

"What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?" (31:36)

Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita, notes that immediately upon seeing that Lavan was chasing him, Yaakov sought to blame no one but his own spiritual failing. This is the hallmark of a *tzaddik*. When circumstances change for the bad *tzaddikim* instantly introspect, seeking to find fault in their own inadequacies. The simple way out is the one employed by most of us – rationalize and justify, but by all means blame it on something or someone other than yourself. This is not the *Torah* way. Every situation we are confronted with is a response to something we have done. Subsequently when a negative situation confronts us, we should endeavor to seek the precipitating circumstances within our own behavior.

Horav Elya Lopian z.l. applies this idea further. When Yaakov saw Lavan coming to speak with him, he worried. What could he have done that brought him down from his spiritual pedestal to Lavan's level, whereby Lavan would be inclined to strike up a conversation with him. When those who are by choice distant from a *Torah* way of life feel comfortable in our presence, when they are inclined to act like "Lavan" in our company, they demonstrate their lack of esteem for us. This should behoove us to reconsider our actions and refine our image. Obviously, we are acting in such a manner that we misrepresent the noble precepts we live for. This was Yaakov's question, "what am I doing wrong that would *encourage* Lavan to associate with me?"