה עפרון החתי: 30 במערה אשר בשדה המכפלה אשר על פני ממרא בארץ כנען אשר קנה אברהם את השדה מאת עפרון החתי לאחוזת קבר: 31 שמה קברו את אברהם ואת שרה אשתו שמה קברו את יצחק ואת רבקה אשתו ושמה קברתי את לאה: 32 מקנה השדה והמערה אשר בו מאת בני חת: 33 ויכל יעקב לצות את בניו ויאסף רגליו אל המטה ויגע ויאסף אל עמיו:

RASHI

וכל אסיפה האמורה במיתה, אף היא לשון הכנסה: אל אבותי. עם אבותי: 33 ויאסף רגליו. הכניס רגליו: ויגע ויאסף. ומיתה לא נאמרה בו. ואמרו רבותינו וכוונם לברכה: יעקב אבינו לא מת:

29 נאסף אל עמי. על שם שמכניסין הנפשות אל מקום גניזתן. שיש אסיפה בלשון עברי שהיא לשון הכנסה. כגון: "ואין איש מאסף אותם הביתה" 125, "ואספתו אל תוך ביתך" 126, "באספכם את תבואת הארץ" 127, הכנסתם לבית מפני הגשמים, "באסף את מעשיך" 128.

126. שופטים יט, טו. 127. דברים כב, ב. 128. ויקרא כג, לט. 129. שמות כג, טו. 130. תענית ה, ב.

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occupation. Conversely, students of Torah must be fully engaged when doing good deeds and observing the commandments.

Participating in our compatriots' endeavors enhances Jewish unity, making us receptacles for God's blessings, including the ultimate blessing of redemption.¹³¹

32 Levi will not carry me since his descendants will carry the Holy Ark, and Joseph will not carry me since he is viceroy of Egypt: As we saw in the Overview, Jacob's death signaled the beginning of the descent that would end in the physical enslavement of his descendants.¹³² His removal from Egypt further intensified this descent.¹³³

This is the deeper reason why Joseph and Levi could not be party to Jacob's removal, since both embodied transcendence from subjugation: Joseph was practically the king of Egypt, both physically and spiritually.¹³⁴ Similarly, the fact that Levi's descendants would one day carry the Holy Ark meant that their job was to remain aloof from mundane life, focused on the Divine mission of the Jewish people. Levi's descendants were therefore never enslaved; they remained free to study the Torah throughout the Egyptian exile¹³⁵ so that they could be a spiritual inspiration to the rest of the nation.

Likewise, when the Jews reached the Holy Land, Levi's descendants did not receive a portion of the land,¹³⁶ so that they could remain dedicated to serving God and teaching His ways of righteousness to the rest of the nation.¹³⁷

This explains why, although Levi was not to carry Jacob's bones, Moses, who was not only a Levite but a member of the Levite family that carried the Ark, carried Joseph's coffin out of Egypt: Carrying Jacob's coffin out of Egypt constituted a further descent into Egyptian exile; carrying Joseph's coffin out of Egypt, in contrast, was a part of the redemption. It was therefore fitting that a Levite, indeed the chief Levite, Moses, carry out Joseph's coffin.

Thus, with Joseph's passing, the descent into slavery increased¹³⁸ and with Levi's passing the actual slavery began.¹³⁹

In our own lives, we can draw on the power of Joseph to be "king over Egypt," to recognize that we are inherently aloof from our challenges in exile. And like the tribe of Levi, who carried the Holy Ark, we, too, can draw upon the power of Torah to transform the darkness and challenges of exile into the light of spiritual growth.¹⁴⁰

131. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 287-291. 132. Rashi on 47:28, above. 133. See *Zohar* 1:222a. 134. See on 39:1 and 41:55, above. 135. Exodus 1:10 (Rashi on Exodus 5:4); see above, on 15:13. 136. Deuteronomy 18:1-2. 137. *Mishneh Torah, Shemitah V'Yovel* 13:12. 138. *Shemot Rabbah* 1:4; see on 43:20, above. 139. Rashi on Exodus 6:16. 140. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 237-242.

Jacob's Death

29 He then commanded them, saying to them, "I am about to be gathered unto my people in the afterlife. Bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite—

30 in the cave in the Field of the Machpelah, facing Mamre, in Canaan, the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite as a burial property.

31 There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah; there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebecca; and there I buried my wife Leah.

32 The purchase of the field and the cave within it was from the Hittites.

Do not let any Egyptian help carry my coffin. Only the progenitors of my twelve tribes shall participate in carrying my coffin from Egypt to Hebron. Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun shall carry the coffin in front; Reuben, Simeon, and Gad will carry the coffin on the right; Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin will carry the coffin in back; Dan, Asher, and Naphtali will carry the coffin on the left. Levi will not help carry my coffin, since his descendants are to carry the Holy Ark in the future; Joseph will also not help carry my coffin, since he is viceroy of Egypt and it would be an affront to the honor of his position.¹²⁴ Ephraim and Manasseh will carry me in Levi and Joseph's stead, acting as their agents, so it will be considered just as if they, too, had honored me by carrying me."¹²⁵

33 When Jacob concluded giving his instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up onto the bed. He breathed his last and was gathered unto his people. But, because all his children had remained loyal to his religious heritage, he did not "die"; rather, his body entered a state of deep slumber only resembling death.

✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

with each other.¹²⁶ Similarly, when Jacob blessed Judah that his descendants, as kings, would vanquish their enemies, he was at the same time blessing the entire nation.¹²⁷

- (b) On a deeper level, Jacob united the tribes, thereby enabling them to internalize each other's qualities.¹²⁸ Thus, although Dan is characterized by Jacob as a "snake," he is characterized elsewhere as a "lion,"¹²⁹ indicating that he received the quality of a "lion" from Judah.¹³⁰
- (c) On yet a deeper level, the tribes received each other's unique qualities not from each other but directly from Jacob. This level is reflected in our interpolation, which follows Rashi, who writes that Jacob included all of them in all of the blessings.

The lesson here is that although we each have our unique roles—some of us are immersed in Torah study, others in communal activities—we can and must be involved to some extent in the other roles as well. As above, we can do so in three ways:

- (a) Because we are all united, working toward the same goal, we all have a share in the good deeds of those whose roles are different from ours. Those who engage in commerce and good deeds, for example, have a share in the Torah study of those immersed in Torah study. Conversely, those immersed in Torah study have a share in the good deeds of those involved in good deeds.
- (b) On a deeper level, each group imparts some measure of its unique strength to the other groups: those immersed in Torah study influence others to increase their own study of the Torah. Conversely, those engaged in good deeds influence those immersed in Torah study to increase in their own good deeds.
- (c) On yet a deeper level, although we engage primarily in a particular sort of work, we can experience all paths of holiness completely. For example, when business people take time from their business affairs to study Torah, they should engage with Torah at that time as if that were their sole

¹²⁴ Rashi on 50:13, below, and on Numbers 2:2. ¹²⁵ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 236. ¹²⁶ *Tanchuma, Vayechi* 16 (ed. Buber: 17). ¹²⁷ *Or HaChaim*. ¹²⁸ See *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:8. ¹²⁹ Deuteronomy 33:22. ¹³⁰ *Bereishit Rabbah* 99:4.

