



Returning Today
Greater Than He Was
When In His
**SPIRITUAL
COCOON**

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayishlach

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Yaakov's Responsibility to Pray for Rachel When She was Barren

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Gartie = Taryag

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The Power of Negotiation

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The Significance of Yaakov's Bows to Esav

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Yaakov's Responsibility to the World

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Yaakov's Level Was Where He Didn't Need To Take Certain Initiatives

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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*. The Hebrew equivalent for sojourned is *Garti* – 613.
3. Although he was exposed to *Lavan's* evil ways he was not diminished.
4. If *Yaakov* kept the 613 *mitzvos*, it is obvious he did not learn from his ways.
5. When *Yaakov* fled to *Lavan* to escape the wrath of *Esav*, he made a vow.
6. Should he return to his father in peace, he will

tithe all his assets for G-d.

7. *Rashi*: “Whole from sin” – that he does not learn from *Lavan's* evil eye.
8. One needs divine assistance to escape the influences of *Lavan*.
9. Despite the overwhelming negative influence of *Lavan*, *Yaakov* remained unscathed.
10. Before confronting *Esav*, *Yaakov* feared he became sullied with sin.
11. When *Yaakov* initially fled, he accepted upon himself the exactness of G-d's attribute of justice.

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 twenty 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*. Because he totally integrated all 613 *mitzvos* he didn't learn

from *Lavan's* evil ways.

11. On the 4th year of the sabbatical cycle, he makes the Confession of the Tithes.
12. One says, “I have rejoiced & made others happy as a result of the distributing the tithes to the rightful parties.
13. By giving away serious percentages of one's profit is how is one happy.
14. After the distribution, one supplicates G-d: “Gaze from your Heavenly abode & bless People of Israel.”
15. *Chazal*: We have done what you decreed – If we walk in your statutes, the rains & bounty will come in their time. This refers to toiling in the *Torah*.
16. Only when toiling in *Torah* can one internalize the value of *mitzvos* & have a sense of one's true worth.
17. The only one who could say, “I rejoice” when giving away significant percentage of one's profits is the one who toiled in *Torah*.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vayishlach



Returning Today Greater Than He Was When In His SPIRITUAL COCOON

The Secret to Jewish Survival

Torah: 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, 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 that he would have harmed him if it had not been for G-d's intervention. *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 of herds and flocks

to be presented to his brother with great reverence, hoping 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 fled from *Lavan* than when he was about to confront his brother *Esav*. However, if this is the case, why did *Yaakov* need to prepare for the encounter with *Esav* if he did not do so for the confrontation with *Lavan* – which seems identical?

Torah: After *Yaakov* had received the blessings from his father, *Yitzchak*, *Esav* pleaded with his father to bless him too, 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: 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, despite his intense hate for him, it was another matter regarding his concern about surviving and succeeding with his brother *Esav*. 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 sufficient to make him worthy of the blessings.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: The Roman presence in Israel (descendants 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 downtrodden.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: 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, even though 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*.

Yaakov: The Embodiment of the Jewish People

Torah: After *Yaakov* had not seen his brother *Esav* for nearly 36 years, he communicated to him through angels (agents), "*Im Lavan gartie* – I have sojourned with *Lavan* and have lingered until now. I have acquired oxen, donkeys, flocks, servants, and maidservants..." *Yaakov* delineated to *Esav* his financial success and what he had amassed while with *Lavan*. Why did *Yaakov* share his successes with his brother *Esav*, who had despised him? Why would *Esav* be interested in the information *Yaakov* communicated to him?

Rashi citing *Chazal*: When *Yaakov* communicated, "*Im Lavan gartie* – I have sojourned with *Lavan*..." he was telling *Esav* that despite all of the negative influences of *Lavan* and his community, he remained spiritually intact and unscathed. This interpretation is derived from the word "*gartie*," which has a numerical value 613. This means that *Yaakov* was telling *Esav* that he had adhered to all of the precepts of the *Torah* (negative and positive) while in *Lavan's* household. Thus, he remained protected by G-d because he was spiritually undiminished.

Midrash Tanchumah: When *Yaakov* delineated his assets to *Esav*, he communicated that he had nothing to fear because of his personal spiritual value.

