

The Meaning of The [Number](nchart.html) Thirteen (13)

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# Definition

The [spiritual](physical.html) significance of the [number](nchart.html) thirteen (13), which as reflected by the **thirteen** attributes of Mercy (we will look at these attributes later), relates to a transcendent dimension of G-dliness. This transcendence enables [one](one.html) to infuse spirituality within our material [world](worlds.html)[[1]](#footnote-1).

[Twelve](twelve.html) is the [number](nchart.html) of *maximal differentiation*. It is the [number](nchart.html) of lines that border a cube, and according to Chazal,[[2]](#footnote-2) all of reality.

The fact that the [twelve](twelve.html) are all connected in the center is the thirteenth. **Thirteen is the** [**number**](nchart.html) **that bonds multiplicity into** [**oneness**](oneness.html)**.** For example: There are [twelve](twelve.html) [tribes](tribes.html) that are bonded into their father [Israel](gen-jew.html) ([Yaaqov](jacob.html)). [Israel](gen-jew.html) is the thirteenth. The meaning of the [number](nchart.html) thirteen is the *bonding of many into* [*one*](one.html).

[Jews](gen-jew.html) look to make many into [one](one.html) whilst the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) look to make [one](one.html) into many. This is exemplified with the preeminent [prayer](prayer.html) of the [Jews](gen-jew.html), the [Shema](shema.html)[[3]](#footnote-3), which speaks of [HaShem](hashem.html)[[4]](#footnote-4) being [one](one.html); while the [Gentile](gen-jew.html)’s preeminent theology is the trinity, in which they make [HaShem](hashem.html) into [three](three.html) gods. Thus the [Goyim](gen-jew.html) have a superstition that the [number](nchart.html) thirteen is bad, whilst the [Jews](gen-jew.html) see the [number](nchart.html) thirteen as very good.

# [HaShem](hashem.html) is Thirteen

The [number](nchart.html) thirteen is among the holiest of the [numbers](nchart.html) because it is closely associated with [HaShem](hashem.html).

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4***[*Hear*](mashal.html)*, O* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*:* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our God,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is* [*one*](one.html)*:*

The above verse, from the [Shema](shema.html), tells us a very important relationship:

[HaShem](hashem.html) = sjt[[5]](#footnote-5) Echad ([One](one.html))

The [Shema](shema.html) - שמע is recited twice a day, by observant [Jews](gen-jew.html), to obey the Torah [command](cmds613.html) as found in the [Shema](shema.html) itself. The goal of the [Shema](shema.html) is not just to declare that [HaShem](hashem.html) is [one](one.html), but rather to declare that [HaShem](hashem.html) is [one](one.html) and there is nothing in existence besides Him. The [world](worlds.html) and everything around us, is just an extension of [HaShem](hashem.html).

To help us understand the making of many into [one](one.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the sense of [hearing](mashal.html). As an aside, [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the human [body](body.html), with all of its responses, in order to give us intimate [insights](insights.html) into [HaShem](hashem.html) and His [creation](bara.html). If we understand what it means to [hear](mashal.html), we can understand what it means to declare [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [oneness](oneness.html).

[Hearing](mashal.html) is a sense which requires us to assemble the sounds from another person, into a cohesive picture. Thus we would say that [hearing](mashal.html) is the forming of disparate parts into a single idea or picture. Literally we make many (sounds) into [one](one.html) (idea).

The [Shema](shema.html), which is uttered twice a day by every observant [Jew](gen-jew.html), is an interesting perspective into [hearing](mashal.html). [Shema](shema.html) is normally translated as “[hear](mashal.html)”. Our Sages [teach](teacher.html) us that [*shema*](shema.html) literally means *the gathering of many and making them into* [*one*](one.html). The appropriateness of this definition is brought into sharp distinction when we see that the goal of the [shema](shema.html) is that [HaShem](hashem.html) should be [one](one.html) and His [name](name.html) [One](one.html).

To help us understand the relationship between [HaShem](hashem.html) and His [oneness](oneness.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) language. Part of this language is the fact that each [letter](letters.html) not only has intrinsic meaning, but each [letter](letters.html) also has a numeric value, as we learned in our [study](study.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html). In the following chart, we can see that the numerical value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html) that form *echad*, whose meaning is [*one*](one.html), is thirteen.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The gematria of *echad* - אחד is thirteen: | א = 1ח = 8ד = 4----------Total: 13 |

Not only does echad=13, but the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *ahava* (love) also has a numerical value of thirteen, as expressed verbally in the Nazarean Codicil:

***1 Yochanan (John) 4:8*** *He that loveth not knoweth not* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is love.*

Chazal[[6]](#footnote-6) [teach](teacher.html) that if [two](two.html) words have the same numeric value, then the essential meaning of the [two](two.html) words is the same. The above verse from the Nazarean Codicil[[7]](#footnote-7) gives us another very important relationship:

[HaShem](hashem.html) is Ahavah (Love)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The gematria of *ahavah* - אהבה is thirteen: | א = 1ה = 5ב = 2ה = 5----------Total: 13 |

Thus we learn that:

[HaShem](hashem.html) is echad ([one](one.html))

Echad ([one](one.html)) is ahavah (love)

[HaShem](hashem.html) is ahavah (love)

It follows, therefore, that we become [one](one.html) with [HaShem](hashem.html), when we love Him and we love what He has [created](bara.html). Love means unification with the object of our love, and unification with [HaShem](hashem.html) means a unified [heart](body.html) in belief and devotion.

