

VA'YECHI – 5774

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

[We were very grieved to hear this morning that Dr. Herbert Sunshine succumbed to his illness and his holy neshama was returned to its Creator. May he be a meilitz yosher for his devoted wife miki, and to all klall Yisrael.]

In Ya'akov's Bracha to Yosef, he says (48:22), "And as for me, I have given you Shechem- one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite *BE'CHARBI U'VEKASHTI* [with my sword and with my bow].

According to one opinion in Rashi, Ya'akov was giving to Yosef the city of Shechem which he acquired through the acts of Shimon and Levi, by the sword and bow. Ya'akov was now giving it to Yosef because of his newly –gained position as a B'Chor [firstborn]. This would be the meaning of the pasuk if we translate the words *be'charbi u'vekashti* in the literal military sense. However, Onkolus translates these words as spiritual weapons employed by Ya'akov, namely, *BITZ'LUTI U'VAVUTI* [my prayer and my petition]

This interpretation is based on the Gemara Bava Batra (123a) that help and salvation cannot be achieved by the sword and the bow. Therefore, Ya'akov must have been referring to prayer and petition.

Actually, I heard from Rabbi Aaron Adler, that the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive and not contradictory. Ya'akov himself taught us that in anticipation of his encounter with his brother Eisav, after a twenty year absence, he prepared for the event on three levels. He would first attempt to appease his brother by showering him gifts, he would pray; and he would prepare for battle. At that meeting Rashi comments (32:9) "It is not only legitimate, but desirable not to rely exclusively upon Tefillah. Rather, a person must gear up to battle as well". Thus, Ya'akov was teaching the lesson of the double weapon system-the spiritual and the military. Both interpretation of *be'charbi u'vekashti* are essentially correct.

Similarly, we find this concept employed by Dahvid HaMelech who was known as a brave warrior on one hand and the Psalmist on the other. And it is in this spirit that we can understand his words in Tehillim (20:8) "There are those armies who rely exclusively on chariots, and some on rely on their horses, but we call upon the help of HaShem." It is we who can be confident of success at the end of the day.

Today, the Israeli army and Israeli soldiers standing on guard to defend the Jewish people must certainly rely upon their weapons, technology and training. However, with the backing provided by Jews throughout the world reciting the Tefillah for Tzahal on behalf of the troops on the frontlines we can be confident of the awaited Divine response of "*HA'SHEM HO'SHIAH HA'MELECH YA'ANEINU B'YOM KOR'EINU*" [HaShem will save us, and the King will answer us when we call.]