

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)

Yaakov *Avinu* wanted to know the name of the angel with whom he had wrestled – and won. The angel responded, “Why do you inquire of my name?” The commentators debate if this was a question, more or less, as if the angel were replying, “What difference does it make to you what my name is? You cannot do anything about it. I am not reachable by name.” Others contend that his response was actually his name. In other words: “Why do you ask my name?” is the actual name of the angel.

Horav Shabsi Yudelevitz, zl, explains this. When the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, approaches a person with the intention of leading him to sin, he really wants only one thing from the person: “Do not think! Now you are in the city, away from your bastions of Torah environment which protect you. Now is when you grab to your heart’s desire. Face it, your desires are working overtime; you see what you normally would never see at home. Now is when you should act. Live it up!”

The *yetzer hora* does not want us to stop and think, to ruminate if what he is saying makes sense: if it is good; or if it is bad. He just wants us to “do it!” Once we ask questions we wonder, “What is motivating me to remain in the city? Who is talking to me – my *yetzer tov*, good inclination, or my *yetzer hora*?” Once a person begins to ask questions, he demands answers. Once he hears the answers, the *yetzer hora* has been eliminated from the picture. No one intentionally listens to the *yetzer hora*.

Thus, Eisav’s angel, representing the *yetzer hora*’s evil, replied, “Why do you inquire about my name? Do not ask questions. Act!”

Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, takes a different approach. He defines “Why do you inquire about my name?” as a message: The angel of Eisav, AKA the *yetzer hora*, has no name. The name of a creature, person, animal, etc. defines its essence. When Adam *HaRishon* named the animals he studied each one’s personality, essence, of what they were made, their goals and objectives, etc. and then he gave each of them a name. Some people, such as Moshe *Rabbeinu*, had ten names, because he was so special that one name could not define his true essence. The *yetzer hora* is nothing but an illusion, a figment of the imagination; he has no essence; he is an apparition with no substance – other than what we grant him. Therefore, he has no name. He is nothing, so why should he have a name?