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The Significance of the Number Eleven

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# Introduction

In this study I would like to understand the significance of the number eleven.

Eleven refers to the conveyance of the Divine light which transcends the limits of the [world](worlds.html) within the limits of the world.

“The world was created with [ten](ten.html) utterances.” Eleven, thus, refers to a level above the limits of that set. Nevertheless, since it is also a number which follows in sequence to ten, we can understand that it refers to the fusion between the transcendent Divine light and the framework of limited worldly existence.

Eleven indicates an excess, a spillage, an over-doing or wasting of divine energy. According to the Arizal.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In general, when it comes to Torah, numbers are always significant and they are the tellers of the stories behind the stories. In the [ketoret](ketoret.html) (incense), it is the number that is perhaps one of the most telling factors of the ketoret itself. There were ten fragrant spices in the ketoret, the incense, and one foul smelling spice (Chelbenah-galbanum).

***Shemot (Exodus) 30:34-36*** *balsam, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense*

The Rabbis taught: The *ketoret* contained **eleven** spices.

There were [seventy](seventy.html) measures each of

(1) balsam,

(2) onycha,

(3) galbanum, and

(4) frankincense.

There were sixteen measures each of

(5) myrrh,

(6) cassia,

(7) spikenard, and

(8) saffron.

There were [twelve](twelve.html) measures of

(9) costus,

three measures of

(10) aromatic bark,

and [nine](nine.html) measures of

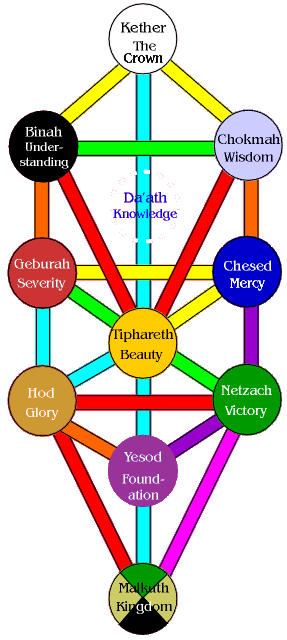
(11) cinnamon.

Rashi, in Shemot 33:34, explains that only ten of the components of Ketoret are actually sweet-smelling components. The eleventh, Chelbena, gives off a putrid smell. Only when combined with the other components does the Chelbena produce a sweet smell. This is to show, explains Rashi, that when we repent and [pray](prayer.html) to [HaShem](hashem.html), we should not refuse sinners the right to join us in [prayer](prayer.html). On the contrary, only when their prayers are combined with our prayers will our prayers give off a “sweet scent” before HaShem.[[2]](#footnote-2) Chelbena, the *eleventh* component of the Ketoret, represents those who follow the ideology of [Esav](edom.html). Ketoret shows that when such people realize that they are only an “incomplete eleven,” and that their arrogance causes them to be lacking, they can be combined with the righteous to produce a sweet scent.

***Keritot 6b*** *Every* [*communal fast*](tishabav.html) *that does not include sinners of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *is not a fast.*

This is derived from the fact that the [incense](ketoret.html) included Chelbenah-galbanum. Just as the Chelbenah was necessary to give the other spices exactly the right fragrance, a congregation is not complete without someone who has also fallen and who must re-elevate himself through repentance. In particular, when a difficult punishment has been decreed against Israel because of some evil deed, this very evil must be taken and elevated. **Thus, the idea of transforming evil by elevating it back to its source in holiness is intimated in the incense**. It is for this reason also that a communal fast must include *the sinners of Israel*.

The number eleven, which is how many spices there were in the ketoret, at first seems rather odd. However, kabbalistically it is a number of tremendous importance for it alludes to one of the most prized possessions in all of history: [Daat](daat.html) Elohim, G-dly-[Knowledge](knowledge.html). Positive [daat](daat.html) is eleven**.** Daat is called the eleventh [sefirah](omer.html).[[3]](#footnote-3)



Eleven different types of spices were used to make up the [*Ketoret*](ketoret.html)*,* Incense-Offering;[[4]](#footnote-4) eleven is a number associated with [*daat*](daat.html), since the eleventh [*sefirah*](omer.html) is Daat. Wherever the issue of *daat* arises, it is not unusual to find the number eleven as well. In fact, the total [time](time.html) it was to have taken the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people to travel [from Egypt](thebirth.html) to Eretz Israel[[5]](#footnote-5) was eleven days. However, the Torah tells us that the nation had not been ready for so direct a route to the *daat* of Eretz Yisrael[[6]](#footnote-6). Also, the number of days by which the [lunar year](calendar.html) (central to Jewish life) is less than the [solar year](calendar.html) is also *eleven[[7]](#footnote-7)*, and Kabbalistically, this is also an idea very much related to *daat*. There are many others.]

