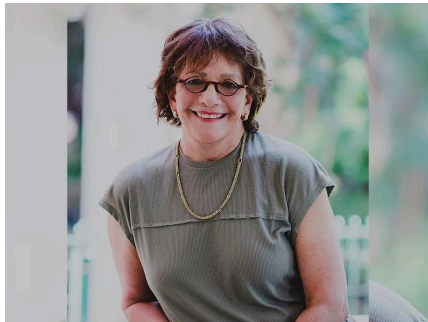


Understanding Yaakov's Battle with the Angel: *Yaakov's Limp in Light of the Somatic Symptom Disorder*

The Somatic Symptom Disorder is a mental disorder manifested through a physiological symptom that is not explained by a medical condition or pathological finding. A person experiences pain, paralysis, or any other bodily sensation whose origin is primarily psychological rather than a biological malfunction.



Dr. Rivka Raicher-Atir is a specialist in clinical and medical psychology, focusing on therapy and training. She holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Bar-Ilan University, with a specialization in bioethics. She initiated a training program for certification studies in forensic psychology. Dr. Riker-Atir serves as a senior lecturer at Tel Aviv-Yafo Academic College.

"Somatic symptom experiences arise from an unconscious desire to "ignore self-problems." There are times when a person copes with a psychological difficulty but unconsciously decide to complicate their life by denying or suppressing it from awareness. Since they do not confront the distress directly, it continues to roam in the depths of their soul, seeking its way to ventilation, much like a pressure cooker searching for an outlet to release steam. The pain or physical difficulties are the body's way of expressing this emotional distress"



Treatment:
Diagnose why the pain is where it is. Understand the broader psychological role of the organ in the patient's life.

1. בראשית ל"ב | Bereshit 32:

- (כג) וַיָּקָם בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא וַיִּקַּח אֶת שְׁתֵּי נָשָׁיו וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי שִׁפְחֹתָיו וְאֶת אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר יְלָדָיו וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת מַעְבַּר יַבְבֹּק.
 (כד) וַיִּקְחֵם וַיַּעֲבֹרֵם אֶת הַנָּחַל וַיַּעֲבֹר אֶת אָנְשׁוֹ לוֹ.
 (כה) וַיִּזְתֶּר יַעֲקֹב לְבָדּוֹ וַיֹּאבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר.
 (כו) וַיֵּרָא כִּי לֹא יָכַל לוֹ וַיִּגַע בְּכַף יָרְכּוֹ וַתִּקַּע כַּף יָרֵךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּהֶאֱבֹקוֹ עִמּוֹ.
 (כז) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחֲנִי כִּי עָלָה הַשָּׁחַר וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ כִּי אִם בְּרַכְתָּנִי.
 (כח) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה שְּׁמֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב.
 (כט) וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד שְׁמֶךָ כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי שָׁרִית עִם אֱלֹהִים וְעַם אָנְשִׁים וַתּוֹכַל.
 (ל) וַיִּשְׁאַל יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּידָה נָא שְׁמֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה זֶה תִּשְׁאַל לְשָׁמִי וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתוֹ שָׁם.
 (לא) וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם פְּנִיאֵל כִּי רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים וַתִּנָּצַל נַפְשִׁי.
 (לב) וַיִּזְרַח לוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּאֲשֶׁר עָבַר אֶת פְּנוּאֵל וְהוּא צָלַע עַל יָרְכּוֹ.
 (לג) עַל כֵּן לֹא יֹאכְלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת גִּיד הַנָּשָׂה אֲשֶׁר עַל כַּף הַיָּרֵךְ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי נָגַע בְּכַף יָרֵךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּגִיד הַנָּשָׂה.

(23) He rose that night and took his two wives and two maidservants and his eleven children and he crossed the ford of the Yabbok.

(24) He took them and brought them across the river, and he brought across whatever he had.

(25) Yaakov was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

(26) He saw that he could not prevail over him and he touched his thigh, and Yaakov's thigh was dislocated when he wrestled with him.

(27) He said, "Please, send me forth, because dawn has broken." He said, "I will not send you forth unless you bless me."

(28) He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Yaakov".

(29) He said, "Your name will no longer be called Yaakov, but rather Yisrael, because you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."

(30) Yaakov asked and said, "Please, tell me your name." He said, "Why ask regarding my name?" And he blessed him there.

(31) Yaakov named the place Peniel, "because I saw God face to face and my life was saved."

(32) The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.

(33) Therefore, the Children of Israel do not eat the sciatic nerve which is by the thigh joint to this day, because he touched the socket of Yaakov's thigh, at the sciatic nerve.

