

TAPPING THE SPIRITUALITY Embedded in the Letter "Heh"

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Toldos

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weely Video: Tapping the Spirituality Embedded In The Letter "Heh"

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A Soul Mate By Divine Design

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A Prophecy Not Shared With Others Albeit Qualified

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The Why Behind The Rightful Purchase Of A Birthright

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Tracing The Force That Brought Existence Into Being

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1. Yitzchok was only conceived by Sarah after Avraham was circumcised and had the letter Hei added to his name.
2. The world was created with the spirituality that is contained in the letter Hei.
3. Gemara: The shape of the letter Hei is indicative of man's free choice.
4. The shape: two vertical legs that are spaced and a small opening on the top of left leg.
5. The wide open space alludes that man has the choice to go into the oblivion, free fall.
6. If he chooses to repent, he can return by taking another path to allow himself to maintain his change for the better.
7. A Noachide must live his life within the context of 7 Noachide Laws.
8. Before the sin of Adam, that would have been sufficient to achieve spiritual perfection.
9. After the sin, due to spiritual regression one needs 248 Positive and 365 Negative Commandments for perfection.
10. Since man is prone to fail, Repentance was embedded in the profile of creation.
11. Avraham needed a Hei added to his name to create the force that brought all existence into being.

When Intervention Is Without Self Interest

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1. Esav returns from the field fatigued and famished.
2. He asks Yaakov to give him of the lentil soup that he is cooking.
3. Yaakov agrees only if he sells him his birthright.
4. Esav agrees to sell his birthright for a pot of lentils and a loaf of bread.
5. As the narrative reads – Yaakov took advantage of the moment to snatch the birthright.
6. Midrash: The service in the Temple was reserved exclusively for the first born.
7. Yaakov said it would be disgraceful for such an evil person to be the officiant before G-d.
8. Yaakov had no self interest in the birthright; his initiative was solely to avert a desecration of G-d's name.
9. Years later Yaakov took the blessings that were meant for Esav by impersonating Esav.
10. Esav, upon returning and realizing what Yaakov had done, lets out a yelp and wails.
11. Yitzchok blesses Esav: When you are pained by the fact that your birthright was taken from you, when the Jews don't keep the Torah, you will then cast their yoke from your neck.
12. Why is the transgression of the Torah a basis to cast off their yoke?
13. Yaakov's justification to take the birthright was that it was disgraceful for an evil person to be G-d's officiant.
14. If there is a desecration it is no longer justified because the Jews themselves transgressed the Torah.

The Empowerment of the Patriarch Through The Matriarch

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1. After Yitzchok marries Rivka, the Torah tells us of Avraham's passing at the age of 175.
2. Avraham passed away when Yaakov and Esav were 13 years old; why mention it here?
3. Midrash: The Patriarchs' actions are indicative of the future events of the Jewish People.
4. Midrash: Avraham went down to Egypt and so did the Jewish People; Avraham left with great wealth and as did the Jewish People.
5. A Patriarch assumes that role if there is a Matriarch.
6. Yitzchok did not become the Patriarch until he married Rivka.
7. Although Avraham lived many more years, he no longer contributed as a Patriarch once Yitzchok married Rivka.
8. Avraham's actions were valued as an individual; no longer contributing to the destiny of the Jewish People.

Withholding The Script of Reality

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1. Rivka was barren and miraculously became pregnant due to Yitzchok's supplication.
2. During her pregnancy, she experienced unusual agitation within her womb and suffered greatly.
3. She sought out clarity from Shem the prophet.
4. He told her that there are two nations in her womb; one represents good and the other evil.
5. The 2 entities were in opposition of one another.
6. Rivka was now aware that Esav was truly evil.
7. Why did Rivka not share this information with Yitzchok? It would have prevented so much pain and suffering.
8. Why did Rivka seek out clarity from Shem and not from Avraham or Yitzchok?
9. Avraham passed away 5 years before his time so not to see his grandson Esav pursuing an evil path.
10. Rivka did consult with Avraham, but he did not know.
11. The basis for Esav hating Yaakov is a consequence of Yaakov haven taken the blessing meant for Esav.
12. Had Yitzchok been aware of the evil of Esav he would have never considered blessing him.
13. The context for Esav to be considered for the Blessing was only because Yitzchok did not know his true nature.
14. Rivka realized this should not to be known to her husband Yitzchok, and so could not divulge the true nature of Esav.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Toldos



TAPPING THE SPIRITUALITY

Embedded in the Letter "Heh"

The Spiritual Interplay Between Avraham and Yaakov

Torah: "...Avraham begot Yitzchak..."

