



VAYISHLACH

WILL THE REAL YOU PLEASE RISE?

Wrestling with Your Own Greatness

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Vayishlach

Jacob returns to the Holy Land after a twenty-year stay in Charan and sends angel-emissaries to Esau in hopes of a reconciliation. But his messengers report that his brother is on the warpath with four hundred armed men. Jacob prepares for war, prays, and sends Esau a large gift (consisting of hundreds of head of livestock) to appease him.

That night, Jacob ferries his family and possessions across the Jabok River; he, however, remains behind and encounters the angel that embodies the spirit of Esau, with whom he wrestles until daybreak. Jacob

suffers a dislocated hip but vanquishes the supernal creature, who bestows on him the name Israel, which means “he who prevails over the Divine.”

Jacob and Esau meet, embrace, and kiss, but part ways. Jacob purchases a plot of land near Shechem, whose crown prince—also called Shechem—abducts and rapes Jacob’s daughter Dinah. Dinah’s brothers Simeon and Levi avenge the deed by killing all male inhabitants of the city after rendering them vulnerable by convincing them to circumcise themselves.

Jacob journeys on. Rachel dies while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin, and is buried in a roadside grave near Bethlehem. Reuben loses the birthright because he interferes with his father’s marital life. Jacob arrives in Hebron to his father, Isaac, who later dies at age 180. (Rebecca had passed away before Jacob’s arrival.)

Our *parshah* concludes with a detailed account of Esau’s wives, children, and grandchildren; the family histories of the people of Se’ir, among whom Esau settled; and a list of the eight kings who ruled Edom, the land of Esau’s and Se’ir’s descendants.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Why do we sometimes resist stepping into leadership or growth, even when we know it's the right thing to do? What are we really afraid of?





Before Jacob reunites with Esau, he spends all night wrestling with a mysterious man.

TEXT 1

Genesis 32:23-31

כג. וַיָּקָם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא, וַיַּקַּח אֶת שְׁתֵּי נְשָׁיו וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי שִׁפְחֹתָיו וְאֶת אֶחָד עָשָׂר יְלָדָיו, וַיַּעְבֵּר אֶת מַעְבַּר יַבֹּק.

כד. וַיַּקְהֵם וַיַּעְבְּרֵם אֶת הַנָּחַל, וַיַּעְבֵּר אֶת אֲשֶׁר לוֹ.

כה. וַיִּנְתֵּר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר.

כו. וַיִּרְא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לוֹ וַיִּגַע בְּכַף יָרְכוֹ, וַתִּקַּע כַּף יָרְדֵי יַעֲקֹב בְּהֶאָבְקוֹ עִמּוֹ.

כז. וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחְנִי כִּי עֹלָה הַשָּׁחַר, וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָּ כִּי אִם בְּרַכְתָּנִי.

23. And he arose that night, and he took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven children, and he crossed the ford of [the] Jabok.

24. And he took them and brought them across the stream, and he took across what was his.

25. And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

26. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him.

27. And the man said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking," but Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me."



TEXT 1

Genesis 32:23-31

כח. וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה שְּׁמֶךָ, וַיֹּאמֶר
יַעֲקֹב.

כט. וַיֹּאמֶר, לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאמָר עוֹד
שְׁמֶךָ כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי שָׁרִיתָ עִם
אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אַנְשִׁים וַתִּוָּכַל.

ל. וַיִּשְׂאַל יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּידָה נָא
שְׁמֶךָ, וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶה תִּשְׂאַל לְשְׁמִי,
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתוֹ שָׁם.

לא. וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם פְּנִיֵאל
כִּי רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים
וַהֲנַצֵּל נַפְשִׁי.

28. So he said to him, "What is your name?"
and he said, "Jacob."

29. And he said, "Your name shall no longer
be called Jacob, but Israel, because you
have commanding power with G-d and with
men, and you have prevailed."

30. And Jacob asked and said, "Now tell me
your name," and he said, "Why is it that you
ask for my name?" And he blessed him
there.

31. And Jacob named the place Peniel, for
[he said], "I saw a man of G-d face-to-face,
and my soul was saved."

Jacob wins and the man changes Jacob's name to Israel.



QUESTIONS

1. Who is this man?
2. What was the purpose of his wrestling with Jacob? And why did he come specifically at this juncture?
3. What is the significance of the name change?
4. Why was it so important for Jacob to find out his name? And what, indeed, is the answer to his question, “What’s your name?”



ONE EXPLANATION

Some suggest it was Esau's guardian angel trying to harm Jacob.

