hline

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

By Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David (Greg Killian)

hline

[In the Torah 1](#_Toc24703605)

[In Pesach 2](#_Toc24703606)

[Who knows four? 4](#_Toc24703607)

[An Essay 4](#_Toc24703608)

[In Creation 6](#_Toc24703609)

[Exiles 7](#_Toc24703610)

[“Ma’aseh Avot siman l’banim” 9](#_Toc24703611)

[An essay - by HaRav Shammai Zahn, zt”l 10](#_Toc24703612)

[Four and Five 11](#_Toc24703613)

[In Succoth 11](#_Toc24703614)

[In The Temple 11](#_Toc24703615)

[Fasts 12](#_Toc24703616)

[Torah Interpretation 12](#_Toc24703617)

hline

In this paper I would like to explore the [number](nchart.html) four (4) as it thematically affects [Succoth](succoth.html) and [Pesach](passover.html). In the process, we will discover the meaning and significance of the [number](nchart.html) four.

Four is the value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letter](letters.html) dalet: ד.

Dalet means *door*.

**According to Chazal, our Sages, the** [**number**](nchart.html) **four signifies completion, wholeness, or fullness, as we shall see.**

The Maharal indicates that four:

1. Indicates *place* because a “place” extends in the four directions. This is why we have expressions like, “the four corners of the earth”. We also indicate all directions by saying: North, [East](east.html), West, and South. As it is spoken by the Prophet:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 11:11-12*** *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *again the second* [*time*](time.html) *to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and* [*from Egypt*](thebirth.html)*, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and* [*gather*](gather.html) *together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*

1. The [number](nchart.html) four symbolizes *diversity*, as the four directions are independent of each other and have no part in common.

The [number](nchart.html) four is a [number](nchart.html) of separation, and represents dispersal in all four directions. We see scripture describing division and separation as:

***Zechariah 2:10*** *...for I have scattered you like the four directions of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*.*

Four is the [number](nchart.html) representing [exile](galuyot.html), as we shall see shortly.

# In the Torah

The [first](one.html) use of the [number](nchart.html) four, in the Torah, is found in [connection](connection.html) with the water that flowed out of [Gan Eden](eden.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:10*** *And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.*

The four matriarchs; the four wives of [Jacob](israelja.html): Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpa.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 47:24*** *And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the* [*fifth*](five.html) *part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for* [*seed*](flower.html) *of the field, and for your* [*food*](food.html)*, and for them of your households, and for* [*food*](food.html) *for your little ones.*

**TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN** **to Debarim (Deuteronomy) 28:12** Four keys are in the [hand](fourteen.html) of the LORD of all the [world](worlds.html), which He has not delivered into the [hands](fourteen.html) of any secondary power: 1. the key of life, 2. and of the tombs, 3. and of [food](food.html), 4. and of rain; and thus did Mosheh the prophet [speak](mashal.html): “The LORD will open to you His good treasure which is with Him in the [heavens](heaven.html), and will give you the rain of your land in its season; the early in Marchesvan, and the latter in [Nisan](feasts.html); and will bless you in all the works of your [hands](fourteen.html); and you will lend to many peoples, but will have no need to borrow.

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 28:12*** *The Lord will open up for you His good treasury, the* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, to give your land its rain in its [right]* [*time*](time.html)*, and to bless everything you do. And you will lend many* [*nations*](nations.html)*, but you will not [need to] borrow.*

# In [Pesach](passover.html)

The [number](nchart.html) four, more than any other digit, plays a significant part in the [Passover](passover.html) celebration. The [Haggada](haggada.html) is replete with things that [number](nchart.html) four:

✡ There are the four sons,

✡ four glasses of wine,

✡ four questions.

✡ Four [mitzvot](cmds613.html): [Matza](chametz.html), maror, [haggada](haggada.html), and four cups.

✡ [Three](three.html) [matzot](chametz.html) which become four.

[Pesach](passover.html) is preceded by four special Shabbats: [Shabbat](sabbath.html) [Shekalim](shekalim.html), [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Zakhor, [Shabbat](sabbath.html) Parah, [Shabbat](sabbath.html) HaChodesh.

The [holiday](festival.html) itself even has four names: Chag HaPesach (the [Festival](festival.html) of [Passover](passover.html)), Chag HaMatzot (the [Festival](festival.html) of [Matza](chametz.html)), Chag Ha’[aviv](feasts.html) (the [Festival](festival.html) of Spring) and Z’man Cheiruteinu (the [Time](time.html) of our [Freedom](freedom.html)).

There are four categories of persons who must thank [HaShem](hashem.html) for deliverance from danger: sea voyagers, desert travelers, released prisoners and people who have recovered from sickness. The Gaon of Vilna indicates that the deliverance [from Egypt](thebirth.html) symbolizes rescue from all these four hazards.

The Torah uses four expressions to describe our [redemption](redemption.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html): [HaShem](hashem.html) said to the [Jews](gen-jew.html) in Egypt:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 6:6-7*** *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and*

*1. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and*

*2. I will rid you out of their bondage, and*

*3. I will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And*

*4. I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall* [*know*](daat.html) *that I [am]* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Sanctification** |
| **“I am** [**HaShem**](hashem.html) **and I will separate you** [**from Egypt**](thebirth.html)**ian bondage,** |  |
|  | **Deliverance** |
| **I will deliver you (through** [**plagues**](plagues.html)**),** |  |
|  | [**Redemption**](redemption.html) |
| **I will** [**redeem**](redemption.html) **you with an outstretched arm,** |  |
|  | **Completion** |
| **I will take you as My own people and**  **I will be your God.”** |  |

Our Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that the four statements [speak](mashal.html) to four [exiles](galuyot.html) of [Babylon](bavel.html), Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *I will bring you out* | [Babylon](bavel.html) |
| *I will rid you out of their bondage* | Persia |
| *I will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *you* | Greece |
| *I will take you to me for a people* | Rome ([Edom](edom.html)) |