Thus we see that [HaShem](hashem.html) equals thirteen. Therefore the meaning of thirteen is the [oneness](oneness.html) and love of [HaShem](hashem.html).

The yod-י hay-ה vav-ו hay-ה ([HaShem](hashem.html)) [name](name.html) has a gematria of 2 X 13 = 26.

The word *echad* is spelled: אחד aleph-chet-dalet. In Kabbalah, the [letter](letters.html) *aleph* (א) corresponds to the highest sefirah, *Keter*. The *chet* (ח) [with a numerical value of [eight](eight.html)], in this case, represents the [eight](eight.html) sefirot below Keter (Chachmah, Binah, Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, and Yesod), until the last sefirah, Malchut. The [letter](letters.html) dalet (ד), in Kabbalah, always represents *Malchut*. The following chart illustrates the sefirot, which represents [creation](bara.html):



Hence, the message of the [Shema](shema.html) is: From the very top of [creation](bara.html) until the very bottom of [creation](bara.html), even in the darkest, most [physical](physical.html) parts of existence, you must [know](daat.html) and be real with [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [Oneness](oneness.html). There is never a place that [HaShem](hashem.html) isn't, just places where it is not proper to think about Him. There is never a [time](time.html) when [HaShem](hashem.html) isn't, just times when He doesn't seem apparent to us.

So, thirteen is another way of expressing the unity of [HaShem](hashem.html).

Throughout the siddur ([prayer](prayer.html) book), and [Jewish](gen-jew.html) thought, thirteen is used to express [HaShem](hashem.html) and His [oneness](oneness.html). This is made emphatic by the thirteen principles which express the essentials of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) belief, which allow us to have an attachment to [HaShem](hashem.html) and His eternal [world](worlds.html). The following list contains Rambam's thirteen principles of faith, which we understand are the minimum requirements of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) belief:

**1.** [HaShem](hashem.html) exists.

**2.** [HaShem](hashem.html) is [one](one.html) and unique.

**3.** [HaShem](hashem.html) is incorporeal.

**4.** [HaShem](hashem.html) is eternal.

**5.** [Prayer](prayer.html) is to be directed to [HaShem](hashem.html) alone and to no other.

**6.** The words of the prophets are true.

**7.** Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets.

**8.** The Written Torah ([first](one.html) [five](five.html) books of the Bible) and [Oral Torah](orallaw.html) (teachings now contained in the [Talmud](orallaw.html) and other writings) were given to Moses.

**9.** There will be no other Torah.

**10.** [HaShem](hashem.html) knows the thoughts and deeds of men.

**11.** [HaShem](hashem.html) will reward the good and punish the [wicked](wicked.html).

**12.** The [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come.

**13.** The dead will be [resurrected](techiyat.html).

# Thirteen in the Siddur

The consistent theme throughout the Shacharit (morning) [prayers](prayer.html), is the unification of ourselves with [HaShem](hashem.html). We do this with words and with the counting of **thirteen**. The following lists names some of those [prayers](prayer.html) with their relationship to thirteen:

**In Leshem yichud** – We unify the Yod Hay with the Vav Hay.

**In Ribono shel olam**: We count out the **thirteen** attributes of Mercy.

**In Ellu Devarim**: We [speak](mashal.html) of those things which have no set measure, then we conclude with “the [study](study.html) of Torah is equivalent to them all. With this we join ourselves to [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and to [HaShem](hashem.html).

**In Le’olam Ye’he** [**Adam**](adam.html): We extol [HaShem](hashem.html) and negate ourselves. Then, we [speak](mashal.html) the [first](one.html) sentence of the [Shema](shema.html). Finally, we conclude with multiple statements on [HaShem](hashem.html)’s unity and with our summation into His [Name](name.html).

**In** [**Ketoret**](ketoret.html): We [speak](mashal.html) of the [eleven](eleven.html) spices and the absolute requirement that none of them be omitted. We [speak](mashal.html) of Yom [HaKippurim](kippur.html) when the [incense](ketoret.html) is used to join Klal [Israel](gen-jew.html) to [HaShem](hashem.html) in the ultimate [marital act](marriageact.html).

**In Anna Bechowach**: We [speak](mashal.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) as the “Single and Exalted [One](one.html)”.

**In Ezehu Mekoman**: We [speak](mashal.html) at length about the korbanot (sacrifices) which are meant to draw us near to [HaShem](hashem.html).

**In the Baraita of Rabbi Ishmael**: We [speak](mashal.html) of the **thirteen** principles to Torah exegesis for the [remez](remez.html) level.

