

## The Manner in which God's Word affects a Faithful Heart

In this week's reading from [Parashat Vayetze](#) (*Shemot / Genesis 28:10-32:2*) Jacob flees, on the advice of his mother, from his brother Esau. There is a lot that occurs in this week's Torah portion, we read that while traveling, Jacob lays down and falls asleep and the Lord speaks to him in a dream (וַיִּקְלֹם) about the covenant He made with his fathers (*Bereshit / Genesis 28:10-19*), and the Lord promises to be with him too. Jacob travels to Haran and meets Laban his mother's brother (*29:9-14*) and marries Rachel and Leah and the entire nation of Israel is born, all except Benjamin the youngest son. On arriving in Haran, he falls in love and makes a deal with Laban to work seven years for Rachel to be his wife (*29:18-21*). Laban tricks Jacob and gives the older daughter Leah instead and so he works another seven years for Rachel (*29:22-28*). The twelve tribes of Israel are born to Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah, (*29:31-30:27*). Jacob and Laban agree on wages (*30:28-43*) for the work that Jacob is performing, and the Lord greatly prospers Jacob and his flocks. As a result, Laban and his sons are upset that Jacob has become so wealthy in cattle (*31:1-3*). The Lord speaks to Jacob that it is time for him to return to the land of Canaan, to take his family, and all he owns, back to the land of Canaan (*31:4-21*). The Torah portion concludes with Jacob making a covenant with Laban to do no harm to one another (*31:22-32:2*).

In the opening verses of this week's portion, the Lord speaks by a dream and Jacob has a vision of angels ascending and descending upon a ladder. We are told that the Lord God stood over top of the ladder, and then he stood next to the ladder and spoke to Jacob. This is the first time the Lord God has revealed Himself to Jacob according to the Torah. Previously, the Lord has been revealed through his father, and family speaking of the goodness of God and how he has worked in their lives. (*Note the importance of our sharing our faith with family and friends.*) As the Lord reveals Himself to Jacob, He reiterates the covenant that He made with his fathers Abraham and Isaac, and this affects Jacob in a powerful way. He renames the place, "*Beit-El*" (בֵּית-אֵל, Bethel, "*House of God*") and recognizes the meaning of these words and so he faithfully promises

to return a tenth of the wealth God will give him.

**ספר בראשית פרק כח Bereshit / Genesis 28:11-13**

יה וישכם יעקב בבקר ויקח את-  
האבן אשר-שם מראשיתו וישם  
אתה מצבה ויצק שמן על-ראשה:  
יט ויקרא את-שם-המקום ההוא  
בית-אל ואולם לוז שם-העיר  
לראשונה: כ וידר יעקב נדר  
לאמר אם-יהיה אלהים עמדי וש-  
מרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך  
ונתן-לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבש:  
כא ושכתי בשלום אל-בית אבי  
והיה יהוה לי לאלהים: כב והאבן  
הזאת אשר-שמתי מצבה יהיה  
בית אלהים וכל אשר תתן-לי  
עשור אעשרנו לך:

*28:18 So Jacob rose early in the morn-  
ing, and took the stone that he had put  
under his head and set it up as a pil-  
lar and poured oil on its top. 28:19 He  
called the name of that place Bethel;  
however, previously the name of the city  
had been Luz. 28:20 Then Jacob made  
a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me  
and will keep me on this journey that I  
take, and will give me food to eat and  
garments to wear, 28:21 and I return to  
my father's house in safety, then the Lord  
will be my God. 28:22 'This stone, which  
I have set up as a pillar, will be God's  
house, and of all that You give me I will  
surely give a tenth to You.'* (NASB)

Jacob rose early recognizing the significance of the dream. The Lord had revealed His presence in this place and made a promise. As a result, Jacob set up a metzevah (מצבה, pillar) and anointed the pillar with oil. Jacob then makes a covenant with God using this pillar as a sign that if the Lord brings him back to this place, and provides for the necessities of life, he says *“then the Lord will be my God.”* He goes on to say that as he has set up this pillar (מצבה), he will give a tenth of all the Lord gives to him. What is interesting about what Jacob is doing is found in the use of the Hebrew word metzevah (מצבה). The word metzevah (מצבה) is used elsewhere in the Tanach as a reference to setting up an *“image,”* as in the case of Israel’s sin of setting up an image to worship. In the Tanach we read the following according to *Hosea 3:4*.