2. בראשית כ"ד | Bereshit 24:

- (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל עַבְדּוֹ זָקֵן בֵּיתוֹ הַמְּשָׁל בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ שֵׁים נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יָרְכִי.
 (ג) וְאַשְׁבִּיעֶךָ בְּה' אֱ-לוֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְא-לוֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִקַּח אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי מִבְּנוֹת הַכְּנַעֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּקֶרְבָּו.
 (ד) כִּי אֶל אֶרְצִי וְאֶל מוֹלַדְתִּי תֵלֵךְ וְלִקַּחְתָּ אִשָּׁה לְבְנִי לְיִצְחָק.

(2) Avraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who ruled over all that was his, "Please, place your hand **under my thigh**,

(3) and I will make you swear in the name of Hashem, God of the heavens and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose midst I dwell.

(4) Rather, you will go to my land and family and take a wife for my son, Yitzchak."

3. בראשית מ"ז | Bereshit 47:

- (כט) וַיִּקְרְבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמוּת וַיִּקְרָא לְבָנָו לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם נָא מִצָּאתִי חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ שֵׁים נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יָרְכִי וְעָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי חֶסֶד וְאַמַּת אֶל נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרָיִם.
 (ל) וַיִּשְׁכַּבְתִּי עִם אֲבֹתִי וְנִשְׁאַתָּנִי מִמִּצְרָיִם וְקִבְרַתִּנִּי בְּקִבְרֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אֶעֱשֶׂה כְּדָבָרְךָ.
 (לא) וַיֹּאמֶר הַשִּׁבְעָה לִּי וַיִּשְׁבַּע לוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל רֹאשׁ הַמֶּטֶה.

(29) Yisrael's time to die drew near, and he called for his son, for Yosef, and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please **place your hand under my thigh**, and deal with me with steadfast kindness. Please, do not bury me in Egypt.

(30) When I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me from Egypt and bury me in their grave." He said, "I will do as you have spoken."

(31) He said, "Swear to me", and he swore to him. Yisrael bowed at the head of the bed.

4. **אבן עזרא פירוש ראשון בראשית כ"ד:ב' | Ibn Ezra on Bereshit 24, 2**

שהיה משפט בימים ההם לשום אדם ידו תחת ירך מי שהוא ברשותו. והטעם: אם אתה ברשותי, שים נא ירך תחת ירכי, והאדון יושב וירכו על היד. הטעם: הנה ידי תחת רשותך לעשות רצונך. וזה המשפט עודנו היום בארץ הודו.

It was customary in those days for a person to place his hand under the thigh of his master, its meaning being, "If you are subject to my authority, place your hand under my thigh." The lord then sat on his servant's hand. By doing so the servant, as it were, said to the master, "My hand is under your authority to do your will." This custom is still followed in India.

5. **במדבר ה' | Bamidbar 5**

(כא) והשביע הכהן את האשה בשבעת האלה ואמר הכהן לאשה יתן ה' אותך לאלה ולשבעה בתוך עמך בתת ה' את ירכך **נפלת** ואת בטנך צבה.

(כב) ובאו המים המאזרים האלה במעיך לצבות בטן ולנפל ירך ואמרה האשה אמן אמן...

(כז) והשקה את המים והיתה אם נטמאה ותמעל מעל באישה ובאו בה המים המאזרים למרים וצבתה בטנה ונפלה ירכה והיתה האשה לאלה בקרב עמה.

(21) Then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall tell the woman – 'May Hashem make you a curse and an oath among your people, when **Hashem allows your thigh to fall away**, and your body to swell.

(22) And this water that brings a curse will go into your bowels, and make your body swell, and **your thigh fall away.**' The woman shall say, 'Amen, Amen.'...

(27) When he has made her drink the water, then it shall happen, if she is defiled and has committed a trespass against her husband, that the water that causes the curse will enter into her and become bitter, and her body will swell, and **her thigh will fall away**; and the woman will be a curse among her people.

6. **בראשית כ"ה | Bereshit 25**

(כה) ויצא הראשון אדמוני בלו כאדמת שער ויקראו שמו עשו.
(כו) ואחרי כן יצא אחיו יודו אחזת בעקב עשו ויקרא שמו יעקב ויצחק בן ששים שנה בלדת אתם.

(25) The first emerged ruddy, all of him hairy, like a cloak, so they called him Esav.

(26) Afterwards, his brother emerged, his hand holding on to the heel of Esav, so he called him Yaakov. And Yitzchak was sixty years old when they were born.

