

"And he took from the stones of the place." (28:11)

The *Midrash* comments that Yaakov took twelve stones, symbolizing the nation that he would soon establish. The twelve stones represented the twelve tribes which were to coalesce into a unified nation. Yaakov said, "I knew that a great nation would be established. Avraham did not establish it and neither did my father, Yitzchak. If these twelve stones meld together to become one, then it is a sign that I will be the one who will establish this great nation."

Yaakov *Avinu's* simile is enigmatic. If one person, Yaakov, were to establish a nation via the birth of twelve tribes, then he should have taken a simple stone which would transform into twelve little stones. How do twelve stones becoming a single stone represent the prospective nation of twelve tribes?

Yalkut Yehudah infers from this *Midrash* that Yaakov was seeking a sign from Heaven. This sign would give him the key for establishing a nation that could withstand the vicissitudes of time and endure the various trials it would eventually confront. He was told that "*achdus*", unity and harmony, among the twelve tribes would enable them to fuse into one strong unit, so that the nation would endure. The *kiyum*, ultimate existence of our people, is dependent upon our solidarity under one banner -- the banner of *Torah*.