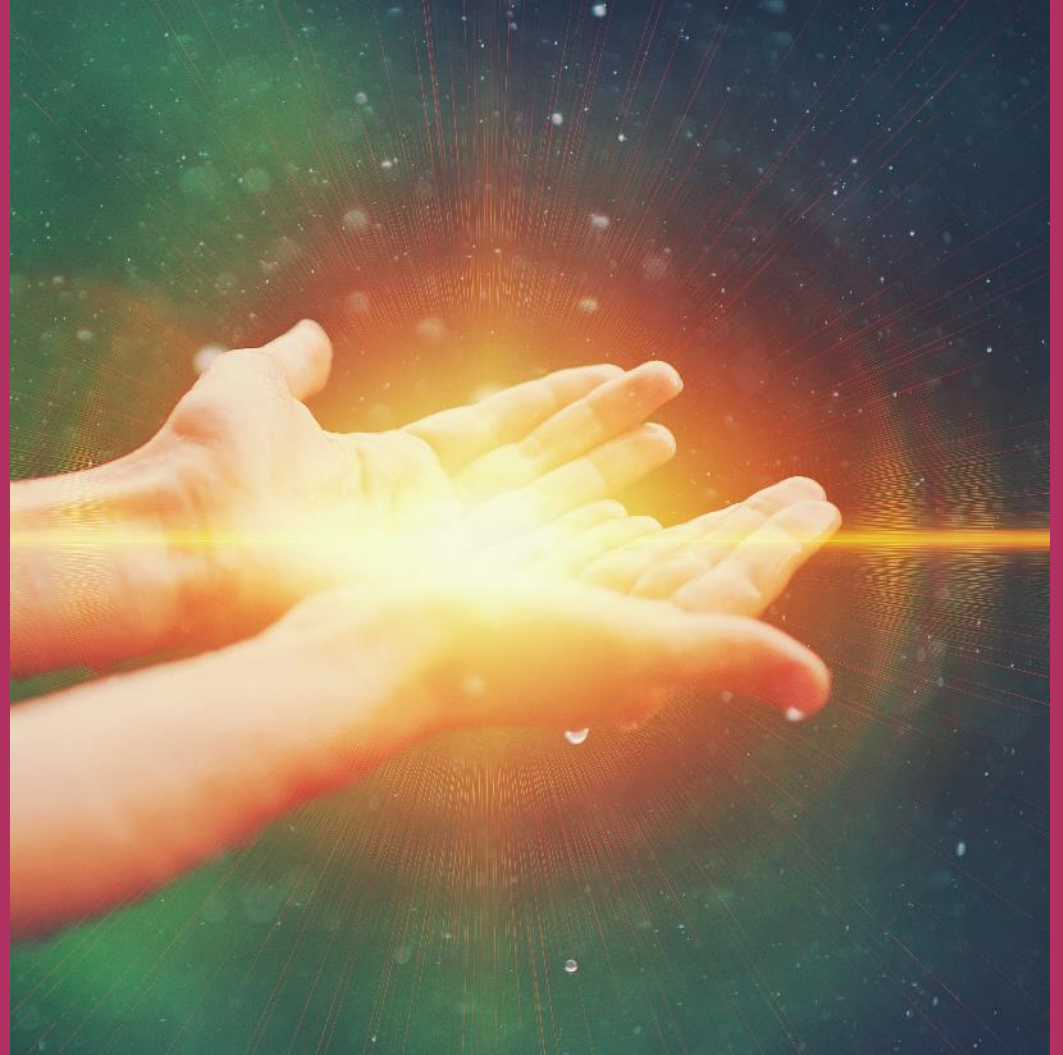
TEXT 2A

Rashi, Genesis 32:25

"ויאבק איש עמו" . . . פירשו
רבותינו שהוא שרו של עשו.

"And a man wrestled." . . . Our rabbis explained that this was the guardian angel of Esau.

The struggle was over
who truly deserved the
birthright and blessings.



TEXT 2B

Rashi, Ibid. 32:26

"כי אם ברכתני". הודה לי על
הברכות שברכני אבא שעשו מעורר
עליהם.

"Unless you have blessed me." [Jacob told the angel:] "Acknowledge for me the blessings my father blessed me with, the ones Esau is contesting."

TEXT 2C

Rashi, Ibid. 32:29

"לא יעקב יאמר עוד שמך". לא יאמרו עליך עוד שהברכות בעקיבה וברמייה, כי אם בשררה ובגילוי פנים. סופך שהקדוש ברוך הוא נגלה עליך בבית אל ומחליף את שמך ושם הוא מברכך, ואני שם אהיה ואודה לך עליהן.

"Your name shall no longer be called Jacob (יעקב)." It shall no longer be said that the blessings came to you through trickery (עקבה) and deceit but with nobility (שררה) and openness. Ultimately, G-d will reveal Himself to you in Bethel and change your name, and there He will bless you. And I shall be there and admit your right to the blessings.

יעקב; עקבה — Tricky

Ya'akov

Akbah

The name change affirmed that he had rightfully earned the blessings and not through trickery.

ANSWERS

1. The man was Esau's angel.
2. They wrestled to resolve the dispute around the birthright.
3. The name change affirmed Jacob's right to the birthright.

TEXT 3

*Midrash, Bereshit
Rabah 77:1*

"וַיִּוְתַר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ" . . .

רַבִּי בְּרֵכְיָה בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי סִימּוֹן אָמַר "אֵין כָּאֱ-לֹ
יִשְׁוּרוֹן"? יִשְׂרָאֵל סָבָא: מָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כָּתוּב בּוֹ "וַיִּשְׁגָּב
ה' לְבַדּוֹ", אַף יַעֲקֹב "וַיִּוְתַר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ".

"And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him. . . ."

