



**“Yaakov was very frightened and it distressed him”**

## **Yaakov Avinu Had to Walk a Narrow Line Making Peace with Eisav and Staying Far Away from Him**

This week, we read parshas Vayishlach. Thus, we will begin by discussing Yaakov Avinu’s strategy in dealing with his brother Eisav. Before confronting Eisav, Yaakov sent emissaries ahead to appease him (Bereishis 32, 4): **“וישלח יעקב מלאכים לפניו אל עשו אחיו ארצה שעיר שדה אדום, ויצו אותם לאמר כה תאמרון לאדוני לעשו, כה אמר עבדך יעקב עם לבן גרתי ואחר עד עתה, ויהי לי שור וחמור צאן ועבד ושפחה ואשלחה להגיד לאדוני למצוא חן בעיניך.”** **Yaakov sent malachim (emissaries) ahead of him to his brother Eisav to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. He commanded them, saying, “Thus shall you say, to my lord, to Eisav. ‘So said your servant Yaakov: I have sojourned with Lavan and have lingered until now. I have acquired oxen, donkeys, flocks of sheep, servant and maidservants; I am sending to inform my lord to find favor in your eyes.’”** Rashi comments that the emissaries were actual “malachim,” as inferred by the text.

We will endeavor to explain why it was necessary for Yaakov Avinu to send heavenly malachim as messengers to represent him rather than relying on human messengers. Additionally, we will consider why Yaakov Avinu was overcome with fear prior to encountering Eisav. In fact, he was so fearful that he saw fit to divide up his household into two separate camps (ibid. 8):

**“ויירא יעקב מאד וייצר לו, ויחץ את העם אשר אתו ואת הצאן ואת הבקר והגמלים לשני מחנות, ויאמר אם יבוא עשו אל המחנה האחת והכהו והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה.”**

**And Yaakov became very frightened, and it distressed him. So, he divided the people with him, and the flocks, and the cattle, and the camels, into two camps. And he said, “If Eisav comes to the one camp and attacks it, then**

**the remaining camp will survive.”** Rashi comments: **“The remaining camp will survive” against his (Eisav’s) will, because I will battle him. Yaakov prepared himself for three things—for paying tribute, for prayer, and for war.**

It behooves us to clarify several points. Since Yaakov had beseeched Hashem to protect him and save him from Eisav (ibid. 12)—**“הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו”**—why did he feel it was necessary to split his household into two camps? Secondly, if he was so worried, then why was he so confident that a second camp would survive? After wiping out the first camp, what would prevent Eisav from seeking out the second camp and wiping it out also?

**“ויירא יעקב מאד ויצר לו”**  
**Yaakov Was Fearful because**  
**He Was Treading a Fine Line**

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing a precious insight from the incredible teachings of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy”a, in his sefer Beis Yisrael (Vayishlach). He elaborates on the passuk: **“ויירא יעקב מאד ויצר לו”**—**and Yaakov became very frightened, and it distressed him.** (Note that the term **“ויצר”** indicating that Yaakov was **“in distress,”** also connotes being in a tight spot or walking a thin line—because it is related to the Hebrew word **“צר”**.) He writes that he was always perplexed by the fact that Yaakov is described as **“נורא”**—**awesome, fearful, terrible.**

To better comprehend the issue, let us refer to the first berachah in Shemoneh Esrei where we recite the formula (Devarim 10, 17): **“האל הגדול הגיבור והנורא”**—**the G-d Who is**

**great, mighty, and awesome.** According to the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 70), “**hagadol**” (**the great**) refers to the midah of “chesed” epitomized by Avraham Avinu; “**hagibor**” (**the mighty**) refers to the midah of “gevurah” epitomized by Yitzchak Avinu; and “**hanorah**” (**the awesome**) refers to the midah of “Tiferes” epitomized by Yaakov Avinu. Thus, we see that the midah of Yaakov Avinu—“Tiferes”—is called “**norah.**” In fact, after Yaakov’s dream, he exclaims (Bereishis 28, 17): “וַיִּירָא וַיֹּאמֶר מִה נֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה” —**and he became frightened and he said, “How awesome (‘norah’) is this place!”** This is somewhat surprising and difficult to understand. Since Yaakov’s midah is “Tiferes,” which is characterized by “rachamim” and divine mercy, how can it also be described as “**norah,**” which implies fear and awe?

