



D'VAR TORAH

Office of The  
CHIEF RABBI

**In war, there are no winners.**

In war, there are no winners.

In Parshat Vayishlach, we read how Yaakov was just about to meet up with his twin brother Esav, who had threatened to kill him.

And how does the Torah describe Yaakov's feelings at that momentous time?

'Vayirah Yaakov Meod Vayeizer Lo' – Yaakov was afraid, and he was sorely distressed.

And the obvious question is, why do we need to have both sentiments mentioned?

If he was afraid, it is because he was distressed and if he was distressed, he was certainly afraid.

The Netziv of Volozhin explains as follows: 'Vayirah Yaakov Meod' – Yaakov was afraid, 'Vayeizer Lo', he was distressed because he was afraid.

Yaakov knew it was Hashem's idea for him to end his sojourn in the diaspora, to come back to Israel to meet his brother again.

Therefore, he should have had confidence in the Almighty.

Nonetheless, his human feelings came to the fore.

He was nervous.

He was fearing what was going to happen and that distressed him.

Rashi gives a very different answer: 'Vayirah Yaakov Meod' – Yaakov was afraid lest he be killed. 'Vayeizer Lo' and he was distressed, lest he be forced to kill another.

For Yaakov, war was not within his comfort zone.

He realised that in the aftermath of war, even for those who are victorious, there are pieces to pick up.

At this very moment Israel is engaged in a tragic war.

Israel did not ask for it, Israel did not want it.

But Israel has an imperative to destroy the threat that exists against the Jewish state and against Jews worldwide, and to bring all of our hostages back home.

In the aftermath of this war, there will be pieces to pick up.

There will be emotional scars.

There will be people who will continue to suffer for a good while.

That is why, as crucial as this war is, we pray that it will be concluded successfully as soon as possible, because as we learned from Yaakov Avinu, in war, there are no true winners.

Shabbat Shalom.