

## DO YOU KNOW WHY YOUR DEEDS ARE 100X GREATER?!

### PARSHAS VAYESHEV

Yaakov suffered through many difficult struggles. His brother, Eisav, wanted to kill him. His father-in-law, Lavan, cheated him by switching Leah instead of Rochel. Lavan also swindled Yaakov by changing the conditions of his salary 100 times! Then Yaakov's daughter, Dina, was molested by Shem ben Chamor. And then Yaakov's wife, Rochel, died. After all this, when Yaakov returned to Eretz Yisroel, he finally wanted to live in tranquility. Just when Yaakov wanted to live in tranquility, Yosef disappeared and Yaakov thought that Yosef had been killed by wild animals.

**Rashi** (Bereishis 37:1) quotes the **Midrash** that when the righteous wish to live in tranquility, Hashem says, "It is not enough for the righteous that which is stored for them in the world to come. They wish to live at ease in this world too?!"

**Rav Chaim Shmulevitz** zt"l (Sichos Mussar) says that certainly, Yaakov did not desire tranquility to be able to enjoy the comforts of this world. Rather, he wanted peace of mind to be able to learn Torah and serve Hashem without major distractions. So, what was wrong with that? **Chasam Sofer** also says that Hashem desires to give only good. So, what would be the problem if a tzadik enjoys this world in addition to enjoying the next world?

**Rav Chaim** answers that the purpose of our life in this world is not to serve Hashem in tranquility. Rather, we were put here to serve Hashem while overcoming obstacles in the face of adversity!

**Rashi** explains the **Mishna** (Pirkei Avos 5:26) which states that the reward for observing the mitzvos increases in proportion to the effort and difficulty needed for its performance. The **Midrash Shmuel** (on Avos) says that Hashem

*"Yaakov settled in the land of his father's residence, in the land of Canaan." (Bereishis 37:1)*

rewards a person for learning Torah based on the amount and quality of the effort that he puts into it. Even if one fails to accomplish a great deal, he still reaps tremendous reward!

**Avos d'Rav Nosson** (Avos 5:26) says that one deed accomplished under difficult or challenging circumstances is greater than 100 deeds done without hardships.

*Once, a weak student spoke to the **Chofetz Chaim** zt"l. The Chofetz Chaim asked how much Gemorah he learned. Sheepishly, the student replied that he had only learned 1 blatt (1 full page). The Chofetz Chaim said that he was incorrect, that he had actually learned 100 blatt! The student was confused. The Chofetz Chaim explained that since the student found learning to be difficult, his 1 blatt was the equivalent of 100 blatt that the Chofetz Chaim had learned!*

*The Mir Yeshiva miraculously escaped Nazi Europe and relocated in Shanghai, China. The conditions were difficult and the students of the yeshiva did not know if their family members who remained in Europe were alive or dead. Despite those challenges, the students later said that*

*their Torah learning while in Shanghai was on a greater level than before or after. Torah scholarship thrived in Shanghai. As low as the humanitarian situation was, the Torah flourished in the face of adversity!*

We all have challenges to climb. For some, the challenges seem unsurmountable. The purpose of our life in this world is not to serve Hashem in tranquility. Rather, we were put here to serve Hashem while overcoming obstacles in the face of adversity!

**We must muster the strength to continue to serve Hashem by learning Torah and performing mitzvos.**

**We must continue to have total faith in Hashem despite our challenges.**

**One day we will become aware that our deeds which are done despite our challenges, will be rewarded at a rate that is 100x greater than our good deeds done at times of no challenge.**

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*Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.*

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