



Parsha Va'yeshev / And He Settled

B'reshith / Genesis 37:1 – 40:23

Beit Emet ~ Vancouver, WA

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Last week we read about Ya'aqob's return to Kena'an, his reunion with Esau and the wrestling match that resulted in his new name, Yisra'el. Now, in this week's *parsha*, we read in **B'reshith / Genesis 37:1; *And Ya'aqob settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Kena'an.*** Actually, in the Hebrew the term "**Va'yeshev**" means "**and he settled**" in the land of his father's sojournings, in eretz Kena'an.

Rabbi Yosef Kalatzky, in his teaching series **Beyond Pshat**, "[Parsha Vayeishev](#)", sites Rashi as he writes, "*Rashi provides one interpretation of the word vayeishev, 'settle,' to mean that Yaakov wanted to live in peace and tranquility. Yaakov, at this point in his life, had already experienced many difficulties and hardships such as working for Lavan for 20 years under the most trying conditions. Yaakov also had to confront his evil brother Esav, his daughter Dinah was raped, and his sons, Shimon and Levi, destroyed a community. In addition, his young wife Rachel passed away during childbirth. After experiencing these multiple hardships, Yaakov felt that he wanted to live in tranquility... Rashi explains that since Yaakov believed that he had suffered enough and wished to retire into this state of tranquility, he was confronted with yet another major tragedy - the conflict between Yosef and his brothers! Ultimately, Yaakov was led to believe that a beast had devoured Yosef, his most beloved child, and he had to suffer for twenty-two years with this belief.*"

So now, let's look at **B'reshith / Genesis 37:2-11; *These are the generations of Ya'aqob. Yoseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the young man was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Yoseph brought an evil report of them to his father. And Yisra'el loved Yoseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a long robe. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and were not able to speak peaceably to him. And Yoseph dreamed a dream, and told it to his brothers. So they hated him even more. And he said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have dreamed: See, we were binding sheaves in the midst of the field, and see, my sheaf rose up and also stood up. And see, your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Shall you indeed rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. And he dreamed still another dream and related it to his brothers, and said, "See, I have dreamed another dream, and see, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me.*"**

And he related it to his father and his brothers. And his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall we, your mother and I and your brothers, indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father guarded the word.

To help us here, I want to paraphrase Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum, in his teaching this week, [Universal Torah: Vayeishev](#). He points out, now that the Torah has completed the stories of Avraham and Yitzaq and that part of the story of Ya'aqob in which he is the central player; his story is now winding down and we turn the page to yet another chapter in the "**toldot**" (the *generations* or *birthings*) of Avraham, Yitzaq and Ya'aqob (*Yisra'el*), as we first saw three weeks ago. As **verse 2** of our *parsha* begins, "**These are the generations of Ya'aqob**". Let's revisit, for a minute, the meaning of this word "**Toldot**", which is the Hebrew word for "**generations**", "**birthings**" or "**the fruits or birthings**". Remember what we learned from *Parsha Toldot*? What's also interesting, is that "**toldot**", or "**generations**", carries the connotation, in Hebrew thought, of the concept and term "**gilgulim**" or "**rollings**", as with a "**wheel**" or within a "**whirlwind**". Their "**rollings**" are recounted in the remaining four *parashot* in **B'reshith (Genesis)** and allude to all of *their / our* history and future; first in the Land of Yisra'el and then in exile, until we will finally come again to a "**state of habitation**" (**yeshev**) in the Land of Yisra'el, with Mashiach. Then too, we will live in a state of "**Yeshev HaDa'at**", "**a settled mind**". Ya'aqob sought tranquility (*a settled mind*) in the Land of Israel, after his return from Haran. However, this was to be short lived, as our *parsha* this week teaches us. You see, true tranquility, or "**settled mind**" can only be attained in the world of the future; after many "**rollings**" (**gilgulim**) or "**generations**" and after the Restoration of the Kingdom to Yisra'el and all things.

