

Yaakov has taken all that which belonged to our father and from that he amassed all this wealth. (31:1)

Targum Onkelos translates *kavod* (usually translated as honor) as *nichsaya*, material possessions (*u'midei l'avuna kana kol nichsaya ha'ilein*). Why would *Onkelos* diverge from the usual translation? *Horav Tzvi Elimelech Hertzberg, zl* (Rav in Baltimore), explains that the word *kavod* is noticeably spelled missing the *vav*, which implies that the honor that they were addressing is (to us) not true honor; rather, it is *kavod medumah*, imaginary honor. What did Lavan's sons value? Growing up in their father's home, influenced by his love of money, his constant swindling, anything to make a buck. They were privy to a perverted sense of honor: money. Only someone who had a healthy financial portfolio was worthy of honor. *Yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, erudition, refined character traits, performing *chesed* were, in their eyes, of no consequence. They were blinded by the glitz and opportunities that money could buy. Thus, *Onkelos*, in his penetrating insight, translates *kavod* as *nichsaya*.

We must ask ourselves: Have we distanced ourselves from this deficient value system? Do we consider material abundance to be the barometer of success, and hence the definition of honor and to whom this honor should be granted? Perhaps we should think twice before responding.