

## Yaakov was left alone. (32:25)

Yaakov *Avinu* went back for *pachim ketanim*, small jars. The Patriarch's actions beg elucidation. Our commentators, each in his own manner, explain why Yaakov returned for a few small jars whose monetary value was probably negligible. *Chazal* explain that the righteous place a premium on their material possessions, because they represent items acquired under the strictest conditions of integrity. Anything that might even smell of a tinge of impropriety will not pass through their hands. Thus, Yaakov returned for these jars, because they represented the highest ideals of veracity. *Horav Chaim Vital, zl*, quotes his saintly *Rebbe*, the **Arizal**, who explains this further. *Tzaddikim* understand that whatever material possessions they have are gifted to them by Hashem. (We all talk the talk, claiming that "everything comes from Hashem," but do we really believe it?) They understand that if Hashem does not "feel" that they need it, they would not have it. Thus, each and every article, regardless of its value, physical condition, or age is Heaven-sent. What right does one have to maintain a lackadaisical attitude towards it? This is why Yaakov returned in the middle of the night to collect his *pachim ketanim*.

**Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita**, gives deeper meaning to the words of the *Arizal* with an analogy. There was a man who lived in abject poverty. Yet, despite all of the hardship, his greatest desire was to observe *mitzvos* fully. He commented that, due to his economically-challenged status, he was unable to even begin the day properly. Upon arising in the morning, a Jew should wash his hands to remove any impure (spiritually contaminated) spirit attached to him. Due to his extreme poverty, he could not even fulfill this most simple *mitzvah*, since he had no cup! One night, he dreamt that Hashem had heard his plea and had blessed him with a cup and bowl, so that he could now wash *nege' vasser*. When he woke up that morning, he was excited to see the realization of his dream. There, next to his bed was a cup and bowl. His excitement was palpable. He could now wash in the morning!

Over the years, the poor man's fortune changed, and he no longer was a poor man. He purchased furniture and various materialistic articles which most of us take for granted. At one point, his dingy abode did not suffice for the many things he had purchased. His wife suggested that they purchase a new and larger condo, as befits someone of his newly-acquired status. He agreed and, after making the necessary arrangements, he decided to move. He called a moving company to move his material belongings to his new state-of-the-art condo.

When the movers completed the job, they presented their bill and asked to be paid. The man said that he must first make certain that everything had been transferred from his old apartment. After going through everything, he declared that something was missing. The workers disagreed, claiming that they had removed everything from the apartment. "That is not true," he said. "Something is missing." He returned with the movers to his apartment and began to search. Finally, after hours, he located his "cup and bowl." "This is what concerned you?" they asked. "It is nothing more than an old cup and bowl. Who would care about something such as this?"

“You do not understand,” the man explained. “This cup is very dear to me, since I received it as a gift from G-d.”

This analogy illustrates for us the attitude of the righteous towards everything they own. It is a gift from G-d. True, it has been purchased with money (or credit card), but it is enabled by Hashem, thereby rendering it invaluable. The *Mashgiach* adds: “This is only when one appropriates the article through pure means, acting with integrity to the full letter of the law. Otherwise, if he commits any form of thievery, obtaining his material possessions in a less than truthful manner, it is really not his. Thus, it is not considered a gift from Hashem. Do we really want something that does not meet Hashem’s criteria for ownership?”