



5785 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Vayetzei / פרשת וַיֵּצֵא

Eretz Yisrael Folds Under Jerusalem

As *Yaakov Avinu* experiences his dream of the supernal ladder, God promises him that the land upon which he lies will belong to *Yaakov* and his descendants. The *Gemara Chullin* notes that this covenant does not initially sound so encouraging. After all, *Yaakov* was technically lying on a mere four cubits of earth. While we should infinitely appreciate every square inch of *Eretz Yisrael*, this doesn't seem to be a flattering promise.

As *Rashi* (*Bereishit* 28:13) notes, *Chazal* explain that during *Yaakov's* dream the entirety of *Eretz Yisrael* was folded underneath the ground that he rested. Hence, this promise of הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה ולזרעך incorporated every destined part of *Eretz Yisrael*.

The *Kli Yakar* (*Bereishit* 3:23) notes that this *midrash* is not a literal description of a fantastical land-origami miracle. Rather, it captures a deep message concerning the power of *Yerushalayim* and *Makom HaMikdash*. As *Rashi* explained earlier, *Yaakov* had inadvertently come to the place where his father was almost sacrificed at the *Akeidah*, *Har HaMoriya*. This place was the *sha'ar hashamayim*, the center of the future city of Jerusalem.

The *Gemara Yoma* famously states that the entire world's creation stemmed forth from the *Even Shetiya*, the foundational stone that rested in the center of *Har HaBayit*. In a certain sense, all the dust of *Eretz Yisrael* is sourced in Jerusalem. Hence, in a metaphysical sense, as *Yaakov* lay on the future spot of the *Beit HaMikdash*, he was resting over all of *Eretz Yisrael*. The sanctity and vitality of the entire Holy Land is sourced in its Holy City, Jerusalem.

On a deeper level, this explains *Yerushalayim's* unique capacity to unite all the disparate *shevatim* into the unified reality of *Knesset Yisrael*. Every tribe of Israel is deeply connected to their ancestral homeland. Each distinct *chelek* represents a unique divine mission in this world. It is specifically because of the beautiful diversity of *Klal Yisrael* and the distinct spiritual missions of every tribe that it can become difficult to unite under the common banner of *Klal Yisrael*. The ancestral portions of Israel physically reflect this separation between various Jews and their spiritual destinies.

But Jerusalem is the source of all of *Eretz Yisrael's kedusha*. The land of Israel "folds" under *Yerushalayim*, drawing its spiritual essence from the city that can bind together the disparate elements of *Klal Yisrael* into one unified whole. All of the distinct ancestral portions of the land find their common source in the Holy City. This is why it is specifically in Jerusalem that the twelve distinct rocks that surround *Yaakov's* head become one unified whole. בית אלקים, והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלקים, this unified stone is the only vessel that is worthy of serving as the בית אלקים.



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It is impossible for the destiny of *Klal Yisrael* to rest on a single tribe. Jerusalem miraculously weaves the various threads of our people into one beautiful tapestry, allowing the city to become the בית אלקים.

