

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

JACOB AND ISRAEL ('Ya'akov and Yisrael) are the two names of the father of the people, the first given him at birth and the second in his matured days. Both signify struggle, the first with his brother Esau and the second with the mysterious figure (man or angel?) near the River Yabok. These two names and their symbolisms may homiletically point to the two arenas of struggle encountered by the Jewish people during history, the political, with other nations (symbolized by Esau), and the spiritual, with cultural assimilation, whether religious or secular (symbolized by the perplexing "ish" – divine or human). Without struggle there is no survival and creative growth. Fight and resist, the people must. Jacob, says the Midrash, yearned for some tranquility; he did not get it – Esau saw to it. When Esau was (momentarily) appeased, Jacob had to wrestle with the "ish" – emerging Israel. It is his name, Israel, pointing to the spiritual encounter of the people, that persisted to describe the national character of the Jewish people. It is through this struggle that victory is ultimately assured.

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Dec. 11:
VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43
HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Candlelight time: 4:38 P.M. ... Sabbath Ends at 5:32

Scriptural Readings for tomorrow morning:

VAYISHLACH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK: The divinely bestowed name, Israel, emerges in the weekly Torah and Haftara reading. The earliest known record, outside Scripture, that mentions Israel, dates back to the end of the 13th century B.C.E. The name appears on the Egyptian victory stone of Merneptah, son of Ramses II, c. 1225 B.C.E. In a list of his defeated enemies in Canaan, the bragging Pharaoh claims that "Israel lies desolate, its seed is no more." When that extravagant claim was made, the people of Israel, led by Joshua, were in the process of settling in their new land. A similar boast made a few centuries later is found in a Moabite inscription on the Mesha stone, c. 830 B.C.E. There we are assured that "Israel has perished forever". These vain statements about the destruction of Israel, made by ancient mighty rulers are now being discovered in their own ruins, while Israel lives.

by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

Candlelight time 4:42 Sabbath ends 5:35
Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Nov. 25:

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

ISRAEL, the Divinely bestowed name of Ya'acov (Jacob), became the honorable name of the people. The earliest non-Scriptural record that mentions Israel dates back to the end of the 13th century, B.C.E.-- on the Egyptian victory stele of Mernephtah, son of Ramses II. In a list of his defeated enemies in Canaan, the bragging Pharaoh claims that "Israel lies desolate; its seed is no more." When that extravagant claim was made, the people of Israel, led by Joshua, were in the process of settling in their new land. A similar boast, made a few centuries later, is found in a Moabite inscription on the Mesha Stone (c. 830 B.C.E.): "Israel has perished forever." These vain statements about the destruction of Israel, made by ancient rulers, have been found in their own ruins, while Israel lives.

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE NAME "ISRAEL" – referring to the people – first appears in an extra-biblical record, on the Stele of Merneptah (c. 1225 B.C.E.). There the Egyptian ruler brags, "Israel lies vanquished, its seed no more!" Centuries later, Mesha, king of Moab, makes a similar boast on his stone inscription (c. 830 B.C.E.): "Israel has perished forever!" The former claim was made presumably while the Israelites were inhabiting their new land; the latter, while the Israelis flourished during the First Temple era, about a century before the emergence of classical prophecy. These vain declarations on the "final annihilation" of Israel were buried in oblivion for centuries. Ironically, they are now being discovered in their own ruins – while Israel endures and lives.

As the name "*Yisra-El*" implies, it is the power of the people to constantly wrestle with both the divine and human demands and challenges – and astonishingly and agonizingly prevail – that assures Israel's everlasting life.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

WHAT DO THE NAMES ISRAEL AND JACOB MEAN? JACOB AND ISRAEL: Both names imply struggle, whether mundane or celestial. *Ya'akov* (Jacob) indicates social rivalry and *Yisra-El* (Israel) spiritual wrestle. The first name was given at birth, as the infant emerged holding on to his twin brother's heel (*ekav*), as if trying to supersede him in rank and fortune. The second name, Yisra-El, was divinely endowed later, hailing the hero's invincible vigor, namely: The patriarch/people "who wrestles with humans and God and prevails" (Genesis 32:29).

