

**The Number Forty**

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In this study I would like to examine the biblical significance of the number forty.

Every time one finds the number forty in Torah, its inner meaning is **the ascent from one level to the next higher one**.

We get a new mission at forty. But the attainment of a higher level can come only after first reaching and fulfilling all aspects of the previous level, and then making an emptiness in the middle to allow for the emergence of something entirely new.

Forty, then, represents both the **completion of the previous level**, **and leaving it behind, nullifying it**, and forty also represents the inauguration and structuring of a new existence (the Torah given in forty days, the development of the fetus, and so forth).

Forty is composed of 4 x 10

The number ten signifies a unity made of parts.We see this in the fact that we have a single number, ten (10), which is composed of a one (1) and a zero (0). The parts, zero and one, are unified in the single number ten (10).

The number four signifies completion or fullness.

To understand forty and it’s significance, lets start by looking at what a renown Rabbi has to say about the meaning of the number forty.

**Waters of Eden – By Aryeh Kaplan[[1]](#footnote-1)**

One of the laws of mikveh (a gathering of waters for immersion - baptism) is that it must hold at least forty Seah, or approximately 200 gallons of water. In deriving this quantity of forty Seah, we saw that in a sense, this was based upon a measure of man. It is interesting to note that the concept of forty occurs a great many times in the Torah. The flood of Noah lasted forty days, Moses was on Mount Sinai for "forty days and forty nights" when he received the Torah, and the Israelites similarly spent forty years in the desert. There are many other places where we find the concept of forty in the Bible.

Why is the number forty so important? Why do we come across this number as a duration of time so often in the Torah? We find the beginnings of an answer in the laws of childbirth, as they applied in the time of the Holy Temple. The pain and infirmity associated with childbirth are an indication of the imperfection of human reproduction, and therefore, they bring about a state of "impurity" in a woman who has given birth. The Talmud states that one reason a woman had to bring a sacrifice after giving birth to a child was because she had so much pain that she would swear never again to bear a child.

***Nidah 31b*** *R. Simeon b. Yohai was asked by his disciples: Why did the Torah ordain that a woman after childbirth should bring a sacrifice? He replied: When she kneels in bearing she swears impetuously that she will have no intercourse with her husband. The Torah, therefore, ordained that she should bring a sacrifice. (R. Joseph demurred: Does she not[[2]](#footnote-2) act presumptuously[[3]](#footnote-3) in which case the absolution of the oath[[4]](#footnote-4) depends on her regretting it?[[5]](#footnote-5) Furthermore, she should have brought a sacrifice prescribed for an oath!)[[6]](#footnote-6) And why did the Torah ordain that in the case of a male [the woman is clean] after seven days and in that of a female after fourteen days? [On the birth of a] male with whom all rejoice she regrets her oath after seven days, [but on the birth of a female] about whom everybody is upset she regrets her oath after fourteen days. And why did the Torah ordain circumcision on the eighth day?[[7]](#footnote-7) In order that the guests[[8]](#footnote-8) shall not enjoy themselves[[9]](#footnote-9) while his father and mother are not in the mood for it.[[10]](#footnote-10) It was taught: R. Meir used to say, Why did the Torah ordain that the uncleanness of menstruation should continue for seven days? Because being in constant contact with his wife[[11]](#footnote-11) [a husband might] develop a loathing towards her. The Torah, therefore, ordained: Let her[[12]](#footnote-12) be unclean for seven days[[13]](#footnote-13) in order that[[14]](#footnote-14) she shall be beloved by her husband as at the time of her first entry into the bridal chamber.*

Childbirth, and the pain associated with it, is related to man's imperfection and therefore requires "purification”. In speaking of this purification, the Torah says:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:2-4*** *"When a woman conceives and bears a male child, she shall be unclean seven days, as the days of niddah... And she shall continue... for thirty-three days...."*

Counting the days required for purification after childbirth, we find a total of forty.

Our sages teach us that these forty days represent the time that an embryo takes to attain human form. From a standpoint of Jewish Law, an embryo does not have any status as a human being until forty days after conception This concept is also sound from a scientific viewpoint, since it is well known that the human embryo begins to assume recognizable human form around the fortieth day after conception. This helps explain why the flood described in the Torah lasted for forty days. According to the traditional interpretations, the main sin that brought about the flood was sexual immorality. The Midrash thus says that the flood lasted for forty days because the people of that generation "perverted the embryo that is formed in forty days."

***Midrash Rabbah - Bereshit (Genesis) XXXII:5*** *5. FOR YET SEVEN DAYS, etc. (VII, 4). R. Simeon b. Yohai said: They have transgressed the Torah which was given after forty days,[[15]](#footnote-15) therefore I WILL CAUSE IT TO RAIN... FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS. R. Johanan said: They corrupted the features which take shape after forty days,[[16]](#footnote-16) therefore I WILL CAUSE IT TO RAIN... FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS. AND EVERY LIVING SUBSTANCE (YEKUM) THAT I HAVE MADE WILL I BLOT OUT. R. Berekiah said: That means, whatever exists (kayomaya) upon it.[[17]](#footnote-17) R. Abin said: The one who arose against him [his brother].[[18]](#footnote-18) R. Levi said in the name of Resh Lakish: He [God] kept him [Cain] in suspense[[19]](#footnote-19) until the Flood came and swept him away: hence it is written, And He blotted out every one that had arisen (Gen. VII, 23).[[20]](#footnote-20)*

