

## **The Scratched Diamond**

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There once was a story about a king who owned the most beautiful diamond in the world. Every night the king carefully took the gem from its storage case to gaze at it lovingly.

One morning, while admiring it in his private chamber, the king lifted the diamond from its velvet box. But as he turned to place it back, his hand slipped. The diamond tumbled to the marble floor with a sharp, unforgiving sound. His heart dropped. He snatched it up at once, but it was too late: Across the once-perfect surface ran a deep, jagged scratch.

The king was inconsolable. He summoned the greatest jewelers from every corner of his kingdom. One by one, they examined the diamond. Each one shook his head.

"We can polish it," one said, "but the scratch is too deep. To remove it, we would have to cut the diamond down. It would lose its size, its brilliance—its very majesty."

Another jeweler frowned and added, "We can try to disguise it, Your Majesty, but the mark will always be there, hidden beneath a clever setting or concealed in shadow. It will never be as it once was."

The king dismissed them all in despair. His flawless jewel, the pride of his treasury, was ruined. He locked it away in a chest, unable to bear the sight of it.

Days turned to weeks. Then, one day, a traveler arrived at the palace gates—a quiet man carrying only a small leather bag of tools. He requested an audience with the king.

"I hear," the traveler said humbly, "that your diamond has been scratched. If you allow me, I will not only repair it—I will make it more beautiful than before."

The court laughed at him. The royal jewelers scoffed. But the king, desperate and weary, allowed him to try.

The artisan worked in silence. He did not attempt to erase the scratch. Instead, he studied it—its angle, its depth, the way it cut across the stone. And then, with the gentlest and most deliberate hand, he began to carve. Day after day, he labored over the diamond. Tiny chips of crystal fell away like snow, until at last he stepped back.

When the king looked upon his jewel, his eyes filled with wonder.

The scratch was gone—not because it had been erased, but because it had been transformed. In its place was an intricate engraving: a delicate flower, its stem formed by the original crack in the diamond. The flaw that had once disfigured the stone had become the heart of its beauty.

The diamond was no longer flawless, but it was far greater than flawless—it was unique. No other gem in the world could match it. Its beauty did not come from its perfection, but from its transformation.

The king placed it back in its box. And now, whenever he wore it, people no longer whispered about its flaw. Instead, they marveled at the flower and the skill that had turned an imperfection into a work of art.

And from that day on, the king understood: Sometimes what we call broken is simply the beginning of something more beautiful than we could have imagined.

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This story teaches us that our flaws do not diminish who we are—they are part of what makes us unique and special.

Like the diamond, we all carry scratches: past mistakes and regrets, imperfections and limitations. We often want to hide them or pretend they're not there. But the artisan in the story doesn't erase the scratch; he transforms it into something new and breathtaking.

In the same way, our flaws can be transformed. They can teach us compassion, deepen our resilience, and give us a kind of beauty that comes not from perfection, but from growth. We are not defined by what has hurt us—we are reshaped by it. And with care, even our deepest imperfections can become the most meaningful part of who we are.

Every morning, we are reminded of this in the prayer Asher Yatzar, when we thank God for forming our bodies and for their miraculous ability to work exactly the way they are supposed to. This blessing does not say that our bodies are perfect. Instead, it teaches us gratitude for the beauty and holiness of what is, even when it isn't flawless.

Just as the artisan transformed the diamond's scratch into something beautiful, Asher Yatzar invites us to see that our "scratches" are not defects to erase—they are part of what makes us whole, sacred, and worthy of blessing.