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פרשת וישלח תשפ״ז

Growing from יעקב to ישראל

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The journey home

יעקב returns from the house of לבן with the family he has spent twenty years building. Yet before he can settle in the land of his fathers, עשו approaches with four hundred men. יעקב divides his household into two מחנות, two camps, to protect them. That night, alone at יב״ק, he struggles with the שר of עשו, the force representing his brother, and receives a new name: ישראל.[1]

Why now? Why does יעקב receive a new name precisely when the בית he has built is in danger? If ישראל expresses his victory, why does he emerge limping and then bow seven times before עשו? Why is the name first announced by the שר, only for הקב״ה to give it again at בית אל?

There is a more fundamental question. The תורה continues to call him יעקב, and תנ״ך also calls us בית יעקב. Yet the principal name of the people is ישראל, and the land is ארץ ישראל. Why does this name, bestowed in the course of one man's struggle, become the name of the entire nation and its land?

Nor does the פרשה end with עשו. The violation of דינה is followed by the proposal of חמור that the families become עם אחד. Then שמעון and לוי respond with their swords, and יעקב rebukes them. The household must then purify itself at בית אל, where the name ישראל is repeated. And at this point in the journey, why is רחל buried בדרך דווקא, rather than in the family burial place?

The deeper structure in the כתבי האריז״ל sharpens the difficulty. ישראל is read as לי ראש, pointing to the ראש, while יעקב contains עקב, the heel. In one central structure in the כתבי האריז״ל, the name ישראל is associated with the higher בחינה of לאה and יעקב with the lower בחינה of רחל. Yet לאה belongs to a level whose influence is initially concealed, whereas רחל is associated with the way that influence is expressed below. Why does the name of the entire nation and its land come from the higher, concealed בחינה?

These questions return us to the birth of יעקב.

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What does יעקב hold?

Even his name begins with an act of holding on.

> וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעֲקֵב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וְיִצְחָק בֶּן שִׁשִּׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֹתָם. (בראשית כה:כו)

Afterward his brother came out, his hand holding the heel of עשו, and he was called יעקב.[2]

The name is extraordinary. The child enters the world holding the עקב of his brother. What others might consider the lowest part is precisely where he takes hold. The מגלה עמוקות asks why the name is יעקב rather than עקב and sees significance in the ׳י that precedes it.[2] The detail suggests that the עבודה of יעקב is not to abandon what appears low, but to recognize its place in serving הקב״ה.

We see the same difference between the brothers in their treatment of the בכורה (*firstborn right*). עשו sells it for food. It is not that the בכורה has no value; עשו is unwilling to subordinate his immediate desire to what the בכורה demands. Before the עבודה was given to the כהנים, the בכורים had a special relationship to that עבודה. What עשו discards is not merely a place of honor. It is a responsibility.

יעקב holds on to that which עשו is prepared to place beneath his heel. The עבודה of יעקב begins with a different measure of importance. He will not determine the value of something by the immediate satisfaction it brings him. There are מצוות which a person may be tempted to trample underfoot because they appear small. To יעקב, the fact that something is ׳רצון ה is precisely what gives it importance.

The same understanding of responsibility appears in his תפילה before עשו.

> קָטֹנְתִּי מִכֹּל הַחֲסָדִים וּמִכָּל הָאֱמֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת עַבְדֶּךָ כִּי בְמַקְלִי עָבַרְתִּי אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה וְעַתָּה הָיִיתִי לִשְׁנֵי מַחֲנוֹת.
> (בראשית לב:יא)

I have become small through all the kindnesses and all the truth You have done for Your servant; with my staff I crossed this ירדן, and now I have become two camps.[3]

Why does יעקב single out his מקל? The פסוק calls it a מקל rather than a מטה, a distinction we should note without assuming the two terms are identical. The immediate point is that יעקב remembers the staff he carried when he first crossed the ירדן.

In תולדות we developed the relationship between the בכורה, the ברכה, and the מטה. The בכורה identifies the one entrusted with the עבודה, the ברכה gives him the כח to carry it, and the מטה expresses that authority in the hand of its bearer. When יעקב crossed the ירדן, he already carried the responsibility of the בכורה and the ברכה he had received.

Now he returns with two מחנות. Through the חסד of הקב״ה, we now see an evolved version of יעקב, not merely that he has more possessions and family, but his responsibility. That is the force of קטנתי: what was once entrusted to one man must now be carried by his בית.

That responsibility is about to be tested at יב״ק, where the שר will strike at the עבודה connected with the בכורה.

His later words to עשו make the same contrast clear.

> וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו יֶשׁ לִי **רָב** אָחִי יְהִי לְךָ אֲשֶׁר לָךְ. (בראשית לג:ט)

> קַח נָא אֶת בִּרְכָתִי אֲשֶׁר הֻבָאת לָךְ כִּי חַנַּנִי אֱלֹקִים וְכִי יֶשׁ לִי כֹּל וַיִּפְצַר בּוֹ וַיִּקָּח. (בראשית לג:יא)

עשו says, "I have much." Whereas יעקב says, "Hashem has graciously given me, and I have everything."[4]

Both are wealthy. Yet עשו describes abundance and יעקב describes completeness. רב can always become greater in quantity. כל is what has been provided for its purpose. This does not mean יעקב wishes to remain poor or that עשו owns more. It means that the person who understands his possessions as a חסד can regard them as כל, sufficient for the work given to him.

His words קטנתי describe the very responsibility that makes him say ועתה הייתי לשני מחנות. He must now protect the בית he has built. Why is he emphasizing these two aspects simultaneously? That is a matter we must address.

That is the challenge awaiting him on the journey home.

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The night at יב״ק

After sending gifts toward עשו, we see that יעקב takes his household across the river. חז״ל explain that he then returned for פכים קטנים, small vessels, and therefore remained alone.[5] It is an astonishing detail. The man who has just spoken about his wealth, who has divided his possessions to survive a possible attack, goes back for something apparently insignificant.

The return of יעקב for פכים קטנים belongs to this same outlook: what appears small may still be precious. My Rebbe connected these vessels with the פך שמן of חנוכה, a connection to which we will return.

> וַיִּוָּתֵר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר. (בראשית לב:כה)

יעקב remained alone, and a man struggled with him until the rise of dawn.[5]

The תורה places the struggle at מעבר יב״ק. The אריז״ל explains יב״ק through the combined value of the שמות הוי״ה and אלקים: twenty-six and eighty-six, together one hundred and twelve. He places the crossing within the movement from מוחין דקטנות to מוחין דגדלות: a change in the level at which יעקב is able to receive and carry his עבודה, involving the passage through the גרון.[6] The same combination, הוי״ה with אלקים, is the middle of the three ייחודים of the נר of חנוכה, to which we will return. There is another striking רמז: the תורה speaks of the crossing as a נחל, the יב״ק נחל. The connection of נח״ל with נר חנוכה will become clearer at the end.

And what is the first thing the שר does when he recognizes that he cannot overcome יעקב?

> וַיַּרְא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לוֹ וַיִּגַּע בְּכַף יְרֵכוֹ וַתֵּקַע כַּף יֶרֶךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּהֵאָבְקוֹ עִמּוֹ. (בראשית לב:כו)

He saw that he could not overcome him, and he struck the socket of his hip.[7]

The בעל הטורים offers an extraordinary explanation: לפוסלו מן העבודה, to disqualify him from עבודה, based on לפי שקנה מעשו הבכורה שבהן העבודה, because יעקב had acquired from עשו the בכורה to which the עבודה belonged. He further notes that בכף ירכו has the גימטריא of לפוסלו מכהונה.[7]

The שר cannot overcome יעקב directly, so he strikes at the capacity for עבודה that came with the בכורה. What עשו sold, his שר now seeks to prevent יעקב from exercising.

There is a related tradition about the בגדי החמודות of עשו which רבקה placed upon יעקב when he received the ברכות. Here, חז״ל trace those garments back to אדם הראשון and connect them with the special position of the בכורות in the early עבודה.[8] The family history has therefore never been

only about an inheritance of property. It has always been about the one who would serve הקב״ה and bring that עבודה into the world.

The injury is also unusual because the תורה describes a particular כף הירך, the hip joint, while the איסור of גיד הנשה, the prohibition concerning the displaced sinew, applies to both thighs. In שער הפסוקים, the אריז״ל develops his understanding of the injury through the related בחינות of נצח and הוד, and the relationship between יעקב and רחל.[6] For our purposes, the שר attacks a place of movement and continuation. יעקב is going home to establish his family in the land. The attack does not destroy him, but it affects how he walks onward. As a person is a הולך the הגר״א ז״ל when discussing the actions of an individual, says there are different levels. He expressed that walking is the greatest among them. I believe that understanding, as is common of the הגר״א ז״ל, to be on multiple levels. The first is that walking literally moves you geographically, so the effect you can have may reach different locations. Additionally, on a deeper level, we describe הליכה as a means of growth and change. A מלאך is an עומד, he stands still with a single leg. And yet, a man walks with his two legs. To damage the capacity to walk is an attempt to hinder the means to affect change. Not only is his faculty of walking diminished, but symbolically his spiritual growth as well.

