

The Significance Of The [Number](nchart.html) Fifty (50)

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine the meaning of the [number](nchart.html) fifty. This [desire](needs.html) to understand the significance of the [number](nchart.html) fifty came to my mind as I was counting the fifty days of the [omer](omer.html).

The [hebrew](hebrew.html) [letter](letters.html) nun - נ has the value of fifty.

Fifty is a [number](nchart.html) which expresses transcendence. In the [omer](omer.html) count, Torah [commands](cmds613.html) us to count fifty, but we can only count [forty](forty.html)-[nine](nine.html) because that is the limit of the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html).

When you get beyond [seven](seven.html) times [seven](seven.html), you reach the [number](nchart.html) fifty. The [number](nchart.html) fifty is beyond the realm of multiples of [seven](seven.html) and belongs to the series of eights, and represents the part of the universe that lies beyond what is directly visible in the natural [world](worlds.html).

It took fifty days to go from Mitzraim (Egypt) to Mt. [Sinai](stages.html). It took fifty days to go from the lowest part of this earth, to go to the place where [heaven](heaven.html) and earth kissed.

Fifty is a [number](nchart.html) that is often associated with the the previous and [future](future.html) Temples. Fifty represents the [Festival](festival.html) of [Shavuot](shavuot.html); we begin counting on the second night of [Pesach](passover.html) until the [forty](forty.html)-[ninth](nine.html) night. During these fifty days crops sprout and grow; and thanks for harvest of [first](one.html) fruits is on the fiftieth day, also [know](daat.html) as Chag HaBikurim, meaning [Festival](festival.html) of [First](one.html) Fruits.

The fiftieth year is [Jubilee](yovel.html) in which most slaves go free and land is returned to the original owner.

It was at the age of fifty that the Kohan completed his [Temple](temple.html) service. He began at the age of [thirty](thirty.html) and served for [twenty](twenty.html) years. [Twenty](twenty.html) is the constructed Gematria of Nun.

Fifty cubits is the heighth that [Haman](esther.html) built the gallows for Rabbi Mordechai as written in the Book of [Esther](esther.html)... [Haman](esther.html) and his sons were hung from his gallows.

Fifty is the furthest level from [HaShem](hashem.html). If [one](one.html) were to drop to the fiftieth level, G-d forbid, they would never be able to return according to our sages.

On the other [hand](fourteen.html), fifty is also the highest level [one](one.html) can reach. Moshe reached the [forty](forty.html)-[ninth](nine.html) level. Rabbi Akiva reached the fiftieth level. Keeping our directions in the positive, we should grow and establish towards the heights of the fiftieth level and avoid the depths of no return.

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It is no coincidence that [Haman](esther.html) built his gallows to hang Mordechai fifty amot high (approximately 75 [feet](heel.html) (3)). The [number](nchart.html) "fifty" in Judaism usually alludes to the Nun Sha'arei Binah-Fifty Gates of Understanding, which played a very significant role in the story of [Purim](purim.html). [Haman](esther.html) identified Mordechai with the Fifty Gates of Understanding (and rightly so), and it was his intention to hang both, so-to-[speak](mashal.html), from his fifty-amot high gallows.

That fifty is a [number](nchart.html) that suggests unity we can see from the [Mishkan](mikdash.html):

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 26:11*** *You shall make 50 loops on the end of the* [*one*](one.html) *curtain that is the outermost in the joining, and 50 loops on the edge of the curtain that joins to the second. You shall make 50 catches of copper, and put the catches into the loops, and join the tent together, that it may be* [*one*](one.html)*.*

This is also why the courtyard in front of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was fifty amot in length and fifty amot in width. It is this area that provides the [halachic](walking.html) parameters for an eiruv, which, on [Shabbat](sabbath.html), is the amalgamation of many private and individual domains into [one](one.html) unified area for the purpose of carrying on [Shabbat](sabbath.html).

The word for kidney, *kulyah*, comes from [*kol*](voice.html)--"all." [*Kol*](voice.html) = 50. Our sages [teach](teacher.html) us that "at the age of 50 [one](one.html) is able to give advice." The [two](two.html) [kidneys](body.html) are [two](two.html) complementary sets of 50 (as the 50 parallel 50 loops of the [two](two.html) sets of the over-hang drapery of the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html)). 50 plus 50 = 100 = 10 squared, the consummate state of rectification, 10 (powers of the soul) "interincluded" in 10.