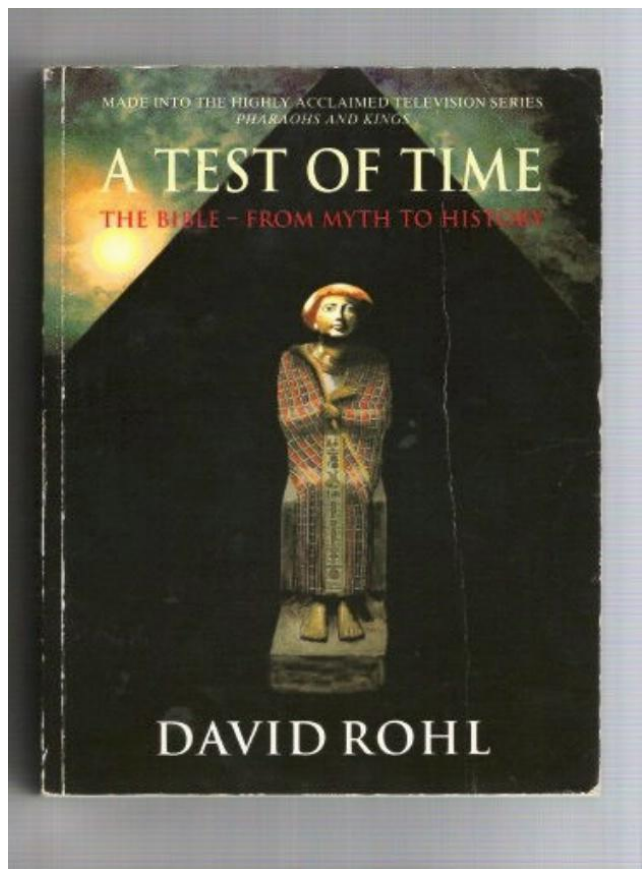
Over the past couple of weeks, we've seen that the mothers of B'nei Ya'aqob made a competition out of having these children. They were conceived in strife. Now, in this week's *parsha*, we're seeing these bad feelings playing out in the sons' lives. In **verse 2** we see that Yoseph, son of Rachel and a youth of 17, was with the sons of Bilhah (*Dan & Naphtali*) and Zilpah (*Gad & Asher*) tending their father's flocks. Now, in the Hebrew it says that Yoseph "*would bring their evil reports to his father*". In other words, he would tell Ya'aqob of the bad things they would say about him (Yoseph).

Now, the Book of Yasher and the oral histories tell us that Yoseph, his father's prodigy, studied with his father and Eber (Shem's grandson) and became his prime disciple in the worship of Elohim. The other brothers, we're told, were not as eager to learn as Yoseph was. That is why **verse 3** tells us that Yisra'el loved Yoseph more than his other sons. Our English text reads that it was "*because he was the son of his old age*". The Hebrew word here for "**old age**" is shown with vowel points as "**zawqoon**" which means "**old age**". However, there are two very interesting things in the Hebrew here. First, we have the addition of the "*yud-mem*" making it the plural "**zawqoon'im**" or "**old ages**". But, secondly, since there are no vowel points in the Torah, we could also read this as "**zawqayn'im**" which applies being "**old**" or "**aged**" with "**having wisdom**". With that in mind, we would read **verse 3** as meaning; that Yisra'el loved Yoseph more than his other sons because he was the son of Yisra'el's "**age old wisdoms**" or "**ancient knowledge**", which is consistent with Yoseph following his father's teachings. And this made the brothers very jealous.

Verse 3 also tells us that Yisra'el made Yoseph a "**ketonet**" spelled "*kaf-tav-nun-tav*". It is Strong's #3801 and means "**tunic**" and is an "**inner or mid layer garment**" made of woven linen, or wool, sharing the same root word as "**kee'tan**" (*kaf-yud-tav-nun*) meaning "**woven linen**" or "**woven**

wool according to Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon. It wasn't a coat or cloak at all. It was an inner or under garment. And, there's more. "**Ketonet**" and "**kee'tan**" share the same root word, which is "**kaf-tav-nun**" or "**katan**", as in "**tallit katan**" and means "**small**" or "**under**" as in "**small tallit**" or "**under tallit**", which represents our prayer covering. The numeric value of the letters "**kaf-tav-nun-tav**" in "**ketonet**" is 870, which equals "**heet ha'lu'ah kahtee**" or "**I have followed**" from **B'reshith 24:40** and from **VaYiqra 22:32**, "**v'nee qadash tee**" or "**And I will be Set-apart**".