> וַיִּזְרַח לוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָבַר אֶת פְּנוּאֵל וְהוּא צֹלֵעַ עַל יְרֵכוֹ. (בראשית לב:לב)

The sun rose for him as he passed פנואל, and he was limping upon his thigh.[7]

The sun rises, yet יעקב is still limping. His victory has not removed the wound.

That contrast will remain part of the history of כלל ישראל. The ברית can withstand an enemy even when those who carry it suffer real injury.

Now we can understand why יעקב insists upon a ברכה before allowing the שר to leave. He is not merely asking his attacker to wish him well. The force which tried to prevent his עבודה must acknowledge that he has prevailed. The adversary asks his name, יעקב answers, and the name ישראל is announced.

> וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאָמֵר עוֹד שִׁמְךָ כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי שָׂרִיתָ עִם אֱלֹקִים וְעִם אֲנָשִׁים וַתּוּכָל. (בראשית לב:כט)

He said: Your name shall no longer be called יעקב, but ישראל, for you have struggled with the Divine and with men and prevailed.[9]

My Rebbe taught that a person's שם expresses his רצון, as we see שמ״ו is the gemaria of רצו״ן. That thought is particularly striking here. The שר asks יעקב to identify himself, and then announces what the struggle has shown: the רצון of יעקב cannot be turned aside from its purpose by the opposition of עשו.

If יעקב has received a new name, why does the תורה continue calling him יעקב? This is a well known notion that חז״ל teach that the name of ישראל becomes עיקר, yet the earlier name remains. [9] The אריז״ל explains the distinction through קטנות and גדלות. But the order of the פסוקים presents an immediate difficulty: the man called ישראל in the night must still meet עשו in the morning, carrying an injury.

The struggle is over, but its result must now be tested in the daylight, before עשו and the children that יעקב must protect.

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The man who bows

Immediately after receiving the name ישראל, it is יעקב who sees עשו approaching with four hundred men. Instead of demanding that עשו acknowledge his new position, he divides the children among their mothers and bows to the ground seven times.

> וְהוּא עָבַר לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים עַד גִּשְׁתּוֹ עַד אָחִיו. (בראשית לג:ג)

He passed before them and bowed to the ground seven times until he approached his brother.[10]

How could this be? Has יעקב not just defeated the שר of עשו? If the new name ישראל expresses שררה, why does he still behave as someone vulnerable to his brother? הגר״א ז״ל explains that the seven השתחוויות were in truth directed to הקב״ה, not to עשו, despite appearances.[10]

The victory at יב״ק did not make danger disappear.

He can therefore bow without surrendering the ברית. Respectful conduct before עשו need not mean accepting the values of עשו.

And indeed, יעקב refuses the invitation from עשו to travel together. The brothers meet, but their households remain separate.

We can now return to the two מחנות. Their division was first an act of physical preservation: if one part of the family were struck, the other might survive. Yet the two מחנות may also be a רמז to לאה and רחל, each with her own מהלך in revealing רצון ה׳. One בית is ultimately built through both, which eventually becomes a nation.

That is a significant change from the beginning of the life of יעקב. יעקב had to contend with עשו over who would inherit the בכורה. Now he himself has a household with different children, each of whom will have his own place in כלל ישראל. His task is not simply to preserve one uniform form of greatness. He must become the father of a nation whose different כחות can coexist within a single ברית.

Yet a separate household requires more than distance from עשו. What happens when an outsider offers to join the family through the very sign of its ברית? That is the question raised at שכם.

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The demand of שכם

שכם takes דינה and violates her. His desire to marry her afterward does not undo what he has done, and she remains in his house while חמור negotiates with יעקב and his sons. Then, instead of dealing only with the wrong committed against one daughter, חמור proposes an arrangement that would determine the future of the entire family.

The תורה introduces דינה as בת לאה. Why emphasize her mother? חז״ל explain that לאה davened so that רחל would not have fewer sons than the שפחות; therefore דינה was born, revealing the willingness of לאה to limit her own aspirations for רחל's benefit.[11], [12]

As developed in ויצא, this is a remarkable expression of דין: not simply demanding what is deserved, but recognizing a boundary even where one's aspirations are justified.

That daughter now suffers at the hands of a man who recognizes no boundary on his desire. The question of how דין should be exercised runs through the מעשה.

What we can understand begins with the proposal of חמור.

> וְהִתְחַתְּנוּ אֹתָנוּ בְּנֹתֵיכֶם תִּתְּנוּ לָנוּ וְאֶת בְּנֹתֵינוּ תִּקְחוּ לָכֶם. (בראשית לד:ט)

Intermarry with us: give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.[13]

This is no longer merely a request for שכם to marry דינה. Here חמור offers shared residence, trade, and intermarriage. He proposes that the two families become עם אחד, one people.

