

Parshas Vayeishev

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1. Giving Meaning to the Incomprehensible

The Torah states, **“These are the offspring of Yaakov; Yosef, at the age of seventeen years...”** Rashi cites Chazal who explain there are several reasons that “the verse only refers to “Yaakov’s offspring” as “Yosef,” despite the fact that he had other children: One is that Yaakov’s sole purpose in working for Lavan was for Rachel, Yosef’s mother; furthermore, Yosef’s facial features resembled that of his father; and everything that happened to Yaakov happened to Yosef. Yaakov was hated and Yosef was hated; Yaakov’s brother sought to kill him, and Yosef’s brothers sought to kill him; and there are many other such parallels...”

On a simple level, Chazal are telling us that the reason Yosef is referred to as “the offspring of Yaakov” is because of the parallel tracks of their lives- that the life of Yosef almost identically reflected the life of his father. However, one can understand Chazal on a more profound level. The reason the verse states, **“These are the offspring of Yaakov; Yosef...”** is because everything that happened to Yaakov was only *because of Yosef*. In fact these are the words of the Midrash. Yaakov needed to work for Lavan only because of Rachel – who was Yosef’s mother. Yaakov developed and had certain distinguished facial features only because Yosef was to have such features. All the personal and difficult experiences endured by Yaakov were only because Yosef had to experience those similar events and relationships in the future. If Yosef did not need to have certain experiences in the future, Yaakov would not have had to experience what he had experienced. Yaakov’s life evolved according to the pattern that it had because Yosef needed to experience similar experiences. How do we understand this?

Yaakov is referred to by Chazal as the “most special of the Patriarchs.” He developed as he did because of his antecedents Avraham and Yitzchak; Yaakov was the synthesis of both his father Yitzchak and his grandfather Avraham. Avraham assumed and represented the Attribute of Kindness (Chesed). Chesed is the quality of doing acts of kindness indiscriminately- whether one is deserving or not. Yitzchak, on the other hand, represented the Attribute of Justice (Din), which is exacting precision and deliberate. Yaakov represented the Attribute of Mercy (Rachamim), which is a synthesis of Chesed and Din. Meaning, one only demonstrates mercy if there is a chance that ultimately the mercy will bring about something of value. However, if one is undeserving and unrepentant, then one does not demonstrate mercy to that individual.

Thus, all the difficult experiences and tests endured by Avraham and Yitzchak occurred only for the purpose of giving Yaakov the ability to coalesce these two attributes and establish himself as “the most special Patriarch,” and father of the twelve Tribes of Israel. It is understood that each of the Patriarchs developed as he had because of their own initiative and choice. However, Hashem presented them with their situations and circumstances for the sake of the future development of Yaakov, our Patriarch. Everything which preceded Yaakov was for his development and to ultimately establish the Jewish people.

G’d brought many difficult and trying situations upon Yaakov so that he should develop into the most special of the Patriarchs and to be able to pass that ability onto his son Yosef - since Yosef had a specific objective regarding the destiny of the Jewish people. Yosef’s personal destiny was to go to Egypt/exile and establish an environment and setting within which the Jewish people could survive and develop. Yaakov’s facial features reflected his spiritual greatness only so that

Yosef should possess those same features. Yosef's ability and dimension of person was necessary as a prerequisite to the Jewish exile in Egypt so that ultimately upon redemption they would be qualified to receive the Torah at Sinai.

The principle of "*Maaseh avos s'mon l'banim* – the actions of the forefathers are a precursor for the children (future generations)" is usually understood as the actions of the forefathers are an allusion to what their descendents will experience. However, with our new understanding of Yaakov and Yosef, we can understand this principle differently; the predicaments that came upon the forefathers were necessary only because their descendents needed to have identical or similar experiences.

Chazal tell us that initially the world will try to destroy the Jewish people through hate. However at the end of time before the coming of Moshiach, they will try to destroy the Jewish people with love. The Jew will be misled and believe that his situation may be secure and even advantageous to him as a Jew – although it is not. Everything which had transpired in the past through the experiences of the earlier generations only occurred to prepare us for the future.

One may ask, "why do I have so many difficulties in my life?" One must understand that if one overcomes and succeeds despite his difficulties, he establishes a value that will guarantee a level of success (spiritual and material) for the future. The *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice) of our antecedents established worthiness that we should merit Divine Assistance and therefore succeed as a Jewish people despite our environment. The only reason it is less difficult today for the Jew to be able to observe many of the Laws of the Torah such as dietary laws, the observance of the Shabbos, and the availability of quality Jewish education is because of the sacrifice and endurance of our ancestors.

