

# TORAH WEEKLY



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**25** years  
OF TORAH GROWTH  
TOGETHER

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## Timeless Strategy

By: Rabbi Yossi Kaplan (Originally Published 2012)

Yaakov was scared. Scared with good cause. He was en route with his family, but his enemy was en route, too. And while Yaakov was on his way home, his enemy was on the way to kill him. That enemy was Esav, his brother - much as his descendants have tried to wipe out the Jewish People ever since.

When the infamous German dictator rose to power in 1933, German Jewry was frightened, too; this epitome of evil had declared his intention of decimating the Jews. It was then that the Chofetz Chaim was asked what would remain of the Jewish nation. His answer lies in this week's parsha, words spoken by Ya'akov when he split his family in two, calculating that if Eisav were to attack and destroy one group, "and the remaining camp shall survive." (Genesis 32:4) Yaakov was promising us that the Jewish nation will survive.

But where will that surviving camp be? The Chofetz Chaim's answer to this was clear as well, "at the mountain of Zion there will be a survival." (Ovadia 1:17) Indeed, ten years later, the Germans suffered a major defeat in Egypt as they stood at the gates of Zion, Eretz Yisroel.

For generations, we've looked to our forefathers in times of trouble to see how they acted in such times of distress. So what did Yaakov do when faced with Esav?

Rashi tells us that Yaakov harnessed a three-pronged attack: One, prayer; two, a bribe; and three, battle. Battle, says Rashi, alludes to the division of the nation into camps, so that if one camp was to be attacked, the other would survive. Thus, Yaakov wasn't merely offering a promise of survival; he was employing a strategy.

Fighting has never been our strong point, despite the trumpeting by some of wartime victories in recent decades. But self-defense, prayer and overtures of peace have been, and continue to be, our mainstay in times of trouble.

There's a spiritual element here as well. At the height of a spiritual battle, we need to remember Yaakov's three-pronged attack. When the Yetzer Hora (Evil Inclination) entices us with sin, we can bribe him. We can tell him we're unavailable, please try again tomorrow. At times it may mean giving in to a small (permissible) desire, if that's what the body needs.

The second step is battle strategy. For example, everyone knows of which situations allow temptations to arise. So when you see disaster heading your way, just stay away. Finally, let's remember to pray that our spiritual - and human - foe alike be silenced forever.

## Alumni Focus

Rabbi Yossi Kaplan

PAST



Rabbi Kaplan, teaching at Fathers and Sons, 2013

**2012-2015**

Years as a Denver Kollel Scholar

PRESENT



Rabbi Kaplan, Agudah CO, 2023

**Director**

Agudah of Colorado

## Kollel Happenings



Mr. Louis Abrams, who recently retired from 50 years of teaching at Hillel Academy has joined the Kollel's morning seder together with Brett Pepper.