Parshat Vayeshev

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 maschiach. 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
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
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.
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.