

Yaakov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents. (25:27)

Onkeles interprets *ish tam* as *g'var shlim*, perfect/whole man; and *yosheiv ohalim* as *meshamesh bais ulfana*, served/studied in the house of Torah study. Yaakov *Avinu* achieved perfection in that his *neshamah*, soul, filled his entire body; he essentially became a totally spiritual (spiritually-oriented) person. Yaakov expunged whatever negative spiritual forces that might have existed within him, to the point that his pure soul was in complete control of his being.

Chazal teach (*Bava Basra* 16a) that *Eisav kofar b'Ikar*, denied the *Ikar*, Hashem; he was a heretic who had no regard for anything spiritual. He believed in nothing. He demonstrated his beliefs (non-beliefs) when he sold the *bechorah*, birthright, because it meant nothing to him. After repudiating the religion, what use would the *bechorah* be to him? *Horav Aharon Kotler, zl* (cited by *Horav Dov Schwartzman, zl*) explains that *kofar b'Ikar* does not refer to *Eisav's* denial of Hashem, but rather, to his eschewing what is *ikar*, primary/principle/essential in life. He understood the meaning of *ruchniyos*, spirituality, and did not deny its value, but, as far as he was concerned, it was not the *ikar*. It was to him *tafeil*, secondary/ancillary.

Yaakov viewed the primary goal of life, the *ikar*, in its entirety to be spirituality, which was, indeed, his focus in life. All of life revolved around the *ikar: ruchniyos*. *Eisav*, however, divided his life into moments: one moment of fun; another moment, a good meal; the next, satisfying his physical desires. He had no single primary goal. Each moment was for whatever struck his fancy at the moment. This would occupy him and become the focus of his life – at that moment. Moods powered *Eisav's* life. Whatever mood he was in at the moment became the center of his attention. He had no *ikar*, no primary goal, guiding objective. It was all about what he wanted to do, when he wanted to do it.

Rav Schwartzman explains that at the onset of one's commitment of service to the Almighty, he must know, acknowledge, affirm to live by the notion that he has an *ikar*, and also a *tafeil*. He lives by – and for – the *ikar*, which is his lodestar and subsumes his entire essence – to the point that he becomes one with the *ikar*. The *ikar* is a life devoted to spiritual ascendance. Yaakov *Avinu* was the *adam ha'shaleim*, perfect man, *g'var shlim*, whose *neshamah* encompassed his essence. He had one *ikar* and he lived by it, unlike his brother *Eisav*, who lived by his whims. He had no *ikar* other than whatever made him feel good at the moment.

This is a powerful lesson for us. We tend to compartmentalize our lives in such a manner whereby we “make time” for spiritual endeavor alongside our other foci. The problem arises when we have a “conflict,” and a tug of war ensues. One who is focused on a life completely relegated to – and by – the Torah has no conflicts. Ultimately, we can have only one *ikar*.