

# Bereishit 32-33: When History And Meta-History Touch...

Parashat Vayishlach 5778  
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## 1. Midrash Aggada, Bereishit 32 #12

**[יב] הצילני נא מיד אחי.** אחי שבא אלי מכוחו של עשו, שבשעה ששלח יצחק את יעקב לפדן ארם, שיגר עשו איש אחריו ששמו אחי:

Please save me from my brother's hand - "Achi" who has come to me under the authority of Esav. When Yitzchak sent Yaakov to Padan Aram, Esav dispatched a man after him whose name was Achi.

## 2. Shemot 22:1-2 [1985 JPS translation]

(א) אם במחתרת ימצא הגנב והכה ומת אין לו דמים:

(ב) אם זרקו השמש עליו דמים לו שלם ושלם אם אין לו ונמכר בגנותו:

1. If the thief is seized while tunneling, and he is beaten to death, there is no bloodguilt in his case.

2. If the sun has risen on him, there is bloodguilt in that case. — He must make restitution; if he lacks the means, he shall be sold for his theft.

- If the "Ish" is actually a person, why would Yaakov ask for a blessing?
- Even more unusual, why would he give Yaakov the blessing?
- Are we meant to assume that he Esav's authority to give a blessing?
  - When the other Avot and Imahot receive new names, they are given by G-d.

## 3. Shoftim 13:17-23 [1985 JPS Translation]

(יז) ויאמר מנוח אל מלאך ד' מי שמך כי יבא דברך וכבדנוך:

(יח) ויאמר לו מלאך ד' למה זה תשאל לשמי והוא פלאי: ס

(יט) ויחק מנוח את גדי העזים ואת המנחה ויעל על הצור לד' ומפלל לעשות ומנוח ואשתו ראים:

(כ) ויהי בעלות הלהב מעל המזבח השמימי ויעל מלאך ד' בלהב המזבח ואשתו ראים ויפלו על פניהם ארצה:

(כא) ולא יסף עוד מלאך ד' להראות אל מנוח ואל אשתו אז ידע מנוח כי מלאך ד' הוא:

(כב) ויאמר מנוח אל אשתו מות נמות כי אלקים ראינו:

(כג) ותאמר לו אשתו לו חפץ ד' להמיתנו לא לקח מידנו עלה ומנחה ולא הראנו את כל אלה וכעת לא השמיענו כזאת:

17 So Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "What is your name? We should like to honor you when your words come true."

18 The angel said to him, "You must not ask for my name; it is unknowable!"

19 Manoah took the kid and the meal offering and offered them up on the rock to the LORD; and a marvelous thing happened while Manoah and his wife looked on.

20 As the flames leaped up from the altar toward the sky, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flames of the altar, while Manoah and his wife looked on; and they flung themselves on their faces to the ground. —

21 The angel of the LORD never appeared again to Manoah and his wife. — Manoah then realized that it had been an angel of the LORD.

22 And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen a divine being."

23 But his wife said to him, "Had the LORD meant to take our lives, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and meal offering from us, nor let us see all these things; and He would not have made such an announcement to us."

## 4. Shmuel I 22:2 [1985 JPS translation]

ויתקבצו אליו כל-איש מצוק וכל-איש אשר-לו נשא וכל-איש מר-נפש ויהי עליהם לשר ויהיו עמו פארבע מאות איש:

Everyone who was in straits and everyone who was in debt and everyone who was desperate joined him, and he became their leader; there were about four hundred men with him.

**R' Elchanan Samet**, Ya'akov's Encounter with Esav and His Struggle with the Angel (32:4-33:20)

Hebrew original - <https://goo.gl/8BQFGu>

English - <https://goo.gl/6PxGPM>

1) Threat 2) Division 3) Encounter 4) Gift 5) Movement

◇ - The Battle (Night → Dawn)

### I: Preparation (Night)

- 1) Threat - 32:4-7
- 2) Division - 32:8-9
- 3) Encounter - 32:10-13
- 4) Gift - 32:14-22
- 5) Movement - 32:23-24

### II: Actualization (Day)

- 1) Threat - 33:1a
- 2) Division - 33:1b-2
- 3) Encounter - 33:3-7
- 4) Gift - 33:8-11
- 5) Movement - 33:12-17

5. **R' Elchanan Samet** [1953 - , Israel], <https://goo.gl/6PxGPM> [Translation by Yoseif Bloch and David Silverberg]

Although this explanation may appear to be derash (and thus scared off peshat-oriented commentators such as Rashbam and Radak), it actually constitutes a "depth of peshat" approach, since it is the only possible solution which can answer all the questions we raised earlier.