Midrash: "*Yaakov* said, "I have no reason to fear you (*Esav*) because I have acquired oxen..." The "ox" refers to *Yaakov's* son *Yosef*. Another reason *Yaakov* had no reason to fear *Esav* was because he had "donkeys." This alludes to *Moshiach*, the son of (King) *David*, who will redeem the Jewish people and bring existence to spiritual perfection. As it is stated, "*Moshiach* will come like a poor man riding on a donkey..." The "sheep (flock)" mentioned by *Yaakov* refers to the merits of the sons of the Tribes (*Yaakov's* sons) – who are referred to as flocks.

Additionally, *Yehudah* (*Yaakov's* son and Prince of the Tribe of *Yehudah*) is the antagonist of *Esav*. As the verse states, "The lion and the ox will eat the straw..." The "lion" refers to *Yehudah*, and the "straw" refers to *Esav*. When *Yaakov* mentioned "*eved* – servant (male)," he was alluding to *Moshe Rabbeinu*, who is referred to as "*eved Hashem* – servant of G-d." The "maidservant"

that *Yaakov* mentioned refers to Ruth, the (grand) mother of King *David*. As the verse in *Psalms* states, “I am the servant of Your maidservant (Ruth) ...” Therefore, because of all these reasons, *Yaakov* had no reason to fear *Esav*.

At this particular moment, *Yaakov* had already fathered *Yosef* and *Yehudah*. However, he alluded to many things that touch upon the merits of future generations that would descend from his son. *Moshe*, Ruth, King *David*, and *Moshiach*... are all descendants of *Yaakov*'s progeny. How do we understand *Yaakov*'s communication to his brother *Esav* regarding all of the individuals mentioned besides his sons *Yosef* and *Yehudah*, who were the only ones born then? How does the special dimension of *Moshiach*, King *David*, Ruth, and the descendants of the Tribes offer a basis for Divine Protection from *Esav* if they did not yet exist?

Chazal: *Yaakov* was “the most special of the Patriarchs.” On a simple level, one could understand that *Yaakov* is referred to in this manner because he was qualified to father the twelve Tribes of Israel (who are referred to as “*Shivtei Kah* – the Tribes of G-d. However, based on the *Midrash* cited earlier, we can understand *Yaakov*'s uniqueness and special dimension at another level. *Yaakov* embodied the potential of the entire Jewish people until the end of time. Every level of spiritual advancement that could be achieved in the future was only because it was rooted in *Yaakov* himself.

The *Midrash* is telling us that what *Yaakov* communicated to his brother *Esav* was that he had nothing to fear because he contained within himself the spirituality that would enable *Moshe Rabbeinu* to evolve as well as King *David*, *Moshiach* and everything else to which *Yaakov* had alluded. Thus, *Yaakov* merited G-d's complete protection, not to be compromised to any degree by *Esav*, because he inculcated within himself a dimension of spirituality that would manifest itself through these special people until the end of time. Because *Yaakov* played such a vital role in the destiny of the Jewish people, he did not need to be afraid of *Esav*.

Torah: Nevertheless, *Yaakov* was very afraid. How do we understand this? When *Hashem* commanded *Avraham* to take his only son, *Yitzchak*, to the *Akeidah* to be brought as a burnt offering, *Avraham* was confronted with the most difficult test of his life. Normally, one would understand that the difficulty was that *Avraham* was being asked to sacrifice his “only beloved son,” as stated in the verse. However, the test goes beyond

this because if *Yitzchak* were to be sacrificed, being the future Patriarch of the Jewish people, he would not father *Yaakov*, and there would be no Jewish people to stand at Sinai to receive the *Torah*.

If the *Torah* were not given at Sinai, the world would revert to a state of pre-existence because it was only created as a setting for the fulfillment of the *Torah*. *Avraham* understood what was at stake. Thus, this was part of the overwhelming difficulty of the *Akeidah* in bringing his son *Yitzchak* as a sacrifice; it would bring existence to a close. Similarly, *Yaakov* understood that if *Esav* were to end his life, it would mean that there would be no Jewish people. All the *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of G-d's Name) that would have come about through their existence would not come to be if *Esav* were to kill him. Thus, *Yaakov* was frightened, not because of his concern for his own personal physicality and that of his family, but rather that the destiny of the Jewish people, as he had foreseen it, would not unfold.

Understanding *Yaakov*'s Distress

Torah: When *Yaakov* was contemplating his confrontation with his brother *Esav*, “*Yaakov* became very frightened, and it distressed him...” Regarding *Yaakov* being frightened, the *Torah* uses the expression “*meod* – very.” However, regarding his being distressed, the *Torah* only says that he was “distressed.” What is the difference between *Yaakov* being “very” frightened and not being “very” distressed?