And knowing the intrinsic [connection](connection.html) between Eretz Yisroel and the Fifty Gates of Understanding, we can appreciate better Yehoshua's [merit](merit.html) in being Moshe's successor, and the [one](one.html) to lead the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people to their final destination, Eretz Yisrael. After all, Yehoshua was ben nun-the son of fifty (the [letter](letters.html) nun equals 50), the [one](one.html) who married Rachav, the woman who converted to Judaism at the age of fifty!

In the end, this is why [Haman](esther.html) built his gallows fifty amot high:

Rabbeinu Bechayei cites the Kabbalists who say that fifty represents the circle of life.

On a national scale, consider the power of fifty days. In fifty days, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people were transformed from a bedraggled [nation](nations.html) of slaves to recipients of the Torah. We attempt that same metamorphosis each year during Sefirat Ha’[omer](omer.html) as we count off fifty days from [Pesach](passover.html) to [Shavuot](shavuot.html).

Similarly, the Levi may only serve in the [BeitHamikdash](mikdash.html)until the age of fifty. At some level, his [world](worlds.html), too, has been completed at that age.

This is the powerful message of [Yovel](yovel.html). Each [seven](seven.html)-year [shmita](shmita.html)[cycle](cycles.html) represents a rung, a [new](new.html) level achieved within the [world](worlds.html) while [Yovel](yovel.html), which follows the [seventh](seven.html) [shmita](shmita.html)year, represents the dawn of a completely [new](new.html) [world](worlds.html).

Even for the rational [Jew](gen-jew.html), unaware of the mystical notion of the [Yovel](yovel.html) [cycle](cycles.html), the message of Ramban still rings powerful—a [Jew](gen-jew.html) need not die in order to arrive at a [new](new.html) [world](worlds.html); rather, he can transcend [worlds](worlds.html) in his lifetime.

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The Torah was given fifty days after the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People left Egypt. The [number](nchart.html) fifty, like every detail in the Torah, is of great significance.

There are fifty levels of chochmah, or spirituality, in the greater [world](worlds.html). The fiftieth level of chochmah is highest, totally sublime, a level of spirituality that is beyond [connection](connection.html) to the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html).

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) says that Torah was given fifty days after [leaving Egypt](thebirth.html), to symbolize the ascent of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People, as they moved up each level until they were finally able to relate to the metaphysical Torah, on the fiftieth level.

Consider the following fact.

The [Omer](omer.html) [Offering](korbanot.html), brought on the [first](one.html) day of the fifty days (the 16th of Nissan) is made of barley, a course [food](food.html) that is served to animals. The Shtei Halechem or [Two](two.html) Breads, brought on Shevuot, the day after the fiftieth day, is made of pure wheat, a substance of higher quality, in symbolism of the higher expression of the fiftieth day.

Consider another bit of information.

S'firat HaOmer (The Counting of the [Omer](omer.html)) only includes [forty](forty.html) [nine](nine.html) days. The fiftieth day is not part of the calculation. Representative of the highest level of chochmah, the fiftieth day is sublime: it can not be grouped together with anything that has any relation to the [physical](physical.html). Counting it in succession with the other days, implies that it is similar to the other days, which is untrue.

\* \* \*

Ya'akov wanted to establish the Mystery of Unity below, and composed the [twenty](twenty.html)-[four](four.html) [letters](letters.html) of, "Blessed be the [Name](name.html) of His glorious kingdom forever." He didn't make it [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html) since the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) ([Tabernacle](mikdash.html)) had yet to be built. Once the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was built, the [first](one.html) word was completed ... With regard to this it says, "G-d [spoke](mashal.html) to him from the [Appointed](settimes.html) Tent, saying ..." (Vayikrah 1:1), which has [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html). ([Zohar](orallaw.html) 2:139b)

Obviously, this requires an explanation, but on, unfortunately, that is longer than can be provided here. Therefore, in short, the words "Blessed be the [Name](name.html) of His glorious kingdom forever" follow the verse of the [Shema](shema.html) that we say twice a day. Traditionally, there are [two](two.html) sources for this statement. [One](one.html) source was the [angels](angels.html) Moshe heard when he entered [Heaven](heaven.html) to receive Torah. The other source, according to the [Talmud](orallaw.html), was Ya'akov Avinu just prior to his death:

"Perhaps, [Ya'akov said,] G-d forbid, there is something unfit from my bed (i.e., a [spiritually](physical.html) unworthy child), just as Yishmael was born to [Avraham](avraham.html), and Eisav to my father [Yitzchak](isaac.html)?"
His sons answered, "[Shema](shema.html) Yisroel, [HaShem](hashem.html) Elokeinu, [HaShem](hashem.html) Echad-Just as in your [heart](body.html) only [G-d is] [One](one.html), so too in our hearts, there is only [One](one.html)." At that moment, Ya'akov said, "*Boruch Shem kevod Malchuso l'olam va-ed*-Blessed be the [Name](name.html) of His glorious kingdom forever!" (Pesachim 56a)

