

# The Irrefutable Proof of UNMITIGATED HATRED

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Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

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# YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayishlach

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

## Soaring Beyond the Finite to Touch the Infinite

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1. Yaakov flees to Charan to escape Esav's wrath.
2. Yitzchok instructs him to marry one of Lavan's daughters.
3. After 20 years Yaakov leaves Charan with his wives and children.
4. He sends agents to Esav: saying he sojourned with Lavan and has been delayed.
5. The Hebrew word for "I have sojourned" is Garti.
6. Rashi: The numerical value for Garti is 613.
7. Although in an environment of evil, Yaakov did not learn from Lavan's evil ways.
8. Why does Rashi address the numerical value of the letters & not that letters of Garti also spell Taryag-613?
9. The numerical value of Garti is 613- the sojourning itself was 613.
10. Yaakov internalized the 613 mitzvos.
11. Because Yaakov totally integrated all 613 mitzvos he didn't learn from Lavan's evil ways.
12. On the 4th year of the sabbatical cycle, he makes the Confession of the Tithes.
13. One says, "I have rejoiced and made others happy as a result of the distributing the tithes to the rightful parties.
14. By giving away serious percentages of one's profit is how is one happy.
15. After the distribution, one supplicates G-d: "Gaze from your Heavenly abode & bless People of Israel."
16. Chazal: We have done what you decreed - If we walk in your statutes, the rains and bounty will come in their time.
17. This refers to toiling in the Torah.
18. Only when toiling in Torah can one internalize the value of mitzvos & have a sense of one's true worth.
19. The only one who could say, "I rejoice" when giving away significant percentage of one's profits is the one who toiled in Torah.

## 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.

## Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayishlach



### Yaakov, Wanting to be Judged with the Attribute of Justice

*Torah:* Yaakov was informed that his brother was coming towards him with 400 armed men to attack him. It was clear to Yaakov that despite all the years of separation from his brother *Esav*, that time did not cause *Esav's* intense hate to dissipate. Yaakov began to supplicate G-d saying, "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* citing the *Midrash:* Yaakov was concerned that his merits may have been depleted because when he had crossed the Jordan on his way to *Charan* his only possession was his walking staff. However, now because of G-d's Kindness, he was returning with great wealth and a large family.

*Midrash:* "Although You have promised me that I will be protected, perhaps I have become soiled with sin.

Thus, I am no longer worthy of Your Guarantee that I will be protected from my brother *Esav*."

Yaakov was concerned that he may not merit Divine Protection from his brother because he had depleted his merit and that he may have become soiled with sin. A *tzaddik* is always concerned that despite his exceptional level of service to G-d, since he could have performed his service a more perfect level, he will be held culpable for his falling short of his potential. Although Yaakov understood that he, as the Patriarch who fathered the twelve tribes of G-d would be the one to fulfill the objective of Creation; nevertheless, he was concerned that he was vulnerable to *Esav* and that he and his family could be killed. What was the basis for his concern?

*Torah* in *Vayeitzei:* G-d promised Yaakov that He would protect him, "Behold I am with you; I will safeguard you wherever you go..." After Yaakov had awakened from his dream on Mt. Moriah, the *Torah* states, "Yaakov

took a vow saying, 'If G-d (*Elokeem*) will be with me, will safeguard me in this way that I am going, will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and return me in peace to my father's house and Hashem will be a G-d (*Elokeem*) for me....'

*Sforno*: "If G-d (*Elokeem*) will be with me..." can mean, If G-d will remove from me anything that oppresses me or interferes with my belief in G-d or function, which causes one to become destabilized and reject his Maker.

*Mishna* in Tractate *Eruvin*: 'There are three things that destabilizes a person and cause him to reject his Maker. Evil people who come upon him and coerce him to do evil, an illness (evil spirit), and destitution...' Protect me from those who will compel me to behave in a manner that I do not wish to, give me bread so that my destitute state should not bring me to violate Your Will and I should be able to return in peace, protect me from illness..., then *Hashem* will be *Elokeem*, G-d will be the Judge. If I do not serve Him with all of my ability, although *Hashem* is all Merciful, I shall be judged with the Attribute of Justice." *Yaakov* vowed that if G-d would provide him with all of his needs, he would be willing to be judged not within the context of Mercy, but rather with the Attribute of Justice, which is exacting and precise.

