The mission of **Torah Is Geshmack** is to bring out the richness and enjoyment of Torah for everyone, and in doing so bring them closer to Hashem.

פרשת מקץ תשפ״ז

From חלום to לחם

Dovid Kopel

At the end of וישב, we leave יוסף הצדיק in the depths of מצרים. He has guarded the קדושה of his ברית, even at the cost of his בגד, his position in the house of פוטיפר, and ultimately his freedom. The כתונת given to him by יעקב is long gone. But the תורה of בית יעקב remains with him.

Then מקץ begins, and everything changes. יוסף is brought from the בור and raised to become משנה למלך. פרעה gives him בגדי שש, a golden chain, his ring, and even a new name. He marries אסנת, the daughter of פוטי פרע כהן און. Outwardly, he now appears to be part of the very heart of מצרים. If his brothers were to see him, what would they recognize of the יוסף they once knew?

There is another question, perhaps more difficult. יוסף now has tremendous authority. Yet years pass, and we hear nothing of any message reaching יעקב. The תורה does not explain the silence. Meanwhile, his father continues mourning. How are we to understand this?

And when יוסף names his firstborn מנשה, he says that הקב״ה has made him forget כָּל בֵּית אָבִי, all his father's house. Forget? This is the יוסף to whom יעקב transmitted his תורה. How could he speak in such a way? Especially when, only a short time later, the תורה tells us how much he remembers.

Then his brothers arrive. יוסף recognizes them immediately. They do not recognize him. He speaks harshly, calls them spies, holds them for three days, keeps שמעון, returns their money, and demands that they bring בנימין. We know who is standing before them. They do not. What is יוסף trying to accomplish through all of this?

> וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי נַשַּׁנִי אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל עֲמָלִי וְאֵת כָּל בֵּית אָבִי (בראשית מא:נא)

"And יוסף called the name of the firstborn מנשה, for Hashem has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."

We must understand these words. What could יוסף possibly mean when he says that he has forgotten בית אביו?

And immediately after recognizing his brothers, יוסף remembers the חלומות and calls them מְרַגְּלִים אַתֶּם spies. Why this accusation? Why does he say they came לִרְאוֹת אֶת עֶרְוַת הָאָרֶץ, to see the vulnerability of the land?

Perhaps the תורה is directing our attention to something we ourselves must learn. There is what a person sees, and there is what he understands. An outward לבוש may be before our eyes while the person within remains hidden. Let us follow יוסף from וישב into מקץ and see how these questions begin to come together.

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The Mystery of the חלום

In וישב, it is יוסף who is introduced as the בעל החלומות. His brothers' אלומות bow before his; the sun, moon, and eleven stars bow before him. The dreams become a source of terrible jealousy within בית יעקב. But notice something important. יוסף relates the dreams. It is the brothers and יעקב who speak about what they might mean. At this stage, יוסף is the dreamer, not yet the פותר חלומות.

Only in מצרים do we first see יוסף interpreting dreams: those of the שר המשקים and שר האופים. His interpretation comes true. Yet the שר המשקים forgets him.[1] Two years later, when פרעה dreams, that forgotten encounter becomes the means of bringing יוסף out of the בור. We usually look at these dreams as something that required a פתרון. Perhaps we might also ask what the dreams were meant to accomplish. Was their purpose only to reveal the famine, or also to place יוסף where he could save the lives of others?

There is something significant about חלומות in the תורה. The first explicit חלום is not given to one of the אבות. It is given to אבימלך.[2] He has taken שרה, and הקב״ה warns him in a dream that she is married. אבימלך protests that he acted בתם לבב, with a sincere heart. הקב״ה acknowledges that He prevented him from touching her, but still commands him to return her and seek the תפילה of אברהם. Why is אבימלך warned only after taking שרה? Why through a חלום? And why does the dream itself not complete the תיקון?

A חלום can contain a clear message from הקב״ה, yet the person receiving it still has בחירה. אבימלך argues his position. Later, בלעם receives a dream warning, yet still seeks a way to obtain what he wants. But there is another difficulty. Why should such a revelation be given to someone outside בית אברהם?

Perhaps the first חלום is not primarily about the recipient at all. It protects שרה and the future of בית אברהם. The dream to לבן restrains him in his pursuit of יעקב; the warnings to בלעם place limits upon a danger to כלל ישראל. By contrast, the חלום of יעקב reveals a promise about his own future. We might distinguish between a חלום revealing a destiny and a חלום protecting the path toward that destiny. If so, we return to פרעה with a new question: whose future are his dreams really serving?

The חרטומים cannot give פרעה a satisfying פתרון. יוסף explains the seven years of abundance and the seven years of famine, and then tells פרעה how to prepare. פרעה is astonished. But what exactly has he seen in יוסף? Is it only the ability to interpret the dream?

> אַחֲרֵי הוֹדִיעַ אֱלֹקִים אוֹתְךָ אֶת כָּל זֹאת אֵין נָבוֹן וְחָכָם כָּמוֹךָ (בראשית מא:לט)

"Since Hashem has made all this known to you, there is none as discerning and wise as you."

