

“Then Yaakov inquired, and he said, “Divulge, if you please, your name.” And he said, “Why then do you inquire of my name?” (32:30)

Rashi explains that an angel exists only to perform Hashem’s will, and his “name” reflects his mission. By asking the angel for his name, Yaakov *Avinu* sought to determine the nature of his mission. The angel replied that he had no established name, since the names of angels change in accordance with their mission. *Horav Leib Chasman, z.l.*, posits that when the angel responded, “*Why then do you inquire of my name?*” it was a rhetorical question, constituting his response to Yaakov’s query.

A person’s name indicates his essence and true nature. Adam *HaRishon* gave names to all of the animals. He understood their intrinsic natures and “personalities,” and he named them accordingly. He perceived their positive attributes that defined their essence, and he gave them names which corresponded to those characteristics. When we deal with evil, when we address the nature of *kinaah*, *taavah*, *v’kavod* – envy, lust and honor – traits that catalyze one’s untimely spiritual and, oftentimes, physical demise, there is no essence, there is no internal nature. Evil has no foundation, no stability, no permanent basis. It is fleeting, as Shlomo *Ha’melech* refers to the folly of life as “*haveil havalim*,” “futility of futilities.” He understood that the pleasures and allures of this world are passing and of no lasting value. When we examine the true nature of *kavod*, honor, we realize that it is all imaginary, truly “futility of futilities.” Why would we care about its “name,” if it has no essence?

Eisav’s guardian angel, alias *Satan*, also known as the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, is well aware of the truth. He represents futility; he symbolizes illusion and delusion. He is nothing. He answers Yaakov, “Why would you ask my name?” A non-entity is not deserving of a name.