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LXXXVIII:5*** *On what grounds did the Sages institute the four cups of* [*Passover*](passover.html)*? R. Huna said in R. Banayah’s* [*name*](name.html)*: [They instituted them] in allusion to the four expressions of* [*redemption*](redemption.html) *which occur in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with Egypt: I will bring you out... and I will deliver you... and I will* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *you... and I will take you (Ex. VI, 6 f.). R. Samuel b. Nahman said: In allusion to the four cups mentioned in our text: AND PHARAOH’S CUP WAS IN MY* [*HAND*](fourteen.html)*; AND I TOOK THE GRAPES, AND PRESSED THEM INTO PHARAOH’S CUP, AND I GAVE THE CUP INTO PHARAOH’S* [*HAND*](fourteen.html)*... AND THOU SHALT GIVE PHARAOH’S CUP INTO HIS* [*HAND*](fourteen.html) *(XL, II, 13). R. Levi said: In allusion to the four empires. R. Joshua b. Levi said: In allusion to the four cups of fury which the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, will make the* [*nations*](nations.html) *of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *to drink, as it says, For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto me: Take this cup of the wine of fury, etc. (Jer. XXV, 15);* [*Babylon*](bavel.html) *hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *(ib. LI, 7); For in the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of the Lord there is a cup (Ps. LXXV, 9); And burning wind shall be the portion of their cup (ib. XI, 6). Corresponding to these the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, will give Israel to drink four cups of* [*salvation*](salvation.html) *in the Messianic* [*future*](future.html)*, as it says, O Lord, the portion of mine* [*inheritance*](inherit.html) *and of my cup, Thou maintainest my lot (ib. XVI, 5); Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou hast anointed my* [*head*](body.html) *with oil; my cup runneth over (ib. XXIII, 5); I will lift up the cup of salvations, and call upon the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord (ib. CXVI, 13): it does not say ‘The cup of* [*salvation*](salvation.html)*,’ but ‘The cup of salvations’--*[*one*](one.html) *in the days of the Messianic* [*future*](future.html) *and* [*one*](one.html) *in the days of Gog and Magog.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***XV:6*** *THIS MONTH SHALL BE UNTO YOU (XII, 2). Another interpretation: It is written: Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn? (S.S. VI, 10). Four eulogies of Israel are mentioned here, corresponding with the four* [*exiles*](galuyot.html)*, throughout which Israel did not deny God. How do we* [*know*](daat.html) *that this was so in the* [*Babylonian*](bavel.html)[*exile*](galuyot.html)*? Because it is said: ‘ Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn?’ Nebuchadnezzar used to worship the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*, as it says: How art thou fallen from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, O day-*[*star*](mazaroth.html)*, son of the morning (Isa. XIV,12), but Daniel used to rise early and* [*pray*](prayer.html) *unto the Omnipresent, for it says: Now his windows were open in his upper chamber toward* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *(Dan. VI, 11), evening, morning, and noon. Why did he get up early and* [*pray*](prayer.html)*? So that God should have compassion on Israel. Concerning him does Solomon say: He that early [E.V. ‘diligently’] seeketh good seeketh favor (Prov. XI, 27). For this reason was God with them in the* [*time*](time.html) *of their trouble, as it is said: I love them that love me (ib. VIII, 17).6 And so we find that when Daniel was cast into the lions’ den, he was not harmed, for it says: My God hath sent His* [*angel*](angels.html)*, and hath shut the lions’* [*mouths*](body.html)*, and they have not hurt me (Dan. VI, 23). Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were cast into the fiery* [*furnace*](furnace.html) *but were not harmed, for it says: Nor was the* [*hair*](hair.html) *of their* [*head*](body.html) *singed... nor had the smell of* [*fire*](fire.html) *passed on them (ib. III, 27).7 Instead of which they gave light to the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, like the dawn which gives light to the* [*world*](worlds.html)*; therefore does it say: ‘ that looketh forth as the dawn.’ Moreover, they made* [*idol*](idolatry.html)*-worshippers recognize God and praise Him; for when Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah emerged from the* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*, Nebuchadnezzar said: Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, the servants of the God on High (ib28). So, too, Darius, when Daniel fell into the lions’ den, said: Let men tremble and* [*fear*](fear.html) *the God of Daniel; for He is the living God (ib. VI, 27). Hence does it say:’ Who is she that looketh forth as the dawn?’*

*‘Fair as the* [*moon*](chodesh.html)*’ (S.S. loc. cit.)--during the Median [i.e. Persian] captivity. You find that if the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *does not appear in the sky at night, the* [*world*](worlds.html) *is so dark that a man cannot* [*walk*](walking.html) *about even within the* [*city*](city.html)*, but as soon as the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *appears in the sky, all rejoice and* [*walk*](walking.html) *about. So it was in the days of Ahasuerus who decreed that Israel should be destroyed, slain, and made to perish; but* [*Esther*](esther.html) *came and brought light to Israel, for it says: The* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *had light and gladness, and joy and honor (Est. VIII, 16). ‘ Fair as the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *‘refers, therefore, to the Median captivity. Should you inquire why* [*Esther*](esther.html) *is compared to the* [*moon*](chodesh.html)*, the answer is that just as the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *renews itself every* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *days, so did* [*Esther*](esther.html) *say: But I have not been called to come in unto the king these* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *days (ib. IV, 11). ‘Fair as the* [*moon*](chodesh.html)*’ refers, therefore, to the Median captivity. ‘Clear as the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*’ (S.S. Ioc. cit.) refers to the Greek kingdom. Alexander the son of Helios was his* [*name*](name.html)*, and the* [*Sun*](hachama.html) *is called a hero, as it is said, He rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course (Ps. XIX, 6). During the summer* [*cycle*](cycles.html) *all flee from it [the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*], for who can endure its scorching rays, as it says: And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof (ib. 7)? Thus it was with the Greek kingdom; all were afraid of it. But Mattathias the* [*priest*](priests.html) *and his sons stood firm in their faith in God, with the result that the Greek legions fled from before them and were all slain. Hence God said unto them: Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say: I am strong (Joel IV, 10), the verse: So perish all Thine enemies, O Lord; but they that love Him be as the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *when he goeth forth in his might (Judg. v, 31) corroborating the words, ‘clear as the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*.*

*They were terrible as an army with banners (S.S. VI, 10) in* [*Edom*](edom.html)*; and why is she [Israel] called ‘terrible ‘? Because she was placed in a kingdom which inspired* [*awe*](fear.html)*; for it says: And behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly (Dan. VII, 7).*

The Shulchan Aruch[[1]](#footnote-1) explicitly says that it is possible to add more cups[[2]](#footnote-2). The [one](one.html) exception is that it is forbidden to add cups of wine between the [third](three.html) and fourth cups.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Maharal explains that this [halacha](walking.html) is connected to the four [stages](stages.html) of [redemption](redemption.html). It is possible to “interrupt” between the [first](one.html) [three](three.html) [stages](stages.html). But it is forbidden to interrupt between the [third](three.html) and fourth [stages](stages.html). The national independence of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, “I will [redeem](redemption.html) you”, has meaning only in context of our identity as [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [nation](nations.html) as the recipients of His Torah: “And I will take you to me as a [nation](nations.html), and I will be to you as G-d”, when we accept the Torah.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The four expressions of the Egyptian [Passover](passover.html) have their counterparts in the Messianic [redemption](redemption.html):

***Yehezekel (Ezekiel) 34:13-14******I will*** *bring them out from the* [*nations*](nations.html) *and* [*gather*](gather.html) *them from the countries, and* ***I will*** *bring them into their own land.* ***I will*** *pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.* ***I will*** *tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.*

The [number](nchart.html) four signifies the completion of our [exiles](galuyot.html). The [nation](nations.html) of Israel became full and complete upon the fulfillment of the fourth utterance of [redemption](redemption.html), this fourth and final stage in their development.

