

"The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov." (33:4)

A number of issues regarding the text of this *pasuk* should be addressed. First, why is the *Torah* designated as the "heritage of Yaakov" -- and not the heritage of *Yisrael*, a name which is used more commonly ? Second, why does the *Torah* use the term "*kehillas Yaakov*," congregation of Yaakov, instead of sons of Yaakov in describing the Jewish people ? *Horav Yaakov Kameneztsky, z.l.*, lends a profound insight into the matter. Our *Torah* is different from any other religious code. Our *Torah* belongs to every Jew, regardless of his intellectual acumen or socio-economic stature. Our *Torah* is a *morashah*, heritage, bequeathed to "Yaakov," a name symbolizing the entire "*hamon am*," the nation in its entirety. It does not apply only to those who are on the level of "Yisrael," a name which implies strength and dominance.

The religious creed of other religions, on the other hand, is quite different. It remains accessible only to those few who are totally aloof from the community. These select few demonstrate exemplary devotion from a spiritual standpoint and lead their respective communities. Their religious code is accessible only to those who maintain an insular lifestyle, whose religious conviction prevents them from pursuing a mundane relationship with the community.

Rav Yaakov supports this idea with the fact that gentiles may sacrifice only a *korban olah*, which is entirely burnt. They may not offer a *shelamim*, peace offering, since the gentile does not understand how one can partake of an animal's flesh and still serve G-d. Association with the material and the mundane precludes association with the Divine. We, of course, offer *shelamim* and partake of the meat, since we understand that one can serve Hashem through both the mundane as well as the material. Consequently, the *Torah* remains the heritage of the entire *kehillah*, not just a select few "children".