*Torah*: After *Yaakov* had spent twenty years in the house of *Lavan* and had not seen his brother for a minimum of thirty four years, he sent angels ahead of him to tell his brother *Esav*, "I have sojourned with *Lavan* and lingered until now – *im Lavan gartie*."

*Rashi* citing *Chazal*: The word "*gartie*" is the numerical equivalent of "*taryag*," which is the numerical value of 613 *mitzvos*. *Yaakov* was saying to *Esav*, his brother, that although he was exposed to *Lavan* and his community for this extended period of time, he had adhered to the entire *Torah* meticulously. In addition, he had communicated to *Esav* saying, "I did not learn from his evil ways."

*Yaakov* understood that in order to withstand the Attribute of Justice, he needed to be perfect without any blemish. The slightest degree of spiritual imperfection could result in death. Since *Yaakov* vowed to be judged within the context of the Attribute of Justice, if G-d would provide all of his needs, then spiritually he needed to be above reproach. It was only because *Yaakov* agreed to be judged in this context that he was concerned that he would be vulnerable to *Esav*. Had

he been judged within the context of the Attribute of Mercy, he would not have been concerned.

*Torah*: Although initially *Lavan* was willing to pay *Yaakov* a wage, *Yaakov* did not want to receive any compensation from *Lavan* the evil one. It was because he understood that everything that he would need, would be provided by G-d. Since G-d did in fact provide *Yaakov* with all of his needs, he was concerned that perhaps his service of G-d was not sufficiently perfect. Thus his spiritual record would not be tolerated by the Attribute of Justice. Why did *Yaakov* make a vow that would subject him to such a level of scrutiny and judgment?

*Rambam* in *the Laws of Deos*: In order to affect a change in one's character and behavior, one must go to the opposite extreme in order to eventually come to the midpoint. *Yaakov* understood that in order to spiritually survive the level of evil that he would be exposed to in the community of *Lavan*, he needed to be willing to subject himself to the exactness of the Attribute of Justice. Understanding the seriousness of the consequence of his failing, he would thus strive to be more perfect. Although his approach may have been helpful in safeguarding him from sin, if he should fail, even to the slightest degree, he would be vulnerable to *Esav*.

## **Esav Rejecting Yaakov's Overtures**

*Torah*: After *Yaakov* had spent twenty years in the house of *Lavan* and had not seen his brother for a minimum of thirty-four years, he sent angels ahead of him to tell his brother *Esav*, "I have sojourned with *Lavan* and lingered until now – *im Lavan gartie*."

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In addition to communicating to *Esav* that he had maintained his spiritual dimension and purity, *Yaakov* also revealed to *Esav* the material wealth that he had amassed saying, "... I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, servants, and maidservants..."

*Rashi:* "Although Yaakov had many oxen and donkey's he expressed himself in the singular 'ox' and 'donkey.' It is because although one may have multiple animals, one expresses oneself in the singular."

*Torah:* Regarding the gift that Yaakov had sent to his brother, "Yaakov sent a tribute to his Esav his brother: two hundred she-goats...thirty nursing camels with their colts; forty cows..."

*Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk z'tl:* Although when Yaakov initially enumerated the material assets that he had amassed, he did not mention that he had camels. However, regarding the tribute he sent to Esav, the *Torah* reveals that Yaakov also had camels. Why were they initially omitted?

When Yaakov initially enumerated the various species, he wanted to communicate a specific message to his brother Esav. When Yaakov referred to the ox and the donkey in the singular, it was because he was referring to the particular species and not the specific animals that he possessed. Through the mention of the species of the ox and the donkey, Yaakov wanted Esav to understand that although he had been in the community of Lavan for many years, he had not been diminished as much as an iota.

The ox is a kosher species because it possesses all of the signs that render it a kosher species. Similarly, the donkey, because it does not possess any of the signs, it is rendered a non-kosher species. Therefore, the differentiation between the ox and the donkey is clearly discernable. The camel, on the other hand, although it is not a kosher species chews its cud, which is one of the signs of kosher species. Thus, the camel can be confused as kosher because it possesses a kosher sign and a non-kosher sign.