**Hosea 3:4**

*4:4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days with-  
out a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice,*

*and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim* (דָּ כִּי יָמִים רַבִּים יָשְׁבוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵין מְלֶךְ וְאֵין שָׂר וְאֵין זָבַח וְאֵין מִצְבָּה וְאֵין אֶפֶוד וּתְרָפִים:

Here we are told that a day is coming when Israel will abide without a king, prince, sacrifice, image, ephod, and teraphim. The word Teraphim is explained in the rabbinic literature as a reference to disgraceful things, and in many English translations of the Bible it is translated as idols, or household gods. The Lord is telling Israel through the prophet Hosea that there will come a day when they will not have anything, including their detestable things, their idols and images of worship.

Jacob is not necessarily setting up the metzevah (מִצְבָּה) as an idol image. He is setting the pillar up as a marker or point of reference for return to the place the Lord revealed Himself. In his own way he is making a covenant with the Lord God in heaven, but he does not make the covenant in blood, he does so with stone and with oil. Here Jacob makes a covenant with God asking him to be with him, to make him safe, and to provide him with the necessities of life on his journey in a different land. In the covenant that Jacob makes, his statements appear to be almost a test of whether the Lord will be His God that is based upon whether the Lord will provide him with the necessities of life. In a sense, Jacob is asking the Lord to redeem him, he is being exiled and he looks forward to the day when the Lord will bring him back.

The way in which Jacob speaks his covenant with God (*“if the Lord God will be with me and give me the necessities of life, then returning to this place having been given the necessities of life the Lord will be my God.”*), there appears to be an interesting parallel in the midrash on *Tehillim / Psalms 80, Part 2* the rabbis state, אַף שָׁנָה, מֵה שָׁנָה גְאוּלָּה פְרִנְסָה, “*As a year of redemption brings with it the necessities of life, so a year that brings the necessities of life brings redemption with it.*” The rabbis use an Epanodos in their description of to listen, to give ear. (*Epanodos - a figure of speech where earlier words are repeated in the reverse order.*) The rabbis make a statement and then reverse the word order for the purpose of emphasizing the play on the meaning of the words and their interaction with one another. The homiletic introduction states that the year of redemption (שָׁנָה גְאוּלָּה) brings the necessities of

life (livelihood, פרנסה) and then reverses the order, the year of necessities (שנת פרנסה) brings redemption (גאולה). The question is how does the year of redemption bring the necessity of life, and how does the year of the necessity of life bring redemption? Is this the concept that Jacob had when making the covenant and request for the Lord to provide the necessities of life and to bring him back (redeem) into the Land?

We might be able to gain some insights into this reading from the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:6-7*.

***Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:6:***

*Greater is Torah than priesthood and kingship, for monarchy is obtained with thirty levels, and priesthood with twenty-four, and Torah is obtained with forty-eight things. And they are these: learning, listening of the ear, preparation of speech, understanding of the heart, reverence, awe, humility, happiness, purity, service of Sages, care in [selection of] friends, debate of the students, clarification, reading, learning, minimal commodities, minimal worldly occupation, minimal pleasure, minimal sleep, minimal conversation, minimal laughter, patience, generosity, trust in Sages, acceptance of suffering, knowing one's place, gladness in one's portion, erection of a fence to his words, lack of self-aggrandizement, loveliness, love of God, love of the creatures, love of the righteous, love of the upright, love of rebuke, distancing from honor, lack of arrogance in learning, lack of joy in teaching, lifting of a burden with one's friend, judgment with the benefit of the doubt, standing for the truth, standing for peace, deliberation in study, questioning and responding, hearing and adding, learning in order to teach and learning in order to act, making his master wiser, focusing one's words, citing the source, for it is taught that one who cites a source brings redemption to the world, as it says (Esther 2:22): "Esther told the king in Mordechai's name." גדולה תורה יותר מן הכהונה ומן המלכות, שהמלכות נקנית בשלשים מעלות, והכהונה בעשרים וארבע, והתורה נקנית בארבעים ושמונה דברים. ואלו הן, בתלמוד, בשמיעת*

