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The Significance of the [Number](nchart.html) Eighteen

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine the significance of the [number](nchart.html) eighteen (18).

According to the gematria, the Rabbinic system of numerical symbolism, each [letter](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) alphabet represents a [number](nchart.html). The word *chai* - חי meaning *life* consists of [two](two.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html) het - ח equivalent to the [number](nchart.html) [eight](eight.html), and yud - י equivalent to the [number](nchart.html) [ten](ten.html) which together add up to 18.

ח – 8

י - 10

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Total = 18

The main thing that we can learn from 18, *Chai*, is the fulfillment of Torah and [commandments](cmds613.html)([*mitzvot*](cmds613.html)), as in the verse:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 18:5*** *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them (*[*mitzvot*](cmds613.html)*): I* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

**Eighteen means your performance, the full extension. Eighteen is life!**

Eighteen represents a basic structure of life.

# [Matza](chametz.html) and Eighteen

Both bread and [Matza](chametz.html) are flour mixed with water, then kneaded into a dough and baked. What is the difference between them? The difference is that bread dough has sat unattended for eighteen minutes and becomes [leavened](chametz.html) (bread). The [Matza](chametz.html) which we [eat](eating.html) on [Passover](passover.html) has been baked quickly.

Eighteen is the amount of [time](time.html) it takes to turn [*matza*](chametz.html)dough into [*chametz*](chametz.html) ([leaven](chametz.html)). It is the difference between being cut off from the those who live (keret), during [Pesach](passover.html), and those who actually live.

The spelling of “[Matza](chametz.html)” is similar to “[mitzva](cmds613.html):” Just as we shouldn’t delay in the making of [Matza](chametz.html), so too we shouldn’t procrastinate in performing a [mitzva](cmds613.html). The lesson of [Matza](chametz.html) is to seize the moment. Delaying even [one](one.html) second can mean the difference between an opportunity gained or lost.

Why eighteen minutes? Because the [number](nchart.html) eighteen is the numerical value of “Chai,” meaning “life.” They say that “baseball is a game of inches”. Actually, life itself is a game of seconds. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells of people who had sunk to the depths of humanity, and then in [one](one.html) moment of [insight](insights.html) reversed their lives for all eternity. More than just the difference between [Matza](chametz.html) and bread, the [Seder](haggada.html) [teaches](teacher.html) us the difference between life and death.

# Eighteen In Our [Prayers](prayer.html)

Eighteen is the [number](nchart.html) of times [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [name](name.html) is mentioned in [*shema*](shema.html)*[[1]](#footnote-1)*. When we declare the unity of [HaShem](hashem.html) we are connecting to The Source of life.

The [number](nchart.html) eighteen is prominent in the eighteen blessings of the Shemone Esreh. The Shemone Esreh is called The [Prayer](prayer.html), The [standing](mashal.html) [prayer](prayer.html). It is the quintessential service of life. We live to serve [HaShem](hashem.html).