Why does פרעה call him an איש נבון וחכם? What has יוסף shown beyond the ability to foretell what will happen?[3]

And there is another striking connection. יוסף's first dream, back in בית יעקב, concerned grain. Now grain is the very thing that raises him to greatness in מצרים. Have we simply returned to the beginning, or has יוסף himself become someone different?

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The New Position of יוסף

The תורה gives us an extraordinary description of יוסף's new position. פרעה declares:

> אַתָּה תִּהְיֶה עַל בֵּיתִי וְעַל פִּיךָ יִשַּׁק כָּל עַמִּי רַק הַכִּסֵּא אֶגְדַּל מִמֶּךָּ (בראשית מא:מ)

"You shall be over my house, and by your word all my people shall be provided for; only by the throne will I be greater than you."

And פרעה gives him the visible signs of royal authority:

> וַיָּסַר פַּרְעֹה אֶת טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ עַל יַד יוֹסֵף וַיַּלְבֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ בִּגְדֵי שֵׁשׁ וַיָּשֶׂם רְבִד הַזָּהָב עַל צַוָּארוֹ (בראשית מא:מב)

"And פרעה removed his ring from his hand and placed it on יוסף's hand; he dressed him in fine linen and placed a gold chain around his neck."

He even places him in the מרכבת המשנה, the second chariot.[4]

פרעה also gives יוסף a new name: צָפְנַת פַּעְנֵחַ. רש״י explains it as one who reveals hidden things.[5] Other מפרשים understand it as an Egyptian title. Either way, everything about his position appears to have changed. Yet the very same פסוק concludes: וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם. The תורה continues calling him יוסף. Whatever name פרעה gives him, he remains יוסף.

His marriage to אסנת, the daughter of פוטי פרע כהן און, adds to the picture. His clothing, his name, his authority, and his household all place him in the center of Egyptian society. How can we find the יוסף of בית יעקב beneath all of these outward changes?

Perhaps the question is not merely what the new לבוש conceals. What if it also tells us something about what יוסף has become through the נסיונות of וישב?



The Names of מנשה and אפרים

Before telling us of the famine itself, the תורה relates that יוסף had two sons. It emphasizes that they were born before the years of famine, and it tells us the reasons for their names. Why are these details so important?

> וַיִּקְרָא יוֹסֵף אֶת שֵׁם הַבְּכוֹר מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי נַשַּׁנִי אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל עֲמָלִי וְאֵת כָּל בֵּית אָבִי (בראשית מא:נא)

"And יוסף called the name of the firstborn מנשה, for Hashem has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."

Why should יוסף speak about forgetting בית אביו? And why does he give this name specifically to his בכור?

It surely cannot mean that he has literally forgotten his family. The moment his brothers arrive, he knows precisely who they are. The תורה even tells us, וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף אֶת הַחֲלֹמוֹת And the פסוק does not say merely that he has forgotten the pain of his past. It says כָּל בֵּית אָבִי. There must be another way of understanding the name מנשה.

Then comes the name of his second son:

> וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּי הִפְרַנִי אֱלֹקִים בְּאֶרֶץ עָנְיִי (בראשית מא:נב)

"And the name of the second he called אפרים, *for Hashem has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."*

The first son is named for forgetting; the second for פרי, for becoming fruitful, specifically בְּאֶרֶץ עָנְיִי, in the land of his affliction. Why this order? Why does the תורה call one הבכור and the other השני?

And why, many years later, does יעקב place אפרים before מנשה? We will need to return to these names.

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The Grain, the Famine, and a Familiar ברכה

To understand this, let us return for a moment to the grain:

> וַיִּצְבֹּר יוֹסֵף בָּר כְּחוֹל הַיָּם הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד עַד כִּי חָדַל לִסְפֹּר כִּי אֵין מִסְפָּר (בראשית מא:מט)

"And יוסף *stored up grain like the sand of the sea, very much, until he ceased counting, for it was beyond number."*

The grain is described as being like the sand of the sea, so abundant that it is beyond counting. Does that language not remind us of the ברכות given to אברהם אבינו concerning his descendants?[6]

As we developed in לך לך, the words אִם תּוּכַל לִסְפֹּר are not simply a question of arithmetic. What we can count is never the whole story. We ask how many; הקב״ה knows who. And here, the grain that יוסף preserves will sustain the very descendants promised to אברהם.

Notice also the change in language. During the years of abundance, יוסף gathers בָּר, grain. When the famine comes, the people cry out for לֶחֶם, bread or food.[7] We need not assume the grain has already been baked. But there is a difference between grain stored for the future and bread that can sustain a person now.

The grain must be preserved, and when the time comes it must be joined with מים and עבודה. Only then can its potential become actual nourishment.