Yaakov wanted to communicate to Esav that just as the species of the ox is clearly discernable from the donkey, and does not possess any of the characteristics of a nonkosher species, so too does he have no relevance to something that is impure. Because Yaakov was not diminished to any degree, he was thus communicating to Esav that his "voice is still the voice of Yaakov." Meaning, the blessing that he received from their father *Yitzchak* was still in effect and that he was not vulnerable to Esav. Esav understood that if Yaakov was in fact spiritually pure, he would be impervious to his advances.

Although Esav understood the message that Yaakov had sent him, he nevertheless advanced towards him with 400 armed men. Why did Esav not retreat after receiving the message from Yaakov, that he was spiritually unscathed and thus not vulnerable to his attack? It was because Esav could not believe the truthfulness of Yaakov's symbolic message. He could not accept that Yaakov, who was a personification of *Torah* could have spiritually survived Lavan and his community.

Another reason Esav could not accept the truthfulness of Yaakov and his sincerity, is because Esav knew that Lavan was a master of deceit and would not allow Yaakov to leave under any circumstances. If this was so, how could Yaakov have extricated himself for Lavan's service with all of this wealth? Esav concluded that Yaakov must have deceived and outwitted Lavan.

Yaakov must have been an even greater master of deceit. Therefore the symbolism of the "ox and the donkey" was a lie. The fact that Yaakov attempted to deceive Esav, who was a himself the ultimate master of deceit, enraged him even more against his brother. He therefore advanced towards Yaakov to kill him. It was only later after Yaakov had bowed before his brother Esav seven times that he was appeased and appreciated Yaakov's sincerity.

## Seeing Life for what it is

*Torah:* Yaakov had sent angels to his brother Esav to inform him of the material wealth that he had amassed. He said, "(Tell my brother)... I have acquired oxen and donkeys (written in the singular)..."

*Midrash:* (Since Yaakov had mentioned that he only had only one ox and one donkey) Did Yaakov only have one ox and one donkey? From the gift that Yaakov had sent to Esav it is obvious that he had great wealth, as it states, 'Yaakov sent a tribute to his Esav is brother: two hundred she-goats...thirty nursing camels with their colts; forty cows...' If so, why did Yaakov only mention one ox and one donkey? It is to teach us that when the devoutly righteous (*tzaddikim*) seek to minimize themselves when they speak. In contrast, the evil strive to exalt themselves.

Proverbs: 'There are those who possess wealth and do not have anything. (However) there are those who are impoverished but have great wealth.'

*Torah:* After *Yaakov* and *Esav* met, *Esav* said to *Yaakov*, regarding the exceptional gift that he had received from *Yaakov*, "I have much, therefore you should have it in return." *Yaakov* responded, "I have everything, therefore you must take it." *Yaakov* being of a spiritual dimension, as he is quantified by the *Torah* "He is the perfect man who dwells in the tent (of *Torah*)," understood that the value of the material is only to facilitate the spiritual. Therefore, whatever material G-d bestows upon him, it is the equivalent of having everything. *Yaakov* understood that as much or as little as he may have, it was only to advance his spirituality.

However, *Esav* who was the physical and material person, believed that the material only has value unto itself. Therefore, as much as he had it was never enough, because one only has enough when one has it all, which is impossible. Thus, the evil one although he is wealthy has nothing and the *tzaddik*, although he may be impoverished has everything. How do we understand this?

*Mishna* in *Ethics of our Fathers*: "Who is the wealthy one? It is the one who is joyous with his portion." The *Mishna* is not referring to one who is merely "satisfied" person, but rather one who is satisfied with his portion. It is because he understands that his portion was given to him for a specific reason. This individual understands that his portion was only allocated to him by G-d as an endowment to facilitate his spiritual objective. Thus, whatever he may possess, he is satisfied and joyous.

Regardless of how much or how little he may actually have, the wealthy person understands that G-d has granted him exactly what he requires for his physical and spiritual needs. Anything more that what he received would be considered superfluous and excessive. It could actually cause a distraction that could entice the individual to succumb to his inclination. Since each individual has his own unique objective, G-d endows each person with what is needed to facilitate that individual's objective in life. Therefore, one cannot compare himself with his fellow, regarding material possessions.