We have this long taught picture in our heads of "**Joseph's coat of many colors**". And, why not? Don't the King James Bible and numerous English translations of the Torah say so? Well, we've just seen that it wasn't a coat at all. And? You guessed it; no "**many colors**". While King Jimmy translated it as "**colors**" with (*many*) italicized and in brackets denoting that it was added, in the Hebrew Torah we find simply the word "**pasim**", "**pey-samech-yud-mem**", Strong's #6446 meaning "**to the wrists**" and/or "**ankles**" and also "**striped**". According to Gesenius' Lexicon, a "**ketonet pasim**" was a long tunic worn by those of noble or **priestly** rank. In fact, if you go the Temple Institute's website, then you can see the "**tunic**" of the Kohen Gadol. As you read the articles you'll notice that Rabbi Richman also makes the connection between this priestly "**tunic**" and the one Yisra'el (*Ya'aqob*) made for Yoseph.



Here you see the picture of the High Priest's tunic from www.templeinstitute.org and a picture of the cover of Historian and author, David Rohl's book "**The Test of Time**". In it, he shows the archeological evidence that Yoseph was indeed in Egypt when the Torah states that he was. This is a picture of the statue of Yoseph, in his royal Governor's "**coat of many colors**". This statue was

found in his tomb in Egypt. His name, both as Yoseph (in Hebrew) and his Egyptian name "**Zaphnath-Pa'neah**" (meaning "**Savior of the Age**") were written in numerous places within this tomb. The other picture of the "**priestly tunic**" worn by Kohen HaGadol (*the High Priest*) is ready and waiting for the next Priest who will serve in Mashiach's Temple.

You see, Ya'aqob (*Yisra'el*) made Yoseph the Kohen Gadol of the family. He made him High Priest, after the order of the Melek Tzadik. The Levitical priesthood wouldn't be set-apart, or sanctified, for another 300 years or so. Yoseph studied under his father and was set-apart as Yisra'el's High Priest in his generation. No wonder his brothers couldn't handle it. You see, in the two previous generations the sons chosen to lead the family were not the first-born. HaShem told Avraham that Yitsaq was to be chosen from his seed. HaShem told Rivka that Ya'aqob was to accept the blessing and not Esau. So, can you imagine what the 10 older brothers thought about the idea that the second youngest would rule over them.

In fact, we read in verse 4; "**But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him v'lo yachlu dabro l'shalom.**" We have several English translations of this last phrase. They include; "*They could not speak peaceably to him*" ~ "*They could not speak a kind word to him*" ~ "*They could not speak to him on friendly terms*". But, the Hebrew translates literally as, "**they could not speak him to peace**". What does this mean? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in his teaching last year, "[Vayeshev: Speech Therapy](#)", cites Rabbi Yonatan Eybeshutz, who refers us to the command in **VaYiqra / Leviticus 19:17**, which states, **Do not hate your brother in your heart. Reprove your neighbor, for certain, and bear no sin because of him.** The rabbi's point is simple. Had the brothers been able to speak to Yoseph, they might have told him of their anger at his tale-bearing, and of their jealousy at his being named the family's High Priest. They might have spoken frankly about their sense of humiliation at the way their father favoured Rachel over their mother Leah, a favouritism that was now being carried on to a second generation. Then, Yoseph might have come to understand their feelings. It might have made him more modest, or at least more thoughtful. But "**v'lo yachlu dabro l'shalom**". They simply couldn't bring themselves to speak. As Nachmanides writes, on the command: "**Do not hate your brother in your heart**": "*Those who hate tend to hide their hate in their heart*".

Next, Yoseph goes and has two dreams in which his brothers and even his parents bow down to him. It was just too much for them to take. Even though his father scolded him, because it seemed like he might be bragging; we're told that Ya'aqob guarded the word. He knew his son, and he knew that Yoseph's dreams were indeed from HaShem.

As does everything else in Torah, this has tremendous prophetic implications for us. King David wrote of Mashiach, in **Tehillim / Psalms 110:1-4**; **YHVH said to my Master, "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." YHVH sends Your mighty scepter out of Tzion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people volunteer in the day of Your might, In the splendors of set-apartness! From the womb, from the morning, You have the dew of Your youth! YHVH has sworn and does not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melek Tzadik."**

Yoseph was indeed a picture of Mashiach. And, as we'll see, he delivers Egypt (a picture of the world of constriction and slavery) in order to save and bless his own family Israel. In all of these events, Torah is showing us the pattern of how Mashiach will help save Israel and feed the whole world with the Words of HaShem until the "**Olam HaBah**" (*the World to Come*).