Rashi: The meaning of *Yaakov* being “frightened” was that he was concerned that he may be killed in his confrontation with *Esav*. However, the basis for his “distress” was that he may kill others in a confrontation. *Yaakov* was “very” frightened, not because of the possibility of dying in a physical sense. He was “very” frightened that if he were to be killed, all the *Kiddush Hashem* (Sanctification of G-d's Name) that was to emanate from him would never come to be. He was “very” frightened that by his life coming to an end, there would not be a spiritual future for the Jewish people, which implies the end of existence. This was an overwhelming fear for *Yaakov*. However, the level of “distress” he felt in having to kill others in battle was not comparable to the idea that this could be the end of the Jewish People. This is why *Yaakov* was “very” frightened and not “very distressed.”

Torah: If one rises up to kill another, the one who is being attacked has an obligation to rise and kill his attacker. If *Esav* and his band of followers were to engage with *Yaakov* in battle, then it would be *Yaakov's Torah* obligation to kill them. If this is the case, what is the basis for *Yaakov's* distress? Additionally, rising and destroying *Esav* and his followers seems like a *mitzvah* that would purge the world from evil.

It is clear from *Rashi's* citation of the *Midrash* that *Yaakov's* distress was not because he was concerned about the diminishment of his own spirituality but rather from having to kill others. We understand this because the *Midrash* does not say he was distressed to "kill" but rather to "kill others." How do we understand this? The basis for illness is rooted in one's spiritual failing. Thus, when one becomes ill, it is part of the rehabilitative process to recover one's spiritual state. It is through illness and suffering that one atones for his sins.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin *z'tl* in *Nefesh HaChaim*: If illness atones for one's sins, why do we pray, "Heal us, *Hashem*— then we will be healed; save us...Bring complete recovery for all our ailments..."? Perhaps one should not pray to be healed because, in essence, one is asking not to be rehabilitated. It would be analogous to a doctor suggesting that the only way to recover from a specific illness is to undergo a particular therapy, and the patient pleads with the doctor not to administer it. Seemingly, this is what we are asking G-d.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin *z'tl*: The blessing of healing can be explained with an allegory. A man has a son who has experienced a serious accident in which all of the bones of his body are broken and need resetting. The doctor tells the father that after the bones are all set properly, the son will have a full recovery and return to full function. The father who stands by and watches the doctor reset the bones, although he is happy and feels fortunate that this procedure will bring about a full recovery, simultaneously he feels tremendously pained and anguished to witness his son in such excruciating pain. Similarly, although *Hashem* brings illness upon a person for the sake of atonement, which is rehabilitative, He is simultaneously "pained" that His child needs to experience and undergo such unfortunate difficulties.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin *z'tl*: If one would feel *Hashem's* pain out of his love and reverence for Him, then the pain experienced by the person praying would atone for the consequences of the sin that brought about the illness.

If one could truly internalize the pain that *Hashem* "feels" when He must punish His children, then that pain would in itself alleviate spiritual diminishment. However, *Yaakov* would have had the obligation to rise and kill his attacker. Nevertheless, his attacker is the handiwork of *Hashem*— regardless of their status as evil or not.

When the Egyptians drowned in the Sea, the angels began to sing the praises of *Hashem*. Even though the Egyptians were evil and they had enslaved and persecuted the Jewish people for over 200 years, G-d's response to the angels was, "My handiwork is drowning in the Sea! And you are singing My praises!" *Hashem* was "pained" to see the Egyptian people (His handiwork) dying in the Sea — although it was something that needed to take place. Similarly, *Yaakov* was distressed if he would need to kill another individual(s) despite their representation of evil or his obligation to rise and destroy them. *Yaakov* was at a level where he experienced and internalized the "pain" of *Hashem*. Thus, the *Torah* tells us that he was "distressed" that he may have to kill others.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin *z'tl*: When a Jew responds (during the recitation of the Kaddish), "*Amen, y'hai shmei rabba m'vorach l'ol mei ol maya* — *Amen, May His great Name be blessed forever and ever,*" he is declaring that *Hashem* should permeate all levels of existence and thus all evil would come to an end.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: When *Hashem* hears Jews responding with, "*Amen, May His great Name be blessed forever and ever,*" G-d shakes His head (to the degree that one may express this) and says, "How fortunate is the King who is praised in His own house! What does a father have if He exiled His children? Woe to the children that have been exiled from their father's table." This response of *Hashem* indicates that He is "pained" that His children, the Jewish people, are in a state of exile. One must understand that when he transgresses, he is not only violating the Word of *Hashem*, but he is also causing G-d to be pained that His children need to be punished.