2. Reading Life's Events

The Torah tells us that Yosef had interpreted correctly the dreams of the wine steward and the baker who were in prison with him in Egypt. The interpretation of the wine steward was that he would be released from prison and reinstated by Pharaoh to his original status, while the Baker would be hung. When the wine steward was being released from prison, Yosef had made a request of him, "**If only you would remember me with yourself when he (Pharaoh) benefits you, and you will do me a kindness, if you please, and mention me to Pharaoh, then you would get me out of this building...**" Rashi cites Chazal who explain that because Yosef had made two requests of the wine steward; "remember me" and "mention me," Yosef spent an additional two years in prison for these two words. It was considered a lack of faith to put his trust in a heathen. As it is stated in Psalms, "Fortunate is the man who puts his faith in G'd and did not turn to the heathens..."

Rabbeinu Bachya explains, "Although there is a principle known as *hishtadlus*- that one must take the initiative before G'd lends His Assistance. Yosef's request of the wine steward was considered a breach of faith because of Yosef's outstanding level of spirituality and relationship with Hashem. Taking any initiative on his own was considered inappropriate." If one has a special

relationship with his own father and his father is able to respond and assist him in any area of his life without difficulty, then if the son should ask assistance from anyone else, it would be considered an affront to his father. Since the father has great love for his son and wants him to benefit from his kindness, why should the son seek assistance from a stranger? This was the exact situation with Yosef. However, one can approach this question differently,

Initially, before Yosef was sold into slavery by his brothers, the Torah tells us that his brothers had cast him into a pit because they had believed that the purpose of his tale bearing to their father was to ultimately destroy them. The Torah states, **“They took him and cast him into the pit; the pit was empty, no water was in it.”** The Gemara in Tractate Shabbos asks, “If the Torah tells us that the pit was empty, is it not obvious that it did not contain water?” The Gemara answers, “By stating that the pit was empty and no water was in it, infers that although it did not contain water – it contained something else - snakes and scorpions.”

Based on the Gemara in Tractate Shabbos, it seems that Yosef’s brothers’ evaluation is not to be understood. If in fact he was cast into a pit filled with snakes and scorpions, how is it possible that he survived? It is evident that he merited a miracle because he was a tzaddik. If this is the case, this should have immediately given credence to Yosef’s dreams – that they were prophetic and not delusions of grandeur. Nevertheless when the opportunity presented itself to remove Yosef from the pit to be sold into slavery, Yosef’s brothers did so. How do we understand this?

The Midrash tells us that when Yosef’s brothers cast him into the pit, they did not see the snakes and scorpions because they were hidden in the walls of the pit. Thus, they were unaware that a miracle had transpired that allowed Yosef to survive. However, according to the Midrash it seems to be difficult. If Yosef’s brothers were unaware of the snakes and scorpions, why did G’d want Yosef to be cast into a pit that contained snakes and scorpions? The value of being put into a snake-pit and experiencing a miracle was for Yosef himself. G’d wanted to communicate to Yosef that he should not despair – G’d was with him. Initially Yosef believed that his dreams were prophetic visions which he needed to share with his brothers. However, when he was cast into the pit to die, he began to question the efficacy of his visions. Perhaps he was mistaken – maybe they were delusions of grandeur. G’d wanted to dispel this consideration from his mind and to communicate to him that he was not mistaken. His dreams would come to fruition. Consequently, Yosef did not despair because he understood that G’d was with him.

After Yosef was taken out of the pit, he was sold into slavery. The Torah describes the merchandise which was being transported by the merchants who purchased Yosef - **“A caravan of Ishmaelites from Gilead, and their camels were bearing spices, and balsam, and birthwort...”** Rashi in his commentary cites the Midrash which asks, **“Why did the Torah make known the nature of the merchandise that was being transported? To make known the reward of the righteous.”** For it is not the way of Arabs to carry anything but naphtha and foul smelling resins. But because Yosef was a tzaddik, the cargo that was being transported was spices which emitted a (pleasant) fragrance – so that he should not be harmed by the foul odor.” Chazal use the expression “to reward the tzaddik” as the reason for Yosef being exposed to the pleasant fragrances rather than foul smelling materials. Do pleasant-smelling spices constitute a reward?

