

PARSHAT VAYISHLACH
GENESIS 32:4-36:43
HAFTARAH OBADIAH 1:1-21
14 KISLEV 5786/4 DECEMBER 2025



Embracing Uncertainty #5
Acrylic and glass beads on canvass by Jonas Gerard

THE BLESSING OF UNCERTAINTY

1. וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּצְרָר לוֹ (Genesis 32:8)

Jacob was greatly frightened; in his anxiety (he divided the people with him, and the flocks and herds and camels into two camps...) (JPS edition)

צָרָר – to bind, tie up, be restricted; be cramped, in straits

“And he was very frightened” lest he be killed; “and it distressed him” were he to kill others. (Rashi)

מִצְרַיִם – Egypt

2. The Sages taught: One who goes to measure the grain on his threshing floor recites: May it be Your will, O Lord, our God, that You send blessing upon the product of our hands. If one began to measure the grain he says: Blessed is He Who sends blessing upon this pile of grain. If one measured and afterward recited this blessing, this is a prayer made in vain, because blessing is found neither in a matter that is weighed, nor in a matter that is measured, nor in a matter that is counted. Rather, it is found in a matter concealed from the eye, as it is stated: “The Lord will command blessing with you in your storehouses.” (Talmud, Bava Metzia 42a)

3. 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)
4. In times of strife, we have our imagination, we have our creative impulse, which are things that are more important than material things. They are the things that we should magnify... as a performer, one has a mission, like Coltrane, to take your solo out to talk to God. (Patti Smith)
5. Our society faces serious, complex problems that cause real suffering and that pose serious threats. Finding solutions to those problems will involve imagination and courage, qualities that flourish only when we embrace uncertainty and acknowledge all that we do not, and perhaps cannot, know. (Jonathan Bliss, concert pianist)
6. וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ (Genesis 32:24)
...he caused to cross over that which was his.

וַיִּנְתָּר יַעֲקֹב לְבָדּוֹ (Genesis 32:25)
And all that remained was himself...