

Yaakov settled in the land of his father's sojourning. (37:1)

Chazal infer from the variation in the text describing Yaakov's taking up residence, *vayeishev*, he settled, from that of his father, *migurei*, sojourning, which implies wandering that Yaakov sought to settle, finally to relax in one place with a roof over his head and not worry about what tomorrow would bring. No one questions that Yaakov *Avinu* had his fill of struggles and troubles. Would it be so terrible for him to have a little tranquility? *Chazal*, quoted by *Rashi*, say: *Yaakov bikeish leishev b'shalvah*, the Patriarch wanted to settle down in tranquility. As a result, Hashem sent the Yosef debacle with which to contend. The almighty asks: "Is not what awaits the righteous in the World-to-Come sufficient that they expect to live at ease in this world too?" Apparently, *Chazal* see in the Yosef incident a punishment for Yaakov's desire to live in tranquility. This begs elucidation. Yaakov had no plans to go to a seashore resort to soak up some sun and live a life of abandon. All he wanted was to sit and learn 24/7 and devote himself full time to serving Hashem without dealing with such "interruptions" as Eisav, Lavan, Shechem. Was he asking too much? Furthermore, Avraham *Avinu* was wealthy and highly respected. Yitzchak *Avinu* was also well-to-do, and he lived a life of full time devotion to Hashem. Was it too much for Yaakov to expect what his father and grandfather had?

Horav Elchanan Sorotzkin, zl, explains that material bounty in this world is sanctioned as long as it is acquired through legal, honest and above-board means. Indeed, one can pave the way to *Olam Habba*, the World-to-Come, with the manner in which he appropriates and makes use of his material possessions. He can devote his time more freely to Torah study; he can support those who learn, *yeshivos*, *kollelim*; he can help those in need, widows and orphans. He can establish an entire edifice in the World-to-Come, based upon the goals and objectives he sets for his material assets. *Olam Haze*, this world, was not designated specifically for the unholy. The righteous are entitled to have a "piece of the pie" if they use it purposely and properly.

Avraham and Yitzchak had material wealth, but it meant nothing to them. Their focus was on *Olam Habba*. When Avraham spent 25 years in Chevron, the Torah writes, *Va'ye'ehal*, He camped/made a tent. He did not settle. Concerning his 26 years in Plishtim, the Torah writes *Va'yagar*, He sojourned. It was a temporary dwelling. He would not settle in this world. He had time to settle when he achieved his eternal rest. The first time the word *toshav*, settler, is used concerning Avraham is when he sought a place to designate as Sarah *Imeinu's* final resting place. Regarding Yitzchak, the Torah used *gur*, sojourner, not settler.

Thus, *Chazal* sense in the use of the word *va'yeishev* – in contrast to his forbears' *migurei* – a change in attitude, but they never gave any thought or value to their physical/material accoutrements. Material possessions were meaningless to them, because they were just "passing through" this world. Yaakov *Avinu*, however, indicated that he would like to settle and spend his day learning and serving Hashem without all of the challenges that had plagued him until now. He was willing to become a *toshav*. This would have been acceptable, but Hashem wanted to see how Yaakov would handle the challenge of settling down. Soon after, we see Yaakov demonstrating his

partiality to Yosef by giving him a multi-colored tunic. Why did he give the son whom he was singling out from all of the others a physical/material gift? He could have given Yosef a spiritual gift. Why did he pick a *kesones pasim*? When the physical/material have value, then we have cause for concern. (We have no question that profound esoteric reasons motivated Yaakov *Avinu's* decision to give Yosef the *kesones pasim* and material value was clearly not one of them. On the surface, however, it appears that the Patriarch gave his favorite son a material gift which provoked even greater envy and animus in the family.)

I vividly remember an incident that left an indelible impression on me. While I ordinarily do not mention names in a story, this time I will, and may it be a merit for the individual. Across the street from the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland was a butcher store owned by Mr. Leo Israel, a Holocaust survivor who worked very hard to support his family. His greatest pride in life was his daughter and her husband, Rabbi and Mrs. Yochanan Greenwald, who were both outstanding educators at Yavne High School for Girls. Mr. Israel's greatest *nachas* was to watch his grandchildren go to school. It meant the world to him. I would stop by every few days and *shmuess* with him. One day he told me that his grandson, Dovie, was starting to learn *Mishnayos*. He was so excited. I said, "Mr. Israel, buy him a set of *Mishnayos*." Two days later, as I walked by the store, he called me in and said, "Rabbi Scheinbaum, *kimt arein*, come in." I came in and, with great dexterity, he lifted a heavy box. With glistening eyes and a beaming smile from one end of his face to the other, he showed me a set of *Yachin U'Boaz Mishnayos*. Not a Segway, a Gameboy, a scooter, but a *Mishnayos*. This was his greatest pride. Yehi Zichro Baruch.