

The Greatest Confrontation
Between Two

MEGA FORCES

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayishlach

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Neither Consumed Or Compromised

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1. Yaakov sends agents to Esav and relates that he is returning after many years.
2. Yaakov says he sojourned with Lavan.
3. The Hebrew equivalent for "sojourned" is Garti - 613.
4. Although he was exposed to Lavan's evil ways he was not diminished.
5. If Yaakov kept the 613 mitzvos, it is obvious he did not learn from his ways.
6. When Yaakov fled to Lavan to escape the wrath of Esav, he made a vow.
7. Should he return to his father in peace, he will tithe all his assets for G-d.
8. Rashi: "Whole from sin" – that he does not learn from Lavan's evil eye.
9. One needs divine assistance to escape the influences of Lavan.
10. Despite the overwhelming negative influence of Lavan, Yaakov remained unscathed.
11. Before confronting Esav, Yaakov feared he became sullied with sin.
12. When Yaakov initially fled, he accepted upon himself the exactness of G-d's attribute of justice.

Sating the Unsatisfied

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Weekly Video: The Greatest Confrontation Between Two Mega Forces

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Dominated or Dictated by Physicality?

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Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayishlach



Subjugation of the Physical to Achieve the Spiritual

The *Torah* states when *Yaakov* approached *Esav* on his return to *Canaan*, "*Yaakov* raised his eyes and saw – behold, *Esav* was coming...he quickly went ahead of them (his family) and bowed earthward seven times until he reached his brother." Every action of the holy Patriarchs was done with a specific intent and purpose. Why did *Yaakov* choose to prostrate himself seven times before *Esav*, his brother?

Baal HaTurim cites a verse in Proverbs, "*Yaakov* bowed down seven times because, 'The *tzaddik* falls seven times and then he rises'" *Yaakov* understood that by prostrating himself seven times before *Esav* it would be the equivalent of falling seven times. Prostration is an expression of negation and subordination to another. Thus, by bowing seven times before his evil brother, *Yaakov* would merit the Divine Assistance to rise and not be destroyed.

The *Torah* tells us that *Yaakov* worked seven years for each of his wives. As the *Torah* states, "*Lavan* said to *Yaakov*, "...Tell me: What are your wages?...*Yaakov* loved *Rachel* so he said, 'I will work for you for seven years, for *Rachel*....'" Why did *Yaakov* offer to work for seven years when he could have offered to work for a shorter period of time? If *Lavan* would not have been agreeable to the lesser amount, *Yaakov* could have then increased the years of labor until they would be in agreement. Nevertheless, *Yaakov* specifically chose to commit himself to work for *Lavan* for seven years.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that *Yaakov* understood that *Lavan* was a representation of evil and that he would need to subordinate himself to *Lavan* for the sake of acquiring the hand of *Rachel* in marriage. He thus chose to work for *Lavan* for seven years, based on the verse in Proverbs, "The *tzaddik* falls seven times and then he rises" *Yaakov* believed that after working for *Lavan* for seven years, his evil father in law would

be unable to affect him or his family because he had risen after falling seven times. *Chazal* tell us that in order for the physical not to interfere with spiritual it must be subordinated. By bowing seven times before *Esav*, *Yaakov* subordinated his physicality so that he could ultimately have the merit to dominate *Esav*.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Bava Kama* tells us that *Rav Kahana* (who was to a certain degree the equivalent of *Reb Yochanan*) summoned a Jew who was an informant for the Persian government. *Rav Kahana* warned him that if he continued to inform on other Jews, he would be put to death because he has assumed the status of a "pursuer (*rodeif*). The *Torah* tells us that one is permitted to kill the one who is pursuing another.