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Our story is one of the few instances in Tanakh where the veil lifts and we see how earthly reality, which generally fills the Biblical stage, depends on another, sublime and concealed reality. In fact, normal reality is merely a reflection of that more sublime reality. Why does this phenomenon occur specifically here, in this story? Why was Esav's "sar" [heavenly emissary - YMR] sent to wrestle with Ya'akov, thus determining the continuation of the story - the actual encounter between Ya'akov and Esav?

- **Da'at Mikra** - "We've explained in *Da'at Mikra* to Daniel that any war that is waged between earthly governments is only a reflection of a heavenly war being waged between the "sar[s]" of those nations. This is when history and meta-history touch..."
- **R' Chaim David HaLevi, Shu"t Aseh Lecha Rav 4:7** - In discussing the concept of *ma'aseh Avot siman l'banim*, R' HaLevi writes, "We are permitted to assume that the fight with Esav's heavenly emissary, which was intended to kill Yaakov, hints to that staggering Holocaust."

6. **R' Kalonymus Kalman Shapira** [1889 - 1943, Poland], *Eish Kodesh*, Vayishlach 1940

**וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא אֶשְׁלַחְךָ כִּי־א בִּרְכַתְּנִי וְכוּ'. וְנִבֵּן נָא לְמָה הָיָה צָרִיךְ יַעֲקֹב  
אֲבִינוּ שֶׁשָּׂרוּ שֶׁל עֶשָׂו יִבְרָכּוּ הָלֹא. כִּבְר בִּרְכּוּ ד', וְמָה שָׂאֵל לוֹ  
הַמֶּלֶאךָ מָה שֶׁמֶךְ הָאֵם לֹא יִדַּע אֶת שְׁמוֹ.**

**אַבְל מַעֲשֵׂה אֲבוֹת סִימָן לְבָנִים, וְאַחֵר שֶׁנִּפְגַּשׁ עִם הַמֶּלֶאךָ וַיֹּאבֵק עִמּוֹ, וְגַם  
נִגַּע בְּכַף יָרְכוֹ, וְרָצָה הַמֶּלֶאךָ לִלְכֹּת, אָמַר יַעֲקֹב הָאֵם כּוֹזֵאת יֹאדָע  
לְבָנִי שֶׁאַחֵר שֶׁיִּסְבְּלוּ צָרוֹת וּפִגְעִים תִּהְיֶה זֹאת יְשׁוּעָתָם מִה שֶׁלֹּא יִכְלוּ שׁוֹנְאֵיהֶם  
לְהֵם, וְלֹא נִפְלוּ בִּידֵיהֶם, וּמַעֲתָה יִשׁוּבוּ אֶל מִצְבֵּם שֶׁהָיוּ קוֹדֵם שֶׁסְּבָלוּ, לֹא כֵן  
רַק לֹא אֶשְׁלַחְךָ כִּי אִם בִּרְכַתְּנִי, שֶׁאַחֲרֵי הַיְסוּרִים יוֹשִׁיעַם ד' בִּישׁוּעָה, לֹא  
רַק שֶׁיִּתְפַּטְרוּ מִצְרוּתֵיהֶם בְּלִבָּהּ.**

**And he said, I won't send you unless you bless me** - We must understand why Yaakov Avinu felt it necessary that Esav's heavenly emissary bless him, for G-d had already blessed him! [Also,] why did the emissary ask, "What is your name?," did he not know his [Yaakov's] name?

However, the events that befell the forefathers are a sign for their descendants. After he meets the emissary and fights him, injuring Yaakov's hip, the emissary wants to leave. Yaakov says, If something like this occurs to my children, after having suffering persecution and attacks, this should be their salvation. Their enemies won't be able to concur them, they won't fall into their hands, and [what's more] they'll return to the state they were in before the persecution. "No, I will not send you unless you bless me!" That after the suffering, G-d should save them [fully], not that they should merely cease to be persecuted.