Rabbi Berechiah said in the name of Rabbi Simon: It says, "There is none like G-d," and who is "like G-d, O Jeshurun" (Deuteronomy 33:26)? The elder Israel [Jacob]. Just as it says about the Holy One, "And G-d alone will be exalted" (Isaiah 2:11), so too it says about Jacob, "And Jacob was left alone."



The *Midrash* links Jacob being "**alone**" with G-d, the One who is truly **alone**.

ANOTHER EXPLANATION

Jacob was fleeing from Esau because he did not sufficiently trust that G-d would protect him.



TEXT 4A

*Rashbam, Genesis
32:23, 25*

"ויקם בלילה הוא". נתכוין לברוח דרך אחרת ולפיכך עבר הנחל בלילה.

כמו שמצינו בדוד בברחו מפני אבשלום בדרכים הללו של ירדן ומחנים שעבר יעקב ובלילה.

"ויותר יעקב לבדו". כלומר שהעביר כל אשר לו, שלא היה עוד לעבור אלא הוא לבדו, ורצה לעבור אחריהם, כי לברוח דרך אחרת שלא יפגשנו עשו נתכוון.

"And he arose that night." Jacob intended to flee by a different route, and that's why he crossed the river at night.

We find the same with David when he fled from Absalom. He, too, traveled through these same places along the Jordan and Mahanaim that Jacob had passed, and at night.

"And Jacob was left alone." Meaning, he had already brought over everything he owned; there was no one left to cross but him. He wanted to cross after them because he was planning to escape by a different route so that Esau wouldn't encounter him.

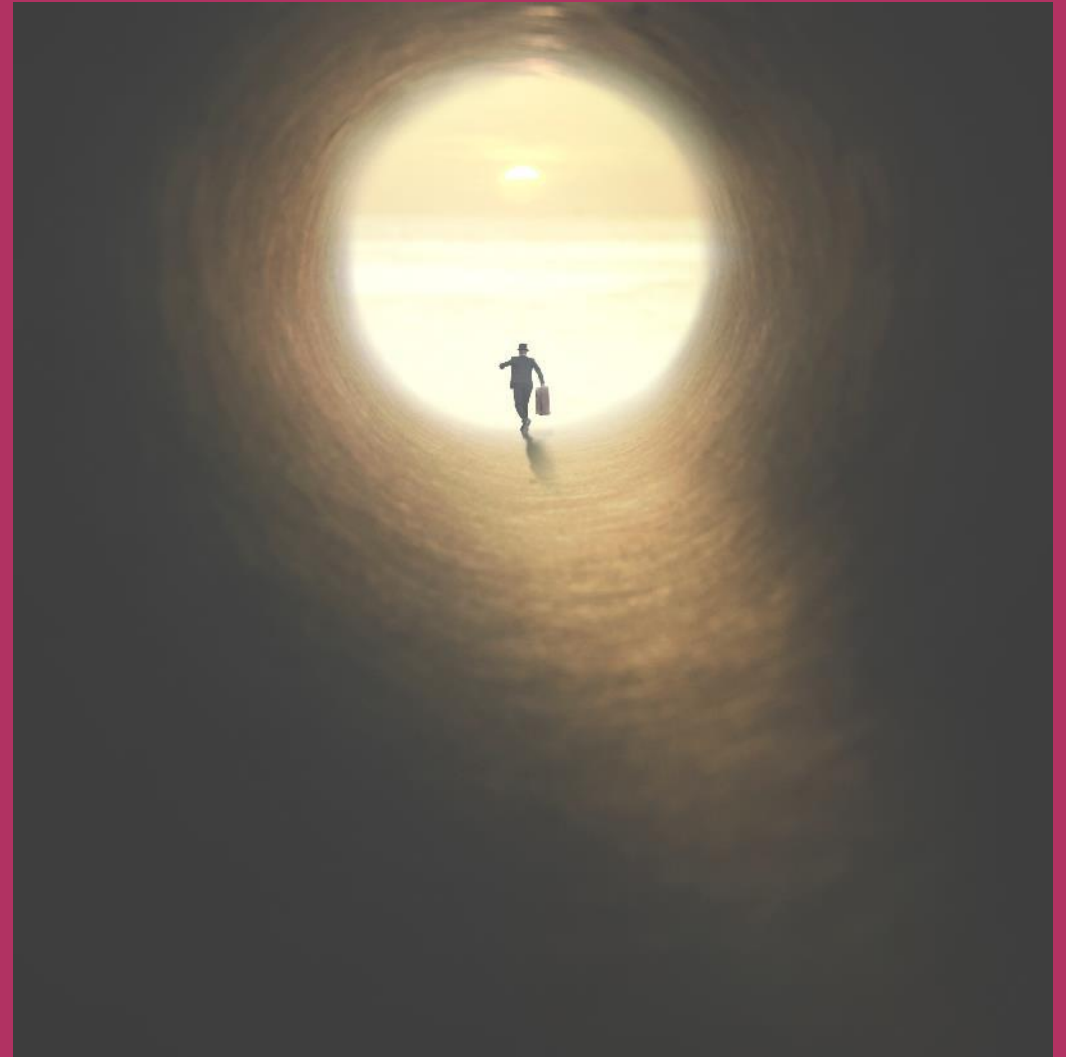
TEXT 4B

Rashbam, Genesis
32:25

"וַיִּאֲבֹק" מֵלֹאךְ עִמּוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא יוּכַל לִבְרוּחַ,
וַיִּרְאֶה קִיּוּם הַבְּטַחְתּוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
שֶׁלֹּא יִזְיָקֵהוּ עֲשׂוֹ.

