

# וַיִּשֶׁב

## VAYESHEV/AND HE SETTLED Bereshith/Genesis 37:1-40:23

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“*And Ya’acov settled*” (וַיִּשֶׁב)...the **name** of our **parasha** and the **beginning words** indicate that **Ya’acov** is positioning himself for an era of **leisurely living**. He has **endured** through many **trials**. Even before he was born, he **struggled** in the **womb with his brother**. He was **forced to leave his family** because of **Esav’s murderous threats** after the way he **obtained the blessings**. He lived **20 years** with a **manipulative uncle** and yet had **left with wives, children and possessions**. He **struggled with a divine being** before figuring out how to **appease Esav** upon his **return to the Promised Land**. His **daughter** was **rescued from the arms of an evil prince** although the questionable method of securing her release **brought worry to Ya’acov**. After all of this, **why wouldn’t Ya’acov**, now an elderly man, be **ready for “settling”** into a **restful retirement**?

**Retirement** was **not יהוה’s plan** for **Ya’acov**. His favored son, **Yosef**, would **soon be kidnapped** by his own brothers and **sold as a slave**. Thus **Ya’acov** would **endure another 22 years** of **trials, mourning a son** in whom he had placed so much hope. If you haven’t figured it out by now, there is **no real “settling”** in **this world**. There is always **another battle, another trial, another test** for the **person of faith**. Our **mission** in life seems to be just to **keep moving forward**.

Let’s take a look at that **first verse** in our **parasha**:

*Bereshith 37:1 And Ya’acov settled (vayeshev - וַיִּשֶׁב) in the land where his father was a sojourner (maguhr- מַגוּחַר), in the land of Canaan.<sup>2</sup> These are the generations (toledah - תּוֹלְדוֹת) of Ya’acov....*

It seems pretty **simple**. **Ya’acov** has **returned** to the **same “land as his father”**. He is **the next in line** to **continue** the **covenant**. **Rashi** compares the **above verse** with an **earlier verse** concerning his **brother, Esav**:

*Bereshith 36:2 Esav took his wives from the daughters of Canaan... **Esav took** his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Ya’acov. ...<sup>8</sup> And Esav settled (vayeshev - וַיִּשֶׁב) in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.<sup>9</sup> And these are the generations (toledah - תּוֹלְדוֹת) of Esav....*

The **contrast** is **clear**. **Bereshith 37:1** links **Ya’acov** to his **father, Yitzchak**. On the **contrary**, we see that **Esav** has **chosen to leave the “land of Canaan”**, since he is **not a part of the covenantal promise**, and **“settle”** (vayeshev - וַיִּשֶׁב) in **“Edom”**. Not to be missed, however, is that **Ya’acov’s father** was a **“sojourner”** (maguhr- מַגוּחַר) in the **“land of Canaan”**. So...**Ya’acov** had **intentions of “settling”** in the **“land”** where his **father** was a **“sojourner”**. It would appear that **Ya’acov** was **attempting to act** in a manner which was **opposite** of the way his **father lived life**. **Ya’acov’s desire** for a **“settled” lifestyle** is **shattered** by the **pain of losing his beloved Yosef**.

The **Brit Chadasha** tells us of the **necessity** and the **spiritual growth** which brings us to “**completion**” as a **result of living through “trials”**:

*Romans 5:3 ... we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;<sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope.<sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of Yah has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

*James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.<sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Years later, a **matured Ya’acov** now **referred** to his **life** as a “**sojourn**” as he **answered a question** posed by **Pharaoh**:

*Bereshith 47:8 Pharaoh said to Ya’acov, "How old are you?"<sup>9</sup> And Ya’acov said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourn (maguhr- ַגַּוְרִי) are one hundred and thirty years; few and bad have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourns (maguhr- ַגַּוְרִי)."*

At first, it sounds like **Ya’acov** is **being very negative**; however, I think he’s come to **accept** that **trials and difficulties** have been the **tool** that **יהוה** used to **bring him** to “**completion**” (*James 1:4*). The writer of **Hebrews** reminds us that **all of the Patriarchs** were “**sojourners**”:

*Hebrews 11:8 By faith Avraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Yitzchak and Ya’acov, the heirs with him of the same promise;*

**Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’acov -**

*Hebrews 11:13 ... confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.*

The **benefits of not being too “settled” on this earth...**

*Hebrews 11:16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore Elohim is not ashamed to be called their Elohim, for He has prepared a city for them.*

“**Sojourning**” implies **walking, mobility, progress, and growth**. The **danger** of the “**settled**” lifestyle is that one **can become spiritually paralyzed or stagnant**. **Obsession with security can hinder us from following Elohim**. We find the idea of “**walking**” connected with **righteous men**:

*Bereshith 5:24 And Enoch walked with Elohim; and he was not, for Elohim took him.*

*Bereshith 6:9 ... Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with Elohim.*

*Bereshith 17:1 ...**וי** appeared to Avram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai; walk before Me and be blameless.*

**Rav Sha'ul encourages us in our "spiritual walk":**

*Romans 8:1 There is therefore now **no condemnation to those who are in Yeshua the Messiah, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.***

*2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

Are you **not sure how to "walk"**? **Yeshua invites** each of us to **"yoke up"** with Him:

*Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

**Yeshua promises us "rest for our souls"...**that's not a **promise** for a **"settled"** life. In fact, Scripture seems to **point to exactly the opposite:**

*Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

*1 Peter 1:6 ... now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,*

The question is...to **"settle"** or to **"sojourn"**? **"Settling"** sounds **inviting**, but the following **story illustrates** what we **might be missing** if we **avoid the challenges of life:**

Once there was an old lady sipping her coffee in the restaurant of a theater long after the curtain had gone up on the first act of the play. The waiter asked her curiously why she hadn't taken her seat inside the theater. She replied to him, "Oh no...it's much too crowded and noisy in there now. Once they all come out...that's when I go in. Then I can have as many seats to myself as I like!"

We tend to think that the **purpose of life is those endless sunny summer days**; days when you can't see a cloud and everything in life seems perfect. And when the rain falls into our lives (as it does to us all) well, that's something to be endured until the clouds clear. **We put up with hardship, thinking that it's just a painful intermission, and when it ends, we will get back to the "real purpose of life".**

The reverse is really the case. **Life is all about the rain and the storms and our striving to overcome them.** For in this way, we **elevate ourselves spiritually and fulfill the purpose that we were meant for.** Those sunny days are so we can **gather our strength**, and thus **derive the maximum from facing life's challenges.** Ya'acov learned that it was **considered improper** for him to **place his focus on serenity**, for in life **"the play's the thing"....not the intermission.** (Based on R'Yerucham Lebovitz)

The **story of Yosef always coincides with Chanukah.** One begins to **search for a connection between these two stories** which, at first glance, appear to have nothing in common. The name **Chanukah** has **two meanings.** **First**, and foremost, it means **"dedication"** because it was **on Chanukah** that in 165

BCE, the Temple was purified and “*rededicated*” to the service of יהוה after many years of pagan defilement. Its other meaning, however, we may find very interesting in light of what we have been studying. Chanu (חנן) means “*they rested*”, and Kah (composed of the Hebrew letters for 25 – כ & ה) means “*25<sup>th</sup>*”. This points to the date for the feast of Chanukah...the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev.

Although Chanukah was a “*rest*”, it was really only a reprieve between battles. Physically, the Jews overpowered the Greeks. They were able to rededicate the Temple and “*settle*” for a moment. However, like the story of Ya’acov, this would develop into another conflict...a conflict which turns out to be a spiritual battle. Ya’acov was not able to “*settle*” and find “*rest*” because his children were at odds with one other. Ya’acov faced many trials in his lifetime, but none as bad as when Yosef’s brothers began to act on their hate. No war is as bad as a civil war. Ya’acov knew how to deal with attacks by Esav and Lavan, but he was at a loss when it came to dealing with the battle that raged in his own home. Chanukah repeats Ya’acov’s story.

In addition to the physical victory the Jews had over the Greeks, Chanukah continues with the spiritual battle of Jew against Jew:

*1 Maccabees 2:27-28 “Whosoever is zealous for the Torah, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me!”*

Secular Jews invited the Greek influence into Jerusalem. Hellenization crept into the Temple service. Many Jews began to embrace Hellenistic culture and all the worldly things it had to offer. Thus they assimilated and “*settled*” into that system.

Chanukah turned into a struggle for the spiritual soul of Israel. It was a war fought in defense of the ritual of circumcision, the observance of Shabbat, the study of Torah, kosher eating, and purity of the Temple Service. If that war had not been fought, there would not have been a Jewish state for Yeshua to be born into!

Those straying from the Torah saw Hellenization as a comfortable way of “*settling*” and a way of “*unifying*” with the world. But “*unity*” does not mean conformity. “*Unity*” does not mean we have to sacrifice our beliefs and ideals and accept the way of the majority. Again we can find a connection with our parasha. There was no “*unity*” between Yosef and his brothers. Yosef “*walked*” a different path than his brothers. They “*hated him because of his dreams*”:

*Bereshith 37:8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.*

Notice this verse references “*dreams*”, yet it follows the telling of only Yosef’s first dream. Obviously this was not the first dream Yosef shared with his brothers. Yosef’s dreams gave him a vision of the future. Yosef’s dreams were prophetic! It seems strange that Yosef dreamt about harvesting grain. Yosef and his brothers were shepherds and not farmers. Why would Yosef’s dreams make his brothers uncomfortable, even to the point of hatred?

