

**Yad Avraham Institute**  
**WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARY SERIES**  
*Parshas Vayishlach*

December 14, 2005

**Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, Shlita**

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## Parshas Vayishlach

Presented by

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

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### 1. The Infrastructure of the Jewish People

The Torah tells us that after Yaakov had met Rachel, he raised up his voice and cried. Rashi cites the Midrash that explains that Yaakov cried because G'd revealed that Rachel would not be buried with him. Why did G'd reveal this fact to Yaakov? Secondly, why was it revealed at this particular moment?

Yaakov, the future Patriarch of the Jewish people, understood that Rachel was meant to be his wife and thus the Matriarch of the Jewish people. He perceived Rachel as the embodiment of all Twelve Tribes. This perception was correct and accurate because Rachel was the mother of Yosef. We find that although Yosef's children, Ephraim and Menashe, were the grandchildren of Yaakov, they were also considered the equivalent of his children. As it is stated, "**Ephraim and Menashe shall be to me as Reuven and Shimon...**" The Gemara tells us that initially Yosef had the capacity to father twelve sons. It was only because of the incident with the wife of Potiphar (who attempted to seduce him) that he had lost ten droplets of semen (each potentially generating a Tribe). Thus, Yosef only had two sons.

If in fact Yaakov's perception of Rachel was correct – that she would be the Matriarch of the Jewish people, then why was she not going to be buried with him? Evidently, G'd was communicating to Yaakov that because there was a deficiency in Rachel, she could not be **the single** Matriarch of the Jewish People. Rachel not meriting to be buried with Yaakov was an indication that there would be another Matriarch. That other Matriarch would merit to be buried with Yaakov.

If Rachel had the spiritual dimension and capacity to mother all Twelve Tribes, then why did G'd decree that the twelve sons of Yaakov should emanate from four wives rather than from one?

Maharal of Prague z'tl states that if one were to describe the essence of G'd, the only description that can be given is Echad (He is One). Nothing exists outside of Him. The Maharal explains that thirteen is the numerical

value of the word *echad*. The Jewish people are comprised of thirteen tribes— twelve received a portion in the Land of Israel and one (Levy), did not. He explains that the thirteen tribes of the Jewish people reflect the Unity of G'd, which is *echad*. The Maharal explains further that even within the context of the thirteen tribes there is a more specific allusion to *echad*.

The most spiritual of the thirteen tribes was Levy because he was chosen to be the officiant of G'd. Therefore, in order to indicate his uniqueness, we would classify Levy as *aleph (number one)* – a level unto himself. Of the four wives of Yaakov, two of them were considered Matriarchs (Rachel and Leah) and two were considered concubines (Bilhah and Zilpah). The Matriarchs, who were of special spiritual status, bore Yaakov eight sons; Leah mothered six and Rachel two. The number **eight** is denoted with the letter *ches*. The concubines of Yaakov (who were of lesser spiritual dimension) bore him **four** sons, which are denoted with the letter *daled*. The following identifies the various levels of spirituality contained within the tribes of Israel. We have the tribe of Levy (*aleph*), the sons of the Matriarchs (*ches*), and the sons of the concubines (*daled*), spelling – *echad*. The Maharal explains that not only do the tribes numerically reflect the unity of G'd but also the innate spiritual structure of the tribes themselves reflects *echad* (*aleph ches daled*).

In order to establish an entity, which reflects the Unity of G'd both in number and in structure, it was destined for Yaakov to father the Tribes through four wives. Initially, Yaakov, our Patriarch, did not understand this. When he saw that Rachel would not be buried with him he feared that it was because there was a spiritual defect in her. However, with the Maharal's explanation regarding the number thirteen, we are able to understand that not being buried with Yaakov was not the result of a spiritual deficiency on the part of Rachel or her capacity to mother the Tribes of Israel.