## Who knows four?

During the [Pesach](passover.html) [seder](haggada.html), we sing several times. [One](one.html) of the songs found in the [Haggada](haggada.html) speaks about the [numbers](nchart.html) from [one](one.html) to [thirteen](thirteen.html). In the song “Echad mi yodei’ah?” when you get to “Who knows four?”, the participants vie to answer with the following words:

*I* [*know*](daat.html) *four. Four are the mothers of Israel…*

The answer is “four are the mothers, [three](three.html) are the [fathers](fathers.html), [two](two.html) are the tablets, [one](one.html) is G-d…”

The four mothers are the four matriarchs: Sarah, Rivka, Leah, and Rachel.

## An Essay

by Rabbi Yehudah Prero

At the [Seder](haggada.html), we drink four cups of wine, we ask four questions, and we read about four sons. What is the significance of the [number](nchart.html) four ?

The Divrei Negidim (which is attributed to the Maharal of Prague) discusses the [number](nchart.html) four initially in the context of the four cups of wine. The four cups correspond to four expressions of [redemption](redemption.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) uttered. The Divrei Negidim explains that the [nation](nations.html) of Israel was subjugated threefold. Firstly, they were in [exile](galuyot.html), as strangers in a strange land. Secondly, not only were they in [exile](galuyot.html), but they were enslaved in [exile](galuyot.html). Lastly, not only were they enslaved, but they were tortured, [physically](physical.html) and mentally. [HaShem](hashem.html) [first](one.html) told us that he would take us out from under the burdens which Egypt placed on us. [HaShem](hashem.html) then told us that we would be saved from the slavery. Finally, we were told that we would be [redeemed](redemption.html). This would bring the [nation](nations.html) to a point where they would not be persecuted slaves in [exile](galuyot.html). But what would they be? That is the point of the fourth expression, “And I will take them to Me as a [nation](nations.html)”. The [nation](nations.html) would now be a just that, a [nation](nations.html), with a purpose, with a common bond unifying the [nation](nations.html). We were taken out to be the [nation](nations.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). This fourth expression brings us to a level of fullness and completion. The [Jews](gen-jew.html) were no longer just a large group of people. They were a true blue [nation](nations.html).

**The** [**number**](nchart.html) **four signifies completion or fullness.**

The [number](nchart.html) four signifies this completion, this fullness. The [nation](nations.html) of Israel became full and complete upon the fulfillment of the fourth utterance of [redemption](redemption.html), this fourth and final stage in their development.

The four questions [known](daat.html) as *Mah Nishtaneh*, according to the Abarbanel, are meant to set the tone for the evening. The questions (or expressions of bewilderment, as some explain) are meant to point out the inherent contradictions in the evening. When the four questions are read, we are saying - Look at what will be going on tonight: We [eat](eating.html) [Matza](chametz.html) and Maror, which remind us of the bread we [ate](eating.html) as slaves and the bitter life we had as slaves. We then dip our [food](food.html) and recline, which are actions of the aristocracy. Is this night a reminder of the bitter [experience](experience.html) we had in Egypt, or is it a celebration of [freedom](freedom.html)?

We [know](daat.html) the answer: Yes, we were slaves, and yes, [HaShem](hashem.html) freed us. Why four questions? Perhaps because it is these very four questions which encapsulate the [Seder](haggada.html). The questions focus on [freedom](freedom.html) vs. slavery. How can we have both in [one](one.html) night? These four questions are enough to set the very tone we need on this night. They are a perfect summation of all that [needs](needs.html) to be said in order to get the ball rolling at the [Seder](haggada.html). They point out four practices that are unique to this evening, and that do not all fit into the same logical category. They are a set of questions that are complete and full. Nothing more [needs](needs.html) to be asked. Only answers are needed.

The Divrei Negidim explains that the four sons are also a ‘complete set’. The Hakham, the Wise Son, [wants](needs.html) to [know](daat.html). He researches. He inquires. He pursues [knowledge](knowledge.html) and wisdom. He becomes wise. For this reason, he is called the Wise Son. *The Tam*, the Simple Son, is neither intellectually superior nor inferior to the Wise Son. However, he does not pursue intellectual growth. He does not strive for greatness. When he sees something out of the norm, he will inquire. However, unless there is an impetus to inquire, no query will be forthcoming. For this reason, he is termed *Simple*. The She’aino Yodai’a Lish’ol, the [One](one.html) Who Does Not [Know](daat.html) How To Ask, is simply not as smart as the other [two](two.html). Even when he sees something that is unusual, he will not inquire about it. Oddities are no inspiration for education. He just does not [know](daat.html) how to ask even when questions are most definitely appropriate. The Rasha, the [Wicked](wicked.html) Son, is on par with the Hakham. He is smart. He does have a drive for the bigger and better. However, his drive is motivated by a [desire](needs.html) to do evil. He has no urge to do good. Any [knowledge](knowledge.html) gained is used for the pursuit of the amoral. His wisdom is not put to ‘good’ use. For this reason, he is called [Wicked](wicked.html).

These four sons represent all the elements on the intellectual spectrum. There are those who are highly motivated, minimally motivated, and those who need more than motivation to bring them to a level of understanding. The Torah addresses the [needs](needs.html) of each of these children by instructing a father how to tell each of these children about the [departure from Egypt](thebirth.html) in a way that best suits their level of understanding. But what about that child who knows just fine what is going on, but could care less? What about that son who is not using his [knowledge](knowledge.html) for good, productive purposes? The Torah has an answer for him as well.

These four sons and their respective responses are all the Torah needed to cover any situation. They are complete. They satisfy all options. Again, the [number](nchart.html) four signals a whole, a fullness, and a completion.