This brings us back to a teaching of my Rebbe about המוציא לחם מן הארץ. The earth does not produce bread. It produces wheat. Man must harvest, grind, knead, and bake. Yet the ברכה is המוציא לחם, for it is הקב״ה Who placed within the wheat the potential to become bread. Our עבודה brings that potential into פועל.[8]

And perhaps there is a רמז here. The words חלם and לחם contain the same letters, but arranged differently. So too פותר, one who interprets, and תופר, one who sews. A תופר takes separate pieces and joins them into a garment. A פותר takes images that appear disconnected and finds the one meaning within them. But יוסף's greatness cannot end with interpreting the meaning. He must do something with it.

יוסף tells פרעה that חֲלוֹם פַּרְעֹה אֶחָד הוּא. Both dreams are one. And still, the פתרון alone will not feed a single person. It must lead to preparation, to עבודה, to מעשה. Perhaps this is the movement from חלום to לחם.

The בעל החלומות of וישב has become the פותר חלומות of מקץ. פרעה calls him איש נבון וחכם because יוסף does not merely tell him what tomorrow will bring. He understands what must be done today. The גר״א ז״ל explains that חכמה, בינה, and דעת were all given to יוסף.[9] He receives what הקב״ה has shown him, understands it, and acts upon it. What began as a חלום must become something real.

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From שמירה to השפעה

There may be a deeper connection between the grain and the לחם. After אדם הראשון, חטא עץ הדעת is told בְּזֵעַת אַפֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם, by the sweat of your brow you will eat bread. Food will now require labor. And the original חטא itself involved eating: taking what was desirable despite the command of הקב״ה. The question was not merely whether something was good to eat, but whether desire would be governed by His רצון.

In וישב, יוסף is faced with a נסיון that demands precisely such restraint. He leaves his בגד rather than compromise the קדושה of his ברית. He loses his position and his freedom. But he does not surrender what הקב״ה has entrusted to him.

In מקץ, we find this same capacity taking on a different form. During the seven years of abundance, everyone could have consumed what was available in the moment. יוסף sees that today's abundance must sustain tomorrow's hunger. He preserves it rather than using it all now. Of course, hunger itself is not an עבירה, and we are not comparing it to the sinful יצה״ר. The connection is the ability to govern an immediate desire for the sake of a greater purpose.

Perhaps there is another רמז. In וישב, the תורה describes the pit: וְהַבּוֹר רֵק אֵין בּוֹ מָיִם. The word בור contains a ו׳. Now, in מקץ, יוסף gathers בר, without that ו׳. Perhaps we can suggest that the ו׳ has not simply disappeared. יוסף himself, associated with the מדה of יסוד, the sixth of the מדות of ז״א, has become the one who gathers and channels the grain. And what must be added to grain before it can become לחם? מים, the very thing absent from the בור. What was lacking must now be brought together through עבודה.

From בור to בר. From בר, with מים and עבודה, to לחם.

But this is more than a lesson about preparing food. It may express the movement from כח to פועל, and from שמירה to השפעה. The בר must be kept until it can become לחם. So too, the קדושה that יוסף guarded in וישב must eventually become capable of giving חיים to others.

This is a בחינה of יסוד. Its purpose is not simply to withhold, and not simply to give without limit. It preserves what is precious so it may be given in its proper place and time. The ברית below concerns this careful preservation of the capacity to bring forth life. The ברית above, ברית הלשון,[10] concerns how a person uses the power of speech. We will see that both have a place when יוסף meets his brothers.

Perhaps we might also notice the words זנות in וישב and מזונות in מקץ. There is a רמז in their language to two very different expressions of יסוד. In וישב, יוסף guards his ברית from זנות. In מקץ, he directs the abundance of מצרים toward מזונות, sustaining others. The same קדושה that required restraint is now expressed through giving.

The שמירת היסוד of וישב becomes the השפעת היסוד of מקץ.

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The Man Beneath the Garment: בגד and לבוש

Consider how often the תורה speaks about יוסף's garments. The כתונת given to him by יעקב identified his place within בית יעקב. When the garment was brought to his father without יוסף, יעקב could judge only from what he was shown. Later, the בגד that יוסף left in the house of פוטיפר was again presented without the person who wore it. In both cases, the garment seemed to testify to something that was not the full truth.

There is a connection between בגד and בגידה, betrayal. A בגד can hide what lies within. Yet a לבוש can also give expression to something real about the person wearing it. The question is whether the outward form reflects the inner person or conceals him.

When יוסף is brought from the בור, וַיְגַלַּח וַיְחַלֵּף שִׂמְלֹתָיו he shaves and changes his clothing. When פרעה raises him to greatness, וַיַּלְבֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ בִּגְדֵי שֵׁשׁ again his clothing changes. But now it expresses something that has already developed within him. The בגדי שש do not make יוסף wise. He receives them because his חכמה has been recognized.

So too with the name צפנת פענח. פרעה gives him a new name, but the תורה keeps calling him יוסף. As we saw, רש״י explains the name as one who reveals hidden things. How fitting for this פרשה. יוסף can see the meaning hidden within a חלום and then bring that meaning into מעשה. His new position reveals a greatness already formed through the קדושה he preserved.