### 2. How does One Deal with the World Despite its Unlimited Pitfalls?

The Portion of Vayishlach begins with Yaakov sending agents to inform his brother Esav that he is returning after being away for many years. The Torah states, **“To my lord, to Esav so said your servant Yaakov: I have sojourned with Lavan and lingered until now – *im Lavan gartie*.”** Rashi cites the Midrash, which offers two interpretations of **“*im Lavan gartie* – I have sojourned with Lavan.”** The Midrash explains that the word “gartie,” which means “stranger,” is to communicate to Esav that despite his father’s blessing for good fortune, Yaakov remained a stranger - a man without status. The second interpretation cited by Rashi is that the word “gartie” is the numerical equivalent of “taryag,” alluding to the 613 mitzvos of the Torah. Yaakov was communicating to Esav that although he had lived for a period of twenty years in the home of his evil father-in-law, Lavan, his spirituality had not been diminished as much as an iota. Yaakov was as much a tzaddik now as he was when he left for Charan.

Why would Yaakov need to communicate to Esav that he was a “stranger” – a man without status? Or that he remained devout despite the influences of his father-in-law, Lavan? Esav, being a man who had no interest or regard for spirituality, was not concerned whether Yaakov was devout or not - or whether he was a person of status. Esav despised the essence of Yaakov and only wished to kill him. With this understanding of Esav’s position vis-à-vis Yaakov, what is the significance of Yaakov’s communication?

After Yaakov had rightfully received the blessing from his father Yitzchak, Esav said to his father, “That one (Yaakov) tricked me twice.” Yitzchak responded, “Your brother came and took the blessings with wisdom.” Yitzchak realized, through the dialogue with Esav, that Yaakov was justified to have taken the blessings despite the manner in which they were taken. The fact remains however that Yaakov deceived Yitzchak by impersonating Esav in order to take the blessing. Yaakov is referred to as the “ish Emes – the man of Truth.” He was concerned that because he behaved in a deceitful manner, his characteristic of Truth was diminished. He had to reinstate it to an untainted level. In order to accomplish this Yaakov dedicated fourteen years of uninterrupted Torah study in the yeshiva of Shem V’Aver before departing to Charan – the home of Lavan. Yaakov understood that his characteristic of Emes needed to be free of deficiency in order to survive the evil environment of Charan and be able to be sensitive to even the slightest nuance of Evil to its fullest.

When Esav realized that Yaakov had used deception (which was his own characteristic) to take the blessings, he believed that Yaakov had become weakened and could now fall prey to him. If Yaakov breached his standard of Truth, then he was vulnerable to Esav’s attack. The only way Esav could have killed Yaakov is if his characteristic of Truth was compromised.

Esav believed that after spending twenty years with a man such as Lavan, who epitomized and personified evil and deceit, it was an impossibility that Yaakov’s characteristic of Truth was not eroded and compromised. Therefore, Yaakov sent a message to Esav communicating to him that he was a “stranger in the house of Lavan.” Meaning, despite the fact he was exposed to Lavan for many years, he did not have any relevance to Lavan or his evil surroundings. He was completely detached from that community.

Yaakov was truly a stranger. He did not have an interest in physicality as an end – but only as a means to do the will of G’d. The Torah refers to Patriarchs (Avraham and Yitzchak) as “*geirim*- strangers” because they only utilized existence as a means and not as an end. By communicating that he was a stranger, Yaakov was informing Esav that although he had been exposed to the evils of Lavan, he was not subject to their influences. Thus, Esav would understand that Yaakov was not vulnerable to his attack.

If one sees himself as a “stranger” vis-à-vis existence, he will have a greater chance to succeed in the realm of spirituality. A wealthy Jew once visited the Chofetz Chaim z’tl and observed that he lived in a residence, which was the equivalent of a hovel. The furnishings of his home were far from impressive. The wealthy man was surprised that a man of such renown as the Chofetz Chaim would be living in such impoverished surroundings. Upon seeing the visitor’s perplexed look the Chofetz Chaim asked him, “Where are you staying locally?” The wealthy man responded, “In the small inn down the road.” The Chofetz Chaim asked him to describe his room at the inn. He responded by saying that his room was small and non-descript. The paint in the room was peeling and the furniture was in a state of disrepair. The Chofetz Chaim responded by saying, “I thought that a man of your wealth would have more luxurious accommodations.” To this the wealthy man responded, “Rabbi, you must understand that I am only passing through and therefore it is o.k.” The Chofetz Chaim said to his visitor, “I am also only passing through and therefore the accommodations are irrelevant.” The

wealthy man now understood who the Chofetz Chaim was. The world to him was only a means and not an end.