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50:1 וּפָל יוֹסֵף עַל אַפֵּי אַבְוֵהִי וּבָקָא עֲלוּהִי וְנָשִׂיק לָהּ: 2 וּפְקִיד יוֹסֵף יָת עֲבֻדוּהִי יָת אֶסְוֵתָא לְמַחְנֵט יָת אַבְוֵהִי וְחִנְטוּ אֶסְוֵתָא יָת יִשְׂרָאֵל: 3 וּשְׁלִימוּ לָהּ אַרְבַּעִין יוֹמִין אַרְי כִּן שְׁלִמִין יוֹמֵי חֲנִיטָא וּבְכוּ יָתָהּ: 4 וְעֲבְרוּ יוֹמֵי מִצְרָאֵי שְׁבַעִין יוֹמִין: 4 וְעֲבְרוּ יוֹמֵי בְּכִיתָהּ וּמְלִיל יוֹסֵף עִם בֵּית פְּרַעָה לְמִימְרָא אִם כַּעַן אֲשַׁכְּחִית רַחֲמִין בְּעֵינֵינוּן מְלִילוֹ כַּעַן קָדָם פְּרַעָה לְמִימְרָא: 5 אָבָא קָיִים עָלֵי לְמִימְרָא הָא אָנָּא מְאִית בְּקַבְרֵי דִי אַתְּקַנְיַת לִי בְּאַרְעָא דְכַנְעַן תַּמָּן תַּקְבְּרִנִי וּבְכַעַן אֶסַק כַּעַן וְאֶקְבֵר יָת אָבָא וְאַתּוּב: 6 וְאָמַר פְּרַעָה סַק וּקְבוּר יָת אָבוּךָ כְּמָא דְקָיִים עֲלֶךָ: 7 וּסְלִיק יוֹסֵף לְמַקְבֵר יָת אַבְוֵהִי וּסְלִיקוּ עִמָּה כָּל עַבְדֵי פְּרַעָה סְבֵי בֵּיתָהּ וְכָל סְבֵי אַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם: 8 וְכָל בֵּית יוֹסֵף וְאַחֻוּהִי וּבֵית אַבְוֵהִי לְחוּד טַפְלָהוֹן וְעַנְהוֹן וְתוֹרִיהוֹן שְׁבָקוּ בְּאַרְעָא דְגִשׁוֹן: 9 וּסְלִיקוּ עִמָּה אִף רַחֲבִין אִף פְּרִשִׁין וְהוֹת מִשְׁרִיתָא סְגִיָּתָה לְחֻדָּא: 10 וְאַתּוּ עַד בֵּית אֲדָרֵי דְאַטְדֵי דִי בְּעֲבָרָא דִּירְדְנָא וְסַפְדוּ תַמָּן מִסְפְּדֵי רַב וְתַקִּיף לְחֻדָּא וְעַבְדוּ לְאַבְוֵהִי אָבְלָא שְׁבַעִין יוֹמִין: 11 וְחֻזָּא יָתָהּ אַרְעָא כְּנַעֲנָאָה יָת אָבְלָא בְּבֵית אֲדָרֵי דְאַטְדֵי וְאָמְרוּ אָבְל תַּקִּיף דִּין לְמִצְרָאֵי עַל כִּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ אָבְל מִצְרַיִם דִּי בְּעֲבָרָא דִּירְדְנָא: 12 וְעֲבְדוּ בְּגוּהִי לָהּ כִּן כְּמָא דִּי פְקִידוּן:

50:1 וַיִּפֹּל יוֹסֵף עַל-פְּנֵי אָבִיו וַיִּבְכֶּה עָלָיו וַיִּשְׁקֵלֹ: 2 וַיִּצַּו יוֹסֵף אֶת-עַבְדָּיו אֶת-הַרְפָּאִים לְחַנֵּט אֶת-אָבִיו וַיְחַנְטוּ הַרְפָּאִים אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל: 3 וַיִּמְלְאוּ-לוֹ אַרְבַּעַיִם יוֹם כִּי בֵן יִמְלָאוּ יְמֵי הַחַנְטִים וַיִּכְפוּ אֹתוֹ מִצְרַיִם שְׁבַעַיִם יוֹם: 4 וַיַּעֲבְרוּ יְמֵי בְכִיתוֹ וַיְדַבֵּר יוֹסֵף אֶל-בֵּית פְּרַעֲהָ לֵאמֹר אִם-נָא מְצִאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֵיכֶם דַּבְּרוּ-נָא בְּאָזְנֵי פְּרַעֲהָ לֵאמֹר: 5 אֲנִי הִשְׁבִּיעֵנִי לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מֵת בְּקַבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר פָּרִיתִי לִי בְּאַרְצָן כְּנַעַן שָׁמָּה תִקְבְּרֵנִי וְעַתָּה אֶעֱלֶה-נָּא וְאֶקְבְּרָה אֶת-אָבִי וְאֲשׁוּבָה: 6 וַיֹּאמֶר פְּרַעֲהָ עֲלֶה וּקְבֹר אֶת-אָבִיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁבִּיעֵךָ: 7 וַיַּעַל יוֹסֵף לְקַבֵּר אֶת-אָבִיו וַיַּעֲלוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל-עַבְדָּי פְּרַעֲהָ וְקָנִי בֵיתוֹ וְכָל זְקֵנֵי אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם: 8 וְכָל בֵּית יוֹסֵף וְאָחֻיו וּבֵית אָבִיו רַךְ טַפָּם וְצִאֲנָם וּבְקָרָם עֲזוּבוּ בְּאַרְצָן גִּישׁוֹן: 9 וַיַּעַל עִמּוֹ גַם-רַכָּב גַּם-פָּרָשִׁים וַיְהִי הַמַּחְנָה כְּבַד מְאֹד: 10 וַיָּבֹאוּ עַד-גִּזְרֵן הָאָטָד אֲשֶׁר בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן וַיִּסְפְּדוּ-שָׁם מִסְפַּד גָּדוֹל וּכְבֵד מְאֹד וַיַּעַשׂ לְאָבִיו אָבְל שְׁבַעַת יָמִים: 11 וַיֵּרָא יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֶת-הָאָבְל בְּגִזְרֵן הָאָטָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ אָבְל-כְּבֵד זֶה לְמִצְרַיִם עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ אָבְל מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן: 12 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנָיו לוֹ כִּן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּם:

