"A Man Came Upon Him...": Mystery Men in Sefer Bereshit

1. Genesis 45.8

. חַ וְעַתָּה, לֹא-אַתֶּם שְׁלַחְתֶּם אֹתִי הַנְּה ,כִּי, הָאֱלֹהִים; וַיְשִׁימֵנִי לְאָב לְפַרְעֹה, וּלְאָדוֹן לְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ, וּמֹשֵׁל, בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מְצְרָיִם So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

2. Genesis 50.20

כּ וְאַתֶּם, חֲשַׁבְתָּם עָלֵי רָעָה; אֱלֹהִים, חֲשָׁבָהּ לְטֹבָה, לְמֵעַן עְשֹה כַּיּוֹם הַזְּה, לְהַחְיֹת עַם-רָב. 20 And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

3. Genesis 37:1-20

- וַיַּשָׁב יַעֲקֹב בָּאָרֶץ מְגוּרֵי אָבִיוֹ--בְּאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן א.
- בּ -יְשֶׁהְ תּלְדוֹת יַצְלְב יוֹסֵף בְּן-שְׁבַע-עָשְׂרָה שָׁנָה הָיָה וֹעָה אָת-; אָהִיו בַּצֹאן וְחוּא יַצַער אָת-בְּנֵי בַלְהָח וְאָת-דְּנַתִּ וֹלְפָּה וְשִׁי אָבִיוּ וְיָּבַא יוֹסֵף אָת-דְּבָּתָם וְעָה אָל-אַבִיהַם.
- ג אָסָב אָת-יוֹסַף מִכֶּל-בָּנָיוּ--כִּי-בָּן-וְקַנִים חוּא לוֹ ; וְעַשָּׁח גּ וְיִשְּׂרָאַל אָסַב אָת-יוֹסַף מִכָּל-בָּנָיוּ--כִּי-בָּן-וְקַנִים חוּא לוֹ ; וְעַשָּׁח גֹּל בָּסִים .
- ן ;וּלְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי-אֹתוֹ אָחָב אֲבִיהָם מְכֶּל-אָחָיו-וַיִּשְׂנְאוּ אֹתוֹ ; וּנִּיְרְאוּ אָחָיו כִּי-אֹתוֹ אָחָב אֲבִיהָם מְכֶּל-אָחָיו-וַיִּשְׁנְאוּ אֹתוֹ ; וּנִירוֹ לִשְׁלֹם , וֹלְא נַכְלוּ דַּבְּרוֹ לִשְׁלֹם
- זיַחַלם יוֹסַף חָלוֹם וַיַּגַּד לְאָחָיו; וַיּוֹסְפּוּ עוֹד שְׁנֹא אֹתוֹ. זַיַּחַלם יוֹסַף חָלוֹם וַיַּגַּד לְאָחָיו;
- וֹיאמֶר אֲלַיהָם: שִׁמְעוּ-נָא הַחֲלוֹם הַזָּה אֲשָׁר חָלְמְתִּי וּ.
- ה ;ויֹם מְשׁל בָּנוּ הָמְלֹף עָלֵינוּאַם-מְשׁוֹל הַמְשׁל בָּנוּ ;הַנְילוּ הָמָלף עָלַינוּאַם-מַלּוֹתַיו וְעַל-דְּבֶּרֵיוּוְיוֹסְפּוּ עוֹד שְׂנֹא אֹתוֹעֵל-חֲלמֹתַיו וְעַל-דְּבֶּרִיוּ
- ניאמֶר הַנַּה הָלַמְתִּי ;וַנַּחֲלֹם עוֹד הַלוֹם אַחַר וַיְסַפַּר אֹתוֹ לְאָחִיוּ ט הַלוֹם עוֹד וְהַנַּה הַשְּׁמֵשׁ וְהַנָּרָת וְאַחֵד עְשָׂר כּוֹכְבֵים מִשְׁתַּחַוִים לִי.