It is interesting to note that the Zohar gives a similar reason for the fact that the punishment was through water. The division of the waters represent the original concept of sexuality in creation, with the "upper waters" as the male element, and the "lower waters" as the female. The generation of the flood perverted this basic concept of sexuality, and therefore, the "upper waters" and "lower waters" came together to punish them. The Torah thus says:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:11*** *"The springs of the great deep were split open, and the windows of heaven were opened.*

This same concept also applies to Mikveh, which can be made up of rain waters and spring waters. The same concept also applies to the giving of the Torah. This also involves the idea of birth. The Jewish people were born anew under the covenant of the Torah, and the Torah itself, in being transmitted to man, had to undergo a birth process. As in the case of man, this was to take forty days. The same reasoning also explains why the Israelites spent forty years in the desert. When Moses sent spies to explore the Promised Land, the Torah tells us that:

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 13:25*** *"they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days."*

The spies knew that the Israelites would undergo a spiritual rebirth when they entered the Promised Land. In order to experience this rebirth themselves and report on it, the spies spent forty days in the land. They were not worthy of the land, however, and therefore, they brought back a bad report. As a result of this report, the Israelites rebelled against Moses, not trusting that HaShem would give them the land. It was then decreed that they should spend forty years in the desert, as the Torah says:

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 14:34*** *"Following the number of days in which you spied out the land - forty days - for every day, you shall bear your sins for a year - forty years."*

These forty years represent yet another kind of rebirth - the rebirth of an entire generation that would be worthy of eventually entering the Promised Land. We see that the number forty represents the process of birth. As we have said, it is related to the measure of man. This also explains the forty Seah of water that the Mikveh must contain. The Mikveh also represents the womb, and therefore, these forty Seah parallel the forty days during which the embryo is formed.

In order to understand why birth and embryonic development always involve the number forty, we must introduce yet another concept.

Our Sages teach that the world was created through ten Divine utterances. Mystically, each of these ten utterances manifests itself on four different levels, hence a total of forty. On Shabbat, we refrain from 39 categories of forbidden labor. The Talmud refers to these 39 as "forty minus one" because each one parallels one of the forty levels of creation, except for the highest level of creation, creation of something from absolute nothingness, which has no parallel in our physical world.

Creation consists of four stages, alluded to in the verse:

***Yeshayah (Isaiah) 43:7*** *"All that is called by My Name,*

*(1) for My glory,*

*(2) I have created it,*

*(3) I have formed it,*

*(4) and I have made it."*

These four stages are represented by the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, God's Name Yud Hay Vav Hay. The first stage is "God's Glory," where things exist conceptually, but not in actuality. The next stage is creation," which represents creation ex nihilo, "something out of nothing." Then comes "formation" where the primeval substance attains the first semblance of form. Finally comes making," where the process is completed and yields a finished product. Our sages also teach us that the world was created with ten sayings. These are the ten times that the expression "and God said" appears in the account of creation:

***Midrash Rabbah - Bereshit (Genesis) XVII:1*** *1. AND THE LORD GOD SAID: IT IS NOT GOOD THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE (II, 8). We learnt: By ten commands was the world created,[[21]](#footnote-21) and these are they: In the beginning God created (Gen. I, 1); And the spirit (ruah) of God hovered (ib. 2)[[22]](#footnote-22); And God said: Let there be light (ib. 3); And God said: Let there be a firmament (ib. 6); And God said: Let the waters be gathered together (ib. 9); And God said: Let the earth put forth grass (ib.11); And God said: Let there be lights (ib.14) And God said: Let the waters swarm (ib. 20); And God said: Let the earth bring forth (ib. 24); And God said: Let us make man (ib. 26). Menahem b. R. Jose excluded, ’And the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters,’ and included, AND THE LORD GOD SAID: IT IS NOT GO0D THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE. R. Jacob b. R. Kirshai said: A separate command was devoted to the wind.[[23]](#footnote-23)*

These "ten sayings" enter into each of the four stages of creation, the total number of elements of creation is forty. The number forty is therefore very intimately related to the concept of creation.

In enumerating the categories of "work" that are forbidden on the Sabbath, the Talmud teaches us that there are "forty less one." As we know, these thirty-nine categories of "work" parallel the types of activity that went into creation, just as our own Sabbath rest parallels the Sabbath of creation. There is one type of "work," however, that we cannot duplicate, and that is creation ex nihilo - creating something out of nothing. This is the one category that is not included among the types of work forbidden on the Sabbath. Otherwise, the categories of "work" represent the elements of creation - "forty less one." The four basic stages that we mentioned earlier are also alluded to in the "four branches" of the river from Eden. As we have discussed, this river is very intimately related to the concept of Mikveh. The forty Seah of the Mikveh represent the basic elements of creation. The primeval stage of creation was basically one of water. Therefore, when a person passes through the forty Seah of water in the Mikveh, he is passing through the initial steps of creation.

End of The Waters of Eden

**The Mem – מ ם**

The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are assigned numeric equivalents and are then explained in terms of these equivalents. This mode of interpretation is called gematria. Numbers themselves are assigned symbolic significance by our tradition. To cite one example: the number forty has come to symbolize beginnings and new beginnings. Thus, creation is renewed after forty days of flooding. The covenant with the Jewish people, our beginning as a nation, is granted after Moses' sojourn of forty days on Mount Sinai. Following the rebellion of the people as a result of the report of the spies, the Jewish people are condemned to forty years of wandering in the wilderness before a new beginning can be contemplated. The embryo is considered viable forty days after conception. Gestation takes forty weeks.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Every time one finds the number forty in Torah, its inner meaning is the ascent from one level to the next higher one.

