

## **And he lay down in that place. (28:11)**

*Rashi* cites the *Midrash* that emphasizes that Yaakov *Avinu* lay down now - for the first time in fourteen years. His *Torah* study was so diligent that he had not laid down at night since he had left his parents' home fourteen years earlier. Let us examine this statement. Certainly, Yaakov studied at the *yeshivah* of Shem and Eivar prior to his untimely departure from home. The *Torah* does not mention his lack of sleep there. What was so unique about these fourteen years that he never laid his head down?

*Horav Yechiel M'Ostrovitze, zl*, explains that these were two distinct forms of *Torah* study, with different purposes in mind. When Yaakov originally studied *Torah* at home, he was in an environment that was conducive to Jewish living. He resided among Jews, in a family that represented the benchmark of *Torah* for that generation. His focus of *Torah* study was to learn how a Jew lives among Jews. Conversely, as he was about to leave this utopian environment to go into exile in the atmosphere of Lavan *ha'rasha*, he prepared himself for life among pagans. Learning how to live as a devout Jew in an environment that is hostile to *Torah* is a distinct lesson in itself.

Interestingly, we note that Yaakov seemed to have been able to lay down previously. When he was studying how to live among the "Lavans," he could not risk laying down. This serves as a lesson for us that, when we are exposed to an atmosphere that is not conducive to the *Torah* way of life, we cannot relax our guard.