Reb Moshe Cordevero in *Tomar Devorah*: Regarding the Attribute of Mercy of *Hashem*, He carries the deliberate, defiant, and inadvertent sin of the Jewish people. He explains that when one sins, one creates a negative spiritual entity. Every entity in existence (spiritual or physical) needs to be sustained. If the transgressor would sustain the consequence of the sin through

punishment, the person would not survive. Thus, because of His unlimited level of Mercy, *Hashem* Himself sustains the negative forces created on the various levels of transgression. Despite the disgrace of *Hashem* that He needs to carry something that is the equivalent of “spiritual waste,” He does so as a result of His Mercy. This is one of the advanced levels of Mercy of *Hashem*.

Reb Moshe Cordevero citing a verse regarding the spiritual cleansing brought about by G-d: “When G-d has washed away the spiritual excrement/filth of the daughters of *Tzion*...” With this, one should understand how to remove himself from sin because “it is the King Himself who cleanses the filth from his garments.” One should not only remove himself from sin because it is wrong; but rather, because of the disgrace of causing the Omnipotent Being (*Hashem* Himself) to cleanse one of something that is so spiritually vile. *Yaakov*, our Patriarch, was able to internalize that pain. Consequently, it is relevant for us to have a sense of that reality as we are the descendants of *Yaakov*.

The Power Behind Existence

The *Torah* relates to us the tragic incident of the defilement of *Dinah*, the daughter of *Yaakov*, by *Shechem* (Prince of *Canaan*). “*Shechem*, son of *Chamor*...saw her (*Dinah*); he took her, lay with her, and violated her. He became deeply attached to *Dinah* (her spiritual essence), ‘*bas Yaakov*’ the daughter of *Yaakov*...” The *Torah* could have simply referred to *Dinah* as “*Dinah*.” Why does it identify her in this context as “the daughter of *Yaakov*?”

Torah: “Now *Yaakov* heard that he (*Shechem*) had defiled his daughter *Dinah*...” The *Torah* could have stated that *Yaakov* heard that *Shechem* had defiled “*Dinah*.” Why does it refer to her as “his daughter, *Dinah*?” After *Yaakov*’s sons returned from the field, they heard their sister had been defiled. The *Torah* states, “...the men were distressed, and were fired deeply with indignation, for he had committed an outrage/disgrace in Israel by lying with the daughter of *Yaakov*...” Once again, the *Torah* identifies *Dinah* as “the daughter of *Yaakov*.” It does not even identify her as “*Dinah*” but only as “the daughter of *Yaakov*.” What is the *Torah* communicating to us by continuously reiterating that *Dinah* is “*bas Yaakov* – the daughter of *Yaakov*?”

Yaakov’s daughter, *Dinah*, represents holiness because she is “*bas Yaakov*.” As “*bas Yaakov*,” she possessed a semblance of the sanctity and holiness of her father *Yaakov*, our Patriarch. This is precisely why *Shechem*,

who was *Canaanite*, was drawn to her. The descendants of *Canaan* are a “cursed stock.” Something that is cursed cannot attach itself to something that is blessed. *Shechem* was attracted to *Dinah*, the daughter of *Yaakov*, not because of her exceptional beauty (the *Torah* does not identify her in this context) but rather because of her innate spirituality. Because his essence was cursed, *Shechem* was attracted to the essence that was blessed – to attach itself to it and subsume it.

Torah: Pharaoh had summoned the Jewish midwives (*Yocheved* and *Miriam*).

Midrash: Pharaoh summoned the Jewish midwives to cohabit with them.

Maharal of Prague z’tl: The purpose of cohabitation with the midwives was to ultimately have greater influence over them. Thus, when Pharaoh would later instruct them to kill the Jewish males, they would acquiesce to his demands. “Was Pharaoh really aware of such a concept – that by having sexual relations with a woman, one would assume a dominant position over her?”

Midrash: Pharaoh definitely did not consciously understand this concept; rather, the evil force that was behind Pharaoh (which directs an individual to behave in a certain manner) was the motivating factor to bring about the destruction of the Jewish people. The individual himself believes that his behavior is motivated by his own rationale. However, the true motivating and compelling force behind his actions is this evil force unbeknown to him. The evil influence that governed Pharaoh’s behavior wished to take control of the Jewish midwives to use them to undermine the spirituality of the Jewish people. However, the midwives did not succumb to Pharaoh’s request. Every one of the seventy root nations has its own archangel responsible for that particular nation.