Midrash citing a verse from Proverbs: "The crown of the elders is the sons of their sons (grandchildren) and the glory of the children is their forefathers." The *Midrash* explains, "The righteous are crowned and beautified through their grandchildren and the grandchildren through their grandparents. Where do we find this? Avraham was coronated in the merit of Yaakov.

"When Nimrod cast Avraham in to the fiery kiln of Kasdim, G-d descended to save him from the fire. The angels came to G-d with a claim, 'Is this the one who You want to save from the fire? There will be many evil descendants that will come from him in the future (Yishmael, Esav, etc.)!'

"G-d responded, 'In the merit of his grandson Yaakov, I will save him!' Where do we see that Avraham was saved in the merit of Yaakov?"

Rav Brechya: 'It is written, 'G-d said to the House of Yaakov, who redeemed Avraham.' G-d rescued Avraham from the fiery kiln."

The angels claimed that Avraham should not be rescued because he will bring forth many evil descendants in the future. To counter this claim, G-d told them that He was going to rescue Avraham in the merit of Yaakov. Did G-d save Avraham in the merit of Yaakov because Yaakov's dimension of spirituality was going to be so advanced that it would outweigh all of the evil descendants of Avraham? Or is it for a more profound reason?

Torah: Regarding Yitzchak's quantification of Yaakov, "Hakol kol Yaakov v'hayadayim yidei Esav - the voice

is the voice of *Yaakov* and the hands are the hands of *Esav*.”

Chazal: As long as the Jewish people utilize their “voice” as the “voice” of *Yaakov*, which is the use of the power of speech in the study of *Torah* and prayer, then they will not be subject to the hands of *Esav*. If the Jewish people are functioning as they should, regarding their spirituality, the influences of *Esav* in the world will be subjugated, diminished and dispelled. However, if the Jewish people do not engage in *Torah* study and prayer as they should, then *Esav* will be empowered and the Jewish people will be at his mercy.

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: If one says that Jerusalem is flourishing and Rome is in its glory, it should not be believed, because it is not possible that both entities of good and evil could coexist simultaneously. If Jerusalem is flourishing, then consequently, Rome must be in a destroyed state.

The angels were concerned that if *Avraham* were to be rescued from the kiln the world will be subsumed by the evil of those who will descend from him. G-d told them that the spiritual strength of *Yaakov*, which is transmitted through his children has the ability to vanquish that evil. From this we see, that the grandparents are coronated by the grandchildren. Where do find that the grandchildren are glorified through their grandparents?

Midrash: When *Yaakov* was pursued by *Lavan* to kill him, he said, “If it were not for the G-d of my father *Avraham* and *Yitzchak* I would not have survived.” From this, we see that the grandson is coronated through the merit of the grandparents. *Yaakov* was only able to endure and survive the evil of *Lavan* in the merit of his grandfather, *Avraham*. *Avraham* only survived the kiln because of the evolvment of *Yaakov*.

Meaning, although one may have personal great merit and spiritual accomplishments, if one is meritorious it will manifest itself in a manner that it will bring about even greater merit to protect him. As we see, it was due to *Avraham*’s merit that allowed *Yaakov* to be protected from the pursuit of *Lavan*.

Yitzchak, the Joy of Existence

Torah: “And these are the offspring of *Yitzchak* son of *Avraham*....”

Midrash citing a verse from Proverbs: “The father of the *tzaddik* (devoutly righteous) rejoices and the one who bears the wise man will rejoice with him... To whom is King Solomon referring? He is referring to *Yitzchak*. When *Yitzchak* was born all rejoiced. Heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the zodiac all rejoiced in his birth. Why were they happy? It is because if *Yitzchak* would not have been created, the world could not exist.

“*Yirmiya*: ‘If not for My covenant, which is in effect day and night, the extent of heaven and earth would not be put in place.’ What is the covenant to which G-d is referring? It is *Yitzchak* – as it states in the *Torah*, ‘My covenant I will establish with *Yitzchak*.’”