- 1 And Jacob dwelt in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.
- 2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, being still a lad even with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought evil report of them unto their father.
- 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colours.
- 4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.
- 5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren; and they hated him yet the more.
- 6 And he said unto them: 'Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:
- 7 for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and bowed down to my sheaf.'
- 8 And his brethren said to him: 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?' And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.
- 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said: 'Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream: and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed

- י סַּלְּה אָלָיאָנִי וְאָלִּקּף חָלֶמְתּּ : מְּבִיוֹנַיּאמֶר לו מָח חַחֲלוֹם (אַבְיוֹנַיּאמֶר לו מָח חַחֲלוֹם חַלְּה אָשֶׁר חָלְמְתּּ : מְּבִּיוֹ נִאָּלִר-אָר מִּלְּה אָשְׁר חָלְמְתּ : מְּבְּיוֹנַיּאמֶר וְאִבְּיוֹ נִיּא הַחָּשְׁתַּחַלִּהְאָרְצְּחְ.
- יא לְיָקַנְאוּ-בּוֹ אָחָיו; וְאָבִיו שָׁמֵר אַת-הַדְּבַר יא.
- וַיַּלְכוּ אָחָיו לְרְעוֹת אָת-צאן אֲבִיחָם בִּשְׁכֶם יבּ.
- וּלאמֶר יִשְׂרָאַל אָל-יוֹסַף הָלוֹא אַחָידְּ רֹעִים בָּשְׁכְּם--לְכָּח יגּג וְאָשְׁלְחַדְּ אַלִיהַם; וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הַנַּנִי.
- יניאמֶר לוֹ לֶדְּ־נָא רְאַח אָת-שְׁלוֹם אַחָידְּ וְאָת-שְׁלוֹם הַצּאן ייד. נַהַשְׁבַנִי דְּבָר; נִישְׁלָחַהוּ מַעַמֶק חָבְרוֹן וַיָּבא שְׁכָמָה.
- יט מַה- אָישׁ (הַנַּח תֹעָה בַּשְּׁדָה; וַיִּשְׁאָלַהוּ הָאִישׁ לַאמר מַה- טו הָבַקַשׁ.
- ַנים טז אַנלָר אָת-אַחַי אָלכִי מְבַקַּשׁ; הַגָּידָה-נָּא לִי אַיפֿה חָם רְעֵים טז.
- י לְּאמֶר הָאִישׁ נָסְעוּ מִזְּחֹ--כִּי שְּׁמֵעְתִּי אֹמְרִיםנַלְכָח דֹּתְּזְיָתְ ; זַיַּלְדְּ יז , וֹלְאָבֶים בְּאֹרֶר.
- אַנן און מַרָתק; וּבְטָרָם יָקְרַב אָלַיהָם וַיִּתְנַפְּלוּ אֹתּו 'יחק. לְחָמִיתוֹ.
- יט אַקרי אָישׁ אָל-אָחִיו: הַנַּח בַּעַל הַחֲלמוֹת הַלְּזָה--בָּא יט.
- בְּעַה לְכוּ וְנַסַרְגַחוּ וְנַשְּׁלְכַהוּ בְּאַחַד חַבּּרוֹת וְאָמַרְנוּ חַיָּה רְעָה אָכָלְתְהוּ; וְנְרָאֶהמַה-יִּהְיוּ חַלֹּמֹתְיוּ.

down to me.'

- 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him: 'What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down to thee to the earth?'
- 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind.
- 12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.
- 13 And Israel said unto Joseph: 'Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them.' And he said to him: 'Here am I.'
- 14 And he said to him: 'Go now, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flock; and bring me back word.' So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.
- 15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying: 'What seekest thou?'
- 16 And he said: 'I seek my brethren. Tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding the flock.'
- 17 And the man said: 'They are departed hence; for I heard them say: Let us go to Dothan.' And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.
- 18 And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.
- 19 And they said one to another: 'Behold, this dreamer cometh.
- 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say: An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.'

4. Midrash

מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת וישב סימן ב

וימצאהו איש אין איש האמור כאן אלא גבריאל שנאמר והאיש גבריאל

"And a certain man found him" This is not a man referred to here, but rather it is Gavriel as it says "and the man Gavriel..."

