

*Shalom* once again. Maybe we could use the phrase you learned a few weeks ago: *boqer tov*! For those listening the first time and thought we were cursing, this simply means: good morning!

Welcome to this edition of Language of Redemption. Today, and for the entire week, we will be covering the fifth letter of the Hebrew *alephbet*: ה, *hei*. As with all other letters, this can also be expressed as a word, where we use the *hei* and *aleph* to spell it: הא.

The original pictogram of this letter was a man lifting up his hands, but later it changed to that of a lattice or an open window. Similar to how the letter *bet* can be used as a prefix, the letter *hei* is also used as a definite article, the English word ‘the’. In this case it will be pronounced ‘*ha*’. Referring back to our greeting, where *boqer* means morning, we would say הבקר, “the morning”. More about this later.

Throughout Scripture the letter *hei* will be used for the number 5. Every chapter and verse which refers to the single digit five, will be indicated by *hei*. In ancient Hebrew this letter means ‘behold!’. This word, behold, will always call attention to the person talking, or the person talked about. Ironically that it has lately become a common form of greeting, where two or more people meet. One will hear ‘hey’ from one person, while another will simply reply: ‘hey’. We find the word ‘behold’ many times in Scripture, but for now we can look at two examples:

*Yechezq'el 16* <sup>43</sup>Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but have raged against me in all these things; **therefore, behold, I also will bring your way on your head**, says the Lord GOD: and you shall not commit this lewdness with all your abominations. [Hebrew Names Version – emphasis added]

In this verse, we see the word ‘behold’ used, and in the original text the emphasised section will look as follows:

וְגַם אֲנִי הָאֵל דְּרַכְךָ בְּרֹאשׁ

Another example can be seen:

*B'reisheet 47* <sup>23</sup>And *Yosēph* said to the people, “**Look, I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land.**” [emphasis added]

The original text would be rendered as follows:

הִן קָנִיתִי אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם וְאֶת אֲדָמַתְכֶם

Here the word is slightly inflected, shown as ‘*hen*’ instead of ‘*hei*’, but that is for technical reasons beyond the scope of this study. Rest assured, that the many times you will read ‘behold!’, it will be as either of the examples shown here. It will always be used to show or reveal something, as shown by the ancient symbols.

The modern letter is actually a copy of the previous letter, *dalet*, with an inverted *yud* to its left. Although it is reserved for a future study, keep in mind that *aleph*, which represents our Creator, actually has two letters *yud*. If necessary, refer to our study of *aleph*, which is available from the sources given at the end of this study. It almost seems possible that one *yud* left the *aleph* and is now living inside the *dalet*, thereby forming the letter *hei*, almost in the same way that the Spirit of *YAH* dwells inside a believer. When the Spirit of *YAH* dwells inside a person, that life takes on a new identity.

We will get to know *hei* as being full of insights and applications; it is meek in some ways, yet powerful in others. According to the sages, *YAH* used the *hei* to create the present world. For those who have the

resources, you will find this in the *Talmud* in *Menachot 29b*. This is found in two sources, with the first one seen where *Dawid* expresses the joy of the righteous, for they see the Divine Providence in every aspect of the universe. The righteous see the laws of nature only as an external cloak. Seeing through the laws of nature, they perceive the Divine order and providence of the Creator:

*Mizmor 33* <sup>6</sup>By the Word of יהוה the heavens were made, And all their host by the Spirit of His mouth,

The first phrase, “By the Word of יהוה the heavens were made ...”, refers to the creative action of the letter ב, *bet*. Referring to our study of this letter, we learned that *Yeshua* is the Word. The second phrase, “...all their host by the Spirit of His mouth”, refers to the letter ה (*hei*), as the sound made by *hei* is merely the exhalation of breath. Here the lips and the tongue are not used to cause any sound whatsoever.

Our second source that *hei* was used to create the universe, can be found near the beginning of *Torah*:

*B'reisheet 2* <sup>4</sup>These are the births of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that יהוה *Elohim* made earth and heavens.

