



Likkutei Sichos

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Two Camps

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1.

THE REMAINING CAMP WILL SURELY BE SAVED

On the verse, “He {Yaakov} said, ‘If Eisav comes to the one camp and strikes it down, then the remaining camp shall survive,’”¹ Rashi (in his second gloss on this verse) focuses on the clause, “then the remaining camp shall survive,” and explains: “Against his Eisav’s will, because I will do battle with him.” Afterward, Rashi continues and says, “{Yaakov} prepared himself in three ways...” (as we will explain below in section three).

Why does Rashi need to explain these words in the verse? Seemingly, the verse can be understood simply: By dividing everyone into two camps, even if Eisav attacks and vanquishes one camp, the second can flee.

The commentators explain² that the difficulty Rashi addresses is the word “then,” which implies that the “remaining camp” will definitely “survive.” This raises a question: Even by dividing everyone into two camps, the survival of the second camp was still not certain. There was only a greater *chance* that the second camp would survive.

Accordingly, the verse should have used the word “perhaps” (instead of “then”).

Rashi clarifies that the word “then” actually implies that it was “against his will” (unlike *Ibn Ezra* and other commentators who translate “then” to mean “perhaps”) – the survival of the second camp was assured “because I will do battle with him,” and not allow Eisav to also conquer the second camp.

This explanation must be clarified:

- a. Why does “because I will do battle with him” guarantee that “the remaining camp will survive?” Even if we understand the verse as

¹ *Bereishis* 32:9.

² *Gur Arye; Be'er Mayim Chaim; Maharshal; et al.*

meaning that while Yaakov clashes with Eisav for the **first** camp, the second camp can flee and be saved, the rescue of the second camp is still uncertain.³ Splitting the camp only makes it **more likely** for the second camp to escape and be saved, as discussed.

- b. What does “against his will” mean? How is it germane here that the battle would be against Eisav’s will? Here, it is only relevant to emphasise that by Yaakov confronting Eisav, the second camp would **surely** be saved.

Ramban explains: Yaakov’s certainty was because “Yaakov knew {prophetically} that Eisav wouldn’t defeat Yaakov’s entire family; therefore, at least one of the camps would be saved.” However, Rashi’s interpretation cannot be understood this way because then Yaakov’s certainty would have been based on another consideration {i.e., Yaakov’s knowledge that Eisav wouldn’t conquer his entire family}, and not based on Yaakov engaging Eisav in battle, which is what Rashi explains and **emphasises** in his commentary.

2.

AN ATTEMPTED RESOLUTION

On the face of it, one difficulty can be used to resolve the other, albeit this suggested solution is strained: Rashi’s did not say “against his will” in order to demonstrate that Yaakov was certain that the second camp would be saved. Rather, Rashi’s intent was to explain the manner in which they would be saved – they would be saved “against his will” because “I will do battle with him.”

In light of this, a difficulty arises on this idea itself: (Aside from the primary difficulty that the words “against his will” imply certainty) how

³ {For Eisav can pursue the second camp and destroy them as well. See *Divrei Dovid* (by the *Taz*) on Rashi.}

does the verse demonstrate (according to the the plain meaning of Scripture)⁴ that “I will do battle with him?”

[This question doesn't apply according to our previous understanding that Rashi's intent was to emphasise Yaakov's certainty that “the remaining camp... refuge”; the verse clearly demonstrates this with the word “**then**.” Accordingly, the phrase “for I will do battle with him” serves only as the basis for Yaakov's certainty.⁵ According to the second explanation offered, it turns out that (on the contrary) Rashi's (primary) intent was to explain and **introduce** a new interpretation, i.e., the verse means “I will do battle with him.” (Therefore, the fact that the “remaining camp shall survive” would be “against his will.”) Accordingly, the difficulty arises that this verse does not seem to demonstrate that “I will do battle with him.”]

3.

THREE PREPARATIONS

Rashi continues (in the above-mentioned segment):

He {Yaakov} prepared himself in three ways: by sending a gift, by praying to Hashem, and by preparing for battle. Concerning a gift, it says, “So the tribute passed on before him.”⁶ Concerning prayer, it says, “L-rd of my father, Avraham.”⁷ Concerning battle, it says, “Then the remaining camp shall survive.”⁸

We need to clarify:

- a) Why does Rashi quote all three preparations **here**, if the focus of his commentary here is only the preparation for **war**?⁹ The fact that

⁴ {In the Hebrew original, “*p'shuto shel mikra*,” often referred to as “*pshat*.” Though there are many levels and depths of interpretation on the Torah, Rashi adopts a straightforward approach.}

⁵ {Although we would still have our above-mentioned difficulty.}

⁶ *Bereishis* 32:22.