The sons of יעקב answer that the men of שכם must undergo מילה, so that they will be כמונו, like us. The men agree. Yet when חמור presents the arrangement to the inhabitants of his city, he reveals its appeal.

> מִקְנֵהֶם וְקִנְיָנָם וְכָל בְּהֶמְתָּם הֲלוֹא לָנוּ הֵם אַךְ נֵאוֹתָה לָהֶם וְיֵשְׁבוּ אִתָּנוּ. (בראשית לד:כג)

Their livestock, their possessions and all their animals—will they not become ours?[13]

The contrast is startling. The brothers demand that the people of שכם become כמונו. Here חמור promises his people that the possessions of the family of יעקב will become לנו. The outward sign of מילה is accepted, yet the terms of the arrangement are explained through the expectation of acquiring the family and its wealth. This is a completely different notion of becoming one people.

We must consider what the danger is. עשו came with four hundred men. יעקב prepared for an attack and the possible loss of part of his household. Here the proposed outcome is more difficult to recognize as a threat. The people of שכם offer the possibility of living together. But what becomes of the ברית if the family of יעקב is absorbed into another people and ceases to have an identity of its own?

The question is not whether one can live alongside others. יעקב had worked for twenty years in the household of לבן. Nor can we conclude from this account that every offer of peaceful coexistence is suspect. It is the particular combination of violence against דינה, continued possession of her, and the declared expectation of acquiring the family's property that tells us what this proposal means.

One can accept the physical sign of מילה for the wrong purpose. ישמעאל himself had מילה, yet the special ברית of the אבות continued through יצחק. The outward form matters, but it is not independent of what it signifies.

A father who built a family must now preserve its identity. His children cannot become one people merely through resemblance, an economic arrangement, or a shared city. The ברית is not something which חמור can acquire in the manner he imagines acquiring their flocks.

But this does not end the question. The response of שמעון and לוי makes it much more difficult.

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The strength of שמעון and לוי

שמעון and לוי cannot tolerate what has been done to their sister. They enter the city with their swords and kill the men. They bring דינה out, and when יעקב objects, their reply is sharp.

> וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַכְזוֹנָה יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת אֲחוֹתֵנוּ. (בראשית לד:לא)

Should he treat our sister like a harlot?[14]

Their question is not insignificant. דינה has been violated. To pretend that what happened was merely the beginning of a marriage negotiation would erase her suffering and the wrong that was done. The brothers refuse to accept that.

Yet the תורה does not allow us to conclude that every act committed in response was justified. יעקב objects to the danger their actions have created for the family. Later, in his final words, he condemns their anger.

> אָרוּר אַפָּם כִּי עָז וְעֶבְרָתָם כִּי קָשָׁתָה אֲחַלְּקֵם בְּיַעֲקֹב וַאֲפִיצֵם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. (בראשית מט:ז)

Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is harsh.[14]

The brothers see a real outrage. יעקב sees a terrible danger. Moreover, there are substantive halachic questions concerning the liability of the city's inhabitants, treated differently by the ראשונים; our מהלך does not decide them in passing.

But there is another question. Why do שמעון and לוי respond together, and why does the later history of לוי take such a significantly different direction?

תקיפות, the capacity to act with strength, is not the same as קדושה. A person may have the courage to stand against a wrong, yet still need to learn where and how that courage may be exercised. The fact that anger arises from a legitimate grievance does not make its every expression correct.

This is particularly important in the development of יעקב. He has just emerged from a struggle in which he prevailed over the שר of עשו. The purpose of that victory was not to teach that the one who possesses superior strength is entitled to impose his will. His victory preserved the עבודה which the שר tried to obstruct. It had a purpose beyond the assertion of power.

The later history of לוי is remarkable in that light. His descendants become associated with עבודה in the מקדש. From them comes אהרן and the כהנים, called upon to serve הקב״ה on behalf of כלל ישראל.

And later there is פינחס.

The קנאות of פינחס is exceptional. His act is not a model through which any person may justify violence by claiming righteous anger. The תורה gives this act its own Divine response. What is astonishing is the ברכה which הקב״ה gives him:

> לָכֵן אֱמֹר הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לוֹ אֶת בְּרִיתִי שָׁלוֹם. (במדבר כה:יב)

Behold, I give him My covenant of peace.[15]

Why should an act of קנאות be answered with שלום? And why should פינחס receive ברית כהונת עולם?

Perhaps the answer lies in what his action was meant to accomplish. The purpose was not anger, nor strength, nor personal triumph. Under the particular circumstances recognized by הקב״ה, it restored the relationship of כלל ישראל with Him. The very כח that can become destructive when

exercised without proper direction may, when subordinated to רצון ה׳, become an instrument of restoring the ברית.