— RASHI —

וְאָמַר לַעֲשׂו: טל זה בשביל חלקך במערה: 6 כַּאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁבִּיעַךָ. וְאִם לֹא בְּשִׁבִיל הַשְּׁבוּעָה, לֹא הֵייתִי מְנִיחָךְ. אָבְל יָרָא לֹמַר: עֲבַר עַל הַשְּׁבוּעָה. שְׁלֵא יֹאמַר: אִם כֵּן, אֶעֱבַר עַל הַשְּׁבוּעָה שְׁנֹשְׁבַעֲתֵי לָךְ שְׁלֵא אֲגַלְּהָ עַל לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ שְׁאֲנִי מְכִיר עוֹדֶךָ עַל שְׁבַעִים לְשׁוֹן, וְאַתָּה אֵינְךָ מְכִיר בּוֹ. כְּדֹאִיתָא בְּמַסְכַּת סוּטָה¹³²: 10 גִּזְרֵן הָאָטָד. מְקַף אָטָדִין הִיָּה. וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ¹³³ דְּרָשוּ עַל שֵׁם הַמְּאֹרֶע, שְׁבָאוּ כָּל מַלְכֵי כְּנַעַן וְנִשְׂאִי יִשְׁמַעֲאֵל לְמַלְחָמָה, וְכִיּוֹן שְׁרָאוּ כְּתוּדָא שֶׁל יוֹסֵף תְּלוּי בְּאַרְזוֹ שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב, עֲמִדוּ כְּלָן וְתָלוּ בּוֹ כְּתִירֵיהֶם, וְהַקִּיפוּהוּ כְּתִירֵים כְּגֵרִין הַמְּקוֹף סִיג שֶׁל קוֹצִים: 12 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּם. מַהוּ "אֲשֶׁר צִוָּם"?

2 לְחַנֵּט אֶת אָבִיו. עֲנִין מְרַקַּחַת בְּשִׁמִּים הוּא: 3 וַיִּמְלְאוּ לוֹ. הַשְּׁלִימוּ לוֹ יְמֵי חֲנִיטָתוֹ, עַד שְׁמִלְאוּ לוֹ אַרְבַּעַיִם יוֹם: וַיִּכְפוּ אֹתוֹ מִצְרַיִם שְׁבַעַיִם יוֹם. אַרְבַּעַיִם לְחִנְטָה וּשְׁלִשִׁים לְבִכְיָה, לְפִי שְׁבָאָה לְהָם בְּרַכָּה לְרַגְלוֹ, שְׁכֻלָּה הֶרְעַב וְהָיוּ מִי נִילוּס מִתְּבָרְכִין: 5 אֲשֶׁר פָּרִיתִי לִי. כְּפִשׁוּטוֹ, כְּמוֹ¹³⁰: "כִּי יִכְרֶה אִישׁ". וּמְדַרְשׁוּ¹³¹ עוֹד מִתְּנִיב עַל הַלְשׁוֹן, כְּמוֹ "אֲשֶׁר קִנִּיתִי". אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: כְּשֶׁהֲלַכְתִּי לְכַרְכֵי הַיָּם, הָיוּ קוֹרִין לְמַכְרֶה "פִּירָה". וְעוֹד מְדַרְשׁוּ: לְשׁוֹן "כְּרִי", דְּגוֹר, שְׁנִטְלָ יַעֲקֹב כָּל כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב שֶׁהִבִּיא מִבֵּית לָבָן וַעֲשָׂה אוֹתוֹ כְּרִי,

¹³¹. שמות כא, לג. ¹³². סוטה יג, א. ¹³³. לו, ב. ¹³⁴. סוטה יג, ב.

The place was therefore called Eivel-Mitzraim ["Egypt's mourning"], which is beyond the Jordan.

12 The sons of Jacob did for him just as he had instructed them:

50:1 Joseph fell on his father's face, wept over him, and kissed him.

2 Joseph then ordered his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father, so the physicians embalmed Israel.

3 His forty days passed, for that was the time required for embalming. In recognition of the fact that Jacob was responsible for having brought the famine to an early end,¹⁴¹ **the Egyptians mourned him** during an extended period: during the forty days of embalming and then for an additional thirty days, i.e., **for a total of seventy days.**

4 When the days of weeping for him were over, Joseph addressed Pharaoh's court, saying, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please speak to Pharaoh as follows:

5 'My father bound me by an oath, saying, "I am about to die. In the grave that I purchased at great expense from my brother¹⁴² and dug for myself¹⁴³ in Canaan, there you shall bury me." From this you see how important it was for him to be buried there: he expended a large sum to purchase the site and he dug the grave himself.¹⁴⁴ So allow me now to go up and bury my father and then return.' "

6 Pharaoh replied, "Go up and bury your father, as he had you swear." Had Joseph not been bound by an oath, Pharaoh would not have let him remove his father's remains from Egypt. He would have preferred that Jacob's tomb become another Egyptian shrine.¹⁴⁵ Pharaoh did not suggest that Joseph break his oath, knowing that Joseph could then in turn threaten to embarrass him by breaking another oath he had taken, namely, the oath not to reveal to anyone that he could speak Hebrew, while Pharaoh could not.¹⁴⁶

7 So Joseph went up toward Canaan to bury his father, and with him went up all of Pharaoh's courtiers, the elders of his court, and all the elders of Egypt,

8 followed by all of Joseph's household, his brothers, and his father's household. They left only their small children, their flocks, and their cattle in Goshen.

9 Chariots and horsemen also went up with him—a very sizeable retinue.

10 They came to Goren ha-Atad ["The Threshing Floor (surrounded by a hedge of) Thorns"], **which is beyond the Jordan.** The kings of the city-states of Canaan and the Ishmaelite chieftains heard that they were coming, and, assuming Jacob's sons were intending to conquer the land, gathered together there to wage war against them. But when they saw the funeral procession, they understood that this was not their purpose in coming. Then, when they saw Joseph's crown set upon Jacob's coffin, they paid homage to Jacob by removing their own crowns and setting them, too, upon his coffin. Thus wreathed with crowns, the coffin resembled a threshing floor surrounded by a hedge of thorns. **There they conducted a great and solemn ceremony of lamentation, and Joseph ordained a seven-day mourning period for his father.**

11 When the Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw the mourning in Goren ha-Atad, they said, "This is a grievous outpouring of mourning for the Egyptians."

141. Above, 47:10. 142. Above, 33:16. 143. Above, 46:1. 144. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 15, pp. 459-466. 145. Rashi here and on 47:29. 146. Above, 41:44.