**In** [**HaShem**](hashem.html) **Melech**: We [speak](mashal.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s reign and we look forward to the day when “[HaShem](hashem.html) will be [One](one.html) and His [Name](name.html) will be [One](one.html)”.

**In Yishtabbach**: We count out the **thirteen** praises of [HaShem](hashem.html).

**In the** [**Shema**](shema.html): We [speak](mashal.html) of the [Oneness](oneness.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html).

In fact, nearly every [prayer](prayer.html) addresses our unity in [HaShem](hashem.html). The counting of **thirteen** is done to emphasize His love and His [Oneness](oneness.html) with His people.

It is desirable to have [ten](ten.html) men of bar-[mitzva](cmds613.html) age,[[8]](#footnote-8) before we [pray](prayer.html). The meaning of thirteen is mentioned in [Mishna](orallaw.html) Avot 5:26, where we find the source of the well-[known](daat.html) *Bar-*[*Mitzva*](cmds613.html) concept: A [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [male](male%2Bfemale.html) is not responsible for [mitzva](cmds613.html) (Torah [commands](cmds613.html)) observance until the age of thirteen. Thus [prayer](prayer.html) and [praying](prayer.html) depends on having [ten](ten.html) men who are thirteen years or older.

As a major part of the [prayers](prayer.html) of [Yom Kippur](kippur.html),[[9]](#footnote-9) we repeatedly mention the thirteen attributes of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s divine mercy. These thirteen attributes are found in:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 34:6-7*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *passed by before him, and proclaimed,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and* [*sin*](sin.html)*, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the* [*third*](three.html) *and to the* [*fourth*](four.html)[*generation*](toldot.html)*.*

Let me separate and explain these attributes:

(1) [HaShem](hashem.html) has [compassion](jonah.html) before man [sins](sin.html);

(2) [HaShem](hashem.html) has [compassion](jonah.html) after man has sinned (comp. R. H. 17b);

(3) "El," mighty in [compassion](jonah.html) to give all creatures according to their need;

(4) "Rachum," merciful, that mankind may not be distressed;

(5) "Chanun," gracious if mankind is already in distress;

(6) "Erek appayim," slow to anger;

(7) "Rab Chesed," plenteous in mercy;

(8) "Emet," truth;

(9) "Notzer Chesed laalafim," keeping mercy unto thousands (comp. the explanation of Samuel b. Meir in "[Daat](daat.html) Zeḳenim," *ad loc.*);

(10) "[Nose](body.html) 'awon," forgiving iniquity;

(11) "[Nose](body.html) pesha'," forgiving transgression;

(12) "[Nose](body.html) Chata'ah," forgiving [sin](sin.html);

(13) "Wenakeh," and pardoning.

It is the [merit](merit.html) of the recitation of these thirteen attributes, following our teshuva (repentance), that [HaShem](hashem.html) gives us [atonement](atonemen.html). Such is the importance of thirteen!

From these examples, we can see that the [number](nchart.html) thirteen is used in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [prayer](prayer.html) to express the [oneness](oneness.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) and His people.

# Thirteen in the Nazarean Codicil

My [teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai [taught](teacher.html) the following regarding the [number](nchart.html) thirteen:

The Nazarean Codicil [teaches](teacher.html) us about thirteen as well.

***Matityahu 10:1-6*** *And when he had called unto him his* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. 2 Now the names of the* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *apostles are these; The* [*first*](one.html)*, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. 5 These* [*twelve*](twelve.html)[*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*, and into any* [*city*](city.html) *of the Samaritans enter ye not: 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*.*

So, I see [twelve](twelve.html) Apostles, but where is the thirteenth? I submit that when they went out to [teach](teacher.html), heal, and [pray](prayer.html) that there were always thirteen: The [twelve](twelve.html) Apostles and [Yeshua](yeshua.html) Himself makes thirteen. [Yeshua](yeshua.html) bonded the [twelve](twelve.html) into [one](one.html) group.

This theme is carried forward when we see that after [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s death, the Apostles chose a replacement for Judas:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:24*** *And they* [*prayed*](prayer.html)*, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these* [*two*](two.html) *thou hast chosen, 25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *apostles.*

At this point, Judas has died and the [eleven](eleven.html) remaining Apostles have chosen a [twelfth](twelve.html) to join them. So, where is the thirteenth?

I learned from my [teacher](teacher.html) that we can see that Hakham Shaul (Paul) was the thirteenth Apostle:

[***Galatians***](galatian.html) ***1:1*** *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)*

Thus we see that Hakham Shaul bonded the [twelve](twelve.html) into [one](one.html) group. As such, he was responsible for writing a significant portion of the Nazarean Codicil.

# In The [Stars](mazaroth.html)

The Mazzaroth, also [known](daat.html) as the zodiac, is the [name](name.html) given to the pattern of [stars](mazaroth.html) found on the [celestial](celestal.html) equator, or [ecliptic](mazaroth.html). The [ecliptic](mazaroth.html) is an imaginary zone of the [heavens](heaven.html) containing the [*twelve*](twelve.html) sets of [stars](mazaroth.html) (constellations) within which lay the paths of the principal planets, and through which the [sun](hachama.html) passes in its [annual](annual.html) course. Mazzaroth is the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for constellation. There is a related [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word: mazzaloth.