The great Rabbi of Zidichov, zy”a, reconciles this difficulty based on a teaching from the sacred sefer Noam Elimelech (Vaeira). As we know, the midah of Avraham Avinu, “chesed,” is aligned on the right; the midah of Yitzchak Avinu, “gevurah,” is aligned on the left; whereas the midah of Yaakov Avinu, “Tiferes,” is a combination of “chesed” and “gevurah,” and is aligned between them. Furthermore, since “Tiferes” tends to be more like “chesed,” it is associated with “rachamim.”

Now, we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 47a): **לְעוֹלָם “תְּהֵא שְׂמַאל דְּחוּחָה וַיְמִין מִקְרַבְתָּ” —the left hand should always push away, while the right should draw things near.** Understood in this light, the jobs of Avraham Avinu and Yitzchak Avinu in this world were clearly delineated. Avraham always demonstrated kindness, like the right hand that draws things near; he even attempted to draw reshaim near in the hope that they would repent. This was ever so evident when he prayed to spare the wicked inhabitants of Sedom from extermination. In contrast, Yitzchak always acted in accordance with strictness and severity, like the left hand that pushes away that which is undeserving and contemptible. Hence, he would reprimand even people who were usually good to take care to rectify all of their shortcomings requiring tikun. This is in keeping with the passuk (Koheles 7, 20): **“כִּי אָדָם אֵין צַדִּיק בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה טוֹב וְלֹא יִחַטָּא” —for there is no man so wholly righteous on earth that he always does good and never sins.**

Understood in this light, the job of Yaakov Avinu was not as straightforward and was definitely more demanding. He had to tread the line between “chesed” and “gevurah” without

wavering. On the one hand, he had to treat only those who were deserving with “chesed,” functioning like the right hand. On the other hand, he had to treat those who deserved to be punished with “gevurah” and “din”—strict justice—like the left hand. Therefore, his midah of “Tiferes” is described as “**נורא**,” because it is fraught with the constant, awful fear that its “chesed” or “gevurah” will be applied inappropriately.

It is analogous to a man walking across a very narrow bridge spanning a turbulent river. He must take extreme caution to cross the bridge in a straight, deliberate path without deviating. For, if he deviates even slightly to the right or the left, he is liable to fall into the river and drown. Similarly, this is the case with Yaakov’s midah of “Tiferes.” The path is precarious and fraught with terrible fear and anxiety. He must be vigilant not to deviate too much to the right, drawing someone undeserving near with “chesed.” Conversely, he must not deviate too much to the left by pushing someone away who does not deserve to be treated so strictly and severely. In other words, he must practice extreme caution to walk the fine line straight down the middle.

The esteemed Rabbi of Zidichov, zy”a, interprets our passuk brilliantly based on this understanding: **וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב “מֵאֵד וַיִּצַר לוֹ” —Yaakov was extremely fearful, because he had to walk a very “narrow” path—that is the implication of “וַיִּצַר לוֹ” from the word “צַר”.** He was fearful lest he deviate too far from the straight and narrow path to the right or left which would be inappropriate.

### **Rabeinu HaKadosh Would Review This Passage before Meeting with the Roman Emperors**

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to embellish his sacred thought, explaining why, indeed, Yaakov Avinu became so fearful at that precise moment. Furthermore, how did dividing his household into two camps allay his fear?