The name Israel for the people first appears in an extra-biblical record on the Stele of Merneptah (c. 1225 BCE), as the Egyptian ruler brags: "Israel lies vanquished, its seed no more!" Centuries later, Mesha king of Moab makes a similar boast on his one inscription (c. 830 BCE): "Israel has perished forever!" The former claim was made while the Israelites were inhabiting their new land; the latter, while they flourished during the First Temple era. These vain declarations on the "final annihilation" of Israel lay buried in oblivion for centuries. Ironically, they are now being discovered in their own ruins, while Israel lives.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

ELAND JEWISH NEWS / DECEMBER 15, 2000

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

JACOB AND ISRAEL (*Ya'akov* and *Yisrael*): Both names indicate struggle. Jacob – his struggle with his brother Esau; Israel – his struggle with a mysterious figure, representing God. The first name, Ya'akov, was given to him at birth; he was born holding on to his brother's heel, as if trying to supersede him in rank and fortune, and was named after the heel, "*ekev*" in Hebrew. The second name, Yisra-El, was given to him after his legendary struggle; it means (Genesis 32:29): "He who had struggled with the Divine and prevailed."

Although victorious in both struggles, the mundane and the metaphysical, the patriarch emerges limping. Rabbinic tradition has understood these two struggles of Jacob-Israel as a symbolic prefiguration of the destiny and self-image of the Jewish people, a people that survives through constant struggle against evil and falsehood – on both levels: the political-physical (Jacob-Esau) and the cultural-spiritual (Israel-God). Like the biblical patriarch, so, too, historical Israel emerges victorious. But also painfully limping.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA
VAYISHLAH

JACOB AND ISRAEL: Both names imply struggle. Ya'akov (Jacob; from akov, implying circumvention and trickery) indicates social rivalry; Yisra-El (Israel; from saro, suggesting mastery and victory) points to spiritual wrestling.

The name Ya'akov (Jacob) portrays the hero's birth, as he emerges from his mother's womb holding on to his twin brother's heel (ekev), as if trying to supersede him in rank and fortune. The second name Yisra-El (Israel) originates at the hero's maturity. Given by God, this fascinating name hails the hero's vigor and resilience.

The name Israel, referring to the people, first appears in an extra-biblical record on the Stele of Mernephtah dating from the second half of the 13th century BCE. Mention of the name is intriguing. Soon after Israel's settlement on its promised land, when the nation was young and vigorous, the Egyptian Pharaoh Mernephtah bragged on his Stele, "Israel is vanquished; its seed is no more!" Ironically, Israel appears for the first time in recorded history as a nation already extinct, with no survivors. Historically, we are all survivors.

Centuries later, Mesha, king of Moab, (c. 830 BCE) makes a similar boast on his inscription. The Stele of Mesha, unearthed from the ruins of Dibon in Eastern Trans-Jordan, commemorates the victory of Mesha over Israel. On it Mesha boasts, "I have annihilated Israel forever; Israel is no more." Now, Moab is no more, while Israel struggles and lives.

The Torah thus explains the name, "For you struggle with both Divine and human beings and you prevail!" (Genesis 32:29).

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

JACOB AND ISRAEL: Both names imply struggle, whether mundane or celestial. *Ya'akov* (Jacob, from *akov*, implying circumvention and trickery) indicates social rivalry; *Yisra-El* (Israel, from *saro*, suggesting mastery and victory) points to spiritual wrestling. The name *Ya'akov* portrays the hero's birth as he emerges from his mother's womb holding on to his twin brother's heel (*ekav*), as if trying to supersede him in rank and fortune. The name *Yisra-El* originates at the hero's maturity, hailing his invincible vigor and resilience.