As *Rav Kahana* was explaining this to the informant, he understood that he too would be informed upon by this individual to the Persian government and thus be killed. *Rav Kahana* broke the neck of the informant on the spot based on the principle of *rodeif*. Although it was permitted for *Rav Kahana* to kill the informant, he understood that G-d brought about this predicament to him because there was a certain spiritual liability that needed to be corrected. As it states, "G-d brings liability on the one who is liable." He thus took upon himself a vow of silence for seven years and not reveal his greatness in *Torah*. *Rav Kahana* became a fugitive and needed to flee Babylon to Jerusalem.

When he was in Jerusalem, he met *Reish Lakish*, the primary student of *Reb Yochanan*. After engaging *Rav Kahana* in *Torah* dialogue, *Reish Lakish* being overwhelmingly impressed ran to *Reb Yochanan* and said, "A lion has just ascended from Babylon!" *Reb Yochanan* summoned *Rav Kahana* to sit and participate in his *Torah* lecture and began to pose questions to him. Because of his vow of silence, he could not respond to *Reb Yochanan's Torah* queries. This repeated itself seven times and again *Rav Kahana* did not respond.

After being disgraced seven times, *Reb Kahana* said to himself, "Let these seven incidences of disgraces be the equivalent of the seven years of silence." *Reb Kahana* chose to be silent for seven years, in order to subdue and subordinate his physicality to address his spiritual shortcoming that was revealed to him by needing to kill the informant. *Reb Kahana* understood that he could now shine forth with his spirituality and reveal who he was as a true *Torah Sage*.

The Commentators explain that the number seven represents the physical. As we see that the process of Creation was completed within seven days. Only after one has conquered and subordinated the physical barriers, has he removed all physical barriers and is able to ascend spiritually, unhindered.

Yaakov's Concern for His Spiritual Survival

The *Torah* states that after *Yaakov* was informed that *Esav* was approaching him with 400 men, "*Yaakov* became very frightened...." *Yaakov* had already informed his brother *Esav* that he had not been spiritually diminished to any degree while in the household of *Lavan* the evil one, and to the contrary that he had advanced spiritually, as he had said, "In addition to adhering to the 613 *mitzvos* of the *Torah*, I was not influenced to any degree." If so, what was the basis for *Yaakov* to be concerned that he was vulnerable to the attack of *Esav*?

The *Torah* states in the Portion of *Vayeitzei* after *Yaakov* had awoken on Mt. Moriah after his dream, "*Yaakov* said, 'If G-d will be with me, will guard me on this way that I am going, will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I will return in peace to my father's household, and *Hashem* will be a G-d (*Elokim*) to me....'"

Sforno explains in his commentary that when *Yaakov* had said, "*Hashem* will be a G-d (*Elokim*) to me.." to mean, "G-d will be my judge if I do not serve Him with all my might." Meaning, G-d Who is the Merciful One will be to me "*Elokim*" to relate to me through the Attribute of Judgment. By making this vow, *Yaakov* had taken upon himself a level of service that needed to be at a nearly perfect level. If he were to fail even to the slightest degree, he would forfeit G-d's guarantee of protection since he had asked G-d to relate to him through the Attribute of Justice. Why did *Yaakov* assume upon himself the strictest standard of service with the Attribute of Justice, when G-d would have related to him through the Attribute of Mercy? To be evaluated within this context of scrutiny it would be nearly impossible to succeed. Nevertheless, *Yaakov* imposed upon himself this strict and exacting level of service.

Chazal tell us that when *Yaakov* had prayed to G-d "Protect me" he was supplicating G-d that he should be protected from transgressing the three Cardinal Sins

(adultery, idolatry, and murder). *Yaakov* understood that he would be entering into a household and community that was depraved and sinful. In order for him to be able to survive spiritually in that environment, *Yaakov* understood that he could not waiver to any degree in his level of service in order to survive. If G-d would evaluate him within the context of the Attribute of Mercy, it would be possible for him to falter to some degree since the evaluation of his spiritual record would not be at the strictest level. Being subject to the evaluation of the Attribute of Justice would be a guarantee that his service of G-d would be perfect, despite the negative spiritual environment of *Lavan's* community.

