

STAYING PURE IN AN IMPURE WORLD

Background

Rivkah tells Yaakov that he must run away because Aysav is plotting to kill him. On the way, Yaakov makes a covenant with HASHEM. Yaakov asks for four requests. One of them is that he will be in peace. Rashi tells us that that is actually a request that HASHEM should protect him from the influence of Lavan – “I shouldn’t learn from the ways of Lavan.”

ספר בראשית פרק כח

כ) וַיֵּדֶר יַעֲקֹב נֶדֶר לֵאמֹר
אִם יְהִיָּה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי
וּשְׁמֵרנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר
אֲנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ וְנָתַן לִי לֶחֶם
לֵאכֹל וּבִגְד לְלַבֵּשׁ
כא) וְשָׁבֹתִי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל
בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה יְדוּד לִי
לֵאלֹהִים

And Yaakov made a vow saying, “If HASHEM will be with me and guard me on this path that I go, and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear, and HASHEM will return me in peace to my father’s house. . .”

רש"י על בראשית פרק כח פסוק כא

בשלום - שלם מן החטא שלא אלמד מדרכי לבן

In Peace- completely [free] from sin; that I shouldn’t learn from the ways of Lavan.

Questions

1 Yaakov Avinu is now 63 years old. He’s a *tzaddik gamur* who has spent all of his days in piety and perfection. He is known as the greatest of the Avos.

2 He is now going to someone who is the opposite of him in nature; Yaakov by nature was a man of honesty, while Lavan was a man of deceit.

3 Yaakov is clearly aware of the danger (and even the extent of the danger) by the fact that he feels compelled to ask for heavenly assistance.

Why would Yaakov be afraid that Lavan, of all people, would influence him - and so much so that he has to *daven* and make it one of his four requests from HASHEM?