Let's read on with **B'reshith / Genesis 37:12-24**; *And his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shekem. And Yisra'el said to Yoseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shekem? Come, I send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." And he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the sheep, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shekem. And a certain man found him, and see, he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What do you seek?" And he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please inform me where they are feeding their sheep." And the man said, "They have left here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go towards Dothan.'*

I find it quite interesting that Yoseph's brothers go to Shekem to feed their father's flock. Hopefully you remember from our past studies together that **Shekem** means "**upper back**" or "**shoulder**" and is the part of the shoulder that carries the weight of a **burden** or a load. In fact it has come to be identified with "**bearing burdens**". It is also the area of the back where scourgings were concentrated since that was the "**burden**" of punishment. And, it was here that Shim'on and Levi took out their anger on the men and animals of the whole city because of the kidnapping and rape of their sister Dinah. The other brothers also looted and took slaves from the women and children of Shekem. Plus, Ya'aqob had purchased a field from Hamor, Shekem's father there too. So, they owned the land of Shekem and they return there, the place of their revenge, to plot the killing of Yoseph.

Ya'aqob sends Yoseph to check up on them, playing right into their hands. How could this be? Ya'aqob isn't stupid. **Verses 12-14** read a little different in the Hebrew that what we see in the English. As Yisra'el sends Yoseph to see his brothers, he tells him to look into the '**peace**' (*shalom*) of his brothers and the '**shalom**' of the flock and report back. Yisra'el is telling Yoseph to "*go make peace with your brothers*".

Then, we're told a curious thing. **So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shekem**. Actually, in the Hebrew it says that he sent him "**out of the depth**" of Hebron. The Hebrew word here is "**m'emeq**", spelled "**mem-ayin-mem-kuf**". From the letters, **mem** = *water*, **ayin** = *eye or fountain*, **mem** = *water* and **kuf** = *to surround*, we see the connotation of being in the '**eye**' or "**center of the fountain**" and "**surrounded by the waters**"; like in an immersion or in a mikvah. Hebron isn't in a valley. It's on a hill. I know, I've walked it. It's literally a city on a hill, a very steep hill. So, what's at the "**depth of Hebron**"? Machpelah, the "**Cave of the Patriarchs**"; at that time the burial place of Avraham and Sarah. And, it would become the burial place of Yitzaq and Rivka and Ya'aqob and Leah. And, according to the rabbis, it's quite probable that Adam and Chavah are buried in a lower chamber of the cave. In any event, Hebron means "**joining**" or "**conjunction**". Yisra'el sent Yoseph from the "**cave of conjunction**", the "**depth (m'emeq) of Hebron**", the very

meaning of Hebron, representing Kol Yisra'el (past, present and future) to make peace with his brothers at Shekem, the "**shoulder of the burden**". With his royal priestly tunic he went as "**Sar Shalom**", the Prince who would make Peace and restore the nation, Yisra'el. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?.

Now, when Yoseph reaches Shekem and is wandering about, looking for his brothers and the sheep, he is found by a "**certain man**". Actually from the Hebrew, it sounds like Yoseph found this "**iysh**" or "**man**". In fact, the phrase here is "**v'ye'matzahoo**" ("**and he found**" a **man**). The connotation here is that Yoseph "**received**" or "**found knowledge**" in this man. This "**man with knowledge**" was a messenger of Elohim, sent to make sure that Yoseph found his brothers. Now, this man tells him that his brothers chose to go to Dothan. Dothan literally means "**two wells**". It also comes from the root word "**dat**" which is "**religious law**". What does all of this mean?

As Rabbi Greenbaum explains this week, "*But what it means is FROM THE DEEP PLAN of that tzaddik who is buried in Hebron, i.e. Abraham... the 'deep plan' necessitated the sale of Joseph into slavery in Egypt, which would eventually cause all his brothers and Jacob himself to go down to Egypt, in order to bring about the exile of the Children of Egypt there in preparation for their eventual Exodus. The paradigm of Exile / Redemption recurs repeatedly in Jewish history in the exiles of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome (Edom-Yishmael). All the 'rollings' (gilgulim) and incarnations of the Children of Israel from generation to generation refine and purify their souls in preparation for the eventual state of YESHEV, 'habitation', which depends on peace among the Twelve Tribes.*"

