

## *parshat vayishlach*

### **A scene from the parsha:**

Alone by the river Jacob wrestled through the night.  
As dawn approached he knew it was time to stop struggling,  
But he could not let go.  
He cried into the coming day-- *I will not give up until I find a blessing within this conflict and pain.*

In that moment a voice called, *What is your name?*

Jacob, he replied.

The last time Jacob was asked the question “*Who are you?*” he answered,  
*I am Esau.*

This time Jacob told the truth.

And through this truth telling flowed blessing:

*Your name shall not only be Jacob.*

*You will not only be the one who grasps, who holds on, who suffers because he wants things to be different than they are.*

*Your name shall also be Yisrael--yashar el,*

*The one who is directed toward God.*

*The one who has the strength to set his intentions, to follow them forward and to meet well what ever comes.*

*Both of these capacities exist within you: Notice when each tendency arises. Be aware of who and what they serve*

*And discover how to use them well.*

Jacob walked into the new day limping—

His vulnerability revealed.

And he named this place of

Struggle, Truth and Blessing:

*Peni-el*—the Presence of God.

### **Explorations:**

We, as *beit ya'acov* and *b'nai y'srael*—the house of Jacob, the children of Israel, have inherited the rich legacy of Jacob's struggle and awareness. Through him we are called to examine the truth of our lives. We are urged to explore our willingness and resistance to being honest with ourselves and others. We are challenged to notice our tendencies to grasp, to hold on and fight what is as well as our abilities to set an intention, follow it with strength and trust in the way forward. Jacob calls us to reveal ourselves and discover the beauty and the fragility of our vulnerability.

### **This week we ask:**

What causes me to hold back from saying what is true?

When do I find myself speaking the truth?

In what situations do I grasp, hold on, and fight what is?  
In what situations do I step into the moment, set an intention and trust the way forward?  
What helps me and what hinders me from accepting and honoring all of who I am?  
Where and when am I willing to be vulnerable?

May we ask these questions with love and compassion. May we not judge ourselves harshly for what arises. May we be grateful for each insight. And may we know that each time we allow ourselves to be revealed in truth we expand our capacity for love and awareness.