The [number](nchart.html) eighteen is prominent in the song sung by the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People after the splitting of the [Red Sea](stages.html) ([Exodus](exodus.html) 15:1-19).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***B’Midbar Rabba to*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***2:1-34*** *AND THE LORD* [*SPOKE*](mashal.html) *UNTO MOSES AND UNTO AARON, SAYING (Num. II, 1). In eighteen passages you find Moses and Aaron placed on an equal footing (i.e. the divine communication was made to both alike); to this the Eighteen Benedictions correspond (the reason, was that Moses and Aaron were both instruments of Israel’s deliverance, which would not have been effected without their* [*prayers*](prayer.html)*, hence the daily* [*Prayer*](prayer.html) *was likewise divided into Eighteen Benedictions.). From the* [*three*](three.html) *Patriarchs you derive the fixed ritual of* [*praying*](prayer.html)[*three*](three.html) *times a day.* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *instituted morning* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, as it is said, And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood, etc. (Gen. XIX, 27), and ‘*[*standing*](mashal.html)*’ signifies* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, as it is said, Then stood up Phinehas, and* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *[English Version: ‘wrought judgment’] (Ps. CVI, 30).* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *instituted afternoon* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, as it is said, And* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *went out to meditate in the* [*field*](field.html) *at eventide (Gen. XXIV, 63), and ‘meditation’ signifies* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*; as it is said, A* [*prayer*](prayer.html) *of the afflicted, when he faints, and pours out his meditation (E.V.: complaint) before the Lord (Ps. CII, I).* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *instituted evening* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, as it is said, And he lighted (wayyifga’) upon the place, etc. (Gen. XXVIII, 11), and pegi’ah signifies* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*, as it is said, Therefore* [*pray*](prayer.html) *not you for this people ... neither make intercession (tifga’ - all* [*three*](three.html) *are from the root paga’) to Me (Jer. VII, 16). In eighteen passages Moses and Aaron are conjoined, thus giving a hint for the Eighteen Benedictions which correspond to the eighteen references to the Divine* [*Name*](name.html) *occurring in the* [*shema*](shema.html)*’ and in [the* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *commencing,] A* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *of David: Ascribe unto the Lord, O you sons of might (Ps. XXIX, 1). The* [*three*](three.html) *Patriarchs, then, introduced the custom of* [*praying*](prayer.html)[*three*](three.html) *times a day, while from Moses and Aaron and from the above-mentioned references to the Divine* [*Name*](name.html) *we infer that eighteen benedictions [must be said].*

Chazal instituted Eighteen Benedictions of the [Prayer](prayer.html) (the Tefillah), corresponding to the Eighteen mentions [of the divine [Name](name.html)] in the Reading of the [Shema](shema.html), and also in [the [Psalm](psalms1.html)], Ascribe to the Lord, O you sons of might ([Psalm](psalms1.html) 29):

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 29:1*** *<<A* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *of David.>> Give unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, O ye mighty, give unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *glory and strength. 2 Give unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *the glory due unto his* [*name*](name.html)*; worship* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in the beauty of holiness. 3 The voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth:* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is upon many waters. 4 The voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is powerful; the voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is full of majesty. 5 The voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *breaketh the cedars; yea,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. 6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. 7 The voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *divideth the flames of* [*fire*](fire.html)*. 8 The voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shaketh the wilderness;* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shaketh the wilderness of* [*Kadesh*](stages.html)*. 9 The voice of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his* [*temple*](temple.html) *doth every* [*one*](one.html)[*speak*](mashal.html) *of his glory. 10* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sitteth upon the flood; yea,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *sitteth King for ever. 11* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will give strength unto his people;* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will bless his people with peace.*

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-Said R. Hiyya b. Abba: [The eighteen times ‘[command](cmds613.html)’ are counted] only from “And with him was Oholiav, the son of Ahisamach of the [tribe](tribes.html) of Dan.” ([Exodus](exodus.html) 38:23) until the end of the Book.

The phrase “as [HaShem](hashem.html) had commanded Moses,” appears eighteen times in Torah portion Pekudei. The [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[2]](#footnote-2) asks the following question: Why do we say eighteen blessings in the daily *Shemoneh Esrei* [prayer](prayer.html)? Some of the answers the [Talmud](orallaw.html) records are as follows: “Rabbi Shimon says that the eighteen blessings correspond to the eighteen discs in [one](one.html)’s spinal chord. Rabbi Chaninah says in the [name](name.html) of Rabbi Pinchas that the eighteen blessings correspond to the eighteen times that our forefathers ([Abraham](avraham.html), [Isaac](isaac.html), and [Jacob](israelja.html)) are mentioned together in the Torah. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani says in the [name](name.html) of Rabbi Yochanan that the eighteen blessings correspond to the eighteen times the phrase ‘as [HaShem](hashem.html) had commanded Moses’ appears in the Torah portion of Pekudei.”

All of the reasons mentioned above can be combined into [one](one.html) central idea: [One](one.html) of the things that differentiates man from animal is the fact that he is able to [walk](walking.html) upright, that he has a spine full of vertebrae. The mark of someone who is a *ba’al ga’ava*, a haughty person, is that he walks with a straight spine, upright, in a way which shows that he feels greater than everyone else. A humble person, however, tends to [walk](walking.html) more bent over, in a submissive manner, realizing his lowliness in comparison to his Creator.