The name Israel, referring to the people, first appears in an extra biblical record on the Stele of Merneptah from the second half of the 13th century B.C.E. Soon after Israel's settlement on its promised land, when the nation was young and vigorous, the Egyptian pharaoh Merneptah

bragged on his Stele, "Israel is vanquished; its seed is no more!" Ironically, Israel appears for the first time in recorded history as a nation already completely extinct, with no survivors. Historically, we are all survivors.

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The Torah, addressing initially the patriarch and eternally his descendants, the people of Israel, thus explains the name: "For you struggle with both Divine and human beings and you prevail!" (Genesis 32:29).

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE NAME ISRAEL, referring to the people, first appears, in an extra-biblical record, on the Stele of Merneptah (c. 1225 B.C.E.). There the Egyptian ruler brags: "Israel lies vanquished, its seed no more!" Centuries later, Mesha, King of Moab, makes a similar boast on his stone inscription (c. 830 B.C.E.): "Israel has perished forever!" The former claim was made while the Israelites were inhabiting their new land; the latter while they flourished there during the First Temple era, about a century before the emergence of classical prophecy. These vain declarations on the "final annihilation" of Israel were buried in oblivion for centuries. Ironically, they are now being discovered in their own ruins--while Israel lives.

Candlelight time 4:38 Sabbath ends 5:31
Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, D
VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43
HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

CLEVELAND JEWISH NEWS Friday, December 7, 1984
Friday, December 7, 1984 THE CLEVELAND JEWISH NEWS

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

JACOB AND ISRAEL; Both names indicate struggle: Jacob (*Ya'akov*), with brother Esau; Israel (*Yisra'el*), with a mysterious, divine figure. The first name was given to him at birth. He was born holding on to his brother's heel, as if trying to supersede him in rank and fortune. The name *Ya'akov* invokes both his brother's heel (*ekev*) and his own circumventive ingenuity (*akov*). The name *Yisra'el* he earned after his metaphysical encounter: "He contended with the Divine ... and prevailed" (Gen. 32:29).

The two struggles of Jacob-Israel may be viewed as symbolic prefiguration of the destiny and self-image of the Jewish people: A people constantly struggling against evil and falsehood on both the political-mundane and the cultural-spiritual levels. Like its prototypical patriarch, so, too, does historical Israel always emerge victorious. But also bleeding and limping.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

JACOB AND ISRAEL (Ya'akov and Yisrael); Both names indicate struggle. Jacob—his struggle with his brother Esau, holding on to his “heel” (“ekev”), trying to supersede him in rank and fortune. Israel—his legendary wrestling with the mysterious figure—person or angel—representing God; “*Yisra-El*” meaning “He who contends with the Divine.” Although victorious in both struggles—the mundane and the metaphysical—the Patriarch emerges limping. Rabbinic tradition has understood these two-faceted struggles of Jacob-Israel as a symbolic prefiguration of the destiny and self-image of the Jewish people throughout the ages: A people that survives through constant struggle against evil and falsehood on both levels—the material and the spiritual.

Thought of the Week

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

VAYESHEV

November 29, 1991

DREAMING AND STRIVING: Driven by dreams of greatness Joseph rises from the pit of enslavement to a high position of power and success. A dream may be a sign of aspiration and source of inspiration; but unless a vision is forged by determination and action, it remains a fleeting illusion. Nor can dreams be realized by misplaced trust in others. In prison Joseph appealed to the jailed chief cupbearer (whose imminent freedom he had predicted): "When things go well for you, please remember me and do me a favor, mention me to Pharaoh, perhaps you will be able to get me out of this place..." (Gen. 40:14). The jailed official was freed and restored to his former high position, just as Joseph had predicted, yet (for another 2 years) he "did not remember Joseph and forgot all about him" (23).

Misplaced trust is ineffective and harmful; it creates false hope leading to complacency and inactivity. Trust in God must inspire us to unfold and apply our own resourcefulness. In Hebrew, to aspire (*halom*) and to fight (*lahom*) are interrelated. Dreams come true through human initiative and venture. This universal lesson is illustrated by Hanukkah: Its heroes fought.