The letter *Mem* is the thirteenth letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. The letter *Mem* is equivalent to forty (40).

The Mem represents the age or time of completion.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The letter *Mem* is the first letter of the word *Mayim* – The Hebrew word for water. Mayim- מים starts with an open mem and concludes with a closed mem. Water, a drash or parable for Torah. The closed "mem" is used in the first saying of Creation. The open "mem" is used in the subsequent nine sayings of Creation.

**ם -** The closed, *Final Mem*, represents the era of Mashiach as explained in Kabbalah.

**מ** - The open "mem" looks like a square with a small opening at its lower left corner. The final "mem" – looks like a complete square.

The word Mashiach (Messiah) itself begins with a *mem*. In the time of the coming of Mashiach, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of HaShem as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9); then, even the closed *mem* will be revealed. Only once in the entire Torah, in reference to Mashiach, do we find a closed *mem* in the middle of a word:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 9:6*** *To increase reign and peace without end.*

… לםרבה (לְמַרְבֵּה) הַמִּשְׂרָה

***Sotah 2a*** *....for Rav Judah has said in the name of Rav: Forty days before the creation of a child, a Bat Kol issues forth and proclaims, The daughter of A is for B; the house of C is for D; the field of E is for F!"*

Every time one finds the number forty in Torah, its inner meaning is the ascent from one level to the next higher one.

**Ascensions**

The Talmud states that from conception until "formation" of the fetus (ye'tziras ha'vlad) is forty days. A human being is referred to as a "small world"; thus, forty days represents the formation of an entire world, in microcosm.

Forty is also a number associated with Torah and da'at. It was over the course of forty days that Moshe received the Torah on Har Sinai. He subsequently spent two more sets of forty days on Har Sinai to achieve forgiveness and atonement for the incident of the golden calf.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sivan 7 | Tammuz 17 | Tammuz 19 | Av 29 | Elul 1 | Tishrei 10 |
| 40 days | 40 days | 40 days |

Chazal teach that time as we know it will cover six thousand years, divided into three sets of two thousand years:

***Sanhedrin 97a*** *The Tanna debe Eliyyahu teaches: The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era, but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost.*

Two thousand years is forty jubilees (fifty years each). Thus we see that the world will exist for three sets of forty jubilees. We see, also, that Moses went up on Mt. Sinai, three times, for forty days each.

Moshe himself, who is considered "rooted" in da'at, lived for a hundred and twenty years, or three sets of forty years. He was:

1. Forty years as a prince in Egypt,
2. Forty years as a prince of sheep in Midian, and
3. Forty years as a prince of Israel in the desert.

It rained for forty days and forty nights during the Flood; the Pri Tzadik says this was because Noach's generation could have received Torah in their time, had they been fitting. The Talmud also speaks to this:

***Menachoth 99b*** *R. Johanan and R. Eleazar both said, The Torah was given in forty days and the soul is formed in forty days:[[26]](#footnote-26) whosoever keeps the Torah his soul is kept, and whosoever does not keep the Torah his soul is not kept. A Tanna of the School of R. Ishmael taught: It is like the case of a man who entrusted a swallow to the care of his servant and said to him, ‘Do you think that if you suffer it to perish I will take from you an issar for its value? [No,] I will take your soul from you’.*

This concept underlies many of the forty day periods found in the Torah:

**1**. The forty days of rain of the Great Flood. The intention was to destroy all life. Just as [human] life forms in forty days, so too it took that interval to erase it from the earth:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:1-4*** *HaShem then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, And also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."*

**2**. The forty days that Moshe remained on Mount Sinai. A new world order was beginning, in which Torah would play the central role. Hence, the 40-day duration.

***Shemot (Exodus) 34:28*** *Moses was there with HaShem forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant--the Ten Commandments.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 9:9-11*** *When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that HaShem had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. HaShem gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments HaShem proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. At the end of the forty days and forty nights, HaShem gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 9:15-26*** *So I turned and went down from the mountain while it was ablaze with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands. When I looked, I saw that you had sinned against HaShem your God; you had made for yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that HaShem had commanded you. So I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands, breaking them to pieces before your eyes. Then once again I fell prostrate before HaShem for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in HaShem's sight and so provoking him to anger. I feared the anger and wrath of HaShem, for he was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again HaShem listened to me. And HaShem was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too. Also I took that sinful thing of yours, the calf you had made, and burned it in the fire. Then I crushed it and ground it to powder as fine as dust and threw the dust into a stream that flowed down the mountain. You also made HaShem angry at Taberah, at Massah and at Kibroth Hattaavah. And when HaShem sent you out from Kadesh Barnea, he said, "Go up and take possession of the land I have given you." But you rebelled against the command of HaShem your God. You did not trust him or obey him. You have been rebellious against HaShem ever since I have known you. I lay prostrate before HaShem those forty days and forty nights because HaShem had said he would destroy you. I prayed to HaShem and said, "O Sovereign HaShem, do not destroy your people, your own inheritance that you redeemed by your great power and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:10*** *Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, as I did the first time, and HaShem listened to me at this time also. It was not his will to destroy you.*

**3**. The forty days of the spies. The transition to yet another world perspective, that of the Jews as a nation united with their land, was to have begun. Unfortunately, the spies produce a slanderous report on the land and the Jews are relegated to forty years in the desert, one year for each day.

