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Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ד PARSHAS MATTOS MASEI BRAZIL RAV

REUVEIN AND GAD CHOSE AIVER HAYARDAIN INSTEAD OF E.Y.

גד and Reuven these two *Shevatim* possessed an abundance of cattle and sheep. It seems from the *pessukim* that they were willing to give up living in Eretz Yisrael in order to remain in the already conquered territories of Sichon and Og because their land had much more pastures available for their livestock's sustenance. On the surface this episode seems very difficult to comprehend. After *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, which goal was *להבאתי אתכם אל הארץ*, after the miracles in the *Midbar*, subsequent the sin of the *Meraglim* with its forty year punishment of wandering in the desert, we find that two *Shevatim* make a stand and say we want to remain here and not inherit Eretz Yisrael as planned. It appears that a segment of *Yisrael* still did not learn their lesson of disobeying Hashem's will. Yet surprisingly we find that Hashem went along with their proposition if they fulfilled certain conditions set before them! We must therefore admit that what was transpiring here is far greater and deeper than what meets the eye.

One of the *Talmidim* of the Ari Hakadosh ztl opens our eyes to a profundity in this complex story that should shake our hearts with *Yiras Shamayim*. These two *Shevatim* whose origins were Reuven and Gad possessed a blemish at the time of their birth which made them inherently not worthy of inheriting Eretz Yisrael. He explains that when Yaakov was supposed to marry Rachel, at the wedding night Lavan switched her with Leah making her a *זיווג שלא ידע* an unintended partner. At that wedding night Leah conceived Reuvein. A similar episode occurred with the birth of Gad. When Rachel was unable to bear a child she gave to Yaakov with his permission Bilhah her maid servant as the *passuk* says (Bereishis 30) *בא אל שפתי* come to my maidservant. Yaakov was well aware that Bilhah was to be his added wife. This is in contrast to Leah when she gave Zilpah to Yaakov to bear more offspring he wasn't aware of the switch from Leah to Zilpah and that night Gad was conceived *שלא מדעת* of Yaakov. Because of the blemishes that happened at the very beginning of the formation of these two Tribes Reuvein and Gad, they were not allowed to inherit in Eretz Yisrael.

Let us first expound on this interpretation in order to understand how it fits in with our *pessukim* which openly state that their motive to inherit in *עבר הירדן* was because of their *מקנה רב*? Furthermore, Rashi (Devarim 33,21) tells us that the reason they chose this land as their dwelling was because their Rebbi Moshe *Rabbeinu* was to be buried there. *"מחוקק ספון"* Moshe *Rabbeinu* the *מחוקק* will be buried in *עבר הירדן* not in Eretz Yisrael. *ספון* his burial place was concealed from everyone as the *passuk* says *ולא ידע איש את קבורתו*. How does this reason align itself with the *passuk* of *מקנה רב*?

However this question we can answer of one *sefer* who interprets *מקנה רב* as they had a big *קנין* in their *Rav* and Rebbi Moshe *Rabbeinu* and they wanted to be in close proximity to him continuously even after his death. We can support this explanation with a *gematriah* that *מחוקק ספון* equals *לבני ראובן לבני גד*. But the first question of the initial blemishes of these two *Shevatim* in the time of their conception still remains unanswered. Where is that hinted in the claim of *מקנה רב היה לבני ראובן ולבני גד*?

We can answer that the Ari's interpretation is alluded to with an acronym and a *gematriah*. The term *מקנה רב* is referring to the *קנין* acquisition that Yaakov made with Leah at the night of the wedding was *רב* the acronym of *שלא ידע בזיווגו* *לבני ראובן ולבני גד* is *gematriah* *לבני ראובן ולבני גד* (with the kollel). Even though on the surface their proposition of inheriting land in *עבר הירדן* seems to be motivated by practical and logical rationale, underneath the surface the real reason is alluded to. Rather that it was

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because these two Tribes were spiritually stained being a product from deceiving Yaakov into fathering two children from women without his prior consent or knowledge.

