

May the Lord be with you: A Jewish reading of...



- The web is cluttered with tenuous links of *Star Wars* characters to Biblical Hebrew – Yoda/Yodeya, Ben Kenobi/Ben K'Navi, Jedi/Yehudi, and the Hebrew-like script on Darth Vader's breastplate.
- George Lucas is certainly not Jewish, but like many filmmakers he draws inspiration from the classic writings of faith and fable.

A. May the Force be With You

"Well, the Force is what gives a Jedi his power. It's an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together." (Obi-Wan Kenobi, IV)

1. Book of Ruth 2:4

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, **'HaShem Imachem, May the Lord be with you.'** And they answered him, **'Yevarechecha HaShem, The Lord bless you.'**

מגילת רות ב:ד

וְהִנֵּה בָּעוֹז בָּא מִבֵּית לְחָם וַיֹּאמֶר
לְקוֹצְרִים ה' עִמָּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ
יְבָרְכֶךָ ה':

2. Book of Judges 6:12-16

12. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him [Gideon], and said to him, **'HaShem Imcha, The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valour.'**
13. And Gideon said to him, 'Oh my Lord, if God is with us, why then has all this happened to us? ... 16. And God said to him, **'Eheye Imach, I will be with you,** and you shall strike the Midianites as a single man.

ספר שופטים ו:יב-טז

יב וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהֵי מְלָאָךְ ה' וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו ה'
עֲמֹךָ גִּבּוֹר הַחַל: יג וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו גִּדְעוֹן
בִּי אֲדֹנָי וַיֵּשׁ ה' עִמָּנוּ וְלָמָּה מְצַאֲתָנוּ כָּל
זֹאת... טז וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו ה' כִּי אֲהִיָּה
עִמָּךְ וְהַכִּיתִּי אֶת מִדְיָן כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד:

"Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you? Hmm? Hmm. And well you should not. For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter. You must feel the Force around you; here, between you, me, the tree, the rock, everywhere, yes. Even between the land and the ship." (Master Yoda, V)

3. **Genesis 1:27** So God created humankind in God's own image; in God's image did God create humankind; male and female, God created them.

בראשית א:כז וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם
בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר
וְנִקְבָּה בָרָא אֹתָם:

4. **Isaiah 6:3** ...Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is filled with God's Glory. [recited in *kedushah* of the *Amidah*]

ישעיה ו:ג ...קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ ה'
צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כֹל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:

B. The Dark Side

"Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." (Master Yoda, I)

5. Numbers 15:38 [tzitzit]

Speak to the people of Israel and tell them that they make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments through their generations, and that they put on the fringe corner a **thread of blue**.

במדבר טו:לח

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כַּנְּפֵי
בְּגֵדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנוּ עַל צִיצִית
הַכַּנֵּף פִּתְיֵל תְּכֵלֶת:

6. Talmud, Chullin 89a

R. Meir says. Why is blue singled out from all the colours? Because blue resembles the colour of the sea, and the sea resembles the colour of the sky, and the sky resembles the colour of sapphire, and sapphire resembles the colour of the Throne of Glory, as it says... "Looking like sapphire stone was the appearance of the throne." (Ezekiel 1:26)

רבי מאיר אומר: מה נשתנה תכלת מכל הצבעונין - מפני שתכלת דומה לים, וים דומה לרקיע, ורקיע דומה לאבן ספיר, ואבן ספיר דומה לכסא הכבוד, דכתיב... "כִּמְרָאָה אֲבֹן סַפִּיר דְמוֹת כְּסֵא" (יחזקאל א:כו).

7. Morning prayers (Shacharit, after Barchu)

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who forms light and creates darkness, who makes **and creates all things**.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל.

8. **Isaiah 45:7** - I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, **and create evil**; I, God, do all these things.

יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא רָע אֲנִי ה' עֹשֶׂה כָּל אֲשֶׁר

"This last word has been changed to 'all' to avoid speaking evil in the context of prayer. The verse is directed against dualism: the perennial temptation to see in the suffering of the world, a force (evil, darkness, the devil) independent of, and opposed to, God... So profoundly did Judaism reject this idea, that it placed this counter-affirmation at the beginning of our collective prayers." (commentary of Rabbi Sacks in Siddur)

C. Truth and Myth: A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away...

Hans Solo 1977 (Episode IV):

“Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid... I've flown from one side of this galaxy to the other, and I've seen a lot of strange stuff, but I've never seen anything to make me believe that there's one all-powerful Force controlling everything. Cos no mystical energy field controls my destiny. It's all a lot of simple tricks and nonsense.”