⁷ *Bereishis* 32:10.

⁸ {*Bereishis* 32:9.}

⁹ {i.e., In the opening of his commentary here, Rashi says that “I will do battle with him,” and as a (direct) continuation, he describes Yaakov's three preparations, although the other two strategies (sending a gift and praying to Hashem) have nothing to do with the opening part of this commentary (which speaks about battle).}

Yaakov also “prepared himself... by sending a gift {and} praying” is understood from the **later** verses where it says so **explicitly**, as Rashi himself quotes.

- b) One might venture to say that in the verse that tells of Yaakov’s preparation for war, it is relevant to point out that this was not the only method that Yaakov used, not even the first method or beginning of his preparations. On the contrary, he first prepared a gift and then prayed. Still, why does Rashi connect this — as a continuation — to his explanation, “against his will, for I will do battle with him?”
- c) Furthermore, even if Rashi wants (for whatever reason) to specify that together with getting ready for a fight, Yaakov also prepared by sending a gift and by prayer (which itself needs explanation, as discussed above, for these preparations are **explicitly** mentioned later in the *parshah*), we must answer another difficulty: Why must Rashi repeat that he (also) “prepared himself... for “war?” Rashi explained earlier {in this segment} that Yaakov said, “I will do battle with him.” Rashi should have only added that, “He prepared himself (also) by sending a gift and by praying.”

*Mizrachi*¹⁰ explains¹¹ that Rashi’s continuation, “{Yaakov} prepared himself in three ways,” is intended as proof for his interpretation that “then the remaining camp shall survive” means “against his will, for I will do battle with him.” Since **our Sages say**¹² that “{Yaakov} prepared himself in three ways,” and this detail — that Yaakov prepared himself for war — is not stated explicitly in the verse (unlike Yaakov’s gift and prayer), we must conclude that the clause, “then the remaining camp shall survive” refers to Yaakov’s preparation for war.

However, Rashi does not say that “He {Yaakov} prepared himself in three ways,” is a teaching of our Sages (in the *Midrash*).

¹⁰ {Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi.}

¹¹ {In his commentary to the abovementioned Rashi.}

¹² *Midrash Tanchuma* (Buber edition) *Parshas Vayishlach*, sec. 6; *Koheles Rabbah*, ch. 9, sec. 18.

On the contrary – the simple understanding of Rashi’s wording is that **after** we know that “I will do battle with him,” we understand from the **simple meaning** of the verse that “{Yaakov} prepared himself in three ways,” including war.

4.

ADD A HEADING HERE

We must also clarify the continuation of Rashi’s explanation “{Yaakov} prepared...”:

- a) The order of the three things that Rashi mentions in his explanation, “by sending a gift, by praying to Hashem, and by preparing for war,” is contrary to the order of the verses which Rashi cites as proof: “So the tribute passed on before {Yaakov}” (a gift) is written **after** the verse, “L-rd of my father, Avraham,” (prayer) which (immediately) **follows** the verse, “Then the remaining camp shall survive,” (battle). Why does Rashi deviate from the order in which they appear in the Torah?
- b) The *Midrash* brings proof (aside from the above-mentioned verses that Rashi cites in his explanation) from other verses: Prayer — “Rescue me, please, from the hand of my brother.”¹³ A gift — “You shall say, ‘{The gift is} Your servant’s Yaakov’s. It is a gift sent to my master.’”¹⁴ War — “He put the handmaids... he went on ahead of them...”¹⁵ In other places in *Midrash*¹⁶ the proof brought for “a gift” is, “as it says, ‘then {Yaakov} took from that which had come into his hand, a tribute....’”¹⁷ “For war, as it says, ‘So he divided the people with him.’”¹⁸

¹³ Bereishis 32:12.

¹⁴ Bereishis 32:19

¹⁵ Bereishis 33:2-3.

¹⁶ *Lekach Tov*.