"And a man wrestled." An angel wrestled with him to stop him from escaping, so that he would be forced to face the situation and witness the fulfillment of G-d's promise—namely, that Esau would not harm him.

G-d sent a messenger to stop Jacob from fleeing, striking him on the thigh as punishment for trying to abandon his mission.



TEXT 4C

Rashbam, *Ibid.* 32:29

מה שלקה יעקב ונצלע, לפי שהקדוש ברוך הוא הבטיחו והוא היה בורח.

וכן מצינו בכל ההולכים בדרך שלא ברצון הקדוש ברוך הוא או ממאנים ללכת, שנענשו.

במשה כתיב: "שלח נא ביד תשלח" (שמות ד, יג), "ויחר אף ה' במשה" (שמות ד, יד). ולפי הפשט, אף על פי שאמרו חכמים "בכל מקום חרון אף עושה רושם", וכאן מה רושם יש? "הלא אהרן אחיך הלוי" (שם) — עתיד הוא להיות לוי ואתה כהן ועכשיו הוא יהיה כהן ואתה לוי (השווה בבלי, זבחים קב, א).

Why was Jacob struck and left limping? Because G-d had promised to protect him, and yet he tried to run away.

We find this pattern with anyone who travels against G-d's will or resists His mission: they are punished.

With Moses it says, "Send through someone else" (Exodus 4:13), and the next verse reads, "G-d's anger burned against Moses" (4:14). The sages say that whenever G-d's anger is mentioned, it leaves a mark. What mark is there here? The answer: "Is not Aaron your brother the Levite" (*ibid.*)—he was meant to be a Levite and you a *Kohen*, but now he will be the *Kohen* and you the Levite (Zevachim 102a).

TEXT 4C

Rashbam, Ibid. 32:29

אך לפי הפשט לפי שהיה מתעצל ללכת
כתיב: "ויהי בדרך במלון ויפגשוהו ה'
ויבקש המיתו" (שמות ז, כד).

וכן ביונה שנבלע במעי הדגה. וכן
בבלעם: "ויחר אף אלקים כי הולך
הוא" (במדבר כב, כב) ונעשה חיגר,
כדכתיב: "ותלחץ את רגל בלעם"
(שם, כה), "וילך שפיי" (שם כג, ג).

More straightforwardly, since Moses delayed going, it says, "On the way at the inn, Hashem encountered him and sought to kill him" (Shemot 4:24).

The same with Jonah, who was swallowed by the fish. And with Balaam: "G-d's anger flared because he went" (Numbers 22:22), and he became lame, as it says, "She crushed Balaam's foot" (22:25), and later, "He went halting" (23:3).



Jacob was afraid of his true self and the great mission with which he was tasked.

Moses, Jonah, and other greats faced the same dilemma with the same response.

TEXT 5

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, "Feeling the Fear," rabbisacks.org

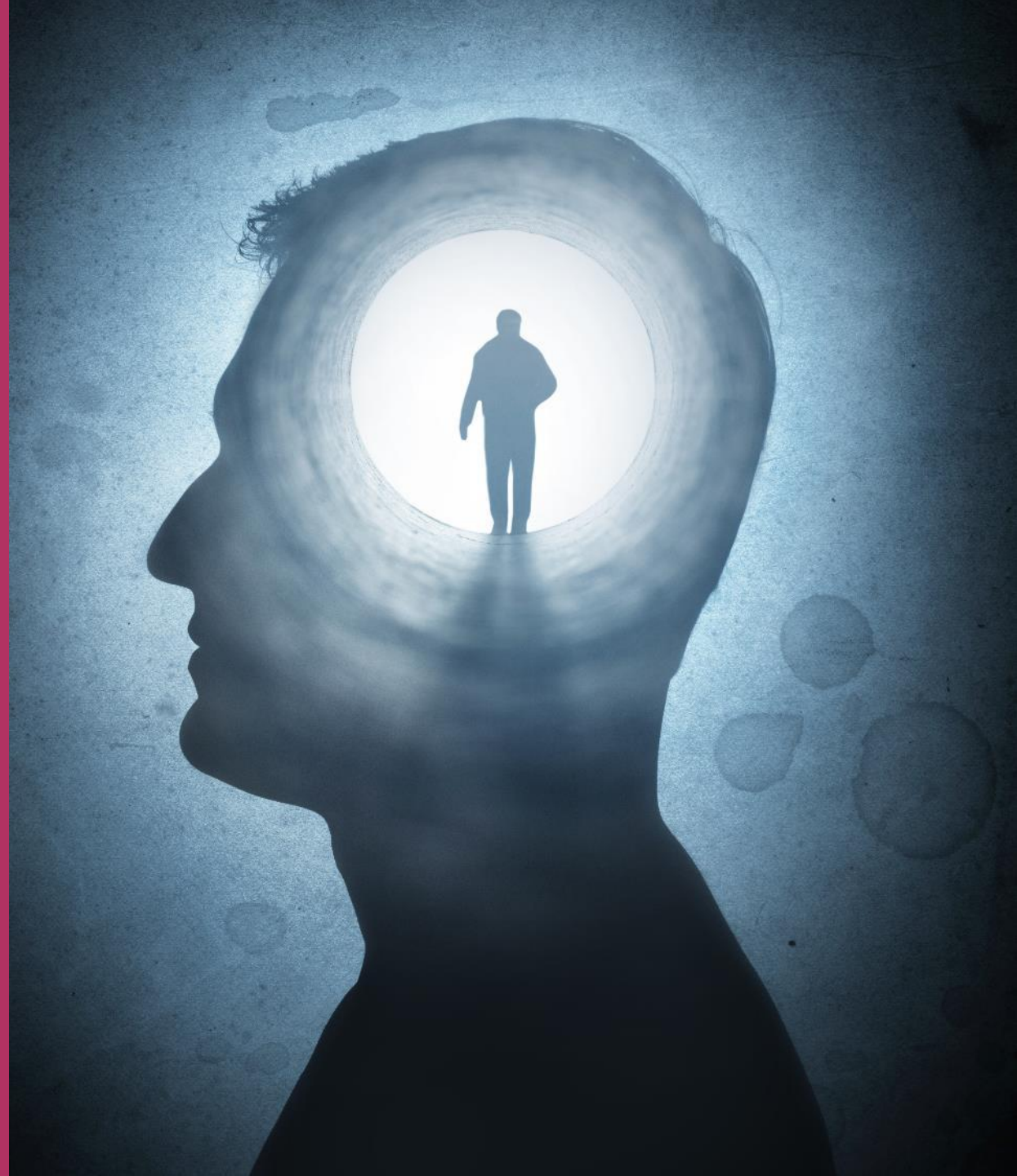
They were afraid, essentially, of their mission. Moses kept telling G-d at the burning bush: Who am I? They won't believe in me. I am not a man of words. Jonah was reluctant to deliver a message from G-d to Israel's enemies. And Jacob had just said to G-d, "I am unworthy of all the kindness and faith that You have shown me" (Genesis 32:11).