— ONKELOS —
 13 ונטלו יתה בנוהי לארעא דכנען
 וקברו יתה במערת חקל כפלהא
 די זבן אברהם ית חקלא לאחסנת
 קבורא מן עפרון חתאה על אפי
 ממרא: 14 ותב יוסף למצרים הוא
 ואחוזי וכל דסליקו עמה למקבר
 ית אבוהי בתר די קבר ית אבוהי:
 15 וחזו אחי יוסף ארי מית אבוהון
 ואמרו דלמא ישר לנא דכבו יוסף
 ואתבא יתיב לנא ית כל בשתא די
 גמלנא יתה:

13 וישאו אתו בניו ארצה פנען ויקברו אתו במערת
 שדה המכפלה אשר קנה אברהם את השדה לאחותו
 לקבר מאת עפרן החתי על פני ממרא: 14 וישב יוסף
 מצרימה הוא ואחיו וכל העלים אתו לקבר את אביו
 אחרי קברו את אביו: 15 ויראו אחיו יוסף כימת
 אביהם ויאמרו לו ישטמנו יוסף והשב ישב לנו את
 כל הרעה אשר גמלנו אתו:

— RASHI —

במיתתו אצל יוסף, שהיו רגילים לסעד עמו על שלחנו
 של יוסף והיה מקרבן בשביל כבוד אביו, ומשמט יעקב
 לא קרבן: לו ישטמנו. שמא ישטמנו. "לו" מתחלק
 לענינים הרבה: יש "לו" משמש בלשון בקשה ולשון
 "הלאו", בגון: "לו יהי כדברך"¹³⁷, "לו שמעני"¹³⁸, "ולו
 הואלנו"¹³⁹, "לו מתנו"¹⁴⁰. ויש "לו" משמש בלשון "אם"
 "אולי", בגון: "לו חכמו"¹⁴¹, "לוא הקשבת למצותי"¹⁴²,
 "ולוא אנכי שקל על פיי"¹⁴³. ויש "לו" משמש בלשון
 "שמא": "לו ישטמנו", ואין לו עוד דומה במקרא, והוא
 לשון "אולי", כמו¹⁴⁴: "אלי לא תלך האשה אחרי", לשון
 "שמא" הוא. ויש "אולי" לשון בקשה, בגון: "אולי יראה
 ה' בעניי"¹⁴⁵, "אולי ישיב ה' אותי"¹⁴⁶, הרי הוא כמו¹⁴⁷:
 "לו יהי כדברך". ויש "אולי" לשון "אם": "אולי יש
 חמשים צדיקים"¹⁴⁸:

13 וישאו אתו בניו. ולא בני בניו, שכה צום: אל ישאו
 מטתי לא איש מצרי, ולא אחד מבניכם, שהם מבנות
 כנען, אלא אתם. וקבע להם מקום, שלשה למזרח,
 וכן לארבע רוחות, וכסדרן למסע מנה של דגלים
 נקבעו כאן. לוי לא ישא, שהוא עתיד לשאת את
 הארון, ויוסף לא ישא, שהוא מלך, מנשה ואפרים יהיו
 תחתיים, וזהו¹⁴⁹: "איש על דגלו באתת", באות שמסר
 להם אביהם לשא משתו: 14 הוא ואחיו וכל העלים
 אתו. בחזרתן כאן הקדים אחיו למצרים העולים אתו,
 ובהליכתן הקדים מצרים לאחיו, שנאמר¹⁵⁰: "ויעלו
 אתו כל עבדי פרעה" וגו', ואחר כך¹⁵¹: "כל בית יוסף
 ואחיו". אלא, לפי שראו הכבוד שעשו מלכי כנען,
 שתלו בתריהם בארוננו של יעקב, נהגו בהם כבוד:
 15 ויראו אחי יוסף כימת אביהם. מהו "ויראו"? הכירו

135. במדבר ב, ב. 136. פסוק ז. 137. פסוק ח. 138. בראשית ל, לד. 139. בראשית כג, יג. 140. יהושע ז, ז. 141. במדבר יד, ב. 142. דברים לב, ט. 143. ישעיה מח, יח. 144. שמואל ב, יב. 145. בראשית כד, לט. 146. שמואל ב, טו, יב. 147. יהושע יד, יב. 148. בראשית ל, כד. 149. בראשית יח, כד.

After Jacob's death, Joseph ceased doing this. When Joseph's brothers perceived this change in his behavior now that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph is nursing hatred towards us. If so, he will surely repay us for all the wrong we did to him!"

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

13 He...struck Esau on the head, killing him: Accord-
 ing to the sages, Esau's head rolled into the Cave of
 Machpelah and remained buried in Isaac's bosom.¹⁵³
 This seems odd, considering the law that a wicked
 person may not be buried near a saint.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, God
 performed a miracle to remove the corpse of a false
 prophet who had been thrown into the grave of the
 saintly Elisha.¹⁵⁵

As we have seen,¹⁵⁶ Esau stemmed from a lofty source
 in the realm of holiness. Esau's latent holiness, being
 his greatest asset, is symbolized by his head, while
 his wicked, lowly behavior is symbolized by his body.
 Thus, once his head was isolated from the wickedness
 of his body, it was indeed suitable to rest in Isaac's
 proximity.¹⁵⁷

153. Targum Yonatan; Sotah 13a; Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 39, end. 154. Sanhedrin 47a; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 362:5. 155. 2 Kings 13:21; Sanhedrin 47a and Rashi ad loc. 156. See Overview to parashat Vayishlach. 157. Likutei Sichot, vol. 15, p. 193.

13 The sons that he had specified **carried him to Canaan** in the formation he had specified.¹⁴⁷

When they arrived in Hebron and were about to bury him in the Machpelah cave, Esau came and protested, saying to them, “Hebron is known as Kiryat Arba because there are only sepulchers for four couples in the Machpelah Cave.¹⁴⁸ So far, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebecca have been buried there; since Jacob and I are both sons of Isaac, we should inherit the remaining sepulcher and divide it equally between us. Jacob has already used his half of it to bury Leah, so the remaining half belongs to me!” They replied to him, “You sold it!”¹⁴⁹ He said to them, “I may have sold my birthright, but I did not sell my heir’s right!” They replied, “Yes, you did!” He said to them, “Show me the document of sale.” They replied to him, “The document is in Egypt.” They consulted among themselves, saying, “Who should go to fetch it? Let Naphtali go, because he is swift as a deer.” So Naphtali set out for Egypt, while everyone else prepared to await his return. Among those present was Chushim, the son of Dan, who was hard-of-hearing. He asked the others, “What is happening?” They told him, “Esau is preventing the burial until Naphtali returns from Egypt.” He retorted, “Is my grandfather to lie there in disgrace until Naphtali returns from Egypt?” He took a club and struck Esau on the head, killing him.¹⁵⁰ This fulfilled Rebecca’s prophecy that both her sons would die around the same time and both be buried on the same day.¹⁵¹

With Esau now out of the way, Jacob’s sons **buried him in the cave of the Field of the Machpelah, the field facing Mamre, which Abraham had bought as a burial property from Ephron the Hittite.**

14 And after he buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt together with his brothers, followed by all those who had gone up with him for his father’s burial (see Figure 48). Whereas the Egyptians had preceded Joseph’s brothers on the way up from Egypt to Canaan,¹⁵² once they witnessed the great honor paid to Jacob by the Canaanite kings, they respectfully let his sons take the lead on the trip back.