There are [twelve](twelve.html) Mazzaroth on the zodiac. So, where is the thirteenth? I’d suggest that the [sun](hachama.html), [moon](chodesh.html), and the planets are the thirteenth Mazzaroth.

A Mazzaroth (constellation) is a group of [lights](lights.html) that are grouped by location. The [sun](hachama.html), [moon](chodesh.html), and planets are also a group of [lights](lights.html) that are grouped by their location. They are [traveling](mashal.html) [lights](lights.html) that [travel](mashal.html) through all of the other [twelve](twelve.html) constellation, binding them together as the thirteenth.

It is also worth noting that the center point of the Mazzaroth is the [sun](hachama.html), which points again to its [connection](connection.html) as the center point. he thirteenth *mazal* stands by itself and summarizes or encapsulates the other [twelve](twelve.html).

# In The [Calendar](calendar.html)

It is well [known](daat.html) that there are [twelve](twelve.html) months in a year. Yet, in a leap year we add an extra month called [Adar](feasts.html) [Sheni](sheni.html). This second [Adar](feasts.html) is the month that binds the other [twelve](twelve.html) into a [calendar](calendar.html) that is both lunar and solar. [Adar](feasts.html) [sheni](sheni.html) allows us to have our [festivals](festivals.html) in their seasons. [Pesach](passover.html) always falls in the spring. [Succoth](succoth.html) always occurs during harvest [time](time.html).

# An Article By R. Mordechai Kornfeld

The foundation of the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html) is the thirteen [exegetical principles](rules.html) which are enumerated in the introduction to Torat [Kohanim](priests.html). Through these principles, the Oral [Law](law.html) is derived from the written text of the Torah. (This is why the [Midrash](orallaw.html) HaZohar on Bereshit (Genesis) [teaches](teacher.html) that the [number](nchart.html) thirteen serves as a metaphor for the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html).)

The **thirteen** breaches (made by the Greeks) in the enclosing wall, which surrounded the [Temple](temple.html) Mount, were repaired by the Hasmonean kings. These kings decreed that [one](one.html) must bow down when passing by each of these repaired breaches; a total of **thirteen** bowings.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The Elders made **thirteen** modifications in the text of the Torah when they translated it into Greek. This [number](nchart.html) represents the fact that inherent in the translation is the loss of the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html), which is derived through the **thirteen** [exegetical principles](rules.html). The **thirteen** breaches made by the Greeks and repaired by the [Hasmoneans](chanukah.html) represent the entire focus of the Greek war against the [Jews](gen-jew.html). The Greeks sought to eliminate the **thirteen** principles through their literal translation of the Torah into Greek, with the resultant loss of the Oral component of the Torah. The [Hasmoneans](chanukah.html) succeeded in restoring these indispensable tools of Torah interpretation. In order to commemorate and give thanks for this victory of authentic Torah ideology over the shallow, incomplete Sadducee misrepresentation of Torah, **thirteen** bowings were instituted at the sites of the repaired breaches. It may be further noted that according to Rashi[[11]](#footnote-11), **thirteen** [Hasmoneans](chanukah.html) commanded the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) army that overthrew the Greeks. These **thirteen** courageous men enabled the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People to preserve the Oral Tradition and its **thirteen** principles![[12]](#footnote-12)

# An Article By R. Solomon D. Sassoon

Regarding [Number](nchart.html) Symbolism in the Torah from the Work of Rabbi Solomon D. Sassoon:

I. Introduction

In the [parashat](annual.html) HaShabua studies there have been a goodly [number](nchart.html) of references to the views of Rabbi Solomon D. Sassoon a"h, including allusions to his interpretation of [numbers](nchart.html). As many readers are unfamiliar with his work, following is a brief introduction to this [one](one.html) aspect of his prodigious achievements in the [field](field.html) of Torah [study](study.html).

Based on extensive research conducted over many years, Rabbi Sassoon maintained that in the Torah and in certain other books of Tanach[[13]](#footnote-13), as the prophetic message utilizes metaphor and figurative speech, it often uses [number](nchart.html) symbolism in a variety of ways. He felt [numbers](nchart.html) were of extremely great significance and usually were not to be taken literally. He demonstrated the ubiquitous use in the Torah of the digit [eight](eight.html) and its multiples to signify the [Covenant](covenant.html) between G-d and [Israel](gen-jew.html). He pointed out that the [number](nchart.html) thirteen - which he explained as the gematria of "ehad" referring to the [Oneness](oneness.html) of G-d - is also often used symbolically. Sometimes the [number](nchart.html) 21 and its multiples are used to signify the combination of 13 + 8. At least several other symbolic [numbers](nchart.html) are present in the Torah. As we have pointed out in our [Parashat](annual.html) Vaera [study](study.html), the [number](nchart.html) 26, gematria of G-d's Tetragrammaton Y-H-V-H [name](name.html), is embedded in the structure of the texts of [Exodus](exodus.html) 6 and 15, which uniquely [speak](mashal.html) about His [name](name.html) and is associated with the total [number](nchart.html) of occurrences of His [name](name.html) in the Torah (Pentateuch) and Neviim (Prophets) Rishonim but this [study](study.html) will be limited to examples of 8 and 13.