According to the [Zohar](orallaw.html), Ya'akov wasn't simply commenting on the [spiritual](physical.html) status of his sons; he was using a [spiritual](physical.html) "formula" to draw down a very high source of godly light, [one](one.html) that has the power to unify. This would make sense given that his own sons had suffered terribly from a lack of unity, which is what caused problems from which we are still suffering. Apparently Ya'akov had the ability to draw down a light powerful enough to create an extremely sublime reality, [one](one.html) that would have been comparable to that of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html).

However, Ya'akov sensed that the [time](time.html) was not quite right, and stopped short. This is indicated by the fact that the verse he composed only consisted of [twenty](twenty.html)-[four](four.html) [letters](letters.html), and not [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html). For, [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) is the [number](nchart.html) that symbolizes the Supernal Light of [creation](bara.html), referred to as the "Hidden Light," which G-d used to make [creation](bara.html) on the [first](one.html) day, and then hid for the righteous in the [Time](time.html)-to-Come.

Why [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html)? Because, the verse says:

G-d said, "Let there be (*yehi*) light!" And there was light! (Bereshit 1:3)

The word "*yehi*" is spelled yud-heh-yud, which, in gematria is equal to the [number](nchart.html) [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) (10+5+10). Thus, the verse can also be read as:

*yehi* = light

Or, rather, [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) equals light, or, is at least representative of this light. This is why the [Shema](shema.html)--the ultimate statement of unity--has [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html) itself!

Hence, combined, the [Shema](shema.html) and "Blessed" would have resulted in fifty [letters](letters.html), the ultimate [number](nchart.html) of unity, a unity, apparently, that was reserved for the [Mishkan](mikdash.html):

You shall make 50 loops on the end of the [one](one.html) curtain that is the outermost in the joining, and 50 loops on the edge of the curtain that joins to the second. You shall make 50 catches of copper, and put the catches into the loops, and join the tent together, that it may be [one](one.html). (Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html))26:11)

Therefore, once the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was constructed, the "mysterious" and powerful unity of the [World](worlds.html) Above was achieved down below, accomplishing what was intended by the verse, "Blessed ..." which Ya'akov composed. The last [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html) of the [first](one.html) verse of Vayikra, according to the [Zohar](orallaw.html), indicate that a "vehicle" to draw down the Supernal, Original Light of [creation](bara.html) now existed and was functioning.

\* \* \*

The fullest expansion of the realm of nature is found when [one](one.html) multiplies [seven](seven.html) by [seven](seven.html). The result is 49. Going [one](one.html) beyond brings us to 50, which symbolizes the ability to transcend all the details and enter a [new](new.html) and higher realm. But how does that 50th level correlate with a [nation](nations.html)'s march from infancy to maturity? What [connection](connection.html) is there to [Ruth](ruth.html)'s growing from the most degenerate of [Moab](stages.html) to the mother of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) royalty? The key to unlocking the meaning of the 50th level lies within a biblical story concerning our forefather [Yaakov](israelja.html).

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*Excerpted from the just-published book* [Jewish Wisdom in the Numbers](nchart.html).

The [number](nchart.html) 50 is the distinguished [number](nchart.html) of transcendence. The count up to 50 is composed of [two](two.html) essential and distinct [stages](stages.html).

The [first](one.html) phase is the step-by-step progression rising from 1 up to 49. As the square of 7 (7²=49), 49 denotes the complete [cycle](cycles.html) within the [physical](physical.html) universe.[[1]](#footnote-1) This is a natural development, [one](one.html) that reaches the extremities of the outer boundaries. This may be the furthest limit as far as nature is concerned – but it is not the endpoint. But the ultimate destination of a [Jew](gen-jew.html) is his arrival at the second phase – [one](one.html) where he somehow manages the supernatural leap from 49 to arrive at the transcendental quality of 50.

The progression from 49 to 50 has, as its precedent, the stepping stone from 7 to 8. The soul is likened to the 7th center of holiness within the [body](body.html) that sanctifies the 6 directions of the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) toward [spiritual](physical.html) pursuits.[[2]](#footnote-2) Through this process, the soul is able to elevate itself, and the [body](body.html) with it, toward perfection.[[3]](#footnote-3) In [number](nchart.html) terms, the 7 is elevated beyond to reach 8, which is synonymous with entry onto the higher transcendental plane.[[4]](#footnote-4) And the arrival at 50 similarly marks the entry into this exalted state.