[One](one.html) foundation of [prayer](prayer.html) is for us to realize that we are totally subjugated to [HaShem](hashem.html); only He can give us what we need and has given us what we have. [Three](three.html) times a day during our recital of the *Shemoneh Esrei* [prayer](prayer.html) we bow to [HaShem](hashem.html) as we say the words “*Baruch ata* -- blessed are you.” We then stand upright when we say “[*HaShem*](hashem.html)”, recognizing the blessing [HaShem](hashem.html) provides man by straightening the bent. A [Jewish](gen-jew.html) king is required to recite the entire *Shemoneh Esrei* [prayer](prayer.html) while on his knees, to show himself and the entire [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people that even the king is totally subjugated and dependent on [HaShem](hashem.html).

Another foundation of [prayer](prayer.html) is *zechut avot*, the [merit](merit.html) of our righteous forefathers: [Abraham](avraham.html), [Isaac](isaac.html), and [Jacob](israelja.html). Their deeds and self-[sacrifice](korbanot.html) are the only reason we have the opportunity to stand before [HaShem](hashem.html). Without them, we would be like any other [nation](nations.html), devoid of the special relationship our forefathers achieved to connect to the Infinite.

The central idea which [connects](connection.html) the reasons of the bent spine and our forefathers’ righteousness can be found in the [third](three.html) reason mentioned above as to why we recite eighteen blessings in the daily *Shemoneh Esrei*: “as [HaShem](hashem.html) had commanded Moses,” the phrase which is repeated eighteen times in this week’s Torah portion. Moses did just as [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded him, and so did our forefathers. We, too, because of their [merit](merit.html), are able to serve [HaShem](hashem.html) by bowing our spine and subjugating ourselves to His will, as we do every [time](time.html) we recite the *Shemoneh Esrei* [prayer](prayer.html).

***Berachoth 28b***[*GEMARA*](orallaw.html)*: On what are these “Eighteen Blessings” based? Rabbi Hillel the son of Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nachmani says that they’re indicated by the eighteen times the* [*name*](name.html) *of God is mentioned in* [*Psalm*](psalms1.html) *29, “Bring to God, you sons of the mighty”. Rabbi* [*Joseph*](joseph.html) *bases it on the eighteen times God’s* [*name*](name.html) *is mentioned in the* [*Shema*](shema.html)*. Rabbi Tanchum said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levy that the eighteen blessings correspond to the eighteen major vertebrae in the human spine.*

Many attempts to uncover the underlying structure of the [Amida](amida.html) are predicated on the significance of the [number](nchart.html) eighteen in the “Eighteen Blessings.” These attempts include the drawing of correlations between the eighteen blessings and the eighteen vertebrae of the spine, eighteen matters of the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html), eighteen pivotal [events](feasts.html) in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) history, or eighteen select biblical texts. R. Saadya Gaon came up with [twelve](twelve.html) different reasons for this [number](nchart.html) of blessings.

**3)** [**THREE**](three.html) **REASONS FOR THE EIGHTEEN BLESSINGS OF SHEMONEH ESREH**

**QUESTION:** The [Gemara](orallaw.html) describes [three](three.html) reasons why the Hakhamim instituted eighteen blessings in the Shemoneh Esreh.

(a) They correspond to the eighteen times that the [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) is mentioned in Tehilim 29.

(b) They correspond to the eighteen times that the [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) is mentioned in the [three](three.html) paragraphs of [Shema](shema.html).

(c) They correspond to the eighteen vertebrae of the spine. Is there anything common to these [three](three.html) groups of eighteen?

**ANSWER:** The **SEFER HA’IKRIM** (1:5) says that the [three](three.html) main tenets of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) belief are that

(a) [HaShem](hashem.html) created the [world](worlds.html);

(b) [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the Torah and commanded us to follow the [Mitzvot](cmds613.html);

(c) [HaShem](hashem.html) sees and knows all of man’s actions and will reward and punish appropriately in the [World](futures.html) to Come.