# In [Creation](bara.html)

[Creation](bara.html) consists of four [stages](stages.html), alluded to in the verse:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 43:7*** *“All that is called by My* [*Name*](name.html)*,*

*(1) for My glory,*

*(2) I have created it,*

*(3) I have formed it,*

*(4) and I have made it.”*

These four [stages](stages.html) are represented by the four [letters](letters.html) of the Tetragrammaton, [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [Name](name.html) Yod Hay Vav Hay. The [first](one.html) stage is “[HaShem](hashem.html)’s Glory”, where things exist conceptually, but not in actuality. The next stage is “[creation](bara.html)“, which represents [creation](bara.html) ex nihilo, “something out of nothing”. Then comes “formation” where the primeval substance attains the [first](one.html) semblance of form. Finally comes making,” where the process is completed and yields a finished product. Our sages also [teach](teacher.html) us that the [world](worlds.html) was created with [ten](ten.html) sayings. These are the [ten](ten.html) times that the expression “and [HaShem](hashem.html) said” appears in the account of [creation](bara.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***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*](ten.html)[*commands*](cmds613.html) *was the* [*world*](worlds.html) *created, and these are they: In the beginning God created (Gen. I, 1); And the spirit (ruach) of God hovered (ib. 2); 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*](gather.html) *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*](body.html) *of the waters,’ and included, AND THE LORD GOD SAID: IT IS NOT GO0D THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE. R.* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *b. R. Kirshai said: A separate* [*command*](cmds613.html) *was devoted to the wind.*

These “[ten](ten.html) sayings” enter into each of the four [stages](stages.html) of [creation](bara.html), the total [number](nchart.html) of elements of [creation](bara.html) is [forty](forty.html). The [number](nchart.html) [forty](forty.html) is therefore very intimately related to the concept of [creation](bara.html).

In enumerating the categories of “work” that are forbidden on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html), the [Talmud](orallaw.html) [teaches](teacher.html) us that there are “[forty](forty.html) less [one](one.html)”. As we [know](daat.html), these [thirty-nine](thirtynine.html) categories of “work” parallel the types of activity that went into [creation](bara.html), just as our own [Sabbath](sabbath.html) rest parallels the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) of [creation](bara.html). There is [one](one.html) [type](types.html) of “work,” however, that we cannot duplicate, and that is [creation](bara.html) ex nihilo - creating something out of nothing. This is the [one](one.html) category that is not included among the types of work forbidden on the [Sabbath](sabbath.html). Otherwise, the categories of “work” represent the elements of [creation](bara.html), “[forty](forty.html) less [one](one.html)”. The four basic [stages](stages.html) 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](forty.html). The [forty](forty.html) Seah of the [mikveh](forty.html) represent the basic elements of [creation](bara.html). The primeval stage of [creation](bara.html) was basically [one](one.html) of water. Therefore, when a person passes through the [forty](forty.html) seah of water in the [mikveh](forty.html), he is passing through the initial steps of [creation](bara.html).

Rashi says on the *pasuk* “[*Shema*](shema.html) *Israel*”, listen Israel, the “[HaShem](hashem.html) Who is our G-d”, in the times of [Mashiach](mashiach.html), He will be accepted as “[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *Echad*, “the only [one](one.html) and true G-d.”*,* the unity of His existence, that all is [HaShem](hashem.html). Then it says, everyone will worship the [oneness](oneness.html) of His existence.

So until those days, just before [Mashiach](mashiach.html) comes, it’s written: we taste this divine manifestation of truth and revelation of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s unity. As it says, the [heavens](heaven.html) reflect the signature and imprint of its maker. This we see today, more than ever.

For this taste and awareness of [HaShem](hashem.html) in all of [creation](bara.html), we have always seen the [number](nchart.html) four, which is the [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), *Yod Heh Vav Heh,* through which everything was created, reflected in so many essential areas of [creation](bara.html).

Four components that pair into [two](two.html). Exactly like *Yod* & *Heh*, *Vav* & *Heh*, the source of all [creation](bara.html) and the potential for all. By the way, Torah already tells us: Everything at all levels, comprises of a pair, a [giver](giver.html) and receiver.

\* \* \*

A key tenet of Chasidic thought is that the microcosm emanates from and reflects the macrocosm. So we also find many other sets of fours reflected in nature. For example, *Chasidut* speaks of four categories of being in the natural [world](worlds.html): the inanimate (*domem*); the vegetative (*tzomeach*); the animal (*chai*); and the [speaking](mashal.html) (*medaber*). These four types of natural existence levels also exist within each person, so to [speak](mashal.html). Or, there are four seasons of the year and four directions of the compass. Indeed, the traditional understanding of the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) as composed of four elements -- [fire](fire.html), air, water, earth -- could also be translated into the language of modern science: the matter of our [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) assumes [one](one.html) of four states: solid, liquid, gas, active combustion; or the four elements can be said to correspond to the four basic chemical elements of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen; or to the four elements of subatomic phenomena; or to the four forces [known](daat.html) to modern physics (gravity, electromagnetic, strong, weak).

On a [spiritual](physical.html) plane, there are numerous fours: the four types of sons mentioned in the [Haggada](haggada.html); the four components of a Torah text (cantillations, vowels, crowns, [letters](letters.html)); the four basic levels of Torah interpretation (Pshat - literal, [Remez](remez.html) - allusion, Drash - allegory, [Sod](sod.html) - [secret](sod.html)), etc.

[Jewish](gen-jew.html) mysticism also explains that each of the four higher [spiritual](physical.html) [worlds](worlds.html) possesses the entire spectrum of the so-called [ten](ten.html) *sefirot*. The *sefirot* are [HaShem](hashem.html)’s creative attributes or characteristics which emanate to, structure, and are reflected in all existence, including the [spiritual](physical.html) powers of the human soul. (Materially, each thing in the [world](worlds.html) also reflects this [ten](ten.html)-ness; it can be said to have [nine](nine.html) sides or dimensions: width, length, height; beginning, middle, end; and the tenth aspect is the thing itself taken as a whole).

