

"And I will return to my father's home in peace; there Hashem will be my G-d." (28:21)

Rashi interprets this *pasuk* in the sense that Yaakov *Avinu* was concerned that there should be no blemish on his descendants. Yaakov did not want to be saved from death at the hands of his brother, Eisav, only to have his offspring doomed to assimilation. The Jew has always concerned himself with his children's future. The "future" to which Yaakov was referring was his children's spiritual future. He certainly was anxious regarding their physical and financial security, but that was not his prime concern. The security of financial success was secondary to the Patriarch who was to build *Klal Yisrael*. His overriding concern was that there should not be "a blemish in his offspring." Those Jews who have adopted the Patriarch's attitude in raising their children have succeeded in stemming the tide of assimilation by demonstrating the perpetuation of Judaism as their main priority.

Chazal comment regarding Yaakov's use of the word, *vhvu*, "*Hashem took the words of the Patriarchs' and made them the key of the liberation of their children.*" Hashem said to Yaakov, "*You said's vhwu. So too, I will announce to your children all the kindnesses, blessings and promises for the future with the same word, vhwu.*" **Horav Eli Munk, zl**, explains that the term, *vhvu* has a specific meaning. The conversive "*vav*," when placed before the verb in the past tense (*vhv*) (it was), transforms it into the future tense (it will be). The converse also applies with the future form *hvhv*, which becomes a past form when the conversive "*vav*" precedes it. *Horav Munk* infers from this grammatical peculiarity that whenever our glorious past serves as a foundation for building the future, when we raise our children consistent with the "*derech Yisrael sabah*," ways of old, the result will be joy, happiness and great promise for the future. If, however, the Jew chooses to forget the past, to ignore the way of life that has protected us from assimilation for thousands of years, to shun a heritage for which we have died throughout the generations, then sadness and despair are the resultant by-products.

This concept is consistent with *Chazal* who say, The word *hvhv*, "*and it was*," connotes sadness and despair. Yaakov *Avinu* stands on the threshold of the future. He entreats Hashem for a future that has lasting meaning. What is life if his children will reject everything for which he and his ancestors have sacrificed themselves? Is there value in life if he will have no descendants that he can call "Jews"? Thus, Hashem responded with a future of optimism, a future of fulfillment, employing the same term Yaakov had used to express his serene confidence in the future.