**A Passage to** [**Sinai**](stages.html)

Perhaps the count toward the [number](nchart.html) 50 finds its most well-[known](daat.html) historic expression in the [Exodus](exodus.html) and its aftermath. – [*exodus*](exodus.html)*: 50*

The momentous [event](feasts.html) that commemorates the [birth](thebirth.html) of the Children of [Israel](gen-jew.html) as a [nation](nations.html) was the [exodus](exodus.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html). Not only is there a twice-daily remembrance of this milestone,[[5]](#footnote-5) but much of [*mitzvah*](cmds613.html) observance is marked by repeated references to the [Exodus](exodus.html). Its central importance is due to this [event](feasts.html) celebrating the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People’s brand-[new](new.html) *state of existence*.

Their deliverance was not only from [physical](physical.html) slavery but also from the Egyptian worldview. The [Exodus](exodus.html) released them from an outlook constrained by the natural realm.[[6]](#footnote-6) The [redemption](redemption.html) catapulted [Israel](gen-jew.html) into an alternate state of reality. They exchanged the restricted for the unrestricted, the natural for the supernatural, and the ordinary for the extraordinary. It was *the* seminal [event](feasts.html) that would define what [Israel](gen-jew.html) had now become: God’s Chosen People. Their transcendental quality was now evident in the aftermath of their trailblazing [liberation](freedom.html).

The historic [event](feasts.html) of the [Exodus](exodus.html) is mentioned in the Torah a total of 50 times.[[7]](#footnote-7) And the [redemption](redemption.html) process which started on the [first](one.html) day of [Pesach](passover.html) finally reached its completion stage 50 days later at [Sinai](stages.html). Indeed, God freed the Children of [Israel](gen-jew.html) *in order* that they accept the Torah. The Divine instruction given to Moshe at the burning bush was to lead [Israel](gen-jew.html) [out of Egypt](thebirth.html) and bring the [nation](nations.html) to serve God at that mountain.[[8]](#footnote-8) – [*shavuot*](shavuot.html)*: day 50*

The 50 [stages](stages.html) of [redemption](redemption.html) required a minimum 49-day interval for their national metamorphosis. Prior to their [liberation](freedom.html), the Children of [Israel](gen-jew.html) had sunk to the nadir of [spiritual](physical.html) [impurity](purity.html): the 49th level of [impurity](purity.html). The [Exodus](exodus.html) introduced a [spiritual](physical.html) cleansing process. [Israel](gen-jew.html) embarked upon a gradual path of ascension, [one](one.html) level after another. Theirs was a phenomenal rise from their degraded position on the 49th gate of [impurity](purity.html) up to the 49th gate of [purity](purity.html).[[9]](#footnote-9) Finally, they arrived at the highest [spiritual](physical.html) pinnacle on the 50th day.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This period bridges the [Festivals](festivals.html) of [Passover](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html). The [journey](stages.html) is alluded to in the [*mitzvah*](cmds613.html) that famously links this [time](time.html) frame: the 50-day Counting of the [*Omer*](omer.html), from date of the cutting of an [*Omer*](omer.html)measure of the [new](new.html) crop of barley, which was brought up as an [offering](korbanot.html) on the second day of [Pesach](passover.html): *You shall* *count for yourself … 7 weeks that shall be complete until the morrow after the 7th week – it shall be 50 days ….*”[[11]](#footnote-11) – *torah: 50*

[Shavuot](shavuot.html) is the only [Festival](festival.html) not referenced by a specific date in the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) lunar [calendar](calendar.html). Its classification as the [time](time.html) of the giving of Torah is recorded as Day 50 after the [Exodus](exodus.html). This firmly establishes [Shavuot](shavuot.html) as *the* climax of the [Exodus](exodus.html). In the relationship between God and [Israel](gen-jew.html), the giving of Torah at [Sinai](stages.html) is termed *on your* [*wedding*](wedding.html) *day*.[[12]](#footnote-12)

[Marriage](mashal.html) celebrates the total commitment of [two](two.html) parties to each other. The obligations of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [marriage](mashal.html) arrangement are recorded in the ketubah, the [wedding](wedding.html) contract. The set monetary settlement allocated to a maiden was 50 silver *shekels* (equivalent to 200 *zuz*/dinars in Mishnaic currency).[[13]](#footnote-13) This sum finds its perfect parallel in the giving of the Torah, where the contractual duties of [Israel](gen-jew.html)’s [wedding](wedding.html) day came into effect on the 50th day after the [Exodus](exodus.html).