The Patriarchs' relevance to existence was that they were "*geirim* – strangers" in this world. They were only passing through this world. The physical world was only a means and not an end. Therefore, Yaakov was able to communicate to Esav that he had not compromised any of the 613 precepts of the Torah. His spirituality was not compromised and fully intact.

### 3. *Yaakov's Sensitivity to His Own Spirituality*

The Torah tells us that Yaakov was informed that his brother was coming towards him with 400-armed men. Despite the length of time that had transpired, Esav's hate had not waned. Yaakov began to pray. He said, "**I have been diminished by all the kindnesses and by all the truth that You have done Your servant; for with my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps. Rescue me...**" Rashi cites Chazal who explain that Yaakov's concern was that his merits may have been depleted. He says, "**I have been diminished,**" because when he initially crossed the Jordan on his way to Charan his only possession was his walking staff and now because of the kindness of G'd, Yaakov is returning with great wealth and a large family. He was concerned that since G'd had bestowed such kindness upon him, perhaps he did not have sufficient merit remaining to protect him from his brother Esav. This is the simple understanding of the verse as explained by Rashi.

Perhaps one can say that Yaakov was concerned that his merits had been depleted because he had crossed the Jordan in an impoverished state and was now returning with great wealth. However, at the same time, Yaakov was alluding to the fact that despite his good fortune, his merit was not depleted. When Yaakov left his father's home, his parents entrusted him with great wealth. Yaakov needed this wealth to negotiate with Lavan for the hand of his daughter in marriage, as his grandfather's servant Eliezer had been entrusted with great wealth to negotiate for the hand of Rivka for Yitzchak.

Rashi cites the Midrash that Yaakov (at the time of the crossing of the Jordan) was impoverished because Esav had sent his son Elifaz to kill him. In an attempt to save his own life, Yaakov relinquished all of his wealth to Elifaz and explained to him that this was based on a principle, which he had learned from his grandfather Yitzchak, that "one who is impoverished and destitute is considered as if he is dead." Thus by taking his wealth,

Elifaz would have minimally fulfilled the dictate of his father to kill Yaakov. Consequently, Yaakov's sole possessions were the clothing on his back and his walking staff. This is what Yaakov meant when he said, "I have crossed the Jordan with my walking staff."

It is interesting to note that when Yaakov first saw Rachel coming from a distance with her flock, the Torah tells us that the well that was used by the community to water their flocks was covered with a large boulder. This boulder was jointly removed by all the shepherds in order to water their flocks. When Yaakov understood that Rachel's flock would have to be watered, he single-handedly plucked the rock from the mouth of the well. Rashi cites Chazal who explain that he removed the boulder as one removes a cork from a bottle. The Torah is informing us of Yaakov's "enormous strength." Why is it important for us to know that Yaakov possessed superior human strength? We do not find that his physical strength factored into his role as a Patriarch.

There is a principle in Jewish law that if one rises to kill you then you are obliged to rise and kill your attacker. Based on this principle, we must understand why Yaakov did not kill Elifaz when he was confronted by him. One could say that Yaakov had no choice because he did not have the physical strength to overpower Elifaz. However, by revealing Yaakov's superhuman strength, the Torah is telling us that he could have killed him. If so, then why did he relinquish his wealth to Elifaz rather than kill him?

The consequence of this decision, not to kill Elifaz, was that Yaakov had to spend twenty years of hard labor paying for the hands of his wives and re-establishing his family's fortune. Yaakov understood that as the Patriarch of the Jewish people his own level of spirituality would determine the spiritual viability of the Jewish people until the end of time. He understood that although he was permitted to kill Elifaz, he nevertheless chose to relinquish his wealth rather than take a life in self-defense. Yaakov understood that the act of killing would diminish him as a spiritual person and thereby diminish the potential of the Jewish people. Yaakov's relinquishment of wealth was in fact a Kiddush Hashem (Sanctification of G'd's Name) because he chose to give away all of his wealth at the expense of having to spend twenty years in an environment which was antithetical to his being. Yaakov's statement, "I have crossed the Jordan with my walking staff" was in effect a badge of honor for Yaakov.

Yaakov was concerned that he was vulnerable to Esav's attack because the kindness that was bestowed upon him might have depleted his merit. However, at the

same time he was saying, “I am deserving of Your protection because I gave up all of my wealth and it was later restored - only as a result of my sanctification of Your Name.”