When Yosef was taken out of the pit by the Arab merchants and put onto the caravan, he immediately noticed that there were no foul smelling fuels which would have been expected. Rather, there were pleasant smelling spices. Yosef understood that this was another communication from Hashem that He is with him. The “reward of the righteous” that is mentioned by Chazal is not the pleasure of smelling something that is sweet; but rather, informing the tzaddik that he should not despair. Thus, despite the bleakness of the moment and with no understanding of the path that he was taking, Yosef believed that ultimately this would lead to a position of power.

In Egypt, Yosef continuously advanced himself from one success to another. Initially he was sold as a slave to Potiphar. He eventually rose to a level of control of administering the entire household of his master. When he was accused of attempting to defile the wife of his master, Potiphar, he was imprisoned. There he quickly rose again to become the unofficial warden. After he was released from prison he immediately became the Viceroy of Egypt. Eventually his prophetic dreams were realized. In every one of these successes, from the time he was thrown into the pit until he ultimately held the most prestigious and powerful position in the world, Yosef never needed to take the initiative. He was always the person for whom G’d performed miracles. Hashem continuously communicated to him through his various experiences so that it was not necessary to take any initiative; but rather, things would evolve as G’d wished.

With this we can understand the gravity of Yosef’s failure when he uttered the two words to the wine steward: “remember me” and “mention me.” Despite G’d’s assurances, Yosef sought out the assistance of a pagan and a heathen. It was not necessary to take any initiative - especially with a pagan such as the wine steward. Yosef’s initiative was a lack of faith. Consequently, he remained another two years in prison.

The Gemara in Tractate Chullin tells us that if one continuously fails in various financial ventures, he should take pause and not take any further action. One should not “push his fate” because it is obvious that it is not his moment to succeed. One should only take the initiative when there is some degree of indication that his situation can change. If one ignores these indicators and takes initiative it is not considered *hishtadlus*. It is considered a waste of resources and a lack of faith - desperation.

Hashem continuously sends us messages. We must be cognizant and sensitive to our experiences and interpret them in order to understand what we should do. If Hashem sends one difficulties, he must understand that there is a message that is being communicated. If one chooses to ignore these communications and continuously behaves without any change in his life, he is acting foolishly.

3. The Proper Approach to Survive Exile

The Torah tells that the wife of Potiphar, incessantly attempted to seduce Yosef, who was in the service of her husband. Potiphar, who was a minister in the court of Pharaoh, had placed Yosef in the charge of his household and all of his assets. The Midrash explains that her advances became increasingly more bold and threatening to Yosef. Because he refused her advances she had even threatened to harm and destroy him. Despite all of her threats, Yosef was not intimidated by the wife of Potiphar, his master.

The Torah states, **“After these things, his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Yosef and she said, ‘Lie with me.’ But he adamantly refused; he said to his master’s wife, ‘Look – with me here, my master concerns himself about nothing in the house,**

and whatever he has he placed in my custody. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has denied me nothing but you, since you are his wife; how then can I perpetrate this great evil and have sinned against G'd!"

It is interesting to note that Yosef's approach in rebuffing his master's wife's advances, first assumed the posture of rational and logical reasoning. Yosef initially explained to her, that Potiphar had treated him well, had given him responsibility over his entire household, and had trusted him implicitly. If he were to lie with her, as she had requested, then he would be considered an ingrate. Such a degree of disrespect and lack of appreciation towards his master was unacceptable to Yosef. However in conclusion, Yosef explained that if he were to acquiesce to her request and lie with her, he would have "sinned against G'd."

If one resists temptation solely on cogent reasoning, it is possible, because of the overwhelming conflict of interest, to succumb to desire. It is possible that he would rationalize and justify in many ways to see the wrong as something permitted. One has the capability, because of conflict of interest to transform night into day by processing events through his own biases. Thus, Yosef concludes, that he would not lie with his master's wife because he would have "sinned against G'd." G'd's Will/Dictate is an absolute that is not subject to reason. Therefore under no circumstance, would Yosef comply with her overtures. Why was Yosef's initial approach to take control of his situation based on reason and then ultimately to conclude with G'd's Dictate?