To begin with, we will introduce an important principle gleaned from the sacred commentary of the Ramban (introduction to parshas Vayishlach). He explains the underlying strategy of everything Yaakov Avinu did in this parsha to appease Eisav. His words will inspire us and illuminate this parsha for us:

**This parsha was written to inform us that HKB”H rescued His servant and redeemed him from a hand more powerful than his own. “He sent a malach and saved him.” And to also teach us that he (Yaakov) did not rely on his own righteousness; instead, he made every effort to achieve salvation with all of his abilities. Additionally, there is an inferred lesson for future generations: Everything that happened to our father with his brother Eisav will happen to us constantly (repeatedly) with Eisav’s offspring. Hence, it is fitting for us to adopt the methods of this tzaddik (Yaakov) by preparing ourselves for the three eventualities for which he prepared himself—for tefilah, for presenting (him with) gifts, and for salvation by means of battle, to flee and to be saved.**

The importance of learning the vital lesson taught by this parsha for all future generations is emphasized by our blessed sages in the Midrash (B.R. 78, 15): **”רבינו כד הוה סליק למלכותא: ולא הוה נסיב ארמאה עמיה”**—when Rebbe would go to the Emperor, he would study this parsha, and he would never take Romans with him. In other words, before Rabeinu HaKadosh would go to the Emperors of Rome to debate religious matters with them, he would always study this parsha first to learn from Yaakov Avinu the appropriate approach and demeanor in dealing with kings. Therefore, he refused to be escorted by a non-Jew sent to him by the Romans, just like Yaakov refused to be escorted by Eisav even after they had made peace.

The Ramban explains Rebbe’s rationale for reviewing this parsha (Bereishis 33, 15): **There was a Rabbinical tradition that this was the parsha of galus. Therefore, when he arrived in Rome in the courtyard of the kings of Edom regarding public matters, he would peruse this parsha to follow the advice of the wise patriarch; for it is he that the generations are to see and emulate. Thus, he would not accept the company of Romans to escort him, since they only draw others near to them for their own benefit, and they confiscate others’ money.**

### **Yaakov Avinu Hinted to Rabeinu HaKadosh that He Learn from Him How to Behave with Antoninus**

We will now introduce the illuminating words of the Agra D’Kallah. With this in mind, he explains the text related to the

malachim that Yaakov sent to Eisav: **“He commanded them, saying, “Thus shall you say to my lord, to Eisav.”** What is the significance of the term **”לאמר”**—saying—here? Normally, this term means to relate what has been said to others, but that cannot be its meaning here, since the narrative goes on to say: **“Thus shall you say, to my lord, to Eisav.”**

Hence, the Agra D’Kallah asserts that with the term **”לאמר”**, Yaakov Avinu was conveying a message to a future descendant, Rabeinu HaKadosh. He foresaw that Rabeinu HaKadosh would have to discuss religious matters with the Roman Emperor Antoninus. Yaakov wanted to teach him how to relate to the emperor with respect and deference. We find a wonderful story in the Midrash concerning this matter (B.R. 75, 5):

**”ויצו אותם לאמר כה תאמרון לאדוני לעשו. רבינו אמר לרבי אפס, כתוב חד אגרא מן שמי למרן מלכא אנטונינוס. קם וכתב, מן יהודה נשיאה למרן מלכא אנטונינוס, נסכה וקרייה וקרעיה, אמר ליה, כתוב מן ‘עבדך’ יהודה למרן מלכא אנטונינוס. אמר ליה, רבי מפני מה אתה מבזה על כבודך, אמר ליה, מה אנא טב מן סבי, לא כך אמר, כה אמר עבדך יעקב.”**

**Rabeinu (Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi) once directed Rabbi Afes to write a letter in his name to the Emperor Antoninus. He (Rabbi Afes ) proceeded to write: “From Yehudah the Nasi to our sovereign the Emperor Antoninus.” He (Rabeinu HaKadosh) took it, read it, and tore it up (because he felt that it did not convey proper deference). He instructed him to write the following: “From your servant Yehudah to our sovereign the Emperor Antoninus.” He (Rabbi Afes) responded, “Rebbe, why are you demeaning your own honor (by referring to yourself as his servant)?” He (Rebbe) answered him, “Am I any better than my grandfather (Yaakov)? Did he not say, ‘So said your servant Yaakov’?”**