It could be that these [three](three.html) tenets are included in the Shemone Esreh according to the [three](three.html) reasons given for why the Hakhamim instituted eighteen blessings.

(a) The verses of [Shema](shema.html) declare [HaShem](hashem.html) as the [One](one.html) and Only Creator.

(b) Tehilim 29 describes the [events](feasts.html) of the giving of the Torah, and therefore represents our belief that [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the Torah .

(c) The spine represents the [knowledge](knowledge.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) sees all of our actions, because the spine is the part of the central nervous system that directs every action and movement that a person makes, which are being watched by [HaShem](hashem.html). In addition, [HaShem](hashem.html) will take [one](one.html) vertebrae from the spine and rebuild the [body](body.html) from it at the [time](time.html) of the [resurrection](techiyat.html). The spine therefore alludes to the belief that [HaShem](hashem.html) will give [eternal life](eternal.html) to those who follow His ways[[3]](#footnote-3).

These [three](three.html) illustrations appear to correspond to the [three](three.html) parts of man’s Soul; the vertebrae [Nefesh - [physicality](physical.html)]; the Keri’at [Shema](shema.html) [Ru’ach - Spirit, with which we praise [HaShem](hashem.html)]; “Havu la’Shashem B’nei Eilim” (which refers to Matan Torah) [Neshamah - the most [spiritual](physical.html) of the [three](three.html) Souls]. This [teaches](teacher.html) us that, when we stand before [HaShem](hashem.html), we must [pray](prayer.html) to him at all [three](three.html) levels.

The Hallel and Eighteen

***Ta’anith 28b*** *R. Johanan said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Simeon ben Jehozadok: “Eighteen times during the year an individual may recite the whole Hallel, and they are:*

*On the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days of the* [*Feast of Tabernacles*](succoth.html)*,*

*on the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days of the Feast of Dedication (*[*Chanukah*](chanukah.html)*),*

*on the* [*first*](one.html) *day of the* [*Passover*](passover.html)*, and*

*on the day of* [*Pentecost*](shavuot.html)*.*

*While in* [*exile*](galuyot.html)*, however,* [*one*](one.html) *may recite it* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*one*](one.html) *times during the year, namely: On the* [*nine*](nine.html) *days of the* [*festival*](festival.html) *of* [*Tabernacles*](succoth.html)*, on the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days of* [*Chanukah*](chanukah.html)*, on the* [*first*](one.html)[*two*](two.html) *days of* [*Passover*](passover.html)*, and on the* [*two*](two.html) *days of* [*Pentecost*](shavuot.html)*.”*

# Eighteen in the [Mishkan](mikdash.html)

If we would list the materials for the [offering](korbanot) for the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), there would be eighteen different items:

***Shemot (***[***exodus***](exodus.html)***) 25:1-7*** *And this [is] the* [*offering*](korbanot) *which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ [*[*hair*](hair.html)*], And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and* [*shittim*](stages.html) *wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.*

Said R. Samuel b. Nachman in the [name](name.html) of R. Nathan: Eighteen times is [‘As the Lord did] [command](cmds613.html)’ written in the section of the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html): [Exodus](exodus.html) 37:22; [Exodus](exodus.html) 38:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43; [Exodus](exodus.html) 40: 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

The Ba’al HaTurim[[4]](#footnote-4) points out the seemingly redundant repetition of the phrase, “As [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded Moshe” after each item for the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was constructed. He explains that as a reward for Moshe’s pleading for the [Jews](gen-jew.html) after the [sin](sin.html) of the Golden Calf, when he said, “Please erase me from your book”, [HaShem](hashem.html) constantly repeats Moshe’s [name](name.html) in this portion. The Ba’al HaTurim notes further that the phrase “As [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded Moshe” appears eighteen times in this portion, corresponding to the eighteen blessings of the weekday [Amida](amida.html). The phrase, “As [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded, so they did” appears once, and corresponds to the additional nineteenth blessing against heretics. How are these [three](three.html) ideas - Moshe’s pleading, the [Amida](amida.html), and the construction of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) - related?