After he had become wealthy in the household of his father-in-law Lavan, Yaakov, Our Patriarch, called his wives out into the field and said to them, **"I have noticed that your father's disposition is not toward me as in earlier days...with all my might I served your father..."** He continues to explain to them that despite all of his hard work, their father Lavan had cheated him. At night he was consumed by the cold and in the day he was scorched by the heat. Nevertheless, Yaakov remained selflessly dedicated to their father Lavan. After presenting all the reasons for leaving their father's home (which were based on realistic and cogent fact), Yaakov concludes that they needed to leave because G'd had instructed him to return to his father's household in Canaan. Why did Yaakov need to provide a rational explanation to Rachel and Leah who were Matriarchs? It would have been sufficient for him to tell them that G'd had told him to leave and return to his land. Why then did he first approach them with the rationale for leaving?

Although Rachel and Leah were Matriarchs, maybe Yaakov assessed that it would be too difficult for them to leave their father's household even though G'd had commanded them to do so. Thus, Yaakov explained to them in a logical manner that they were in fact no longer welcome and that all of his assets that he had amassed were rightfully his. In addition to this explanation, Yaakov concluded that Hashem had instructed him to do so.

Thus, we can say that Yosef was following the approach that was taught to him by his father Yaakov – to first relate to a situation in a rational and logical manner and then conclude that one's behavior is dictated by one's fear of G'd. However, what must be understood is how Yaakov himself came upon this approach.

The Torah tells us that after Yaakov had become enormously wealthy, he had overheard the murmurings of his brothers in law - the sons of Lavan who said, **"Yaakov has taken all that belonged to our father, and from that which belonged to our father he amassed all this wealth..."** Yaakov understood that he was made privy to this information for a reason. He heard these murmurings only because G'd wanted him to

hear them. After this event, he saw that the countenance of his father-in-law was no longer the same towards him, which was a further indication that it was time for him to leave. However at the conclusion of all this, G'd communicated to Yaakov that he needed to return to Canaan. If it was the Will of G'd for Yaakov to leave the household of Lavan, then why first present to him all of the indicators (the murmurings, and the countenance of his father in law)? Hashem could have simple said to Yaakov, "leave!" G'd did not need to be make him aware of the nature of the relationship.

Yaakov understood from his experience that G'd wished that he first understand the nature of his predicament from a rational perspective. Only after appreciating the situation did G'd tell him to leave for Canaan. Thus, when Yaakov spoke to his wives, he took the same approach. He first explained to them on a rational basis why they needed to leave and then concluded that G'd had told him to leave.

Yosef, being the disciple of his father, was taught all of the special Torah that Yaakov had learned in the Yeshiva of Shem and Aver. This Torah was not taught to any of the other children of Yaakov. It dealt specifically with how to contend with and survive the challenges of exile. Thus, Yosef understood that the approach to survive in exile is first to appreciate the wrong of whatever it may be (on a rational basis) and then act based on one's fear of G'd. Therefore when Yosef explained to the wife of Potiphar why it was inappropriate for him to acquiesce to her advances, he first did so on a rational basis. Ultimately, he concluded it would be a "sin against G'd."

We, being in exile, need to learn from Yaakov, our Patriarch, how one must deal with negative influences. We must first appreciate the negativity and the detriment that such behavior or actions would bring upon us. This can only be achieved through the study of Torah to understand and internalize the value of a mitzvah and the destructive nature of a sin. However, this alone is not sufficient. We must always conclude that the reason one is not permitted to transgress is because one would be violating the Dictate of G'd.

4. A Tragedy of Epic Proportion

The Torah tells us that Yosef's brothers sold him into slavery. They had taken Yosef's tunic and dipped it into goat's blood. They brought the blood-soaked tunic to their father Yaakov and said, "**We found this; identify (it), if you please: Is it your son's tunic or not?**" Yaakov recognized it and said, "**My son's tunic! A savage beast devoured him! Yosef has surely been torn to bits!**" Yaakov rent his garments, put on sackcloth and began to mourn and grieve the death of his son Yosef. Despite all the attempts of his children to console him, Yaakov refused to be comforted and said, "**For I will go down to the grave mourning for my son.**" Juxtaposed to this portion, the Torah states, "**It was at that time that Yehudah went down from his brothers and turned away towards an Adullamite man whose name was Chirah...**"

Rashi cites Chazal who ask, "Why is the portion concerning the separation of Yehudah from his brothers juxtaposed to the portion concerning the sale of Yosef and the subsequent grieving of Yaakov? To tell us that Yehudah was no longer esteemed by his brothers. This caused him to take a secondary position and was no longer recognized as their leader. They felt that Yehudah was the cause of their father's distress and grief. They had said to Yehudah, "You told us that we should sell him (into slavery). Had you told us to return him to our father Yaakov, we would have listened to you."