Now look at the ברכה given by the כהנים.

> יָאֵר ה׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ. (במדבר ו:כה)

> יִשָּׂא ה׳ פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם. (במדבר ו:כו)

May Hashem illuminate His face toward you and favor you. May Hashem lift His face toward you and grant you peace.[15]

The עבודה of the כהנים culminates in אור and שלום. They do not stand before כלל ישראל to proclaim their own greatness. They stand to bring the ברכה of הקב״ה to His people. This is a direction for the תקיפות associated with לוי. Its highest purpose is to protect and serve something beyond itself.

We are not finished with שכם until we understand this distinction. It is not enough to know that the family must not be absorbed. The family must also learn how to exercise its own powers. Preserving a ברית requires boundaries in both directions: resisting what would destroy it from outside, and submitting one's strength to רצון ה׳ within.

Then the תורה takes us directly to בית אל.

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A house fit to be ישראל

After the killing at שכם, there הקב״ה tells יעקב to go to בית אל and build a מזבח. Now יעקב turns to his family with a startling command.

> וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל בֵּיתוֹ וְאֶל כָּל אֲשֶׁר עִמּוֹ הָסִרוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַנֵּכָר אֲשֶׁר בְּתֹכְכֶם וְהִטַּהֲרוּ וְהַחֲלִיפוּ שִׂמְלֹתֵיכֶם. (בראשית לה:ב)

Remove the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments.[16]

Why does יעקב have to demand the removal of foreign gods from within his own household, precisely after the family has refused to become עם אחד with שכם?

The danger now turns inward. After resisting עשו and refusing absorption into שכם, we see that יעקב must remove foreign עבודה from within his own בית.

This cannot be accomplished by another solitary struggle. יעקב must lead his household toward טהרה and the מזבח. Only when the children themselves are directed toward that עבודה can the transformation reach beyond their father.

And it is here, after purification and return to עבודה, that הקב״ה again gives יעקב the name ישראל.

> וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלֹקִים שִׁמְךָ יַעֲקֹב לֹא יִקָּרֵא שִׁמְךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה שְׁמֶךָ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. (בראשית לה:י)

Hashem said to him: Your name is יעקב; your name shall no longer be called יעקב, but ישראל shall be your name. And He called his name ישראל.[16]

The announcement by the שר at יב״ק followed the victory of one man; at בית אל, it is הקב״ה gives him the name ישראל again.

This brings us back to the central question: why does the name ישראל, rather than יעקב, become the name of the people and the land, and why is it associated specifically with לאה?

The כתבי האריז״ל explain the distinction more precisely. ישראל is read as לי ראש, while יעקב contains עקב. These are not simply labels for a better or a worse person. They describe different levels at which the same קדושה operates. ישראל is associated with לאה and עלמא דאתכסיא, where the source of influence is not yet apparent below; יעקב is associated with רחל and עלמא דאתגליא, where that influence enters the life we can see.[9]

The אריז״ל traces לאה to the מלכות דאימא of אחוריים, associated with בינה, while רחל belongs to the principal מלכות דז״א of בחינה. This structure describes how a higher source can guide what later emerges below.

Here lies the apparent reversal: ישראל, the name of the לי ראש and the concealed בחינה of לאה, becomes the public name of the nation and its land. Yet the תורה gives the name again at בית אל precisely after יעקב has led his בית back to עבודה: the concealed בחינה becomes the name of the nation when its עבודה passes from one man to his household.

The ראש directs the body, even though the source of that direction is not visible in the movements of the limbs. So too, what begins in a concealed בחינה can direct a nation's visible life once that influence takes root in the generations.

Consider לאה herself. The תורה describes her as שנואה in contrast to רחל, the wife whom יעקב loved and initially sought. Yet from לאה come לוי and יהודה. From לוי will emerge the כהונה and the enduring עבודה of the מקדש; from יהודה, the מלכות of בית דוד. Neither institution is visible at the moment of the marriage to לאה. Their full גילוי belongs to the future of כלל ישראל.

Through רחל comes יוסף, who receives the בכורה in its later development, and רחל herself will have a unique role in the גלות of her children. The distinction concerns different forms of גילוי, not a ranking of the mothers; our suggested application to the nation's history is a מהלך, not a technical definition of the פרצופים.

The second naming thus marks more than the greatness of one man. The עבודה now carried by his בית explains why the higher בחינה associated with לאה can become the public name of כלל ישראל.

Then, precisely after that naming, רחל dies בדרך. Her part in this story has not ended. It will be revealed in another way.