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 13:16-25*** *These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. (Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.) When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land." (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.) So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. That place was called the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.*

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 14:29-35*** *In this desert your bodies will fall--every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you--your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years--one year for each of the forty days you explored the land--you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.' I, HaShem, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die."*

***Bamidbar (Numbers) 32:13*** *HaShem's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the desert forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.*

**4**. The forty day period after childbirth. Forty days after birth of a boy, or eighty days after birth of a girl, the mother brings offerings to the Temple. After the birth of a male child the mother is required to observe a cycle of separation. She separates herself for 7 days +33 days which equals a total of 40 days. This represents the beginning, the middle and the end of the cycle of separation from physical relationships, etc. (Vayikra.12:4, 6 days of creation + 1 day of rest + 33 days the body mourns the separation of the son.) The child is elevated to a new level as the mother brings the offerings:

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 12:2-7*** *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days. And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: Who shall offer it before HaShem, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This [is] the law for her that hath born a male or a female.*

There is a certain spiritual impurity after childbirth that extends for a double 40 day period after the birth of a girl, at the very same time there is a complementary law in the Torah that for the entire 80 day period for a girl, the blood which the woman sees is pure blood. Thus she is permitted to have relationships with her husband during this entire time. That time lasts for a double period as opposed to after the birth of a boy, when her blood is pure, i.e. she can maintain relations with her husband only for 40 days. After the initial 7 days when she goes to the mikveh she is pure for 40 days after the birth of a boy, and after the birth of a girl for 80 days.

**5.** In a book of Jewish Mystical philosophy titled *Torah Ohr*, it is explained that the Flood was not simply the punishment for a totally corrupt world. For, to destroy the world, HaShem could have chosen any number of different methods to this end. The Flood was also an act of purification, which is why the deluge lasted for forty days. The number forty corresponds to the forty seah (a fluid measurement) in a mikveh (ritual bath).

The waters of Noah cleansed the world by immersion in the same way one is purified by immersion in the waters of the mikveh*.* This separation and removal of all extraneous and undesirable elements has the ultimate purpose of bringing the world (and a person) to **a higher level, hence forty**:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:11-13*** *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month--on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:17*** *For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 8:6*** *After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark And sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth.*

**6.** The Children of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness in preparation for their ascent into Eretz Israel. This was forty years after the giving of the Torah. The Sages teach that "After forty years, a student can attain [a full grasp of] his teacher's knowledge." Thus, after the forty years in the desert when the Children of Israel lived with the revelation of Mount Sinai, they were able to internalize it and use it for their ascent into The Promised Land.

**7.** The forty days between the beginning of the month of Elul and Yom Kippur are the days of Selichot, repentance. The revelation of the thirteen attributes to Moshe took place on the first day of Elul (forty days after the sin of the golden calf on 17 Tammuz), and the sign of the forgiveness of Israel was given on Yom Kippur, when Moshe descended the mountain for the second time with the second tablets of the law. We have forty days between the beginning of the month of Elul and Yom Kippur when every Jew hopes to be "born again" and ascend to the level of the angels as be speaks with a full voice: **Baruch shem kvod, malchuto leolam vaed!**

Finally we see that forty related to ascension in the ascension of Mashiach on Lag B’Omer.

After a period of “forty” days teaching his Talmidim after his resurrection[[27]](#footnote-27), Mashiach ascends finally to the heavens[[28]](#footnote-28), awaiting his return at the time appointed by HaShem, Most Blessed be He! **On Lag B’Omer, Yeshua ascended into heaven[[29]](#footnote-29).** Since Lag B’Omer was a day for the heavens to be opened, we can understand why Yeshua ascended on this day. Further, it is apparent that He will return the same way:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:9*** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Yeshua, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.*

Yochanan (John) also brought together the ascension and the Bread from Heaven (manna) in the following sod level passage:

***Yochanan (John) 6:53*** *Then Yeshua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Yeshua knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

It is also apparent that His ascension was also necessary for another gift to be sent to us from heaven:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:4-5*** *4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

***Ephesians 4:1*** *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Mashiach. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the* ***body of Mashiach****: 13 Till we all come in the* ***unity of the faith****, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Mashiach:*

We may derive, then, that the eighteenth day of Iyar (Lag B’omer) is an auspicious time for King Mashiach’s revelation. However, this revelation may come in the form of blessing, as we had with the manna, or punishment, as we had with the flood. In preparation of this day it is incumbent upon us in to pray and repent so that HaShem’s revelation manifest itself in the form of blessing and not destruction.

When His Majesty King Yeshua was Lag B’Omer in age (thirty-three years of age) his body (temple) was put to death by the Roman execution of the cross.

I believe that when Yeshua ascended, He was fulfilling His obligation to send us a Comforter to instruct us in all wisdom and therefore triumph over Nebuchadnezzar and Pilate! This suggests that the wisdom of the Zohar being given to Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai, was fittingly given on Lag B’Omer.