# [Exiles](galuyot.html)

According to our Sages, [Edom](edom.html) is [one](one.html) of the four great [exiles](galuyot.html): [Babylonian](bavel.html), Persian, Greek and [Edom](edom.html). The pattern for these four major [exiles](galuyot.html) is found in the account of the four kings versus the [five](five.html) kings:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 14:1-9*** *And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of* [*nations*](nations.html)*: [That these] made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea.* [*Twelve*](twelve.html) *years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the* [*thirteenth*](thirteen.html) *year they rebelled. And in the* [*fourteenth*](fourteen.html) *year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that [were] with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which [is] by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which [is]* [*Kadesh*](stages.html)*, and smote all the country of the* [*Amalekites*](amalek.html)*, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar. And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same [is] Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of* [*nations*](nations.html)*, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with* [*five*](five.html)*.*

The narrative, in Bereshit 14, describes the battle between the four kings and the [five](five.html) kings. Who were these kings and their subjects? The [five](five.html) kings were kings of cities in the [Jordan](stages.html) Valley plains. The four kings were kings of cities in [Babylon](bavel.html) and Assyria. The armies of the [five](five.html) kings lost to the armies of the four, and subsequently served the strongest of the victors, Chedorlaomer.[[5]](#footnote-5)

It is worth noting that the [Amalekites](amalek.html) are mentioned in the above pasuk long before [Amalek](amalek.html) was even born! Concerning this anomaly, the [Midrash](orallaw.html) writes:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XLII:7*** *AND THEY TURNED BACK, AND CAME TO EN - MISHPAT-THE SAME IS* [*KADESH*](stages.html) *(XIV, 7). R. Aha said: They came only in order to* [*attack*](attacks.html) *the eyeball of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*; the eye which executed judgment in the* [*world*](worlds.html) *they* [*desire*](needs.html) *to blind! THE SAME (HI) IS* [*KADESH*](stages.html)*: R. Aba said: This is written hu (he): it was he [*[*Abraham*](avraham.html)*] that sanctified (kiddash) the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, in the fiery* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*.1 AND THEY SMOTE ALL THE COUNTRY OF THE* [*AMALEKITES*](amalek.html)*.* [*Amalek*](amalek.html) *had not yet arisen, yet you say, AND THEY SMOTE ALL THE COUNTRY OF THE* [*AMALEKITES*](amalek.html)*! But, He declareth the end from the beginning (Isa. XLVI, 10). AND ALSO THE AMORITES, THAT DWELT IN HAZAZON--TAMAR: this means, in En-gedi of the palm-trees. AND THERE WENT OUT THE KING OF SODOM... FOUR KINGS AGAINST THE* [*FIVE*](five.html) *(XIV, 8 f.). Four kings waged war with* [*five*](five.html) *and defeated them.*

Alternatively, this was not a battle between [two](two.html) alliances of cities. Rather, this was a battle between a coalition of [five](five.html) cities and a confederation of four countries. The four kings joined forces in order to conquer the [world](worlds.html). The reason, therefore, that the [five](five.html) kings paid tribute to Chedorlaomer, wasn’t because he was the strongest of the four kings, but rather because the territory of their [five](five.html) cities fell out in his lot of the [world](worlds.html).[[6]](#footnote-6)

The war was fought over only [one](one.html) thing, money.

It was midnight, we are told, when [Avraham](avraham.html) reached northern Israel and battled the four kings. [Avraham](avraham.html)’s deliverance came at midnight, as we read in the [haggada](haggada.html). The idea of midnight is the that this is a [time](time.html) for [prayer](prayer.html) to be heard and [redemption](redemption.html) to be accomplished. Night [time](time.html) also alludes to the [galut](galuyot.html), the [exile](galuyot.html).

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XLII:2*** *R. Abin said: Just as he commenced with four kings, so will he conclude with four kings. [He commences with four kings, viz.]: With Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar (Gen. XIV, 9); so he ends with four kingdoms: the kingdom of* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*, the kingdom of Media, the kingdom of Greece, and the empire of* [*Edom*](edom.html) *[i.e. Rome]. R. Phinehas quoted in R. Abin’s* [*name*](name.html)*: But they* [*know*](daat.html) *not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel, for He hath* [*gathered*](gather.html) *them as the sheaves to the threshing- floor (Micah IV, 12). Thus, why Came all these as allies (Gen. XIV, 3)? In order that they might come and fall by the* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*; hence it is written, AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE DAYS OF AMRAPHEL, etc.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XLII:4*** *AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE DAYS OF AMRAPHEL. He was called by* [*three*](three.html) *names: Cush, Nimrod, and Amraphel. Cush, because he was indeed a Cushite; Nimrod, because he incited the* [*world*](worlds.html) *to revolt (himrid) Amraphel denotes: he made a declaration (amar imrah), ‘ I will cast down (appilah).’ [Another interpretation is] that he made sport of (amar we-afle) the* [*world*](worlds.html)*, also that he made sport of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*; again, that he ordered* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *to be thrown (amar we-hippil) into the* [*furnace*](furnace.html)*. ARIOCH KING OF ELLASAR. R. Jose of Milhaya said: Why are they [hazel-nuts] called elsarin? Because [they grow in the territory] of Ellasar. CHEDORLAOMER KING OF ELAM, AND TIDAL KING OF GOIIM. R. Levi said: There is a place which is so called there [sc. in* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*], and [its inhabitants] took a certain man and made him king over them. R. Johanan said: And his* [*name*](name.html) *was Tidal. Another interpretation: AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE DAYS OF AMRAPHEL KING OF SHINAR: this alludes to* [*Babylon*](bavel.html)*; ARIOCH KING OF ELLASAR: that alludes to Greece; CHEDORLAOMER KING OF ELAM: that is Media; AND TIDAL THE KING OF* [*GOYIM*](gen-jew.html) *[lit. ‘*[*nations*](nations.html)*’]: this alludes to the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *Power [i.e. Rome] which levies troops from all the* [*nations*](nations.html) *of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. R. Eleazar b. R. Abina said: When you see the Powers fighting each other, look for the* [*coming*](coming.html) *[lit. ‘* [*feet*](heel.html) *‘] of the King* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*. The proof is that in the days of* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, because these Powers fought against each other, greatness came to* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*.*

## “Ma’aseh Avot siman l’banim”

The actions of the father are a [sign](signs.html) for the children.

The four kings represent a [world](worlds.html)-view where everything in [creation](bara.html) is subsumed under the “forces of nature.” This view holds that there is nothing else in this [world](worlds.html), except this [world](worlds.html). Four always denotes completion or fullness in this [world](worlds.html).