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Nov. 30:

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE PATRIARCHS are called “yesharim,” and the Book of Genesis that tells their story, “sefer ha-yashar.” “Yashar” means straight; “yosher” – meaning fairness, justness and equity – is the hallmark of the Patriarchs. The Natziv of Volozhin (1817-1893) explains it by an historical comparison with the generation that suffered the Second Destruction (70 CE): “They were “zadikim” (righteous) and “hassidim” (pious) and studious in Torah, but not “yesharim” (upright) in worldly matters. With unfounded hatred (“sin’at hinam”), they suspected everyone who did not follow their way in worship of being sectarian or heretic; this resulted in social corruption that led to the Temple’s destruction. For God is “Yashar” (Deut. 32:4); He does not tolerate “zadikim” who are not “yesharim” in worldly affairs – who act crookedly, even in the name of Heaven—because their behavior spells distortion of creation and collapse of civilization. Therein lies the virtue of the Patriarchs: Besides being “zadikim” and “hassidim,” loving God to the utmost, they also were “yesharim.” They treated all people, even the most despicable pagans, with love and kindness.” The Patriarchs – whose saintliness is enhanced by their decency and tolerance – by “yosher” – are the excellent models for their descendants, the people of Israel – whose noble poetic title is of the same root: “Yeshurun.”

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Dec. 8:

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

COPING WITH AN ENEMY is demonstrated by Jacob meeting his hostile brother, Esau. Aware of Esau's threatening advancement, "Jacob was greatly fearful and distressed." "Fearful" that he might be killed; and 'distressed' that he might kill others." (Gen. 32:7; Rashi). Doubly apprehensive, Jacob devised a triple plan: reconciliation, warfare and Prayer. First, he sent gifts to Esau, in order to appease him. But he did not rely on this alone. Ready to fight for his life and the lives of his people, he strategically divided them all, women and children, into two camps. He was even prepared for a disaster: "If Esau overcomes the one camp and strikes it, then the remaining camp may yet survive." Then--after actually preparing for both peace and war, facing the possibilities of both victory or defeat--Jacob engaged in prayer.

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Dec. 4:

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE RAPE OF DINAH: Visiting the city of Schechem, Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was overpowered by the ruler's son and, by force and seduction, kept in his house. Her brothers rescued her, violently punishing the offenders. Their tactics were criticized by their father, to whom they retorted: "Is she as an outcast prostitute, our sister, that we let one abuse her?" (Gen. 34:31). In Judaism, the protection of the helpless is the essence of justice. The dignity of the individual must be unyieldingly defended, and his humiliation vigorously condemned.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

CONTENTMENT IN ONE'S LOT can be expressed in two different ways. Esau said, "yesh-li rav" (Gen. 33:9); Jacob said, "yesh-li-kol" (11). Both are commonly translated to mean the same: "I have enough." In truth, there is a remarkable distinction between "rav" and "kol." "Rav" means plenty; "kol" means all. Esau ("I have plenty"), in his outward gesture of reluctance to accept his brother's gifts said: "An abundance of property exists for me!" To have much does not necessarily exclude lust for more. Jacob ("I have everything"), in response to his brother, said: "All I need is in store for me!" Jacob demonstrates the ideal of contentment in one's lot, which derives from a genuine trust in God: "For God is graciously generous to me." This is a firm sense of self-assurance that all that one really needs is within one's power and possession to achieve and have, without greed and coveting, but with joy and gratitude.

Candlelight time 4:38 Sabbath ends 5:31

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Dec. 8:
VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

“SHOULD OUR SISTER BE TREATED LIKE A WHORE?” (Genesis 34:31) is a bold expression of noble indignation. Dinah, daughter of Jacob, was raped by a Hivite prince, Shechem. Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, were merciless and uncompromising in their revenge; they destroyed the rapist’s entire city with deceit and violence. Patriarch Jacob protested: “You have brought shame and danger upon us . . .” But the passionate retort of the avengers—“Should our sister be treated like a whore?”—prevails as the final word of the biblical narrative. People with a sense of duty and self-respect will not let anyone be abused and dishonored. Savage revenge is certainly not the ideal solution. But violence must often be met with violence.