¹⁷ Bereishis 32:14.

¹⁸ Bereishis 32:8.

In light of this, we must further clarify Rashi's comments: We may assume that Rashi wanted to cite verses that clearly describe Yaakov's actual preparations (and not verses that address his planning for them). This is implied through the first proof regarding "a gift": Rashi quotes the verse, "So the tribute passed on before him."¹⁹ (Rashi does not quote the **previous** verses, beginning with, "then he took, from that which had come into his hand, a tribute to Eisav his brother,"²⁰ or the like, which address how Yaakov **prepared** and organized the gift. Therefore (simply understood) Rashi chose the verse "so the tribute passed..." for his proof, which describes the **actual** sending of the gift.)

Accordingly, regarding prayer and war, Rashi should have also quoted verses where the point is the implementation of his plan to pray and prepare for battle: Regarding prayer, "**Rescue me**, please, from the hand of my brother,"²¹ and regarding war, "He put the handmaids... He went on ahead of them..."²² (As Rashi explains there,²³ "if that wicked one will come to do battle, let him do battle with me first.") Rashi should not have quoted the beginning of the prayer, "L-rd of my father, Avraham"²⁴ {which doesn't describe the prayer itself}, or what Yaakov had planned ("then the remaining camp shall survive," which describes what Yaakov **said**) — that he is prepared for war.

If, on the other hand, Rashi did not want to quote verses that address how Yaakov actually executed his plan, but rather, how "{Yaakov} **prepared** himself for three things" — just his preparation — then as a proof-text to Yaakov's intent to send "a gift," Rashi should have quoted the previous verse,²⁵ as discussed.

¹⁹ {Bereishis 32:22.}

²⁰ {Bereishis 32:14.}

²¹ {Bereishis 32:12.}

²² {Bereishis 33:2-3.}

²³ {Bereishis 33:3, see Rashi.}

²⁴ {Bereishis 32:10.}

²⁵ {Bereishis 32:14.}

- c) Rashi already pointed out that **this** verse “then the remaining camp shall survive,” means, “I will do battle with him.” Why must he repeat himself at the end of his explanation that the proof that “{Yaakov} prepared himself... for war” is from **this** verse, “then the remaining camp shall survive”?
- d) Why does Rashi use the verb *hiskin* (התקין) {to mean “prepared (himself),” although, literally, it means Yaakov “fixed” himself}. Why not use the verb *heichin* (הכין) {which literally would mean that Yaakov “prepared” himself} or the like {which would be more suitable here}?

5.

TWO DIVISIONS

The explanation of all of these issues:

The simple **context** of the verses implies that after the angels returned {from Eisav} and informed Yaakov that Eisav “is heading toward you, and four hundred men are with him,”²⁶ Yaakov **first** prepared for war, “he divided the people... and he said, ‘If Eisav comes...’” Only **afterward** did he pray: “Yaakov said, ‘L-rd of my father, Avraham...,’” and **finally** he started to prepare a gift for Eisav.

This, however, is not smooth: It is simply understood that when a Jew is informed that someone is coming to do battle with him, at first prays to Hashem, and only then does he begin with the “natural” preparations (preparing for battle, etc.) If so, how is it possible to say, especially regarding Yaakov *Avinu*, that he first prepared for battle and only then prayed to Hashem?!

Accordingly, we must say that Yaakov also conducted himself in this manner (as we will explain below). The verse, “So he divided the people

²⁶ {Bereishis 32:7.}

with him, the sheep... He {Yaakov} said, ‘If Eisav comes to the one camp... then the remaining camp shall survive,’” is a preface — and an explanation — for his prayer:

When Yaakov heard the news from the angels (“{Eisav} is heading toward you, and four hundred men are with him”) “Yaakov became very **afraid** and it **distressed** him.”²⁷ Consequently, “he divided the camp...” after which we can understand his prayer {as we will soon explain}. **Afterward — the next morning**, when Yaakov saw that “Eisav was coming, and four hundred men were with him”²⁸ — only **then** “he divided the children...”²⁹

The division of the people in **this** verse³⁰ is **not** the same division which is mentioned later on. **Simply** understood: Here, “he divided the people... **and the sheep...**” {i.e., all his possessions}, and afterward he divided only “the women and children,” and **not into two camps**.

