

## "And Yaakov settled in the land of his father's sojournings." (37:1)

The text begins with the word, "*Vayeshev*," settle, and ends with "*migurei*," sojourn. *Chazal* infer from this seeming ambiguity that Yaakov finally sought to settle down, to rest from the *tzaros*, afflictions, that were an integral part of his life. He was not, however, destined to rest. The righteous enjoy no rest in this world. Their ultimate rest and reward await them in the World to Come. *Chazal* do not mean that Yaakov is about to "retire," to cease his work in this world. They simply teach us that the *tzaddik's* work is never completed. Yaakov thought that he had fulfilled his mission, raised a *Torah* family, blazed the trail for the creation of *Klal Yisrael*; he now merited to sit and learn *Torah* uninterrupted. This was not destined to be. He was thrown into a major crisis in which his beloved family was torn with strife and his dear Yosef was taken from him. In his old age he was relegated to mourn a son in whom he had placed so much hope. No, Yaakov's mission was far from complete.

What lesson can we derive for ourselves? In his inimitable manner, **Horav Moshe Swift, zl**, poses the question; "Can a Jew ever take it easy?" He has built his home and involved himself in the community. He has a wonderful marriage in which he has raised a lovely *Torah* family. Can he breathe a sigh of relief, now that all his trials and tribulations are behind him? Is that not precisely what Yaakov was attempting? Eisav was behind him. Lavan no longer had a strangle-hold over him. Dinah had become an episode in the past. His family "seemed" to be in order.

The *Torah's* message is clear: We can never sit back and rest upon our past laurels. A Jew can never be "vayeshev", never settle himself. New crises continue to confront us. We have new challenges to surmount and new obstacles to overcome. We must build for our children, so that they will preserve the ideals that we bequeath them. What was sufficient for us is not necessarily adequate for our children. They are confronted with new and stronger challenges than those which we have faced. Only if we build for them will they know to build for "their" children. The Jew's mission in life is to keep moving forward. The unfortunate alternative is that he will fall backwards.