

Parashat Vayishlach- Ya'acov's Mystery Man



Torah: **Ist Aliyah Bereshiyth (Genesis)32:1-32**

When we begin to look at the life of Ya'acov (Jacob) we see a life of struggle right from the womb. We see him as the guy who wants to get ahead, He manipulates the birth right from Esav (Esau) and then deceives his Father Yitzchaq (Isaac) for the blessing. His struggles never seem to end but because of his deceptive actions we see him receiving measure for measure from Lavan (Laban) his uncle and finally decides to escape his uncle to return to the Promised Land (the Land of Canaan). Many translators however translate his name to mean deceiver or supplanter though this may be the result of his actions, but his name literally means one who grabs the heel which was perceived as one wanting to be first as shown in the image:

The image we get from Ya'acov (Jacob) is of a man that successfully manipulates situations so much so that even when YHWH gives him the promises at Bethel after that dream of the ladder his still makes his trust in YHWH rather conditional by saying in:

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The illustration shows a man in a blue and yellow robe standing in a desert landscape, pouring oil from a golden vessel onto a large, smooth rock. In the background, a large, ornate temple with a golden roof and a tall chimney emitting smoke is visible under a cloudy sky. The scene is set in a rocky, arid environment.

The Conditional Vow of Ya'acov [Jacob]

Bereshiyth (Genesis) 28:20 Then Ya'acov (Jacob) made a vow, saying, "If Elohim will be with me, and keep me on this journey that I am taking, and give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, **21** so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then YHWH shall be to me for Elohim.

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When we see him again coming to the land of Canaan we see his default plan being his trust in his ability to manipulate the situation because he divides his company thinking that if one group dies the other may live.

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The illustration depicts a large caravan of people and pack animals, including donkeys and camels, traveling through a desert landscape. In the foreground, a man in a white and red robe is riding a donkey, looking back towards the caravan. The scene is set in a vast, open desert with rolling hills in the background.

Ya'acov [Jacob] Divides his Company

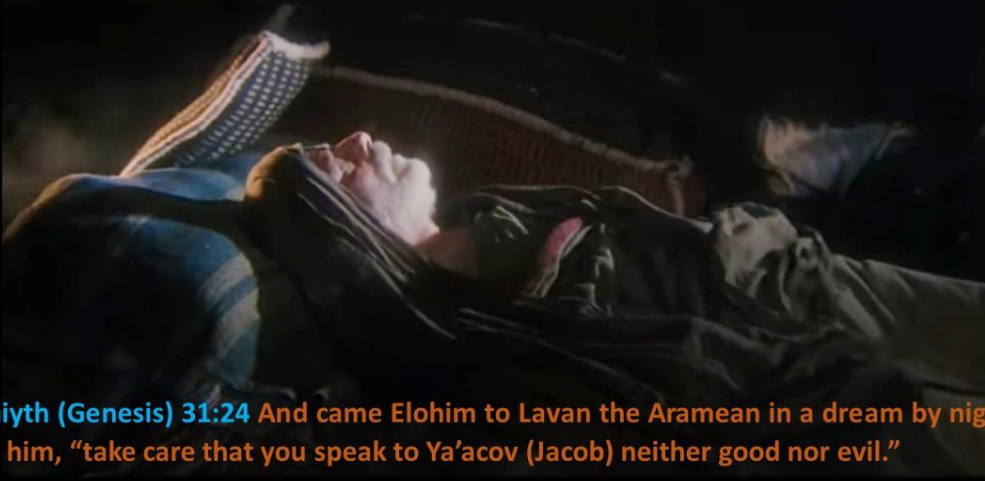
When Ya'acov sends many gifts to his brother by a series of servants with more gifts each time he is applying his very nature to a difficult situation in the hope of wearing down his brother's anger and to appease him.



His only default is to scheme which has succeeded in the past so that is what he does best since that has been his nature from the day he was born.

Though we see in him this nature of strong desire to succeed, through all his struggles, surely, he is slowly learning to put his trust in the Elohim of his Father's.

Elohim Cautions Laban



Bereshiyth (Genesis) 31:24 And came Elohim to Lavan the Aramean in a dream by night, and said to him, "take care that you speak to Ya'acov (Jacob) neither good nor evil."

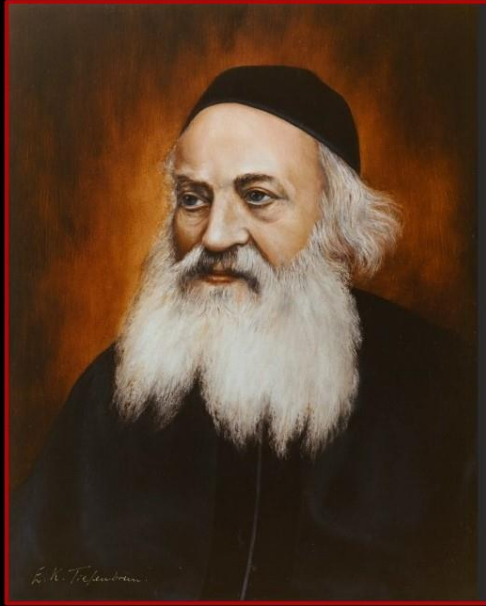
His rescue as we saw previously with Lavan was not achieved by his schemes, but we see it revealed as coming from YHWH who spoke to Lavan in:

Bereshiyth (Genesis) 31:24 And came Elohim to Lavan the Aramean in a dream by night, and said to him, "take care that you speak to Ya'acov (Jacob) neither good nor evil."

