

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Vayeshev	21 Dec. 2019	23 Kislev 5780	Gen.37:1-40:23	Amos 2:6-3:8	Matt. 1:18-25

It is written (37:1), “And Ya’akov dwelt in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Kena’an.” Or HaChaim questions why the Torah mentions this verse at all since it already said that Ya’akov came to Yitzchak (35:27). Thus as long as the Torah does not mention the location again, we can assume that Ya’akov stayed at the same place. Second question, why did the Torah repeat itself? בְּאֶרֶץ מְגוּרֵי אָבִיו (Be’e-retz me-gu-rei a-viv; in the land / of [his] sojourning / father) – Or Bahir explains that this verse does not mean , the “*land*” of his father’s lodgings, but rather, the “*province*” of his father’s lodgings.

The answer to second question: The Torah established that Ya’akov’s brother established Mount Seir as a heritage by virtue of his father’s merit. Meaning, by having a righteous father, Esav was able to conquer Mount Seir and claim it as his heritage to pass on to his descendants (28:13, 36:20). So the Torah is now completing Ya’akov’s heritage. Therefore, it says, “And Ya’akov dwelt in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Kena’an,” that he did not do anything other than being a lodger, unlike Esav who conquered the land. Ya’akov acted this way because Hashem had told Avraham that his descendants were to dwell in a land that was not their own (15:13). Therefore, it would be wrong for him to behave in a way that the land belonged to him. Thus, “This is the genealogy of Ya’akov.” (37:2)

It is written (37:2), “This is the genealogy of Ya’akov.” The Torah now disconnects any relationship with Esav, and by saying this the Torah is implying that Ya’akov wished to settle down in tranquility. But the anguish that he experienced refers to his “offspring” of Ya’akov, Yosef. And the Torah wanted us to know all the subsequent distress that Ya’akov suffered was brought about by Ya’akov himself. See last year’s Torah portion (Vayeshev 12012018).

“Yosef, being seventeen years old.” Yosef dreamt that his father and brothers would bow down to him (vs. 7, 10), and this came true only 22 years after the dream. The years, as Rashi said, Yosef was 17 when he had the dreams, and he was 30 when he appeared before Pharaoh (41:46), which was totals of 13 years. There were further 7 years of plenty (41:53) and 2 years of hunger (45:6) by the time Ya’akov came down to Mitzrayim, which add up to 9 years. These 9 and the earlier 13 total 22. It was only then that Yosef’s dreams were fulfilled (42:6).

“[Yosef] 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 Yosef brought an evil report of them to his father.” Meaning, Yosef acted as their shepherd and supervisor with regard to the flock. The Torah is conveying that Yosef acted like a shepherd to his brothers, with regard to their eating meat from the flock that they would eat limb from a live animal. This is the evil report Yosef brought to his father.

It is written (37:5), “Yosef dreamed a dream.” The Torah is testifying that Yosef dreamt this dream. By saying, “Yosef dreamed a dream, the Torah is removing any suspicion on the part of the reader that he made up his dream because he wanted to lord over his brothers. And verse 9, “I have dreamed another dream,” confirm Yosef’s dream.

It is written (37:6), “And he said to them, “Please listen to this dream which I have dreamed.”” The brothers did not want to hear his dreams, therefore Yosef says, “Please” or “Now”. The sages¹ said that the time for

¹ Shabbos 11a

correctly interpreting a dream is specifically on the day of the dream, not on a different day as the outcome of a dream is determined on that very day. And that is why one undertakes a fast for the sake of annulling a bad dream even on Shabbat, and the fast is not pushed off to a different day.² Although fasting is prohibited on Shabbat, when a person has a bad dream, he is allowed to fast on that very day in order to annul the bad dream. Because a fast on a later day would not be effective enough to annul it.

Or HaChaim explains that Yosef mentioned his dream to his brothers as a display of affection for them, since he was giving them the opportunity to interpret it and thus affect its outcome. Yosef therefore urged his brothers to hear his dream right away, in order to impress upon them that he trusted them to interpret it favorably. The reason Yosef went to his brothers first was that the second interpretation cannot be contradictory to the first interpretation as second interpretation cannot undo the first. Therefore, Yosef was concerned that the brothers would judge him to have done this, that is, first interpretation. That is why Yosef said, "Please" indicating that he is relating the dream for the first time, and not previously interpreted.

It is written (37:7), "'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.'" In our version of the Scripture, it says "see", and it can also mean, "behold" from Hebrew word *ve-hin-neh* (and / behold). So, why did Yosef say "behold" three times? When a dream is a prophetic vision, and a message from those angels who stand before Hashem and transmit Divine message, the one experiencing the dream knows that it is not an ordinary dream.

The sign and proof that it is in fact a Divine message is if the dream is clear and vivid to the dreamer, bright as day as though he was actually awake. The empty dreams are blurred thoughts and exaggerated, unrealistic imagery. That is the reason Yosef repeated "behold" three times, to show his brothers that the dreams were clear in his mind's eye as though he is seeing it now, when he was awake with full consciousness.