Here also, we have "**two wells**", or "**two fountains**". In the remez level it is hinted that they had "**two wisdoms**" or "**two paths**". One path to murder and another to selling their brother into slavery. As we read in **B'reshith / Genesis 37:25-36**; **And they sat down to eat a meal. And they lifted their eyes and looked and saw a company of Yishma'elites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, and balm, and myrrh, going to take them down to Mitsrayim. And Yehudah said to his brothers, "What would we gain if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Yishma'elites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our flesh."** **And his brothers listened. And men, Midyanite traders passed by, so they pulled Yoseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Yishma'elites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Yoseph to Mitsrayim. And Re'uven returned to the pit, and see, Yoseph was not in the pit. And he tore his garments. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone! And I, where am I to go?" So they took Yoseph's robe, killed a male goat, and dipped the robe in the blood, and sent the long robe and brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Please look, is it the robe of your son or not?" And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe. An evil beast has devoured him. Yoseph is torn, torn to pieces." And Ya'aqob tore his garments, and put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "Now let me go down into the grave to my son in mourning." So his father wept for him. And the Midyanites had sold him in Mitsrayim to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.**

So, they sell Yoseph to the Yishma'elites for 20 pieces of silver. Twenty is an interesting number, in that in Hebrew thought, 20 is the number of "**expectancy**". Now, in **VaYiqra 27:2**, HaShem tells Moshe that "**when a man separates a vow by the evaluation of lives unto YHVH, and it is a male from 5 years old up to twenty, the evaluation shall be twenty sheqels**". Torah states that

20 sheqels is value of a young man below 20 years of age. Remember, Yoseph was 17. And, they took his priestly garment, his tunic and, having killed a male goat, dipped it in the blood and brought it home to show Ya'aqob. It's interesting that Torah makes sure to tell us that they killed a "**male goat**" (as in *Yom Kippur*) and dipped the tunic in the blood of the "**kapparah**" or offering of atonement and bring it home to Yisra'el (Ya'aqob).

Now, Ya'aqob mourned Yoseph many days. He refused to be comforted. The word for comforted here is "**nachum**", "*nun-chet-mem*". Interesting, in that "**nun**" is "**kingdom**", "**chet**" is "**life**" and "**mem**", in addition to "*water*", is "**chaos**". So, "*the kingdom's life was in chaos*". "**Nachum**" also means to "**repent**". This is very interesting in that according to **B'reshith 5 & 6** (the telling of Noach and the flood), this word "**nachum**" is used to describe, first why Lemek named his son Noach; because he brings "**nachum**" or "**comfort**" to them concerning the toil of their hands, because of the ground that Elohim had cursed, in **B'reshith / Genesis 5:28-29**. Then, in **Chapter 6:6**, HaShem "**repented**" ("**nachum**") that He had made man on the earth. So Ya'aqob would not be comforted or repent from his mourning for Yoseph, whom he had appointed as Priest. In fact, he would mourn for his son the next 22 years. And, Yoseph is sold into slavery in Mitzrayim (Egypt).

Now, the sages teach that when the brothers saw how Yoseph's loss hurt their father that they turned on Yehudah (Judah); because it was his idea to sell Yoseph. And, this is why Yehudah left his brothers and went his own way, at this time. In any event, we read in **B'reshith / Genesis 38:1-11**; *And at that time it came to be that Yehudah left his brothers, and turned aside to a man, an Adullamite whose name was Hirah. And Yehudah saw there a daughter of a certain Kena'anite whose name was Shuwa. And he took her and went in to her. So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. And she conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. And he was at Kezib when she bore him. And Yehudah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Yehudah's first-born, was evil in the eyes of YHVH, and YHVH took his life. And Yehudah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. And it came to be, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled on the ground, lest he should give an offspring to his brother. But what he did displeased YHVH, so He took his life too. Then Yehudah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die as his brothers did." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.*

So, Yehudah goes to a city named Adullam. Adullam, and Adullamite, come from the root word "**adull**" which means "**justice**". "**Adull ami**" or "**Adullamite**", as used in our text, means "**people's justice**" and "**Adullam**" (*the city*) is referred to as "**hiding place**", as in a "*city of refuge*" according to Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon; which is part of HaShem's justice. So, Yehudah goes to a "**city of refuge**" and "**turns aside**" or "**finds**" **Hirah** ("**nobleman**"). In other words he probably went to the mayor or community leader and asked to dwell there. Then, he meets the daughter of a Kena'anite named Shuwa and he marries her. Now, **Shuwa**, or **Shuva**, means "**to cry for help**" or "**an outcry**" and is the root for "**teshuva**" or "**turning and repenting**", because it involves the crying out of a contrite heart. So, Yehudah in fact marries into "**repentance**".