The Egyptian לבוש is not the source of יוסף's identity. It is the outward form of a far greater תפקיד. In וישב, he guarded his קדושה in private. Now he must carry it into the lives of an entire nation. The clothing has changed. יוסף has not abandoned what he received from בית יעקב.

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Only the כסא, and the Difference Between יסוד and מלכות

There is a striking precision in פרעה's words: יוסף רַק הַכִּסֵּא אֶגְדַּל מִמֶּךָּ receives authority over almost everything, but not the throne itself. On the level of פשט, he remains subordinate to פרעה. But perhaps we can also see here what we developed in שופטים about יוסף, the מדה of יסוד, preparing the way for מלכות.

יסוד gathers and preserves what it receives so that it can reach its proper destination. It does not have to become מלכות itself. יוסף gathers the grain of מצרים, governs its distribution, and sustains the people. He stands just beneath the כסא. His greatness is not that he possesses the throne, but that he fulfills his responsibility without it.

There is a remarkable parallel here to מרדכי. יוסף's elevation begins with the incident involving the שר המשקים and שר האופים. מרדכי's elevation begins with בגתן and תרש.[11] These events seem almost coincidental when they occur. Yet each becomes the beginning of a much larger השגחה. חז״ל themselves draw a parallel between these incidents and the later elevation of the צדיק.[12]

In both stories, the event is initially forgotten. The שר המשקים forgets יוסף. מרדכי's deed is written in the king's chronicles, but remains unrewarded. Then, at the proper moment, it is remembered. Both receive honor and authority through the king. Both receive royal garments and the king's ring. Both become משנה למלך, without becoming king themselves.

Contrast this with המן. He dreams of the king's clothing, horse, and public honor for himself. מרדכי receives the authority needed to save כלל ישראל. The outward symbols are not what distinguish these men. It is what each seeks to accomplish with them.

Neither יוסף nor מרדכי needs the throne to fulfill his תפקיד. Each rises within a foreign מלכות in order to preserve life. Their garments are signs of honor, but they are not the source of their greatness. What was already within them now becomes a source of חיים for others. And in each story, the precise timing reveals the יד השם.

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The Name מנשה: What Does It Mean to Rise Above the Past?

Let us return to the name מנשה. כִּי נַשַּׁנִי אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל עֲמָלִי וְאֵת כָּל בֵּית אָבִי We cannot say that יוסף has ceased being the son of יעקב. The תורה will shortly show how clearly he remembers his brothers and his dreams. What, then, is this שכחה?

Perhaps forgetting here does not mean erasing. יוסף remembers בית אביו, but his place in the world is no longer the same as when he lived in that house. The נער who received his father's תורה has now become capable of carrying it on his own.

The תורה calls him בן זקנים. רש״י explains that יעקב transmitted to him what he learned from שם ועבר.[13] The רמב״ן discusses the חכמות וסתרי תורה entrusted to him.[14] Their connection was not merely that of father and son. It was a relationship built upon the transmission of תורה.

For twenty-two years, יוסף could not be with his father. The separation was not his choice. Yet throughout his נסיונות, he had to live the תורה he received, without the shelter of בית יעקב. Perhaps even the כ״ב years recall the כ״ב אותיות, hinting to his task of giving expression to the תורה that was placed within him. This is only a רמז, but the larger point is clear: he now had to carry that תורה himself.

Perhaps this is the עבודה of מנשה. יוסף does not sever his connection to יעקב. Quite the contrary. He becomes a כלי capable of preserving that connection even when he must stand on his own.

Nor does this mean that the pain has disappeared. When his brothers return, יוסף remembers, and he weeps. He has not forgotten his father or the suffering of his past. But that suffering no longer defines the limits of what he can accomplish.

And perhaps this is why מנשה is the בכור. First a person must become a כלי capable of carrying what he has received. Only then can he become a source of השפעה for others.

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The Name אפרים: The פרי of the עבודה

Then comes אפרים with the language of כִּי הִפְרַנִי אֱלֹקִים בְּאֶרֶץ עָנְיִי The language is entirely different. מנשה looks toward what יוסף has endured. אפרים speaks of what has grown from it. He has not merely survived גלות. He has become fruitful within it.

And notice what יוסף calls מצרים. Not ארץ הצלחתי, the land of my success, but ארץ עניי, the land of my affliction. The greatness he has attained has not caused him to forget that he is in גלות. Yet even in that גלות, he has built a family and become a source of חיים. The suffering is real, and the fruitfulness is real.

Perhaps we can suggest that מנשה is the עבודה of standing on one's own, while אפרים is the פרי that comes from it. The first step is necessary. But the purpose of overcoming a נסיון is not merely to be able to say that one has overcome it. The greater question is what one can now bring into the world.

The תורה calls מנשה הבכור and אפרים השני. There is a necessary ראשית, and there is a פרי that follows. Both have their place.

When יעקב later places אפרים before מנשה,[15] he does not change which son was born first. But perhaps he reveals that the ultimate תכלית is greater than the beginning. And through אפרים comes יהושע בן נון,[16] who will lead כלל ישראל into ארץ ישראל. From the son named for bearing fruit in גלות comes the one who guides כלל ישראל toward its future in the land.