The "sheaves" represent many *mitzvos* performed by all the brother alike, with each gathering his own bundle of *mitzvos*. Yosef's intention of telling his dreams to his brothers is that they will remove their hatred toward him when they realize his merit and leadership would be needed to sustain them in the future. But what did brothers do? "They hated him even more for his dreams and for his words." (37:8)

It is written (37:8), "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." The double words "reign over us" and "rule over us," shows that they believed Yosef's dreams. But their hatred was stronger than their love toward him. So, when they said, "reign over us?" It means they believed Yosef will attain kingship and "reign" over them. It also means, negatively, they are saying, "Do you not have thoughts of reigning over us? That is why you have dreams that you will "reign over us?" They reasoned here that even if the dream was real, it was a result of Yosef's own thoughts.

As for "rule over us," they already established a tradition that Yehudah would be leader over them all. Thus, "Why are you breaking the rule that Yehudah is our leader?" The intent of his brothers is like the dream Nebuchadnezzar who had a dream but could not remember. Daniel told him both the dream and its interpretation, and began by telling him that the dream was a reflection of his thoughts during the day. (Dan. 2:29)

² Shulcan Aruch, Orach Chaim 288:4-5

It is written (37:10), “And his father rebuked him.” Ya’akov believed that the dream might come true, but outwardly he scolded Yosef in order to remove the jealousy of his brothers. After all, Rahel died. Therefore, how could “your mother” bow down to you? Therefore, your dream is naught. However, Ya’akov “guarded the word.” (v. 11) But “his brothers envied him,” meaning they were jealous of him. In this essence, “envy” connotes negativity. They were “jealous of him” because, now, they realized that Yosef’s second dream could only be a message from heaven, and therefore they grew “jealous of him.”

Now, what does the Zohar³ say about dreams? R’ Hiyya opens with, “And He said, “Hear now My words: If your prophet is of יהוה, I make Myself known to him in a vision, and I speak to him in a dream.” (Num. 12:6) Prophecy derives from the divine flow, channeled through the *sefirotic* pair *Netzach* (Victory) and *Hod* (Splendor) which are considered a single prophetic vision. All prophets absorb from a single facet, through two rungs as mentioned, through a dim glass, that is a lens that does not shine with the exception of Moshe who gazed through a clear glass as said “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.” (1Cor. 13:12) In the Zohar, *Shechinah* is the dim glass, that does not shine on its own but rather reflects and transmits the other *sefirot*, as She is the medium through which the prophet receives his *sefirotic* vision.

The Talmud⁴ says in the name of R’ Yochanan said: If one arose from sleeping and a Scriptural verse immediately fell into his mouth, this is a sort of minor prophecy, for this is a veiled portent of some future tidings. Even if a person had not recently dreamed anything at all, nevertheless, the verse he thinks of upon waking is still to be taken seriously as a sign. “A dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy,” this expression conveys a large number of indefinite proportion.

In the book of Daniel (8:16; 9:22), Gabriel interprets revelations who appears as a prince of dreams. As always, you cannot have a dream without false material intermingling. Since Gabriel is appointed over dreams, he stands beneath *Shechinah* and thus outside the purely divine realm; therefore demonic forces in the vicinity can smuggle false images into the dream material, just as there cannot be wheat without straws.

What controls the dream? Word. Because a dream contains falsehood and truth, thus, a dream needs favorable interpretation as R’ Yehudah said, “Because every dream is of the rung below, controlled by Speech, so every dream follows speech. Human interpretation is effective because it activates divine Speech (*Shechinah*), who then translates the dream into reality.

When a person sleeps, his soul leaves him and goes wandering above, each in its own way, ascending so according to its conduct on earth. Then Hashem inform the soul, through the rung presiding over dreams, of things destined to befall the world, of things corresponding to the mind’s imaginings, so that one will follow a path of admonishment in the world so that a dreamer can return to the straight path as said in the book of Job, “in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on a bed, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction, to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man.” (Job 33:15-17) For one is not informed (dream) while in an active state, meaning awake and physically active. Rather, an angel inform the soul, and the soul, the person, and that dream derives from above, when souls leave the body and ascend, each in its own way.

Who should interpret the dream? “Yosef dreamed a dream and told it to his brothers, and they hated him even more. (37:5). We learn from here that a person should tell his dream only to one who loves him. Otherwise, he may prove decisive, for if that dream changes tone, he is the cause. Meaning, if the dreamer

³ 1:183a

⁴ Berachos 57b

tells his dream to someone who hates him, this enemy can harm him by the spiteful tone of his interpretations as Yosef's brothers did, which affects the fulfillment of the dream. Since, Yosef told his dreams to his brothers who hated him, it delayed its fulfillment for 22 years as their hatred stimulated demonic forces to delay the fulfillment of the dream.

If the brothers had interpreted the dream unfavorably for Yosef, it would have been fulfilled accordingly. However, their spontaneous, hateful response, "Will you really reign over us?", guaranteed that the dream would actualized precisely that ways: by Yosef's dominance. By verbally expressing this interpretation, they had sealed both their fate and his. Realizing what they had done to themselves, they hated Yosef all the more.