7. **בראשית כ"ה | Bereshit 25**

(כט) ויצד יעקב נזיד ויבא עשו מן השדה והוא עיף.
(ל) ויאמר עשו אל יעקב הלעיטני נא מן האדם הזה כי עיף אנכי על כן קרא שמו אדם.
(לא) ויאמר יעקב מכרה כיום את בכרתך לי.
(לב) ויאמר עשו הנה אנכי הולך למות ולמה זה לי בכרה.
(לג) ויאמר יעקב השבעה לי כיום וישבע לו וימכר את בכרתו ליעקב.
(לד) ויעקב נתן לעשו לחם ונזיד עדשים ויאכל וישת ויקם וילך ויבד עשו את הבכרה.

(29) Yaakov cooked a stew and Esav came from the field, and he was famished.

(30) Esav said to Yaakov, "Please, give me to gulp from this red, this red stuff, as I am famished."

Therefore, he was named Edom.

(31) Yaakov said, "Sell me, now, your birthright."

(32) Esav said, "Behold, I am going to die, what need have I for a birthright?"

(33) Yaakov said, "Swear to me now." He swore to him and sold his birthright to Yaakov.

(34) And Yaakov gave bread and lentil stew to Esav. He ate, drank, rose, and went, and Esav scorned the birthright.

8. בראשית כ"ז | Bereshit 27:

(יט) וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל אָבִיו אֲנֹכִי עֹשֶׂה בְּכֶרֶךְ עֲשִׂיתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ אֵלַי קוּם נָא נִשְׁבֵּה וְאָכְלָה מִצִּידִי בְּעֵבֹר תְּבָרְכֵנִי נִפְשָׁךְ.

(כא) וַיֹּאמֶר יַצְחָק אֶל יַעֲקֹב גִּשָׁה נָא וְאָמְשָׁךְ בְּנֵי הָאֵתָה זֶה בְּנֵי עֹשֶׂה אִם לֹא.

(כב) וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל יַצְחָק אָבִיו וַיִּמְשָׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַקֵּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהִידִים יְדֵי עֹשֶׂה.

(כד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵתָה זֶה בְּנֵי עֹשֶׂה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי...

(ל) וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה יַצְחָק לְבָרֶךְ אֶת יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אַף יֵצֵא יַצָּא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פִּנֵי יַצְחָק אָבִיו וַעֲשֹׂה אָחִיו בָּא מִצִּידוֹ.

(לא) וַיַּעַשׂ גַּם הוּא מִטְעָמִים וַיָּבֵא לְאָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יְקָם אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בְּנֵי בְּעֵבֹר תְּבָרְכֵנִי נִפְשָׁךְ.

(לב) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יַצְחָק אָבִיו מִי אֵתָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי בְּנֶךְ בְּכֶרֶךְ עֹשֶׂה.

(לג) וַיַּחֲרֹד יַצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד מָאֵד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אַפּוֹא הוּא הַצֵּד צִיד וַיָּבֵא לִי וְאָכַל מִכָּל בְּטָרָם תְּבוֹא וְאֶבְרַכְהוּ גַם בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה.

(לד) כִּשְׂמֹעַ עֹשֶׂה אֶת דְּבָרֵי אָבִיו וַיִּצְעַק צָעָקָה גְּדֹלָה וַמָּרָה עַד מָאֵד וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו בְּרַכְנִי גַם אָנִי אָבִי.

(לה) וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא אָחִיךָ בְּמִרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בְּרַכְתְּךָ.

(לו) וַיֹּאמֶר הֲכִי קָרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פְּעָמִים אֶת בְּכֹרְתִי לְקַח וְהִנֵּה עֵתָה לְקַח בְּרַכְתִּי וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶצְלַת לִי בְרַכָּה.

(19) Yaakov said to his father, "I am Esav, your firstborn. I have done as you have spoken to me. Rise, please, sit up and eat from my game, so that you may bless me."

(21) Yitzchak said to Yaakov, "Please, approach, that I may feel you, my son. Are you indeed my son, Esav, or not?"

(22) Yaakov approached his father Yitzchak, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Esav."

(24) He said, "You are my son Esav?" He said, "It is I...."

(30) When Yitzchak finished blessing Yaakov, and Yaakov had just barely left from before his father Yitzchak, his brother Esav came from his hunt.

(31) He, too, made delicacies and brought them to his father. He said to his father, "May my father rise and eat from his son's game, so that you may bless me."

(32) His father Yitzchak said to him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esav."

(33) Yitzchak trembled in a very great fit of trembling and said, "Who, then, is he that hunted game and brought it to me? And I ate of it all before you arrived and I blessed him! Even so, blessed he will be."

