

And Yaakov sent messengers (32:4) – Rashi tells us that he sent real angels. What is the point of Rashi's comment? **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that even when Yaakov was so busy working – as he describes to his wives before he leaves Lavan's home, he still had loftier things on his mind. This is the intention of Pirkei Avos when we are עשה תורתך קבע ומלאכתך עראי . People should make sure that no matter what occupies their day, their experiences should be Torah centered and growth centered. Those who do, will have celestial matters on their minds all of the time.

And the camp that remains shall be able to run away (32:9) – Ramban notes that he prepared the children with prayer, sending gifts and preparing them for war. In his introduction to the Parsha though, he notes that we should learn from Yaakov to prepare with prayer, gifts and Hatzala. So which is it – preparation for battle or for Hatzalah? **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide ztl.** explains that when Ramban is explaining Yaakov's actions, he speaks of preparing for the eventuality of war. However in learning our lessons, we are told to focus on Hatzalah. The reason is that we have been made to promise (Kesubos 111a) not to conduct an offensive based on the rules of בחומה לא יעלו. If one does not have that option, one may/must conduct the offensive.

And Yaakov remained alone (32:25) – Simply put, the Possuk is telling us that since he was alone therefore he had to fight Eisav's Malach. The Midrash provides a deeper lesson (Berashis Rabbah 77) based on the Possuk in Yeshaya – ונשגב ה' לבדו and its connection to our possuk. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl.** explained that the name Yisrael speaks to the idea of שלימות. It is through that Sheleimus that one gets to experience the לבדו ה' נשגב. How did Yaakov get that chance? Because he was alone. Rav Nosson Tzvi added that he didn't understand how one could satisfy his Gemara learning with a Daf when he could learn two, or to learn for 8 hours when he could handle 12. He begged people not to compare to the Tzibbur or cultural norms and to set individual goals for themselves. Yaakov looked at himself alone, and even when attacked from a threat of the common man, he stayed himself and was successful.

And he placed the handmaidens and their children first, Leah and her kids last and Rachel and Yosef last (33:2) – Rashi adds that אחרון אחרון חביב. This is odd. When it comes to Pikuach Nefesh, one is not allowed to place his own interests first. Why then would it be acceptable here? **Rav Elimelech Biderman Shlita** quotes the Shinover **Divrei Yechezkel** who notes that seemingly suggests that Hashem gives better protection to those who are downtrodden and shamed. Thus, although being appreciated more than Bilha and Zilpa, Leah knew that she was in the middle. Thus, Yaakov set up the order in reverse order of who needed the most protection – not based on favor.

And he called him קא-ל, the God of Yisrael (33:20) – Rashi explains that Hashem called Yaakov קא-ל. Nowhere is this seen as a חטא. Yet, the Midrash Rabba offers a different position, suggesting that Yaakov was saying that Hashem rules in the Heavens and I, on earth. For this statement, the Midrash says that Yaakov was punished. How could it be that the Gemara and Rashi see no sin on Yaakov's behalf here and the Midrash finds this episode the prelude to the one with Dinah? **Rav Shach ztl.** explains that the 2 positions actually do not contradict. Hashem raised Yaakov not to think of himself as less than the other people – he needed to value his position among men. However, he also needed to know that he was not done growing and that as far as his relationship with Hashem

was concerned he would need to know that he certainly had further to go. If Yaakov did not see himself as valuable, he would likely not bother to see his uniqueness in front of people but if he was too haughty, he would not appreciate how much further he needed to go.

לֵאָה הַדָּוְלָה דִּינָה בֵּת לֵאָה Dinah the daughter of Leah went out (34:1) – The Midrash tells us that Yaakov was punished for hiding Dinah from Eisav. However wasn't he correct? Isn't one supposed to be careful not to marry his daughter off to an עַם הָאָרֶץ? **Rav Yerucham Levovitz quotes the Alter of Kelm ztl.** who says that it was not the action itself but rather the way it was done that led to the stringency of punishment against Yaakov Aveinu. Sometimes it is not the action that we choose but the reasoning behind it that Hashem will judge in its totality.

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל And Yaakov heard (35:22) – **Rav Haim Sabato Shlita** notes that throughout the Parsha we find Yaakov learning things – about Reuven here, about Shimon and Levi and about Dinah wherein he was capable of remaining calm. It was only at the time of his death that he reacts the way that he does and addresses these episodes. Why then? Rav Sabato explains that Yaakov led a life – a life that he calls מַעֲט וְרַעִים – with many challenges. Challenges present both negativity and trauma but also opportunity to see Hashgacha. Yaakov chooses to see the Hashgacha. In all of the tough moments, before reacting, Yaakov attempts to figure out what Hashem wants of him in the situation. Even when declaring מַעֲט וְרַעִים, he uses the phrase later to explain מִכָּל רֵעַ אוֹתִי הַגּוֹאֵל אֹתִי. For the Jew in Galus – for whom Yaakov serves as model – has the choices to make as to how to look at his history – as one of trauma that cannot be overcome or as one of a series of steps toward Divine destiny.

הִנֵּה קְטָנוֹן נִתְתִּיךָ בְּגוֹיִם בְּזוּי אֶתָּה מֵאֵד: Haftorah: Behold you are the smallest of the nations and very much despised (Ovadia 1:2) – Why is Eisav called most despised? **Rav Aharon Kotler ztl.** explained that when Eisav turned away from having a relationship with Hashem (when he was מְבַזָּה the בכורה), he gave up on a raison d'être for living. Someone who sees no purpose in existence is quite small-minded and despised.