With the above let us suggest a possible מדה כנגד מדה why this blemish should cause a punishment prohibiting them to dwell with the other *Shevatim* in Eretz Yisrael. Just as one finds a **zivug** marriage and bonding between two *nefashos* so too we find a zivug between Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. The Medrash Tanchuma writes על הפסוק במדבר לד ב זאת הארץ אשר תפל לכם בנחלה משל למלך שהיו לו עבדים ושפחות והיה משיא לעבדיו שפחות מן אוסיא אחרת ולשפחותיו עבדים מן אוסיא אחרת עמד המלך וחישב בדעתו אמר העבדים שלי ושפחות שלי מוטב שאשיא עבדי לשפחותי שלי לשלי כך כביבול הקב"ה אמר הארץ שלי היא שנאמר לה' הארץ ומלואה וישראל שלי הן כי לי בני ישראל עבדים מוטב שאנחיל ארצי לעבדי שלי לשלי לכך נאמר זאת הארץ אשר תפל לכם

תנחומא מסעי ו

א"ל הקב"ה למשה הארץ הזאת חביבה עלי שנא' (דברים יא) ארץ אשר ה' אלהיך דורש אותה וישראל חביבין עלי שנאמר (שם לד) כי מאהבת ה' אתכם וגו' אמר הקב"ה אני אכניס בני שהם חביבין עלי לארץ שהיא חביבה עלי מנין ממה שקראו בענין כי אתם באים אל הארץ כנען:

The *Shidduch* between Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael is because we both share being beloved by Hashem. With Yaakov in particular we find a *Lashon* used by the Torah in association with Eretz Yisrael which is not found by any other Av, and that is the term *he lay at the Makom Hamikdash*. When Yaakov wakes up from his dream Hashem tells him הארץ אתה שוכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך. The *Lashon* of שכיבה is used to describe intimate relations (Bereishis 30,16; ibid 34,2; ibid 35,22). The term of שכיבה used here by the Torah when describing Yaakov's inheritance of Eretz Yisrael portrays that Yaakov and his descendants inherit Eretz Yisrael like an intimate **zivug** between two *nefashos*.

By blemishing Yaakov's *zivug*, first with Leah being switched instead of Rachel and secondly Zilpah being switched with Leah, the product of these two blemishes Reuvein and Gad were not worthy to inherit Eretz Yisrael as **their zivug** which was given to Yaakov as his *zivug*.

Another possible interpretation can be that Eretz Yisrael is a land that showers its inhabitants with דעת. Berachos 33 דעת ה' Berachos 33 דעת ה' Chazal say אוירא דארץ ישראל מחכים. The *Beis Hamikdash* was a place to realize דעת.

רבי אלעזר כל אדם שיש בו דעה כאילו נבנה בית המקדש בימיו דעה נתנה בין שתי אותיות מקדש נתן בין שתי אותיות. Chazal also say אין תורה כתורת ארץ ישראל.

Intimate relationship with one's spouse is called by the Torah דעת as the *passuk* says והאדם ידע את חוה. Marital relations is not only about the bonding of the bodies but also the connection of דעת one with another. Eretz Yisrael is the *zivug* of דעת between *itself* and Am Yisrael. The blemish of those two *Shevatim* came about because Yaakov was not privy to the knowledge that Rachel and Leah were replaced when forming Am Yisrael. He was deceived with שלא ידע בזיווג which is the opposite of Eretz Yisrael which is מחכים and has a *shefa* of *Daas*. By withholding information and knowledge from Yaakov they were punished not to have the *zivug* of שפע חכמה that is exclusively present in Eretz Yisrael. מדה כנגד מדה

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The *tikkun* for these blemishes was to live in a place where their Rebbi was buried but no one knew where that place was. This was tremendous *tzaar* for them being unable to *daven* or visit their Rebbie's *kever*. The anguish of not knowing where it is even though it is right in your back yard, was a *tikkun* for the *tzaar* of deliberately deceiving Yaakov into a state of not knowing. An allusion to this *tikkun* is in the *gematriah* חלקת מחוקק ספון (incl. kollel) which equals זה זיווגו בלא רשות - this is to correct the grave shortcoming of making Yaakov stumble into a *shidduch* which he did not agree to be a part of.

It was these two *Shevatim* who were driven unconsciously to make a *tikkun* on the שלא ידע זיווגו. It is therefore that we find that at the end, Hashem acquiesced to their requests. For only in עבר הירדן would they be able to bring to *tikkun olam* and rectify the שלא ידע זיווגו of Yaakov *Avinu*.

It is awesome to be enlightened by such an explanation that makes one's heart shudder. When we see individuals who act in our eyes with inappropriate behavior we right away judge them on their shortcomings. One will never know the orchestration and intervention of Hashem within that person's life to bring him or her to a *tikkun* in that *nefesh's* world of previous failures and blemishes that occurred in the past that they forgot, or previous *gilgulim*. During these three weeks we must strengthen our *emunah* in Hashem and be *melamaid zechus* wherever and whenever we possibly can. If one takes the *gematriah* of ומקנה רב היה (kollel) it equals משיח בן דוד. Everyone must know that even when we fix up previous *aveiros* or we experience *yisurim* without doing *aveiros* with circumstances beyond our control we thereby are bringing *Moshiach* closer by *Tikkun Haolam*.

Rav Brazil

Gut Shabbos