Torah: After the Jewish people had left Egypt, they saw “Egypt traveling after them.” The word for “traveling” used by the *Torah* is “*nosayah*,” which is written here in the singular form rather than the plural. If the *Torah* wished to communicate that the Egyptians (as a people) were pursuing the Jewish people, it should have used the plural form of the word.

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The *Torah* refers not to the Egyptian army but to the archangel of Egypt. The archangel of Egypt was the driving force behind them, enabling them to become the most advanced civilization of that era.

The spiritual force behind the Egyptian people was the counterforce to the Jewish people, who represented G-d's Presence in this existence.

Torah: Before *Yaakov* was confronted by his brother *Esav*, he wrestled with the archangel of *Esav*. *Yaakov* successfully subdued *Esav's* archangel. It was because of *Yaakov's* victory over the spiritual force that empowered *Esav* that he was confident that he would be able to succeed with his brother. Since the spiritual counterpart of *Esav* was completely subdued and subordinated by *Yaakov*, he was able to subdue *Esav* himself. As a result of this victory, *Yaakov* assumed the appellation of "*Yisroel*," which identifies his advanced spiritual dimension.

Hitler and *Amalek* (may their names and memory be obliterated) were able to gain positions of control and dominance in relatively short periods of time only because their archangel empowered them to do so. Their ascent to power and world dominance was not rooted in their intelligence or ability but rather in the spiritual force behind them. Their archangel caused them to act at the exact moment of opportunity to undermine and deceive all humanity in attempting to bring about the "Final Solution." These evil powers ultimately failed because the spiritual force driving and directing them was restrained and subdued. It was not because of poor planning, physical weakness, or faulty strategy.

Shechem was physically attracted to *Dinah*. However, what motivated him and compelled him to seek her out for defilement was the fact that she was the daughter of *Yaakov* – the essence of holiness. He was not consciously aware of this motivating force. The force of evil that was the counterpart of *Shechem* motivated him to defile her so that it could become attached to her and destroy her spirituality.

Torah: "He (*Shechem*) became deeply attached (his soul attached itself) to *Dinah* (her essence) ..." This is the reason that within the context of her defilement, the *Torah* refers to *Dinah* as "the daughter of *Yaakov*." When the brothers of *Dinah* heard that she had been defiled, they were enraged, not because their sister was raped, but because "the daughter of *Yaakov*" was defiled. Their level of outrage was only because it was a diminishment of her spirituality, which was an outgrowth of *Yaakov*.

Torah: When *Yaakov* encountered his brother *Esav*, he bowed to him several times and embraced him – *v'yishakeihu*. When the *Torah* writes the word "*v'yishakeihu*," dots are placed upon the letters of the word.

Rashi, citing the *Midrash*, explains the significance of these dots: "*Reb Shimon Bar Yochai* says, "It is a fact (*halacha*), and it is well known that *Esav* despises/hates/detests *Yaakov*. It was only at that moment that *Yaakov* aroused a sense of mercy within the heart of *Esav* that caused him to embrace his brother wholeheartedly." Thus, the dots on the word are coming to teach us that although at that moment *Esav* expressed sincere feelings for his brother *Yaakov*, under normal circumstances, "*Esav* despises *Yaakov*." One should not think otherwise.

One may think that the Western world/western civilization in which we live today is truly kind and generous to the Jewish people. At no other time in history did the Jews have such freedom, equality, and opportunity to succeed. Despite this fact, one must be aware and understand that we are presently experiencing the fourth exile of *Edom/Esav*. While in the material sense, our situation is better than it ever has been, the fact is that there has never been a time in history when assimilation has been at such catastrophic levels. It is precisely because of the freedom and affluence that has been afforded to the Jews that we are experiencing a spiritual holocaust.

The driving force behind our society is the archangel that compels it to behave as it does. Its interest and purpose are to subsume, subdue, and ultimately extinguish the spirituality of the Jewish people. As the *Torah* tells us through the dots on the word *v'yishakeihu* – he kissed him – despite all of the exterior indications that *Esav* truly loved his brother *Yaakov*, the fact that must be stated and known is that *Esav* despises *Yaakov*. It is true that one must be beholden for all the kindness that is afforded to us as a Jewish people in the free world.