Regarding *Yaakov* our Patriarch, even if he were to only have one ox and one donkey, it was the equivalent of having "everything." Thus, *Yaakov* only mentioned that he had only one ox and one donkey to his brother *Esav*. To have mentioned the quantity of his assets would not have been relevant to his communication because he

would be able to accomplish his objective in life with whatever G-d granted him. Man is inclined to attribute his successes to his own abilities and initiatives.

*Torah:* When one becomes wealthy he will say, "My strength and the power of my arm have brought about this success." Regarding this individual, his wealth and possessions define who he is. Since he believes that his success is a reflection of his own abilities and achievements, and not a gift from G-d, then the more he has the more he values himself.

If he believed that all of his success and wealth was an endowment from G-d, then he would be "joyous" with his portion, regardless of its quantitative value. This is the meaning of the words of King Solomon in Proverbs, "there are those who possess great wealth and have nothing, and there are those who are impoverished but have great wealth."

*Torah:* When *Yaakov* our Patriarch saw *Rachel*, "Then *Yaakov*...raised his voice and wept."

*Rashi* citing *Chazal*: *Yaakov* wept because he came to *Rachel* empty-handed (without any gifts).

*Midrash:* "Yaakov had said, 'Eliezer the servant of my grandfather (Avraham) came with a nose ring, bracelets, and delicacies in his hand as gifts for *Rivka* and I did not.'" *Yaakov* understood that the gifts that Avraham had sent to *Rivka* had great spiritual value, that affected the destiny of the Jewish people.

*Midrash:* For example, regarding the nose ring and bracelets that were given by *Eliezer* to *Rivka*, our Matriarch, the nose ring is an allusion to the half-silver coin (*machtzis haShekel*) which would be given in the future by the Jewish people for the sake of purchasing communal offerings. The two bracelets are identified by the *Torah* as "two bracelets, their weight ten in gold." This alludes to the Ten Commandments that were inscribed on Two Tablets that were attached and of identical dimension.

When *Eliezer* had given these gifts to *Rivka*, the future Matriarch of the Jewish people, he established and secured these two spiritual elements on behalf of the Jewish people. Therefore, *Yaakov*, who did not have gifts to give to *Rachel* the future Matriarch, did not weep over the material wealth that he did not have to offer, but rather because he could not actualize the destiny of the Jewish people.

## The Positive Aspect of Bribery

*Torah:* Yaakov had sent a valuable gift comprised of many herds and flocks to his brother Esav as a tribute in order to appease him. The servants of Yaakov who delivered the many components of the tribute addressed Esav in the name of Yaakov as “master” and referred to Yaakov as “his servant.” When Esav finally met with Yaakov his brother, he initially did not want to accept the gift.

*Torah:* “Esav had said, ‘What did you intend by that whole camp (the gift) that you sent me? Yaakov answered, ‘To gain favor in my lord’s eyes.’ Esav said, ‘I have plenty. My brother let what you have remain yours.’ But Yaakov said, ‘No, I beg you!...Please accept my gift which was brought to you, inasmuch as G-d has been gracious to me and inasmuch as I have everything.’...He urged him and he accepted.”

*Gemara:* If one offers a gift sincerely to another and his intent is clear that he wants to relinquish the gift to his fellow, then it is considered as if his fellow received it, even if he did not actually take possession of the gift. Yaakov’s intent was clear that he wanted his brother Esav to take possession of the gift, as he had urged him multiple times to accept it. If so, based on the *Gemara* it would have been sufficient for Yaakov to make his intent clear by sincerely offering the gift to Esav. Why did Yaakov insist that Esav actually take possession of the gift?

*Chazal:* A judge is qualified to preside over a case only if he has no conflict of interest regarding the parties that are involved. If a judge received a favor from one of the parties prior to the case, he must disqualify himself. If he were to accept a bribe, it would be a *Torah* violation. As the verse states, “You shall not take bribery (*shochad*) because it blinds the eyes of the wise and corrupts the devoutly righteous (*tzaddikim*).” Since the objectivity and impartiality of even the most devoutly righteous is impaired by bribery, it is thus forbidden for a judge to accept it.