As a result of *Yaakov's* personal predicament, when he was confronted with the fact that his brother *Esav* was approaching with 400 men to do battle with him, he was concerned that despite his understanding that he had performed perfectly as a servant of G-d, he may have fallen short of that perfect level of service. He was thus frightened that his position had been compromised. He would then be vulnerable to be killed.

The *Torah* tells us that when *Yaakov* had come to the Temple mount after studying for fourteen years in the *Yeshiva* of *Aiver*, "He lied on that place..." *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who explain that in that location he lied down to sleep; however, for the fourteen years when he was in the *Yeshiva* of *Aiver*, he did not lie down to sleep. Seemingly, the *Torah* is communicating to us the level of diligence of *Yaakov's Torah* study during those fourteen years. What is the significance and value of this information?

The *Torah* quantifies *Yaakov* as "the perfect man who dwelt in the tent (of *Torah*)."*Yaakov* was a personification of the *Torah* itself. In order to be able to achieve that, it is understood that his level of involvement in *Torah* study needed to be at an advanced and fully dedicated level. Nevertheless, the inference of *Yaakov* lying down on the Temple Mount indicates that when he had studied *Torah* before going to the *Yeshiva* of *Aiver* that he did lie down. This would indicate that lying down to sleep does not compromise one's degree of commitment to *Torah* study nor did it diminish *Yaakov's* level of embodiment of the *Torah*. If so, how do we discern between the *Torah* study that *Yaakov* had done during the fourteen years in the *Yeshivah* of *Aiver* and the first sixty-three years of *Yaakov's* life when he studied *Torah* in the "tent?"

The reason *Yaakov* chose to spend an additional fourteen years studying in the *Yeshiva* of *Aiver*, although he had dedicated his life to *Torah* study, was because he understood that he was not sufficiently prepared for the spiritual encounter with evil that existed outside of the Land of Israel in the community of his future father-in-law *Lavan*. It was not only a question of self-spiritualization to advance himself, but also it was a question of being able to survive the spiritual abyss of *Charan*. This being the fact, *Yaakov* could not afford to lie down to sleep during the fourteen years because he needed to be fully invested for the sake of spiritual survival.

After awakening on the Temple Mount, he made a commitment to G-d that he was willing to be evaluated within the context of the Attribute of Justice because of the level of clarity that he had achieved due to his spiritualization. He understood that if he were not held to the absolute standards of the Attribute of Justice there would be room for compromise. The broadness of heart and clarity to understand what was needed to be done, came from his fourteen years of *Torah* study in the *Yeshiva* of *Aiver*.

The Superficiality of Man's Understanding

The *Torah* states regarding *Dina*, the daughter of *Yaakov*, "*Dina*, the daughter of *Leah*, went out to look over the daughters of the land." The *Midrash* asks, "Why is *Dina* identified by the *Torah* as 'the daughter of *Leah*'? Was she not the daughter of *Yaakov*? It is because just as her mother *Leah* possessed the characteristic of 'going out' so too did *Dina* possess that same characteristic. Where do we find the characteristic of being outgoing regarding *Leah*?"

The *Torah* tells us that *Reuvain* had found mandrakes in the field (*dudaim*) and brought them to his mother, *Leah*. *Rachel*, requested them from her sister *Leah* since she was infertile. *Rachel* understood that the mandrakes would make her fertile. She had yet not conceived and wanted them in order to make her fertile. In exchange for the mandrakes, *Rachel* had agreed to relinquish her conjugal right with *Yaakov* to *Leah* for that night. The *Torah* states, "When *Yaakov* came from the field in the evening, *Leah* went out to meet him and said, 'It is to me that you must come for I have clearly hired you with my son's *dudaim*.'" Consequently, *Leah* bore her fifth son to *Yaakov* and she named him *Yissachar*.

Leah's going out to meet *Yaakov* was a manifestation of her characteristic of outgoingness.