[Avraham](avraham.html) and the [five](five.html) kings were focused on an existence beyond this [world](worlds.html). This is the [world](worlds.html) view represented by the [number](nchart.html) [five](five.html). [Five](five.html) in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) is represented by the [letter](letters.html) v *heh*. If you look at the [letter](letters.html) v *heh*, you will see that it is composed of the [letter](letters.html) s *dalet* (which stands for four) plus the [letter](letters.html) h *yod*. h *Yod* is a unique [letter](letters.html). It is the only [letter](letters.html) which doesn’t touch the line on which you write. It is no more than the smallest dot floating above the line, representing intangible, [spiritual](physical.html) existence. The written [letter](letters.html) v *heh*, then, is a pictogram of this [world](worlds.html) focused and revolving around that which is above this [world](worlds.html) — the s *dalet* (the “four” of this [world](worlds.html)) with the h *yod* of spirituality at its axis. [Avraham](avraham.html) fought on behalf of the [five](five.html) kings against the four kings. [Avraham](avraham.html) was the [first](one.html) person to look at this [world](worlds.html) and see an existence beyond. If there was a [creation](bara.html), there had to be a Creator. After Avram fought the war against the four kings, [HaShem](hashem.html) added a [letter](letters.html) to his [name](name.html). Not surprisingly, that [letter](letters.html) was the [letter](letters.html) v *heh*. For [Avraham](avraham.html) stood for all that the v *heh* represents, that this [world](worlds.html) revolves around a Higher Existence.

The [number](nchart.html) [five](five.html) thus represents the perfection of the natural order (the [number](nchart.html) four), with the addition of [one](one.html): [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself.

Bereshit (Genesis) chapter 14 contains the Torah account of a cosmic battle which will reverberate till we hear the footsteps of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html). This was the cataclysmic battle of ascendancy of the great forces of the [world](worlds.html).

The battle of the four kings against the [five](five.html) kings leads to victory for the four kings. These four kings, in turn, are defeated by [Avraham](avraham.html) and his trusty servant, Eliezer.

The Torah is foreshadowing [Jewish](gen-jew.html), and [world](worlds.html), history. There will be four kingdoms that will rule the [world](worlds.html). These four will ultimately be conquered by [Avraham](avraham.html)’s descendants.

In the [end of days](lastdays.html) this battle will occur again. As in the beginning, so it will be in the end. The kings of the [world](worlds.html) will fight against each other and the redeemer of the Children of Israel will defeat the victors. The captives will be set free and a tithe will be paid to the King of Righteousness.

In this next pasuk we see [one](one.html) of the keys to understand [Edom](edom.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:26*** *And after that came his brother out, and his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *took hold on* [*Esau*](edom.html)*’s* [*heel*](heel.html)*; and his* [*name*](name.html) *was called* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*: and* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *[was] threescore years old when she bare them.*

The final [exile](galuyot.html) is called ‘[Galut](galuyot.html) [Edom](edom.html),’ the ‘[Exile](galuyot.html) of [Edom](edom.html)’. The [exile](galuyot.html) of [Edom](edom.html), who descended from [Esau](edom.html), coincides with the last 2,000 years of history referred to by the [Talmud](orallaw.html) as, the ‘Footsteps of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)!’

***Sanhedrin 97a*** *[Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord,’ wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.] it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*, R. Judah said: in the* [*generation*](toldot.html) *when the son of David comes, the house of assembly will be for harlots, Galilee in ruins, Gablan lie desolate, the border inhabitants wander about from* [*city*](city.html) *to* [*city*](city.html)*, receiving no hospitality, the wisdom of scribes in disfavor, God-fearing men despised, people be dog-faced, and truth entirely lacking, as it is written, Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. What is meant by ‘yea, truth faileth [ne’edereth ]’? — The Scholars of the School of Rab said: This* [*teaches*](teacher.html) *that it will split up into separate groups and depart. What is the meaning of ‘and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey [mishtollel ]’? — The School of R. Shila said: He who departs from evil will be dubbed a fool by his fellow-men.*

Thus we see that the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come at the end of the [galut](galuyot.html) [Edom](edom.html).

The present [exile](galuyot.html) is seen as an extension of the Roman [exile](galuyot.html) ([Edom](edom.html) is Rome), since culturally and legally, Western civilization shares the values and worldview of ancient Rome. A subset of this [exile](galuyot.html) is that of Ishmael, the Arabs, who are seen as an antithesis of Roman civilization and values, and who will rule over the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people for a [time](time.html) concurrently with the [exile](galuyot.html) of Rome.

## An essay - by HaRav Shammai Zahn, zt”l

***Shemot* 6:6** *Therefore, say to the Bnei Israel all, I am* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, and I shall take you out shall take you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim, and I shall rescue you from their slavery, and I shall* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *you with an outstretched Arm and with great judgments, and I shall take you to Me as a* [*Nation*](nations.html)*.*

Chazal [teach](teacher.html) us that these four terminologies of [redemption](redemption.html) which [HaShem](hashem.html) used to spell out His [salvation](salvation.html) to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People, correspond to the four empires which ruled over us during our history as a [Nation](nations.html). The four kingdoms are: [Bavel](bavel.html), Porat Umodai, Yavan, and [Edom](edom.html).

The [first](one.html) [exile](galuyot.html) began with the Churban Bayit Rishon (the destruction of the [first](one.html) [Temple](temple.html)). Nevuchadnetzar burned the [Bet HaMikdash](mikdash.html) ([Temple](temple.html))and waged war against the Bnei Israel in [Eretz Israel](city.html). Then he ruthlessly killed thousands, *R”l*. However, for those remaining, it was a relatively light [exile](galuyot.html) during which there were no persecutions, and no mass killings. They were brought to [Bavel](bavel.html) as slaves, yet enjoyed a peaceful life. They only bemoaned the fact that they could not return to [Eretz Israel](city.html) all, as stated, “*Al naharot* [*Bavel*](bavel.html)*, shom yoshavnu gam bochinu!”[[7]](#footnote-7)*

Regarding this [first](one.html) [exile](galuyot.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) promised us “and I will take you out; I promise you that you will return to [Eretz Israel](city.html), and there will be an end to this [exile](galuyot.html)”.

The second kingdom, the Persian empire of *Porat Umodai* who conquered the Babylonians, was the kingdom of Achashverosh. The [wicked](wicked.html) [Haman](esther.html) “sought to wipe out, destroy, and annihilate all the [Jews](gen-jew.html)”. Regarding this decree came [HaShem](hashem.html)’s promise of “I will rescue you from the danger of death and annihilation”. This was the miracle of [Purim](Purim.html).

The Greek empire -- *Malchut Yavan* -- ruled during the second [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) ([Temple](temple.html)). The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [Nation](nations.html) then dwelled in [Eretz Israel](city.html), but we were not independent. The Greeks decreed terrible [laws](law.html)to cause us “to forget Your Torah, and remove us from the [laws](law.html) of Your Will”. Regarding these decrees, [HaShem](hashem.html) promised us “and I will [redeem](redemption.html) you”. We would triumph over the Greeks, succeeding to be free once again to keep the Torah as we wished.

