

# WHERE IS HASHEM?

## THE 6TH LEVEL OF EMUNAH

### Background

When Yaakov Avinu left the house of his parents, HASHEM promised him protection. This *perek* opens up some 35 years later. First Yaakov went to the yeshiva of Shem and Ever for 14 years, and then he worked for Lavan for 21 years, so we are now standing 35 years later when Aysav has come to attack. The Gemarah in *Brochos* asks a question: how is it possible that Yaakov was afraid? Didn't HASHEM promise him that He would offer protection to Yaakov? In fact, the Gemarah calls this a contradiction since HASHEM earlier promised that He would protect Yaakov, yet now the *posuk* is saying that Yaakov was afraid.

### Questions

Why is this considered a contradiction? Isn't it possible that Yaakov had human fears, much like you and I would? After all, it had been many years since HASHEM made that promise, and Aysav was a mighty, wicked individual accompanied by 400 armed men prepared to meet him in battle. Maybe Yaakov was quite simply afraid. Why does the Gemarah consider this to be a contradiction, as if to say it is not possible that Yaakov could be afraid?

#### ספר בראשית פרק לב

ז ויִירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיֵּצֵר  
לוֹ וַיַּחַץ אֶת הָעַם אֲשֶׁר  
אִתּוֹ וְאֶת הַצֹּאן וְאֶת  
הַבָּקָר וְהַגְּמָלִים לְשְׁנֵי  
מַחֲנֹת

*And Yaakov was very afraid, and it caused him pain. And he split the nation that was with him, along with the sheep and the cattle, into two camps.*

#### תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ד/א

דרבי יעקב בר אידי רמי כתיב והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתך בכל אשר תלך וכתיב ויירא יעקב מאד אמר שמא יגרום החטא

*Rav Yaakov bar Idi states, "There is a contradiction. On the one hand it says, 'And I will guard you wherever you will go.' But it also says 'And Yaakov was very fearful.' (How is it possible that Yaakov was afraid when HASHEM openly promised to guard him?) The answer is that he was afraid that his sins made it such that HASHEM's promise no longer applied.*