The *Torah* tells us that after *Shechem* had defiled *Dina*, the daughter of *Yaakov*, he had asked his father *Chamor* to go *Yaakov* and negotiate for the hand of his daughter in marriage. The *Midrash* states, "*Chamor* said to *Yaakov*, 'You could demand any amount of money from me for the hand of your daughter *Dina*. I am aware that your grandfather *Avraham* was a prince. I too am a prince of the land.' (Thus, our families are compatible for marriage.)

Yaakov replied, '*Avraham* was not a prince, but rather, he was an ox (*shor*).' As the verse states when *Avraham* hosted the angels, '*Avraham* ran to the cattle...' The verse in *Proverbs* states, 'The amount of yield given by a field is determined by the strength of the ox.' You on the other hand are a donkey (*Chamor*). One is not permitted to plow with an ox and a donkey that are hitched together as it is written, 'You shall not plow with the ox and the donkey together... Therefore, there is no basis for us to enter into marriage.' This is similar to what the *Torah* tells us regarding *Eliezer* and the search for a wife for *Yitzchak*.

When *Eliezer* was told to seek out a wife for *Yitzchak*, he had alluded to the fact that he had a daughter who was eligible and qualified to be the wife of *Yitzchak*, the future Matriarch of the Jewish people. *Eliezer's* daughter was truly devout and righteous; however, *Avraham* rejected the suggestion. *Avraham* said to *Eliezer* that he was a *Canaanite*. *Canaan* was a descendant of *Cham*. *Noach* cursed *Canaan*, who was the forbearer of the *Canaanites*. *Avraham* said to *Eliezer*, "You come from a cursed stock and I, a descendant of *Shem* (the most special son of *Noach* who had received his blessing) come from a blessed stock. Something that is cursed cannot cleave to something that is blessed." Therefore, *Eliezer's* daughter, as devout as she was, did not qualify to be the future Matriarch.

Matriarch of the Jewish people.

Eliezer had a profound understanding of spirituality and could appreciate *Avraham's* reason for rejecting his daughter as the potential Matriarch. *Chamor*, however, had no sense or understanding of spirituality and thus could not appreciate the essence of *Avraham's* standing as a prince. *Avraham* was a prince of G-d and not "a prince of the land."

There was no commonality between *Chamor* and *Avraham*. *Avraham* was a prince of G-d because "he ran to the cattle." His greatness stemmed from his zealotry to perform the *mitzvah* of hospitality with the objective to dispel paganism. *Chazal* tell us that *Avraham* slaughtered three calves so that he could provide each of his guests with the tongue, which is considered a delicacy. His hospitality was unique because it was not for the sake of satisfying his guest's physical needs but rather it was purely to serve G-d. Thus, *Yaakov* explained to *Chamor* that his grandfather's classification was a "*shor*" (ox) to convey to him that despite his title of "prince" he had no relevance to *Avraham*.

Yaakov said to *Chamor*, the father of *Shechem*, that he is the equivalent of the "donkey." It was to indicate that he is one who is devoid of spirituality. As the prophet *Yechezkel* refers to the Egyptian people as "donkeys" (*chamor*). As it is stated, "Their flesh is the flesh of donkeys." *Maharal of Prague* explains that the word "*chamor*" (donkey) is derived from "*chomer*" which means material. Of all the seventy root nations, the Egyptian people were the most devoid of spirituality. Thus, what *Yaakov* had said to *Chamor*, "My grandfather *Avraham* is equated to the ox, is the spiritual being, who has no relevance to you because you are totally physical. Therefore there is no compatibility between our families."

It is interesting to note that what led to the defilement of *Dina* was precipitated by *Leah's* characteristic of "outgoingness" which her daughter *Dina* had inherited. The *Torah* states in the Portion of *Bereishis*, "*Vichivshah ...*" *Rashi* cites *Chazal* who explain, "It is the way of a man to pursue a woman and not a woman to pursue a man. It is considered a breach of modesty for a woman to be outgoing. The honor and glory of a daughter of a king is to be concealed..." Since *Leah* possessed the characteristic of "outgoingness," her daughter *Dina* was drawn to seek out the daughters of the land. Consequently, she was defiled by *Shechem*.

