

## YOU HAVE STRIVEN WITH GOD\*

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב  
יִאָמַר עוֹד שְׂמִךְ כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל  
כִּי־שָׂרִיתָ עִם־אֱלֹהִים וְעִם־אָנָשִׁים  
וַתִּזְכָּל:

And he said: Not Jacob  
shall your name will be called anymore, but Israel;  
for you have striven with God and with men,  
and you have prevailed.

*And he said [to him]:* Jacob was wrestling with an incarnation of the evil that had been and was to be the “orb of empire, the sceptre and sword,” in which human consciousness and mind are confused by a darkness like that of the blackest night (S.R. Hirsch 32:25). *Not Jacob shall your name be called anymore*—You are no longer to be defined by where you began, at your brother’s heel, but by how you have chosen to live. *But Israel*—Your name shall tell of your struggle with the divine and against evil. *For you have striven with God and with men*—Including, now, the “prince of Esav” (Bereshit Rabbah), who represents the animating “spiritual essence” of empire against the spirit (N. Krochmal). You have persisted against all obstacles, endeavoring in spirit and flesh. *And you have prevailed*—You are blessed and will be healed from your wounds to struggle again and again—and “you will survive all the nations” (Sforno).

\* Genesis 32:29 (in Vayishlach)