Here, the verse says “He divided... into **two camps**,” with the intention that “if Eisav comes to the one camp and strikes it down, **then the remaining camp shall survive.**” Later on, the verse says, “He divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children first, and (**immediately after** them) Leah and her children later, and Rachel and Yosef last”³¹ — all in one camp. This is **clearly** demonstrated when Eisav “raised his eyes and saw the women and children”³² {referring to} **all of the above-mentioned** people, indicating that they were not in two separate camps in a way that the second one could flee (if Eisav should attack the first camp).

Rashi explains that “then the remaining camp shall survive” means “**Against his** {Eisav’s} **will**, because **I will do battle** with him.” Against his will, Eisav will not be allowed to harm them, {as soon will be explained}.

²⁷ {Bereishis 32:8.}

²⁸ Bereishis 33:1.

²⁹ Bereishis 33:1.

³⁰ {Bereishis 32:8.}

³¹ {Bereishis 33:1-2.}

³² Bereishis 33:5.

The division of the two camps were as follows: The first camp consisted of the sheep, the cattle, and the camels (understandably this camp also included those “men who were with him,” the shepherds, etc., who cared for the animals). The “remaining camp” consisted of “the women and children” and those associated with them. This is **clearly** demonstrated in the verse,³³ “{Yaakov} crossed the shallows of the *Yabbok* river” — two **distinct** crossings.

Only after this division, Yaakov could pray due to the “**promises that You made to me**,”³⁴ based upon which the **remaining** camp (as mentioned above) would **certainly** be saved — as opposed to the sheep, etc., in the first camp.³⁵

In order to prove that Yaakov was certain that he would overcome Eisav, Rashi continues, “{Yaakov} prepared {literally, “fixed”} himself in three ways.” **Each** act that Yaakov did in order to be saved was done as preparation — “he prepared himself” — as we will explain below.³⁶

³³ *Bereishis* 32:23-24.

³⁴ *Bereishis* 32:10 See Rashi.

³⁵ {According to our prior understanding (before the Rebbe's explanation), the division of the two camps was an equal division amongst all of Yaakov's people, in order to give one camp a chance to escape while the other camp was attacked. However the Rebbe explains that the division of the two camps was in the following manner: Yaakov and his immediate family were in one camp, and his possessions (animals, shepherds, etc.) in the second. Yaakov's intent in doing so was that if Eisav attacked the other camp, his camp (i.e., he and his family) would be unharmed, for he (and his immediate family) had a promise that G-d would protect them. This is what Yaakov meant when he said "then the remaining camp shall survive," and Rashi explains, "Against his {Eisav's} will, because I will do battle with him." Yaakov meant to say that even if Eisav's attacks him, and he has to do battle with him, he will definitely overcome him ("against his will"), because he had the promise of Hashem's protection. This answers the question in the beginning of this *sichah*, as to what was Yaakov's assurance that the second camp would survive. Since the second camp was his immediate family, his assurance was Hashem's promise to protect them. For this reason, Yaakov divided the camps before he prayed. For in his prayer, he was invoking Hashem's promise to protect Yaakov. Since that promise was only applicable to Yaakov and his family, he first separated them from the rest.}

³⁶ {This answers the question in section 3 above, why does Rashi mention here Yaakov's preparation for all three things. In resolution, Rashi's intent is to prove that Yaakov was sure he would overcome Eisav. This is proven by the fact that in all the things Yaakov did, he did so in a manner of "fixing himself," which proves that he was assured of overcoming Eisav, as the Rebbe explains further.}

6.

PREPARING ONESELF

When a person prepares himself to do something, or many things, the usual term used is “*heichin*,” or the like. Here, however, the term “*hiskin*” is used, which emphasises another aspect of his preparations.

“*Heichin*” simply means “prepared”: A person prepares himself physically or spiritually to perform a specific task³⁷ — to pray, or the like.

The word, “*hiskin*” — derived from the word *tikkun* {to rectify} — doesn’t mean only regular preparation, but also implies the sort of preparation being made: He “fixes” **himself** — he conditions himself to do whatever is needed.

A similar concept applies to Yaakov. His preparations to send a gift, to pray, and to do battle, were described as “**he** prepared {*hiskin* — fixed} **himself**.”