✦

רחל on the road

The passing of רחל immediately after the naming at בית אל seems a painful conclusion to the journey. יעקב has finally brought his family home, yet the woman for whom he first worked seven years will not accompany him to the family burial place. She is buried בדרך. Why?

To understand her burial, we must return to the דודאים, or mandrakes, in ויצא. That ראובן brought them to לאה, and רחל asked for them. לאה responded:

> וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַמְעַט קַחְתֵּךְ אֶת אִישִׁי וְלָקַחַת גַּם אֶת דּוּדְאֵי בְנִי וַתֹּאמֶר רָחֵל לָכֵן יִשְׁכַּב עִמָּךְ הַלַּיְלָה תַּחַת דּוּדְאֵי בְנֵךְ.
> (בראשית ל:טו)

Was it not enough that you took my husband, that you would also take my son's דודאים?[17]

רחל offered לאה a night with יעקב in exchange. For someone who longed so deeply for children, this was an astonishing choice. לאה spent that night with יעקב and conceived; רחל received the דודאים, but her own ישועה came later, when הקב״ה remembered her. The contrast recalls what we explored in ויצא: the difference between a tangible כלי and the deeper מקור from which its benefit must come.

חז״ל make a striking connection to the end of the life of רחל. Because she was מזלזלת במשכב הצדיק, treating the night with יעקב lightly, she did not merit to be buried beside him.[17] This refers to the place of her burial, not an explanation that her death itself was punishment for the exchange. The connection is nevertheless exact. The night beside יעקב was relinquished for the דודאים; she would ultimately rest apart from him. לאה would be buried with יעקב, while רחל remained on the road.

But this is only half the matter. רש״י explains that רחל was buried בדרך so she could plead for her children when they would be taken into גלות. The נביא hears her cry:

> כֹּה אָמַר ה׳ קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים **רָחֵל מְבַכָּה עַל בָּנֶיהָ** מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחֵם עַל בָּנֶיהָ כִּי אֵינֶנּוּ. (ירמיהו לא:יד)

רחל is weeping for her children.[18]

And הקב״ה answers:

> וְיֵשׁ תִּקְוָה לְאַחֲרִיתֵךְ נְאֻם ה׳ **וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לִגְבוּלָם**. (ירמיהו לא:טז)

The children shall return to their boundary.[18]

The place which separates רחל from יעקב becomes the place where she remains close to her children in their greatest separation. She cannot accompany יעקב to מערת המכפלה, but she accompanies כלל ישראל along the road into גלות. The concealed בחינה of לאה will be revealed in the national institutions that emerge from her children. The בחינה of רחל, associated with עלמא דאתגליא, is revealed here in a different form: the mother whose presence remains with her children when their national life is hidden from view. Neither role replaces the other.

✦

The coming light

My Rebbe would often bring from the של״ה that the פרשיות read at a given time are connected to that time. The approach of חנוכה therefore invites us to consider how the ideas of וישלח illuminate it. We have been speaking about the בכורה, the attempt to prevent עבודה, the development of לוי, and the value of what appears to be a small כלי. These point to a struggle which continues long after the events of this פרשה.

חז״ל tell us that יעקב returned for פכים קטנים. My Rebbe connected those vessels with the פך שמן through which חז״ל remember חנוכה. The association is particularly fitting because the issue of size is no incidental detail. The man who grasped the עקב and recognized the value of the בכורה which עשו discarded would not determine the importance of a thing by its outward appearance. A small כלי may preserve what is of greatest value.

The כתבי האריז״ל offer another connection. The combination of הוי״ה and אלקים, whose numerical value is יב״ק, stands at the center of the three ייחודים whose combined value is נר: forty-seven, one hundred and twelve, and ninety-one, together two hundred and fifty.[19] Here the point is not merely a calculation. The struggle at יב״ק, in which the שר attempts to obstruct the עבודה of יעקב, is placed in relation to the light through which that עבודה will later be remembered.

We have already encountered the נחל יב״ק. The אריז״ל also associates the letters נח״ל with the words להדליק נר חנוכה in the כוונות of חנוכה, although those words do not yield נח״ל in their written order. The juxtaposition is especially striking: the very נחל where יעקב struggled for the עבודה points us toward the נר through which that עבודה would later be restored.

But the strongest connection follows the events of the פרשה themselves. The חשמונאים were כהנים, descendants of לוי. They fought to restore the בית המקדש and its עבודה after the decrees of יון. At יב״ק, the שר had sought to injure יעקב and prevent the עבודה associated with the בכורה. In שכם, the תקיפות of לוי raised the difficult question of how strength must be directed. Generations later, the descendants of לוי fight in defense of the תורה and the עבודה of the מקדש.