There are some very famous elevens through history, and they are all associated with this concept of [Daat](daat.html). For example, [Yosef](joseph.html) was the eleventh son born to Yaakov, the one through whom the hand of [HaShem](hashem.html) became clear and from whom [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben Yosef will descend to help us across the threshold into Mashiach’s time.

However, perhaps the most famous eleven is the gematria of the [letters](letters.html) “Vav-Heh” from HaShem’s Tetragrammaton Name, purposely left out at the end of [Parashat Beshalach](annual.html) when HaShem swears there will be war against [Amalek](amalek.html) until the end of history. The Name of HaShem that represents this reality is *Elohim*. Once Amalek is finally snuffed out in Mashiach’s time, they will return and HaShem’s [Name](name.html) will once again be one. However, until such time it is as if they remain hidden, like the hand of HaShem itself in the affairs of man, allowing Gevurot and Amalek to do their thing.

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The [Gemara](orallaw.html) proves that “whoever attempts to add, actually subtracts” from the verse that describes the eleven curtains of goat’s [hair](hair.html) that covered the [Mishkan](temple.html). The number eleven has significance as representing an addition to a pre-existing, complete set of [ten](ten.html). We find the number eleven with regard to the [Ketoret](ketoret.html). Rashi[[8]](#footnote-8) explains that the Ketoret was comprised of eleven ingredients, even though the number ten is normally used to represent a spiritual *full set*. Why was the number eleven selected for the production of the Ketoret?

We also find the number eleven mentioned with regard to [Esav](edom.html). The Torah, in Bereshit 36:40-43, enumerates the eleven Alufim (chieftains) that were born to the family of Esav. Rashi[[9]](#footnote-9) points out a basic difference between [Yaakov’s](israelja.html) and Esav’s outlooks on life. When Yaakov described his material status, he exclaimed, “I have all that I need!” [Esav](edom.html), on the other hand, arrogantly stated, “I have much more than I need!” Esav sees no goals in life. He is not striving to fulfill a particular purpose; rather, he grabs limitlessly to get as much as he can. [Yaakov](israelja.html), in contrast, lives for a purpose. He strives to fulfill a particular mission, and if he is able to accomplish that mission, he has “all that I need”.

The number [ten](ten.html) represents completeness, a full integer count. The number ten represents Yaakov’s purposeful existence. The ideology of Esav, of seeing no limits or goals and of amassing “much more” than one needs, is represented by the number eleven. It is indeed appropriate that his nation originated with eleven chieftains. However, for all his amassing of wealth, one who follows such an ideology will actually end up with less, not more.

Esav’s attitude of having “much more than I need” is represented by the number eleven. All of his additional wealth just takes him farther from attaining the true goals in life. Esav, and the arrogant people who follow his way of life, nevertheless can realize, that one who adds, takes away, that “arrogance is a blemish,” and can become servants of [HaShem](hashem.html).

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The difference between the [lunar year](calendar.html) and the [solar year](calendar.html) is exactly eleven days. This, of course, is not incidental. Thus, the number eleven is associated with the lunar year and not the solar one. Eleven, as we explained previously, represents Daat Elohim, the Heavenly [knowledge](knowledge.html) necessary for extracting the hidden light of [creation](bara.html) and revealing it to all mankind, causing the great healing of history called the final [redemption](redemption.html).

