

PARSHAT VAYISHLACH
GENESIS 32:4-36:43
14 KISLEV 5782/18 NOVEMBER 2021



Embracing Uncertainty
Acrylic on canvass by Jonas Gerard

THE COURAGE TO LIVE WITH UNCERTAINTY

1. Uncertainty is a great blessing if you can flow with it. If you're stuck on your determination...on your outcome...then uncertainty doesn't have a chance and miracles can't happen. (Jonas Gerard)

“If God remains with me and protects me...and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear and if I return safe to my father's house then Adonai shall be my God.” (Genesis 28:20-21)

“What is this you have done to me....Why did you deceive me?” (Genesis 29:25)

2. He named that place Mahanaim....I have now become two camps (*shnei mahanot*) (Genesis 32:3, 11)
3. And a man wrestled with him. (Genesis 32:25)

Fearing the confrontation with Esau, Jacob wanted to run away, and God sent an angel to wrestle with him to stop him doing so. On this reading, God was teaching Jacob how to wrestle with his fears and defeat them. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

God answers a person's prayers if the person prays by searching himself, becoming his own opponent. (Rabbi Benno Jacob)

"I will deal with you in great goodness" (Genesis 32:13) suggests that God promises Jacob that his sense of his own life will share in the experience of God's goodness. God will not merely be good to Jacob. God will make Jacob accomplice in the benign self-creation of Israel. (Sefat Emet)

4. "No longer will your name be Jacob but Israel." (Genesis 32:29)

שָׂרָה (*sarah*) = persist, exert oneself, persevere

אֱלֹהִים (*el*) = God

5. "You have brought trouble on me..." (Genesis 34:30)

Rachel died. She was buried on the road to Ephrath, now Bethlehem. (Genesis 35:19)

6. Faith is the courage to live with uncertainty. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)