And how is that victory remembered? Through a נר. The sword was necessary in the historical struggle, but the purpose was not the sword. The victory made it possible to restore the עבודה. The מנורה expresses what that victory was for. In this way, the history of the חשמונאים brings together the struggle at יב״ק and the eventual direction of the strength of לוי. It is not an incidental echo; it is a later expression of a question which begins in וישלח.

The deeper meanings of שמן, מנורה, נצח and הוד belong to the חנוכה דרשה. Here, the continuity is enough: the עבודה challenged at יב״ק is defended by the descendants of לוי, and its restoration is remembered through a נר.

✦

What changed in יעקב?

יעקב prevails, yet limps; he receives the name ישראל, yet still bows; he returns to בית אל, yet loses רחל. The name cannot mean that his struggles have ended.

The contrast of כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הזה ועתה הייתי לשני מחנות tells us what has changed. What began as the עבודה of one man has become the responsibility of a בית, carrying forward the inherited בכורה and ברכה developed in תולדות.

At יב״ק, the שר cannot take away the עבודה of יעקב. Before the second naming, however, יעקב must protect his children before עשו, resist חמור's proposed absorption, confront the difficult use of תקיפות by שמעון and לוי, and finally lead his household to טהרה at בית אל. His own steadfastness must become the life of the next generation.

The association of ישראל, לי ראש, with לאה now takes on national meaning. From her concealed בחינה come לוי and יהודה, whose descendants bring כהונה and מלכות into the life of כלל ישראל. What begins hidden can become the source of an enduring public גילוי.

And the role of רחל is not diminished. Through יוסף she is connected with the בכורה; through her burial בדרך, with the promise to her children in גלות: that ושבו בנים לגבולם.

יעקב remains יעקב; his original עבודה is never abandoned. Yet the people and the land are called ישראל because that עבודה can now unfold through the generations.

May we be זוכה to preserve that inheritance as עם ישראל, using our ראש to direct the life and עבודה entrusted to us. May we remain cognizant of both the גילוי associated with רחל and the concealed בחינה of לאה. We do not always see רצון ה׳ clearly, and it may be revealed in different ways; may we have the wisdom to recognize and serve it in each. May we recognize in our own lives the challenge of שכם: an outward willingness to adopt the signs of a ברית does not always reflect a shared commitment to its meaning. May we have the wisdom to protect our בית and its קדושה while continuing to act with love toward others. May we direct our כח toward תורה and עבודה, and see the full גילוי of the קדושה of כלל ישראל with the fulfillment of במהרה בימינו, ושבו בנים לגבולם.

✦

מראי מקומות

[1] רש״י בראשית לב:ט; ברכות ד ע״א; בראשית לב:ב-יג.

[2] בראשית כה:כו; בענין י׳ ועקב, פרשת וישלח, מגלה עמוקות; ועיין כלי יקר בראשית כה:כו.

[3] בראשית לב:יא; ועיין; כפי שנתבאר בדרשת תולדות, בענין בכורה וברכה והמטה, ביאור הגר״א ז״ל על חד גדיא ביאור הגר״א ז״ל על משלי ג:ג בענין חסד ואמת.

[4] בראשית לג:ט, יא.

[5] בראשית לב:כה-כו; חולין צא ע״א, פכים קטנים.

[6] יש לבדוק הלשון המדויק בענין נצח והוד במקור; בענין מעבר יב״ק ווירא כי לא יכול לו, וישלח, שער הפסוקים.

[7] בראשית לב:כו; לב, בעל הטורים בראשית לב:כו / לפוסלו מן העבודה, לפוסלו מכהונה.

[8] בראשית רבה סה:טז; ועיין רש״י בראשית כז:טו; פרקי דרבי אליעזר כד.

[9] בראשית לב:כט; בענין קטנות וגדלות, פרשת וישלח, שער הפסוקים; ישראל עיקר ויעקב טפל לו, ברכות יג ע״א; לה:י; בענין ישראל ולאה למעלה ויעקב ורחל למטה, דרוש ב, דרושי ויעבר, שער הכוונות; ושמות יעקב וישראל, עץ חיים; פירוש הרצון הנעלם והגילוי לדורות הוא מהלך מוצע. לבירור היחס בין מלכות דאימא ומלכות דז״א, שער לאה ורחל ולא לשון מפורשת של האריז״ל.

[10] בראשית לג:א-יז; בענין שבע ההשתחוויות, לה ע״ב, ביאור הגר״א ז״ל על תיקוני זוהר חדש.

[11] בראשית ל:כא; ברכות ס ע״א; רש״י בראשית ל:כא.

[12] יש לבדוק את הכתיב נער וביאורו במקור; ד״ה ותצא דינה בת לאה, וישלח, שער הפסוקים.