Candlelight time 4:44 Sabbath ends 5:37

Scriptural reading for Saturday, Nov. 22:

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

“A SAVED REMNANT” (“She’erit Hapeleita”): This is an historical factor in Jewish survival: whenever Jewish life is destroyed in one part of the world, there remain flourishing Jewish communities in other parts to provide shelter and carry on the struggle for a better future. This tragic-heroic feature of Jewish history is boldly articulated by Jacob (Gen. 32:8-9). Preparing for a defensive war with Esau, Jacob divided his people and property into two camps. “He reasoned, if Esau will attack one camp and hit it, then the remaining camp will be saved.” The Hebrew uses a more vivid term: it will become *peleitah*. This term (akin to *palit* meaning refugee) connotes both escape from disaster and finding a haven. Jacob’s tactics are an awesome symbol for Jewish survival to this day: surviving as a “saved remnant.” As Jews, are we not all refugees, escapees and survivors from the constant devouring flames of persecution and destruction?

Candlelight time 4:38 Sabbath ends 5:32

Scriptural reading for Saturday, Dec. 12:

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

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RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

MASSACRE IN SHECHEM: Returning from Mesopotamia to Canaan, Jacob and his family arrived in the vicinity of Shechem. He did not invade or encroach upon the city. Legally and openly he purchased a parcel of land at the city's outskirts for a handsome price (100 keshitah) and encamped there. Jacob "came in peace" (*shalem*), arriving safely, with good will and no belligerence (Gen. 33:18). Nonetheless, tragedy ensued. The chief's son, Shechem (bearing the name of the city), spotted Jacob's daughter, Dinah. He kidnapped, raped and held her hostage in his home. Outraged, the

victim's brothers responded with savage vengeance as they rescued their sister.

This brutal conduct was harshly condemned by Jacob (on pragmatic, non-moralistic grounds; 34:30): "You have gotten me in trouble; you have ruined my reputation; we are small in number; we may be attacked and wiped out." The brothers, however, have the last word in this narrative (v. 31): "Should we allow our sister to be treated like a whore?"

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

FACING ENMITY is agonizing. How do we deal with an enemy? How do we overcome hatred? Confronting animosity of any kind – whether personal, filial, ethnic, racial, national, religious, or other – requires insightful reactions involving both one’s attitude and conduct. An exemplary model of dealing with enmity is demonstrated in Torah (Genesis 32:4-22), in Jacob’s elaborate preparations to meet his hostile brother, Esau. Jacob readied himself for three deliberate steps: (1) **Pacification**, appeasement of enemy (generously); (2) **War**, fighting for survival (desperately); (3) **Prayer**, appealing to G-d (earnestly).

In a blend of acute caution and overflowing

cordiality, Jacob first gestured his noble intentions and good-will. He sent messengers (*mal’akhim*) to his brother, Esau, calling him “my master”: These agents – who were, as our Sages insist, “real” human emissaries (not divine “angels”) – returned to Jacob with an alarming report that Esau was heading towards him with a platoon of 400 men. “Jacob, then, became very frightened and distressed” (v.8). Frightened that he might be killed, and distressed that he might (in self-defense) kill others (Rashi). From this initial mood of fear and worry, Jacob emerged into action: He divided his company into two camps: “If Esau comes and destroys one camp, the remaining camp may escape.” Driven by concern for survival, Jacob prepared for war. Only then did he engage in prayer, asking for Divine help.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