Indeed, Rabbi Sassoon claimed that the whole Torah and Early Prophets, as well as the [Psalms](psalms1.html), and perhaps other parts of Tanach, were written with [codes](codes.html) running through them, based on gematria, precise word counts, sequence and patterns, highlighting the [Covenant](covenant.html), governing the structure and design of numerous, if not all, passages, and providing [insight](insights.html) on many important topics.

Although he often stated that he did not [know](daat.html) the meaning or implications of many [number](nchart.html) usages or word patterns, and that on many particulars he may be mistaken, he was confident that the systems he uncovered were real. He subjected them to expert statistical analysis, their implications fit in with the substance of other Torah research he did (penetrating investigation into the meaning of the Torah text), many echoes and hints were present in classical rabbinical literature and his results were in harmony with certain aspects of modern scholarly research (of course rejecting much of the speculative work of modern Bible scholars).

The presence of sophisticated patterns serves a [number](nchart.html) of purposes. In addition to beautifying the word of G-d and helping to preserve the integrity of the text through the processes of copying and transmission, recognition of wondrous patterns provided support to the recipients that the text was the genuine statement from the true prophet. This was especially important in a [world](worlds.html) that had become an arena of competing ideologies as the ancient Near [East](east.html) most certainly was, where dissenters challenged the authenticity of the great prophets. Serious observers might conclude that the remarkable systems of word pattern and structure running throughout the text - much more sophisticated and difficult to compose than any literary artifact [known](daat.html) to man - was the result of true prophetic inspiration from G-d.

Finally, through deeply embedded patterns pointing to meanings that, for various reasons, could not be expressed explicitly - undoubtedly including the difficulty of the uninitiated to grasp sophisticated thought - the prophets [spoke](mashal.html) to those prepared to [hear](mashal.html) their fuller communication while providing a satisfactory message to the others.

Notwithstanding that the formulae Rabbi Sassoon uncovered lie beneath the surface and explicate Peshat on a deeper level, and although the reader may often be amazed at the sophistication of the text, the systems follow standard literary norms for certain types of symbolic writing. Everything is there in front of the reader. The text is not manipulated. The reader may count the words and see the pattern. And the text is not trivialized. This should not be confused with the [codes](codes.html) of *Arachin*, the *Discovery Seminars* and related approaches (Rips, Witzum, Drosnin, et al), roundly criticized by many scholars, which are of a totally different nature. We will not enter further into that topic here as the purpose of this discourse is only to provide background and helpful information to assist the reader of our [parashat](annual.html) HaShabua studies.

Examples

Some examples of symbolic use of [eight](eight.html) and 13 (and their multiples, usually with addition of zeroes) including several in which both are used in close proximity, follow. Most, but not all, of these examples are taken directly from Rabbi Sassoon's work.

1. [Adam](adam.html) is 130 years of age when he begot Seth "bidmuto kesalmo" and lives 800 years more, for a total of 930 (Gen. 5:3-4). The Torah does not furnish any other age [number](nchart.html) for him! Rabbi Sassoon explained the 130 to refer to [Adam](adam.html) having attained the stage of recognition of the [one](one.html) G-d (13) and the 800 to relate to his having been in the "brit" ([covenant](covenant.html)) with G-d (8). (He quoted the Rambam's comments on "selem" in this regard.)

2. In the narrative of [Noah](noach.html), the "brit" stem appears [eight](eight.html) times. The [number](nchart.html) of people [saved](salvation.html) via the [ark](ark.html) is 8 ([Noah](noach.html), [three](three.html) sons and their wives). The [sign](signs.html) of the brit (zot ot habrit - Gen. 9:12) is the "qeshet" (the rainbow), gematria of 800. (The word qeshet in all forms appears 8 times in the Torah and 13 times in the Early Prophets.)

3. [Brit mila](circumcz.html) for Ishmael is at 13 (years), while for [Yitzchak](isaac.html), and subsequently for [Israel](gen-jew.html), it is at 8 (days). This 13 results from a period of [time](time.html) in [Abraham](avraham.html)'s life - in consecutive verses (Gen. 16:16 and 17:1) [Abraham](avraham.html) is 86 when he begot Ishmael and 99 when G-d appeared to him to contract the [Covenant](covenant.html), which is signified by [circumcision](circumcz.html) on the [eighth](eight.html) day. In that Genesis 17 passage the root "brit" appears 13 times and the word intervals between most of the occurrences are 8 or its multiples. It also appears significant that [Abraham](avraham.html) is 160 years of age (80 x 2) when [Yitzchak](isaac.html) begot [Esav](edom.html) and [Yaaqov](jacob.html).