האזן, בעריכת שפתים, בבינת הלב, באימה, ביראה, בענוה, בשמ-  
 חה, בטהרה, בשמוש חכמים, בדקדוק חברים, בפלפול התלמידים,  
 בישוב, במקרא, במשנה, במעוט סחורה, במעוט דרך ארץ, במעוט  
 תענוג, במעוט שנה, במעוט שיחה, במעוט שחוק, בארך אפים, בלב  
 טוב, באמונת חכמים, בקבלת היסורין, המכיר את מקומו, והש-  
 מח בחלקו, והעושה סיג לדבריו, ואינו מחזיק טובה לעצמו, אהוב,  
 אוהב את המקום, אוהב את הבריות, אוהב את הצדקות, אוהב את  
 המישרים, אוהב את התוכחות, ומתרחק מן הכבוד, ולא מגיס לבו  
 בתלמודו, ואינו שמח בהוראה, נושא בעל עם חברו, ומכריעו לכף  
 זכות, ומעמידו על האמת, ומעמידו על השלום, ומתישב לבו בתל-  
 מודו, שואל ומשיב שומע ומוסיף, הלומד על מנת ללמד והלומד על  
 מנת לעשות, המחכים את רבו, והמכון את שמועתו, והאומר דבר  
 בשם אומרו, הא למדת כל האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאלה  
 (לעולם, שנאמר (אסתר ב), ותאמר אסתר למלך בשם מרדכי.

What is important to note from the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:6* is the relationship of the Torah to redemption and the necessity of life. The rabbis say that the Torah is greater than the priesthood and kingship, and then go on to list the significance using the gematria, where the numeric value of Torah is greater than these other two. They go on to list the added value of the study of Torah, and then they conclude with the one who cites the source brings redemption to the world. Note that there are two aspects to the comment of citing the source. One is in the meaning of the words, that one is to *“focus upon one’s words citing the source”* meaning to consider your motivation in what you say. The other is in citing the source of the words, whether Scripture, or someone else. Note that in many cases, throughout the Talmud, Mishnah, and Midrashim, the rabbis always cite the source of their comments (interpretation) as a former rabbi. Consider the NT connection of citing the source of our Rabbi Yeshua the Messiah and how doing so brings redemption to the world. (*Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. KJV*) His words lead to eternal life (*John 6:60, 12:50*). Note what Yeshua states concerning the Mitzvot in *John 12:50 I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” (NASB)* Note also that Yeshua taught Torah as a way of life. In addition, if Yeshua’s words do lead to eternal life, then citing his words brings



redemption to the world, a direct parallel to what the Rabbis are saying here in the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:6*. Note also the relationship with the necessities of life. The list given in *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:6* is pretty exhaustive. In each of these words used to describe what happens to the one who studies Torah, it is possible to find a NT verse of either Yeshua, the disciples, or Paul speaking of who we are or what we should be in the Messiah. Take for example the words “*minimal laughter*” where Paul says in *Ephesians 5:4* “*and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*” (NASB)

The rabbis continue in the Mishnah on the importance of the Torah saying the following:

***Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:7:***

*Great is Torah, for it gives life to those who do it in this world and in the next world, as it says: ‘For they are life to those that find them, and healing to all his flesh’ (Proverbs 4:22), and it says ‘It will be healing for your navel, and tonic to your bones’ (Proverbs 3:8). And it says ‘It is a tree of life to those who hold it, and those who grasp it are happy’ (Proverbs 3:18). And it says ‘For they are an accompaniment of grace for your head, and a necklace for your throat’ (Proverbs 1:9). And it says ‘She will give your head an accompaniment of grace; with a crown of glory she will protect you’ (Proverbs 4:9). And it says ‘For by me your days will be multiplied, and you will be given additional years of life’ (Proverbs 9:11). And it says ‘Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left is wealth and honor’ (Proverbs 3:16), and it says ‘For length of days and years of life and peace will be added to you’ (Proverbs 3:2), and it says ‘her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace’ (Proverbs 3: 17).* (גדולה תורה שהיא)

נותנת חיים לעשיה בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא, שנאמר (משלי ד), כי חיים הם למוצאיהם ולכל בשרו מרפא, ואומר (שם ג), רפאות תהי לשרך ושקוי לעצמותיך. ואומר (שם), עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותומכיה מאשר. ואומר (שם א), כי לוית חן הם לראשך וענקים לגרגרתיך. ואומר (שם ד), תתן לראשך לוית חן עטרת תפארת תמך

גנך. ואומר (שם ט), כי בי ירבו ימיך ויוסיפו לך שנות חיים. ואומר (שם ג), ארך ימים בימינה בשמאולה עשר וכבוד, ואומר (שם), כי ארך ימים ושנות חיים ושלום יוסיפו לך ואומר (שם), דרכיה דרכי נועם וכל נתיבותיה שלום.

