

## Dvar Torah for Parshat Vayishlach Based on *Likutey Moharan II*, Lesson # 7

Yaakov remained, alone. The "man" wrestled with him until daybreak (*Genesis 32:25*). The "man" who wrestled with Yaakov Avinu (our Patriarch) was Esav's guardian angel. One opinion is that the angel appeared as a gentile. A second opinion is that he appeared as a Torah scholar (*Chulin 91a*).

The range of knowledge, awareness and interest that Jews have of God's will and His Word runs the gamut from encyclopedic "seeing from one end of Creation to the other," heart-on-fire selflessness, to abysmally ignorant, insensitive and apathetic. The Jew at each of these extremes needs assistance in becoming aware of Hashem (God). The latter sort of Jew obviously needs to be educated, not only in the rudiments of Jewish knowledge and practice, but in what it means to be a Jew, i.e., that he is an indispensable cog in the wheel of Judaism, from Avraham Avinu till Mashiach (and beyond).

Surprisingly, at least from the perspective of those of us far from "the top," the Jew who has the entire corpus of Torah knowledge at his fingertips, and is truly devout as well, also needs assistance, albeit of a different kind. Such a Jew needs to be shown that he "ain't seen nothing yet," that he has yet to begin to perceive what the Divine is really about.

Who can be the teacher of people who need such different lessons? The tzaddik. With his teachings and talking about *yirat Hashem* (fear of God), the tzaddik grows constantly, taking another step into awareness of Hashem's traits, in particular His benevolence and His presence. This awareness he can shine appropriately on other Jews, to teach each one what he needs to learn.

Rebbe Nachman teaches that everyone of us has to be a teacher, to speak with friends about *yirat Hashem*. This topic has to be discussed with a feeling of compassion, for oneself and for the other party, without any trace of a "holier-than-thou" attitude. This compassion, and even pity, is (more) easily felt when one opens his eyes to the fact that both he and his friend are in desperate need of being rescued from sin. When both conversationalists dialogue in this manner, each becomes the other's teacher.

In order to teach another one has to first teach oneself. Yaakov Avinu is Everyjew. Each of us struggles with "the man," with Esav's guardian angel who is really our very own *yetzer hara* (evil urge). The *yetzer hara* is not someone else; the enemy is one's own self. Sometimes he uses the goy within to wrestle with us: What have I got to do with Judaism? What has Judaism got to do with me? Other times he has the "rabbi" do the dirty work: **I** know what the Torah means. **I** know what Judaism is. **I am** holier-than-they.

This is "the man" Everyjew wrestles with. This is the struggle that we all go through during the "night," as we attempt to enter the "Promised Land," the holiness that is native to the Jewish soul. When we maintain the struggle, never giving up, the *yetzer hara* will see that he cannot defeat us (v. 26). Then as the night ends and day dawns, the *yetzer hara* will go to sing Hashem's praises—that He has such beautiful children, who are determined to do His will (cf. 2 *Zohar 97a*).

*agutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!*

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