5. Genesis 18:1-15

- אַ פָּתח-חָאהָל פֶּחם הַאַלנִי מַמְרַא; וְהוּא יֹשְׁב פֶּתַח-חָאהָל פֶּחם מַיּוֹם. הַיּוֹם.
- 1 And the LORD appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

- ן עיניו וַיַרָא וַהָנָה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִּׁיםנְצָּבָים עַלָיו; וַיַּרָא וַהָּנָה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִּׁיםנְצָּבָים עַלִיו; לקראתם מפתח האקלנישתחו ארצה.
- וּלאמַר: אֲדֹנָי אָם-נָא מָצָאתִי חַן בְּעַינְידְ--אַל-נָא תַעֲבֹר מַעֵּל ג עָכָדָּךָ.
- יַקּח-נָא מָעַט-מַיִם וְרַחֲצוּ רַגְלַיכָם; וְהָשַּׁעֵנוּ תַּחַת הָעַץ די.
- ואַקתַה פַת-לַחָס וְסַעַדוּ לָבָּכָס אַחַר תַּעַבֹרוּ--כִּי-עַל-כַּן עַבַרְתַּם ה עַל-עַכָּדֶכֶם; וַלּאמְרוּ כַּן מַעֲשָׂח כַּאֲשָּׁר דְּבַּרְתָּ.
- וַיְמַהַר אַבָרָהָם הַאֹהֶלָה אַל-שַּׂרָה; וַיֹּאמֶר מַהָּרִי שָׁלשׁ סְאִים וּ קַמָח סלַת--לוּשִׁי וַעַשִּׁי עגות.
- וּיָפַת בָּץ אַבְרָחָם ; וַיִּפַת בָּן-בָּקָר רַדְּ וְטוֹב וַיִּתַן אָל-הַנַּעֵר וֹ אָל-הַנַּעַר וַיִּמַחַר לַעַשׁוֹת אתוֹ.
- וּיִּקָּת תָמְאָת וְתָלָב וּבֶּן-הַבָּקָר אֲשָׁר עָשָׁתוַיִּתַן לִפְנַיהָם; וְהוּא- ח עמד עליהם תחת חעץ ניאכלוי.
- וֹיאמָרוּ אַלִיו אַיָּה שָׁרָה אִשְׁתַּדְּ ; וַיֹּאמֶר הִנַּה בָּאֹחָל ט.
- י וּלּאמֶר שׁוֹב אָשׁוּב אָלֶיךְ כָּעֵת חַיָּה וְהַנַּה-בַוְלְשַׂרָה אִשְׁתַּךְ; וְשַׂרָה שׁמַעַת פָּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְהוּא אַהָּרָיוּ.
- ואברהם ושרה זקנים באים בנמים; חדל להיות לשרה ארח יא בַּנַשִּׁים.
- 121.
- וַיֹּאמֶר ח' אָל-אַבָרָהָם: לָמָה זָה צָחַקָּה שָּׁרָה לַאמר הַאַף אַמְנָם יג אַלַד--נְאָנִי זָקַנְתִּי.
- יף בּוֹלְשַׁרָה דָּבָר; לַמּוֹעָד אַשׁוֹב אַלִיךְ כַּעַת חַיַּה--וֹלְשַׂרָה בַּן ייד.
- וַתַּכַחַשׁ שַׂרָה לַאמר לא צַחַקתִּי כִּי יַרַאַה; וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא כִּי צַחַקתִּ. טו.

- 2 and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed down to the earth,
- 3 and said: 'My lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.
- 4 Let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and recline yourselves under the tree.
- 5 And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and stay ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on; forasmuch as ye are come to your servant.' And they said: 'So do, as thou hast said.
- 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said: 'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes.'
- 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto the servant; and he hastened to dress it.
- 8 And he took curd, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.
- 9 And they said unto him: 'Where is Sarah thy wife?' And he said: 'Behold, in the tent.'
- 10 And He said: 'I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.' And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him .--
- 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.--
- יב (עַדְנָה וַאדֹנִי יב And Sarah laughed within herself, saying: 'After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'
 - 13 And the LORD said unto Abraham: 'Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying: Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old?
 - 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD. At the set time I will return unto thee, when the season cometh round, and Sarah shall have a son.'
 - 15 Then Sarah denied, saying: 'I laughed not'; for she was afraid. And He said: 'Nay; but thou didst laugh.'