We see from this Midrash that Rabeinu HaKadosh learned from Yaakov Avinu how to show deference to Antoninus, just as he had to Eisav by saying: **“So said your servant Yaakov.”** Thus, we can suggest that this was Yaakov’s initial intent when he employed the term **”לאמר”**. He was conveying a message to future generations such as Rabeinu HaKadosh to learn from his example. Just as he sent the following message to Eisav: **“Thus shall you say to my lord, to Eisav, ‘So, said your servant Yaakov’”**; he should use a similar formula when addressing Antoninus: **“From your servant Yehudah to our sovereign the Emperor Antoninus.”**

## Rabeinu HaKadosh Was a Nitzotz of Yaakov Antoninus Was the Good Nitzotz of Eisav

Let us add a pleasant tidbit to the words of the Agra D’Kallah. It is written in parshas Toldos (Bereishis 25, 22): **“וַיִּתְרוּצְצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם כֵּן לָמָּה זֶה אֲנֹכִי וַתֵּלֶךְ לְדַרְוֹשׁ אֶת ה', וַיֹּאמֶר “the boys wreaked havoc inside her. So, she went to inquire of Hashem. And Hashem informed her: “Two nations are in your womb.” Rashi comments: “Two goyim are in your womb.”** Due to its spelling, the word **“goyim”** can be interpreted as **“גאים”**—the proud ones—referring to Antoninus and Rebbe.

According to the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (83), thus did HKB”H hint to Rivkah Imeinu that Rabeinu HaKadosh was a nitzotz—a spark from the neshamah—of Yaakov Avinu. This is alluded to in his title—**רבי יהודה הנשיא**. For, the term **נשיא** can be interpreted as an acronym for **נִיצוֹץ שִׁל יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ**—a **nitzotz of Yaakov Avinu**. Whereas the Roman Emperor Antoninus was a gilgul of Eisav, the good nitzotz within him. This then is what HKB”H informed Rivkah: **“You have two proud nations in your womb, alluding to Antoninus and Rebbe; at that time, the relationship of Yaakov and Eisav will be amended.**

We will now introduce another teaching from the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan (82) related to the passuk (Devarim 3, 23): **“וַאֲתַחֲנֶן אֶל ה' בַּעַת הַהִיא לֵאמֹר”—I implored Hashem at that time, saying.** He interprets Moshe Rabeinu’s prayer as a prayer on behalf of Rabeinu HaKadosh—that he find favor in the eyes of the Roman Emperor Antoninus, which would enable him to fortify the religion and redact Torah she’b’al peh. He interprets the term **לֵאמֹר** in this passuk as an acronym for **לִימֹת אֲנִטוֹנִינוּס מֶלֶךְ רֹמִי**—**for the times of Antoninus, Emperor of Rome.**

This explains very nicely the message Yaakov Avinu conveyed to the emissaries that he dispatched to Eisav: **“וַיִּצַו”** **אותם לאמר.** He commanded them to convey a message to future generations as per the interpretation of the Agra D’Kallah. This is alluded to by the term **לֵאמֹר**, an acronym for **לִימֹת אֲנִטוֹנִינוּס מֶלֶךְ רֹמִי**. Yaakov intended for Rabeinu HaKadosh to learn from his example to show deference to Antoninus just as he did when he sent the message to Eisav: **“So said your servant Yaakov.”**

