

One young bull, one ram, one sheep in its first year for an elevation-offering. (7:21)

Rashi comments concerning the allusion of the individual *korbanos* to the *Avos*, Patriarchs. The young bull alludes to Avraham *Avinu*, who used a young bull as part of his act of *chesed*, kindness, in welcoming three guests to his tent. The ram refers to Yitzchak *Avinu*, whom Avraham replaced on the Altar with a ram. This was part of Yitzchak's unprecedented act of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice. The sheep alludes to Yaakov *Avinu* who tended sheep during his stay with Lavan. The Torah underscores Yaakov's honesty in making certain that he took nothing for himself that did not belong to him. Every sheep, that according to their agreement belonged to Lavan, he received. In conclusion, the *korbanos* represent: Avraham's extraordinary commitment of *chesed*, of which he was the pillar; Yitzchak's outstanding devotion to Hashem to the point of self-sacrifice; Yaakov's integrity and meticulous financial ethics. If we take a step back and absorb this, we see Avraham's *chesed* and Yitzchak's *mesiras nefesh*, which are the Patriarch's legacy to our people, stand on equal keel with Yaakov's meticulous financial ethics. One would think that integrity in business – or in any area of life's endeavor – is important, but definitely not on an equal level with *chesed* and *mesiras nefesh*. *Klal Yisrael* were beneficiaries of the *manna* in Avraham's *z'chus* of *chesed*. We beseech Hashem on *Rosh Hashanah* in the merit of *Akeidas Yitzchak*. Where does Yaakov's separating the sheep fit in to this spiritual equation?

Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl, cites the *Rambam* (*Hilchos Sechiros* 13:7), who refers to Yaakov *Avinu* as Yaakov *ha'tzaddik*, because of his integrity in dealing with Lavan. Apparently, *tzaddik* means much more than *davening* a long *Shemoneh Esrai*. It means honesty and integrity in financial ethics. *Yosher*, uprightness, in dealing with others, characterizes a person's righteousness factor. A true *tzaddik* ensures that all his possessions are derived through absolute integrity, free of any trace of dishonesty or wrongdoing. The *Chafetz Chaim* would return even the smallest amount of money if he suspected an error in his favor. *Horav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zl*, was renowned for his impeccable *ehrllichkeit*, honesty. He once refused a discount on a train ticket to which he was technically entitled, but, since he felt that it was not in the spirit of fairness, he would do without it.

A *tzaddik* understands that wealth is a gift from Hashem, and only that which is derived via complete rectitude is truly a blessing. Yaakov had every right to the sheep. His father-in-law was a scoundrel and a defrauder, but, if in the exchange his mind was not absolutely, unquestionably perfect, he wanted no part of it. This is a *tzaddik*. The *Kav HaYashar* writes that *ikar ha'yiraah v'ha'tzidkos*, primary sense of Heaven and righteousness, is evinced in the area of money. Anyone who remains straight in monetary dealings is a *tzaddik*.

Veritably, it all falls back on *emunah*, faith, in Hashem. When a person realizes and acknowledges that whatever he will earn in the coming year is decided by Hashem, he will be relaxed concerning his material possessions, with the knowledge that Hashem will determine whatever he has or will

have. Not only do we have no reason to worry, it will not make a difference. Thus, one who manipulates and schemes will not make anything more than he would have otherwise. *Hishtadlus*, endeavoring, applies only when he does so with complete spiritual integrity. *Shtick*, machination and finagling are not methods of *hishtadlus*. Indeed, *techillas dino shel adam*, the first question the *neshamah* is asked when it arrives at the Heavenly Tribunal is, "Did you conduct your business dealings with faith and integrity?" The *Chazon Ish* writes that true *emunah* is demonstrated in business. A person who truly believes that Hashem controls his livelihood will never have reason to cheat or deceive. Instead, such a person will conduct himself virtuously, knowing that his sustenance is decreed by Hashem. The *Chazon Ish's Rebbetzin* ran a small business, so that her saintly husband could learn Torah uninterrupted by worry. Indeed, a large portion of his Torah achievement may be attributed to his wife. She opened a small store selling thread, using the money she received as dowry to invest in this venture. She was honest and earned the respect of all her customers. Her husband never involved himself in the business except once when he was asked to rule on a dispute that ensued between his wife and a wealthy supplier who claimed that she owed him money. The *rebbetzin* vehemently disagreed. The supplier said that he trusted her husband's ruling and would abide by it. The *Chazon Ish* reviewed the question and ruled in favor of the supplier. The man declared, "You are a man of integrity!" and kissed the *Chazon Ish's* hand.

The *Rebbetzin* was embarrassed and stood, facing her husband. She was clearly upset that the *gaon* had ruled against her. The *Chazon Ish* attempted to assuage her feelings. Among the various comments that he made, he said, "Tell me something. What value is there to the life of a person and to his possessions, if, in fact, it is derived under questionable circumstances?" This calmed her down. She returned to her store, grateful to Hashem for sending such a holy man to be her husband that he saved her from an inappropriate business transaction. [??????](#)