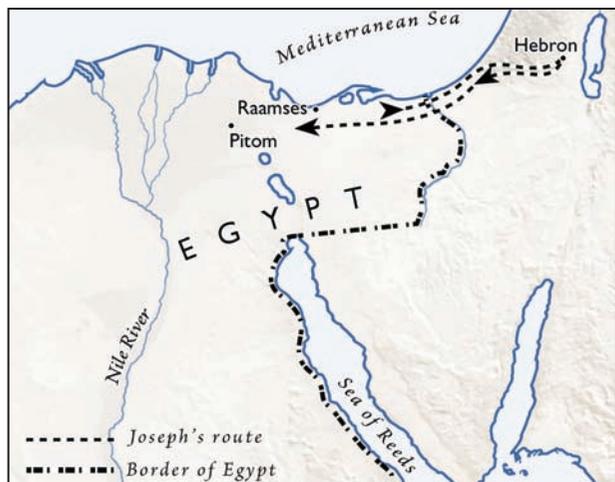


Figure 48: Joseph Buries Jacob.

The Aftermath of Jacob’s Death

15 While Jacob was alive, Joseph regularly invited his brothers to dine with him and fraternized with them in other ways as well, as a sign of respect for his father.

147. Above, 49:32. 148. Above, 23:2. 149. Above, 33:15. 150. *Sotah* 16a; Rashi on 49:21, above. 151. Above, 27:45. 152. v. 8, above.

— ONKELOS —

16 ופקידו לות יוסף למימר אבוקר פקד קדם מוטה למימר: 17 כדון תימרון ליוסף בבועו שבוק בען לחובי אחיק וחסטאהון ארי בשתא גמלוך וכען שבוק בען לחובי עבדי אלהא דאבוקר ובכא יוסף במלותהון עמה: 18 ואגלו אף אחוהי ונפלו קדמוהי ואמרו הא אנהנא לך לעבדין: 19 ואמר להון יוסף לא תדחלון ארי דחלא די? אנא: 20 ואתון חשבתון עלי בישא מן קדם ? אתחשבת לטבא בדיל למעבד כיומא הדין לקימא עם סגני: 21 וכען לא תדחלון אנא אזון יתכוון וית טפלכון ונחם יתהון ומליל תנחומין על לבהון:

16 וַיִּצְוֵנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּסָף לֵאמֹר אָבִיךָ צִוָּה לְפָנַי מוֹתוֹ לֵאמֹר: 17 כֹּה־תֹאמְרוּ לְיוֹסֵף אֲנָא שָׂא נָא פִּשְׁעֵנוּ אַחִיךָ וְחַטָּאתָם כִּי־רָעָה גַּמְלוּךָ וְעַתָּה שָׂא נָא לְפִשְׁעֵנוּ עַבְדֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ וַיִּבְךְּ יוֹסֵף בְּדַבְרָם אֵלָיו: 18 וַיִּלְכוּ גַם־אֶחָיו וַיִּפְּלוּ לְפָנָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִנְנּוּ לְךָ לְעַבְדִּים: 19 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף אֶל־תִּירְאוּ כִּי הִתַּחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי: 20 וְאַתֶּם חִשַּׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֱלֹהִים חִשְׁבָה לְטוֹבָה לְמַעַן עֲשֶׂה בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְהַחֲיִיתַי עִם־רַב: 21 שְׁבִיעֵי 21 וְעַתָּה אֶל־תִּירְאוּ אֲנֹכִי אֲכַלְכֵּל אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־טַפְכֶּם וַיִּנַּחֵם אוֹתָם וַיְדַבֵּר עִלְלָבָם:

— RASHI —

במקומו אני, בתמיהה: אם הייתי רוצה להרע לכם, כלום אני יכול, והלא אתם בכלכם חשבתם עלי רעה והקדווש ברוך הוא חשבה לטובה, והיאך אני לבדי יכול להרע לכם?: 21 וידבר על לבם. דברים המתקבלים על הלב: עד שלא ירדתם לכאן היו מרננים עלי שאני עבד, ועל ידיכם נודע שאני בן חורין, ואם אני הורג אתכם, מה הבריות אומרות: בת של בחורים ראָה ונשתבח בהם ואמר אחי הם, ולבסוף הרג אותם, יש לך אֵח שְׁהוֹרֵג אֶת אֶחָיו? דבר אחר: עשָׂה נרות לא יכלו לכבות נר אֶחָד, וכו'.

16 וַיִּצְוֵנוּ אֵל יוֹסֵף. כמו 149: "וַיִּצְוֵנוּ אֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", צוּה לְמוֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן לְהוֹחִים אֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֵף זֶה — וַיִּצְוֵנוּ אֵל שְׁלוֹחֵם לְהוֹחִים אֵל יוֹסֵף, לֹא מֵר לֹא כֵן. וְאֵת מִי צוּוּ? אֵת בְּנֵי בְּלֵהָה שֶׁהָיוּ רְגִילִין אֲצִלוּ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר 150: "וְהוּא נֵעַר אֵת בְּנֵי בְּלֵהָה": אָבִיךָ צוּה. שְׁנוּ בְּדָבָר מִפְּנֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם, כִּי לֹא צוּה יַעֲקֹב בֶּן, שְׁלֹא נֶחֱשַׁד יוֹסֵף בְּעֵינָיו: 17 שָׂא נָא לְפִשְׁעֵנוּ עַבְדֵי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ. אִם אָבִיךָ מֵת, אֲלֵהָיו קָיָם, וְהֵם עַבְדָּיו: 18 וַיִּלְכוּ גַם אֶחָיו. מוֹסֵף עַל הַשְּׁלִיחוֹת: 19 כִּי הִתַּחַת אֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי. שְׁמָא

150. שמות י, יג. 151. בראשית לו, ב.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

20 Though you intended me harm, God intended it for the good, in order to...preserve the lives of many people: In this verse, Joseph first explains how darkness can be turned to light:

Though you intended me harm, God intended it for the good. We must look beyond the veneer of "harm" to its true purpose, which is to be transformed "for the good."

Joseph then explains why light must emerge from darkness:

To preserve the lives of many people: The word used here for "many" (rav) is associated with the realm of evil. Esau used this term when referring to his possessions, implying that although he had "many" possessions, it was still not enough to satisfy his greed.¹⁶⁴ By using this "unholy" term, Joseph revealed the value of transforming evil. As we have seen, evil contains within it lofty sparks of holiness that possess plentiful energies—"many." Through our holy interactions with evil, we liberate these energies and use them to power

our pursuit of Godliness.¹⁶⁵

As we have seen, even sin can retroactively contribute to God's plan when, as we repent, it prompts us to achieve a deeper connection with God than we possessed prior to sinning. Nevertheless, the decision to sin remains a wrong one, and we must take full responsibility for it and fully regret having intentionally gone against God's wishes.