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I have found the following pasukim which deal with the number eleven. We can study these verses to gain additional insight into the meaning and significance of the number eleven.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 32:22*** *And he rose up that night, and took his* [*two*](two.html) *wives, and his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford* [*Jabbok*](torahy2k.html)*.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:9*** *And he dreamed yet another* [*dream*](dreams.html)*, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *and the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *and the eleven* [*stars*](mazaroth.html) *made obeisance to me.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 26:7*** *And thou shalt make curtains of goats’* [*hair*](hair.html) *to be a covering upon the* [*tabernacle*](temple.html)*: eleven curtains shalt thou make.*

***Shemot (Exodus)26:8*** *The length of one curtain shall be* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *cubits, and the breadth of one curtain* [*four*](four.html) *cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure.*

***Shemot (Exodus)36:14*** *And he made curtains of goats’ hair for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them.*

***Shemot (Exodus)36:15*** *The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains were of one size.*

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 29:20*** *And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:2*** *(There are eleven days’* [*journey*](stages.html) *from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto* [*Kadeshbarnea*](stages.html)*.)*

***Yehoshua (Joshua) 15:51*** *And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages:*

***Shoftim (Judges) 16:5*** *And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.*

***Shoftim (Judges) 17:2*** *And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, my son.*

***Shoftim (Judges) 17:3*** *And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.*

***Shoftim (2 Kings) 23:36*** *Jehoiakim was* [*twenty*](twenty.html) *and* [*five*](five.html) *years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*. And his mother’s name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.*

***Shoftim (2 Kings) 24:18*** *Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*. And his mother’s name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.*

***Divre Hayamim (2 Chronicles) 36:5*** *Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*: and he did that which was evil in the sight of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *his God.*

***Divre Hayamim (2 Chronicles) 36:11*** *Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.*

***Yiremeyahu (Jeremiah) 52:1*** *Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.*

***Yehezekel (Ezekiel) 40:49*** *The length of the porch was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits; and he brought me by the steps whereby they went up to it: and there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.*

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| [Ketoret](ketoret.html) | 10 pleasant smelling. | 1 foul smelling |
| [Mishkan](temple.html) | 11 goat [hair](hair.html) curtains. |  |
| [Esau](edom.html) | 11 chieftains. |  |
| Lunar Year | 11 days longer than a solar year. |  |
| [Daat](daat.html) | 11th [sefira](omer.html) |  |
| [Yaakov](israelja.html) | 11 sons entered [Israel](israelja.html). | [Joseph](joseph.html) was the 11th. |
| Exodus | De 1:2 eleven days’ from [Horeb](stages.html) by the way of mount Seir unto [Kadesh-barnea](stages.html). |  |
| Kings | Jehoiakim reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. |  |
| Kings | Zedekiah reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. |  |
| Shevat | The 11th month. |  |
| HaShem’s name | eleven is the gematria of the letters “Vav-Heh” |  |
| Mt. Eval | 11 curses. |  |
| Mt. Gerazim | 11 Blessings??? |  |

***Matityahu (Matthew) 28:16*** *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *had appointed them.*

***Marqos (Mark) 16:14*** *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of* [*heart*](body.html)*, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was* [*risen*](techiyat.html)*.*

***Luqas (Luke) 24:9*** *And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.*

***Luqas (Luke) 24:33*** *And they rose up the same hour, and returned to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,*

***2 Luqas (Acts) 1:26*** *And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*

***2 Luqas (Acts****) 2:14 But Tzefet, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:*

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There are eleven days between two periods of menstruation.[[10]](#footnote-10)

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[Shevat](feasts.html) is the eleventh month.

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The following section is translated from Shaar HePesukim, Likutei Torah, and Sefer HaLikutim by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky

In the beginning of [parashat Re’eh](annual.html), the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people were commanded to “place the blessing on [Mt. Gerizim](city.html) and the curse on [Mt. Eval](city.html)” when they cross the [Jordan river](stages.html) and enter the [land of Israel](city.html). The discussion of how to do this does not take place in that passage but is rather postponed until the portion of the Torah read this week. In it, the [Jewish people](gen-jew.html) are told: “When you cross the Jordan, the following [[tribes](tribes.html)] will stand on Mt. Gerizim to [face the Levites when they] bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, [Joseph](joseph.html), and [Benjamin](benyamin.html). The following [tribes] will stand on Mt. Eval [to face the Levites when they pronounce] the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.” There follow a list of the eleven curses the Levites are to pronounce. The blessings are not mentioned explicitly but according to the sages they were simply the inverse of the curses.

I have already taught you about the eleven ingredients of the [incense](ketoret.html), the eleven goat wool coverings [of the Tabernacle], and the eleven curses of [parashat Ki Tavo](annual.html).