#### 4. *The Uniqueness of Yaakov*

The Torah tells us that when Rivka, our Matriarch, was pregnant with Yaakov and Esav, she experienced “rumblings within herself”. Chazal tell us that when Rivka would pass before a temple of idolatry, Esav would bolt to leave her womb. When she would pass before the yeshiva of Shem V’Aver, Yaakov would do the same. Another interpretation cited by Rashi was that the “rumblings” experienced by Rivka, was Yaakov and Esav battling one another in the womb over the physical and spiritual worlds. Yaakov as the representation of “good” and Esav as the representation of “evil” were a counter balance for one another. Yaakov was naturally inclined to spirituality and holiness, while Esav was inclined to physicality and desire. They were diametrically opposed to one another. Being the ultimate representation of good and evil, Yaakov and Esav had to come into existence simultaneously because one force could not exist without the counter force.

The Torah tells us that after transporting his family across the river, Yaakov was left alone – “levado”. The Torah states, **“Yaakov was left alone (*levado*) and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.”** Chazal explain that at that moment, Yaakov wrestled with the archangel of Esav (Esav’s spiritual counterpart). Why did the angel of Esav attack Yaakov at that moment and not previously in the home of Lavan or at some other time.

Yaakov communicated to Esav through his agents that the reason he was delayed all these years and was not able to engage with him sooner was because **“*im Lavan gartie*”**- which indicated that although Yaakov was exposed to Lavan for twenty years, he observed all of the 613 mitzvos of the Torah meticulously. He was returning spiritually unscathed, despite all the negative influences of that community. Yaakov’s dimension of spirituality at this moment was exponentially greater than it had been originally because he had not compromised it despite all the difficulties that he had faced.

The Midrash tells us that just as Yaakov is referred to as **“*levado* – alone/unique,”** we find that G’d is also referred to in this way. As stated in the verse, “G’d is exalted *levado* – at a level unto Himself.” G’d is alone/unique at that level and one-of-a-kind. It is only after Yaakov departed from the house of Lavan that the

Torah identifies Yaakov as the person who is *levado* - indicating that it was at that moment (after leaving the home of Lavan) that Yaakov achieved that unique spiritual dimension that was one-of-a-kind. Now he was at a level of spirituality that he was able to deal with the archangel of Esav. This was going to be the ultimate test – will Yaakov defeat the angel and subdue him or will he be defeated?

Sforno in his commentary states that the angel was not able to defeat Yaakov because there was not a moment during the struggle that Yaakov was detached from G’d in thought or speech. Every aspect of Yaakov cleaved to G’d. He was *levado*. Because of the victory over the angel, Yaakov actualized his spiritual potential and was thus called “Yisroel”. As the Torah states, **“You (Yaakov) have striven with the Divine and with man and have overcome.”** Yaakov had overcome the Divine by defeating the angel and he lorded over “man” because he succeeded despite Lavan and Esav. At this moment, Yaakov had achieved a dimension that would forever be a part of the spiritual infrastructure of the Jewish people.

The Jewish people are the B’nai Yisroel – the Children of Yisroel. We have eternal relevance to the (*levado*) uniqueness of Yaakov our Patriarch. Whenever the Jewish people incur a diminishment it is only in our physical number - our essence remains constant and intact. Since Yaakov had established himself as a unique, spiritual individual, who reflects the Unity of G’d, the essence of the Jewish people has been set until the end of time. Because the Jewish people share the quality of *levado*, as G’d is *levado*, we were taken to be G’d’s people.

We learn from the incident of Yaakov, that despite being at the most advanced level of spirituality, he was confronted with the most difficult challenge of his life – the confrontation with the archangel of Esav. We can never rest on our laurels despite the level of our own spiritual accomplishments. Whatever our personal level may be, we must be positioned and ready to deal with the upcoming challenge.

#### 5. *One’s Perspective of Life Determines One’s Happiness*

When Esav met Yaakov, after not seeing him for many years, he noticed the camps of Yaakov’s people and asked, **“Who are these (people) to you?”** Yaakov responded, **“The Children who G’d has graciously (*chanani*) given to your servant.”** Esav then asked Yaakov about the purpose of the gift that was sent to him.