In contrast, the selling of Joseph was not a negative means to a positive end—it was the end that God intended. Although, as in all other sins, the brothers correctly regretted their evil intention—for which they were punished—Joseph told them that they did not need to feel distressed about the actual ramifications of their sin vis-à-vis him. This explains why Joseph reminded his brothers of their harmful intentions although his desire was to comfort and reassure them.¹⁶⁶

21 He thus comforted them: As we have seen,¹⁶⁷ the Midrash compares our sins against God to the sin of

164. See Rashi on 33:11, above. 165. Likutei Sichot, vol. 25, pp. 283-284. 166. Sefer HaMa'amarim Melukat, vol. 5, pp. 260-261. 167. On 47:12, above.

16 So the sons of Leah, with whom Joseph had originally been in conflict, **had this message conveyed to Joseph** via the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, with whom he had always been more friendly:¹⁵⁸ **“Before he died, your father gave this instruction:**

17 **“This is what you must say to Joseph: “Please now forgive your brothers’ crime and their transgression of having treated you harshly.” ’ ’** In fact, Jacob had never issued any such instruction, because he never suspected that Joseph harbored any animosity toward his brothers. The brothers lied in order to promote peace in the family. The brothers continued: **“So now, please forgive this crime of ours.** If you will not forgive us in deference to your father’s command, because he is gone, then forgive us because we, like you, are **the servants of the God of your father,** who is eternal.” **As the messengers spoke to him, Joseph wept.**

18 After the sons of Bilhah delivered their message, **his other brothers and also his stepmother Bilhah went in, and they all threw themselves at his feet and said, “We are hereby your servants!”** Bilhah thereby fulfilled her part of Joseph’s second dream.¹⁵⁹

19 **But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in place of God?!**

20 **Though all of you together intended me harm, God intended it for the good, in order to bring things to their present state and to save the lives of many people.** How, then, can I, who am only one person, harm you, when it is clear that God wants to do you well? If ten lights cannot extinguish one light, how can one light extinguish ten lights?

- ◆ *Seventh Reading* 21 **So now, have no fear. I will provide for you and your young children.” He thus comforted them. He also spoke to them reassuringly,** saying, “Look. Before you came here, people used to say I was born a slave, but when you came, it became clear that I was of high birth. If I kill you, everyone will say that you are not really my brothers—for no one kills his own brothers—and that I just pretended you were my brothers in order to deceive everyone about my lineage.” Nonetheless, although Joseph thus calmed his brothers’ fears, he did not resume fraternizing with them in the same ways he had when Jacob was alive.

This change in behavior was noticed by the Egyptians. They, too, had shown respect to Jacob’s sons during his lifetime in gratitude for Jacob’s having ended the famine and restored material prosperity to the country. Once he died, however, taking their cue from Joseph’s behavior, they stopped venerating the brothers. The brothers correctly saw in this change of attitude the beginnings of the Egyptians’ assertion of their superiority over Jacob’s family, a portent of God’s promise to Abraham that his progeny would be enslaved in a foreign land.¹⁶⁰ So, even though the brothers themselves did not endure actual servitude during their lifetimes,¹⁶¹ they began to be apprehensive.¹⁶²

A CLOSER LOOK

[20] **Though you intended me harm:** This, the final verse of the sixth reading of *parashat Vayechi*, recalls the message of the first verse of this reading, i.e., that through repentance darkness is transformed to light.¹⁶³

158. Above, 37:2. 159. Above, 37:9-10. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 35, p. 157, note 10. 160. Above, 15:13. 161. Exodus 1:6-8; Rashi on Exodus 6:16. 162. Rashi on 47:28, above. *Sefer HaSichot* 5749, vol. 1, pp. 170-171. 163. See on 49:27, above.

— ONKELOS —
 22 ויִתֵּיב יוֹסֵף בְּמִצְרַיִם הוּא וּבֵית אָבִיו וַיְחִי יוֹסֵף מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִים: 23 וַחֲזָא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי תְּלִיתָאִין אָף בְּנֵי מְכִיר בְּרַ מְנַשֶּׁה אֲתִילִידוּ וְרַבֵּי יוֹסֵף: 24 וַאֲמַר יוֹסֵף לְאֲחֹהֵי אָנָּא מֵאִית וַיִּי מְדַכְּר דְּכִיר יִתְּכוּן וַיִּסַּק יִתְּכוּן מִן אֲרַעָא הֲדָא לְאֲרַעָא דִּי קַיִים לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֶקֶב: 25 וְאוּמֵי יוֹסֵף יֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִימְרַ מְדַכְּר דְּכִיר יִי יִתְּכוּן וְתִסְקוּן יֵת גְּרַמֵי מִקְּא: 26 וּמֵיִת יוֹסֵף בְּרַ מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִין וַחֲנֻטוּ יֵתָה וְשְׁמוּהֵי בְּאֲרוּנָא בְּמִצְרַיִם:

22 וַיֵּשֶׁב יוֹסֵף בְּמִצְרַיִם הוּא וּבֵית אָבִיו וַיְחִי יוֹסֵף מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִים:
 מִפְטִיד 23 וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף לְאֶפְרַיִם בְּנֵי שְׁלֹשִׁים נָם בְּנֵי מְכִיר בֶן־מְנַשֶּׁה יְלָדוּ עַל־בְּרַבֵּי יוֹסֵף: 24 וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל־אֲחָיו אֲנֹכִי מֵת וְאֱלֹהִים פָּקְדוּ יִפְקְדוּ אֶתְכֶם וְהִעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֶקֶב: 25 וַיִּשְׁבַּע יוֹסֵף אֶת־בְּנָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר פָּקְדוּ יִפְקְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם וְהִעֲלִתֶם אֶת־עַצְמוֹתַי מִזֶּה: 26 וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף בֶּן־מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִי שָׁנִים וַיַּחְנְטוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּישָׂם

בְּאֲרוֹן בְּמִצְרַיִם: חֹק

פ"ה פסוקים. פ"ה אל פה סימן.

כסום פסוקי דספר בראשית א'תקל"ד. א"ך לד' סימן. וחציו וע"ל חרב"ך תחי"ה. ופרשיותיו י"ב. ז"ה שמי לעלם סימן. וסדריו מ"ג. וידידי"ה סימן. ופרקין ג'. ה' חננו ל"ך קיינו סימן. מנין הפתוחות מ"ג והסתומות מ"ח. הכל צ"א פרשיות. צ"א אתה וכל העם אשר ברגליך סימן.

Its customary at the end of the public reading of any of the Five Books of Moses for the congregation (followed by the reader) to say:

חֹק חֹק וְנִתְחַזַּק!

— RASHI —

חסלת פרשת ויחי

23 על ברבֵי יוסף. כְּתִרְגוּמוֹ: גְּדֹלָן בֵּין בְּרַבָּיו:

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

them, we ask God to inspire us without causing us to suffer.