The first part of the verse in Hebrew would read: אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם, where we see the last word, be-hi-ba-re-Am translating as ‘created’. However, the second letter, *hei*, in this word is printed much smaller in the printed versions of *Torah*. According to the sages, this smaller version of *hei* is done to set it apart from the rest of the word. This indicates that the earth and the heavens were created with *hei*.

Another interesting point made by the sage, *Zohar*, is that the letters of this word can be rearranged to form a new word, בְּאַבְרָהָם, be-av-ra-Ham. More of this patriarch to follow shortly. Possibly some of you may already have recognised the name *Avraham*, with the prefix *bet*. You would have guessed correctly that this translates as “for (the sake of) *Avraham*”. This suggests that *Avraham* was the person who achieved *YAH*’s purpose for the universe, because humanity consistently failed to live up to its mission, until *Avraham* arrived on the scene. This earned *Avraham* the right to be the progenitor of the chosen nation of *Yisra’el*.

Before getting to more nuggets of this intriguing letter, we need to add that *hei* is also used as a suffix to indicate feminine words. Similar to languages such as German, French and some others, Hebrew divides objects into genders, male and female. This was discussed when we looked at the words for man, אִישׁ (*ish*) and woman, אִשָּׁה (*ishah*) – refer to *B'reisheet 2:23* and other verses. It is therefore quite common, when looking at words ending with *hei*, that it would be feminine. The plural of most feminine words end with the suffix ת (*tav*), pronounced ‘ôt’, as it will follow from the actual word itself. The Hebrew for ‘gospel’ (good news) is בְּשׂוּרָה (*b’sô-Rah*). Keeping in mind our study of last week, where we had some insights into the first four books of the apostolic Writings, we will refer to them in the plural as הַבְּשׂוּרוֹת (*b’sô-Rôt*). Note the ת (*tav*) at the end (on the left of the word). We will look at this word again in a few minutes.

While all Hebrew letters are consonants, not all have a specific sound, as we learned from the first letter, *aleph*. *Hei*, on the other hand, has something like a soft breathing sound to it, as when we breathe out. This is the way *YAH* gives us His Scripture, His instructions, by breathing them out to us:

*2 Timotheos 3* <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is breathed out by *Elohim* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for setting straight, for instruction in righteousness,

This is another proof that *Yeshua* is the Word of *YAH*, as our breath assists in modulating any sound coming from the mouth. It was also the breath of *YAH* that gave man life, when He breathed life into *Adam*:

*B'reisheet 2* <sup>7</sup>And **יהוה Elohim** formed the man out of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils breath of lives. And the man became a living being.

More on this later, but we see *Dawid* giving honour to *YAH* in a similar way with a short poem set to music:

*Mizmor 8* <sup>3</sup>For I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have established. <sup>4</sup>What is man that You remember him? And the son of man that You visit him?

According to the view of some sages, the covenant Name of *YAH* is associated with our breathing. The idea is that by inhaling, we speak the word *YAH* and by exhaling we speak the word *WEH*, forming *YAHWEH*. Although this idea is not found in Scripture, it is a brilliant thought that even atheists and agnostics would still acknowledge *YAH* in this way! Those same sages believe that when we don't speak the name of our Creator, we die. This is penned in Scripture, being the words of a man who suffered severe tribulation:

*Iyov 12* <sup>10</sup>in whose hand is the life of all that live, and the breath of all mankind?

This is the best way that *YAH* makes it possible to communicate with Him. The breath He gave us, goes back to Him every time we breathe, thereby creating a deep spiritual way of communing and communicating with Him. We see this in the word **הָגָה** (*ha-Gah*). Here we see the poor man, the *gimel*, between two letters *hei*, essentially two spiritual beings in conversation. While the *gimel* walks from one *hei* to the other, he hears this spiritual conversation and in that way he meditates on the words heard, the meaning of *hagah*. We see this where *YAH* instructs *Y'hoshua* (Joshua), shortly before he leads the nation of *Yisra'el* into the promised land:

*Y'hoshua 1* <sup>8</sup>“Do not let this Book of the *Torah* depart from your mouth, **but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you guard to do according to all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and act wisely.** [emphasis added for explanation]

The words “but you shall meditate on it” is seen in the original text as **וְהִגִּיתָ**, an inflection of *hagah*, written in the future tense. It was only by this means, his pondering the instructions of *YAH*, that *Y'hoshua* was successful in getting a young nation into their promised land, a characteristic he had shown ever since being a spy, a trait he lived out to his last breath. However, sometimes breathing out can also be a sigh, even a sigh of frustration.