Rashi explains that at first Yaakov was “**afraid and distressed**” about the idea of engaging in physical conflict; thus, he needed to “**ready** himself.” Regarding the gift, he was angry that he had to resort to all this;³⁸ he needed to “**fix** himself.” The same applies to prayer, although {Yaakov thought}: “I am afraid because perhaps I have become sullied with sin, and this will cause me to be given over into Eisav’s hands despite Your promised to me {to keep me safe}.”³⁹ Nevertheless, Yaakov **fixed** himself and prayed an additional supplication, “I will surely do good”⁴⁰ — “doing good — in your merit; I will do good — in the merit of your fathers.”⁴¹

³⁷ {In the Hebrew original, “*hachanah b'nefesh*.”}

³⁸ *Bereishis* 32:22; see Rashi.

³⁹ Rashi’s commentary on *Bereishis* 32:11.

⁴⁰ {Lit., “Doing good, I will do good.”}

⁴¹ *Bereishis* 32:13; see Rashi.

7.

THE MANNER OF PREPARATION

In light of the above, we can understand why Rashi quoted these specific verses (and not other ones) as proof: These verses are not quoted to demonstrate that there was a preparation — that Yaakov prepared for these three things. Rather, these verses are quoted to demonstrate the manner in which these preparations were done: “**He fixed** himself” {*hiskin*}

“*For the gift* — so the tribute passed on before {Yaakov}.”⁴² (Since Rashi also quotes {in his caption} the words, “before him {Yaakov},” these words must be relevant to his proof.) The words “before him” are interpreted to mean “he was in a state of anger that he had to do all of this.”⁴³

“*For prayer* — L-rd of my father, Avraham.”⁴⁴ This verse alludes to the promise that Hashem swore to the forefathers, as discussed above.

Similarly, regarding war, Rashi’s prooftext is the verse: “Then the remaining camp shall survive.”⁴⁵ True, we know that earlier Yaakov was afraid and distressed (as mentioned above); nevertheless, “he *fixed* himself” for war, because he was confident and certain that the second camp would be saved (due to Hashem’s promise) — “**then** the remaining camp shall survive.”

Rashi quotes {the preparation for} “war” last, because this was the most difficult of the three things for which he readied himself — overcoming his fear and distress that perhaps he will be killed or that he will kill others.

⁴² {*Bereishis* 32:22.}

⁴³ {As Rashi here says that “*panav*” can connote anger.}

⁴⁴ {*Bereishis* 32:10.}

⁴⁵ {*Bereishis* 32:9.}

8.

NOT A TIME OF DISTRESS

We must still clarify: Why in his commentary did Rashi mention “gift” before “prayer?” Seemingly, Yaakov prayed before he dispatched his gift!

The explanation: Although in actuality, Yaakov sent the gift after praying, however, the **idea** behind the gift — “to find favor {with Eisav}”⁴⁶ — was the first thing Yaakov had already expressed by sending the messengers⁴⁷ to Eisav, as **clearly** stated in the beginning of the *parshah*.⁴⁸

[True, in a time of distress we first pray to Hashem that He send us salvation from Above. Nevertheless, Yaakov referred to Eisav continually as his brother — as Rashi points out,⁴⁹ “**you would** {often} **say** {about Eisav} ‘my brother,’”⁵⁰ and not the usual expression, “you said” {once} .

Yaakov wanted not only regular brotherhood between them, but rather, “**to find favor** {in Eisav’s eyes},” “Yaakov sent messengers... I sent this message to my master to find favor in his eyes.”⁵¹ As Rashi says, “For I am at peace with you, and **seek your friendship**.”⁵² This was not a time of distress.

Only after the messengers returned and informed Yaakov that Eisav was not acting like Yaakov’s “brother” but rather like “the wicked Eisav,”⁵³ did Yaakov pray: “**Rescue me**, please...” Afterward, he sent the gift; perhaps with this he will **find favor** in Eisav’s eyes.]

9.

⁴⁶ *Bereishis* 32:6.

⁴⁷ {According to some interpretations, actual angels.}

⁴⁸ {*Bereishis* 32:4.}

⁴⁹ *Bereishis* 32:7; see Rashi, ad loc.