Seemingly the Torah is telling us that, Yosef's brothers were upset with Yehudah

because they felt that he was the cause of all of the grief and suffering of their father. They were pained to see their father Yaakov suffering at such a level.

The Torah states, **“Yaakov had said, ‘For I (Yaakov) will go down to the grave mourning for my son (Yosef).’ And his father bewailed him...”** Rashi explains that “And his father bewailed him” is referring to Yitzchak, our Patriarch- the father of Yaakov. Yitzchak cried on behalf of his son because he saw his son in such distress and grief. However, Yitzchak did not mourn for Yosef because he was aware that he was actually alive. Sforno explains that the reason Yitzchak cried for his son was because Yaakov was denied a relationship with the Shechina (Divine Presence)/prophecy because he was in a state of mourning. The Gemara in Tractate Bava Basra tells us that the Divine Presence only rests in a location when one is in a state of joy and not grieving, mourning, or depressed. Yitzchak was pained not because Yaakov was suffering and anguished over the death of Yosef, but rather Yaakov was denied the infinite value of having that special connection with G’d. In fact, this disconnection with the Shechina continued for a period of 22 years until Yaakov became aware that his son Yosef was in fact alive. As it is stated, “When Yaakov was informed that Yosef was alive, the spirit of Yaakov became alive.” Meaning, at that moment, because he was elevated from depression to ecstasy, he was again able to prophesize.

Chazal tell us that Yaakov, as the other Patriarchs, was the location for the Divine Presence in this existence. As it is stated in the Midrash, “Hein, Hein HaMerkava – they are the Chariot (receptacle).” Reuvain’s sin of transferring his father’s bed from the tent of Bilhah to the tent of his mother Leah was considered so grave that it was equated to cohabiting with the concubine of his father, Yaakov. This was because Yaakov had designated that his location be in the tent of Bilhah, thus the Divine Presence was located there. When Reuvain moved Yaakov’s bed into the tent of his mother Leah, he was in effect displacing the location of the Shechina/Divine Presence. Reuvain fasted for the remainder of his life to atone for that momentary disruption of the Divine Presence.

The spiritual consequence of Yaakov being in state of mourning for 22 years was something so grave that it cannot be computed. It is because of the serious consequence of Yaakov’s grief that Yehudah was no longer acknowledged as the leader. He was the cause of his father’s disconnection with the Divine Presence. This deprived Yaakov himself, his sons, and the Jewish people from having unlimited spiritual opportunity. Thus, the true pain of Yaakov that his sons witnessed was not the emotional pain but rather the spiritual deprivation.

With this understanding we can appreciate the gravity of the sin of selling Yosef into slavery. Chazal tell us that the Ten Martyrs, who were the ten most special Torah sages (who had lived in the same generation), were killed in the most cruel way to atone for the sin of the selling of Yosef. These Sages were great Torah giants and the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people. Simply, one could understand that the atonement was for the transgression of the Negative Commandment “Lo Tignov – Do not steal (which refers to kidnapping an individual and selling him to a master).” This Negative Commandment carries the death penalty if violated. Thus, the death of the Ten Martyrs was an atonement for each of the ten sons of Yaakov who participated in the sale of Yosef. Their sin was so grave that it was atoned for and lingered for generations until the end of the Second Temple Period. Had the Jewish people not suffered sufficiently throughout the millennia until this point to atone for that sin? Did the Ten Martyrs (our greatest Torah Sages) have to be executed to bring about this atonement?

How do we understand this?

The sale of Yosef caused the Jewish people to be denied an untold level of spirituality – the benefit of Yaakov prophesizing and being connected to the Divine Presence. Yaakov was cut off from this ultimate level of spirituality – a connection with Hashem Himself for 22 years. This tragedy was of epic proportion. Thus, the selling of Yosef was the mechanism through which this spiritual tragedy came about. Therefore it was necessary for the Jewish people to suffer serious loss such as the tragic death of the Ten Martyrs. Nothing less would have been adequate. Although Yosef had forgiven his brothers for what they had done to him, denying the Jewish people the spiritual benefit of 22 years of the ultimate spiritual connection to the Divine Presence was another matter.