Many commentaries note that Hakham Akiva’s student’s stopped dying on Lag B’Omer. Clearly the twelve Apostles did not die on Lag B’Omer, but instead continue to change the world. Their message of love continues to resonate to this very day. They were the antithesis of the disciples of Hakham Akiva. This loving cohesiveness is the key to the Messianic hope.

Finally, note the following words that a Hakham, who wishes to remain anonymous, spoke about the author of the Zohar:

*When we call this day the “Hillula” (Ascent) of Hakham Shimon, the ascent spoken of is not necessarily his death (i.e., the ascent of his soul), but rather the Hillula is his ascent in the learning of Torah. Lag B’Omer celebrates the day when the sacred traditions of the Kabbalah were saved from being lost forever. Lag B’Omer, therefore, has always been considered the “Kabbalist’s holiday.” For on this day Hakham Shimon became possibly the most important link in the chain of Kabbalistic succession.*

The righteous ascend higher and higher each year, as their deeds have greater and greater impact on the world that they left behind.

Does this not sound like a remez, a hint regarding the ascension of Mashiach?

Lets now take a look at what the Nazarean Codicil has to say about the ascension of Mashiach ben Yosef:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:1-4*** *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Yeshua began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with [them], commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, [saith he], ye have heard of me.*

Many struggle with the thought that Mashiach could not have ascended on Lag B’Omer because the above passage clearly says that the ascension happened forty days after the resurrection, not thirty-three days!

The best way to understand this anomaly is to understand that II Luqas (Acts) is written at the remez level of understanding. At this level we do not interpret things literally, we interpret them according to hints. In this level we ask the question: What does forty represent? We find that forty is associated with a “new birth” type experience. It is a time of ascension. It also represents a change in mission. It is the time period which is used when there is a dramatic change in life. For example: A fetus becomes a baby in forty weeks. Moses changed from a prince to a shepherd after forty years. And after another forty years he changed from a shepherd into a king!

Mashiach’s life was transformed on Lag B’Omer. His Majesty made the change from Mashiach ben Yosef to Mashiach ben David. This change was also understood to be the change of the Bnei Israel, because when Mashiach changes, we change. Remember what we have taught previously, in our study Mashiach, that:

**Mashiach = Israel.**

Thus we understand that we are not taking these forty days as a literal, but as a hint to the change that Mashiach, and therefore the Jewish people, are undergoing.

**One Lash Less**

A Jew who transgresses a Torah prohibition is punished with lashes. How many lashes? The Torah mentions the number forty but the Sages interpreted this to mean the number preceding forty and therefore rule that the number of lashes is 39. How foolish are most people, exclaimed the Sage Rava, who stand up for a Sefer Torah but not for a Torah scholar. The Torah says forty lashes and the Sages limited it to 39. A similar proof of the power of the Sages could apparently have been brought from the fifty days of counting the Omer which the Sages interpret as 49. But only the example of the lashes is cited because the true greatness of the Sages to be appreciated by the masses is not in their ability to make the Omer count one day less but in their ability to remove one painful lash from a sinner

***Makkoth 22b*** *HOW MANY LASHES ARE GIVEN? FORTY SAVE ONE.] What is the reason for this [particular number]? — If it were written, ‘forty in number,’ I should have said it means [actually] forty in number; but as [the order of] the wording is ‘by number forty’****[[30]](#footnote-30)*** *[it means] a number coming up to the forty.****[[31]](#footnote-31)*** *Raba observed: How dull-witted are those other people****[[32]](#footnote-32)*** *who stand up [in deference] to the Scroll of the Torah but do not stand up [in deference] to a great personage, because, while in the Torah Scroll forty lashes are prescribed, the Rabbis come and [by interpretation] reduce them by one.*

The validity of this oral law was established by Hakham Shaul himself:

***II Corinthians 11:24*** *Of the Jews five times received I forty [stripes] save one.*

By the lashes, a sinner achieves atonement for his sins and thus rises to a new and greater level, having transformed the sin into a mitzvah.

Every time one finds the number forty in Torah, its inner meaning is the ascent from one level to the next higher one.

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***Avoth Chapter 5*** *MISHNA 21. HE USED TO SAY:[[33]](#footnote-33) FIVE YEARS [IS THE AGE] FOR [THE STUDY OF] SCRIPTURE,[[34]](#footnote-34) TEN-FOR [THE STUDY OF] MISHNA,[[35]](#footnote-35) THIRTEEN-FOR [BECOMING SUBJECT TO] COMMANDMENTS,[[36]](#footnote-36) FIFTEEN-FOR [THE STUDY OF] TALMUD,[[37]](#footnote-37) EIGHTEEN- FOR THE [BRIDAL] CANOPY,[[38]](#footnote-38) TWENTY — FOR PURSUING,[[39]](#footnote-39) THIRTY-FOR [FULL] STRENGTH,[[40]](#footnote-40)* ***FORTY — FOR UNDERSTANDING****, FIFTY- FOR [ABILITY TO GIVE] COUNSEL,[[41]](#footnote-41) SIXTY-FOR MATURE AGE, SEVENTY-FOR A HOARY HEAD,[[42]](#footnote-42) EIGHTY [IS A SIGN OF SUPERADDED] STRENGTH,[[43]](#footnote-43) NINETY [IS THE AGE] FOR [A] BENDING [FIGURE],[[44]](#footnote-44) AT A HUNDRED, ONE IS AS ONE THAT IS DEAD, HAVING PASSED AND CEASED FROM THE WORLD.[[45]](#footnote-45)*

Forty is the time when a Torah scholar becomes fit to judge and decide halachic questions. Even though the scholar may have previously studied much Torah, not until this power of *binah* reaches full maturity at age forty can he best analyze, infer, study precedents, and render legal decisions.