However, the Jew must understand and appreciate the driving force that is compelling the world to behave in this manner. Is the compelling force truly for the sake of kindness to the Jewish people? Alternatively, is it ultimately to subsume and bring about the demise of the spiritual posture of the Jewish People/*Bnei Yisroel* (sons of *Yaakov*) because the Jew is the representation of holiness in this existence – just as *Shechem* gravitated towards *Dinah*, "the daughter of *Yaakov*" to defile her. The nations of the world are not acting in this manner on a conscious level. It is the compelling spiritual force, the counterforce to holiness and spirituality, that is attempting to diminish *Bnei Yisroel* / Jewish people.

Yaakov's Appreciation of Rachel's Spiritual Dimension (from Vayeitzei)

Torah: When Yaakov saw Rachel, "Then Yaakov kissed Rachel; and he raised his voice and wept."

Rashi citing *Chazal:* Yaakov wept because he saw through Divine Inspiration that Rachel would not be buried with him in the Tomb of Machpelah. Another explanation cited by *Rashi* is that Yaakov wept because he came to Rachel, the future Matriarch of the Jewish people, empty-handed – without any gifts.

Midrash: "Eliezer, the servant of my grandfather (Avraham), came with nose rings, bracelets, and delicacies in his hand (to give as gifts for Rivka). It is because I (Yaakov) was pursued by Elifaz (son of Esav), who wished to kill me, that I had to relinquish all of my wealth." What was the basis for Yaakov's weeping? Was it because he was not able to satisfy his future wife with material gifts? Is it possible that Yaakov, the most special of our Patriarchs and the father of the Jewish people, would weep for denying his wife material gifts? How do we understand this? Regarding the gifts of jewelry given to Rivka, our Matriarch, the *Torah* explicitly identifies the nature and the weight of the jewelry. The *Torah* refers to the weight of the nose ring as "Bekka."

Rashi citing the *Midrash:* The weight of the nose ring "bekka" is an allusion to the *Machtzis HaShekel*, which Jewish people would give in the future for the sake of purchasing communal offerings. The communal offerings atoned for the Jewish people. The two bracelets that the *Torah* identifies are referred to as "two bracelets, their weight ten in gold." The weight alludes to the Ten Commandments that were inscribed on Two Tablets, which were of identical size, which means the act of giving these gifts of jewelry to Rivka, our Matriarch, established and secured specific elements of spirituality for the Jewish people. Yaakov, the Patriarch who fathered the Jewish people, understood that he must establish and secure the foundation for their destiny to guarantee the spiritual evolution of the Jewish people. Thus, when he came upon Rachel, the

future Matriarch of the Jewish people, he understood that he was not able to establish through her the necessary elements that would secure the spiritual future of the Jewish people to a greater degree.

Chazal: Rachel was the "primary Matriarch" who mothered Yaakov's most special son – Yosef. Thus, the setting to implant the necessary roots for the future would not be since Yaakov did not have gifts to present to her. Yaakov wept not simply because he denied his future wife material gifts but because it related to the spiritual dimension of the Jewish people.

Torah: After Leah had given birth to several children, her sister Rachel remained barren. "Rachel was jealous of her sister Leah." The *Torah* cannot be communicating to us that Rachel, the primary Matriarch, was experiencing something that is the root of "sibling rivalry/jealousy."

Rashi citing *Chazal:* The "jealousy" mentioned in the *Torah* does not refer to jealousy as understood in the vernacular; instead, it is something positive. Rachel wished she could be at her sister's spiritual level, thus enabling her to have children like Leah did. Rachel wished to have been like her sister Leah in a spiritual sense. If Rachel was barren, meaning it was impossible for her to conceive, then why did she attribute this to lack of merit?

When Yaakov initially saw Rachel, he immediately saw that she was the Matriarch of the Jewish people. She was identified as the "primary Matriarch." Since this was the case, Rachel understood that G-d's miracle did not take place because she was unworthy. Contrastingly, it was clear evidence to Rachel that her sister Leah, who had already given birth to four sons, was more devout than she was. Rachel understood who she was meant to be. This is the "jealousy" that the *Torah* is referring to. The Matriarchs were an embodiment of holiness. They were the setting for the establishment of the Jewish people. Thus, placing the specific jewelry items on Rivka and Rachel would spiritually impact the Jewish people until the end of time. Understanding this, we have no inkling or capacity to even relate to who they were.



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