Here God showered His beloved [nation](nations.html) with the best [wedding](wedding.html) gift of them all: the gift of Torah. The metaphysical quality of Torah often sees its depiction as qualities of the Divine intellect. Its transcendental nature is over and above the [physical](physical.html) existence of This [World](worlds.html). Appropriately, Torah was given at the beginning of the 8th week after the [Exodus](exodus.html). It taps into the symbolism of 8 transcending the natural realm epitomized by the [number](nchart.html) 7. In this respect, 50, which follows the [cycle](cycles.html) of 7 weeks each consisting of 7 days, shares the “out of this [world](worlds.html)” quality of the [number](nchart.html) 8.[[14]](#footnote-14)

As the 50th day after Egyptian deliverance, in the 8th week, [Shavuot](shavuot.html) relates to the transcendental nature of Torah.[[15]](#footnote-15) In the singular form, the word *Torah* is said to occur 50 times in the Torah.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Parallel to the [number](nchart.html) 8, the 50th level relates to that which is “out of this [world](worlds.html).”[[17]](#footnote-17) The [*Mishkan*](mikdash.html), [Sanctuary](mikdash.html), and subsequently the [*Beit HaMikdash*](mikdash.html), [Temple](temple.html), revolved around Torah as represented by the *Luchot*, Tablets, housed in the *Kodesh* *HaKodashim*, Holy of Holies. (In itself, the construction of a [House of God](housegod.html) served to immortalize the giving of Torah at [Sinai](stages.html).[[18]](#footnote-18)) The purchase of the [Temple](temple.html) site took effect through the 50 *shekels* of silver paid by each [tribe](tribes.html).[[19]](#footnote-19) The maximum age for a Levi to serve in the [Temple](temple.html) was 50 years old.[[20]](#footnote-20) In particular, the innermost chamber, the *Kodesh* *HaKodashim* relates to this 50th transcendental level.[[21]](#footnote-21) And there were 50 golden hooks upon the roof spread directly above the curtain cover at the entrance of the *Kodesh* *HaKodashim*.[[22]](#footnote-22)

**Above Nature**

We have noted that 50 represents the full [journey](stages.html) toward acceptance of Torah in the 50 days bridging [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html). The passage through life calls for the [Jew](gen-jew.html) to emulate the national passage to [Sinai](stages.html). He must proceed until the natural end – and then go beyond it. He must transcend the finite and touch the sublime 50th gate that belongs *over and* *above* the natural rules of This [World](worlds.html).[[23]](#footnote-23) – *50: at a distance*

The [number](nchart.html) 50 is used as the measure that places something at a distance. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) notes the use of a rope measuring 50 cubits for matters such as measuring the 2,000-cubit distance of *techum* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html)*,* the distance beyond the [city](city.html) [one](one.html) may [travel](mashal.html) on [Shabbat](sabbath.html).[[24]](#footnote-24) Because of the negative impact of a granary, leather tannery, and cemetery, these were not halachically permitted to be located within 50 cubits of the [city](city.html).[[25]](#footnote-25) Of course, the 50-day [journey](stages.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html) to [Sinai](stages.html) ensured that [Israel](gen-jew.html) was no longer under the sinful influence of their idolatrous past.

No less than 50 [stages](stages.html) of [redemption](redemption.html) – parallel to the 50 times the [Exodus](exodus.html) is recorded in the Torah – were required to achieve a [clean](purity.html) break from the past. Now, on the 50th day, [Shavuot](shavuot.html), the shackles of bondage were finally broken. This is recorded in the mention of the [Exodus](exodus.html) in the opening verse of the 10 [Commandments](cmds613.html): *I am* [*Hashem*](hashem.html) *your God Who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery*.[[26]](#footnote-26) – *50: gates of understanding*

The [creation](bara.html) of [Israel](gen-jew.html) in the 50 days between [Passover](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html) ties into another aspect of symbolism found in this [number](nchart.html). God [created](bara.html) the universe with the 50 Gates of Understanding.[[27]](#footnote-27) The 50 Gates relate to the ascending [spiritual](physical.html) levels within the [world](worlds.html) through which man must pass in order to uncover the inner [secrets](sod.html) of [creation](bara.html) and in order to comprehend the powers, capabilities, and life forces within.[[28]](#footnote-28)

In a sense, the 50 *Sha’arei Binah* signify the distance of how far removed man is from God’s wisdom. It is incumbent upon man to pass through these Gates of Understanding in a [journey](stages.html) to uncover the Divine wisdom hidden in the words of Torah. This often involves the deductive reasoning of understanding, (“bina” in [Hebrew](hebrew.html)) to derive “[one](one.html) thing from something else.”[[29]](#footnote-29) “Bina” is cognate to “*bein*”, between,[[30]](#footnote-30) which indicates the gap that man must bridge in order to approaches his
Creator.