Nor were these the only people in Tanach who had this kind of fear. So did the Prophet Isaiah when he said to G-d, "I am a man of unclean lips." So did Jeremiah when he said, "I cannot speak: I am a child."

This is not physical fear. It is the fear that comes from a feeling of personal inadequacy. "Who am I to lead the Jewish people?" asked Moses. "Who am I to deliver the word of G-d?" asked the prophets. "Who am I to stand before my brother Esau, knowing that I will continue the covenant and he will not?" asked Jacob. Sometimes the greatest have the least self-confidence because they know how immense is the responsibility and how small they feel in relation to it.

Courage does not mean having no fear. It means having fear but overcoming it. If that is true of physical courage it is no less true of moral and spiritual courage.

The man was *inside Jacob's own consciousness* as he battled the version of himself that he was being pushed to become.





We should all wrestle with ourselves to become the best version of who we can be and fully realize our potential.

TEXT 6A

Mishnah, Avot 2:5

וּבְמָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין אַנְשִׁים, הַשְׁתַּדֵּל
לְהִיּוֹת אִישׁ.

In a place where there are no men, try
to be a man.

TEXT 6B

*Maimonides,
Mishnah, Avot 2:5*

עניין השתדל - הרגל נפשך ומשוך אותה לקנות
המעלות, ואחר שאין שם אנשים חכמים שילמדוך, היה
אתה מלמד את עצמך. ותרגום "ויאבק איש עמו"
(בראשית לב, כה) - "ואשתדל גברא עמיה".

The concept of "try" in this context means to train your soul and draw it toward acquiring virtues. When there are no wise people around to teach you, then you must become your own teacher. The Targum on the verse "And a man wrestled with [Jacob]" translates it as "*ve'ishtadel gavra imeih*—a man exerted himself with him."

“What is your name?”

Jacob came face to face with his true identity—the gap between who he believed himself to be and who G-d destined him to become.



ANSWER

4. The question *is* the answer. In asking it, Jacob realizes his true identity — not who he is but who he is meant to become: Israel, a prince. He becomes the man who wrestles with G-d and prevails.



Jacob realized the depth of his own greatness and how he emulated G-d alone.

TEXT 7A

*Rabbi Moshe Chaim
Efraim of Sudilkov,
Degel Machaneh
Efraim, Vayishlach
12*

"ויותר יעקב לבדו וכו'". ואיתא במדרש, הדא הוא
דכתיב: "ונשגב ה' לבדו ביום ההוא", עד כאן.
והנה המדרש הזה הוא תמוה מאוד!

"And Jacob was left alone . . ." The Midrash says:
This is what is written, "And G-d alone will be
exalted on that day."

This Midrash is astonishing!

TEXT 7B

*Rabbi Moshe Chaim
Ephraim of Sudilkov,
ibid.*

ויש לומר על פי הגמרא, "כל אחד מחויב
לומר כל העולם לא נברא אלא בשבילי",
עד כאן.

והנה כשנשים לב על דברי הגמרא זו הוא
מוסר גדול ודרך ישרה להדרכת האדם.
כי כשעולה בדעתו שכל העולם לא נברא
אלא בשבילו, נמצא הוא יחיד בעולם וכל
העמדת העולם וקיומו תלוי בו - בהטבת
מעשיו הוא מקיים את העולם, וחס
ושלום להיפוך הוא מחריב את העולם.