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***Midrash Rabbah - Bereshit (Genesis) XXXIX:13*** *Thus it is written, And he brought up Hadassah (Est. II, 7) Rab said: She was forty years old[[46]](#footnote-46)*

***Midrash Rabbah - Shemot (Exodus) I:30*** *WHO MADE THEE A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US? (ib. 14)- R. Judah said: Moses was twenty years old then.[[47]](#footnote-47) They said to him: ‘You are not yet fit to be a judge and ruler over us, for only a man of forty possesses full understanding.’[[48]](#footnote-48)*

***Midrash Rabbah - Shemot (Exodus) V:14 ...*** *He [Pharaoh] answered them: ‘I do not know who this God of yours is ‘; as it is said: WHO IS THE LORD, THAT I SHOULD HEARKEN UNTO HIS VOlCE? God then said to him: ' Wretch! "WHO (mi) IS THE LORD? " thou sayest. Well, thou wilt be punished with this word ’’Mi’’.’[[49]](#footnote-49) The letter mem is forty and yod is ten--indicating the fifty plagues which God brought upon the Egyptians at the sea, as it says: Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: This is the finger of God (Ex. VIII, 15) ...*

**Scriptures**

The floods of the *Mabul* lasted 40 days;

A kosher *mikvah* requires 40 *saah* (a biblical measurement) of water;

*Chazal* state that until 40 days after conception, the fetus is considered *“maya b’alma”* – formless and like water.

What is the meaning behind these different features of 40, and what is the connection between them and water?

The number 40 represents the spiritual concept of form, the point at which something formless takes on concrete form. This is apparent throughout *Tanach* and *Halachah*:

The *Mabul* lasted 40 days and nights because this was the amount of time it took for the world to transition from formlessness to its recreated form.

A *mikvah* requires 40 *seah* because this is the amount of water required for a person to transition from formlessness to a newly created form, a reborn self.

Until 40 days, the fetus has no form at all; only after 40 days does the fetus begin to take on concrete form.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Moshe spent 40 days and nights on Har Sinai while receiving the Torah, which was a reformation of reality itself.

The Jewish People spent 40 years in the *midbar* as they went through the process of recreating their identity and preparing themselves to enter Eretz Yisrael.

*Chazal[[51]](#footnote-51)* state that 40 is the age of *binah* (*understanding*). Knowledge is the attainment of formless facts and details; *understanding* is the ability to source all expressed details and facts back to their root principles and concepts, giving meaning and form to the countless scattered facts.

\* \* \*

Now lets examine other verses where the number forty is used. As you read this verse, note that every time one finds the number forty in Torah, its inner meaning is the ascent from one level to the next higher one:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:20*** *And Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.*

Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to be his wife. The side note to this is that when Sarah died three distinct thing happened: The continual Shabbat lights ceased, the Glory of HaShem residing at the door of her tent left, and Challah from Sarah's table which was a blessing to all ceased. When Rebekah entered Sarah's tent each of these returned. This was a sign that Rebekah was the selected wife for Isaac. The Sages teach that a man is incomplete until he has a wife. Thus Isaac ascended to a new level of power when he married.

***Zohar Toldot 138b*** *It is taught: The ingathering of the exiles will precede the resurrection of the dead by forty years, as it says, "And Yitzchak was forty years old." What will those forty years be like? Rav Kahana said in the name of Rav Broka: From the time of the ingathering of the exiles until the period of the resurrection of the dead, there will be many troubles. Many wars will be waged against Israel, and happy is the one who is free of them . . . Rebi Yehudah said from here there will be a separating, a whitening, and much refining, just as a silvermaker refines his silver and a goldmaker refines his gold . .*

I have written much more on the above subject in a paper titled: Redemption.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 26:34-35*** *When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 49:33 - 50:3*** *When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people. Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, Taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 16:35*** *The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 24:18*** *Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 26:18-21*** *Make twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle And make forty silver bases to go under them--two bases for each frame, one under each projection. For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, make twenty frames And forty silver bases--two under each frame.*

***Shemot (Exodus) 36:20-26*** *They made upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle. Each frame was ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide, With two projections set parallel to each other. They made all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. They made twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle And made forty silver bases to go under them--two bases for each frame, one under each projection. For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, they made twenty frames And forty silver bases-- two under each frame.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 2:7*** *HaShem your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years HaShem your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:1-6*** *Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that HaShem promised on oath to your forefathers. Remember how HaShem your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of HaShem. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so HaShem your God disciplines you. Observe the commands of HaShem your God, walking in his ways and revering him.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 25:1-4*** *When men have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty. If the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence with the number of lashes his crime deserves, But he must not give him more than forty lashes. If he is flogged more than that, your brother will be degraded in your eyes.*

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 29:5-6*** *During the forty years that I led you through the desert, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet. You ate no bread and drank no wine or other fermented drink. I did this so that you might know that I am HaShem your God.*

***Yahoshua (Joshua) 5:5-7*** *All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the desert during the journey from Egypt had not. The Israelites had moved about in the desert forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed HaShem. For HaShem had sworn to them that they would not see the land that he had solemnly promised their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way.*