What is conspicuous here is the number eleven. Since they Divine energy that [creates](bara.html) and sustains the [world](worlds.html) is organized into a structure of [ten](ten.html) [sefirot](omer.html) (and the Sefer Yetzirah is particular about this number: “ten and not eleven; ten and not [nine](nine.html)“), it follows that ten as number signifies the complete, balanced, and holy order of powers. The number eleven, in contrast, is seen to indicate destructive excess, an egotistic tendency to one-up the Divine system. In the words of the sages: “whoever adds detracts.” It therefore signifies evil and curse.

The [Tabernacle](temple.html) was covered with [three](three.html) curtains: one made of ten curtains fastened together, each woven of a mixture of various materials; one made of eleven goat skins fastened together, and one of tachash skins (the tachash was an multi-colored animal that does not exist nowadays).

Their significance is that just as there are ten holy [sefirot](synagog.html), there are ten sefirot of evil.

Since evil is a perversion of holiness, it follows that for every shade of holiness (expressed in the ten sefirot), there is a corresponding shade of evil.

In addition, there is within [the ten holy sefirot] a spark of holiness that sustains them. This is the mystical meaning of the verse: “and His kingship rules over all”.

The common denominator of all ten sefirot is that they are expressions of [HaShem’s](hashem.html) sovereignty over [creation](bara.html). This is the basis for their mutual inter-inclusion and harmonious co-functioning.

[The same is true for the ten evil sefirot,] with the following difference: The ten holy sefirot are composed of “essences” and “vessels.”

The essence of a sefirah is the Divine energy that powers it; the vessel of a sefirah is its identity, or the particular Divine power it manifests. The more familiar terminology for “essence” in this context is “light.” Here the light is called the “essence” since it is of course the Divine power that makes the sefirah into an instrument or a “useful” tool in the hand of G-d; the vessel or particular identity of the power being manifest is relatively incidental.

Now, [in the case of the [ten holy sefirot](ten.html),] the essence-which is the life force that sustains the sefirot-is absorbed and hidden with them. Thus it is written in the [Zohar](orallaw.html): “He and that which He enlivens [i.e., the ‘[lights](lights.html)’] are one; He and that which He causes [i.e., the ‘vessels’] are one.” This why their number is only [ten](ten.html); they are the ten overhanging curtains of the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html).

Holiness is characterized by submission to G-d’s [will](needs.html), and submission to G-d’s will enables an entity to coexist with its opposite, if it is G-d’s will that this occur. Here, although essence and expression are opposite in nature, the lights and vessels can coexist together so long as they both submit to the Divine scheme. This submission to Divine will is expressed by there being only ten sefirot, the number of balance and containment. The ten curtains that form the inner covering of the Tabernacle, closest to the holiness of the ark and the other vessels, express this submission.

But in the case of the ten evil sefirot, the holy life force cannot be absorbed inside them, for the holy does not mix with the profane. Rather, it hovers above them and enlivens them from afar. Therefore their number is eleven.

Since the evil sefirot express rebellion against the Divine will, there can be no reconciliation between essence and expression. Furthermore, the essence cannot enter the vessel since the essence is obeying G-d’s will (since it is only by virtue of G-d’s will that evil can exist or have any power) while the vessel is not (-as we said, the vessel is an expression of rebellion against G-d’s will).

Therefore, the life force (the “essence” or “light”), rather than being counted as the an aspect of the ten sefirot, is counted as an entity on its own.

As is explained in the [Zohar](orallaw.html) regarding the eleven [goat-wool] coverings, this is because “whoever adds detracts.” We have explained this idea in that context as well. This is the mystical significance of all [three](three.html) elevens mentioned above.

We will now explain these eleven curses [individually]. The first, “Cursed be he who makes a graven or molten image,” corresponds to the evil known as Arich Anpin of kelipah. Therefore it is said about [this image that the one who makes it that] “he puts it hiding.” This refers mystically to the hidden realms of [creation](bara.html), for Arich Anpin hides and is clothed within the world of Atzilut, as is [known](daat.html).

Kelipah (“shell”) is a synonym for evil, and in the present context a particularly apt one, since evil is here described as the phenomenon of Divine energy surrounding its powers rather than entering them to fuse with them.

Idolatry is obviously the general, overall statement of rebellion against G-d, and is therefore considered the keter of evil. Keter, and specifically the partzuf of Arich Anpin, corresponds to the psychological power of will; idolatry is the expression of the will within the soul to break off “the yoke of the kingdom of heaven” in the false hope of independence. This is because idolatry is not a religion in the sense that it is the submission of the individual or community to the will of the deity; it is rather an attempt to harness and manipulate the [spiritual](physical.html) power inherent within [creation](bara.html) for one’s own purposes.

