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## Professional Speaker

**Y**ou look like you are deep in thought, Yankie."

"I am, Doni."

"What are you thinking about?"

"What I want to accomplish in life."

"That is very deep. You have my curiosity going. What do you want to accomplish in life?"

"I want to be a professional speaker."

"That is fantastic. To be able to speak in front of a large audience is wonderful. You can teach Torah on a large scale. I wish you a lot of success."

"Thanks for the well wishes, Doni, but that is not exactly what I meant by professional speaker."

"I see. What did you mean?"

"I want to be a professional speaker like my namesake, Yaakov Avinu."

"Really? How was Yaakov Avinu a professional speaker? I don't recall any mention in the Torah of him speaking before huge crowds."

"Very true, Doni. However, Yaakov Avinu was a professional in the sense that he chose his words very carefully, as a professional craftsman chooses his tools and materials."

"Can you give me an example, Yankie?"

**L**ook carefully at the conversation between Yaakov and Eisav, during their meeting after many years of separation (Bereshis 33:5-15). Rabbeinu Bechaye points out that Eisav speaks in short phrases, never mentioning Hashem's name. This is an indication of his *gaava* (conceit). Yaakov, on the other hand, is lengthy in his conversation; speaking praises of Hashem and all of the kindness that He performed for him."

"I see."

"Yaakov sent a message to Eisav before they met. 'I have ox, donkey, sheep, man and maidservant' (Bereshis 32:6). Although he had herds and herds of cattle, he described them in the singular: 'ox, donkey, etc.' This is the way of tsaddikim, to minimize their accomplishments. Yaakov chose his words carefully."

"Fascinating."

"Rabbeinu Bechaye has a deeper insight. Sheep are the choicest of all animals. If you look carefully into the Torah, you will see that sheep are always mentioned first. Paroh gave Avraham sheep and cattle (Bereshis 12:16). Yitzchak acquired flocks of sheep and cattle (Bereshis 26:14). Yaakov had many sheep maidservants and servants, camels and donkeys (Bereshis 30:43). However, when Yaakov sent a message to Eisav, he mentioned oxen first, and not sheep."

"Why?"

"Yaakov did not want to mention sheep first, because he used the skins of a goat to

trick Eisav out of his bracha."

"What sensitivity. What craftsmanship. Every word was so carefully chosen."

"Yaakov Avinu was a master of the profession of speaking."

"I see what you mean. He was truly a professional speaker."

*Kinderlach . . .*

*Select a good profession for yourselves. Be a professional speaker. Choose your words well. Don't say too much about yourselves and your accomplishments. Rather speak about Hashem, and all that He has done for you. Be sensitive to other people's feelings, and never say anything to hurt them. Loshon Hora or rechilus should never cross your lips. Remember kinderlach, it takes time and practice to learn a profession. However, it is worth it. Professional speakers have a wonderful life, in both this world and the next. Their words live on forever.*



## Your Potential

**I** (my merits) have been diminished by all of the kindness that You have done for me" (Bereshis 32:11). Yaakov was on his way to meet Eisav and he was concerned. Eisav still harbored feelings of

resentment after Yaakov bought the birthright from him and tricked Yitzchak into giving him Eisav's blessing. Eisav had 400 men with him!

Why was Yaakov fearful? Hashem would surely protect him, as He had done all of the years that he was in Lavan's house. Angels watched over him from the moment he left his home in Beer Sheva. Rashi explains that his merits were diminished by the kindness that Hashem had done for him. Merits are accumulated as a reward for good deeds. They can be used up now in the form of blessings (health, wealth, children, etc.) or they can be saved to avert future problems (war, sickness, poverty, etc.). Yaakov was concerned that all of his merits had been used up on the blessings that Hashem had showered upon him. Now when trouble was coming, he had no merits to protect him, and he would be punished for his sins.

**W**hat sins were Yaakov concerned about? He was a tsaddik who had managed to keep all 613 mitzvos in the house of Lavan. He had learned Torah for 14 years (without sleeping in a bed) in the Beis HaMedrash of Shem and Ever. Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l relates that Yaakov was afraid that he had wasted some of his potential. He knew that he had enormous *kochos* (strengths). Perhaps he did not use them to his fullest. Therefore, he might be punished at the hands of Eisav.

*Kinderlach . . .*

*This is a powerful lesson for all of us. Do we use all of our strengths? Hashem gave us the gift of sight. Do we use it to learn Torah and to appreciate the wonders of creation? Do we use our hearing to listen to Torah lectures, or to loshon hora (G-d forbid)? Do we use our time properly, or do we waste it on non-productive things? Time is our most valuable possession. Once a moment is lost, it can never be recovered. Use your whole life for avodas Hashem, kinderlach. Then you have nothing to fear.*

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#### Parasha Questions

- Why did Yaakov divide his group into two camps? (32:9)
- Why was Yaakov concerned that he would fall into Eisav's hands? (Rashi 32:11)
- What is the meaning of the name "Yisrael"? (32:29)
- Who approached Eisav first, second, third? Why? (33:1-2 and Rashi)
- What did Eisav do when he met Yaakov? Why? (33:4 and Rashi)
- Was Yaakov happy with Shimon and Levi's attack on Shechem? (34:30)