Yehudah's wife conceives and bears a son, **Er**, meaning "**watcher**" or "**enemy**". She conceives again and bears **Onan**, meaning "**strong**". She conceives a third time and gives birth to **Shelah**, which means "**to be safe**". **Shelah**, we're told, is born in **Kezib** which means "**false**". It would

indeed be a **“false safety”**. Now, Yehudah takes a wife for his eldest son, Er, whose name was **Tamar**, which means **“upright”**, as in a palm tree. You’ll remember how many times we see the righteous people of Elohim compared to trees, tall and upright trees, as in terebinth, palms and oaks. This one is indeed fitting as Tamar, according to the genealogies and Mishnah, was the granddaughter of Shem, the son of Noach, the Melek Tzadik of Avraham, Yitzaq and Ya’aqob. It was her brother Eber that would have instructed Yoseph. The office of Melek Tzadik (*Righteous King*) passed from Shem to Eber, skipping Eber’s father; because he was either not a Tzadik or chose a different life path.

The Book of Yasher and the other oral histories teach that Er found Tamar so beautiful that he did not want her to have children and lose her youthful beauty. So, he spilled his seed on the ground to prevent her from getting pregnant. This is a grievous sin and so Elohim took Er’s life. Now, Torah tells us that when Yehudah told Onan to go to Tamar and give her an heir for his brother; he did the same thing knowing that this son would inherit instead of him. So, HaShem took his life also. Yehudah then asks Tamar to wait for his youngest, and only remaining son, to become old enough to marry. However, Yehudah decides that maybe this isn’t such a good idea. Why risk losing yet another son.

Let’s read **B’reshith / Genesis 38:12-30**; *And after a long time the daughter of Shuwa, Yehudah’s wife, died. And Yehudah was comforted, and went up to his sheep-shearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was reported to Tamar, saying, “See, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.” And she took off her widow’s garments, and covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat at the entrance to Enayim which was on the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. And Yehudah saw her, and reckoned her for a whore, for she had covered her face. And he turned aside to her by the way, and said, “Please let me come in to you,” for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, “What do you give me to come in to me?” And he said, “Let me send you a young goat from the flock.” And she said, “Do you give me a pledge until you send it?” So he said, “What pledge should I give you?” And she said, “Your seal and your cord and your staff that is in your hand.” And he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. And she arose and went away, and removed her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Yehudah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman’s hand, but he did not find her. And he asked the men of that place, saying, “Where is the cult prostitute who was beside the way to Enayim?” And they said, “There was no cult prostitute in this place.” And he returned to Yehudah and said, “I have not found her. And the men of the place also said there was no cult prostitute in this place.” And Yehudah said, “Let her take them for herself, lest we become despised, for I sent this young goat and you have not found her.” And it came to be, about three months after, that Yehudah was informed, saying, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has whored, and see, she has conceived by whoring.” And Yehudah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!” When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant.” And she said, “Please examine whose these are: the seal and the cord and the staff.” And Yehudah examined and said, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son.” And he never knew her again. And it came to be, at the time for giving birth, that see, twins were in her womb. And it came to be, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand. And the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” And it came to be, as he drew back his hand,*

that see, his brother came out! And she said, “How did you break through? This breach be upon you!” So his name was called Perets. And afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. So his name was called Zerah.

We need to realize something here. While this “*right-ruling*” or “*commandment*” would not be codified until B’nei Yisra’el were in the wilderness, this “**levirate marriage**” (*a childless widow of a first-born marries his brother to produce an heir*) mitzvah was already known to Ya’aqob’s children and Tamar. Now, while her genealogy is not discussed in Torah, the Book of Jubilee’s, Chapter 41 and Josephus’ works state that she was an Aramean (*descendent of Shem*) and Levi’s wife’s (**Milcah’s**) sister. So, when Yehudah decides not to honor this command, he was in sin regarding all Yisra’el. So, no matter how we judge Tamar’s actions in tricking Yehudah into giving her an heir, she helped set things right, or made “**tikkun**”, the Hebrew concept of “**rectification**”. Yehudah acknowledged this publicly when he said that she had been more righteous than he. It’s interesting that the encounter between Yehudah and Tamar came at **Enayim** or the “**crossroads**” on the way to Timnah. **Timnah** means “**portion**” or “**a part assigned**”. It carries the connotation of “**inheritance**”. They were at the crossroads. Had Yehudah simply walked on by, there would be no heir for Tamar, *no inheritance for the upright*.