Atzilut in this context signifies the array of conscious powers of the soul (intellect, emotion, and expression). The will permeates, informs, and runs these powers in a “hidden” (subconscious) fashion, behind the scenes, as it were. Hence the importance of aligning the will with holiness rather than delusions of selfhood.

For this reason there are [thirteen](thirteen.html) words in this verse until and including the word “in hiding”; these correspond to the thirteen rectifications of the [beard](hair.html) of the “holy ancient One” [Arich Anpin].

The actual curse in this verse is exactly thirteen words. The number [thirteen](thirteen.html) signifies the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy, the expression of G-d’s good will and willingness to forgive [sin](sin.html). The bodily correlate of this mercy is the [beard](hair.html), which is seen as a way the [head](body.html) can be channeled down into the lower parts of the [body](body.html) directly.

As we have explained previously, the normal flow of Divine beneficence into reality is patterned after the flow of a new idea or insight from the super-conscious mind (keter) into the conscious mind (chochmah, binah, and [daat](daat.html)) and from there, through the neck into the torso (signifying the emotions) and on out into expression (mouth, hands, feet, and sexual organs). When a person [sins](sin.html), however, this normal flow has been sabotaged such that there is blockage along the way, most typically in that the power of insight cannot properly affect the emotions-leaving the person frustrated and unable to grow, develop, or express himself spiritually. It is therefore necessary for the normal flow to be bypassed or overridden, and this is the dynamic of forgiveness. In such a case, a small but highly concentrated flow of inspiration emerges from the mind-not through the standard channel of orderly processing, signified by the [neck](body.html), but through the [hairs](hair.html) of the [beard](hair.html). As we have also explained previously, hair signifies a very diminished form of life force: it is constantly growing, but can be cut without causing pain. The beard thus signifies G-d’s attribute of mercy. Elsewhere, the Arizal describes the thirteen “rectifications” or “tufts” of the beard, and how each one corresponds to one of the [thirteen](thirteen.html) attributes of mercy.

The second curse, “Cursed be he who insults his father or his mother,” corresponds to [the [two](two.html) partzufim of] Abba and Ima.

The next five curses correspond to the first [five](five.html) sefirot of Z’eir Anpin: keter, chochmah, binah, chesed, and gevurah.

The Arizal does not explain the correspondences between these curses and sefirot.

The next, “Cursed be he who has relations with his sister,” corresponds to tiferet of Z’eir Anpin, for the head of Nukva begins at this level, opposite the chest [of Z’eir Anpin], as is known. She [in addition to being his bride] is Z’eir Anpin’s sister, but this is so only when she is situated at this level, not when she is otherwise. For it is only in this case that they can cling together consummately.

As we have explained previously, both Z’eir Anpin and his feminine counterpart, Nukva of Z’eir Anpin, originate in Ima, and they are therefore considered “brother and sister.” However, they are also intended to [mate](marriageact.html), and in this context are called “[bride and groom](wedding.html)” or “prince and princess.” As we have also explained, their proper [coupling](marriageact.html) occurs when the intellect (head) of Nukva (expression and actualization) is at the level of the chest (emotions) of Z’eir Anpin (inspiration and Divine idea). If Nukva were to be the same height as Z’eir Anpin, this would mean that her intellect receives directly from his intellect, and this would be counter-productive, for she personifies a totally different thrust in the Divine plan, that of disseminating the Divine idea without and throughout [creation](bara.html). It is thus crucial that her intellect receive from the emotions of Z’eir Anpin, the level at which his intellect has been over-staged by the emotion response, the desire to relate the idea of the intellect to the outside world.

To summarize:

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| **curse** | **partzuf/sefirah** |
| Cursed be he who makes a graven or molten image, abhorred by G-d, a craftsman’s handiwork, and puts it in hiding. | Arich Anpin |
| Cursed be he who insults his father or mother. | Abba and Ima |
| Cursed be he who moves his neighbor’s landmark [a form of stealing]. | keter of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who misdirects a blind person on his way. | chochmah of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who perverts the judgment of a stranger, orphan, or widow. | binah of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who has [relations](marriageact.html) with his father’s wife. | chesed of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who has relations with any beast. | gevurah of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who has relations with his sister, whether the daughter of his father or of his mother. | tiferet of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who has relations with his mother-in-law. | netzach of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who strikes his neighbor in secret. | hod of Z’eir Anpin |
| Cursed be he who accepts a bride in the case of the murder of an innocent person. | yesod of Z’eir Anpin |

Further on in this portion of the Torah, Moses describes the results of the people abandoning their [covenant](covenant.html) with G-d. This passage, known as the “the reproof” (tochachah) consists of exactly 98 curses.

