

## **"And Yaakov was greatly afraid and distressed." (32:8)**

As a consequence of Yaakov and Eisav's confrontation, Hashem made a revelation to Yaakov. A reminder of this encounter is interwoven into the daily life of *Am Yisrael*. Just as Yaakov and Eisav opposed each other, so, too, in contemporary life they face one another. They each represent a distinct way of life, originating from two different sets of goals. Yaakov is characterized as a hard-working and loving family man, blessed with children. Opposite him stands Eisav, a man of "accomplishment" and substance, of power and glamour. For twenty years Yaakov struggled to raise a family, to educate children, to earn the privilege to be entitled "Patriarch". Simultaneously, Eisav was climbing the ladder of political fortune. He had become a military leader, whose wealth and strength were externally enticing. The meeting of these two contrasting powers, symbolized by the disparate characters of Yaakov and Eisav, reflects the struggle between forces that have shaped world history. Yaakov is the paradigm of family life, happiness, and the dispensing of kindness unto others, while Eisav represents the attraction of political might. For thousands of years the battle of these two ideologies has raged. Is it sufficient just to be human beings, knowing that all social and political manipulation is a vehicle for reaching the goal of human endeavor? Or, rather, does everything that is "human" in mankind, such as family life, serve only as a background for achieving the glory offered by political power? The *Torah* vividly illustrates for us that morality will ultimately be triumphant.