DIPLOMATS OR ANGELS? Who were the emissaries dispatched by Jacob to negotiate peace with Esau? The biblical 'mal'achim' (Gen. 32:4) connotes both, human as well as divine messengers. Jacob sent both to plead his case before his estranged brother: diplomats, to tell him the message; angels, to make him listen to it. On two levels, earthly and heavenly, we confront our enemies. On the surface, we engage ordinary, mortal agents; we utilize all natural and human resources we can manage. On a higher level, however, we do not rely on them alone. We need and seek divine intervention: guidance and protection. Thus we invoke, we send forth, so to say, spiritual agents ("angels") to accompany and shelter the-physical agents, the diplomats. The mundane work of the earthly "mal'achim" is augmented by our prayers and merits - the celestial "mal'achim." The visible factors of human diligence are blessed by the invisible factors of Divine providence. Like Jacob we must employ both-diplomats and angels.

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, Nov

VAYISHLACH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Friday, November 25, 1977 THE CLEVELAND JEWISH NE

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

THE "MYSTERY MAN" WITH WHOM JACOB WRESTLED (Gen. 32:25): At the banks of river Yabok, "Jacob was left alone; then a man (*ish*) wrestled with him until dawn." In Hebrew, the verb for wrestling (*abok*) is related to *Yabok*, where it all happened. Maimonides insists it was all in a prophetic dream. But, argues Nahmanides, if Jacob's hip was wrenched in a dream, why then was he limping while fully awake? As we know, a traumatic dream may leave a physical effect. Who was this "man" (*ish*), human, angel or demon? A modern Midrash: Jacob wrestled with himself; his Adversary was his own Shadow, the "mystery man" to whom he said, "I will not let you depart, unless you bless me!" The "blessing" is the attainment of wholeness; becoming an individual -- an "undivided" person.

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

ALTARS AND PILLARS were erected by the Patriarchs as a mode of worship (Gen. 33:20; 35:14). An altar (*mizbeah*) was a functional structure, serving as stage for ritual sacrifices. A pillar (*matzevah*) was a monumental *stèle*, aimed to demonstratively proclaim faith in God. With the giving of Torah, pillars were altogether forbidden; and altars were restricted. The Temple had two altars but no pillars (no *matzevah*; it had *amudin*, columns).

What is the reason for Torah's rejection of pillars? A mystical-midrashic explanation was given by Rav Kook: Pillars are symbols of faith without deeds; altars of faith with deeds. Judaism is a religion of mitzvot, of commitment, of sacrifice — an "Altar-religion" not a "Pillar-religion."

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

BENJAMIN (BINYAMIN) was the youngest son of Jacob. He was born to his mother Rachel in hard labor on her deathbed (Gen. 35:18): "And while her breath of life was departing – for she was dying – she named him Ben-Oni; it was his father who named him Bin-Yamin." Why "Ben-Oni?" And why the change to Bin-Yamin? The Hebrew "on" has a double meaning: (a) agony and grief; (b) might and power. This illustrates the ambivalence in the mother's mind at this critical moment when death and birth became intertwined. Did she call her newly-born son Ben-Oni – Son-of-My-Sorrow or Son-of-My-Strength? The word "yamin," literally "right" (as opposed to "left"), also indicates strength (the right hand mostly being stronger than the left). Jacob did not really alter his son's name, but rather pointed to its preferable meaning, Son-of-Strength and not Son-of-Sorrow. A name of a person, born to life, ought to convey a hopeful sense of encouragement, rather than a painful sense of mourning, evoking visions of life and accomplishment, rather than memories of death and bereavement. By renaming his son, calling him Binyamin instead of Benoni, Jacob redeemed the original name from its equivocalness, endowing it with one, positive and optimistic meaning of virtue and vigor.

VAYISHLAH: Genesis 32:4-36:43

HAFTARAH: Obadiah 1:1-21

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

FEAR AND DISTRESS both were the feelings of Jacob on his way to meet his hostile twin-brother Esau (Gen. 32:7-8). Greatly concerned about a possibility of war, Jacob “was frightened lest he be killed, and distressed lest he be forced to kill” (Rashi). The terror of war is not only in defeat, being killed, but also in victory, being forced to kill. Better than a “glorious” victory is peace.