The 50 days of the [*Omer*](omer.html) parallel the 50 *Shaarei* *Binah*.[[31]](#footnote-31) The word *binah* further relates to “*binyan*”, building.[[32]](#footnote-32) The count of the [*Omer*](omer.html) toward [Shavuot](shavuot.html) is the process of building where the [Jew](gen-jew.html) builds himself up from the lowly level of an animal up to the [spiritual](physical.html) heights of a Godly being.[[33]](#footnote-33) It is his bid to traverse the 50 gateways of Divine wisdom. He endeavors to transcend the natural and to touch the supernatural realm where he will gain a clearer perception of God.

The highest level humanly possible is 49 gates; it is God Who enables a person to make the final leap from 49 to 50. The human being who passed through the full 49 gates was Moshe.[[34]](#footnote-34) However, the final 50th gate still lay beyond his grasp. The [secret](sod.html) of this ultimate step would lie within the [secret](sod.html) nature of [*Yovel*](yovel.html).[[35]](#footnote-35) – [*yovel*](yovel.html)*: year 50*

The 7 weekly [cycles](cycles.html) of 7 days lasting until the 50th day, [Shavuot](shavuot.html), has its obvious parallel to the 7 *Shemitah,* [Sabbatical](shmita.html) [cycles](cycles.html) of 7 years that culminate in the 50th year, [*Yovel*](yovel.html), [Jubilee](yovel.html) Year.[[36]](#footnote-36) [*Yovel*](yovel.html)marked the cumulative conclusion of an epoch. Everything that had occurred previously – even something termed as lasting *l’olam*, forever[[37]](#footnote-37) – comes to an end. The slate is wiped [clean](purity.html). It returns to its original pristine state to enable the process to begin anew.

*Shemitah* is classified both as holy, and as [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html); [*Yovel*](yovel.html) is Holy of Holies, and “[Shabbat](sabbath.html) of Shabbatos.”[[38]](#footnote-38) Actually, [*Yovel*](yovel.html)*’s* description as [Shabbat](sabbath.html) of Shabbatot is shared by the [festival](festival.html) of [Yom Kippur](kippur.html), *Day of* [*Atonement*](kippur.html).[[39]](#footnote-39) On this date, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html) was forgiven for the [sin](sin.html) of the Golden Calf that had undermined the Torah given on Day 50. A [new](new.html) era began as [Israel](gen-jew.html) was given the second set of Tablets, delivered by Moshe on [Yom Kippur](kippur.html).[[40]](#footnote-40) This signaled that God had forgiven [Israel](gen-jew.html), affirming that He would not destroy them.

The process of *teshuvah*, repentance – itself related to *binah[[41]](#footnote-41)* – is such that [sin](sin.html) is eradicated. What happens? A person relates to his transcendental roots, returns to God, and emerges as a [new](new.html) [creation](bara.html).[[42]](#footnote-42) Interestingly, there is a total of 50 days of *teshuvah* from [Rosh Chodesh](chodesh.html) [Elul](elul.html) (29 days) until the end of [Hoshana Rabba](hoshana.html)h (21 Tishrei).[[43]](#footnote-43)

The word [*yovel*](yovel.html) also refers to the [*shofar*](shofar.html)-[horn](shofar.html) of a ram.[[44]](#footnote-44) Indeed, the 50th year assumed the status of the [Jubilee](yovel.html) year only once the [*shofar*](shofar.html) was sounded.[[45]](#footnote-45) The [*yovel*](yovel.html)*/*[*shofar*](shofar.html) was blown on [Yom Kippur](kippur.html)[[46]](#footnote-46) of the 50th year. It would herald that people and objects would revert to their original position. Sold fields returned to their original owners. [Jewish](gen-jew.html) slaves were released from their captivity.[[47]](#footnote-47) Here they freely return to their true identity.