4. [Abraham](avraham.html)'s [name](name.html) (including [Abram](avraham.html)) appears 210 times (130 + 80) in the Torah, with the 130th occurrence at a milestone point signified by 8 associated with a 13 (see the following item).

5. [Abraham](avraham.html)'s brother Nahor had [eight](eight.html) sons from his wife and 4 from his pilegesh. When the Torah relates this information it inserts in the passage the [birth](thebirth.html) of Rivkah, the daughter of Betuel, Nahor's 8th son (Gen. 22:20-24). This constitutes a 1-8-4=13 unit, corresponding to aleph-het=dalet indicating that the family of Nahor was an appropriate [one](one.html) from which to seek a wife for [Yitzchak](isaac.html). Upon mention of Rivkah's [birth](birth.html) and within the statement "these [eight](eight.html) Milca bore to Nahor the brother of [Abraham](avraham.html)" is the 130th occurrence of [Abraham](avraham.html)'s [name](name.html).

6. In the section concerning [Abraham](avraham.html)'s servant finding a suitable wife for [Yitzchak](isaac.html) and the consummation of the [Yitzchak](isaac.html)-Rivkah [marriage](mashal.html) (Gen. 24), Rivkah’s [name](name.html) appears 13 times while [Yitzchak](isaac.html)'s appears 8 times.

7. When [Esav](edom.html) gets married at [forty](forty.html) years of age, understood as separating from [Yitzchak](isaac.html) (`al ken ya`azob ish et abiv v'et imo vedabaq be'ishto - Gen. 2:24), the latter is 100 years of age. From that point on he lives 80 years.

8. [Yaaqov](jacob.html) has [one](one.html) daughter and 8 sons from his wives and 4 sons from the shefahot, a 1-8-4=13 unit, corresponding to echad.

9. When G-d changes [Yaaqov](jacob.html)’s [name](name.html) to Yisrael, the last [Yaaqov](jacob.html) attestation before the change (but within the [name](name.html) change context) - "shimkha [Yaaqov](jacob.html)", (Gen. 35:10) - is the 130th occurrence of [Yaaqov](jacob.html)’s [name](name.html) in the Torah. When the [angel](angels.html) changed his [name](name.html), the last usage of his [name](name.html) [Yaaqov](jacob.html) just prior to the change (also within the context of the [name](name.html) change) - Vayomer [Yaaqov](jacob.html) (ib. 32:27-28) - is the 80th occurrence of [Yaaqov](jacob.html) in the Torah when it is counted in the pure form, without prefixes attached to the [name](name.html). (Regarding proper nouns, it appears there is meaning to the count of both the pure form and the prefixed/suffixed form.)

10. [Yaaqov](jacob.html) is 130 years of age when in front of Pharaoh (ib. 47:9), while Moshe is 80 years of age in front of Pharaoh (Ex. 7:7), an obvious juxtaposition of these [two](two.html) key [numbers](nchart.html). At no other points during their lives are their ages given! (Rabbi Sassoon thought that [Yaaqov](jacob.html) was really at the stage of 80 when in front of Pharaoh but in accordance with the principle "al tithadar lifne melekh" (Prov. 25:6), refrained from mentioning it to him and limited himself to the monotheistic concept.)

11. The only ages given for [Yosef](joseph.html) are 17, 30 and 110, clearly delineating [two](two.html) mature periods of life comprising 13 and 80 years respectively. [Yosef](joseph.html) is 30 in front of Pharaoh, or at the level of 13 and eventually achieves the level of 80.

12. Regarding Sarah, the only age given for her is at her death, 100 years, 20 years and 7 years (Gen. 23:1). The unusual literary formulation appears to be hinting at [two](two.html) periods of life, 13 and 80 years respectively.

13. The [Mishkan](mikdash.html) dedication being on the 8th day following the [seven](seven.html) days of initiation (and employing 8 sacrifices), [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) clearly being an 8th day added to the 7 days of [Succoth](succoth.html), [Shavuot](shavuot.html) being emphasized as day 50 (Lev. 23:16) and the [yovel](yovel.html) as year 50, the latter [two](two.html) both beginning the [eighth](eight.html) series of [seven](seven.html), all appear to be examples of the digit 8 (signifying the [Covenant](covenant.html)) replacing the 7. (Additional examples of this nature will be provided in the following section.)

14. A [sacrifice](korbanot.html) is only acceptable from the 8th day onwards (Lev. 22:27).

15. In the Torah's most expansive [Shabbat](sabbath.html) passage, celebrating its linkage with the [Covenant](covenant.html), there are 8 usages of the sh-b-t stem (Ex. 31:12-17). In the most expansive passage dealing with repentance and return, in a context linking them with the [Covenant](covenant.html) renewal, there are 8 usages of the key sh-b stem (Deut. 30:1-10).

16. In both the Year [two](two.html) and Year [forty](forty.html) censuses, the individual [numbers](nchart.html) of the 12 [tribes](tribes.html) do not include a single digit [eight](eight.html), which does appear in the from-[one](one.html)-month-old count of Qehat, the carriers of the [Ark](ark.html) of the [Covenant](covenant.html), and in the grand total of the Levites, the servitors and guardians of the [sanctuary](mikdash.html).