In the original text of the *TaNakh* we see many poems printed in two or more columns. One good example is seen where *Mosheh* pleads with the rebellious nation of *Yisra'el* during his farewell speech:

*D'varim 32* <sup>6</sup>“Do you do this to **יהוה**, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you, Who created you and established you?

These words form part of what is known as “the Song of *Mosheh*”, contained in the complete chapter of *D'varim* 32. The avid students of Scripture should make a point of comparing this chapter to *Sh'mot* 15 as well as Revelation 15, where the latter two parallel two striking examples of liberation.

If we were to read *D'varim* 32 from a *Torah* scroll, we would find an enlarged *hei* completely separate from the rest of the text. This has baffled translators for many years, but the sages are confident that this is *YAH* sighing, considering the nation's unfaithfulness over the years. It certainly makes sense, as the sound of *hei* is simply an exhalation, maybe a sigh of frustration.

In order to understand an ancient language, such as Hebrew, we also need to understand the customs of the time it was spoken. Something we regularly read about in Scripture, is the word covenant. In the will of

*YAH* we will discuss this with many other words once we have finished the *alephbet*. However, we should realise that covenants that we find in Scripture were extremely honoured by the parties concerned. It was literally honoured with a person's life, therefore when *YAH* made a covenant, as He did with *Noach*, *Dawid* and *Avraham*, He was expecting that person to guard and honour it, by being willing to put his life on the line. After completing a covenant between two parties, they would sign it with their own blood, after which a bull or ox was cut in two pieces. The two halves were laid on the ground side by side and the two persons making the covenant would walk between them, literally walking "in one blood". Finally a feast was prepared for family and guests. The two parties of this covenant would now be responsible for the well-being and safety of each other, being prepared, if necessary, to avenge the death of the other. A covenant such as this was irrevocable and although it provided certain benefits, it also demanded many responsibilities.

It is therefore understandable that *Avraham* would have been shocked when *YAH* called on him, ordering the cutting of three animals (cf. *B'reisheet* 15:9-21). *YAH* made many promises of descendants and their own land where they would settle, which we find in the complete chapters of *B'reisheet* 15 to 17. At some stage during this ritual, *Avraham* heard these words:

*B'reisheet* 17 <sup>7</sup>"And I shall establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be *Elohim* to you and your seed after you.

Here the Creator of heavens and earth makes a blood covenant with mortal man, something our limited minds fail to fathom. The question arises: how is it possible for *YAH*, being Spirit, to make a blood covenant and be able to share his blood? *Avraham's* blood would be shed through the act of circumcision shortly after this event, and afterwards he is commanded to sacrifice his only true son, *Yitz'chaq*. Then, some 2 000 years later, *YAH* sends His only son, *Yeshua*, to earth. After 42 months of ministering to the lost sheep, it is time for *Yeshua* to renew this covenant by shedding his own blood on *Gulgota* (Golgotha), shortly after sharing these words with his *talmidim* at the farewell supper:

*Marqos* 14 <sup>24</sup>And He said to them, "This is My blood, that of the renewed covenant, which is shed for many.