[These curses] are all a punishment for the blemished caused in [the sefirah of] yesod. This is the mystical meaning of the phrase “a sword avenging the vengeance of the covenant”.

This whole passage is referred to by the Torah itself as a “covenant” (brit). Simply stated, a covenant or pact is an agreement between [two](two.html) parties sealed by the clause that if the pact is abrogated there will be consequences. The existence of consequences cements the relationship and makes it serious (or “real”) for the parties involved.

As we have explained previously, the sefirah of yesod is where all the powers of the preceding sefirot coalesce into a concentrated essence (the [seed](flower.html) or semen), which is then meant to be transmitted, via malchut/Nukva to outer reality as the “[birth](thebirth.html)“ of a new reality or way of living. All these powers, from the initial insight on, are a gift of G-d that He gives us in order for us to use for positive, wholesome, and holy purposes. It is therefore crucial that this seminal message or energy be channeled through the proper medium, that of malchut. For malchut, being the personification of G-d’s will “to have a home in the lower realms,” is totally directed and dedicated toward using the energy of yesod for the holy purpose of increasing the awareness of G-d’s presence in the world. If a person chooses not to direct his energy into malchut, but instead to divert it into non-holy channels, he is betraying his covenant with G-d. He is taking his G-d-given gifts (whether his vital seed or any other gifts, resources, or talents he possesses) and using them for self-indulgent or egocentric ends.

This explains why the commandment of [circumcision](circumcz.html) specifically is called brit, covenant. (After all, the whole Torah is G-d’s covenant with the [Jewish people](gen-jew.html).) This also explains why the Arizal here says that the consequences detailed by the Torah for abrogating its observance can all be seen as the result of betraying the covenant of yesod. In other words, all [sins](sin.html) are ultimately sins of misdirected sexuality, and the specific sin of misdirected sexuality in a sense contains within it all other sins.

The verse about the sword avenging the vengeance of the covenant is taken from the parallel rebuke-passage in the book of Leviticus.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Now, the [organ of [procreation](marriageact.html), the [physical](physical.html) manifestation of] yesod, is likened to a bow that shoots arrows [of semen]. We see this with regard to [halachic](walking.html) discussions regarding whether or not a particular discharge of semen can be considered potent. The seed is not considered potent if when discharged it does not shoot like an arrow.

The [simile](remez.html) of ejaculation and shooting an arrow is found in Biblical verses as well. The target [of the “arrows” of Z’eir Anpin] is [the partzuf] Rachel.

As we said, the only legitimate “target” for yesod is malchut, personified in the narrow sense by one’s wife or in the broader sense by the holiness of the vessel as evinced in its being a vehicle for the dissemination of the G-d-idea throughout reality.

Therefore, when the Jewish people sinned and thereby caused the holy arrows to be disassociated [from their rightful “target”], the consequence was that [“G-d shot them at them;] a sudden arrow was their wounds.”

This verse applies normally to those who “have sharpened their tongue like the sword, and aimed their arrow-a bitter word-to shoot the innocent in secret.” Here, since the community abuses their arrows, the power of yesod, they bring upon themselves retribution in kind.

These are the 98 curses of this passage.

The numerical value of the word for arrow (cheitz, chet-tzadik) is 98.

-translated from Shaar HePesukim, Likutei Torah, and Sefer HaLikutim by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky

\* \* \*

By Rabbi Pinchas Winston

Eleven is the source of [seventy](seventy.html), which is the source of [redemption](redemption.html). Hence, says the Vilna Gaon, this is why we recite Tehillim (Psalms) 20 just prior to “And a redeemer will come to Zion” on weekday mornings: it has SEVENTY words.

If we need redemption, then we need seventy, and if we need seventy, then we need eleven, and that is why the final redemption begins with [Yaakov’s](israelja.html) eleventh son, [Yosef HaTzaddik](joseph.html).