Yaakov answered that it was sent to find favor in his eyes. Esav responded to Yaakov by saying, **“I have much. My brother, let what you have remain yours.”** Esav initially rejected Yaakov’s gift because he had felt that it was given to him because he was needy. Yaakov urged his brother to accept the gift as an expression of his reverence for him. He urged Esav saying, **“Please accept my gift which was brought to you, inasmuch as G’d has been gracious (*chanina*) to me and inasmuch as I have everything.”** Esav then accepted Yaakov’s gift.

We find that Yaakov repeatedly expressed himself in a manner that reflected that he felt unworthy of G’d’s blessings. He did not feel deserving or entitled to all the blessings that were bestowed upon him. This is why he referred to his children as, **“The Children who G’d has graciously (*chanina*) given to your servant.”** Regarding Esav’s concern that Yaakov was giving him a gift because he was in need, Esav commented by saying, “I have much.” Yaakov then urged Esav to accept his gift because he himself has “everything”. Why did Esav express himself in one manner and Yaakov in another?

Yaakov expressed himself regarding the blessings he received from G’d in the context of having “everything” because Yaakov had no sense of entitlement and therefore whatever he had was more than he felt he deserved. However, Esav who epitomized physicality – the man of power and lust, believed that all that he had was due to his deservingness and was a result of his own accomplishment. In terms of his self-perception, Esav believed he was entitled to all of existence.

If a person were truly a tzaddik, he would have no sense of entitlement. When Moshe Rabbeinu prayed to G’d to annul the decree and allow him to enter into the Land of Israel, his expression of prayer was. “Through Your graciousness (*chanina*) allow me to enter.” He understood that it would only be through the graciousness of G’d that he would be allowed to enter the Land. Chazal tell us that had it not been for Moshe, the Jewish people would not have ever left Egypt. Despite this, Moshe felt that he was not worthy or entitled to demand anything from G’d. Moshe understood that the purpose of his existence was to be the Redeemer of the Jewish people and the communicator of G’d’s Torah. Moshe did not pride himself in any of his accomplishments. The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of Our Fathers) states, “If one studies much Torah, he should not pride himself because it is for this that he was created.”

If a person feels that he is not entitled to anything then he could subsist on bread and water. He is able to sleep on the ground and live a life of deprivation without

any difficulty. One only has difficulty with having less if he believes he deserves more than he receives.

If Esav’s perception of life was diametrically opposed to that of his brother Yaakov (in terms of entitlement) – why did Yaakov express himself in a manner that Esav would not be able to comprehend by saying “I have everything”? Yaakov could only express himself in a manner that was the truth. Even in the situation when Yaakov was posing as his brother to receive the blessings, he did not change his manner of expression even though it caused Yitzchak to become suspect of Yaakov. Prior to receiving the blessing from Yitzchak, Yaakov spoke to his father in a gentler manner than Esav would have by saying, “please father”. Additionally Yaakov said to his father that, “G’d has provided me with the game that I caught.” Esav never used the name of G’d. By expressing himself in this manner, Yaakov revealed his true identity, which could have jeopardized his chance of receiving the blessing. Nevertheless, expressing himself differently would have been considered a Chilul Hashem (desecration of G’d’s Name). He could not have expressed himself differently. Saying that his success was unrelated to the graciousness of G’d was a falsehood. It would have been considered a heretical statement for Yaakov. Therefore, Yaakov had to express himself in this context regardless of Esav’s understanding.

Often Jews try to express themselves in a manner that is meant to conceal their true beliefs to others who may be sensitive to religion. How could one express himself differently and not acknowledge that whatever he has is only due to the graciousness of G’d. Therefore, we must always remain true to our beliefs, as Yaakov was when he expressed his perspective to Esav.

## 6. *Infusing the Physical with the Spiritual*

The Torah tells us that when Esav approached Yaakov’s family, each of Yaakov’s wives, followed by their children came forth to pay their respects to Esav, except for Rachel. When Rachel approached Esav to acknowledge him, her son Yosef went before her. Rashi cites Chazal that Yosef said, “My mother is an exceptionally beautiful woman, and perhaps the eye of this evil man (*rasha*) will gaze upon the beauty of my mother. Therefore I will block his view so that he will not be able to gaze upon her.” Chazal tell us that because Yosef demonstrated such sensitivity towards his mother in this situation by shielding her from the gaze of Esav, he merited to receive from his father Yaakov the special blessing of “*Alei aayin* - You are above the eye,” meaning

that he was not susceptible to the evil eye. The blessing that Yosef's children Menashe and Ephraim received from their grandfather Yaakov was, "May you proliferate abundantly like fish in the midst of the land." Chazal explain that the meaning of this blessing is that Yosef and his sons will not be susceptible to the evil eye - just as fish are not seen by man because they are covered by water, so too, Yosef and his sons will not be susceptible to the gaze of the human eye.