ואינו צריך לעשות עבודתו באיזה פניה
שישבחוהו בני אדם או כיוצא בזה, כי
הוא העיקר בעולם, וכל העולם טפלים
אליו, ואינו צריך להם — רק כולם
צריכים לו.

This can be explained in light of the Talmudic
(Sanhedrin 37a) statement, "Every person
must say: The whole world was created for
me."

If you think about what that means, it's
actually a powerful idea with practical
implications. If the entire world was created
for you, then you're essentially alone in it, and
the whole world's existence depends on you.
If you behave appropriately, you sustain the
world. If not, G-d forbid, you bring it down.

This also means that you never need to try
and impress people or gain their approval.
You're the main character, and everyone else
is secondary. You don't need them; they need
you.

TEXT 7B

Rabbi Moshe Chaim
Ephraim of Sudilkov,
ibid.

וזה מדריגה גדולה מאוד כשזוכה לזה,
ואז בוודאי הוא עובד לה' לבדו בלי שום
בילבול ועירב מחשבה ופניה אחרת.
וגורם בזה ביטול כל הקליפות ונכנעים
תחת יד הקדושה והשכינה כביכול.

וזה יש לומר שמרמז המדרש "ויותר
יעקב לבדו" — היינו כשזוכה למדריגה
גדולה זו שהבין והאמין שהוא לבדו יחיד
בעולם, ושכל העולם תלוי עליו ועל
מעשיו — אז "ונשגב ה' לבדו", היינו
שבוודאי עבודתו תמה ושלימה ונקיה
וביטול כל הקליפות ונכנעים תחת יד
הקדושה, וראה ונגלה כי נשגב ה' לבדו,
והוא לבדו ואין בלתו, רק הוא אחד ושמו
אחד.

That's a high level to reach. But once someone gets there, they can serve G-d with complete focus, without confusion or mixed motives. They're not pulled in different directions. And through that kind of service, all the forces of impurity lose their grip and are pushed aside by holiness and the *Shechinah*.

That may be what the Midrash is hinting at with the words, "And Jacob was left alone." It's describing the level he reached, where he truly saw himself as the only one in the world, with everything resting on him and his actions. And once he reached that clarity, "G-d alone will be exalted." His service was clean, whole, and focused. The distractions and negative forces faded away, and it became fully clear that G-d alone exists—He is One, and His name is One.



The world was created for you, and you are G-d's ambassador with infinite power to fulfill His will.

Recognizing your true greatness is essential to fulfilling your mission of serving G-d.



TEXT 8

*Rabbi Yisrael Baal
Shem Tov, Keter
Shem Tov 145*

שרוב ענוותנותו של האדם גורם שנתרחק מעבודת השם יתברך. שמצד שפלותו אינו מאמין כי האדם גורם על ידי תפילתו ותורתו שפע אל כל העולמות, וגם המלאכים ניזונים על ידי תורתו ותפילתו. שאילו היה מאמין בזה, כמה היה עובד ה' בשמחה וביראה מרוב כל . . .

האדם ראוי לשם לב ולומר כי הוא "סולם מוצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה", וכל תנועותיו ועסקיו ודבורו והילוכו עושה רושם למעלה.

Humility can sometimes backfire. It can actually distance one from serving G-d. Because when someone sees themselves as lowly, they may not believe that their Torah and prayer bring blessing to all the worlds, or that even the angels are sustained by their spiritual work. But if they truly believed that, imagine how joyfully and reverently they would serve G-d, overwhelmed by the weight and privilege of it.

Take this to heart and remind yourself: You are a ladder standing on the earth with its top reaching the Heavens. Every step you take, every word you speak, every action you do—it all leaves a mark Above.

TEXT 9

*Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak
Schneersohn, Sefer
Hasichot 1927, p.
114*

כשם שצריכים לידע חסרונות עצמו,
כך צריכים לידע מעלות עצמו.

Just as a person must be aware of their own shortcomings, they must also be aware of their strengths.

TEXT 10

Rabbi Natan
Sternhartz of
Breslov, Sichot
HaRan 140

כאשר אמר רבינו הקדוש את התורה הנזכרת לעיל עמדתי לפניו כמשתומם, ומחשבותי היו תמהים בענין זה וכו'. ענה ואמר בלשון גערה קצת כאומר: ואם יש לך אמונה, אין לך אמונה בעצמך ("האסטי אין דיר קיין אמונה ניט").

והזכיר מיד מאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה וכו' "מי גרם לצדיקים שיתבזבוז שולחנם לעתיד לבוא, קטנות שהיה בהם בעצמן". שלא האמינו בהם בעצמן . . . שעיקר קטנות האמונה שלהן היה בהן בעצמן . . . שלא האמינו בהקדוש ברוך הוא שהוא טוב לכל והם חשובים וגדולים בעיניו יתברך. ומחמת זה היה בהם קטנות . . .

שהאדם צריך שיהיה לו אמונה בעצמו שגם הוא חביב בעיני השם יתברך. כי לפי גדולת טובתו של השם יתברך גם הוא גדול וחשוב בעיניו יתברך.