תלמוד בכלי מסכת בבא מציעא דף פו עמוד ב

וישא עיניו וירא והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו וירא וירץ לקראתם... מאן נינהו שלשה אנשים -מיכאל וגבריאל ורפאל.

"And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him, and when he saw them, he ran to meet them" Who were the three men? — Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

7. Genesis 32:23-33

וֹלְדִיוֹ; וַיִּעֲבֹר אֵת מְעֲבַר יַבֹּק. Jabbok.

אָת-שְׁתַּי בּלֵיְלָח הוּא וַיִּקְח אָת-שְׁתַּי 23 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two י נְשָׁר (אָת-שַּחָד נְשָּר שְׁחָד וְאָר-אַחַד עָשָר handmaids, and his eleven children, and passed over the ford of the

בר וּיִּשְבְרֵם אָת-הַנְּחֵל; וַנְּשְבֵר 24 And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over אָת-אָשָּר-לו. that which he had.

עמו איש עמן (וַיַּאָבַק אִישׁ עמן בּדּוֹן: וַיַּאָבַק אִישׁ עמן 25 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until עד עלות השטחר. the breaking of the day.

; כו ויִבע בְּכַף-יְרַכוֹ אַ יָכֹלְ לוֹ וִיְּבֵּע בְּכַף-יְרַכוֹ 26 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched וֹפּקעׁ פּף-יָרֶדְ יַצְּׁלְב בְּהַאָּבְקוֹ עִמּוֹ. the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him.

בו לאמֶר שַּלְחַנִי כִּי עָלָה חַשְּׁחַר; וַלּאמֶר (נְיֹאמֶר בּי עָלָה הַשְּׁחַנִי כִּי עָלָה הַשְּׁחַר; וַלּאמֶר 27 And he said: 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.' And he said: 'I will ילא אַשַלְחַךְ כִּי אִם-בֵּרְכְתָּנִי. not let thee go, except thou bless me.'

בת ולאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה-שְּמֶךּ; וַלּאמֶר יַצְקב. 28 And he said unto him: 'What is thy name?' And he said: 'Jacob.'

אַנשים וַתּוּכַל.

יפָי עוד שָּמְף--כִּי 29 And he said: 'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; אם-יִשְּׁרְעִּל: כִּי-שָּׁרִיתְ עָם-אֱלֹהִים וְעִם for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed.'

לוּיִשְאַל יַעַלְב וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּידָה-נַּא שְׁמֵךּ וַלִּאמֶר לָמָּח זָּח תִּשְאַל לָשָׁמִי, וַיִּבַרְדְּ אתו שֶׁם.

30 And Jacob asked him, and said: 'Tell me, I pray thee, thy name.' And he said: 'Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?' And he blessed him there.

לא וַנְקְרָא יַעֲּקֹב שֵׁם הַפְּּוָלְוֹם פְּנִיאֵל: כִּי־ 31 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: 'for I have seen נאיתי אֱלהִים פָנִים אֶל-פָנִים וַתְּנְצֵל God face to face, and my life is preserved.'

-הָשֶּׁבֶּשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָבַר אָת 32 And the sun rose upon him as he passed over Peniel, and he וווא צלע על-ירכו. פוואל: והוא צלע על-ירכו. limped upon his thigh.

לג עַל-פַן לא-יאכָלוּ בָנֵי-יִשְרַאַל אֲת-גַּיד הַנָּשָׁה אֲשֶׁר עַל-כַּף הַיִּרְדְּ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזַּה: פָּי נָגַע בְּכַף-יֶרֶדְ יַצְקֹב בְּגִיד הַנַּשָׁה.

33 Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the thigh-vein which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, even in the sinew of the thighvein.

מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת וישלח סימן ח ויאבק איש עמו זה סמאל שרו של עשו שבקש להרגו

"... and there wrestled a man with him" This is Samael, the ministering angel of Esau who wanted to kill him.

9. Midrash

Surely Hebron was in the mountain?...(But the reference is not to the physical Hebron), but to the mysterious advice imparted to that righteous man who was buried in Hebron, in fulfillment of what was said to Abraham at the covenant between the pieces: "Thy seed shall be a stranger."