We do now find Ya'acov [Jacob] sending the different companies across the Jabbok:



However, why does he remain on the other side:

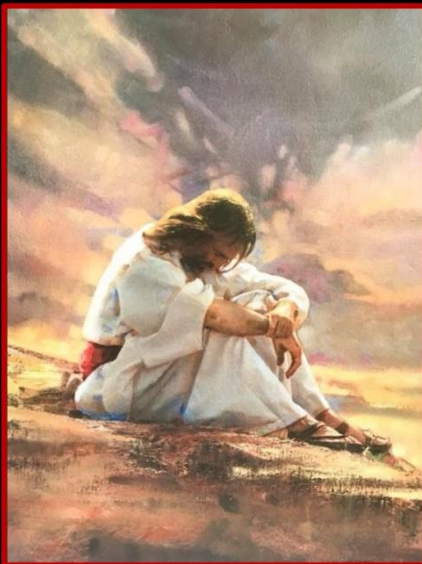


**The Rashbam: Rabbi
Samuel ben Asher
(1085 - 1174 CE)**

The Rashbam: **Rabbi Samuel ben Asher (1085-1174 CE)**, a grandson of Rashi; lived in Northern France; worked from the plain meaning of the Hebrew text even when this contradicted established rabbinic interpretation.

Rashbam proposes that "he meant to follow behind everyone else, intending to flee rather than encounter Esau" and that the encounter with the 'man' was to "keep him from fleeing, so that he would see the fulfillment of the Holy One's promise:

"The narrative however emphasises Ya'acov's aloneness. In the sequential detail of the story, Ya'acov's unprotected state functions as suspense. One whose life is in danger stands alone.



**Yeshua Tested 40
Days**

Yahshua put this into practice when He "was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 being tried for forty days by the devil." (Luke 4:1-2,)

Sometimes the only way of appealing to YHWH is to be alone with Him, one-on-one, away from the distractions of the world and other people, even our nearest and dearest.

This chapter therefore begins with Ya'acov coming to the greatest revelation in his life. His life so far has been a life of struggle & scheming in which he has seen YHWH favouring him and always him gaining the final upper hand but now in the face of death with his Brother Esav (Esau) coming with a company of armed men he is terrified and fears his death & the destruction of his whole family. Finally, he understands his incapability & must turn to his only recourse and that is YHWH the Elohim of his forefathers. Now this great but mystical meeting and struggle with a man meets him and us.



Whilst some commentators say the 'man' is **Esau's angel** others say that Ya'acov is wrestling with his own conscience or his fears and then some that the 'man' is a pre-incarnate appearance of Yeshua - the angel or messenger of the Lord as appears in many other scriptures. However, the sages of Judaism have no clear answers to the difficult passage most likely because it will lead them to consider the idea of the pre-incarnate Yeshua as a manifestation of Elohim. Could this not suggest that Elohim clothed himself in humanity lowering himself to come to earth in human flesh as revealed in this statement in:



Philippians 2:6-8 Although Yeshua was in the form of Elohim, He did not consider it robbery to be equal to Elohim, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant and came to be in the likeness of man 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the tree.

"What kind of Elohim is it who will be pressed to a draw by this man? Is it like a Father who races with his son to inspire him and at last allows the son to succeed? And what kind of man is our father Ya'acov that he can force a draw even against heaven?"

Yahshua himself gives us some insight into the path of one who seeks the way when he encourages seekers of righteousness with these words in:

Luke 13:24 "Strive to enter through the narrow way, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

And in the Book of Hebrews, we see the struggle that Yeshua had through which we receive our greatest hope as written in:



Ivriim (Hebrews) 5:7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death and was heard because of His reverent fear,

However, Yaacov [Jacob] feared greatly for his life and is left alone after dividing his clan into two parties and then suddenly we find him wrestling with a man until the break of day.

Who was this man and what was his purpose?

The sage Rashi (**Shelomoh Yitzchaki, 1040–1105**) tells us that he was not human but the guardian Malakim (Angel) of Esav who fought him over the blessings that were rightfully Esav's.

However, we receive a different understanding & revelation from:



The Revelation of Hoshea

Hoshea (Hosea) 12:4-5 Yes, He (Ya'acov) struggled with the Messenger (Angel) and overcame, he wept and sought his favour. He found him in Beyth El and there he spoke to us. 5 even YHWH Elohim of Hosts, YHWH is his memorable name.

We also reading YHWH confirming the name change in the following:

Bereshiyth [Gen] 35:9 Then YHWH appeared to Yaacov [Jacob] again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. **10** And YHWH said to him, "Your name is Yaacov [Jacob]; your name shall not be called Yaacov [Jacob] anymore, but Yisrael shall be your name." So He called his name Yisrael.