The characteristic of "outgoingness" initially expressed itself in a very positive manner regarding *Leah*. Had *Leah* not possessed the characteristic of outgoingness, she would not have gone out to inform *Yaakov* that it was her night to be with him. As it states, "*Leah* went out to meet him (*Yaakov*) and said..." Consequently, *Yissachar* would not have been conceived. *Yissachar*, which is

one of the most special tribes, was only conceived as a result of this characteristic. However, regarding *Dina's* application of this characteristic, it manifested itself in tragedy.

We see something similar regarding the characteristic of *Avraham*, our Patriarch. The *Torah* refers to him as "*Ha'Ivri* – from the other side." *Chazal* explain this appellation to mean that he was on one side and the entire world was on the other. Meaning, because of his level of belief and conviction, he was able to single handedly introduce monotheism to the world. His characteristic was being "stiff-necked" because he was uncompromising and unbending in his belief. Regarding *Avraham's* application of this characteristic, he brought G-d into existence and changed the destiny of the world.

The Jewish people, being the descendants of *Avraham*, inherited that special characteristic from him. However, if it is not tempered with holiness (through the performance of *mitzvos*), it would manifest itself in a negative manner. The *Torah* states after the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf, "G-d said to *Moshe*, Say to the Children of Israel, You are stiff-necked people. If I ascend among you, I may annihilate you in an instant..." Had *Avraham* not possessed the characteristic of "stiff-necked" he would not have succeeded in establishing monotheism. However, if this positive characteristic is misapplied as we see regarding the Jewish people and the sin of the Golden Calf, it could bring about disaster.

The Symbolism of the Ox and the Donkey

The *Torah* tells us that after *Yaakov* had not seen his brother *Esav* for thirty-four years, he communicated to him through his agents saying, "I have sojourned with *Lavan* and have lingered until now. I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, servants, and maidservants..." *Yaakov* had chosen to share with *Esav* his material acquisitions at the time of his stay with their uncle, *Lavan*. *Yaakov* was specific in identifying two of the species of the livestock (oxen and donkeys). Why would *Yaakov* want communicate this particular information to his brother *Esav*?

Baal HaTurim explains in his commentary, "*Yaakov* did not mention any other species other than 'oxen and donkeys'. By mentioning 'oxen' (*shore*)' he alluded to *Yosef* (his son), who is the antagonist of *Esav*. The word

'*chamor* (donkeys)' alludes to *Yissachar*, (as it states in the verse, '*Yissachar* is a strong-boned donkey..') The tribe of *Yissachar* was only involved in the study of *Torah*. This is the fulfillment of the blessing of *Yitzchak*, 'The voice is the voice of *Yaakov*...'"

The blessing of *Yitzchak* to *Yaakov* was in effect as long as the voice was the voice of *Yaakov* (meaning engaged in continuous *Torah* study) then he would not be vulnerable to *Esav* (the hands will not be the hands of *Esav*). *Baal Haturim* continues, "The numerical value of '*lee shore*' is 'that *Yosef* was born' The numerical value of '*shore* (oxen)' is '*keren Yosef* (horn of *Yosef*)'" *Esav* should be aware that because of *Yissachar* and *Yosef*, *Yaakov* was not vulnerable to him.

The *Midrash* tells us that when *Yaakov* was concerned about defeating the many princes of *Esav*, G-d said to him, "One spark that emanates from you will consume them all- that is the spark of *Yosef*." As the verse states, "The house of *Yaakov* is fire, the house of *Yosef* is a flame, and the house of *Esav* is straw." The *Gemara* in Tractate *Bava Basra* states, "The progeny of *Esav* can only fall into the hands of the progeny of *Rachel*." The *Gemara* continues to explain that the Jewish people were never victorious in a battle against *Amalek* (descendants of *Esav*) unless the progeny of *Rachel* had participated in that battle. Why do the progeny of *Rachel* have the unique ability to subjugate and subordinate the progeny of *Esav*?

