

# BEFORE OUR VERY EYES

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

*"And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn." (Breishis 32:26)*

What does this come to teach us? "Until the break of dawn" for Israel- the salvation of Israel which is comparable to night. The nations of the world and the wicked Edom, they will be wrestling with Israel in order to sway them from the ways of HASHEM as it says, (Shir HaShirim 7:1) "The nations have said to me, "Turn away, turn away from G-d, O nation whose faith in Him is perfect, turn away, turn away, and we shall choose nobility from you." (Lekach Tov)

Who would not like to have witnessed that wrestling match? Well the good news is that it's an event yet in progress, and we may be in the most dangerous stage of all.

Prior to W/WII Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman ztl. wrote in his treatise, "The Epoch of the Moshiach" about many of the prevalent symptoms of the darkness that precedes the break of dawn: "'And a man wrestled with him." Jacob is the pillar of Torah. "A man" refers to the "Satan". This indicates that in the Epoch of the Moshiach immorality will compete with the study of Torah.

"And the thigh of Jacob was dislocated as he wrestled with him." This refers to the Torah schoolchildren, the backbone of our nation for thousands of years. Even this foundation will weaken in the Epoch of the Moshiach, through internal and external foes...

Alternately, "the thigh of Jacob", refers to those who support Torah study... In the Epoch of the Moshiach this precept is diminished... Even in those countries where it is still temporarily possible to help financially, people give to all causes; for Torah study "prutas" (pennies) ...

"Before the redemption, the Jews will err after various forms of idol- worship... "Any matter which appears to man as a controlling factor independent of HASHEM's will, and as capable of doing good or evil is included in the definition of idolatry. (Sanhedrin) ...

He writes, "Let us now review all the "idols" which were worshipped in the last one hundred years. The Enlightenment of Berlin promised a great salvation. As soon as the breeze of liberalism began to blow, the Jews hastened to stand in the ranks of the foremost exponents. After Liberalism had made its exit, they turned to Democracy (worship of public opinion), Socialism, Communism, and to other "isms"... To these idols they made sacrifices of blood and money- and were betrayed by all of them. Not even one justified the faith that was pinned on it..."

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman ztl. attributes the following story to Rabbi Yisrael Salanter ztl: A king

sent one of his loyal princes on a mission to another country. He warned him, "If the nobles of the land offer to make a bet with you, you are to decline." He repeated his warning over and over again. At the conclusion of his mission the noblemen of the place said, "You are a hunchback Sir!" When he rejected their claim, they bet him a million pieces of silver that he was in fact a hunchback. He proved them wrong.

With a million pieces of silver in hand he returned home. The king was not happy to hear about the bet. The prince assured him that it was a "sure thing" and he won the bet. The king told him that he had a wager with the same nobles for a hundred times that amount that the prince could not be tempted to make a bet. Now his foolishness has caused a great loss to the king's treasury.

He writes, "The moral is obvious. If a man thinks in his heart that in spite of the Torah's warnings that a prohibited thing can bring great advantage, we must tell him, "The advantage you see, the Torah also saw; and if the Torah yet prohibited it, it is evident that not benefit but great harm must result from it."

We have been witness to a ferocious wrestling match in recent history with wildly desperate moves on display even today before our very eyes. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](http://Torah.org).