*Midrash:* Regarding bribery, “If bribery blinds the eyes of the wise and corrupts the devoutly righteous, how much more so will the evil one be persuaded and influenced by bribery.” Thus, giving Esav, who was the ultimate hedonist, a valuable gift would surely influence him not to attempt to destroy Yaakov and his family. Why would accepting the gift cause Esav to not want to kill his brother Esav? Perhaps Esav would accept the gift and then carry out his plan to kill Yaakov.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Kesubos*: The word “*shochad* (bribery)” alludes to the Aramaic word “*shechad* (like one).” Meaning, the one who accepts a gift from another becomes one in his mind with the one from whom he had accepted the gift, even if the gift was not intended as bribery. Thus, the judge who accepts a gift from a defendant, is disqualified because he becomes biased due to the fact that his perspective and understanding of the case is similar to the one who gave him the gift.

Yaakov believed that Esav despised him and wanted to kill him only because he did not appreciate and understand his innate value (the value of spirituality). In addition, Esav perceived Yaakov as a deceptive individual. He believed that Yaakov not only deceived his father *Yitzchak* in order to receive the blessings, he must have also deceived *Lavan* in order to extricate himself from his service. Esav understood that *Lavan* was truly evil and would not allow Yaakov to leave or have any material possessions.

When Esav saw how Yaakov had escaped *Lavan* and had great material wealth, he believed that it was only because he was a master of deception. If Esav in some way were able to perceive and appreciate Yaakov’s dimension of spirituality and understand that he was not in fact a master of deception, he would no longer want to kill him. Thus, the objective of Yaakov’s enormous gift was to cause Esav to become of one mind with him.

By accepting the gift, Esav would understand that Yaakov was truly worthy of receiving the blessings from their father and that he was also worthy of amassing great wealth because it was to accommodate his spiritual objective. Such a level of understanding could only come to Esav if his mindset were to become one with Yaakov. Therefore, it was essential for Esav to accept Yaakov’s gift. It was not sufficient for Esav to merely understand Yaakov’s intent to give the gift.

*Ramban:* Throughout the generations, we must conduct ourselves with the descendants of Edom (*Esav*) as Yaakov, our Patriarch had done. Just as Yaakov prayed, gave gifts/bribes, and was willing to engage in battle, so should the Jewish people conduct themselves with descendants of Esav. Yaakov was concerned that he was vulnerable to Esav, despite the promise that G-d had made to safeguard him, because perhaps he had become soiled with sin. In order to take the

necessary precautions should he in fact be soiled with sin and thus vulnerable to *Esav*, *Yaakov* sent the gift to his brother in an attempt to gain his favor and change his perception of him.

## The Superficiality of Man's Understanding

*Torah*: Regarding *Dinah*, the daughter of *Yaakov*, "Dina, the Daughter of Leah- went out to look over the daughters of the land."

*Midrash*: Why is *Dinah* 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 *Dinah* possess that same characteristic. Where do find the characteristic of being outgoing regarding *Leah*?

*Torah*: *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. had yet not conceived and wanted them in order to maker fertile. In exchange for the mandrakes, *Rachel* had agreed to relinquish her conjugal right with *Yaakov* to *Leah* for that night.

*Torah*: "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.

*Torah*: After *Shechem* had defiled *Dinah*, the daughter of *Yaakov*, he had asked his father *Chamor* to go *Yaakov* and negotiate for the hand of his daughter in marriage.

*Midrash*: "Chamor said to *Yaakov*, 'You could demand any amount of money from me for the hand of your daughter *Dinah*. 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...'

"Proverbs: '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 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 zealotness to perform the *mitzvah* of hospitality with the objective to dispel paganism.

*Chazal*: *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:* 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 *Dinah* was precipitated by *Leah*’s characteristic of “outgoingness” which her daughter *Dinah* had inherited.

*Torah in Bereishis:* “*Vichivshah ...*”

*Rashi* citing *Chazal:* “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 *Dinah* 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

*Dinah*’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:* This appellation can 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.

*Torah:* 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.