We saw something similar in ויצא, when לאה names her sons.[17] ראובן begins with כִּי רָאָה ה׳ בְּעָנְיִי שמעון with כִּי שָׁמַע ה׳ כִּי שְׂנוּאָה אָנֹכִי In לוי she longs for attachment, and in יהודה she reaches הוֹדָאָה. The pain is not denied. But the names move beyond the pain toward a greater חיבור and gratitude. Perhaps מנשה and אפרים express a similar movement: from what יוסף has endured to what he can now bring forth.

The timing of their birth may also be significant. Both sons are born in the years of abundance, before the famine. חז״ל and the מפרשים address that detail on its own terms.[18] But within our מהלך, perhaps it also suggests that יוסף's inner עבודה has already borne fruit before the great crisis begins. He has not only stored grain for the future. He has begun building the בית that will continue after him.

✦

When the Brothers Return: From ראיה Toward הכרה

Now the brothers stand before יוסף. The תורה says וַיַּכֵּר יוֹסֵף אֶת אֶחָיו וְהֵם לֹא הִכִּרֻהוּ He recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. רש״י explains that they had last seen him without a beard, before חתימת זקן.[19] That gives us the פשט of their failure to recognize him. But perhaps the זקן can also point toward how much יוסף himself has developed.

In פנימיות התורה, the development of כלים is discussed through אור פנימי and אור מקיף and through the אורות of אוזן, חוטם, and פה. The accounts of עקודים and נקודים have their own distinctions, and the ספרים also discuss the meeting of אורות near the שבולת הזקן.[20] Perhaps the חתימת זקן of יוסף gives us a רמז to the new כלי he has become, capable of bearing a far greater אחריות.

When he left בית יעקב, יוסף was a son receiving his father's תורה. In מצרים, he had to carry that תורה independently. But that independence did not break the חיבור. It enabled him to give what he had received to others.

This is the עבודה of יסוד. It receives and preserves what comes from above, not in order to keep it for itself, but to bring it forward toward מלכות. יוסף has preserved grain to sustain the people of מצרים. Now he must prepare to sustain the future of בית יעקב itself.

What an extraordinary contrast. יוסף knows exactly who these men are. They see only the ruler of מצרים. The one they do not recognize is the very one who recognizes them. Surely the תורה wants us to notice this.

רש״י tells us that יוסף recognized them as his brothers and had רחמים upon them: הִכִּיר שֶׁהֵם אֶחָיו וְרִחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם. We will see that רחמים again when יוסף turns away and weeps.

Yet the תורה says וַיַּרְא יוֹסֵף אֶת אֶחָיו וַיַּכִּרֵם וַיִּתְנַכֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם He sees them and recognizes them, but makes himself a stranger to them. We should be careful not to claim that we know all of יוסף's intentions. Nevertheless, perhaps his conduct also creates the circumstances in which a deeper הכרה can emerge in the brothers.

They must confront what אחוה truly demands. It is not enough to say that another person is one's brother. What happens when that brother is suffering? Will what they see become something they understand and act upon?

The תורה does not yet tell us the full purpose of these events. Instead, it lets the brothers speak. And their words are extraordinary.

Then the brothers say:

> אֲבָל אֲשֵׁמִים אֲנַחְנוּ עַל אָחִינוּ אֲשֶׁר רָאִינוּ צָרַת נַפְשׁוֹ בְּהִתְחַנְּנוֹ אֵלֵינוּ וְלֹא שָׁמָעְנוּ (בראשית מב:כא)

"But we are guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we did not listen."

Notice what the brothers themselves say. They saw the suffering of יוסף. They saw him pleading with them. But their ראיה did not lead them to listen. Now, so many years later, they have begun to recognize the meaning of what they once saw.

יוסף turns away and weeps. His tears show that his רחמים have not disappeared. He knows his brothers even while they do not know him. Their words are the beginning of something. The coming events with בנימין will test how far their אחוה has developed.

We have not yet reached the גילוי of ויגש. We are watching ראיה begin to become הכרה, as the brothers are drawn toward a new understanding of what it means to be אחים.

But why, of all accusations, does יוסף call them מרגלים?

The תורה uses that word immediately after telling us that יוסף remembered his חלומות:

> וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מְרַגְּלִים אַתֶּם לִרְאוֹת אֶת עֶרְוַת הָאָרֶץ בָּאתֶם (בראשית מב:ט)

"You are spies! You have come to see the vulnerability of the land."

And how do the brothers answer? They speak about their shared father:

כֻּלָּנוּ בְּנֵי אִישׁ אֶחָד נָחְנוּ כֵּנִים אֲנַחְנוּ לֹא הָיוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ מְרַגְּלִים (בראשית מב:יא)

"We are all sons of one man; we are honest; your servants have never been spies."