Why did Yosef not want Esav to gaze upon the beauty of his mother Rachel? Why did Yosef merit such an exceptional blessing for obscuring Esav's gaze? Was it because he was concerned that Esav would be attracted to his mother and thus cause Yaakov difficulty by trying to take Rachel? We find that this was not the case because when Yaakov left Charan, he was not concerned with confronting Esav. As the verse states, "the house of Yaakov is fire, the house of Yosef is flame, and the house of Esav is straw." Meaning that with the birth of Yosef, Yaakov was certain that he would defeat Esav because with their combined spiritual energy they would consume Esav (who is straw).

Yosef, himself in the physical sense was the ultimate in beauty. As the Viceroy of Egypt, when Yosef would pass through the streets on his chariot, the women would gaze upon his beauty. In addition, the Torah tells us that Yosef's mother, Rachel, was extremely beautiful. In fact, the Gemara tells us that she is considered one of the most beautiful women who ever lived. Why is it so important that the Torah reveal that Yosef and Rachel possessed exceptional beauty? The Talmud in Tractate Bava Basra states, "The progeny of Esav could only fall through the progeny of Rachel." Apparently, the offspring of Rachel (and not Leah) possessed a spiritual energy that could incapacitate and bring about the downfall of the descendants of Esav. Why is this so?

Esav personified physicality at the most exaggerated level. The Torah refers to him as, "the man of the field." No one in the history of this world was able to appreciate physicality in the way that Esav did. He was the consummate hedonist.

Yosef and Rachel both epitomized the ultimate in physical beauty and perfection. However, rather than succumbing to vanity and living a life of physicality, they consecrated that exaggerated beauty and physicality to the service of G'd. Yosef and Rachel subjugated and subordinated their beauty to spirituality.

The fact that Rachel was able subjugate her beauty, which was unequaled in existence, indicated that

she had the ability to dominate, subjugate and subordinate anything within the physical realm. This is why Esav, who represents the ultimate in physicality, is dominated and subjugated by the progeny of Rachel. Yosef was able to dominate Egypt, as its Viceroy, because it epitomized physicality.

If Esav was allowed to gaze at the beauty of Rachel he would have only perceive her as a physical being. To perceive someone who is so infused with holiness and spirituality as Rachel (Our Matriarch) as merely a physical object would have been a Chilul Hashem (desecration of the Name of G'd). Yosef would not allow Esav to gaze upon his mother to prevent this desecration. Since Yosef prevented a Chilul Hashem by obscuring Esav's gaze upon his mother, he merited the blessing of "*Alei aayin*- You are above the eye". Until the end of time, no human eye can negatively affect Yosef or his offspring.

## 7. *The Secret to Jewish Survival*

The Torah tells us that after working for his father-in-law Lavan for a period of 20 years, Yaakov, our Patriarch, fled with his family and wealth to return to Canaan. When Lavan discovered what had happened, he pursued Yaakov to destroy him. Hashem interceded and came to Lavan in a dream and told him not to harm Yaakov in any way. When Lavan finally caught up with Yaakov, he explained to him that had it not been for G'd's intervention he would have brought harm upon him. Yaakov understood that Lavan had the capacity and capability to destroy him and his family. It is interesting to note that despite Yaakov's understanding of the consequence of his flight and Lavan's pursuit of him, he did not attempt to prepare in any way for the eventual confrontation.

Contrastingly, before Yaakov was to confront his brother Esav, he took that eventuality very seriously. He prepared himself to meet Esav in three areas: Tefillah, gifts, and battle. **Tefillah (prayer)** - Yaakov beseeched Hashem to protect him from his brother and to fulfill His promise that he would be able to return to Canaan unharmed. **Valuable gifts** - Yaakov had prepared a gift comprised of herds and flocks to be presented to his brother with great reverence, hoping that this would defuse his wrath against him. Thirdly Yaakov prepared for **battle** - he divided his family into two camps so that in the event there was a confrontation with Esav, the second camp would be able to flee and survive.