17. In King [David](fathers.html)'s census, the northern kingdom was 800,000 while Judah was 500,000, a total of 1,300,000 (2 Sam. 24:9).

18. In the Masoretic Text, there are 79,982 words in the Torah. Considering the rabbinic attestations that there were some variant readings in Second [Temple](temple.html) times, that markings were placed on certain doubtful words and phrases, that [talmudic](orallaw.html) quotations differ from the Masoretic Text in quite a [number](nchart.html) of instances, that there were a [number](nchart.html) of tiquneh sofrim and `itureh sofrim and that there is evidence from the Targumim, the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls pointing to tiqune sofrim-[type](types.html) deletions of several words, it is not surprising that Rabbi Sassoon felt it reasonable to assume that the original Torah word count was 80,000. (Based on his [codes](codes.html), he thought the original text of the people's response to the arurim declarations in Deut. 27:15-26 was "amen ve'amen", not a single amen, similar to the suspected sota (Num. 5:22) and to several other cases, thus accounting for 12 words.)

Regarding 7 and 12

It appears that the digit [seven](seven.html) and its decimal multiples, well-[known](daat.html) to have been considered a most prominent digit in the ancient Near [East](east.html), representative of [connection](connection.html). G-d's [creating](bara.html) the [world](worlds.html) in 7 days, with the attendant 7 symbolism including [Shabbat](sabbath.html) (where we connect with our work for the previous [six](six.html) days), the post-Diluvial [world](worlds.html) being comprised of 70 [nations](nations.html) (Gen. 10) and the 70 members of the incipient [nation](nations.html) of [Israel](gen-jew.html) that descended to Egypt (prior to the national [covenant](covenant.html)), illustrate this idea of [connection](connection.html).

The [first](one.html) [covenant](covenant.html) mentioned in the Torah is with [Noah](noach.html). His father Lemekh (ben Metushelah) lived to 777 years (Gen. 5:31), indicating that he was an extraordinary man, having achieved completeness in the previous order. He begot [Noah](noach.html) at 182 years of age (14 x 13), a multiple of both 7 and 13, pointedly hinting at his unique [spiritual](physical.html) distinction. This is consistent with his naming his son [Noah](noach.html) and with his declaration upon his [birth](birth.html) - for whom he obviously diligently prepared through [prayer](prayer.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) refinement - that he should be of great benefit to mankind (ib. 5:29). The combined occurrences of the names of [Abram](avraham.html) and Sarai through the last verse in Genesis 16 - which speaks of [Abram](avraham.html) being 86 at the [time](time.html) of the [birth](thebirth.html) of Ishmael and just prior to [Abram](avraham.html) being 99 when the [covenant](covenant.html) linked with the [birth](thebirth.html) of [Yitzchak](isaac.html) is contracted - is 70.

As stated earlier, [Shavuot](shavuot.html), [yovel](yovel.html) and the [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) day all appear to be cases of transforming what might have been [seven](seven.html) symbolism to that of [eight](eight.html). The Mussaf [offering](korbanot.html) on [Shabbat](sabbath.html), adding [two](two.html) lambs to the [two](two.html) daily temidim, making a total of 16, may be a case of subsuming the 7 day week into the [Covenant](covenant.html). In the Ki Tissa [Shabbat](sabbath.html) passage which emphasizes the [Covenant](covenant.html) the sh-b-t root appears 8 times.

The addition of [one](one.html) `olah ram to the [seven](seven.html) `olah lambs in the service of Rosh Hodesh, all days of [Pesach](passover.html), [Shavuot](shavuot.html), [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h, [Yom Kippur](kippur.html) and [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html), being of the same species, was likely mandated to constitute a [Covenant](covenant.html)-connoting unit of [eight](eight.html). The [seven](seven.html) [Succoth](succoth.html) days have double, 14 lambs and [two](two.html) rams daily.

Following the death of [Qorach](qorach.html) and his immediate circle for contesting the prophetic authenticity of Moshe and Aharon, when people complained, basically identifying with the rebels' position, 14,700 die in a [plague](plagues.html) (Num. 17:14). It appears that they represented the old order, those who refused to change to be committed to the [Covenant](covenant.html).

Somewhat analogously to the case of 7 and 8, the [number](nchart.html) [twelve](twelve.html) represented a full measure of blessing and fruitfulness in the ancient Near [East](east.html) and was supplanted in some respects by the [spiritual](physical.html) connotation of 13, referring to those who recognized [one](one.html) G-d. This latter principle appears to be behind the transformation of the [tribes](tribes.html) of [Israel](gen-jew.html) from 12 to 13 by splitting [Joseph](joseph.html) into [two](two.html).