***Yahoshua (Joshua) 14:6-8*** *Now the men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what HaShem said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of HaShem sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, But my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed HaShem my God wholeheartedly.*

***Shoftim (Judges) 3:7-11*** *The Israelites did evil in the eyes of HaShem; they forgot HaShem their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. The anger of HaShem burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years. But when they cried out to HaShem, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. The Spirit of HaShem came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. HaShem gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.*

***Shoftim (Judges) 5:20-31*** *From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, the age-old river, the river Kishon. March on, my soul; be strong! Then thundered the horses' hoofs--galloping, galloping go his mighty steeds. 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of HaShem. 'Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help HaShem, to help HaShem against the mighty.' "Most blessed of women be Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, most blessed of tent-dwelling women. He asked for water, and she gave him milk; in a bowl fit for nobles she brought him curdled milk. Her hand reached for the tent peg, her right hand for the workman's hammer. She struck Sisera, she crushed his head, she shattered and pierced his temple. At her feet he sank, he fell; there he lay. At her feet he sank, he fell; where he sank, there he fell--dead. "Through the window peered Sisera's mother; behind the lattice she cried out, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why is the clatter of his chariots delayed?' The wisest of her ladies answer her; indeed, she keeps saying to herself, 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoils: a girl or two for each man, colorful garments as plunder for Sisera, colorful garments embroidered, highly embroidered garments for my neck--all this as plunder?' "So may all your enemies perish, HaShem! But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength." Then the land had peace forty years.*

***Shoftim (Judges) 8:28*** *Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years.*

***Shoftim (Judges) 13:1*** *Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of HaShem, so HaShem delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.*

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 4:16-18*** *He told Eli, "I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day." Eli asked, "What happened, my son?" The man who brought the news replied, "Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had led Israel forty years.*

***I Shmuel (Samuel) 17:12-19*** *Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was old and well advanced in years. Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, But David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand. Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."*

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 2:10*** *Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he reigned two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.*

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 5:4*** *David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.*

***I Melakim (Kings) 2:10-11*** *Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. He had reigned forty years over Israel--seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem.*

***I Melakim (Kings) 6:14-17*** *So Solomon built the temple and completed it. He lined its interior walls with cedar boards, paneling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling, and covered the floor of the temple with planks of pine. He partitioned off twenty cubits at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from floor to ceiling to form within the temple an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. The main hall in front of this room was forty cubits long.*

***Marqos (Mark) 1:9-14*** *And it came to pass in those days, that Yeshua came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, [saying], Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. Now after that John was put in prison, Yeshua came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,*

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:3*** *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

**Born Again**

In this paper we have spoken at length about the number forty as it pertains to immersion (baptism). It seems fitting, therefore, that I should explain the meaning of a mysterious passage in the Nazarean Codicil:

***Yochanan (John) 3:5-8*** *Yeshua answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

In this passage we see the Master of Nazareth explaing a bit of sod to Nicodemus. Our Sages have taught that the proper time to speak about sod is at night. Therefore, we are not surprised when Nicodemus comes to Yeshua at night.

In this sod passage, Yeshua speaks about two aspects about being born. The following table illustrates these aspects:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Physical Birth** | **Return to Eden** |
| v.5 A man must be born of water. | A man must be born of the Spirit. |
| V6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. | That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. |

A man born to a woman, passes through water to be born physically. This covers the immersion of the flesh.

After the baby becomes viable, at thirty days of age, the baby lacks the intelligence and maturity to turn to HaShem with all his heart. Therefore, the baby must wait till he is thirteen, till he has attained the maturity to turn voluntarily to HaShem. At this point, he can go to the mikveh and his soul can return to the primal state it had at Eden. When a man immerses in the mikveh, our Sages teach that he has been born again. After all, it is the soul which animates the body. The soul has the body’s connection to HaShem.

We see this progression in the Bne Israel when they left Egypt. The crossing of the Reed Sea was the physical birth. Forty days later they went to the mikveh again and not only immersed themselves, but they immersed even their clothes:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:10-11*** *And HaShem said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day HaShem will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.*

Thus the Bne Israel were born again in preparation for receiving the Torah. After all, it is only those who have purified themselves with the counting of the Omer, that are truly prepared to face HaShem. To be able to stand before HaShem, we must return to the state we had at Eden. We must be born again. We wrote more on this subject in the study on Eden.

**Conclusion**

The Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Yehuda Loewe, explains that the number 40 always means cataclysmic change and new creation.