[13] בראשית לד:ט-כג, בייחוד פסוקים ט, טז, כב-כג.

[14] בראשית לד:כה-לא; מט:ז; ועיין רמב״ם הלכות מלכים ט:יד ורמב״ן בראשית לד:יג לעיון בסוגיא ההלכתית.

[15] במדבר כה:יא-יג; ו:כד-כו.

[16] בראשית לה:א-י; בענין לאה עלמא דאתכסיא ורחל עלמא דאתגליא, דרוש ב, דרושי שבת, שער הכוונות, דרושי ויעבר, הכוונות, דרוש ב.

[17] בראשית ל:יד-כג; רש״י בראשית ל:יד; בראשית רבה עב:ג; ועיין רמב״ן בראשית ל:טו.

[18] בראשית לה:טז-כ; ירמיהו לא:יד-טז; רש״י מח:ז; מח:ז; בראשית רבה פב:י.

[19] הוי״ה-אלקים (112), דרוש א: שלושת הייחודים של נ״ר – הוי״ה-אהי״ה, דרושי חנוכה, שער הכוונות (47) שמקורו בנוצר, באותו דרוש נקשרו ראשי התיבות של להדליק נר חנוכה לשם נח״ל 250. וביחד הוי״ה-אדנ״י (91), כפי, בענין הקשר בין הפרשיות לזמנן, השל״ה. ולא סדר האותיות כפי שהן כתובות, זו כוונה בפני עצמה; חסד לאלפים שהביא מורי ורבי.

For further study, note additional material for this שער הכוונות: דרשה, דרושי שבת, דרוש ב (רחל בדרך and בחינות above and below the חזה); דרושי ויעבר, דרוש ב (pairings of ישראל/יעקב and לאה/רחל); the precise location of the גר״א ז״ל on חסד and אמת; and the unusual כתיב נער in שער הפסוקים.

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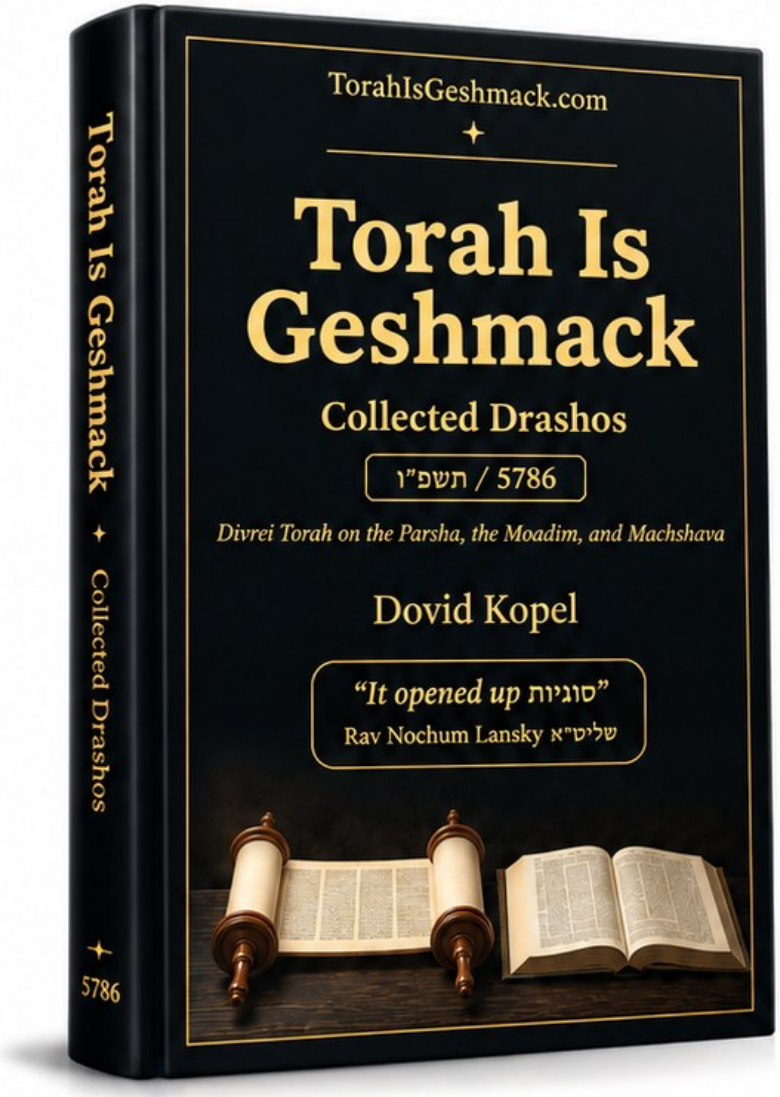
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