It is possible that someone may now think that we gone totally off the beaten track, yet the letter *hei* has everything to do with the blood covenant. One of the traditions of the blood covenant was also a partial exchange of names. Some of you may recall that *Avraham's* name was changed from *Avram*, given to him by his parents. After the blood covenant, *YAH* changed his name from אַבְרָם (*Avram*) to אַבְרָהָם (*Avraham*) by adding the ה (*hei*). In similar fashion the name of his wife was changed from שָׂרַי (*Sarai*) to שָׂרָה (*Sarah*), by replacing the end of her name with ה. Here we see something very significant: *YAH* shares the two letters ה from His Name with the first couple on earth who would renounce pagan rituals, leave a pagan country and follow the way to a promised land, in complete obedience. In this way we find the favour of *YAH* displayed in a wonderful way, also teaching us that the numeric value of *hei*, which is five, indicates favour throughout Scripture. *YAH* sealed the lives of *Avraham* and *Sarah* with *hei*, similar to how *Yeshua* seals the lives of all true believers with *Ruach HaQodesh*, the breath of *YAH*:

*Ephesians* 1 <sup>13</sup>in whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the Good News of your deliverance, in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Set-apart Spirit of promise, [emphasis added]

We wish to point out here that name changes are only made by *YAH*, not by man. All Hebrew names have specific meanings, as we will discuss in future studies. The modern Pharisees, orthodox Judaism, insist on converts or proselytes, people buying themselves into Judaism, to choose a Hebrew name once they have been accepted. If your secular or pagan name was George, you would probably end up being called *Gershom*; John would certainly be changed to *Yochanan*. These, and many others, are the rules of the

Pharisees that *Yeshua* was teaching us not to accept, not to follow, since most of these guys forced it on their followers, but seldom practised it themselves:

*Mattityahu 23* <sup>3</sup>“Therefore, whatever they say to you to guard, guard and do. But do not do according to their works, for they say, and do not do.

Later during this encounter with the Pharisees, *Yeshua* really gets into both the scribes and Pharisees:

*Mattityahu 23* <sup>14</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you eat up widows’ houses, and for a show make long prayers. Because of this you shall receive greater judgment. <sup>15</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you go about the land and the sea to win one convert, and when he is won, you make him a son of *GēHinnom* twofold more than yourselves.

We promised to get back to *hei* being used not only as the definite article, but also as a prefix. Even using it as the definite article, the *hei* is never set apart from the word as in English or other languages, but forms part of the word. Looking at our earlier example, בֶּקֶר (*Bo-qer*) simply becomes הַבּוֹקֶר (*ha-Bo-qêr*), one word. However, when we consider *hei* to be the breath of *YAH*, any word prefixed in this way, would be considered to have a different character, a different individuality. Looking at the word for man, אִישׁ, it will simply translate as ‘man’ or even “a man”. When prefixing it with the definite article, it now changes from אִישׁ to הָאִישׁ, “the man”, a man made whole by the breath of *YAH* and also made in His image.

Not only can ה be used as a prefix, but by using it as a suffix, we would mainly see it as indicating a feminine noun, as mentioned before. We briefly touched on the word בְּשׂוּרָה, gospel or “good news”, even “good tidings”. This word is found regularly in the *TaNaKh*. The ה not only indicates the feminine gender, but we see its character changed by the breath of *YAH*, sending His son to bring good news to those who have an ear to hear. Smack in the middle we find the letter ו (*vav*), to be studied next week. Removing the ו, however, we get בְּשָׂרָה, which can be seen in *Sh’mu’el Bet* 4:10 and *M’lakihm Bet* 7:9, but it is still translated “good news” or “glad tidings”. We already know that ה represents the breath, even the Spirit, of *YAH*. Removing the Spirit from the good news, we end up with the word בָּשָׂר. This translates as ‘flesh’ and since man is flesh, he only becomes whole when the breath of *YAH* is added, as we saw earlier:

*B’reisheet 2* <sup>7</sup>And יְהוָה *Elohim* formed the man out of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils breath of lives. And the man became a living being.

The shape of ה is described by some sages to represent the womb, indicating the symbol of Creation and birth. Only after adding ה to the names of *Avraham* and *Sarah* was the couple able to conceive a child. Only after adding ה to man, can he be fully whole. Ladies, this goes for you as well; we will certainly not leave you out in the cold!

Looking at the spelling of the letter ה, we see הָא. We already know that א represents our Creator, while we have just learned that ה represents the Spirit, even the breath, of *YAH*. In one letter of the *alephbet*, we find the complete unity of *YAH*, His oneness, as we see:

*D’varim 6* <sup>4</sup>“Hear, O *Yisra’el*: יְהוָה our *Elohim*, יְהוָה is one!