## When Yaakov Appeased Eisav He Immediately Began to Distance Himself from Him

Following this line of reasoning, we will proceed to explain the tremendous fear that overcame Yaakov Avinu on account of his midah of **“Tiferes”** and the narrow straits he had to negotiate. As explained, this is the implication of the passuk: **“וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּיצֵר לוֹ”**. Now, after appeasing Eisav with gifts, Eisav proposed a relationship of friendship and camaraderie (ibid. 33, 12): **“וַיֹּאמֶר נִסְעָה וּנְלַכְהָ וְאֵלַכְהָ לְנִגְדֶךָ”—and he said, “Travel on and let us go; I will proceed alongside you.”** Rashi explains: Eisav said to Yaakov, **“I will do you this favor, that I will extend the days of my travel by going as slowly as you need to.”** This is what is meant by **“לִנְגִידֶךָ”**, in line with you. Notwithstanding, Yaakov Avinu turned down this friendly gesture with the following response:

**“וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדוֹנָי יוֹדֵעַ כִּי הַיְלָדִים רַכִּים וְהַצֹּאן וְהַבֶּקֶר עֹלֹת עָלַי, וְדַפְקוּם יוֹם אֶחָד וּמָתוּ כָל הַצֹּאן, יַעֲבֹר נָא אֲדוֹנָי לִפְנֵי עַבְדִּי, וְאֲנִי אֲתַנְהִלָּה לְאֵטִי לְרֹגֶל הַמְּלֹאכָה אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי וּלְרֹגֶל הַיְלָדִים.”**

**But he said to him, “My lord knows that the children are tender, and the nursing flocks and cattle are upon me; and they will drive them hard for one day, then all the flocks will die. Let my lord go ahead of his servant; I will make my way at my slow pace according to the gait of the work that is before me and to the gait of the children.”**

The great luminary, Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, elaborates in his sefer Ben Ish Chai on the dispute that ensued between Yaakov and Eisav. He refers to a concept explained in our sacred sefarim: The enemies of Yisrael attack us in one of two ways. They either battle us physically, attempting to annihilate us completely, as Haman HaRasha did. Or else, they wage a spiritual battle against us in an attempt to corrupt us via assimilation. As it is written (Tehillim 106, 35): **“וַיִּתְעַרְבוּ”—they mingled with the goyim and learned their ways.** Here are his sacred words:

**“וַיֹּאמֶר נִסְעָה וּנְלַכְהָ לְנִגְדֶךָ. יֵשׁ לְדַקְדָּק אִיךָ נִהְפָךְ עָשׂוּ לְאִישׁ אַחֵר לְבַקֵּשׁ הַחֲבֵרָה עִם יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ ע”ה, אַחֵר שֶׁתְּחִילַת בִּיאָתוֹ הִיָּתָה כְּדֵי לְהוֹרִגּוֹ. וְנִרְאָה לִי בְּסִיעֵתָא דְשִׂמְיָא כִּי תַחֲלִילָה רִצָּה עָשׂוּ לְבֹא עַל יַעֲקֹב בְּחֵרֶב כְּדֵי לְאַבְדּוֹ ח”ו, וְסוּף עָתָה בָּא לְהִיפֵךְ שְׁעֹזֵב הַחֵרֶב וְהַמְּלַחֲמָה עִם יַעֲקֹב, וְדִיבֵר לְהִיפֵךְ נִסְעָה וּנְלַכְהָ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּחֵרֶב וְשִׂיתוּף וּבִהֲשׂוּאָה אַחַת, וְאֵלַכְהָ נִגְדֶךָ לְעִזְרָתְךָ וּלְשִׁמּוֹר אוֹתְךָ, וְכָל זֶה אֵינוֹ אוֹמֵר מֵאַהֲבָה אֶלָּא מִשְׂנָאָה, שְׁחֵשֵׁב שְׁבֻזָּה יוֹכֵל לוֹ לְקַלְקֵל דְּרַכִּיו ח”ו, וְאִזּוּ יַגְבֵּר עָלָיו וַיְהִי לוֹ תְּקוּמָה בְּעוֹלָם.”**

אך יעקב אבינו ע"ה הרגיש בנזק הדבר הזה, ואמר לו אדוני יודע כי הילדים רכים וכו', כלומר ידעתי לא מאהבה וטוב לב אתה רוצה בכך, אלא כוונתך כדי להתגבר על זרעי ולשלוט בהם, על ידי קלקול מעשיהם אשר יתקלקלו מחברת זרעך, דאז ידפקום המקטרגים יום אחד ומתו כל הצאן".