Note how consistent these words are with Yeshua's words in *John 12:50*. If we consider these words from the Mishnah and the homiletic introduction states that the year of redemption (שנת גאולה) brings the necessities of life (livelihood, פרנסה) and then reverses the order, the year of necessities (שנת פרנסה) brings redemption (גאולה). Asaph's words calling out to the Lord to give ear, Asaph is seeking the Lord God in heaven to hear; the year of redemption is connected to seeking the Lord and the Lord who provides the necessary redemption for His people, which leads to the necessity of life as is found in the Torah, and its connection to the source, Yeshua God's Messiah. The year of the necessity of life corresponds to the redemption, by reason that when one obtains these necessities which lead to the redemption of the world, one has God's redemption. Note how the list appears to be the work God begins in us who are in the Messiah, the creating of the new man, our motivation, the changed heart, the plans for our lives to serve Him, to live for Him, all of these things are connected. From a rabbinic context, the year of redemption brings the necessity of life, and the year of the necessity of life brings redemption, because the Lord God in heaven is involved.

The entire midrash states the following:

***Midrash Tehillim 80, Part 2***

*2. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel (Tehillim / Psalms 80:2). As a year of redemption brings with it the necessities of life, so a year that brings the necessities of life brings redemption with it. And so redemption sustains us every day, so the necessities of life maintain us every day. As a redemption is miraculous, so the necessities of life are miraculous. Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani taught, The miracle of the necessities of life is greater than the miracle of redemption, for while redemption depends upon an angel, as Jacob said, The angel who has redeemed me form all*

*evil (Bereshit / Genesis 48:16), the necessities of life come from the hand of the Holy One blessed be He, as Jacob said, The God who has been my Shepherd all my life long unto this day (Bereshit / Genesis 48:15). Hence Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel. You that led Joseph like a flock (Tehillim / Psalms 80:2), as Joseph in the seven years of plenty gathered for the seven years of famine, so I will gather in the life of this world for the life in the world to come. As Joseph sustained his brothers according to their deeds, as is said, And Joseph sustained his brethren according to the little ones (Bereshit / Genesis 47:12), do You sustain us according to our deeds. Rabbi Menahema said in the name of rabbi Abin, As Joseph, whose brothers had required him with evil deeds, requited them with good deeds, even so have we, in a manner of speaking, required You with wicked deeds, having transgressed Your commandments, but You have required us with good deeds. Hence You that led the flock like Joseph.*

ב רועה ישראל האזינה. מה שנת גאולה. פרנסה, אף שנת פרנסה גאולה, ומה הגאולה בכל יום, אף פרנסה בכל יום, מה הגאולה פלאים, אף פרנסה פלאים, אמר ר' שמואל בר נחמני הפרנסה גדולה יותר מן הגאולה שהגאולה תלויה על ידי מלאך, שנאמה המלאך הגואל אותי (בראשית מז יו), והפרנסה על יד הקב"ה, שנאמר האלהים הרועה אותי (שם שם בראשית מ"ח טו), הוי רועה ישראל האזינה. נוהג כצאן יוסף. מה יוסף כינס בשבע שני השבע לשבע שני הרעב, אף אני אכניס מחיי העולם הזה לחיי העולם הבא, מה יוסף כלכל את אחיו לפי מעשיהם, [שנאמר לחם לפי הטף (בראשית מז יב)], אף אתה כלכל אותנו לפי מעשינו. אמר ר' מנחמא בשם ר' אבין מה יוסף גמלו אחיו רעות והוא גמל עליהם טובות, אף אנו גמלנוך (לך) רעות ואתה גמלת עלינו טובות כביכול שעברנו על מצותיך, הוי נוהג כצאן יוסף.