In our *parsha*, we are seeing here a prophetic “*double play*”. In order to save Yoseph’s life, Yehudah talks his brothers into selling Yoseph into slavery, sending Yoseph into Mitzrayim (Egypt), where he would become Yisra’el’s salvation. As this played out, when he asked to bring Benyamin before Yoseph, that Yehudah would stand before his father as “*guaranty*” for his brother, until all Yisra’el would be reunited (**regathered**). Even today, Yehudah has stood before our Father as “*Guaranty*” until we are reunited, **regathered**.

Then, in order to save the life of his son, Shelah, Yehudah knowingly sins in not providing an heir for Tamar (**the upright**). But then, at the “**crossroads of inheritance**”, he makes a choice. At Timnah, the “**portion**” is given. The inheritance is set. Tamar, “**the upright**” has twins. First comes, **Perets**, meaning the “**Breaker**”, from whom Mashiah will indeed come to “**break**” the yoke of this world and the yetzer hara (*evil inclination*). The second son is **Zerah**, which means “**rising light**”, or better put “**the scattering of light**”, like the rays of the sun; a picture perhaps of the scattering of B’nei Yisra’el in order to bring the **light** to the world. As it was written this week in Chabad’s commentary, “[Vayeishev-Tamar’s Twins](#)”, “*Unlike the mixed progeny of Isaac and Rebecca’s marriage, the twin sons born out of this morally dubious union were both righteous men. Indeed, all kings of Israel, from David to Moshiah, are the issue of Tamar’s pregnancy.*”

Now, in **B’reshith / Genesis 39**, we see Yoseph arriving and being sold, in Mitzrayim, as a slave to Potiphar, the Captain of Pharaoh’s Guard. Yoseph, having been stripped of his priestly garment, has been given the garment of a slave. And, in this garment, Yoseph (*now the head of Potiphar’s household*) is tested. What’s really interesting to me here is that the Hebrew word used in **Chapter 39** for “**garment**”, when Potiphar’s wife grabs Yoseph’s “**garment**” and he runs away and she then accuses him of attempted rape; the word is “**begeed**”. And, while it means “**clothing**” or “**garment**”, it also means “**deceit**” as it has the connotation of “**covering**” or “**hiding**”, as with the truth. In this line of thought, Yoseph’s brothers use his priestly garment, after tearing it and placing blood upon it, in a deceitful way to convince their father that Yoseph had been killed. Now, Potiphar’s wife uses his slave garment as evidence in her deception of her husband, in covering her own sinful actions.

So now, Yoseph trades in his slave garments for those of a prisoner. But, HaShem shows Yoseph both kindness and favor. The chapter closes with **verses 22-23**; ***And the prison warden gave into the hand of Yoseph all the prisoners who were in the prison, and whatever was done there was his doing. The prison warden did not look into any point that was under Yoseph's hand, because YHVH was with him. And whatever he did, YHVH made it prosper.*** Did you notice that the warden gave all the prisoners into Yoseph's hand? He was given the keys to the prison. Who is that a picture of? HaShem declares through the prophet, regarding Yehudah (Mashiach), in **Yeshayahu / Isaiah 42:6-8**; ***"I, YHVH, have called you in righteousness, and I take hold of your hand and guard you, and give you for a covenant to a people, for a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am YHVH, that is My Name, and My esteem I do not give to another, nor My praise to idols."***

And, as our *parsha* closes in **Chapter 40**, we see Yoseph interpreting the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners, Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker. This act will one day, in Yah's timing, bring him before Pharaoh, as we'll see next week. Then, he'll indeed receive yet another change of garments. Then, as Governor over all Mitzrayim (*second only to Pharaoh*), he will be given his "**coat of many colors**", as depicted in his Egyptian tomb. And, we'll see him fulfill his role as priest to B'nei Yisra'el.

HaShem has indeed shown us, week after week, how He has orchestrated His plan to redeem and save the "**olam**", the *world*, and all of us in it who call upon Him. These aren't just stories of some ancient peoples. These are more than stories about our forefathers. These show us our destiny. Remember, we now have an official Hebrew slogan: "**Ma'aseh avot siman le'vanim**" or "**The deeds of the fathers (our ancestors) are signposts to the children**".

Baruch HaShem!