Why accuse them of coming to see עֶרְוַת הָאָרֶץ when they have come to buy food? On the level of פשט, this is an accusation that might be made by the ruler of a country to strangers arriving from another land. But perhaps the precise words לִרְאוֹת אֶת עֶרְוַת הָאָרֶץ also call us to look more deeply. The brothers had seen יוסף's dreams and his position within בית יעקב. But what had they really understood? Now they stand before a greatness that they cannot recognize. They are being confronted with the limits of what the eye alone can tell us.

The brothers say, וְהָאֶחָד אֵינֶנּוּ ... שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר עֲבָדֶיךָ אַחִים אֲנַחְנוּ. We are twelve brothers, and one is no more. They speak of twelve brothers even as the missing brother stands before them. אַחִים אֲנַחְנוּ. Yes, they are brothers. But the question now is what that אחוה means. Will they stand by a brother when his life and future are placed in their hands?

Generations later, another group of מרגלים will see ארץ ישראל and its difficulties. They see the land, but they fail to recognize the promise of הקב״ה within it. As we developed in our דרשה on שלח, entering the land means bringing תורה into ordinary life: agriculture, commerce, and the מצוות התלויות בארץ. The אוכלי המן had learned כִּי לֹא עַל הַלֶּחֶם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם[21] Now they must learn to live that דעת while working the land and producing לחם. It is one thing to know a truth. It is another to live by it.

And who stands among those מרגלים? יהושע בן נון, from שבט אפרים, the son of יוסף. He sees the same land, but understands what it can become. The other מרגלים call it אֶרֶץ אֹכֶלֶת יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ, a land that consumes its people. יהושע and כלב answer, כִּי לַחְמֵנוּ הֵם, they are our bread.[22] Is that not a striking return to יוסף, who learned how to turn the grain of the land into חיים for others?

And at the end of שלח, the תורה gives us a מצוה involving a בגד:

וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת ה׳ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תָתוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם (במדבר טו:לט)

"And it shall be ציצית for you, and you shall see it and remember all the mitzvos of Hashem and do them; and you shall not stray after your heart and after your eyes, after which you go astray."

Here the תורה gives us an extraordinary order: וּרְאִיתֶם, וּזְכַרְתֶּם, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם. First we see. Then we remember. And ultimately we act. Perhaps this offers another expression of the movement from ראיה to הכרה and ידיעה: what we see must be understood until it directs our actions. The פסוק then says וְלֹא תָתוּרוּ, not to follow the heart and eyes. רש״י speaks of the eyes and heart as the מרגלים of the body.[23] The same language returns to us. In וישב, יוסף left his בגד in order to guard his ברית. In מקץ, he receives בגדי שש so that he can serve others. And upon our own בגד, the תורה places ציצית, teaching us that שמירה must lead to זכירה and ultimately to מעשה.

Perhaps this is the deeper meaning of יסוד. The קדושה that first requires restraint must also become capable of השפעה. ראיה cannot stop at what is visible from the outside. It must lead us to recognize what is within. And the words a person speaks must ultimately come from a דעת that guides his actions.

But there is still a deeper question. What happens to a person's relationship with his father, his brothers, and his own children as he grows into a new מדרגה? We have been following all three

relationships in the life of יוסף. Perhaps now we can bring in an extraordinary פסוק from ברכת לוי, together with the words of הגר״א ז״ל.

✦

הגר״א ז״ל on מדרגות — The Three ידיעה, הכרה, and ראיה

הָאֹמֵר לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לֹא רְאִיתִיו וְאֶת אֶחָיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת בָּנָיו לֹא יָדָע כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרָתֶךָ וּבְרִיתְךָ יִנְצֹרוּ (דברים ל״ג:ט)

"He says of his father and his mother, 'I have not seen him'; his brothers he did not recognize, and his sons he did not know; for they kept Your word and guarded Your covenant."

We must first understand the פסוק in its own context. משה רבינו is speaking of שבט לוי. When fidelity to הקב״ה required it, the לויים placed His תורה and His ברית above even the ordinary claims of family. This is not a praise of indifference to one's father or brother or son. It is a statement that there are times when closeness to הקב״ה demands that a person rise above the ordinary form of even his closest relationships.

The גר״א ז״ל explains that the פסוק contains three בחינות. First אביו ואמו, then אחיו, and then בניו. And notice the three different words: לֹא רְאִיתִיו, לֹא הִכִּיר, לֹא יָדָע. The גר״א ז״ל distinguishes ראיה, הכרה, and ידיעה and relates them to different מדרגות.[24] These are not merely three expressions for the same thing. Each word describes a different kind of relationship and a different level of knowing.

Perhaps we can suggest that these words now allow us to bring together the entire מהלך of יוסף. We have seen the three relationships throughout מקץ. Only after following the story can we recognize how they might be connected. We do not mean that the פשט of ברכת לוי is the story of יוסף. Rather, perhaps its three לשונות illuminate a process already present in the פסוקים before us.