In *Midrash Tehillim 80, Part 2*, The rabbis state “*As a redemption is miraculous, so the necessities of life are miraculous.*” Have you ever considered the necessities of life as being a miracle of God? Consider the following from the Torah in Parashat Ekev,



*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*

*8:16 'In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end. 8:17 'Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' 8:18 'But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 8:19 'It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. (NASB)*

טז המאכלה מן במדבר אשר לא ידעו אבותיה ואמר בלבבך למען ענתה ולמען נסתה להיטבה באחריתה: יז ואמר בלבבך כחי ועצם ידי עשה לי את-החיל הזה: יח וזכרת את-יהוה אלהיך כי הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל למען הקים את-בריתו אשר-נשבע לאבותיך כיום הזה: יט והיה אם-שכח תשכח את-יהוה אלהיך והלכת אחרי אלהים אחרים ועבדתם והשתחווית להם העדתי בכם (היום כי אבד תאבדו):

Notice how Moshe writes concerning the way the Lord fed the people in the wilderness. The purpose was to humble the people and to test them, so that they would not believe it was by their own power they entered into the promised Land. Moshe states that it is the Lord God in heaven who gives us the power to make wealth. It is for this propose, to confirm the covenant He swore to our fathers. The Lord gives us the ability to obtain the necessities of life, and He wants us to recognize that it is the Lord who is doing this. The point is, we are to recognize who it is that gives us life so that we do not turn to other gods to serve them or to turn to our own ways away from God's ways. Another interpretation may be that the necessities of life may become a god or an idol in one's heart by the pursuit of wealth and gain to the point of neglecting our service to the Lord, and our service towards others. In addition, the same could be said of pride, which is the raising up of ourselves, thinking more of ourselves in our hearts than what we truly are. Jacob had the perspective that all he will receive is from the Lord and that what he has he will give back.



It is interesting how the rabbinic interpretation gives the following comments concerning the necessities of life:

*Rabbi Samuel son of Nahmani taught, The miracle of the necessities of life is greater than the miracle of redemption, for while redemption depends upon an angel, as Jacob said, The angel who has redeemed me from all evil (Bereshit / Genesis 48:16), the necessities of life come from the hand of the Holy One blessed be He, as Jacob said, The God who has been my Shepherd all my life long unto this day (Bereshit / Genesis 48:15).*

The rabbis conclude the necessities of life is a greater miracle than the miracle of redemption. The reason being, “*redemption*” depends upon a messenger (מלאך, angel), as opposed to “*necessity*” that requires God’s hand upon one’s life to sustain and to bless as we learn according to Parshiot Toldot and Vayetze, in the lives of Jacob and Joseph, respectively.

The concepts of redemption and the necessities of life are paralleled to Joseph’s life in *Midrash Tehillim 80, Part 2*, and his God given gifts and putting him in a place of power to preserve the people. This is described as God “*Gathering in, the life of this world, for the life in the world to come.*” This illustrates God’s role in the work He is performing in our lives to bring us into the world to come. This is then paralleled in God’s working in our lives for the purpose of sustaining us in our deeds.

The basic concepts here in relation to Parashat Ekev (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18*), the Midrash, the Mishnah, and the Torah portion is the idea of the Lord God who causes us to do good works. The question presented here for us is in the context of works which merit the kingdom of God. Do your works merit the kingdom of God? Or said another way, do you see the Lord God working in your life to produce good works? Is the Spirit of God working in your life to cause you to live a humble life, to do good works, to do justice, and righteousness, to live holy lives, and to help the poor and your neighbor? If not, why not? Jacob expected the Lord to work in this way in his life. Do you expect the Lord to work in this way in yours?

*Midrash Tehillim 80, Part 2* concludes saying, “*Rabbi Menahema said in the name of rabbi Abin, As Joseph, whose brothers had required*

*him with evil deeds, requited them with good deeds, even so have we, in a manner of speaking, required You with wicked deeds, having transgressed Your commandments, but You have required us with good deeds. Hence You that led the flock like Joseph.”* The conclusion of the midrash is that in the evil deeds we have done, the Lord God continues to bless us doing good things for us. The midrash states that God required use with good deeds. The word used here is גמלה meaning “*benefited.*” Though we have transgressed the Torah command, the Lord benefits us with goodness and righteousness, and calls us back to His ways and to faith in his Messiah, the redeemer.

