



Parshat Vayeshev

For the week ending 25 Kislev 5760
3 & 4 December 1999

Overview

Yaakov settles in the land of Canaan. His favorite son, Yosef, brings him critical reports about his brothers. Yaakov makes Yosef a fine tunic of multi-colored woolen

hatred by recounting prophetic dreams of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The brothers indict Yosef and resolve to execute him. When Yosef comes to

intent was to save Yosef. Yehuda persuades the brothers to take Yosef out of the pit and sell him to a caravan of passing Ishmaelites. Reuven returns to find the pit empty and rends his clothes. The brothers

Yaakov, who assumes that Yosef has been devoured by a wild beast. Yaakov is inconsolable. Meanwhile,

-plot,

second son, then weds Tamar by levirate marriage. He too is punished in similar circumstances. When

through Yehuda, as this union will found the Davidic line culminating in the mashiach. Meanwhile, Yosef rises to power in the house of his Egyptian master. His extreme beauty attracts the unwanted advances of his

Yosef of attempting to seduce her, and he is imprisoned. In jail, Yosef successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Ph

is re- is hanged. In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgets to help Yosef, and Yosef languishes in jail.

Insights

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

T apartment and buying it. When you buy, you think in terms of permanent and sometimes expensive re-modeling the best carpets and furnishings you can afford. A fitted kitchen with black marble work surfaces. But when you rent, you reckon you could get by with a lick of paint.

When you buy, you *dwell* . When you rent, you *reside* .

If you want to make money writing a thesaurus job. There are no synonyms in the Hebrew. If you *dwelling* and *residing* listed as synonyms. In Hebrew, however, every word has a unique meaning.

Vaye- lay-shev connotes *La-* to reside means a temporary stay.

Yaakov *dwelled* where his father had merely *resided* . Yitzchak recognized, as no one else, that this

passing through on the way to the palace.

This is not to say, G-d forbid, that Yaakov was overly enamored of this world, but that his lack of attachment to this world did not compare to that of his father. That minute bias has been amplified down the generations. Yaakov wanted to dwell in tranquility where his father Yitzchak had only resided. As a result, Yaakov is subjected to the heart-wrenching loss of his favorite son, Yosef.

Yosef started off his career as a dreamer on a

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel ☎ 972-2-581-0315
38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA ☎ 1-212-213-3100
613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada ☎ 1-905-886-5730

Dedication opportunities are available for Torah Weekly Please contact us for details.

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

972-2-581-2890 ☐ ohr@virtual.co.il
1-212-213-8717 ☐ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@aol.com
1-905-886-6065 ☐ Somayach@MSN.com

Production Design: Eli Ballon

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grand scale: He saw the sun and the moon and the stars bowing to him. Later he is reduced to interpreting who forgets Yosef as soon as he is released from prison.

Just as it was in Egypt, so it has been throughout Jewish history in exile. The great-great grand children of Israel dream their dreams, be it in Russia, Germany or America. We want to change the comes along. Show me any idealistic movement in many Jews, behind it and in the forefront of it.

How is it that we Jews allow ourselves to dream these dreams? Because we start to feel ourselves very comfortable in our alien surroundings. We start to see ourselves as *dwellers* where our parents only saw themselves as *residents*. Look at every one of these movements, from the Bolshevik revolution in Russia to the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties in the United States. From the Hippies to the Yippies. They all have one thing strangely in common - movement has sudden and total amnesia as to who it was that started the whole thing. That same movement turns around and accuses the Jews of

being the very enemy they are trying to eradicate.

A Jew prays three times a day. Probably the most difficult of those prayers is *Mincha*, the afternoon prayer. In the morning, the day is just beginning. Before the world fills with noise and bustle, we have space in our minds to contemplate the Eternal and the Unchanging. At night, the world is winding down and we can catch our breath and talk to G-d in peace and tranquility. But in the middle of the afternoon, when we are engrossed in worldly affairs, it takes a real wrench to step out of this world and speak to G-d.

Mincha prayer service the service that Yitzchak instituted *dwell* in

permanent residence is G-world, and that this world is no more than a rented apartment.

Sources:

- *Kli Yakar, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin*

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14 - 4:7

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHT DAYS

There is a certain timeless quality to that simple catchy tune of , sung by Jews worldwide after lighting the menorah. What about the words? What deep message is hidden in these six cryptic verses?

The first and last verses of express our longing for the rebuilding of the Temple. The middle four verses speak of the exiles to which the Jewish people have been subjected Egypt, Babylon, Medio-Persia, and Greece and of their joyous endings. At the Pesach Seder we do not

mention Egypt. Why is Chanukah the time to learn about Jewish history?

Another puzzle: Chanukah celebrates the one small jar of oil that miraculously burned for eight days. Surely everyone has heard of Judah the Maccabee and his mighty army; why do we not celebrate the military victory?

In the *haftarah* for the Shabbat of between the attempt to rebuild the Second

Temple, and the euphoria that will accompany the rebuilding of the third Temple in the future. Then Zechariah sees a seven-branched menorah, above which is a large oil container with seven pipes feeding olive oil to each of the seven lamps of the menorah. Zechariah is told that this menorah is a message to Zerubavel, who was instrumental in

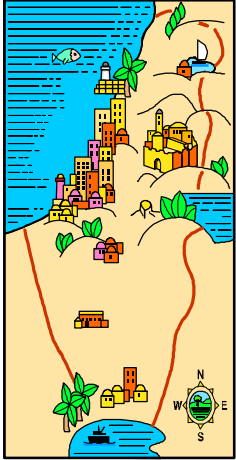
Consider the shape of the menorah, seven lights branching forth from a central stem. The word from the fire. The menorah shows how light spreads forth from

learn to trace everything back to its Divine source, then G-d will channel His benevolence upon us from

above. On Chanukah we sing about all the exiles, for all those exiles could end only when the Jewish People learned the lesson of the menorah. And when we take this message to heart, then our final exile too will end, and the crown will be returned to its former glory.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael



TEKOAH

The oil of the Menorah is the subject of the Chanukah miracle. Where did this oil for the Menorah, and for the flour offerings, come from?

Tekoah was the city in ancient *Eretz Yisrael* that was the prime source of the olive oil used in the *Beit Hamikdash* (Holy Temple). (*Mesechta Menachot 85b*)

commander-in-chief, Yoav, who employed a wise woman from Tekoah to put on a dramatic performance before the king in order to effect reconciliation between him and his son Avshalom, after *Shmuel II Chapter 14*). Olive oil makes one wise, say our Sages (*ibid.*), and the abundance of such oil is what produced the wise woman of Tekoah who succeeded in her difficult mission.

Tekoah is today the name of a thriving Jewish settlement established in the Judean Desert shortly after the Six-Day War.