With his father, the word is לֹא רְאִיתִיו. For twenty-two years, יוסף has not seen יעקב. He even names his בכור for forgetting כָּל בֵּית אָבִי. Yet the תורה of יעקב remains alive within him. He no longer needs to stand in his father's house in order to live by what he received there. Through the בור, the house of פוטיפר, and the palace of פרעה, he has become a כלי that can carry his father's תורה. Perhaps this is the deeper שכחה of מנשה: not losing his father, but learning to stand upon what his father gave him.

With his brothers, the word is לֹא הִכִּיר. And this is the precise language of מקץ: וַיַּכִּרֵם וַיִּתְנַכֵּר אֲלֵיהֶם. יוסף knows them, while they do not recognize him. But the story is moving beyond the recognition of a familiar face. What does it truly mean to recognize another as one's brother? The brothers must discover an אחוה that can withstand a נסיון and accept responsibility for another. יוסף's tears show us that his own רחמים have not been lost.

And with his sons, the word is לֹא יָדָע. Here we must be especially careful. We are not suggesting that יוסף did not know his children. Rather, in the מדרגה of ידיעה we have been developing, knowledge is no longer merely something seen or understood. It becomes part of the person and shapes what he does. Notice that the names of יוסף's sons speak of what הקב״ה has done in יוסף's own life: נַשֵּׁנִי אֱלֹקִים and הִפְרַנִי אֱלֹקִים. מנשה expresses his ability to carry what he received. אפרים expresses the פרי that grows from it. He is now not only a בן and an אח, but an אב transmitting life to the next generation.

And what happens when יעקב later blesses these sons? He says, אֱפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כִּרְאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ לִי.[25] The sons of יוסף become שבטים within בית יעקב. The son who could not see his father for twenty-two years has now brought his own children into his father's house. The separation did not destroy the חיבור. Through the עבודה of יוסף, it has become something greater.

יוסף remains a בן. He remains an אח. But he has also become an אב. The relationships have changed in their outward form, yet the חיבור within them has grown deeper.

Perhaps this is also why the מדרש speaks in the language of בתי, אחותי, and אמי.[26] Different forms of relationship can express a deeper closeness. We should not confuse the distinct contexts of these sources, but the common idea may help us see that a true חיבור is not limited to one outward form.

We can now return to the questions with which we began. The new garments, the name צפנת פענח, the household of כהן און, the silence toward יעקב, and even the unusual way יוסף speaks to his brothers all make him appear so different from the נער we knew in וישב. But the תורה never stops calling him יוסף. He has not abandoned the קדושה he received from בית יעקב. That very קדושה has become capable of sustaining a much larger world.

Perhaps we can now see the progression of the three פרשיות. In וישב, יוסף must guard his ברית. He preserves his קדושה even when his בגד and freedom are taken from him. In מקץ, that שמירה becomes חכמה and השפעה. He nourishes the people of מצרים and begins to prepare his brothers for a renewed אחוה. In ויגש, what has been hidden will finally become clear: כִּי לְמִחְיָה שְׁלָחַנִי אֱלֹקִים לִפְנֵיכֶם. His entire path has prepared him to preserve life.

Yet we must not rush ahead of the תורה. We are still in מקץ. The brothers have begun to recognize something of the suffering they once saw. יוסף hears their words and weeps. The events with בנימין still lie before them, and the final גילוי has not yet come. That is itself part of the lesson. Not every דבר becomes clear at the moment we first see it.

The גר״א ז״ל explains that יוסף's advice to פרעה is itself part of the פתרון.[27] To understand the dream is to understand what must be done because of it. And perhaps we can now return to the question of the חלומות themselves. פרעה saw them, but it was יוסף who understood how to make them into a source of חיים. The dreams were given to פרעה. Yet perhaps we can suggest that in a deeper sense, they were for יוסף.

A חלום shows a future that has not yet come into being. בר contains nourishment that is not yet לחם. A בן receives תורה, but must eventually learn to live it and pass it onward. And ראיה must develop into הכרה and ידיעה, until what a person understands becomes part of his מעשה. This is the movement of מקץ. What יוסף preserved within himself now becomes חיים for others.

From בור to בר. From בר to לחם.

From שמירת היסוד to השפעת היסוד.

From ראיה to הכרה to ידיעה.

May we be זוכה to look beyond the outward לבוש, to recognize the קדושה הקב״ה has placed within us and within those around us, and to bring that recognition into מעשה. May the תורה we receive become the תורה we live. And may the חלום, the potential entrusted to each of us, become לחם, a source of חיים and ברכה for all who depend upon us.

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Notes: מראי מקומות

בראשית מ׳:ה׳-כ״ג — the dreams of the two royal officers and the forgetting of יוסף.

בראשית כ׳:ג׳ — the first explicit חלום in the תורה.

בראשית מ״א:א׳-מ׳ — the dreams of פרעה, their interpretation, and the counsel.

בראשית מ״א:מ״ג — the מרכבת המשנה.

בראשית מ״א:מ״ה, רש״י — the name צפנת פענח.

בראשית י״ג:ט״ז; ט״ו:ה׳; כ״ב:י״ז — the ברכות to אברהם of innumerable descendants.