Wait a minute what is this saying? This suggests that the same presence that spoke to him at Beyth El (Bethel) is the same divine presence that manifested as a man & wrestled with Ya'acov the whole night. We know that Scripture teaches that no man can see YHWH and live. Is there then contradiction or can YHWH manifest himself in other ways.

The Commander of YHWH's Army



Is this the same Malakim (Messenger) that appeared to Joshua before Yericho (Jericho) and

could this be in fact the pre-incarnate manifestation of Yeshua Ha Mashiach (the Messiah). **You be the judge!** The struggle of Ya'acov however, is more about the struggle of faith. How much did he want the blessing and how much do we want the blessing of **YHWH?**

Not until Ya'acov was running away from Eretz Yisrael (Land of Canaan) did YHWH appear to him. Not until years later, alone, at night, terrified at the prospect of meeting Esau, did YHWH or an angel wrestle with him. Ya'acov (Jacob) alone was given, by the Malakim (angel), a completely new name, not an enhancement of his old one but a completely new identity: **"Yisrael."** Even more strikingly, despite the fact that he was told **"Your name shall no more be called Ya'acov (Jacob),"** the Torah continues to call him Ya'acov, suggesting that his struggle was lifelong — as, often, is ours. This is the struggle of faith in all of us. A great example of that in the Briyth Chadashah [New Testament] is **Shimon Kepha** [Simon Peter].



Whenever he lacks faith the Master calls him **Shimon** but when he acts in Faith, he is **Kepha**. Interestingly Yahuchanan [John] always seems to call him **Shimon Kepha** suggesting Yahuchanan is not too sure what to call him.

What is of interest within this portion is that Ya'acov divides his party into two which could be a prophetic indicator just as Yisrael was later divided into the northern tribes and the Southern.

What was the purpose that Ya'acov divided the people in two?

Was it not to ensure the survival of his people!

We do finally see a transformed Ya'acov [Jacob] putting his total trust in YHWH Elohim & humbling himself before his brother.

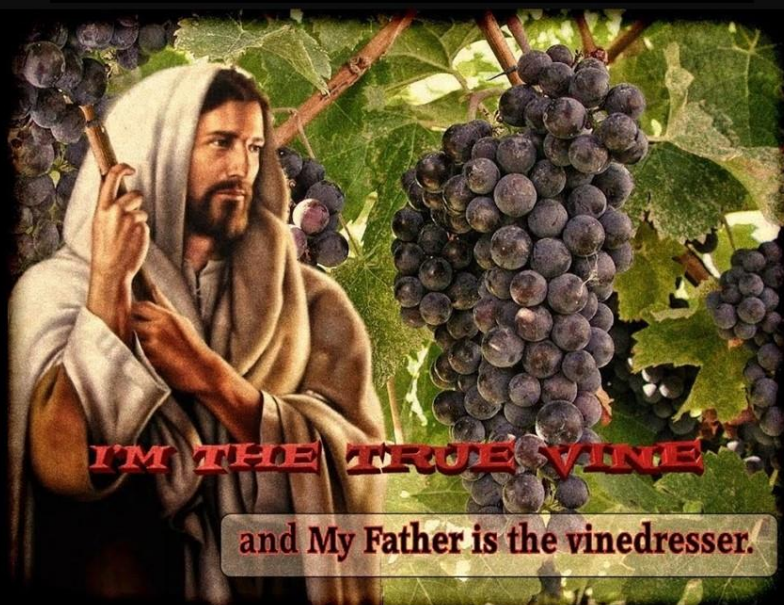
Esau Greeting Jacob



We now see the result of his trust being demonstrated at the meeting with **Esav** [Esau] greeting him with great joy embracing him and weeping.

Conclusion

This ultimate truth to be discovered in this epic story is that true transformation happens when we let go of our human efforts & allow YHWH to work on our behalf which is true faith.



This concept is best seen by the words of Yeshua himself when he puts it this way in:

Yahuchanan [John] 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

May we truly learn to abide in him & put our trust totally in him for our life & future.

Haftarah: Hoshea [Hosea] 12:1-13



This long journey of Ya'acov saw him totally destitute in his own efforts but through perseverance & prayerfulness saw Yahweh's favour rest upon him. In this reading we found Ya'acov [Jacob] wrestling with the messenger upon entering the land promised to Abraham seeking for blessing and the reading suggested that he had formally found him in Beyth El & that it was the one and the same here being none other than Yahweh Elohim himself and so that is why he calls this place **PeniEl** because he had seen Elohim face to face & his life was preserved.

Netzarim Ketuvim: Hitgaluth [Revelation] 7:1-12



The significance of this reading is that these 144,000 will be the first-fruits of redeemed Yisrael finally being a witness Nation which she often refused but now in the plan of Yahweh she will

accomplish her Mission & destiny during the tribulation. This is surely reminiscent of Ya'acov [Jacob] who fulfilled the divine plan not by his human resources but by the will & purpose of Yahweh who had promised him and would perform his word as he will in the final days before the second coming of our Master & King.

Shavua Tov Alechem [A Good Week Unto You All]

Amein