[*Yovel*](yovel.html) replicates the impact of the [*shofar*](shofar.html) to awaken man toward repentance.[[48]](#footnote-48) The [freedom](freedom.html) of [*Yovel*](yovel.html)was unhindered by any constraints. It denotes the transcendental point that stretches above any prior attachment to what came before. – *50: all-in-1*

In This [World](worlds.html), there can be no independent human expression on the 50th level. It remains the ultimate, yet unknowable Godly dimension. It can be characterized as elevated or apart, from everything that precedes it. It transcends the natural [world](worlds.html) and human [experience](experience.html).[[49]](#footnote-49)

In [one](one.html) respect, the 50th is the *uncountable* [*number*](nchart.html). The [*Omer*](omer.html) period lasts for 50 days – yet only 49 are to be counted. The counting of 49 *automatically* leads to the arrival of the 50th. This elevated state was reached at [Sinai](stages.html). It truly surpassed everything that came before it.[[50]](#footnote-50) It was on the 50th day, [Shavuot](shavuot.html), that the union between [Israel](gen-jew.html) and God, like a [marriage](mashal.html), was solemnized.[[51]](#footnote-51)

With this act the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [nation](nations.html) supernaturally transcended worldly existence to become [one](one.html) with God.[[52]](#footnote-52) [Israel](gen-jew.html) achieved this unity when they arrived at [Sinai](stages.html) to encamp in a unified state: like a single person with a single [heart](body.html).[[53]](#footnote-53) The names of the 12 [Tribes](tribes.html) of [Israel](gen-jew.html), which were engraved upon the Stones worn by the [*Kohen*](kohen.html) *Gadol,* have a total of 50 [letters](letters.html),[[54]](#footnote-54) merged as [one](one.html) entity with their Creator.

Thus, the 50th is the point of arrival. This is where man has come “all the way.” This is the ultimate level; man has successfully completed the requisite [stages](stages.html) of the natural passage and progressed to transcend up to the Godly level of eternity. This is the dimension of Torah, of Divine understanding, of true [freedom](freedom.html). It is where [Israel](gen-jew.html) transcends to truly become [one](one.html) with God.

*Click here to order a copy of* [Jewish Wisdom in the Numbers](nchart.html)*, the symbolism in the* [*Hebrew*](hebrew.html)[*numbers*](nchart.html) *expressed in* [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *thought and practice.*