- Just as Joseph comforted his brothers by explaining the inner purpose of their sin, so we ask God

to reveal the purpose of our sins, i.e., that we should realize that the inner purpose of our sins is that we should experience the advantage that is gained through repentance. Once the inner pur-

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[23] **The children of Machir son of Manasseh, were born...between his knees:** According to one opinion, this means that Joseph held his great-grandchildren on his lap during their circumcision. Though their circumcisions took place eight days after their birth, the Torah still refers to them as being “born on Joseph’s lap,” alluding to the fact that the Divine soul enters the newborn’s body during the circumcision.¹⁷⁷ Circumcision is thus considered the spiritual birth of the child.

This interpretation also supports a halachic ruling of Rabbi Moshe Sofer (known as the *Chatam Sofer*):

According to Jewish custom, one person should not receive the honor of holding the child during the circumcision for more than one child per family.¹⁷⁸ This reflects the law restricting priests from offering the incense in the Temple more than once.¹⁷⁹ Rabbi Moshe Sofer, however, rules that the leading rabbi of a city is exempt from this restriction,¹⁸⁰ comparing this to the privilege of the high priest to offer the incense whenever he wishes.¹⁸¹ Thus Joseph, the ruler of the land, which can be compared to the leading rabbi of a city, was justified in receiving this honor for the children, i.e., more than one child, of Machir.¹⁸²

177. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* (second version) 4:2. 178. Rabbi Moshe Isserles, *Yoreh Deah*, 265:11. 179. *Yoma* 26a. 180. *Responsa, Orach Chaim* 198-199. 181. *Yoma* 14a. 182. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, p. 247.

Joseph's Death

22 Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived to be one hundred and ten years old.

- ◆ **Maftir 23 Joseph lived long enough to see Ephraim's great-grandchildren, and even longer still, for the children of Machir son of Manasseh—Manasseh's grandchildren—were not only born during Joseph's lifetime—Joseph also lived long enough to teach them, as he sat them between his knees.**¹⁶⁸

24 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely remember you and take you up from this land, to the land that He promised by oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

25 And Joseph bound the sons of Israel by an oath to bind their descendants by an oath, saying, "God will surely remember you and your descendants, and when He does, you shall have them take up my bones, together with yours, from here." Joseph had heard this prophetic expression ("God will surely remember you") from Jacob and now passed it on to his brothers, who in turn passed it on to their progeny. Joseph did not enjoin his brothers to bury him in the Land of Israel, as his father had enjoined him, for he knew that Pharaoh would not allow this to be done. Since Joseph had been viceroy of Egypt, Pharaoh had to respect the oath he made to his father. The brothers, however, were only resident aliens, and as such had no prestige of office. They told their progeny to take their remains with them when they would eventually leave.¹⁶⁹

26 Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years, and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. The Egyptians sunk the coffin into the Nile River,¹⁷⁰ thinking that its presence in the river would bring blessing to its waters.¹⁷¹

Its customary at the end of the public reading of any of the Five Books of Moses for the congregation (followed by the reader) to say:

Be strong! Be strong! And let us strengthen each other!

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Vayechi* may be found on p. 361.



CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

the brothers against Joseph. The Jewish people thus say to God: "O that You would be as a brother to me," meaning "Comfort me as Joseph comforted his brothers who had done him harm."¹⁷²

- Just as Joseph provided for his brothers and even gave them the best of the land,¹⁷³ we ask God to do the same despite our sins.
- Just as Joseph did not begrudge his brothers, even in his heart, and instead sought to help them atone for their sin,¹⁷⁴ we ask God to cleanse us of our sins without causing us to suffer.¹⁷⁵
- Just as Joseph inspired his brothers to repent,¹⁷⁶ we ask God to inspire us to repent. But whereas Joseph inspired them to repent by tormenting

^{168.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 243-246. ^{169.} Rashi on Exodus 13:19. ^{170.} Rashi on Exodus 32:4. ^{171.} *Sotah* 13b. ^{172.} Song of Songs 8:1 and Rashi *ad loc.* ^{173.} 47:11, above. ^{174.} See on 42:9, above. ^{175.} See *Y. Makot* 2:6. ^{176.} See *Kli Yekar* on 42:16, above.

pose of the sins is revealed, they are transformed to merits.¹⁸³

23 Joseph also lived long enough to teach them: A father and a grandfather are obligated to educate their children and grandchildren in Torah.¹⁸⁴ But according to the predominant view in Jewish law, a great-grandfather does not bear the same obligation to a great-grandchild.¹⁸⁵

Nevertheless, we can derive from Joseph's behavior that if we merit to live long enough to see our great-grandchildren, we should, as Joseph did, study Torah with them (especially since according to some opinions, we are obligated to do so¹⁸⁶). And if we are incapable of doing so—either for lack of strength or ability—we should donate generously to the Torah schools in which our great-grandchildren study.¹⁸⁷

26 He was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt: It seems odd that the Torah would conclude the book of Genesis with the seemingly disheartening imagery of Joseph's death and burial in depraved Egypt. Upon further reflection, however, we see that this verse not only contains a positive message but in fact sums up the message of the entire Book of Genesis:

Genesis primarily recounts the history of our patriarchs and matriarchs. These were men and women who, as we have seen, were above material concerns and were inextricably bound to God and His plan for creation throughout their lives. They were therefore unaffected by the Divine concealment that pervades our world.

We, their descendants, live within a different, much lower consciousness—the consciousness of exile. But as their heirs, we inherit some measure of their transcendence. And it is with that power that we are able to

succeed in fulfilling the Divine mission laid out in the next book of the Torah, Exodus. In Exodus, we enter exile, receive the Torah, and begin the process of building a home for God out of this world.

To provide this sustenance and inspiration to us, our ancestors had to live their holy lives in a quasi-state of exile. This would lessen the disparity between our reality and theirs and enable us to draw sustenance from their lives. We thus read at the end of Genesis about Jacob and his family's descent into the Egyptian exile. Although they were never enslaved and lived a good life both materially and spiritually, they were in "exile," banished from the Holy Land. By maintaining spiritual dominion over Egypt during their exile, they gave us the strength to dominate the spiritual darkness of our own exile.

Just before the era of the patriarchs was to end and the real exile about to begin, Joseph called over his brothers and told them not to worry: "God will surely remember you and take you up from this land"—because exile cannot dominate the Jewish people. To the contrary: the very purpose of the exile is to challenge us to overcome it and grow in the process.

At this point in the narrative—after the inspiration generated by the lives of the patriarchs, God's promises to them, the descent of Jacob to Egypt, his blessings to the tribes, and Joseph's promise to his brethren—the Torah gives us the final piece of information that will sustain us throughout our exile:

Joseph was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. We are not alone; Joseph, the ruler over Egypt, is with us reminding us that we too can "rule over Egypt," transcending exile and transforming it into redemption.¹⁸⁸

☞ A CLOSER LOOK ☞

[25] Take up my bones: Some commentators maintain that only Joseph's bones were taken up from Egypt and that his flesh had decomposed.¹⁸⁹ However, as we read in the next verse, Joseph was embalmed, which means that his flesh was pre-

served.¹⁹⁰ Rather, we must conclude that although Joseph's remains are referred to as "bones,"¹⁹¹ in actuality his entire remains including his flesh is buried in Shechem.¹⁹²

183. *Sefer HaMa'amarim Melukat*, vol. 5, pp. 262-263. 184. Deuteronomy 4:9; *Kidushin* 30a. 185. See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Talmud Torah*, 1:8-9 and sources cited there. 186. *Siftei Kohan, Yoreh Deah* 245:1. 187. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 20, pp. 247-248. 188. *Siftei Kohan* on Exodus 13:19. 189. *Zohar*, end of our *parasha*. See also *Siftei Kohan* and *Tzror HaMor* on 50:2 above. 190. See *Sotah* 13b, Maharsha and *Iyun Yaakov ad loc*. 191. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, p. 477, note 29 and sub-notes * and **. 192. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 474 ff, vol. 30, pp. 249 ff.