Through the telling of his dreams, Yosef raised the possibility that there would be great upheavals in their lives that would completely change life as they knew it. Yosef knew that Ya’acov would not be

able to “settle in the land where his father was a sojourner” (Bereshith 37:1) because of the prophecy given to his great grandfather, Avraham:

*Bereshith 15:13 Then He said to Avram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be sojourners (ger - גֵר) in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.*

Yosef was aware that the Almighty had stated that his family was headed for an alien environment, far from the Promised Land, with new circumstances and under new conditions of life. In his first dream he prophetically saw the unity of the family preserved, yet the dreams pointed to him playing a leadership role.

Let's consider for a moment why Yosef would have told his brothers this dream and most likely other dreams previously. Yosef was a smart young man and knew that these dreams compromised his relationship with his brothers. Yet, I would like to suggest that perhaps Yosef shared his dreams with his brothers because he had an understanding of the prophecy given to Avraham. Yosef's desire for his family to prepare for the future was greater than his desire for their love and acceptance. The brothers did not understand him for they looked upon the future as a continuation of the present. They saw life only from the framework of their lives in Canaan. Are things any different today? יהוה has given us many prophecies in regards to the last days. He has plans of restoring this earth. Our part is to bow to the “Yosef” figure and be willing to follow Him wherever He takes us. Kefa (Peter) reminds us to focus on the words of the prophets and to tell the world that things as we know them are sure to change. The way this information is received is often not that much different than the way Yosef's dreams were received by his brothers:

*2 Peter 3:1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),<sup>2</sup> that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Adonai and Savior,<sup>3</sup> knowing this first: that scorners will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,<sup>4</sup> and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."<sup>5</sup> For this they willfully forget: that by the word of Elohim the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,<sup>6</sup> by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.<sup>7</sup> But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.<sup>8</sup> But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with Adonai one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.<sup>9</sup> Adonai is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.<sup>10</sup> But the day of Adonai will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,<sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of Elohim, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

Whether or not **Yosef related his dreams** to his **brothers** in an **appropriate manner** is **up for debate**; however, I think he **understood** that **his dreams prophetically lined up** with other pieces of **information given** to his **forefathers**. "**Prophecy**", although **easily misinterpreted**, is **extremely important** and worth **meditating on**:

*Revelation 19:10 ... For the testimony of Yeshua is the spirit of prophecy."*

Let's change directions and just briefly look at a **specific event** that happened **when the brothers attempted to cover up the sale of Yosef**:

*Bereshith 37:31 So they took Yosef's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.<sup>32</sup> Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"*

According to **Jewish thought**, the "**dipping**" of Yosef's "**tunic in blood**" marked the **first step of the exile**. The exile would **come about because of hatred** and **disunity** among brothers. The **redemption** then **began** when a **unified** Israel was **commanded** to **dip a bundle of "hyssop" in the "blood"** of the **Passover lamb** and **touch the lintel and two door posts** with it. The "**hyssop**" (symbolizes **all of Israel**) was **dipped into the "blood"** as the **key to redemption**, thus **Israel became one with the "blood" of the Passover lamb**.

**Fast forward** a few thousand years to the **crucifixion**. Notice the "**hyssop**" and the **drink Yeshua takes of the bitter wine, the wine of judgment** (*Jeremiah 25:15*):

*John 19:28 After this, Yeshua, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"<sup>29</sup> Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.<sup>30</sup> So when Yeshua had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

The "**hyssop**", representing the **people of Israel soaked with divisiveness and sin ("sour wine")**, is what **Yeshua drank**:

*2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of Yah in Him.*

And by the "**blood of the Passover Lamb**" we've been **saved** from our **bondage to sin**:

*John 1:29 The next day Yochanan (John) saw Yeshua coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of Yah who takes away the sin of the world!"*

**Bereshith's story of Yosef** continues on with the **process of unifying the "sojourning" family**. **Two thousand years after the resurrection of our Messiah**, we also **are in need of unity**. As we continue to study the **final chapters of Bereshith** we will find **insights** into this **process**. The time will come when **His return** will be **with a reminder** that the **division between the brothers is over**. He will have **reclaimed the special leadership garment given to Him by the father** (*Bereshith 37:3*). It will even **appear the same** as when **His brothers took it!**

**Revelation 19:11** Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of Elohim.** <sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of El Shaddai. <sup>16</sup> And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

And on the **gates** of the **New Jerusalem** will be written the **names of the unified twelve tribes**:

**Revelation 21:12** Also she had a great and high wall with **twelve gates**, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: <sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

**Come quickly, King of Kings!**

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Ardelle**