“Eleven days journey from [Chorev](stages.html) to [Kadesh Barnea](stages.html) by way of Mt. Seir” (Devarim 1:2). It says in the Sifri: Had Israel [merited](merit.html) the eleven days, they would have entered the Land, because the eleven days would have overcome the eleven Klipot, which are the eleven chieftains of [Eisav](edom.html).[[12]](#footnote-12)

Thus, the eleven of [Esav](edom.html) is the mirror of the eleven of [Yosef](joseph.html), except that Yosef’s is on the side of holiness and Esav’s is on the side of spiritual impurity - positive [Daat](daat.html) and negative Daat, Yosef and Esav, [Mordechai and Haman](esther.html).

Thus, there are some very famous elevens through history, and they are all associated with this concept of Daat. For example, Yosef was the eleventh son born to Yaakov, the one through whom the hand of G-d became clear and from whom [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben Yosef will descend to help us across the threshold into Mashiach’s [time](time.html).

There are many other concepts to do with Daatthat have an association with the number eleven, including the [lunar year](calendar.html), which is shorter than the [solar year](calendar.html) by eleven days. We [know](daat.html) from the [Talmud](orallaw.html) that, during the fourth day of [creation](bara.html), the light of the [moon](chodesh.html) was reduced, leaving creation with a need for rectification. Being eleven days shorter than the solar year, it indicates that it is Daatthat will restore the light of the moon in the days of Mashiach.

Of course, the moon is the symbol of the Jewish people.

This is why the distance from [Har Sinai](stages.html) to Kadesh Barnea at the border of [Eretz Yisrael](city.html)—the Land of Daat—was only **eleven** days [Miraculously, they had traveled it in [three](three.html) days (Rashi).]:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:2*** ***Eleven*** *days it was from Chorev (Har Sinai) by way of Har Seir to Kadesh Barnea.*

It had only been their transgressions (***eleven*** in total [In fact, according to Rashi,[[13]](#footnote-13) Noach’s ark sat ***eleven*** *amot* in the waters, perhaps alluding to what had caused the Flood in the first place—*a lack of Daat**Elohim*. In fact, the [Zohar](orallaw.html) says that the waters were [fifteen](fifteen.html) *amot* above the mountains to indicate that the letters *yud-heh* of Elohim were abused by that [generation](toldot.html), leaving behind the letters, *aleph, lamed, mem*, which spells the word *e-laim*, which means deaf and dumb.]), and eventually, the [evil report of the spies](tishabav.html), that had caused them to take a circuitous route around [Har Seir](stages.html), over an additional [*thirty*](thirty.html)*-nine* years. This is evidence that, whatever they had achieved at [Har Sinai](stages.html) as far as becoming receptacles for DaatElohim, the process had not been completed.

Thus, we see that the number **eleven** is associated with the negative forces of [Creation](bara.html), that which create a barrier between Man and God. Therefore, they must be counteracted with a positive **eleven**, as the following reveals:

**Eleven** tehillot were forgotten after Moshe’s death, and these are the **eleven** Klipos, the underlying basis of the **eleven**-day journey [from Har Sinai to Eretz Yisrael]. The [Midrash](orallaw.html) goes on to say that this corresponds to the **eleven** [tribes](tribes.html) that Moshe blessed before his death in order to weaken these forces, which are [known](daat.html) to the Kabbalists as the basis for the **eleven** curtains [in the [Mishkan](temple.html)], the **eleven** spices in the Ketoret, the **eleven** pasukim that begin and end with the [letter](letters.html) Nun — all corresponding to the **eleven** Klipot which cause forgetfulness . . . which is why the **eleven** tehillot were forgotten. (Yalkut Reuvaini b’shem Asarah Ma’ameros, Devarim 13)

Hence, we see that not only is the number **eleven** significant, it is intimately bound up with the purpose and holiness of [Klal Yisrael](gen-jew.html). Therefore, there are **eleven** more days in the [solar year](calendar.html) than in the [lunar year](calendar.html) (Yoma 65b), because the Jewish people are symbolized by the [moon](chodesh.html).[[14]](#footnote-14) And, as Kabbalah explains, this is not incidental, but something central to all of history.