He addresses Eisav's apparent change of heart regarding Yaakov Avinu. Eisav initially came to kill Yaakov and then decided to befriend him. The Ben Ish Chai proposes an explanation. Eisav's seemingly gracious proposal was not uttered out of brotherly love but out of hatred. He calculated that he stood a better chance of harming Yaakov and undermining his plans, chas v'shalom, by adopting a new tactic. Thus, he thought he would defeat and gain the upper hand in the world.

However, Yaakov Avinu sensed the inherent danger and responded appropriately. He informed Eisav that he was aware that the offer was insincere and not motivated by brotherly love. On the contrary, Eisav's true intention was to rule over Yaakov's offspring and dominate them. Yaakov foresaw the inherent danger in the union and friendship of his descendants with Eisav's descendants; they would be corrupted. Ultimately, such an unholy alliance would result in the demise of his entire flock.

### Yaakov's Narrow Straits: Making Peace and Staying at a Distance

We will attempt to shed some more light on the matter and achieve a better understanding of the brilliant insight of the holy Rabbi of Zidichov, zy"a. The Torah informs us that Yaakov was overcome with fear and dread: "ויירא יעקב מאד". Although Yaakov's midah of "Tiferes" is characterized by "rachamim," nevertheless he was fearful, in keeping with the attribute of "נורא". His fear was on account of "ויצר לו"—he was in a tight spot, a dilemma. He had to tread a fine, straight line constantly, painstakingly, not deviating to the right or to the left.

This was the case regarding his reunion with Eisav. On the one hand, he had to show him "chesed"—drawing him near with his right hand by appeasing him and offering him gifts. This was a premonition of the future galuyos, when Yisrael would have to appease the descendants of Eisav who ruled over them. On the other hand, Yaakov had to push him away with his left hand. If he drew too near to Eisav, his offspring might be corrupted. Perforce, Yaakov had to compromise—to

shower his brother with gifts but to keep his distance. Thus, he said: **"Let my lord go ahead of his servant; I will make my way at my slow pace according to the gait of the work that is before me and to the gait of the children."**

We can now begin to comprehend Yaakov Avinu's strategic plan: **"He divided the people with him, and the flocks, and the cattle, and the camels, into two camps."** In other words, he divided the people of Yisrael into two distinct groups, akin to Yissachar and Zevulun. One group would live in peace with the offspring of Eisav, at least externally, during the periods of galus. Simultaneously, the second group would devote themselves to the study of Torah, taking care not to get too close to Eisav's offspring. Thus, Yisrael would maintain a spiritual distance from them to preserve their heritage and avoid adopting their corrupt ways.

This is the significance of the passuk: **"And he said, 'If Eisav comes to the one camp and attacks it'"**—by drawing near to them and corrupting them; **"then the remaining camp will survive"**—the second group will come to the rescue. They will remind the first group of their heritage and inspire them to wage a spiritual battle against the people of Eisav. This is the message conveyed by Rashi's comment: **"Then the remaining camp shall be a refuge" against Eisav's will, because I will do battle with him.** It was precisely for this reason that Yaakov split the people up into two groups. He intended for the group of Torah scholars to remain vigilant and stand watch, protecting Yisrael's kedushah and waging a spiritual battle against the children of Eisav.

This explains beautifully Yaakov's subsequent request. He beseeched Hashem: **"Rescue me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav."** Yaakov implored HKB"H to save him from both prototypes of Eisav—the one that treats him like a **brother** in order to corrupt his offspring and the **Eisav** in galus. The latter does not behave like a brother; he reveals his hatred and disdain openly and aims to harm Yisrael. Dealing with him requires a unique tact and caution, as exemplified by Yaakov in his reunion with Eisav.