The topic of this week’s Torah portion is the Manner in which God’s Word affects a Faithful Heart. The point is to consider in your life how God’s word affects you; do you have a faithful heart? Jacob believed in the word and the promises of God. While studying the Apostolic Writings (NT) it is amazing how often the authors cite examples from the Torah and the Prophets as launching points to introduce what they are about to teach. This denotes the significance of the Torah and the Prophets for us today and the need to be diligent students of God’s Word and of our own lives. The author of the book of Hebrews has much to say about the Torah and the Messiah. The most difficult aspect is how to understand or interpret the meaning of Scripture. Depending on one’s background, there may be a number of ways to interpret a simple passage to have various meanings. This delineates the issue of interpretation having the aspect of being very emotionally driven. Emotions have a huge effect on our understanding of God’s word, specifically in tradition which is considered very emotionally motivated. The question is do you follow tradition because it makes you feel good, are you more emotionally motivated to follow tradition as opposed to Scripture? *Hebrews 4:7-12* explains the effect of God’s word, which is stronger than any two edged sword and is capable of causing a division between both the soul and the spirit and dividing between joints and marrow, and judging between the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.

### ***Hebrews 4:7-13***

*4:7 He again fixes a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, ‘Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.’*

4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. 4:9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 4:10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. 4:11 Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience. 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (NASB)

ז לְכֹן הוֹסִיף לְקַבֹּעַ יוֹם מְקַיֵּץ יָמִים רַבִּים בְּאַמְרוֹ עַל־יְדֵי דָוִד הַיּוֹם  
כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הַיּוֹם אִם־בִּקְלוֹ תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־תְּקִשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם: ח פִּי אֱלוֹ  
הַנִּיחַ לָהֶם יְהוֹשִׁעַ לֹא־הָיָה מְדַבֵּר אַחֲרָי כֵּן עַל־יוֹם אַחֵר: ט עַל־  
כֵּן נִשְׁאַרָה עוֹד מְנוּחַת שְׁבֻת לְעַם אֱלֹהִים: י פִּי הִבָּא אֶל־מְנוּחַתוֹ  
גַּם־הוּא שְׁבַת מִמְּלֹאכְתּוֹ כְּאַשֶׁר הֶאֱלֹהִים מִשְׁלוֹ: יא לְכֹן נִשְׁקָדָה־  
נָא לְבוֹא אֶל־הַמְּנוּחָה הַזֹּאת לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִכְפֹּשׁ אִישׁ וְהָיָה מִמָּרָה  
כְּמוֹהֶם: יב כִּי־דַבֵּר הֶאֱלֹהִים חַי הוּא וּפְעֵל גְּבוּרֹת וְחַד מְכַל־תְּחַרֵּב  
פִּיפְיוֹת וַיִּרְדַּע־לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין־הַנְּפֹשׁ וּבֵין הָרוּחַ בֵּין הַדְּבָקִים וּבֵין־  
הַמּוֹחַ וּבִחֵן מַחְשְׁבוֹת לְבָב וּמַזְמוֹתָיו:

The soul (הַנְּפֹשׁ) and the spirit (הָרוּחַ) are the two primary immaterial aspects that Scripture ascribes to humanity. The Spirit desires the things of God (Romans 7), and the soul desires the things of the flesh. According to the Apostolic Writings, believers are said to be spiritually alive (*1 Corinthians 2:11, James 2:26*), whereas unbelievers are spiritually dead (*Ephesians 2:1-5, Colossians 2:13*). Paul spoke of the spirit as being pivotal to the life of the believer (*1 Corinthians 2:14, 3:1, Ephesians 1:3, 5:19, Colossians 1:9, and 3:16*). However, the soul is the reference to the material aspects of life and the body, and so the Word of God has the capability of placing a division between the two in the sense that the Spirit wants the things of god while the flesh wants to live for self, just as Esau demonstrated in his life. Jacob demonstrates for us in this week's Torah portion that he remained faithful to the Lord God, he did not compromise his faith. He trusted in the Lord, and lived according to His word. Ac-

according to the rabbis (*Shelah, Toldot, Ner Mitzvah 2*) “... all the patriarchs observed the commandment בכל לבבם, בכל נפשם ובכל מאודם “with all their hearts, their souls and their means.” The words בכל מאודם can be understood literally, i.e. “a tithe of everything.” The expression בכל נפשם refers to Jacob who even tithed נפשות, souls; the expression בכל לבבם, refers to תרומה גדולה, something for which the Torah does not prescribe a fixed amount. The amount to be set aside for the priest is left to the generosity of the individual, i.e. it is something to be decided on by his heart, לבבו.” In a similar way, the word of God calls us to give all of our hearts, souls, and means for the service of the Lord God in heaven. This is the manner in which God’s Word affects a faithful heart!