⁵⁰ {In the original Hebrew, “*hayeesa omer*,” and not “*amarta*.”}

⁵¹ {Thus, Yaakov viewed Eisav as his brother and did not think the danger was real (and hence he did not pray first. The (implied) question arises, however, that if Yaakov did not sense that there was a danger, why did he send messengers? So the Rebbe answers that “it was only” that Yaakov wanted “not only regular brotherhood, “ but sought to improve their relationship.}

⁵² *Bereishis* 32:6; see Rashi, ad loc.

⁵³ *Bereishis* 32:7; see Rashi, ad loc.

THREE PREPARATIONS

Rashi's wording, "He prepared himself in **three ways**," is still not smooth: Seemingly, Rashi should have said, "He prepared himself by paying tribute, by praying, and by preparing for battle." (As the *Gemara* frequently asks,⁵⁴ "Why must the number be stated?") The explanation:

Even after the messengers informed Yaakov that Eisav was not behaving as a "brother," but rather, "he conducts himself toward you as the wicked Eisav; he still hates you," Yaakov had **three** possible simultaneous courses of action:

Considering **Eisav's situation**, paying tribute would possibly have been sufficient to mollify him. Yaakov understood this from the fact that his mother, Rivkah, had sent word for him to return home to Israel.⁵⁵

At first blush, this seems perplexing: Since the wicked Eisav "still hates you,"⁵⁶ how could Rivkah have sent for Yaakov to return? This itself proves that although Eisav "still hates you," Eisav's **anger**, however, dissipated. There was no danger that "I will lose you both in one day."⁵⁷ Consequently {since only} his enmity {but not rage remained, it} could be further diminished by paying tribute.

From **Yaakov's** perspective, however, he was concerned ("perhaps... I have become soiled with sin") that Eisav's hate — "he still hates you" — was enough to create a dangerous situation. **Similar** to what happened to Lot, his sin of residing in Sedom led to his being taken captive— "They kidnapped Lot."⁵⁸ Therefore, Yaakov also needed to pray and invoke the merit of his forefathers: "L-rd of my father, Avraham."

⁵⁴ *Shabbos* 69a.

⁵⁵ *Bereishis* 35:8; see Rashi's commentary.

⁵⁶ {Rashi's commentary on *Bereishis* 32:7.}

⁵⁷ *Bereishis* 27:45.

⁵⁸ *Bereishis* 14:12, See Rashi.

The salvation brought about by prayer can materialize in two ways: a) the same way Hashem {miraculously} saved Yaakov from Lavan, “L-rd of my father, Avraham, and the Fear of Yitzchak, was for me... last night, He admonished you”;⁵⁹ or, b) through war, similar to how Lot was saved⁶⁰ when Avraham had to fight to free him. {Since it was possible that Hashem’s salvation through his prayer would have been similar to the way Lot was saved} Yaakov also had to prepare for war.

10.

THE WINE OF TORAH

According to the “wine of Torah”⁶¹ in Rashi’s commentary — we can better appreciate that “He {Yaakov} prepared himself” in all three ways **simultaneously** {as elucidated in section 11}. This {emphasis on the *simultaneous* nature of Yaakov’s preparation} also explains {on a deeper level} Rashi’s nuanced wording, “He *fixed* {*hiskin*} himself in three ways.” In order to prepare for all three things **simultaneously**, against a person’s nature, he must “correct himself” — he must change his inborn nature. For each particular preparation Yaakov made was at odds with the other: Paying tribute expresses closeness or *chesed* {kindness}, while war expressed remoteness and *gevurah* {severity}. Both, however, are interactions between human beings. Prayer, in contrast, means beseeching mercy **from Above**. To simultaneously engage in these three different (and contrary) activities is unnatural for a person, even for the holy nature of the G-dly soul (since each of the above mentioned traits is distinct). Therefore, to accomplish this demands that “he *fixed* himself” — changing one’s nature.

⁵⁹ Bereishis 31:42.

⁶⁰ Bereishis 14:14, et passim.

⁶¹ {I.e., the deeper teachings of Torah.}

11.

TO WIN REQUIRES A CONCERTED EFFORT

This itself needs explanation: Why did Yaakov need to make these three rectifications **concurrently**?

We will clarify this through an explanation offered by *Chassidus*⁶² on the verse, “when all of the flocks were gathered there,”⁶³ employing a parable of a physical war: In order to ascertain victory, one side must deploy “all three of the flanks of its army against a single enemy flank or segment,” as this way, victory will be assured {given the overwhelming force}. Afterward, the same tactic should be applied in confronting the enemy’s second flank, etc.