Vayechi

הפטרות
Haftarot



Haftarah for Vayechi

1 Kings 2:1-12

In *parashat Vayechi*, Jacob admonishes and exhorts his children before his death. In this *haftarah*, King David exhorts his son and heir, Solomon.

2:1 When the time of David's death drew near, he instructed his son Solomon as follows: **2** "I am about to go the way of all the earth, therefore be strong and be a man. **3** You must keep the charge of God, your God, walking in His ways, and observing His rules, commandments, ordinances, and testimonies, as written in the Torah of Moses, so that you may succeed in whatever you do and wherever you turn. **4** Then God will fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your descendants guard their way, walking before Me sincerely with all their heart and all their soul, there will never cease to be one of your line on the throne of Israel.'

5 You also know what Yoav the son of Tzeruya did to me when he showed the other officers of the army the incriminating letter I had sent him through Uriah,³⁵ and what he did to my former adversaries, the two commanders of Israel's forces, Avner son of Ner³⁶ and Amasa son of Yeter:³⁷ he killd them after they had made peace with me, thus shedding the blood of war in time of peace, when they were off guard. In Amasa's case, Yoav put the blood of war on the sword hanging on the belt around his loins by tricking Amasa with it: when he went to meet him, he turned the sheath upside down so the sword would fall out of it. When he then picked it up, Amasa assumed he had no evil intent, and was therefore not prepared for Yoav's attack. Thus, the blood of war was also upon the shoes on Yoav's feet. **6** So act in accordance with your wisdom, and do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace by dying a natural death.

7 But be kind to the sons of Barzilai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for they befriended me when I fled from your brother Avshalom.³⁸

8 And here with you is Shimi son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bachurim, who cursed me with an explicit curse on the day I went to Machanayim.³⁹ When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by God, saying, 'I will not kill you by the sword.'⁴⁰

2:1 וַיִּקְרְבוּ יְמֵי־דָוִד לָמוּת וַיִּצַו אֶת־שְׁלֹמֹה בְּנֵו
לֵאמֹר: 2 אֲנֹכִי הֹלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וְחֹזֶקֶת
וְהֵייתָ לְאִישׁ: 3 וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו לְשָׁמֵר חֻקָּיו מִצְוֹתָיו
וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְעֲדוּתָיו כַּכְּתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה לְמַעַן
תִּשְׁכַּל אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
תִּפְנֶה שָׁם: 4 לְמַעַן יִקָּים יְהוָה אֶת־דְּבָרוֹ אֲשֶׁר
דִּבֶּר עָלַי לֵאמֹר אִם־יִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנֵיךָ אֶת־דִּרְכֶּם
לְלַכֵּת לִפְנֵי בְּאֵמַת כָּכֵל־לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשָׁם
לֵאמֹר לֹא־יִכְרַת לְךָ אִישׁ מֵעַל כֶּסֶף יִשְׂרָאֵל:
5 וְגַם אִתָּה יִדְעֶנָּה אֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לִי יוֹאָב בֶּן־נֶר
צְרוּיָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְשְׁנֵי־שָׂרֵי צְבָאוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְאֲבִנָּר בֶּן־נֶר וְלַעֲמִשָּׂא בֶן־יִתֵּר וַיְהִרְגֵם
וַיִּשֶׂם דְּמֵי־מִלְחָמָה בְּשָׁלוֹם וַיִּתֵּן דְּמֵי מִלְחָמָה
בְּחַגְרָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּמַתְנָיו וַבִּגְעֵלוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּרַגְלָיו:
6 וְעָשִׂיתָ כַּחֲכַמְתָּךְ וְלֹא־תוֹרֵד שׂוֹיְבָתוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם
שָׂאֵל: 7 וּלְבָנֵי בַרְזִילַי הַגִּלְעָדִי תַעֲשֶׂה־חֶסֶד וְהִיוּ
בְּאִכְלֵי שֻׁלְחָנְךָ כִּי־כֹל קָרְבוּ אֵלַי בְּכַרְחֵי מַפְנֵי
אֲבִשָׁלוֹם אַחִיד: 8 וְהַגֵּה עִמָּךְ שְׁמֹעִי בֶן־נֶרָא
בֶּן־הַיְמִינִי מִבְּחָרִים וְהוּא קָלְלָנִי קָלְלָה נְמוּצָת
בַּיּוֹם לְכַתֵּי מַחְנֵים וְהוּא־יָרַד לְקַרְאֵתִי הַיַּרְדֵּן
וְאִשְׁבַּע לוֹ בַּיהוָה לֵאמֹר אִם־אֶמְיתָךְ בַּחֶרֶב:

35. 2 Samuel 11; *Midrash Tanchuma, Ma'asei* 12. 36. 2 Samuel 2:12-38. 37. *Ibid.* 20:4-13. 38. *Ibid.* 17:27-29. 39. *Ibid.* 16:5-9. 40. *Ibid.* 19:17-24.

9 But now, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man: see if he has incurred the death penalty in some other way; if so, you will know what to do to him, and you must bring his gray head down to the grave with blood.”

10 David then lay down with his fathers, and he was buried in the City of David.

11 The length of David’s reign over Israel was forty years: in Hebron he reigned seven years and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12 Solomon then sat on the throne of David his father, and his

rule was firmly established, for he was given mastery over spiritual creatures, as well.

9 וְעַתָּה אֵל־תִּנְקְהוּ כִּי אִישׁ חָכָם אַתָּה וַיְדַעְתָּ
 אֶת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה־לּוֹ וְהוֹרַדְתָּ אֶת־שִׁיבְתוֹ
 בְּדָם שְׂאוֹל: 10 וַיִּשְׁכַּב דָּוִד עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקְבְּרוּ
 בְּעִיר דָּוִד: 11 וְהַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר מָלַךְ דָּוִד עַל־
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בְּחֶבְרוֹן מָלַךְ שִׁבְעַ
 שָׁנִים וּבִירוּשָׁלַם מָלַךְ שְׁלֹשִׁים וְשָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים:
 12 וּשְׁלֹמֹה יָשָׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד אָבִיו וְהָיָה
 מַלְכָתּוֹ מְאֹד:



Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

