

Bereshit Rabbah (77:2 - adapted by Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein):

“And the sages said: ‘The angel appeared to Yaakov in the guise of an archvillain. Both Yaakov and the angel had herds of sheep and camels. The angel said to Yaakov: You bring my things across the river and I will take your things. In the blink of an eye, the angel had transferred Jacob’s possessions across the river, but, Yaakov, every time he brought the angels things from one side of the river to the other, it was as if more things appeared to be moved. Yaakov toiled all night long, back and forth, back and forth. Pretty soon Yaakov realized something was awry and shouted out: Sorcerer (pharmakos) and the two began to wrestle. Jacob took a rag and stuffed it in his opponent’s mouth, fearing his opponent would conjure up trouble. The angel, in turn, decided to show Yaakov who he was really dealing with, thrusting a finger into the ground causing lava to spewed forth. Yaakov then burst forth, saying: ‘You don’t scare me for I am made entirely of fire’, as it is written: ‘And the house of Yaakov was fire.’ (Obadiah 1:18)”