

"And Eisav was a man who knew hunting, a man of the field, and Yaakov was a wholesome man dwelling in tents." (25:27)

Eisav is not depicted as a hunter, but as a man who "knew" hunting, a professional hunter who is an expert at his chosen vocation. Eisav is the consummate hunter, the one who sets the standard for excellence in the field of hunting, the one to whom everybody looks up. Eisav is a "doer;" his entire essence bespeaks accomplishment and success. Yaakov, on the other hand, is portrayed as a man who dwells in tents, the quiescent scholar who remains cloistered from society, his mind buried in his books. Undoubtedly he is successful at what he is doing. In the future, he will probably produce wonderful novellae and serve as a wellspring of knowledge for his community. In addressing the here and now, however, what is he really accomplishing for the community? Indeed, in comparison to his successful brother, Yaakov gives the impression of being the mellow type of fellow who is not achieving at the moment.

This is what one might see at first glance from a cursory reading of the text. *Targum Onkelus*, however, translates "yode'a tzayid" as a "nachshirchan" or a "batlan," a ne'er do well, who does nothing! This suggests quite the opposite impression that one gleans from reading the text. What does this all mean to us? **Horav Avigdor Nebentzhal, Shlita**, presents a specific perspective. Some individuals mistakenly believe that the real movers and shakers are the "Eisavs" of our day. They accomplish; they act; they are the so-called experts in every field who seem to be doing so much. The *Targum*, in his departure from what seemed the simple interpretation, teaches a fundamental principle. It is the "Yaakovs" who are studying *Torah* with enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, who are tucked away from the public forum, who are not constantly creating a tumult; they are the ones who are accomplishing; they are the ones who are truly building and sustaining a world. Veritably, Eisav might seem to be the one who is momentarily building, creating and executing an important function in the world. However, this is only a temporary state. It is Yaakov who is building *nitzchiyus*, eternity. He is building for generations to come. His accomplishment will bear fruit for the future, long after Eisav's exploits will have dissipated and disappeared. Yaakov is the "ish ha'maasi," the man of action, while Eisav is the *batlan*, the ne'er-do-well who has a lot of form but no substance.