When one visits the Kosel (the only remnant of the Second Temple) one is required to rend his garment in order to mourn the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash (Temple). When we observe Tisha B'Av (the 9th of Av) we are mourning the destruction the Second Temple. In actuality what are we mourning through the observance of the laws of Tisha B'Av? Are we mourning that we are not able to bring offerings to be atoned for our sins, which we have been denied for the past 2,000 years? Or is it something beyond that? The Jew must understand the tragedy of not having the opportunity to have a relationship with the Divine Presence/Shechina – which we had when the Temple stood. The degree and dimension of tragedy is something that should consume us. However, unfortunately this is not the case because our lives and mindset are not permeated with spirituality. Our Patriarchs, who were the equivalent of living angels and the location of the Divine Presence, understood and internalized this reality to the depth and core of their being.

5. *Yisroel – the Essence of Our Spirituality* (from *Vayishlach*)

The Torah tells us that when Yaakov, our Patriarch, wrestled with the archangel of Esav, he was injured; **“Yaakov’s hip-socket was dislocated as he wrestled with him...”** It continues that when Yaakov arrived in the land of Canaan, **“Yaakov arrived whole/undiminished *“shaleim”* at the city of Shechem which is in the land of Canaan...”** Chazal explain that Yaakov arrived in Canaan *b’shleimus* (whole/undiminished) in three areas, “physically, monetarily, and in his Torah – he did not forget any of his Torah while in the house of Lavan.” Yaakov was physically whole because he recovered from his injury. Chazal tell us that Yaakov was not diminished monetarily to any degree, despite the fact that he had sent Esav a gift of great value. Additionally, Yaakov’s Torah knowledge remained intact because he had not forgotten any of his Torah while he was in the household of his father-in-law Lavan. Thus, the Torah is teaching us that in order to be considered *shaleim* (whole/undiminished/complete) – in the full sense of the word - a Jew must be complete in all of these areas.

If in fact Yaakov had given Esav a gift of great value, how is it possible that he was monetarily whole/ undiminished? If one invests, regardless of cost, in his (or his family's) spirituality (such as paying for one's children's Torah education) then one is not considered diminished or lacking. This is because in return for the investment one receives something of even greater value. Yaakov understood that the only way it was possible to survive his encounter with his brother Esav was to send him a gift of great value. Thus the assets that he needed to relinquish for the sake of survival was not considered a diminishment. This was an investment in his own existence and the future of the Jewish people.

When Yaakov arrived in Canaan, the Torah tells us that immediately after camping in the community of Shechem, he expressed his thanks to G'd for allowing him to arrive *shaleim* (whole). The Torah states, **“He (Yaakov) set up an altar there and proclaimed, “G'd, the G'd of Israel.”** It is interesting to note that the Torah does not say that he proclaimed “G'd, the G'd of Yaakov;” but rather the appellation that is used is “Yisroel.” Yisroel identifies him as the spiritual person and the father of the eternal people, rather than “Yaakov” which alludes to him as the physical being. He was identifying that the basis for his state of completion resulted from retaining his spiritual posture. Yaakov was given the name “Yisroel” only after he had wrestled and subdued the archangel of Esav which represents physicality at the most extreme level. Yaakov had dominated the physical and its spiritual counterpart. Thus, he evolved into “Yisroel” the spiritual person. This was the basis for his *shaleimus* (wholesome state).

Even if a Jew is physically and monetarily sound, if he is not complete in his Torah – he is considered a deficient person. The true *shaleimus* of a Jew is his essence, which is his spirituality.

Sforno explains that the reason the angel was not able to incapacitate Yaakov was because his mind, emotion, and speech were continuously attached to G'd. Although the angel was not able to overcome Yaakov and defeat him, it managed to injure him. The angel revealed to Yaakov the sin of the future leaders of the Jewish people. Because of his worry, Yaakov became concerned, distracted and was subsequently injured. Yaakov's only concern was the spiritual fate of the Jewish people. When he saw that the future leaders would sin, thus bringing about spiritual misdirection, he was anguished.

Every Jew has relevance to Yaakov, our Patriarch, because within his spiritual genealogy there exists the qualities and characteristics of Yisroel – the spiritual being. Thus it is incumbent upon every Jew to aspire to emulate the ways of our Patriarchs. The Jew must understand that the only relevance he has to the physical world is only as means to a spiritual end – and not an end unto itself.

The Chofetz Chaim in his work *Shmiras Ha'Loshon* cites a Sifri that explains that the only way one can come to the love of Hashem is through the study of Torah. As it is stated in the Shema, **“You shall love Hashem your G'd with all of your heart, with all you being...You shall speak in it (Torah) when you sit in your home and when you walk on the way...”** One is only able to feel love for Hashem through the study of Torah. Thus, one will appreciate the value of the material as a means and not an end.