The Torah repeats the phrase, “As [HaShem](hashem.html) commanded Moshe” eighteen times, to show that the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was constructed with the same selflessness which Moshe embodied. The only purpose was to fulfill the will of [HaShem](hashem.html). Similarly, in [prayer](prayer.html), we should strive for this commitment to serving [HaShem](hashem.html). We do not make requests of [HaShem](hashem.html) for our own pleasure, but so that we will be better able to perform the will of our Creator.

Oftentimes a good way to get to [know](daat.html) someone or something is to investigate its [name](name.html). The [Gemara](orallaw.html) jumps in to do just that. Rabbi Hillel the son of Rabbi Shmuel notices that the Divine [name](name.html) is mentioned eighteen times in the 29th [Psalm](psalms1.html), most often related to Kaballat [Shabbat](sabbath.html) (Welcoming the [Sabbath](sabbath.html)) and reading to Torah. In other words, he’s telling us that our daily [prayer](prayer.html) corresponds on a very deep level to both the [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and to the Torah. Rav [Yosef](joseph.html) brings us a [new](new.html) [connection](connection.html), this [time](time.html) with the [Shema](shema.html) which also contains eighteen repetitions of the Divine [Name](name.html). The [Shema](shema.html), as we already [know](daat.html), is the central declaration of the Unity of All. Thus in this [prayer](prayer.html) we approach all that there is which is now further linked with the realm of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and with the Torah.

# Eighteen In The [Body](body.html)

Rabbi Tanchum, in the [name](name.html) of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levy, points out another occurrence of “eighteen” in the primary vertebrae as seen in medieval anatomy (in fact there are additional cervical and tail vertebrae, but the largest set actually does contain eighteen!). The spine! The structure that stands us upright, makes us, in a certain way, human. The spine also represents the vav in the Divine [Name](name.html), the connector between the upper and the lower realms. The [prayer](prayer.html) of Eighteen engages us in the ultimate service of life: Bowing to [HaShem](hashem.html) in [prayer](prayer.html).

The spine represents the [knowledge](knowledge.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) sees all of our actions, because the spine is the part of the central nervous system that directs every action and movement that a person makes, which are being watched by [HaShem](hashem.html). In addition, [HaShem](hashem.html) will take [one](one.html) vertebrae (the luz bone) from the spine and rebuild the [body](body.html) from it at the [time](time.html) of the [resurrection](techiyat.html). The spine therefore alludes to the belief that [HaShem](hashem.html) will give [eternal life](eternal.html) to those who follow His ways.

[***Zohar***](orallaw.html) ***821*** *Lulav is Righteous* [*One*](one.html)*, NAMELY, YESOD, for the Lulav is like the spinal chord that contains eighteen vertebrae, corresponding to the eighteen shaking movements with the Lulav. And they correspond to the eighteen blessings of the* [*Amidah*](amida.html)[*prayer*](prayer.html)*, and they correspond to the eighteen mentions, NAMELY, THE NAMES OF YUD HEI VAV HEI, in “Ascribe to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, O you mighty” (Tehilim 29:1), and the eighteen times that the Divine* [*Name*](name.html) *is mentioned in the recital of the Sh’ma. And the Lulav is shaken in* [*six*](six.html) *directions: SOUTH, NORTH,* [*EAST*](east.html)*, UP, DOWN AND WEST, which makes* [*six*](six.html)*, and it is shaken* [*three*](three.html) *times in each direction, MAKING a total of eighteen.*

# Eighteen and the Menorah

Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 1:1 has eighteen words in [Hebrew](hebrew.html). These resonate with the fact that the Menorah was to be eighteen handbreadths in height:

***Menachoth 28b*** *Samuel said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of an old scholar, The height of the candlestick was eighteen handbreadths:* [*three*](three.html) *handbreadths for the base and the* [*flower*](flower.html) *upon it,* [*two*](two.html) *handbreadths plain,* [*one*](one.html) *handbreadth for cup, knop and* [*flower*](flower.html)*, again* [*two*](two.html) *handbreadths plain,* [*one*](one.html) *handbreadth for a knop out of which* [*two*](two.html) *branches come forth,* [*one*](one.html) *on each side, extending and rising to the same height as the candlestick, then* [*one*](one.html) *handbreadth plain,* [*one*](one.html) *handbreadth for a knop out of which* [*two*](two.html) *branches come forth,* [*one*](one.html) *on each side, extending and rising to the same height as the candlestick, then again* [*one*](one.html) *handbreadth plain, and* [*one*](one.html) *handbreadth for a knop out of which* [*two*](two.html) *branches come forth,* [*one*](one.html) *on each side, extending and rising to the same height as the candlestick, and then* [*two*](two.html) *handbreadths plain; there now remained* [*three*](three.html) *handbreadths, in which space were* [*three*](three.html) *cups, a knop and a* [*flower*](flower.html)*.*

The same may be learned from the cleansing procedure. The cleaning could have been done without recourse to a set of steps, because the Menorah was only eighteen *tefachim* (approximately [five](five.html) and [one](one.html)-quarter [feet](heel.html)) high. If we could rely on presumptions and evaluations, a cleaning done from ground level would allow us to confidently say the Menorah is perfectly [clean](purity.html) and ready. But we may not rely on anything, and we must [know](daat.html) absolutely, by looking *downwards into* the lamps, that they are perfectly [clean](purity.html) and ready. Similarly, when we [teach](teacher.html) others to avoid [sin](sin.html) and develop good character traits, we must do so fastidiously and with perfectionism.

# [Marriage](mashal.html) At Eighteen

The [Mishna](orallaw.html) indicates that 18 is the age for [marriage](mashal.html):

*Pirkei Avot 5:21*

At [five](five.html) [[one](one.html) begins the [study](study.html) of] the Bible.

At [ten](ten.html) the *Mishnah*. At [thirteen](thirteen.html) [[one](one.html) takes on] the [responsibility for] the [*mitzvot*](cmds613.html).

At [fifteen](fifteen.html) [[one](one.html) begins the [study](study.html) of] the [Talmud](orallaw.html).

At eighteen [[one](one.html) is ready for] [marriage](mashal.html).

At [twenty](twenty.html) to pursue [a livelihood].

At [thirty](thirty.html) [[one](one.html) attains full] strength.

At [forty](forty.html) [[one](one.html) gains] understanding.

At fifty [[one](one.html) gives] counsel.

At sixty [[one](one.html) reaches] old age.

At [seventy](seventy.html) [[one](one.html) reaches] the fullness of age.

At eighty [[one](one.html) reaches] strong old age.

At ninety [[one](one.html) is] bent.

And at [one](one.html) hundred, it is as if [one](one.html) had already died and passed from the [world](worlds.html)”.

Thus at eighteen we are ready to marry and beget life.

\* \* \*

18 [laws](law.html) of *treife* were [taught](teacher.html) to Moshe

Lag BaOmer is the 18th of [Iyar](feasts.html).

[Shabbat](sabbath.html) candles are lit and a blessing is recited no later than eighteen minutes before sunset.

An old tradition maintains that in every [generation](toldot.html), there are [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) hidden righteous people ([two](two.html) times eighteen) for whom the [world](worlds.html) continues.

***Zevachim 88b*** *Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: The robe [me’il] was entirely of blue, as it is said, And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. How were its skirts [made]? Blue [wool], purple wool and crimson thread, twisted together, were brought, and manufactured into the shape of pomegranates whose* [*mouths*](body.html) *were not yet opened and in the shape of the cones of the helmets on children’s heads.* [*Seventy*](seventy.html)[*two*](two.html) *bells containing* [*seventy*](seventy.html)[*two*](two.html) *clappers were brought and hung thereon,* [*thirty*](thirty.html)[*six*](six.html) *on each side. R. Dosa said on the* [*authority*](authority.html) *of Rabbi Judah: There were* [*thirty*](thirty.html)[*six*](six.html)*, eighteen on each side.*