*Malchut* [*Edom*](edom.html), the Roman Empire, is the [one](one.html) who destroyed the second [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html). Thereafter, began our long and difficult [exile](galuyot.html) of close to [two](two.html) thousand years! We have been dispersed among the [nations](nations.html), to all four corners of this earth. As a result, many became assimilated, forgetting their priceless heritage as the children of [Avraham](avraham.html), [Yitzchak](isaac.html), and [Yaakov](israelja.html). Many have gravitated terribly towards the ways of the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html)!

In regard to this [exile](galuyot.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) promised us “and I will take you to Me for a [Nation](nations.html)”. The *Ba’al HaTurim* explains that this means even if it is against our will. [HaShem](hashem.html) will return assimilated [Jews](gen-jew.html) to the fold, to once again become a [nation](nations.html) apart, even if it is against their will. [Time](time.html) and again, the anti-Semitism, which has arisen throughout the [generations](toldot.html), served as a reminder, that nothing would work to bring us to be like “all the rest”. We are a separate people, and will remain that way forever.

In our present-day [*Edom*](edom.html) [exile](galuyot.html), which is typified by assimilation, we have additionally tasted a bit of all the previous [exiles](galuyot.html) combined. At times, our [exile](galuyot.html) was relatively easy, with hardly any persecutions and almost no troubles, as was the [Babylonian](bavel.html) [exile](galuyot.html). Yet as we were threatened during the Media-Persian [exile](galuyot.html), we have undergone terrible mass killings, ruthless pogroms, and the previous [generation](toldot.html) suffered the destruction of Europe at the [hands](fourteen.html) of Hitler *yemach shemo*.

In Spain over [five](five.html) hundred years ago, we suffered [laws](law.html) against the Torah similar to the Greek [exile](galuyot.html). We have undergone so, so much, yet we have always emerged to see the [salvation](salvation.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). As we recite in the [Haggada](haggada.html)of[Pesach](passover.html).

The Eitz [Yosef](joseph.html),[[8]](#footnote-8) explains the following: The paragraph “*Tzur Israel*” immediately preceding the morning Shemoneh Esrei is recited specifically then, in keeping with Chazal’s adage to mention the [exile](galuyot.html) in our [prayers](prayer.html). This means that there is an attempt to refer to [redemption](redemption.html) immediately prior to [praying](prayer.html) the Shemoneh Esrei. In this paragraph, the word “Israel” is mentioned [five](five.html) times. Four times, is a reference to the four empires which [HaShem](hashem.html) redeems us from. The [fifth](five.html) [one](one.html) refers to the *geulas hanefesh,* the [spiritual](physical.html) [redemption](redemption.html) of our souls, which is up to us. We request the help of [Heaven](heaven.html) for this, so that we are successfully [redeemed](redemption.html) from our bondage in this area as well.

# Four and [Five](five.html)

Four is always associated with [five](five.html). As the four [fingers](body.html) are associated with a thumb, so four is always associated with [five](five.html).

We have four sons at the [seder](haggada.html), where is the [fifth](five.html)? The [fifth](five.html) son is the father who is also someone’s son. We have four questions, where is the [fifth](five.html)? The [fifth](five.html) is the answer provided by the “[fifth](five.html)” son. The father of the four sons is himself also a son. The father is the [fifth](five.html) son.

We drink four cups of wine at the [Pesach](passover.html) [seder](haggada.html). Where is the [fifth](five.html) cup? The [fifth](five.html) cup is the cup of Elijah. And so it goes that wherever we see four, we will also see [five](five.html).

# In [Succoth](succoth.html)

The [holiday](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html) has many special [commandments](cmds613.html), [one](one.html) of these is to take four species (ארבעת המינים‎), hold them together, and wave them. These species are:

Etrog (אתרוג) - an unusual citrus fruit

Lulav (לולב) - a frond from a date palm

Hadas (הדס) - myrtle and

Arava (עַרְבֵי) - the water willow.

The Etrog is a beautiful yellow fruit, with both a pleasant taste (especially when made into jam after the [holiday](festival.html)!) and pleasant smell. Therefore Chazal tell us that this fruit represents a [Jew](gen-jew.html) who has both Torah [knowledge](knowledge.html) and good deeds. The Lulav, by comparison, has no smell, but dates do have a pleasant taste, representing Torah [knowledge](knowledge.html). The Hadas, myrtle, has only a pleasant smell, while the Arava, the willow, has neither. So these four species, which we bring together on [Succoth](succoth.html), encompass all types of [Jews](gen-jew.html).

[One](one.html) of the rules concerning performance of the [commandment](cmds613.html) to take four species is that all four are critical, meaning that even if [one](one.html) lacks only the lowly Arava, it is impossible to fulfill this [commandment](cmds613.html).

‘At four junctures of the year the [world](worlds.html) is judged... and on the [Festival](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html) they are judged for the water (i.e., the rainfall)’ - [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h 1:2.

# In The [Temple](temple.html)

A ceremony of [Succoth](succoth.html), the illumination of the [Temple](temple.html), also had it’s source in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition. According to the [Mishna](orallaw.html), at the end of the [first](one.html) day of the [feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html), the [priests](priests.html) and Levites went down to the court of the women. Four enormous golden candlesticks were set up in the court (fifty cubits high) with four golden bowls placed upon them and four ladders resting against each. Four youths of priestly descent stood at the top of the ladders holding [ten](ten.html)-gallon pitchers filled with pure oil, which they poured into each bowl.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The willow branches that had been brought by the Kidron procession were used to build a [Succah](succoth.html) over the altar, and as soon as that was done the morning [sacrifice](korbanot.html) was offered, followed by the special [festival](festival.html) sacrifices. On the [first](one.html) day of the [festival](festival.html), the sacrifices would be [thirteen](thirteen.html) bullocks, [two](two.html) rams, [fourteen](fourteen.html) lambs, and a goat, as a [sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot). During the sacrifices, the Levites would chant the Great Hallel. At [three](three.html) points during the chant, the people would wave their lulavs toward the altar: once when the Levites reached the phrase “Hodu L’Adonai Ki Tov” (“Thank [HaShem](hashem.html), for he is good” [Psalm](psalms1.html) 118:29), once when they sang, “O work then now [salvation](salvation.html), [HaShem](hashem.html),” and at the end when they sang again “O give thanks unto [HaShem](hashem.html).” When the chant was over, the [priests](priests.html) marched around the altar chanting “Hosanna, [HaShem](hashem.html), deliver us, [HaShem](hashem.html), let us prosper”.[[10]](#footnote-10) Finally, there came the benediction, and the people were dispersed, amid the exclamation, “How beautiful art thou, O altar!” or “To [HaShem](hashem.html) and thee, O altar, we give thanks!” At night, the Court of Women was illuminated by four giant oil lamps, in which the cast-off breeches and girdles of the [priests](priests.html) were used for wicks. In order to burn all night, the lamps required tending, so against each lamp was a ladder, and on each ladder a boy from the [tribe](tribes.html) of Levi, whose job it was to keep the [fire](fire.html) burning. The light from these lamps is said to have illuminated the entire [city](city.html). Distinguished men would dance around the lamps, carrying lighted torches and singing praises to [HaShem](hashem.html). On the [fifteen](fifteen.html) steps leading into the court stood the Levites, singing [psalms](psalms1.html) and playing musical instruments. This holy merriment continued until dawn.