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1. Excerpted and edited from "The Waters of Eden", by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. When swearing. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Of course she does. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Lit., ‘the thing’. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It does. Now in such a case it is only a Sage who, after satisfying himself of the sincerity of her plea, may absolve her. A sacrifice, however, has no place here at all. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Instead of the sacrifice of a bird prescribed for a woman after a confinement. (17) A lamb or a goat. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. After birth, and not on the seventh which is the last day of uncleanness [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Lit., ‘all.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. At the festive meal given in honor of the [circumcision](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Ccircumcz.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Lit., ‘sad’, on account of the prohibition of [intercourse](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Cmarriageact.html) which remains in force until the conclusion of the seventh day. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Lit., ‘with her’. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Even after the least discharge of blood. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. When intimate intercourse is forbidden. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. By being deprived of her intimacy for certain recurrent periods. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Of Moses’ stay in the mountain. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The features of a human embryo take shape after forty days. The idea of the expression is that sin is an essential degradation of the human dignity. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. This translation of yekum corresponds to E.V. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Viz. Cain, who arose against his brother, deriving yekum from kam, to arise. He was not punished at the time, but would now be punished. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. E J.i.e.He kept his judgment in suspense. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Sc. Cain, cf. supra, XXII, 12. E.V. ’Every living substance ‘. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ab. v, l. R H. 32a. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. These are interpreted as though they read: In the beginning God said, ‘Let there be heaven and earth’; and God said, ‘Let there be ruah’ (E.V. ' spirit’ but apparently rendered here ' wind ‘). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. ‘Ruah,’ E.V.’spirit’. M.K. explains: see the greatness of the wind, that His creation required a separate order! Thus he agrees with the first Tanna [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. By Rabbi Abner Weiss [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. R' Michaek L. Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet* , 1990, p.148 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. I.e., forty days after conception the soul is implanted in the embryo. In MS.M.: ‘the soul is given in forty days’. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. 2 Luqas (Acts) 1:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. 2 Luqas 1:6-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. ***Marqos 16:19, II Luqas 1:3*** [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. V. p. 155, n. 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. V. p. 155, n. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. I.e., other than cultured people who generally show respect to scholars. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. MV, also other texts, attribute this dictum to Samuel the Little. In some versions it is preceded by the dictum which is also found in the latter's name in IV, 19. By some, our Mishnah is credited to Ben He-He, whose name occurs in the next Mishnah. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. tren (v. Meh. VIII, 8), lit., that which was (to be) read sc. from a written text (synonymous with ‘The Law in Writing’), as distinguished from vban ‘that which was (to be) recited sc. from hearing and memory’ (synonymous with ‘The Law which was (transmitted) by (word of) mouth’). The five years here are said to be based on the analogy of the newly planted tree, the fruit of which becomes available for general consumption in the fifth year (Lev. XIX, 25). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. vban v. previous note. The age of ten in this connection is explained thus: In Num. IV, 3’ etc. the period of a Levite's service is commanded to begin ‘from thirty years old’, but ibid. VIII, 24, ‘from twenty-five years old.’ The discrepancy is explained by allotting five years for the Levite's training before he becomes proficient for his sacred duties (v. Hui. 24a). Five years is, thus, an accepted period for the first phase of education. Commencing Scripture at five, one is ready for Mishnah at ten. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. In connection with many precepts, references to the committing of sins and penalties, the term aht — ‘man’ — is used; hence the age at which one becomes subject to Mitzvoth and penalties is thirteen, when the boy is said to have matured into a ‘man’ (v. Elijah Wilna to this Mishnah). This, of course, underlies the Bar-Mizwah institution, which, however, in the present usage of the term, appears to be of much later origin.V. Schechter, Studies in Judaism (First Series), p. 378ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. sunk, Used here, apparently, in the special sense of study based on the Mishnah or Oral Learning (though not, of course, in the specific sense that we use it), rather than study in general. At the age of fifteen, he will have completed the second five years’ stage of his studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Eighteen was the age recommended at which a man should marry so that he may fulfil the precept, When a man taketh a new wife, he shall not go out in the host . . .’ one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he hath taken (Deut. XXIV, 5) and yet be ready to undertake military service at the age of twenty (Num. I, 3 passim). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Some: For military service which began ‘from twenty years old’ (Num. ibid.). Most commentators: for pursuing, seeking, a livelihood. This will have given him a further five-year period (from fifteen to twenty) for devoting himself to Talmud before setting out in earnest on a worldly career. Others explain ‘for pursuing’ to mean for quickness, zest, impetuosity, in the pursuit of one's desires or ideals (so Abrabanel, v. Taylor). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Thirty was the age at which a Levite entered upon his full duties which comprised the work of service and the work of bearing burdens (Num. IV, 47); these duties being so comprehensive and arduous required the possession of full physical faculties i e jf Scripture thus considers thirty the age for strength. V. also ibid. VII, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. According to Num. VIII, 25f.: from the age of fifty years they (the Levites) shall return from the service of the work, and shall serve no more; but shall minister with their brethren in the tent of meeting, to keep the charge, but they shall do no manner of service. As their ministrations were not in the nature of actual work, they must then have served in the capacity of responsible counsellors. Hence fifty must be the age when a man becomes fitted for giving counsel. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. V. II Sam. V, 4: David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned.forty years. i.e., he lived seventy years; and I Chron. XXIX, 28, And he (David) died in a good old age ( vcha =hoary head). Thus vcha is reached at the age of seventy. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Cf. Ps. XC, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. vuak The Bibl. root vua means ‘sink down’ and its cognates vja and vja ‘bend’, ‘bow down’. Others take vua here as a noun which in the Bible occurs in a feminine form vjua’ ‘pit’, ‘grave’. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Elijah Wilna cites Isa. LXV, 20, There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the youth shall die one hundred years old, and points out that the context there shows that this is intended as a blessing. Thus the extreme limit up to which life is a blessing is a hundred years; and one who exceeds that limit is as one who no more belongs to the world. Exceptions to this are very rare; and in the case of Moses, Scripture found it necessary to say: his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated (Deut. XXXIV, 7). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. When chosen by Ahasuerus. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. V. supra, p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Cf. Sot. 22b. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. hn --[two](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Ctwo.html) letters whose numerical equivalent is 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Berachot* 60a [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *Avot* 5:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)