



## **Words of Wisdom**

**By**

**Rav Aryeh Dachs**

In the beginning of *Parshas Vayishlach* we learn that *Yaakov* feels threatened by *Eisav*. *Yaakov* seeks to appease *hi* by sending him a lavish gift of many herds of animals. *Eisav* sees these flocks and refuses the gesture. "I have plenty," he tells *Yaakov*, "keep what's yours." However, *Yaakov* insists that *Eisav* take the gift, "I have everything, *Kol*."

*Rashi* points out a subtle discrepancy in the way *Eisav* speaks as opposed to the way *Yaakov* speaks. Both *Yaakov* and *Eisav* are communicating the same message, but there is a difference between saying "I have plenty" and saying, "I have *kol*."

The verse in *Tehillim* says, "Those who seek the ways of G-d lack nothing - *vedorshei Hashem lo yachseru kol tov*." How can we reasonably declare that sentiment? So many of the righteous suffer, especially with challenges of poverty; the *dorshei Hashem*, the seekers of G-d are certainly lacking! To clarify, the *Chofetz Chaim* points out a distinction in the language used in the verse. There is indeed a difference between "having plenty" and "not lacking." The righteous may not have a whole lot but they also don't feel that they lack anything. Not everyone can attain wealth, but everyone has the ability to feel content.

The *Kli Yakar* applies this concept to the phraseology of *Yaakov* and *Eisav*. *Eisav*, a *rasha*, is left wanting. As the saying goes, "He who has a hundred desires two hundred" or as the Midrash says, "A person dies with only half his desires fulfilled." Therefore, although *Eisav* boasts that he has plenty, he implies that he doesn't yet have it all. He does not actually possess everything he thinks he needs. On the other hand, *Yaakov* is content and therefore is able to say, "I have everything I need."

The Mishna in *Avos* teaches: "Who is wealthy? He who is content with his lot." This is not merely a phrase we tell poor people to make them feel good. The Mishna is teaching a truth. A person with a million dollars who feels he must have ten million dollars is lacking a significant amount of money; that is an actual feeling of impoverishment. Whereas a poor man who has no wants, is he lacking? In truth, we must consider who would we actually classify as wealthy? Is it a man who is down nine million dollars or is it a man who is lacking absolutely nothing...