# King Solomon and the [Messiah](mashiach.html).

The involvement with the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html), their wisdom and their art, requires extreme caution. King Solomon’s [desire](needs.html) or “passion”[[5]](#footnote-5) to rectify worldly art and science—his attraction to the culture and aesthetic of the [nations](nations.html)—so overtook that it adversely affected his devoted obedience to the [law](law.html) of the Torah. The Torah permits a king to marry eighteen wives; in attempt to elevate all of the beauty and wisdom unrectified of the [nations](nations.html) (embodied in the princess of each [nation](nations.html)) King Solomon married a thousand wives: “King Solomon loved many foreign women, and he had many wives, that numbered [seven](seven.html) hundred, and [three](three.html) hundred concubines.[[6]](#footnote-6)

***Sanhedrin 21a*** *Whence do we deduce the* [*number*](nchart.html) *eighteen? — From the verse, And unto David were sons born in* [*Hebron*](city.html)*; and his* [*first*](one.html)*-born was Ammon of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Chileab of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; the* [*third*](three.html) *Absalom the son of Maacah; and the* [*fourth*](four.html)*, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the* [*fifth*](five.html)*, Shefatiah the son of Abital; and the* [*sixth*](six.html)*, Ithream of Eglah, David’s wife. These were born to David in* [*Hebron*](city.html)*. And of them the Prophet said: And if that were too little, then would I add unto thee the like of these, [Ka-hennah] and the like of these, [we-kahennah], each ‘kahennah’ implying* [*six*](six.html)*, which, with the original* [*six*](six.html)*, makes eighteen in all.*

\* \* \*

**V. I. S.** **Zuri**, *op. cit*., Part I, Bk. 3, pp. 19-27 on the significance of [numbers](nchart.html). He maintains that eighteen is often used symbolically to denote a large [number](nchart.html).

A [Sabbath](sabbath.html) day’s [journey](stages.html) is [two](two.html) thousand cubits. This is generally regarded as an eighteen minutes’ [walk](walking.html).

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***18a*** *The Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: There was a family in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *the members of which used to die at the age of eighteen. They came and told Rabban Johanan b. Zaccai. He said to them, Perhaps you are of the family of Eli, to whom it was said, and all the increase of thy house shall die young men. Go and* [*study*](study.html) *the Torah and you may live. They went and* [*studied*](study.html) *the Torah and lived, and they used to call that family the family of Rabban Johanan after his* [*name*](name.html)*.*

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***20b*** *R. Zera said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Nahman: The* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *is invisible for* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *hours [round about* [*new*](new.html)[*moon*](chodesh.html)*]. For us [in* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*]* [*six*](six.html) *of these belong to the old* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *and eighteen to the* [*new*](new.html)*; for them [in Palestine]* [*six*](six.html) *to the* [*new*](new.html) *and eighteen to the old. What is the practical value of this remark? — R. Ashi said: To confute the witnesses.*

***Yoma 9a*** *‘The* [*fear*](fear.html) *of the Lord prolongeth days’ refers to the* [*first*](one.html)[*Sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*, which remained* [*standing*](mashal.html) *for* [*four*](four.html) *hundred and* [*ten*](ten.html) *years and in which there served only eighteen* [*high priest*](priests.html)*s. ‘But the years of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *shall be shortened’ refers to the second* [*Sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*, which abided for* [*four*](four.html) *hundred and* [*twenty*](twenty.html) *years and at which more than* [*three*](three.html) *hundred [high]* [*priests*](priests.html) *served . Take off therefrom the* [*forty*](forty.html) *years which Simeon the Righteous served, eighty years which Johanan the* [*high priest*](priests.html) *served,* [*ten*](ten.html)*, which Ishmael b. Fabi served, or, as some say, the* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *years of R. Eleazar b. Harsum. Count [the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of* [*high priest*](priests.html)*s] from then on and you will find that none of them completed his year [in office].*

\* \* \*

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1. Berachot 28b [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Yerushalmi Tractate Berachot 4:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. M. Kornfeld [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. commentary on Exodus 40: 33 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 1 *Kings* 9:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *ibid*. 11:1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)