(34) When Esav heard his father's words, he cried a great and very bitter cry and he said to his father, "Bless me, me too, my father!"

(35) He said, "Your brother came in deceit and took your blessing."

(36) He said, "Is that why he is named Yaakov, because he deceived me twice!? He took my birthright and, behold, now he took my blessing!" He said, "Did you not save me a blessing?"

9. בראשית כ"ט | Bereshit 29:

(כה) וַיְהִי בְבֹקֶר וְהִנֵּה הוּא לֹאָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל לְבָן מַה זֹאת עֲשִׂיתִי לִי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עֲבַדְתִּי עִמָּךְ וְלָמָּה רַמִּיתֵנִי.

(כו) וַיֹּאמֶר לְבָן לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה כֵן בְּמִקְוָמֵנוּ לְתַת הַצְעִירָה לְפָנֵי הַבְּכִירָה.

(25) In the morning, behold, she was Leah! He said to Lavan, "What is this that you have done to me! Was it not for Rachel that I worked with you? Why have you tricked me?"

(26) Lavan said, "Such is not done in our place, to give the younger before the older."

10. בראשית ל"א | Bereshit 31:

(ו) וְאַתָּה יָדַעְתָּן כִּי בְכָל כְּחִי עָבַדְתִּי אֶת אָבִיכֶן. (ז) וְאַבְיָכֶן הִתֵּל בִּי וַיַּחֲלֶף אֶת מִשְׁכָּרְתִּי עֲשָׂרַת מָנִים וְלֹא נָתַנּוּ אֶל-לֹקִים לְהָרַע עַמְדִּי.

(6) And you know that I worked for your father with all my might. (7) But your father toyed with me and switched my wages ten times, yet, Gd did not allow him to harm me.

11. הרב אילעאי עופרן, תורה של הנפש, 270-271 | Rabbi Ilai Ofran, Yaakov and the Angel:

יעקב עומד לבדו על שפת הנחל ונאבק עם בבואתו המשתקפת במים, עם החלק שאינו ישר, אמין וגלוי. דרכם של גנבים, גונבי ברכות, תרפים, דעת ולב, לבוא בלילה. יעקב מנהל את חייו עד כה בחסות החשכה. הוא חוסה תחת עיוורונו של אביו כאשר הוא גונב את ברכת עשו, ותחת היעדרותו של לבן כאשר הוא בורח ו"גונב את לבו". כאשר מתחולל בתוככי נפשו של יעקב המאבק הפנימי המבקש לצאת מחושך לאור, ולחדול מדרך בלתי-ישרה זו, דורש קולו של יעקב, זה הדבק בדרך האפלה, לשלחו, "כי עלה השחר", שהרי אוי לו לרמאי אם יאיר היום. אך ה"איש", הקול שכנגד בנפשו של יעקב, דורש לנצל את ההזדמנות שלפני המפגש עם עשו ולזכות מחדש לברכה - "לא אשלחך כי אם ברכתני". נראה כי זוהי משמעותו העיקרית של הדגשת מוטיב הלילה בסיפור, ואפשר שזהו גם עומק משמעותו של הביטוי "ויזרח לו השמש": בסוף התהליך יאיר האור על חייו של יעקב, הוא יסגל לעצמו את מידת היושר ויצא מאפלה לאורה. זריחת השמש כאן איננה אירוע אסטרנומי, אלא מטאפורה פנימית - כשישלים יעקב את התהליך, תזרח לו השמש והוא יצא מחושך לאור.

Jacob stands alone on the bank of the stream, struggling with his reflection in the water, with the crooked, deceitful, and hidden part of himself. The path of thieves, stealing blessings, schemes, thoughts, and hearts, all happening in the darkness of night. Jacob has led his life thus far under the shelter of darkness. He hides beneath the blindness of his father when he steals Esau's blessing, and in the absence of Laban when he escapes, "stealing his heart." As the internal struggle unfolds within Jacob's soul, seeking to emerge from darkness into light and break free from this crooked path, his voice demands attention. It clings to the dark path, commanding him to send forth, "for the dawn has risen," for woe unto him if he delays until daylight.

But the "man," the voice opposing Jacob within himself, seizes the opportunity before the encounter with Esau and insists on regaining the blessing anew - "I will not let you go unless you bless me." It seems that this is the main emphasis of the nocturnal motif in the story, and perhaps it is also the profound meaning of the expression "and the sun rose for him": at the end of the process, as the light of day breaks upon Jacob's life, he will internalize the measure of righteousness and emerge from darkness into light. The sunrise here is not an astronomical event but an internal metaphor - when Jacob completes the process, the sun will rise for him, and he will step out of the darkness into the light.