

"And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Yaakov, but rather Yisrael for you have striven with G-d and with people and you prevailed." (32:29)

Does it matter which name we use to refer to Yaakov? Indeed, the name Yisrael is the name by which his descendants are called. This appellation is not merely Yaakov's new name, it actually describes the Jewish mission. The *Kovner Rav, Horav A. Shapiro z.t.l.*, notes that the name Yaakov has no plural construct. There are no "*Yaakovim*"! The term *Yisraelim* is applied whenever we refer to a group of Jews. Consequently, he suggests that the name Yaakov applies to the Jew as an individual, alone and reclusive. The solitary Jew becomes the prime focus for "Eisav's" angel. He is easy prey to be swayed from his *Torah* perspective. On the other hand, the term *Yisrael* depicts the Jew in successful completion of his mission. It refers to '*Am Yisrael*,' as a nation comprised of individuals. Though we are individuals, our mission is to harmoniously unite as one people.

This may be noted from the end of the *pasuk*. No mention is made of a battle or struggle. It only states the *fait accompli*, "*For you have striven.*" The term *hira* means to strive in a positive sense, to rule over and assert one's uniqueness. It infers the unification of one's entire essence, the blending together of all conflicting forces into one harmonious entity. This is the essence of *Klal Yisrael*, the amalgamation of Jewish people of divergent personalities with varied orientations, all joined together with one focus.

By sublimating these divergent factors in the service of Hashem, we strive to raise the banner of *Torah* throughout the world.