The [priests](priests.html) and Levites used their own worn-out liturgical clothing for wicks. The light emanating from the four candelabra was so bright that the [Mishna](orallaw.html) says, “There was no courtyard in [Jerusalem](city.html) that was not lit up with the light at the libation water-well ceremony”.[[11]](#footnote-11)

***Yochanan (John) 8:12*** *When* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. Whoever follows me will never* [*walk*](walking.html) *in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

\* \* \*

[Heart](body.html) = The base of the altar.

The sacrificial [blood](body.html) was dashed against the altar and then poured out at the base of the altar. As the altar has four corners, so too does the [heart](body.html) have four chambers. As the [heart](body.html) has a higher and lower part, so too does the altar have a red line that marks the upper and lower parts (some offerings had their [blood](body.html) dashed above and some had the [blood](body.html) dashed below).

\* \* \*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Vayikra (Leviticus) X:6*** *AND THE GARMENTS (VIII, 2). R. Simon said: Even as the sacrifices have an atoning power, so too have the [priestly] garments atoning power, as we have learnt in the Mishnah: The* [*High Priest*](priests.html) *officiated in* [*eight*](eight.html) *garments, and an ordinary* [*priest*](priests.html) *in four, namely in a tunic, breeches, a mitre, and a girdle. The* [*High Priest*](priests.html) *wore, in addition, a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, and a* [*head*](body.html)*-plate*

# Fasts

***Zecharyiah (Zechariah) 8:19*** *Thus saith* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts; The fast of the fourth [month], and the fast of the* [*fifth*](five.html)*, and the fast of the* [*seventh*](seven.html)*, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.*

Four fast days are mentioned in this pasuk.

# Torah Interpretation

The Torah is understood and interpreted according to the level being discussed. The Torah can be understood on four levels, while other writings may be confined to only [one](one.html) level. For example, Bereshit (the book of Genesis) can be understood on all four levels, while the [Midrash](orallaw.html) and sefer Matityahu (Matthew) can only be understood on the *drash* level. The following chart details these four levels.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **פרדס** | **פשאת** | **רמס** | **דרש** | **סוד** |
| [**PaRDeS**](remez.html) | Pshat | [Remez](remez.html) | Derash | [Sod](sod.html) |
| **Definition** | Simple | Hint | Explore - Ask | [Secret](sod.html) |
| **Literary level** | Grammatical | Allegory | Parabolic | Mystical |
| **Audience level** | Common People | Noble  (Lawyers, Judges, Scientists) | Kingly  (civil servants, political scientists) | Mystic  (psychologists) |
| [**Hermeneutic**](rules.html) **level**[[12]](#footnote-12) | 7 Hillel [Laws](law.html) | 13 Ishmael [Laws](law.html) | 32 Ben Gallil [Laws](law.html) | 42 [Zohar](orallaw.html) [Laws](law.html) |
| **Rabbinic level** | [Mishna](orallaw.html) | [Gemara](orallaw.html) | [Midrash](orallaw.html) | [Zohar](orallaw.html) |
| [**Gospel**](mishna1.html) | Marqos (Mark),  1 & 2 Peter | I and II Luqas ([Luke](luke.html)) | Matityahu (Matthew) | Yochanan (John) 1, 2, 3, and Revelation |
| **Presentation** | [HaShem](hashem.html)’s Servant | Son of Man | The King | Son of G-D |
| **Principle Concern** | What do we have to do? | What is the meaning behind what we have to do? | How do we go about establishing [HaShem](hashem.html)’s Kingdom on earth? | What metaphysical meaning is there to what is happening? |
| [**World**](worlds.html) | Asiyah | Yetzirah | Beriyah | Atzilut |
| **Symbol** | Man | Ox/Bull | Lion | Eagle |
| **Mazzaroth** | Deli | Shaur | Aryeh | Aqurav |
| [**Tribe**](tribes.html) | Reuben | Ephraim | Judah | Dan |
| [**Temple**](temple.html) | Outside Chatzer | Chatzer | Kodesh | Kodesh Kodashim |
| [**Purim**](Purim.html) | Mikrah Megillah | Matanot L’Evyonim | Mishloach Manot | Seudas [Purim](Purim.html) |

\* \* \*

\* \* \*

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

This [study](study.html) was written by

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

(Greg Killian).

Comments may be submitted to:

Rabbi Dr. Greg Killian

12210 Luckey Summit

San Antonio, TX 78252

Internet address: [gkilli@aol.com](mailto:gkilli@aol.com)

Web page: <https://www.betemunah.org/>

(360) 918-2905

Return to [The WATCHMAN](https://www.betemunah.org/) home page

Send comments to Greg Killian at his email address: [gkilli@aol.com](mailto:gkilli@aol.com)

1. The ***Shulchan Aruch*** (Hebrew: שׁוּלחָן עָרוּך, literally: “Set Table”) also known as the Code of Jewish Law, is the most authoritative legal code of Judaism. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. SA OC 473:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. SA OC 479 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Based on Gevurot HaShem chapter 60 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Abarbanel [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Malbim [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Tehillim (psalm) 137:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Printed in the Otzar Hatefillot siddur*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Succah 5:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Psalm 118:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Succah 5:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The Hermeneutical Laws for the first and second levels of Rabbinical Hermeneutics you will find in the Siddur. In the ArtScroll Siddur (Nusach Sefard), pp. 53-54, which are found in the Morning Service on the “Offerings Section” before the “Kadish D’Rabanan” (The Rabbi’s Kaddish) and which are a quote from the Sifra. The laws of Hermeneutics for this second level are recited every single day of the year by all Torah Observant Jews! [↑](#footnote-ref-12)