There is a deep reason why the [cycle](cycles.html)-length of the [sun](hachama.html) and moon are not equal, but rather the sun’s extends beyond the moon’s by **eleven** days. The Arizal wrote in Likutei Shas that this is part of the [sod](sod.html) of the Nitzotzei Kedushah (Holy Sparks) that fell from the “kings” of the B”N in **eleven** portions: the [seven](seven.html) kings and the [four](four.html) achorayim of Abba and Ima, and Yisrael Sabba and Tevunah . . . Thus, the Malchut is missing **eleven** lights, which are from the myriad of sparks from the 320, 280, and 288 Sparks, and which are continuously being rectified until the arrival of [Mashiach](mashiach.html). Thus, because of these **eleven** lights that are missing from the Malchut, there are **eleven** days missing from the lunar [calendar](calendar.html) in comparison to the solar one.[[15]](#footnote-15)

This is talking about Sefirot and partzufim, the basis of most of Kabbalah and whose explanation is beyond this discussion. However, the main point is clear: the number **eleven** represents that which is missing from [Creation](bara.html) and that which man comes to rectify, specifically through the learning and living of Torah. And, as we will see, b’ezras [HaShem](hashem.html) Yisborach, specifically by participating in the dynamic process we call [Torah Shebaal Peh](orallaw.html).

LIVING SPIRIT: A [speaking](mashal.html) spirit. (Onkelos)

It is the power of drush, the expression of [Daat](daat.html) Elohim through the [mouths](body.html) of those who make themselves vehicles for the word of God. It is [Torah Shebaal Peh](orallaw.html) at its finest, in essence: completely consistent with Torah Shebiktav (the written Torah), perfectly aligned with [Halachah](walking.html) l’Moshe m’Sinai, and derived using [time](time.html) honored Torah principles. And, symbolized by the number **eleven**, the number of days between Niddah-periods, for it was as a result of [eating](eating.html) from the [Aitz HaDaat Tov v’Rah](thetree.html) that Chava brought this [halachic](walking.html) reality to women kind.

The number **eleven** is connected with the concept of [redemption](redemption.html) and the entry into [Eretz Yisrael](city.html) as evidenced by the fact that Moshe began to address the [Jews](gen-jew.html) in the eleventh month. The revelation of the eleventh level brings about redemption from all boundaries and limitations, bringing the true and complete redemption.

\* \* \*

The Arizal explains that numbers have their origins in the supernal spiritual worlds. Single digit numbers correspond to the physical realm Asiyah, the sefirat Malkhut. Tens correspond to the angelic realm Yetzirah, the sefirat Tiferet. Hundreds correspond to the Neshama realm Beriah, the sefirat Binah, Imma. Being that hundreds emanate from the realm of Imma, they are the source of blessing. Therefore, all offerings are the rectification of 100% of the produce offered.

The following chart shows the 22 letters of the Hebrew alefbet in the two common ciphers with eleven letters opposite eleven letters:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ATBaSH** | | **ALBaM** | |
| **Maximal**  **MALE** | **Maximal**  **FEMALE** | **Maximal**  **MALE** | **Minimal**  **FEMALE** |
| א - Alef | ת - tav | א - Alef | ל - lamed |
| ב - Beit | ש - shin | ב - Beit | מ - mem |
| ג - Gimmel | ר - reish | ג - Gimmel | נ - nun |
| ד - Dalet | ק - kuf | ד - Dalet | ס - samech |
| ה - Hei | צ - tzadik | ה - Hei | ע - ayin |
| ו - Vav | פ - pei | ו - Vav | פ - pei |
| ז - Zayin | ע - ayin | ז - Zayin | צ - tzadi |
| ח - Chet | ס - samech | ח - Chet | ק - kuf |
| ט - Tet | נ - nun | ט - Tet | ר - reish |
| י - Yud | מ - mem | י - Yud | ש - shin |
| כ - Kaf | ל - lamed | כ - Kaf | ת - tav |
| **Minimal**  **MALE** | **Minimal**  **FEMALE** | **Minimal**  **MALE** | **Maximal**  **FEMALE** |

\* \* \*

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1. *Etz Chaim* 11:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Keritut 6b [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Biur HaGra, Safra D’Zniusa [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Keritot 6a [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Derech Pelishtim [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Shemot 13:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Rashi, Yoma 65b [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shemot 30:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bereshit 33:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Menachoth 89a* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:14-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Sha’arei Leshem, p. 421 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Bereshit 7:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Succah 29a [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Sha’arei Leshem, p. 300 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)