The Hebrew for the last word, one, is אֶחָד, (*ê-Chad*). Not surprisingly, it starts with the letter א! We have a unique way of serving our Creator and consider it to be monotheistic, indicating a literal one. All religions we are warned against in Scripture to steer away from, are polytheistic religions. This is where more than one ‘deity’ is worshipped. We see this in familiar religions of the Romans, Greeks, and many other nations, where there is a specific god for every occurrence in nature, for fertility, for wars and much more. Our אֶחָד Creator, our one Creator, is not only more powerful than all those pagan gods combined, but He is the only

One Who can really comfort, provide, protect – whatever we can think of, *YAH* is capable of all of that and much more. It is therefore an abomination if we were to confess one *Elohim* and yet worship another. This includes *Yeshua*, our salvation. He is not to be worshipped and not to be prayed to in any way; that honour belongs to our אֱלֹהִים Creator only.

Before we conclude with a few words starting with or containing ה, there is another aspect we would like to cover: the mystery of *hei*. We know the numerical value of *hei* is 5; the word 'light' (אֹר - *ôr*) is mentioned five times (cf. *B'reisheet* 1:3, 4). The number five corresponds on a physical level to the number of fingers we have on each hand, also our five senses. On a spritual level we see it corresponding to the five levels of the soul:

- 🥂 *nefesh* – instincts;
- 🥂 *ruach* – emotions;
- 🥂 *neshamah* – mind;
- 🥂 *chayah* – bridge to transcendence;
- 🥂 *yechidah* – oneness.

This last word, *yechidah*, is derived from אֶחָד we've just looked at, but now we should take a look at some words where ה is prominent, even refers to joy. The first word doesn't start with ה, but actually ends with it, denoting the pleasure a believer of the Word would experience, and is רִנָּה (*ree-Nah*). The correct pronunciation is similar to the female name, Rina, with the emphasis on the last syllable. We find an excellent example, probably from the famous poet and king:

*Mizmor 126* <sup>5</sup>Those sowing in tears, shall reap with songs of joy.

The last part of this reads in Hebrew: "בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ" – *be-ri-Nah yiq-Tzô-ru*. The word picture describes a shout of joy as would be coming from the mouth of a person who is extremely happy.

Our final word has the ה in the middle, indicating that *YAH* should always be at the centre of our lives, and this is אֶהֱלֵה (*ô-Heh*). This word translates as 'tent', but can also be seen as 'tabernacle', especially being in the centre, where the heart of *YAH* is revealed. Once again we depend on our famous poet:

*Mizmor 15* <sup>1a</sup>יְהוָה, who does sojourn in Your Tent?

The original text here would read: "יְהוָה מִי יָגוּר בְּאֶהֱלָךְ".

At Creation, *YAH* made a dwelling for mankind, but only by having Him on our midst, we can reside safely in this temporary dwelling, a tent, as *Sha'ul* teaches us:

*2 Corinthians 5* <sup>1</sup>For we know that if the tent of our earthly house is destroyed, we have a building from *Elohim*, a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens.

This is another reason we should all partake in commemorating the festival of *Sucot*, as we remember the way our ancestors had lived, but await in exhilarating anticipation the shadow of what is to come: the wedding feast of the bride.

In conclusion we would like to draw your attention to the definition of ה, which is "to break", something we also notice when looking at the letter itself. It reminds us of how *Ya'aqov* was broken while wrestling with a messenger and his consequent limp. However he was also blessed, and this should get us excited, as we need to be broken from earthly habits in order to be useful in the Kingdom of *YAH*. Fortunately we also have

the consequential blessing, as did *Ya'aqov*, by not only living a purposeful life, but knowing that this blessing of *YAH's* breath fills our spirit. Live this week to honour the Creator for His blessings, thanking Him for His son, *Yeshua*, by whose blood we have been redeemed and may we now be living stones, living witnesses, wherever we go. Shalom until next week!