Analogously, in one’s divine service, in order to vanquish the *yetzer hara*,⁶⁴ a person must awaken “all three attributes of holiness (love {*chesed*}, fear {*gevurah*}, and compassion {*tiferes*}) against a single attribute of *klipah*.⁶⁵ Then he will surely topple that particular negative attribute and overcome it.” This is what “when all of the flocks were gathered there” means — these refer to the holy attributes of “love, fear, and compassion.”

Just as this applies to the battle with the *yetzer hara* (on an individual basis), it also applies to the general *avodah* of the Jewish people in exile. Exile, generally, has a number of general forms — the exile of Yishmael, and the exile of Edom (Eisav).⁶⁶ Each form of exile demands a specific *avodah* to combat its style (Yishmael represents *chesed* of *klipah* and Eisav represents *gevurah* of *klipah*);⁶⁷ nevertheless, the method

⁶² Manuscript of the *Tzemach Tzedek* printed in *HaTamim* #3 p.120; *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vaeschanan*,” 5a.

⁶³ *Bereishis* 29:3.

⁶⁴ {The evil inclination.}

⁶⁵ {Lit., “a shell” or “a peel.” The term refers to anything that conceals, and thus opposes G-dliness, just as a shell or a peel conceals the fruit within.}

⁶⁶ {Edom (Rome) descends from Eisav.}

⁶⁷ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vaeschanan*,” 5a.

guaranteed to withstand (and to even overcome and transform) exile is to harness all three attributes of holiness **together**.

Since the ability of the Jewish people to perform this *avodah* (a sign for the children) is derived from “the actions of our forefathers,”⁶⁸ we see, regarding Yaakov, the choicest of the forefathers, the concept of unifying all three attributes regarding both types of exile.

As a preparation for Yaakov to live in the house of Lavan (which alludes to the Babylonian exile)⁶⁹ — “all of the flocks were gathered there.”⁷⁰ Similarly, the *avodah* to refine Eisav (the exile of Edom) necessitated that Yaakov prepare himself in three ways (together) — the three modes of *chesed* (tribute), *gevurah* (war), and *tiferes* and *rachamim* {mercy} (prayer).⁷¹

12.

THE LESSON: FIGHTING EISAV WITH ALL ONE’S POWER

From all of the above, we can derive a practical directive for the *avodah* of every Jew:

When a person must rescue Jewish children from the “education of Eisav,”⁷² he cannot be satisfied doing so within the limits of his own nature, as he is **accustomed** to serving Hashem. Rather, he must “prepare himself” — fix and transform himself. For when a person conducts himself methodically and rationally, according to the specific *avodah* to combat “Eisav,” he cannot be certain that he will overcome Eisav. And more importantly, he must save everyone from “Eisav” who needs saving.”

⁶⁸ {“The actions of our forefathers are a sign for the children” is an oft-quoted teaching of our Sages, commonly understood to mean that our forefathers, through their actions, set the patterns of the lives of their descendants, which they are destined to repeat. (See *Midrash Tanchuma*, *parshas Lech Lecha*, sec. 9; *Ramban’s* commentary on *Bereishis* 12:6 for some examples.) Chassidus takes this point one step further, indicating that the actions of our forefathers *empowered* future generations. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 25, p. 123, and the sources referenced there. }

⁶⁹ See *Ohr Hatorah*, “*Vayeitzei*,” 226a.

⁷⁰ {*Bereishis* 29:3, part of the narrative of Yaakov coming to live in Lavan’s house.}

⁷¹ {Mercy and prayer are related in that one arouses Hashem’s mercy through prayer.}

⁷² {Presumably the intent here is to any purely secular education.}

Only when a person proceeds without calculations, with a sense of urgency, “against his will,” marshalling all of his energies together, “fixing himself,” will he succeed in vanquishing Eisav. So much so, the promise,⁷³ “Liberators shall march up on Mount Zion to wreak judgement on Mount Eisav, and dominion shall belong to Hashem” will be fulfilled with the actual coming of our righteous *Moshiach* speedily in our days.

– Based on a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Vayishlach*, 5730 (1969)

⁷³ *Ovadiah* 1:21.