Why is existence contingent on *Yitzchak* more than any other of the Patriarchs? What is unique about *Yitzchak* that the covenant of G-d identifies with him?

Mishna in Tractate *Nidarim*: The “covenant” that must be in effect day and night is referring to the continuous study of *Torah*. If *Torah* were not studied even for a moment, the world would not continue.

Yaakov, our Patriarch is identified and quantified by the *Torah* as the Patriarch who personifies *Torah* study. As the verse states, “*Yaakov* is the perfect person who dwells in the tent (of *Torah*).” Despite this, the *Midrash* tells us that the verse is referring to *Yitzchak* and not *Yaakov*. How do we understand this?

At the beginning of Creation, *Chazal* explain that G-d coalesced the Attribute of Mercy with the Attribute of Justice to allow the world to exist. If the Attribute of Justice, which is exacting and precise would be the standard to which mankind would be held, the world would not be able to continue. Mankind, being prone to failure, could not meet that standard. Therefore, G-d coalesced His Attribute of Mercy in order to mitigate Justice to enable existence to continue. The Attribute of Justice is evoked when satan prosecutes. Throughout the year G-d does not allow satan to prosecute the record of mankind, thus the Mercy continues to be in effect.

However, on the day of judgment, *Rosh Hashanah*, when every person’s record is scrutinized, G-d allows satan to prosecute. This prosecution is only silenced in the merit of the *Akeidah*. When the *shofar* of the ram is blown, it evokes G-d’s Mercy which allows existence to continue. *Yitzchak*, being the object of the

Akeidah, is referred to by *Chazal* as the “unblemished burnt offering.” This indicates that there is something unique in *Yitzchak’s* spirituality that qualified him to be the one to be sacrificed for the sake of G-d. Due to *Yitzchak’s* devoutness and belief, he allowed himself to be brought by his father as a sacrifice. He was thus the vehicle through which G-d’s Mercy is evoked on the Day of Judgment. Existence only continues due to *Yitzchak*. Consequently, when *Yitzchak* came into being, all creation rejoiced.

Mishna: Interpreting the word “covenant” in the words of *Yirimiya*, as referring to the continuous study of *Torah*, which is the basis for existence is not contradictory to the *Midrash* that states that the covenant is referring to the merit of *Yitzchak*. If it were not for the *Akeidah*, even if the Jewish people would study the *Torah* continuously, existence would not continue due to the prosecution of satan. It is only because *Yitzchak* created a mechanism to silence satan’s prosecution that the *Torah* is sufficient in its own right to maintain existence.

Free Choice, the Ultimate Opportunity

Midrash: “*Reb Shimon bar Yochai* says, ‘G-d does not associate His name with the devoutly righteous (*tzaddikim*) during their lifetime. It is only after their passing does He associate His Name with them. As it states in Psalms, “The holy ones (*kadoshim*) that are in the ground are worthy of honor...” When do they assume the status of ‘holy (*kadoshim*)?’ It is when they are buried in the ground. As long as they are alive, G-d does not associate His Name with them. Why is this so? It because G-d does not have faith in them. It is possible that they will be misled by the evil inclination (causing them to sin, thus they will lose their status as devoutly righteous).

“However, after their passing, G-d identifies Himself with them. ... However, *Reb Shimon bar Yochai* says, ‘We do find that G-d associated His Name with *Yitzchak*, the righteous one while he was alive. As it is stated in the verse when G-d communicated to *Yaakov* He had said, ‘*Elokei Avraham Avicha v’Elokei Yitzchak*- G-d of *Avraham* your father and G-d of *Yitzchak* (*Avraham* had already passed away, however *Yitzchak* was still alive). The *Rabbis* say that G-d sees (after the *Akeidah*) the ashes of *Yitzchak* piled upon the altar before Him (it is the equivalent of him not being alive, thus not subject to the evil inclination).

Rav Brechiya: ‘It is because *Yitzchak* was blind that G-d associated His Name with him during his lifetime.’ Thus, G-d associated His Name with *Yitzchak* during his lifetime.”

