

"And a man wrestled with him." (32:25)

Rashi cites *Chazal* who explain that the "ish" who wrestled with Yaakov was none other than Samael, the guardian angel of Eisav. *Rashi* says, however, that the angel who met Yosef as he searched for his brothers was Gavriel. What prompts *Rashi* to identify the angel who fought Yaakov as Samael and the angel who met Yosef as Gavriel?

Horav Leib z.l., who was *Av Beis Din* in Pressburg, offers a novel response. He notes the disparity in behavior between the two angels. After Yaakov fought all night with his angel, he asked for one small favor-- to be blessed. The angel responded, "Let me leave, dawn is breaking." This, we are taught, refers to the angel's obligation to sing praise before Hashem. In Yosef's situation, the angel Gavriel saw him wandering aimlessly in search of his brothers. He approached him and offered assistance, despite his obligation to sing before Hashem. He "felt" that he had an obligation to respond to the needs of this lost Jew, although his own singing would be delayed.

The angel who struggled with Yaakov, on the other hand, did not see the importance of helping a Jew in need at the expense of delaying his return to Heaven. This attitude "characterizes" Samael, Eisav's guardian angel. There is a time and place for everything. When a Jew is in need, one's first and foremost obligation is to help him, even at the expense of one's own immediate "spiritual" growth.