The *Midrash* states, "During the seven-year engagement period, when *Yaakov* worked for the hand of *Rachel*, he would send gifts to his intended bride, but *Lavan* would divert these gifts from *Rachel* and give them to *Leah*. *Leah* believed that *Yaakov* was actually sending these gifts to her. *Rachel*, being aware of what was happening remained silent. *Rachel* said, 'If I were to tell *Yaakov* that the gifts that he sent to me were actually given to my sister *Leah*, he would cease sending gifts. If he were to no longer send me gifts, my father will not allow me marry *Yaakov* and I will be distanced from the holiness of the *tzaddik*.' G-d said to *Rachel*, 'Because you remained silent (and did not reveal this to *Yaakov*), I swear on your life that in the merit of your silence I will remember you.' As it states, 'G-d remembered *Rachel* (to conceive *Yosef*)...'"

Rashi in his commentary regarding the verse "G-d remembered *Rachel*..." cites the *Midrash* that tells us that G-d remembered the signs that she had given

her sister. When they would be under the marriage canopy and *Yaakov* would ask who she was, she would respond with the code words that had been agreed upon between *Yaakov* and *Rachel*. They were '*Nidah*, *Challah*, and *Hadlakos haneir*.'

Rachel felt that if she would not give these words to her sister *Leah*, the ruse of *Lavan* their father would be revealed during the marriage ceremony and her sister would be publicly disgraced. *Rachel* therefore revealed the code words to *Leah* to protect her. Although *Rachel* understood at that moment that because of what she had done, she may not merit to be the Matriarch of the Jewish people, she nevertheless was agreeable to forfeit that right.

Rachel's silence, regarding the gifts and her transferring of the code words to her sister was something extraordinary and contrary to human nature. In order for her to behave as she did, *Rachel* needed to subordinate her nature for the sake of a spiritual objective that was the Will of G-d. *Rachel* had been barren, which is a state in which one cannot naturally conceive. She merited a miracle that G-d Willed that she should conceive. Just as her behavior was contrary to nature and was extraordinary, so too did G-d Will a change in the natural order, to allow a barren woman to conceive.

Leah, who had mothered six of the twelve tribes was initially barren, G-d opened her womb and allowed her to conceive because she was "despised" by *Yaakov* because she did not reveal to him who she was at the time of the marriage. The basis for *Leah* to experience the miracle of conception was unrelated to her own merit or behavior. However, *Rachel*, who was the primary Matriarch and considered to be special to *Yaakov*, only merited the miracle to conceive *Yosef* because of her extraordinary behavior. She thus mothered *Yosef*, who was the equivalent of the "flame" that would destroy the house of *Esav*, which is the equivalent of "straw."

The only true value for the material is to facilitate the spiritual. *Esav*, however, pursued and amassed the material for its own sake. Therefore, *Esav* is compared to straw, which has no value unto itself (its value is only to protect the kernel of wheat). His only desire was the material for its own sake. He had no relevance to the spiritual. In contrast, *Rachel* and her progeny utilized the material only for the sake of the spiritual.

Because *Yosef*, the son of *Rachel* possessed the characteristic of his mother, the ability to dominate the physical for the sake of the spiritual, *Esav* had reason to be take pause, before attacking *Yaakov*. When *Yaakov* mentioned the specific species of the "oxen and donkeys" he communicated to *Esav* that he was impervious to him within the context of the material and spiritual. He was not concerned about *Esav*'s material representation because *Yosef* dominates the material. He was secure in the spiritual as a result of *Yissachar* who was a manifestation of *Yitzchak*'s blessing to *Yaakov* that as long as the voice is the voice of *Yaakov*, the hands will not be the hands of *Esav*.