\* \* \*

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1. See “49: Full Measure.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See “7: A Holy Spark.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ramchal, Derech Hashem 1:3. The reentry of the soul into the body after revivification is destined to propel man to a higher spiritual level than he could attain in life. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See “8: Out of the World.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Berachos 12b. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The root of the word מִצְרַיִם is related to the word מֵיצַר , straits, as in the verse, all her pursuers overtook her within the straits (בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים) (Eichah [Lamentations] 1:3). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Zohar 2, 85b; 3, 262a. See Sfat Emet, Shabbat HaGadol 5634, for how the 50 references to the Exodus correspond to the 50 weeks and 50 Shabbatot in every year. See also Vilna Gaon, Tikkunei Zohar, p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shemot (Exodus)3:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See “49: The Full Measure.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Their development is beautifully symbolized in the 50-day ripening period of an apple – an allusion to receiving of Torah. The Midrash notes that the apple takes 50 days to ripen and this occurs in Sivan (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2:2). This is a reference to the 50-day period between Pesach and Shavuot, when the Jewish nation embraced the Torah. (The apple symbolically relates to the declaration Na’aseh v’nishma, “We will do and we will hear” – Shabbat 88a. See Tosafot, ad loc. for how the apple refers to the esrog.) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Shir HaShirim 3:11 and Rashi ad loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Mishnah, Ketubot 1:2. A divorced or widowed woman who remarries is entitled to half this sum: namely 100 zuz. The basic amount of 50 silver shekels for a maiden is derived from the laws of the penalty payable by a man who violates or seduces a maiden (Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:29; Ketubot 10a). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Maharal, Tiferet Yisrael 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Maharal ibid. Though the Omer count is stated to be for 50 days, only 49 are counted. One does not – indeed, cannot – count the 50th. It is not simply another day in succession to the 49 before it. It is separate and apart; it goes beyond the possible, beyond the countable. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Rokeach, Devarim (Deuteronomy)6:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Tanchuma, Pinchas 15, about how Shemini Atzeret, the 8th day after the onset of Succoth, should have ideally been positioned 50 days after Succoth in the same way that Shavuot was placed 50 days after Pesach. See “8: Out of This World.” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ramban, Shemot (Exodus) 25:1 (Introduction to Terumah). See “410: First Temple.” [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Zevachim 116b. See also Succah 53a and Sifri, Nasso 42 for how David purchased the site of the altar for 50 shekalim. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See Bamidbar (Numbers) 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Maharal, Chiddushei Aggadot, Rosh Hashanah 21b. See “8: Out of This World.” [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Shemot (Exodus)26:6. See Rokeach, Shemot (Exodus)26:6, p.141, for how the 50 golden hooks attaching the curtains parallel the 50 times the word Torah is mentioned in the singular in Chumash. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See Maharal, Nesivos Olam, Netiv HaTorah 1 for how the 50th is uncountable, as it belongs to the ethereal, elevated world that is not subordinate to time. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Eruvin 57b. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Bava Batra 24b-25a. See Rambam, Hilchot Beit HaBechirah 7:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Shemot (Exodus) 20:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Rosh Hashanah 21b; Nedarim 38a. “The 50 occasions Exodus is mentioned in the Torah correspond to the 50 Gates of Understanding” (Vilna Gaon, Aderes Eliyahu, Balak). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ramban, Introduction to Sefer Bereshit. See also Vilna Gaon, Safra D’Tzniusa 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See Rashi, Shemot (Exodus) 31:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibn Ezra, Shemot (Exodus) 31:3; R’ S.R. Hirsch, Bereshit 41:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Vilna Gaon, Aderes Eliyahu, Balak. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See Niddah 45b. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Omer brought on Pesach was an offering of barley, a grain that is used for animal feed. By contrast, the 2 Breads of Shavuot were made of wheat, a human food. This symbolizes the spiritual transformation from a non-spiritual beast to a spiritual human. See Sotah 15b; Maharal, Tiferet Yisrael 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Rosh Hashanah 21b. See “49: The Full Measure.” Parallel to Moshe’s inability to attain all 50 Gates of Understanding, he was unable to pass over the River Jordan, whose width is said to be 50 cubits (Tosafot, Sotah 34b) and pass onto even 1 cubit of the ground of the Holy Land (see Baal HaTurim, Devarim (Deuteronomy) 3:25 and Rokeach ad loc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ramban, Introduction to Sefer Bereshit [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:8-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Shemot (Exodus) 21:6; Kiddushin 21b. This refers to a Jewish servant who rejected going free after his original 6 years of enslavement. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Maharal, Chiddushei Aggadot, Rosh Hashanah 21b. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See Taanis 26b expounding the verse, the day of His wedding (Shir HaShirim 3:11). See Rashi ad loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. In the Amidah, the blessing of teshuvah is juxtaposed to binah (Megillah 17b). See Shelah HaKadosh, Chullin, Torah Ohr 63, Shelah Toldot HaAdam, Beit Chochmah (2nd) 24. See R’ Tzadok HaKohen, Pri Tzaddik, Tu B’Av, 6, as to how the level of 50 Gates of Understanding is the level of knowledge given to a penitent. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See R’ Yitzchak Hutner, Pachad Yitzchak, Yom HaKippurim 1. See Shelah Toldot HaAdam, Beit Chachmah (2nd) 24, as to how Yom Kippur is a source of binah, returning the past year back to its roots and source. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See Panim Yafot, Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Rosh Hashanah 26a and Rashi, Shemot (Exodus) 19:13. In the acceptance of Torah at Sinai, an extended blast from the yovel (shofar) indicated that the Shechinah had departed and the people could now ascend the mountain (Shemot (Exodus) 19:13). This, too, relates to the cessation of a phase. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Rosh Hashanah 9b. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See Minchas Chinuch, Mitzvah 335. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Vayikra (Leviticus) 25:10-13. See also “9: Where to Turn?” [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. On Yom Kippur the 50th and most profound of all gates is opened, the closest level to gain insight into the ways of God (Sfat Emet, Yom Kippur 5653). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Incidentally, we can explain with this the reason that, in the Purim narrative, Haman constructed a gallows that was specifically 50 cubits high (Esther 5:14). Symbolically, the wicked Haman presented himself as a deity who “supposedly” was not subject to the natural law of the land – namely, that he was on the transcendental 50th level (Maharal, Ohr Chadash, Esther 5:14). See also Maharal, Ohr Chodesh, p.175 and Be’er Hagolah 4:14 for the symbolism of this 50-cubit gallows being constructed from the wood of Noach’s Ark (Yalkut Shimoni, 1056). See also R’ Tzadok HaKohen, Pri Tzaddik, Purim, 2, for how Haman’s gallows of 50 cubits corresponds to the 50 Gates of Understanding. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Maharal, Rosh Hashanah 21b, Chiddushei Aggadot. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. One who assaults a maiden must give her 50 coins of silver to marry her (Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:29). This is parallel to Israel receiving Torah on Shavuot, the 50th day after leaving Egypt (Rokeach, Bereshit 32:11). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See Tikkunei Zohar, end of Tikkun 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Shemot (Exodus)19:2 and Rashi ad loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. The 12 Tribes of Israel were represented on the Avnei Shoam, the stones affixed to the shoulders of the High Priest’s Apron. There were 6 names, consisting of 25 letters, on each of the 2 stones, a total of 50 letters (Sotah 36a-b). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)