Han Solo 2015 (Episode VII):

I... thought it was a bunch of mumbo-jumbo. A magical power holding together good and evil, the dark side and the light?! Crazy thing is... it's true. The Force. The Jedi... All of it... It's all true.

Rey: [whispers] Luke Skywalker? I thought he was a myth.



Nostalgic Fundamentalism (VII):

Han Solo: Take off that mask. You don't need it.

Kylo Ren: What do you think you'll see if I do?

Han Solo: The face of my son.

Kylo Ren: Your son is gone. He was weak and foolish like his father, so I destroyed him.

D. Ahch-To is Eden...

A remote island surrounded by water.
A Tree Temple holding the balance of Good & Evil...
Of course, it's I the Garden of Eden!

“Breathe, just breathe, now reach out.” (Luke, VIII)

“It's so much bigger...” (Luke, VIII)



9. Genesis 2:7-9

(7) And the Lord God formed Man of the dust of the ground, **and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and man became a living soul. (8) And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (9) And out of the ground made the Lord God every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and **the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil**. 10. And a river went out from Eden **to water the garden**; and from there it was divided and became four rivers.

ז וַיִּצְרָה ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה: ח וַיִּטֵּעַ ה' אֱלֹקִים גֶּן בְּעֵדֶן מִקְדָּם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר: ט וַיִּצְמַח ה' אֱלֹקִים מִן הָאֲדָמָה כָּל עֵץ נְחֻמָּד לְמַרְאֵה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ הָגֶן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע: י וַיְנַהֵר יְצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת הָגֶן וּמִשָּׁם יִפְרָד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבָּעָה נְהָרוֹת:



Starbird logo of the Rebel Alliance is similar to the LifeTree Temple in Ahch-To/Eden.
That may be its origin... It's the Etz HaChayim!

E. Yetzer Ha'Rah – The Evil Inclination

"When I found you, I saw raw, untamed power... and beyond that, something truly special." (Snoko, VIII)

"I've seen this raw strength only once before in Ben Solo. It didn't scare me enough then. It does now." (Luke, VIII)



10. Midrash Genesis Rabbah 61

R. Nachman... taught: Why is the word *Va-yitzer* ["God formed Adam"] (Genesis 2:17) spelled with two *yuds*? Because the Holy One created two *yetzers* ("impulses") in people—the impulse to good and the impulse to evil.

11. Midrash Genesis Rabbah 9

R. Shmuel, the son of Nachman, said: The words "*Behold, it was good*" [mentioned on each day of Creation] refer to the impulse to good, and the words "*Behold, it was very good*" (Genesis 1:31) refer to the impulse to evil. But how can the impulse to evil be termed "very good"? Because Scripture teaches that **were it not for the impulse to evil, a man would not build a house, take a wife, beget children, or engage in commerce.** All such activities come, as King Solomon noted, "*from a man's rivalry with his neighbour*" (Ecclesiastes 4:4).

12. Mishnah – Berachot 9:5

"You should love God with all your heart" (Deut. 6:5) - i.e. with your two inclinations, good *and* bad inclination.

13. Babylonian Talmud: Sukah 52a

R. Yehuda, son of Ilai, taught: In the Time-to-Come, God will bring the *Yetzer Ha'Rah* and slaughter it in the presence of both the righteous and the wicked. To the righteous, it will have the appearance of a towering mountain; and to the wicked, it will have the appearance of a strand of hair. These will weep, and those will weep. The righteous will weep, saying, '**How were we able to cope with such a towering mountain?**' The wicked will weep, saying, '**How we were unable to cope with a mere strand of hair?**' And God will also marvel with them...

14. Talmud: Avot d'Rabi Natan 16

Rabbi Shimon, the son of Eleazar, said: The impulse to evil resembles a piece of iron cast into the flame. **As long as it is in the flame, one can make of it any vessel desired.** So it is with the impulse to evil: there is no way of refining it except by words of Torah, which are like fire.

F. The Power of Eden – Elijah's Home

15. Talmud - Ta'anit 10a

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: The whole world drinks from the surplus of Gan Eden, as it says, "*And a river flowed out of Eden...*" (Gen. 2:10)...

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל העולם כולו מתמצית גן עדן הוא שותה, שנאמר (בראשית ב') ונהר יוצא מעדן וגו'.

16. Midrash - Derech Eretz Zuta 1

Nine people entered *Gan Eden* in their lifetimes: Chanoch, Eliezer servant of Avraham, Eliyahu, Mashiach, Chiram the king of Tzur, Eved the king of Kushi, Yaavetz the son of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, Batya the daughter of Pharaoh and Serach the daughter of Asher (Yaakov's granddaughter) ...