When the Rebbe [Rabbi Nachman of Breslov] said this teaching, "I stood before him stunned, my thoughts overwhelmed by the idea. . . ." He responded with a hint of rebuke, saying: "And if you have faith—do you have no faith in yourself?" ("*Host du in dir keyn emunah nit?*")

He immediately quoted the sages: "What caused the righteous to lose their reward in the World to Come? The smallness they had within themselves" (Talmud, Sotah 48b). They didn't believe in themselves. The real smallness of their faith wasn't in G-d—it was in themselves. They didn't believe that G-d is truly good to all, or that *they*, too, are precious and important in His eyes. And that's where the smallness came from.

A person must believe in themselves—that they, too, are beloved to G-d. Because the greater G-d's goodness is, the more it means *you*, too, are great and significant in His eyes.



Belief in yourself is, in essence, belief in G-d.

TEXT 11

*Rabbi Tzadok
Hakohen Rabinowitz
of Lublin, Tzidkat
Hatzadik 155*

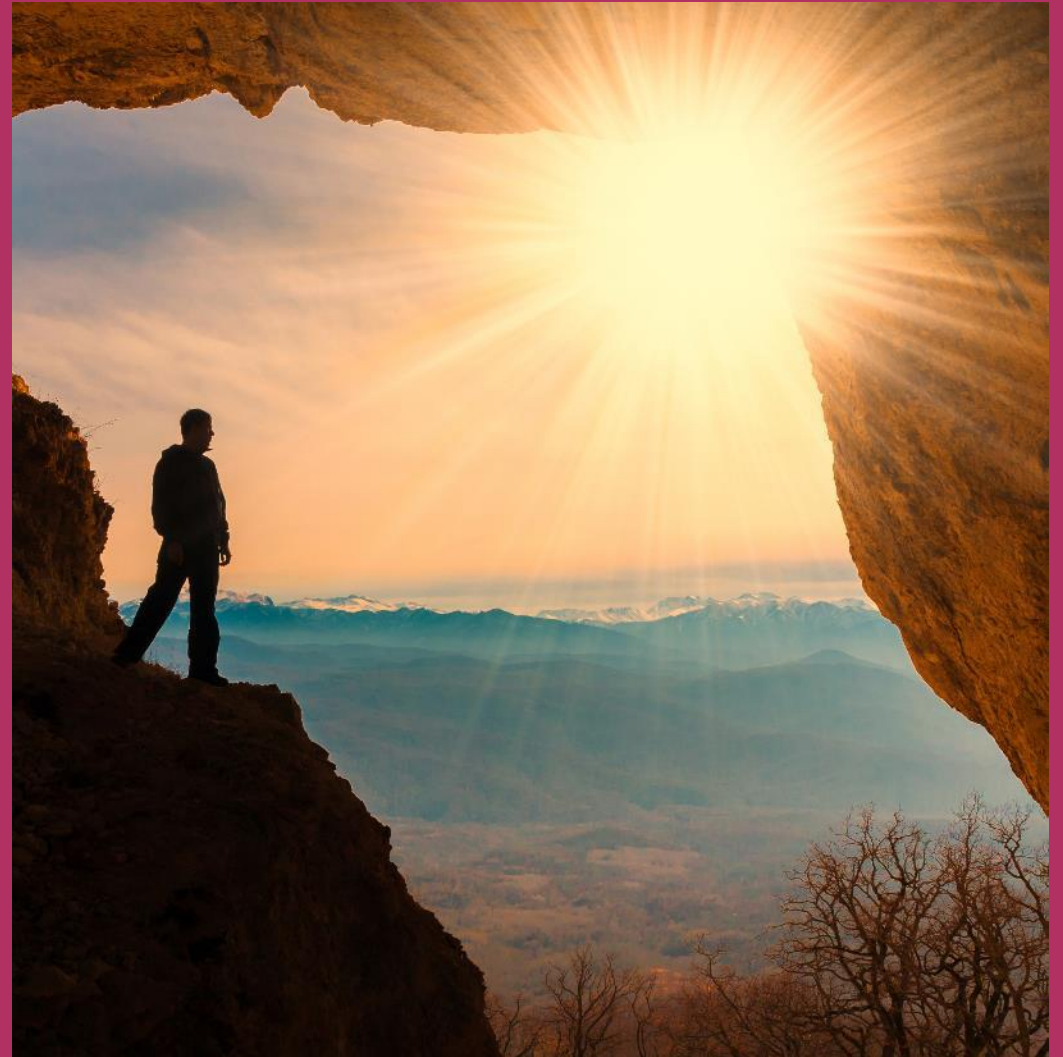
כשם שצריך אדם להאמין בהשם יתברך, כך צריך אחר כך להאמין בעצמו. רוצה לומר, שיש להשם יתברך עסק עמו ושאיננו פועל בטל שבין לילה כו', וכחיתו שדה שלאחר מיתתם נאבדו ואינם.

רק צריך להאמין כי נפשו ממקור החיים יתברך שמו, והשם יתברך מתענג ומשתעשע בה כשעושה רצונו.

Just as a person must believe in G-d, they must also believe in themselves. In other words, you must believe that G-d has a relationship with you—that you're not some aimless creature here one day and gone the next, like an animal of the field that disappears after death.