The Tribe of *Yissachar*, the Spiritual Anchor of the Jewish People The *Torah* tells us that *Yaakov* communicated to *Esav* through his agents saying, "I have sojourned with *Lavan* and have lingered until now. I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, servants, and maidservants..." *Baal HaTurim* explains in his commentary, "*Yaakov* did not mention any other species other than 'oxen and donkeys'. By mentioning 'oxen and donkeys (*shore v'chamor*)' he alluded to *Yosef* (his son), who is the antagonist of *Esav*. The word '*chamor* (donkeys)' alludes to *Yissachar*, (as it states in the verse, '*Yissachar* is a strong-boned donkey...') The tribe of *Yissachar* were only involved in the study of *Torah*.

This is the fulfillment of the blessing of *Yitzchak*, 'The voice is the voice of *Yaakov*...'" The blessing of *Yitzchak* to *Yaakov* was as long as the voice was the voice of *Yaakov*, meaning the continuous study of *Torah*, then he would not be vulnerable to *Esav* (the hands will not be the hands of *Esav*). Every Jew has an obligation to study *Torah*. Why was it sufficient for *Yaakov* to allude to *Esav* that he had *Yissachar* who was engaged in *Torah* study? If the remainder of the Jewish people must also be engaged in *Torah* study, how could one tribe absolve the others from their obligation?

The *Torah* tells us that if one wears a fourcornered garment, he has an obligation to tie upon its corners fringes (*tzitzis*). This is a positive commandment. *Ramchal* explains that if a Jew has among his wardrobe a garment that identifies with G-d, such as a four-cornered garment with fringes, it will cause his entire wardrobe to be elevated. The *Torah* states, "When an ox or sheep or a goat is born..." These are the only three domesticated species that qualify to be brought as an offering. Since the *Torah* identifies these specific

species as having relevance to G-d, within the context of sacrifices, the entire species of these animals, although the animal may not be consecrated, are of an elevated status.

Although every Jew has the obligation to study *Torah*, whenever the time avails itself, the Jewish people have one tribe among them that is fully dedicated to the study of *Torah*. *Yissachar* was continuously engaged in *Torah* study without any distraction whatsoever. All of the material needs of *Yissachar* were provided by *Zevulon*.

Chazal tell us that because *Zevulon* understood and appreciated the value of *Yissachar's* uninterrupted *Torah* study to such a degree that they would literally place the food into the mouths of *Yissachar* so that they should not be distracted from their studies. The mind and soul of *Yissachar* was totally dedicated to *Torah* study. Based on the concept explained by *Ramchal*, the fact that one of the tribes of the Jewish people was dedicated to *Torah* study at an exceptional level, the entire people are affected and elevated as a result. "The voice is the voice of *Yaakov*..." is in effect, despite the fact that the other tribes are engaged in other responsibilities and not in continuous *Torah* study.

The *Gemara* in Tractate *Berachos* cites an argument between *Reb Yishmael* and *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* regarding the understanding of the verse "that you may gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil..." *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai's* position is that if the Jew adheres to the Will of G-d sufficiently and qualitatively, he will not need to engage in the material whatsoever to provide for himself. His material needs will be addressed and provided to him through others. In contrast, *Reb Yishmael's* position was that one needs to be engaged in the material at the time it is necessary in order to provide for himself the minimum necessary sustenance, but also engaged in *Torah* study.

The *Gemara* concludes, "Many attempted to follow the position of *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* and did not succeed." *Reb Chaim of Volozhin* in his work *Nefesh HaChaim* explains that it is inferred from the statement of the *Gemara* that "many" did not succeed in following the position of *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai*; however, some did succeed. If one were in fact dedicated to the degree that *Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* prescribes, then he would not need to be concerned about his material needs.

The Jewish people need to have a *Yissachar*, who is engaged in uninterrupted *Torah* study in order to provide protection against *Esav*. In conjunction with this, every Jew has his personal obligation to study *Torah* day and night, when the time avails itself. Through this level of engagement in *Torah*, the Jewish people will be provided with their sustenance.



Yad Avraham Institute