Rambam in Laws of Repentance: “Since G-d is Infinite and thus knows the future, how is it possible for one to have free choice?” *Rambam* explains that there are concepts that relate to G-d’s essence that are beyond the human grasp. G-d exists in the past, present, and future simultaneously. He knows the future because He is in the future. (The human mind cannot grasp– If the future has not yet occurred how could He be in the future?)

Although G-d knows every choice that one will make, His knowledge of that choice has no bearing on one’s free will. Man has the continuous ability to choose between right and wrong.

Gemara in Tractate *Nidah*: Every aspect of one’s life and predicament (wealth/poor, healthy/weak, etc.) is predestined with the exception of the fear of heaven. Every person has the ability to choose to be righteous or evil. Although G-d knows what one’s choice will be, it does not detract from his ability to choose.

Since G-d knows that ultimately the Patriarch will not deviate until the last moment of his life why does He not associate His Name with him during his lifetime? G-d knew that *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov* would be devoutly righteous until their passing. If G-d associates His Name with the Patriarch during his lifetime, the mere association and classification as “*Elokei* (the G-d of)...” would put an end to that individual’s free will. Once G-d associates His Holy Name with an individual, that person can no longer choose. The devoutly righteous are only accredited for their spiritual accomplishments because they could have chosen otherwise, thus giving value to their choice. If G-d’s Name is associated with the *tzaddik*, he would no longer be subject to the evil inclination.

Not Seeing Beyond One’s Own Subjectivity

Chazal: Each one of the holy Patriarchs were meant to live 180 years. *Avraham*, our Patriarch however lived only 175 years. *Chazal* explain that G-d had promised *Avraham* that he would pass away at “a good old age.” If he were to live until the age of 180, he would

have witnessed his grandson, *Esav* becoming an evil person. This would have pained *Avraham* to such a degree that it would have been contrary to the promise that G-d had made to him. Therefore, G-d took five years away from *Avraham's* life so that he should not witness the evil of his grandson.

Torah: *Yaakov* passed away at the age of 147 years.

Midrash: Initially *Yaakov* was meant to live 180 years as his father *Yitzchak* had. When *Yosef* initially presented his father to Pharaoh, Pharaoh was taken aback by the advanced age of *Yaakov* and asked him "How many are the days of the years of your life?" To that *Yaakov* responded, "The days of the years of my sojourns have been a hundred and thirty years. Few and difficult have been the days of the years..."

Midrash: *Yaakov's* response was considered inappropriate because rather than being appreciative for all that G-d had done for him he was sharing with Pharaoh the difficulties that he had experienced. G-d said, "After you had been saved from all of your difficult encounters and have survived, you bemoan your predicament to this heathen! I swear that every word of your expression to Pharaoh, (which is 33 words) will cause you to lose a year from your life." Thus, *Yaakov* lived 147 years, rather than 180 as he was meant to.

Torah: "*Esav* came in from the field and he was exhausted..."

Chazal: *Esav* was exhausted because on that day he had committed murder, idolatry, and adultery.

Midrash: When *Esav* returned from the field in a fatigued state he saw his brother *Yaakov* preparing lentils with ash on his forehead. He asked *Yaakov*, "What happened?" *Yaakov* responded, "Our grandfather passed away." When *Esav* heard that *Avraham* had passed away, he was taken aback and exclaimed, "There is no justice and there is no Judge!" He thus became a heretic. If *Avraham* had already lived 175 years old, why did *Esav* react upon hearing of his death?

Esav understood that *Avraham* was meant to live 180 years. If he passed away five years before his time it was an indication that G-d denied his grandfather something that was rightfully his. *Esav* knew that his grandfather was devoutly righteous and deserving to live a full life. If G-d had taken these years from such a righteous individual as *Avraham*, it was an indication that there is no justice and no Judge! He

thus blasphemed G-d and rejected Him.

It is interesting to note that the only reason that *Avraham* passed away before his time was because G-d did not want him to witness the evil of *Esav*. *Esav's* reaction to the news about his grandfather's passing was due to his own choice of evil. Thus, he was the cause of his own heresy. This is an example of the principle, "G-d brings tragedy to the hands of the guilty." The one who generates the greatest level of culpability is the one who is not meritorious.

Very often we experience things in life that cause us to react. One must introspect and reflect that perhaps we are the cause of our own predicament. Rather than introspecting and understanding that he was the one who brought about the premature death of his grandfather, *Esav* chose to blame G-d.

