

Rabbi Shlomo Farhi

When Angels Walk Into Your Conflicts

The Hidden Power
of Clarity, Mitzvot,
and Disarming Machloket

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PART I: WHERE THE STORY BEGINS

This week's parasha opens with a deceptively simple line:

“Vayishlach Yaakov malachim.”

“And Yaakov sent angels/messengers to Esav.”

But the backdrop is anything but simple.

Yaakov is returning home **after 34 long years**.

Not with one wife—but four.

Not with one child—but an entire nation forming at his heels.

And Esav...

You know an Esav.

The person who has nurtured a grievance for not 34 minutes, not 34 days—but **34 years**.

Some people put money in a 401k.

Others put *machloket* in one.

And when they retire—oh, do they withdraw it with interest.

Yaakov knows exactly who he's dealing with.

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But the Torah isn't just telling us a story from ancient history.

It's asking **you** something:

Who in your life are you still carrying as an Esav?

Who are you still replaying, nursing, feeding, resenting?

And how long is that grudge going to live?

PART II: WHY SEND ANGELS FOR A SIMPLE ERRAND?

Rashi famously debates:

Does "malachim" mean **angels** or **messengers**?

Yaakov doesn't need metaphysical beings to deliver a message.

"Hey Esav, long time no see, I'm coming home."

You don't need Gabriel, Michael, and Uriel for that.

You need Theo, Mamadou, or Mohammed on Uber Package Delivery.

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And yet Rashi says:

Yes—these were REAL angels.

Why?

Because the message wasn't the message.

The message wasn't the cattle.

It wasn't the gift.

It wasn't the Shorfolio portfolio.

The message was:

"I lived with Lavan and kept all 613 mitzvot."

Why does Esav care?

Because Esav is waiting for one thing:

Yaakov to slip.

Yaakov to soften.

Yaakov to become "normal."

Yaakov to lose his spiritual advantage.

As Yitzchak told Esav:

"The minute Yaakov stops being Yaakov—you rise."

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Esav has banked on 34 years of Yaakov living with Lavan.

And Yaakov now sends proof—not claims, not speeches, not emotional pleas—

He sends angels made from his mitzvot.

PART III: THE NOAM ELIMELECH'S REVOLUTIONARY READ

At the kever of the Noam Elimelech in Poland, we learned a dazzling explanation.

Rashi says:

“Malachim mamash” — real angels.

The Noam Elimelech says:

MAMaSH = Malachim Mi'Mitzvot She'asah

Angels formed from the mitzvot he did.

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When you perform a mitzvah, you create a spiritual being—your defender in Heaven, your advocate, your representative in a world you cannot physically visit.

So Yaakov didn't send angels.
Yaakov sent **his own mitzvot**, embodied.

He sent Esav incontrovertible proof:

“Your window is closed.
I never compromised.
I never fell.
You think I've been slipping for 34 years?
Here—meet the angels my mitzvot created.”

This isn't argument.
This isn't negotiation.

This is **reality**.

PART IV: THE TWO MITZVOT ESAV THOUGHT HE HAD

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Chazal explain:

Esav believed he had **two mitzvot** over Yaakov:

1. **Kibbud Av Va'em** — honoring his parents
2. **Yishuv Eretz Yisrael** — living in the Land of Israel

But Yaakov counters:

1. I left home *because* my parents told me to.
2. I left Israel *only* to get married—which halacha permits.

And the most beautiful detail:

Rivkah told Yaakov:

“Stay until your brother’s anger subsides.”

Yaakov says to Esav:

“You’re still angry.

Therefore, I am still fulfilling Kibbud Av Va'em **right now.**”

Meaning:

The angels were complete because the mitzvot were complete.

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Not broken.

Not half-done.

Not compromised.

Full.

Whole.

Perfect.

PART V: THE SEED OF ALL MACHLOKET

Now we arrive at the deepest revelation:

Yaakov isn't trying to negotiate.

He's trying to eliminate the reason for the machloket.

He's trying to remove the *win* from Esav's mind.

Because most conflicts, fights, divorces, business wars, lawsuits, community blowups—they don't erupt because people love fighting.

They erupt because each side thinks:

“I can WIN this.”

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If you remove the fantasy of victory—you remove the oxygen from the fire.

This is why Yaakov sends not words, not arguments, not persuasion...

He sends **clarity**.

“Esav, you think you have leverage?
Here is proof that you don’t.”

In marriage fights:

Often one spouse thinks reconciliation is still possible—but the other hasn’t communicated clearly.

In custody battles:

One side still believes they have a “card to play.”

In synagogue politics:

Someone thinks they might walk away with power.

But look at the Gemara:

When Rabban Gamliel was removed from leadership, they *did not* give the role to Rabbi Yehoshua (the one he’d offended).

Why?

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So no one would think:

“If I fight... I might become the leader.”

When the *win* is off the table—
the *war* becomes unnecessary.

PART VI: WHEN EVEN THE ANGELS DON'T WORK

Did it work for Yaakov?

No.

Because Esav is not normal hatred.
Esav is Amalek—the archetype of:

“I don’t need to win.
I just need YOU to lose.”

But the Torah still teaches the attempt.

Because most of your conflicts are not with Amalek.

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They are with human beings.

Flawed.

Emotional.

Misguided.

Hurting.

And clarity from you may save not just the relationship—

but their soul.

And yours.

THE TAKEAWAY

Don't begin with war.

Don't begin with prayer.

Don't begin with gifts.

Begin with the **step Yaakov took first:**

✨ Send clarity.

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- ✨ Remove illusions.
- ✨ Take “winning” off the table.
- ✨ Communicate truth without ego.
- ✨ Reduce the fight by removing its foundation.

If you do that, you may avoid 98% of the machloket in your life.

And even when you can't—you will walk through conflict with the dignity of Yaakov, the honesty of mitzvot-made angels, and the clarity of truth.

SHABBAT-TABLE QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION

- 1. What is the Esav in your life right now?**
Someone you are still holding resentment toward?
- 2. What “illusion of winning” might be fueling your conflict with someone?**
- 3. If your mitzvot appeared as angels, what would they look like today?**
Whole? Half-done? Injured?

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- 4. What clarity can you offer someone that may end a fight before it starts?**
 - 5. Where in your relationships do you need to remove ego and bring truth?**
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