Rather, you must believe that your soul comes from the Source of life, and that G-d takes pleasure and is delighted when you do His will.

Jacob's battle empowers us for all time, reminding us of the greatness within each of us.



TEXT 12

*Rabbi Menachem
Nachum Twersky of
Chernobyl, Me'or
Einayim, Vayetze
#40*

כי מה שנתאבק עמו הוא על כל
המאורעות וענינים והנהגות הדורות
העתידים לצאת ממנו שתיקן לנו יעקב
אבינו עליו השלום על ידי המלחמה
שהיה לו אתו, שמחמת גודל כשרונו נצח
להסטרא אחרא בכדי שלא יפעול רעה
חס ושלום לבניו הדורות הבאים . . .

כי יעקב אבינו עליו השלום צפה עד סוף
כל הדורות וראה לתקן להם דרך ה'
ולהכניע המקטרג והסטרא אחרא.

וזהו ענין ההתאבקות שכתוב בתורה
הקדושה "ויאבק איש עמו", שהוא עבור
בניו הדורות הבאין עד ביאת משיחנו
במהרה בימינו, וזהו "עד עלות השחר",
זמן שנאמר בו (ישעיה נח, ח) "אז יבקע
כשחר אורך", שהוא ימות המשיח.

Jacob's struggle wasn't just personal—it was on behalf of all the future events, challenges, and spiritual dynamics that would unfold through the generations that would come from him. Through that battle, Jacob our forefather paved the way for us. Because of his immense spiritual capacity, he was able to defeat the negative forces so they wouldn't harm his descendants in the future. . . .

Jacob foresaw all the generations to come and sought to prepare a path for them to walk in G-d's ways and to subdue all forces of opposition.

That's the meaning behind the wrestling described in the Torah—"And a man wrestled with him"—it was for the sake of his children in all future generations, all the way to the coming of Mashiach. And that's why the Torah says it lasted "until the break of dawn," which refers to the verse in Isaiah (58:8), "Then your light will burst forth like the dawn"—a reference to the era of Mashiach.



Face yourself with honesty and courage. Wrestle with who you are and who you're meant to become, and like Jacob, you will emerge transformed.

TEXT 13

*Rabbi Yossy Gordon,
"The Turkey Prince,"
www.chabad.org*

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov related the following parable:

There was once a prince who lived with his father and mother, the king and queen, in a splendid fashion. He received the finest education and upbringing.

To his parents' chagrin, one day the prince went through an identity crisis and came to the conclusion that he was really a turkey and not a human being.

Initially, the king and queen thought he was kidding. However, after he stopped joining them at the royal table and instead, moved under the table and sat there naked and pecking at crumbs, they knew that serious trouble was afoot.

Needless to say, the prince's strange behavior caused indescribable angst for his loving parents . . . and intense embarrassment for the royal family at large. The king was ready to spare no expense for the person who could cure his son. The finest doctors and psychiatrists of the land came and tried to cure the prince, all to no avail.

The king was at a loss until a gentle-looking wise man came to the palace. "I hereby offer to cure the prince free of charge," declared the man. "My only condition is that no one interferes with anything I do."

Intrigued and desperate, the king and queen readily agreed.

The following day, the prince had company under the table. It was the wise man. "What are you doing here?" asked the turkey prince.



TEXT 13

Rabbi Yossy Gordon,
"The Turkey Prince,"
www.chabad.org

"Why are you here?" countered the man.

"I am a turkey," responded the prince emphatically.

"Well, I am also a turkey," the man replied. With that, he began to gobble like a turkey and peck at the crumbs on the floor. The prince was convinced. A few days passed in this fashion.

One morning, the wise man signaled to the king to bring him a shirt. He said to the prince, "I don't see any reason a turkey can't wear a shirt." The prince thought about it and agreed, and soon the two of them were wearing shirts.

Soon the wise man asked to be brought a pair of pants. He said to the prince, "Is it forbidden for turkeys to wear pants? Certainly not!" The prince thought it over and agreed, and soon the two of them were wearing pants.

So the process continued. Shortly thereafter, the wise man convinced the turkey prince that it was not forbidden for turkeys to eat human food, which was surely tastier. Then came sitting at the table and enjoying human conversation. Within a short time, the turkey prince, although still maintaining that he was a turkey, began conducting himself exactly like a regular person.

Fortunately, most of us don't suffer from turkey complexes. But here's a question we can all ask of ourselves: Am I limiting my potential because of my self-perception?

Never underestimate
your own greatness. G-d
placed you in this
world, loves you, and
believes in you.



KEY POINTS

1. Jacob struggled with a man all night and emerged victorious.
2. The classic interpretation describes this man as Esau's angel sent to settle the birthright dispute. An alternative explanation is that Jacob was avoiding his mission, and an angel was sent to stop him.
3. Jacob and many other biblical greats were afraid of their own greatness and the magnitude of their missions.
4. Jacob's victory symbolizes the triumphant truth that we can all emulate: G-d is with you, and you're empowered to achieve true greatness. This is the deeper meaning of the name change to Yisrael—a prince.
5. Don't ever let thoughts of inadequacy get in the way of fulfilling your mission and destiny. To do so is to deny G-d's plan for you.