תשעה נכנסו בחייהם בגן עדן. ואלו הן: חנוך בן ירד, ואלהו, ומשיח, ואליעזר עבד אברהם, וחירם מלך צור, ועבד מלך הכושי, ויעבץ בנו של רבי יהודה הנשיא, ובתיה בת פרעה, וסרח בת אשר.

17. Talmud - Bava Metzia 114b

Elijah led Rabbah b. Abbuha into Paradise and said: Remove your robe and collect some of these leaves. So, he gathered them and carried them off. As he left, he heard a comment, 'Who would so consume his portion in the World to Come as Rabbah b. Abbuha has done?' So he scattered and threw them away. Yet even so, since he had carried them in his robe, it had absorbed their fragrance, and so he sold it for 12,000 denarii, which he distributed among his sons-in-law.

דבריה ועייליה לגן עדן, אמר ליה: פשוט גלימך, שפי שקול מהני טרפי. ספא שקל. כי הוה נפיק שמע דקאמר: מאן קא אכיל לעלמיה כרבה בר אבוה נפץ שדנהו. אפילו הכי, אתייה לגלימיה, סחט גלימא ריחא, זבניה בתריסר אלפי דינרי, פלגינהו לחתנוותיה.

NOTE: Snoko is *wrong* about everything:

"You think you can turn him. Pathetic child. I cannot be betrayed. I cannot be beaten. I see his mind. I see his every intent.

Yes. I see him turning the lightsaber to strike true.

And now, foolish child, he ignites it and kills his true enemy!" (Snoko, VIII)

- [But Kylo makes Rey's lightsaber ignite and cut Snoko in half]



NOTE: So Snoko is also lying when he says that it was he who enabled Rey and Kylo Ren to communicate.

It wasn't Snoko at all! It's because Rey was in Ahch-To/Eden at the time. It's the power of the fragrance of Eden.

And Eden is a Garden of Time, connected everywhere and every time. [See Daniel 2:8-9 Eden is Aramaic for time – עֲדָנָא] That's how Luke can travel too, without leaving...

G. Is it all worth it? *"I only know one truth - It's time for the Jedi to end."* (Luke to Rey, VIII)

18. Talmud, Yoma 69b

"And [the People] cried with a great voice to the Lord, their God." (Nehemiah 9:4) - What did they cry? Rav, and some say R. Yochanan, said: Woe, woe, it is 'he's [the Yetzer HaRa – the Desire for Evil] who has destroyed the Sanctuary, burnt the Temple, killed all the righteous, driven all Israel into exile, and is still dancing around among us! You have surely given him to us so that we may receive reward through him. **We want neither him, nor reward through him!** Thereupon a tablet fell down from heaven for them, whereupon the word **'True!'** was inscribed. R. Chanina said: One may learn from this that the seal of the Holy One, blessed be God, is truth.

They ordered a fast of three days and three nights, whereupon he [the Yetzer HaRa] was surrendered to them. He came forth from the Holy of Holies like a young fiery lion. Thereupon the Prophet said to Israel: This is the evil desire of idolatry... As they took hold of him a hair of his mane fell out, he raised his voice and the sound reached 400 parasangs. Thereupon they said: How shall we act? Perhaps, God forbid, they might have mercy upon him from heaven! The prophet said to them: Cast him into a leaden pot, closing its opening with lead. Because lead absorbs the voice...

They said, Since this is a time of Grace, let us pray for mercy for the Yetzer HaRa (Desire for Evil). They prayed for mercy, and he was handed over to them. The prophet said to them: Realize that if you kill him, the world goes down. They imprisoned him for three days, then looked in the whole land of Israel for a fresh egg and could not find it. Thereupon they said: What shall we do now? Shall we kill him? The world would then go down. Shall we pray for half? Heaven does not grant halves. So they put out gouged out his eyes and let him go. It helped in as much as no more entices people to commit incest...

"The Empire, your parents, the Resistance, the Sith, the Jedi... let the past die. Kill it, if you have to. That's the only way to become what you are meant to be." (Kylo Ren to Rey, VIII)

H. The End

"Be with me, be with me, be with me." (Rey, IX)



"I am all the Sith" (Palpatine, IX); "And I am all the Jedi" (Rey, IX)

19. Kings 1 8:57 (Part of Selichot and Yom Kippur prayer called Shema Koleinu) [c.f. Judges 6:16]

The Lord our God be with us,
as God was with our fathers;
let God not leave us,
nor forsake us;

יְהי ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ עִמָּנוּ
כְּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
אֵל יִעֲזָבֵנוּ
וְאֵל יִטְשֵׁנוּ :