From Ronald Benun's Upcoming Book on the [Psalms](psalms1.html):

Since before Rabbi Sassoon's death in 1985, Ronald Benun has been working on applying and extending Rabbi Sassoon's principles regarding 8, 13, brit and related matters to understanding the shape, structure and meaning of the [Psalms](psalms1.html). Some selections follow:

1. The 1300th verse from the beginning of Tehillim is the last verse of Mizmor 78. The 1300th verse from the end of Tehillim is the last verse of Mizmor 77. Thus, Mizmor 78 is enveloped by the overlap of 1300 verses going both ways. Mizmor 78 has 72 verses. Verse 36, [one](one.html) of its [two](two.html) center verses, is verse 1264 in Tehillim, the exact center verse of the 2527 verses of Tehillim.

2. Mizmor 79 contains 13 verses. Thus, Mizmor 80 begins after exactly 1313 verses.

3. Primarily based on the Aleppo Codex, from the beginning of Mizmor 80 until the end of Tehillim is 8888 words. Thus, Tehillim comprises 1313 verses followed by 8888 words.

4. There are 21 (13+8) attestations of "brit" in Tehillim. [Two](two.html) of these appear in Mizmor 78. The [first](one.html) (v. 10) is the 8th occurrence from the beginning of Tehillim while the second (v. 37) is the 13th from the end of Tehillim. Excluding superscription, "brit" is the mizmor's 88th word.

5. The 21 attestations of "brit" in Tehillim are in exactly 13 Mizmorim. The 8th occurrence (in Mizmor 78) is in the mizmor that is 8th from the last of these 13 mizmorim. The 13th occurrence is in the mizmor that is 8th from the beginning of these 13 Mizmorim (# 89 v. 35).

# Miscellaneous Thirteens

The MAHARAL writes in Chidushei Aggadot Nedarim 31:2, “And Rabbi Yishmael continued to [speak](mashal.html), ‘Great is the [covenant](covenant.html) of [Circumcision](circumcz.html), for **thirteen** covenants were established in [connection](connection.html) with it’ (the word ‘Brit’(meaning [*covenant*](covenant.html) but alluding to [*circumcision*](circumcz.html)) is mentioned by [HaShem](hashem.html) thirteen times in the section where [HaShem](hashem.html) introduces the idea to Avram, corresponding to the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. – PF) ‘And this is because the foreskin is like a shell, as we have said, and the shell constitutes a separation, and when the foreskin is removed, there remains a complete [covenant](covenant.html) with [HaShem](hashem.html), Blessed is He... That is to say, a complete [covenant](covenant.html) from all sides, and this reflects the fact that this [covenant](covenant.html) is complete with a Singular Being Who is a source of love, and a complete [covenant](covenant.html) is not possible to be made with [two](two.html) lovers... And the ‘gematria’ of the word “Echad,” [One](one.html), is in fact, thirteen.’ ”

\* \* \*

The total [number](nchart.html) of [letters](letters.html) contained in a word reveals something about the word itself. [Abraham](avraham.html), [Isaac](isaac.html), and [Jacob](israelja.html) have a total of thirteen [letters](letters.html) in them (in [Hebrew](hebrew.html)). Sarah, Rivka, [Rachel](rachel.html) and Leah, their wives, also have thirteen [letters](letters.html). The thirteen is the gematria of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word (echad) [one](one.html). Thirteen plus thirteen equals [twenty](twenty.html)-[six](six.html), the numerical value of "Adonai," [HaShem](hashem.html)'s Holy [Name](name.html). Could it be that the Adonai (26) is the balance of the masculine (13) and feminine (13)?

\* \* \*

The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Bible has 39 books, [three](three.html) times **thirteen**.

Moses plus **thirteen**, *echad,* equals the gematria (numerical value) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

[The [covenant](covenant.html) of [Brit Mila](circumcz.html)h (the [covenant](covenant.html) of [circumcision](circumcz.html))] was a made with thirteen covenants, according to the [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[14]](#footnote-14).

\* \* \*

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.

\* \* \*

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1. See Or HaTorah, Bereshit 7a and other sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Chazal** or Ḥazal ([Hebrew](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Chebrew.html): חז"ל‎) is an acronym for the Hebrew "**Ḥ**akhameinu **Z**ikhronam**L**iv'rakha", (**ח**כמינו **ז**כרונם **ל**ברכה, literally "Our Sages, may their memory be blessed"). In rabbinic writings this is a general term that refers to all sages of the [Mishna](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Corallaw.html), [Talmud](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Corallaw.html), and other rabbinic literature commentators, and their authoritative opinion, from the times of the Second [Temple](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Ctemple.html) of [Jerusalem](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Ccity.html) until the 6th century CE. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This [prayer](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Cprayer.html) includes a recitation of Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. HaShem means ‘The Name’ and is the way pious Jews refer to the YHVH name of God. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The gematria, the numerical value of this Hebrew word is thirteen. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Our Sages [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A more accurate [name](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Cname.html) for the [New](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Cnew.html) Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Thirteen years or older. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Day of Atonement – Tishri 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Middot 2:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Deuteronomy 33:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Based on the explanation of Rav David Cohen in "Bircat Yaavetz," p. 147 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. An acronym for Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim, also called the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [Shabbat](file:///D%3A%5CWord%5CNumbers%5Csabbath.html) 132a [↑](#footnote-ref-14)