Based on what we have discussed, we can begin to appreciate the fundamental lesson Yaakov Avinu intended to teach all future Jews in galus. In the words of Rashi: **He prepared himself for three things—for paying tribute (giving gifts), for tefilah, and for war.** Thus, did Yaakov

Avinu prepare for all the future galuyos. He presented Eisav with gifts to pacify him, so that he would not harm Yisrael in galus. Nevertheless, he knew that this peace with Eisav was only external; so, he immediately resorted to tefilah, so that Eisav would not corrupt Yisrael's ways, chas v'shalom, and assimilate them. This would be accomplished by combatting Eisav in spiritual matters to the bitter end and staying far away from him.

### The Malachim Were Given a Dual Mission

It is with great pleasure that we can now explain why Yaakov saw fit to send actual malachim—heavenly emissaries—rather than human messengers to speak to Eisav. Let us refer to the comments of the Noam Elimelech on the passuk: **He commanded them, saying, "Thus shall you say to my lord, to Eisav. 'So said your servant Yaakov: I have sojourned with Lavan and have lingered until now.'"** Undoubtedly, this was aimed solely at appeasing Eisav; but why was it necessary to depict himself to the malachim in this manner: **"Thus shall you say to my lord, to Eisav"**? What purpose did this serve?

He explains that the message he entrusted to the malachim served a dual purpose. Superficially, they appeared to be aimed at pacifying Eisav HaRasha. In reality, however, they concealed a prayer and supplication directed toward HKB"H above. Thus, we can interpret Yaakov's words as follows: **"Thus shall you say to my lord, to Eisav."** You shall say these words that contain a tefilah **"to my Lord"** in heaven, which will also suffice to appease the wicked **"Eisav"** down below.

So, Yaakov continues: **"So said your servant Yaakov: I have sojourned ("גרתתי") with Lavan and have lingered until now."** Rashi clarifies the meaning of Yaakov's remark: **I did**

**not become a dignitary or a notable but a mere sojourner. It does not befit you to hate me over the berachah of your father, that he bestowed upon me . . . for it has not been fulfilled in me. Alternatively, the gematria of "גרתתי" is 613, as if to say, "I sojourned with Lavan HaRasha, yet I observed the 'taryag' (an anagram of 'גרתתי') mitzvos and did not learn from his evil deeds."**

In truth, both interpretations are accurate: **"I sojourned with Lavan,"** and **I did not become a dignitary or an important person.** According to the first interpretation, this statement was directed toward Eisav and meant to assure him that Yitzchak's Berachos had not come to fruition. Hence, there was no reason for Eisav to hate him. According to the second interpretation, this statement was directed toward heaven as a tefilah to Hashem: **"I sojourned with Lavan,"** **I continued to observe the taryag mitzvos, and I did not learn from his evil deeds.** This concludes the interpretation of the Noam Elimelech.

In keeping with what we have discussed, we can understand the matter as follows: Yaakov had to perform two opposite functions. On the one hand, he had to make peace with his evil brother. On the other hand, he had to distance himself from him as far as possible, so as not to stray from Hashem and His Torah, chas v'shalom. Therefore, Yaakov sent heavenly malachim to accomplish this dual mission, knowing that they would find the proper balance necessary to accomplish both goals. They assuaged Eisav, while presenting Yaakov's supplication to connect with and draw closer to HKB"H.

Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of אהינו בני ישראל

Family Madeb - לעילוי נשמת -  
their dear mother  
Lea bat Virgini ע"ה

Arthur & Randi Luxenberg לזכות  
of their wonderfull parents, children and grandchildren  
לעילוי נשמת His Father ר' יצחק יהודה בן ר' אברהם ע"ה

To receive the mamarim by email: [mamarim@shvileipinchas.com](mailto:mamarim@shvileipinchas.com)