בראשית מ״א:נ״ד-נ״ה — the famine and the cry for לחם.

ברכות ל״ח ע״א — the נוסח of ברכת המוציא.

דברים א׳:י״ג, אדרת אליהו — the three given to יוסף.

ספר יצירה א׳:ג׳ – ברית הלשון and ברית המעור (*numbering varies by edition*).

אסתר ב׳:כ״א-כ״ג; ו׳:א׳-י״א; ח׳:ב׳; ט״ו; מרדכי – י׳:ג׳, the royal servants, the ring and royal garments.

מגילה י״ג ע״ב — the parallel of the servants and the elevation of יוסף and מרדכי.

בראשית ל״ז:ג׳ – בן זקנים, רש״י.

בראשית ל״ז:ג׳ – בן זקנים, רמב״ן.

בראשית מ״ח:י״ג-כ׳ — the precedence of אפרים.

במדבר י״ג:ח׳ – יהושע from שבט אפרים.

בראשית כ״ט:ל״ב-ל״ה — the naming of לאה's sons.

תענית י״א ע״א — the births before the famine.

בראשית מ״ב:ח׳, רש״י — the חתימת זקן, and the רחמים of יוסף.

פרק א׳, שער ו׳, עץ חיים; פרק ב׳ – אורות הפה דאדם קדמון, שער ח׳ and the beginning of the כלים in עקודים; the שבולת הזקן and the meeting of the אורות for the כלים of נקודים.

דברים ח׳:ג׳ — the מן and למען הודיעך.

במדבר י״ג:ל״ב; י״ד:ט׳ — the report of the מרגלים and the answer of יהושע and כלב.

בראשית מ״ב:ל״ו:ט״ו, רש״י — the heart and the eyes as the body's מרגלים.

דברים ל״ג:ט׳ – ברכת לוי, אדרת אליהו and its three בחינות.

בראשית מ״ח:ה׳ – אפרים and מנשה as ראובן and שמעון.

שיר השירים רבה ג׳:י״א (*numbering varies by edition*) — the מדרש of בתי, אחותי, and אמי.

בראשית מ״א:כ״ה, אדרת אליהו — the counsel as part of the פתרון.

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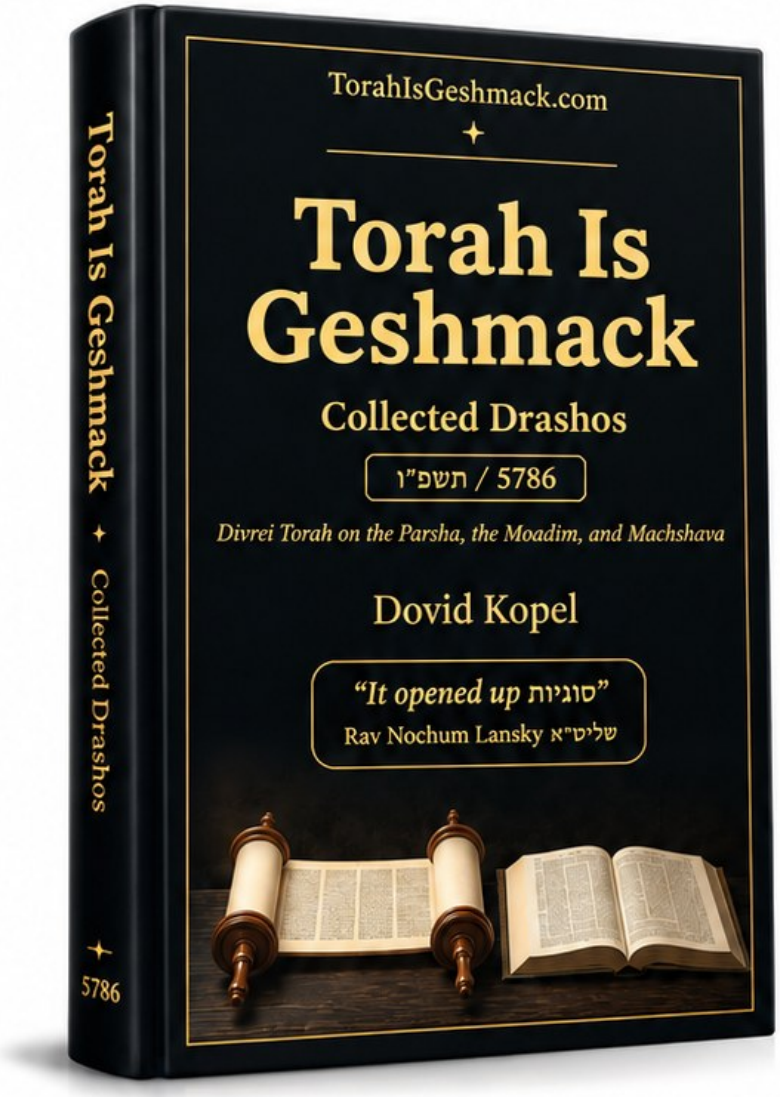
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