Yaakov's existence was in no less jeopardy when he had fled from Lavan then at this moment when he was about to confront his brother Esav. Why did Yaakov need to prepare for the encounter with Esav if he did not do so for the confrontation with Lavan – which seems to have been an identical confrontation and was no less of a threat to his existence?

The Torah tells us that after Yaakov had received the blessings from his father Yitzchak, Esav had pleaded with his father to bless him also saying, **“Have you but one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!...So Yitzchak his father answered, and said to him: “...your brother you shall serve; yet it shall be that when you are aggrieved, you may cast off his yoke from your neck.”** Rashi explains that the only time the Jew is protected from the clutches and tyranny of Esav/Edom is when he adheres to the Torah in its entirety. However, if he should fail in this regard, then Esav will be able to cast off the yolk of Yaakov and become the dominating force.

Yaakov was not concerned regarding his confrontation with Lavan, although he was no less evil than Esav. Being worthy of Divine Protection from Lavan was not contingent upon Yaakov's spiritual status. Of course it is understood that Yaakov only survived his 20-year sojourn with his father-in-law because of G'd's initial promise that he would be protected. However, regarding his concern about surviving and succeeding with his brother Esav, despite his intense hate for him, it was another matter. It is a given that Yaakov needed some degree of merit to be protected from Lavan; however, it was not comparable to what was needed to protect him from Esav. Yaakov understood that G'd's guarantee would only be in effect if he had maintained a level of spirituality that was sufficient to make him worthy of the blessings.

The Gemara in Tractate Shabbos tells us that the Roman presence in Israel (who were descendents of Edom, i.e. Esav) existed 186 years before the destruction of the Second Temple. This means that there was already a breach in the Divine Protection against Esav 186 years prior to the actual destruction of the Temple and expulsion of the Jewish people. It is only because the Jewish people had failed spiritually that they were vulnerable to Edom. Thus began the fourth exile (the Edomite exile), which we are currently experiencing.

Since the destruction of the Second Temple, Esav/Edom has been in a dominant position and the Jewish people have been down trodden. The Gemara in Tractate Yomah tells us that the Second Temple was destroyed because of *Sinaas Chinam* (baseless hatred between Jews). Esav despised and detested Yaakov's existence for taking

the blessing from him, despite the fact that he had no basis for this claim because he had sold Yaakov the birthright. Thus, the characteristic of baseless hatred is that of Esav/Edom. Therefore when the Jew assumes the posture of Esav by emulating him in the context of having baseless hatred for his fellow Jew, he thus forfeits his special relationship with G'd.

Although the Jew may adhere meticulously to the precepts of the Torah, if one has baseless hatred of his fellow (to any degree), he no longer merits Divine Protection. The Jew will only merit blessing if he assumes the posture of Yaakov, our Patriarch, which is Truth. The Jerusalem Talmud tells us that if the Temple is not rebuilt in a particular generation it is as if it were destroyed in that generation. This is because the Jew has the ability to correct the wrong of 2000 years, assume the posture of Yaakov, and no longer be identified with Esav.

#### **YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE**

*Energize your day...*

*... with a solid morning of Torah study*

#### **Monday Through Friday**

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Pirkei Avos
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah
6:30- 7:25 am	Halacha
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Tractate Avodah Zorah
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi

2:00pm Mincha

#### **Special Weekday Classes**

##### **Monday**

11:15 – 12:15pm **Talmud: Sanhedrin**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

12:30 – 1:30pm **Talmud: Pesachim**  
Location: Shandholt 488 Madison Avenue  
Between E.51<sup>st</sup> and E.52<sup>st</sup>

##### **Tuesday**

12:15 - 1:15pm **Torah Insight Based on the Parsha**  
Location: Yad Avraham

##### **Wednesday**

11:30 – 12:30 pm **Talmud: Sanhedrin**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

1:00—2:00 pm Derech **Hashem**  
Location: Yad Avraham

##### **Thursday**

10:30 –11:30am **Tehilim with Malbim**  
Location: Yad Avraham

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Talmud: Sanhedrin**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

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