Hebrew/English Source Sheet

Torah Portion of Vayishlach

“Ya'akov, Small Vessels, and A Jewish Ethic of Resource Use”
by Jonathan Neril

The sources are presented in the order they are mentioned in the essay.

Genesis 32:25
And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

Rashi - Genesis 32:25
And Jacob was left He had forgotten small bottles and returned for them. — [from Gen. Rabbah 77:2, Chullin 91a]

Talmud Bavli Tractate Chulin 91:1
And Jacob was left alone. Said R. Eleazar: He remained behind for the sake of some small jars.31 Hence [it is learnt] that to the righteous their money is dearer than their body; and why is this? Because they do not stretch out their hands to robbery. (Judaica Classics Library)

Talmud Tactate Brachos 28:2
At the moment of his departure he said to them: Remove the vessels so that they shall not become unclean, and prepare a throne for Hezekiah the king of Judah who is coming. (Judaica Classics Library)
Sefer HaHinuch. Mitzvah 529
This is the commandment not to destroy fruit bearing trees during a siege. Included in the prohibition is all needless destruction. The root of this mitzvah is to teach ourselves to love goodness and utility and cleave to them, and consequentially we will be followed by goodness and we will be distanced from all things evil or destructive. This is the way of the pious people of good deeds, who love peace, rejoice in the good of creation, and bring everyone close to the Torah. They do not destroy anything, even a mustard seed. It troubles them to encounter any destruction or waste. If they can act to save anything from destruction, they use all their power to save it.

In contrast, the evildoers, who act like brothers of destructive forces, rejoice at the destruction of the world, and cause destruction themselves. With the measure that a person judges the world, he too is judged, meaning he is forever bound to it. As it is written (Proverbs 17:5), “and he that is glad at calamity shall not be unpunished.” On the other hand, one who seeks good, and rejoices in good, that soul will forever be at rest in goodness, this is known and widely acknowledged.


Sources not included on this source sheet: Orchot Tzaddikim on Genesis 32:24.

Unless otherwise noted, All English Translations from Judaica Press, available online at www.chabad.org