The Focus of Avraham, to Secure Existence (From Chayei Sarah)

Torah: *Avraham*, our Patriarch sent *Eliezer* to seek out a wife for his son *Yitzchak*, who would be the future Matriarch of the Jewish people. *Avraham* gave *Eliezer*, his trusted servant specific instructions and criteria regarding the selection of the wife for *Yitzchak*.

Torah: "Then the servant took ten camels of his master's camels and set out with all the bounty of his master..." Why is it necessary for the *Torah* to identify the number of camels that *Eliezer* had taken? Seemingly, the number of camels is significant and connotes something very specific.

Torah: After *Yosef* revealed himself to his brothers, he sent them back to his father *Yaakov* with gifts of various types of special food to provide for him because of the famine.

Torah: "And to his father he sent the following: ten he-donkeys laden with the best of Egypt and ten she-donkeys laden with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey..." If the intent of the *Torah* is to tell us that *Yosef* had sent his father *Yaakov* an abundant variety of provisions that would be needed for the journey, why was it necessary to specify the number of donkeys that were needed to transport them?

Mishna in Ethics of Our Fathers: "G-d tested Avraham with ten tests..." It was only after Avraham had

succeeded in the ten tests that were presented to him by G-d did he achieve a special level of distinction in the eyes of G-d. G-d would only established the future and permanence of the Jewish people if *Avraham* would succeed in all of the ten tests.

Midrash: The *Akeidah* was the tenth and final test that was presented to *Avraham*. After the *Akeidah*, *Sarah* our Matriarch passed away.

Chazal: At the exact moment of her passing, *Rivka*, the future Matriarch was born. It was communicated to *Avraham* through a prophetic vision that the future Matriarch came into existence at that moment.

Midrash citing a verse from Ecclesiastes: "As the sun shines, the sun sets..." Meaning, when one devoutly righteous person leaves the world, another is brought into existence in his place to maintain the balance of good. *Avraham* understood that since that information was Divinely revealed to him, after he was told that *Yitzchak* would not be slaughtered, he needed to actualize the prophecy.

Avraham understood that the world was brought about through the ten utterances of G-d. Thus, anything that has relevance to fulfill the objective of Creation is encompassed in the number ten. Since he was subject to ten tests, *Avraham* understood that by succeeding in all of them, he would be the one to further the future of existence and be the one to determine its objective.

Chazal: The first word of the *Torah* alludes to the purpose of Creation. It was for the sake of the fulfillment of *Torah* and the Jewish people that the world was created. This was confirmed at Sinai when the Jewish people were given the Ten Commandments. In addition, the precursor to Sinai, was experiencing the ten plagues in Egypt, which were revealed miracles. This was to qualify them for the Sinai experience. The miracles came about within the context of "ten" which is an allusion to the Ten Utterances of G-d.

Torah: In addition to giving *Eliezer* specific instructions regarding the type of wife he was to find for *Yitzchak*, he was given gifts of jewelry that were to be placed upon her once she was identified as the destined wife. Regarding the gifts of jewelry that were given to *Rivka*, our Matriarch, the *Torah* is explicit in identifying what they were, and their weight in gold. The two bracelets that are identified by the *Torah* are referred to as "two bracelets, their weight ten in gold." The number of bracelets alludes to the two Tablets which were of identical size and the weight of ten alludes to the Ten Commandments that were inscribed on the two Tablets.

These gifts of jewelry were specifically designed by *Avraham* to be given to the future Matriarch in order to establish and secure the future spirituality of Jewish people, which is the objective of existence. When *Eliezer* was sent with the ten camels of his master to seek out the future Matriarch, it was to indicate and emphasize that his mission was for the specific purpose to guarantee and secure the spiritual future of the Jewish people. They are the ones who are destined address the objective of Creation that was brought about through the Ten Utterances of G-d.

Chazal: The ten martyrs, who were the greatest sages of the Jewish people since Sinai, needed to be taken in the most cruel manner by the Romans to atone for the failing of the ten sons of *Yaakov*, who had sold their brother *Yosef* into slavery. The spiritual deficiency that was caused by their failing, was an impediment and obstruction that would not allow the objective of Creation to be met. Therefore, the greatest ten sages needed to be taken to fully make that correction.

