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The Significance of The [Number](nchart.html) Two

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to [study](study.html) the meaning of the [number](nchart.html) two. I would also like to see the significance of the [number](nchart.html) two.

The second [letter](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [alef-bet](file:///D:\Word\Numbers\letters.html), bet - ב, mirrors the symbolism of the [number](nchart.html) two. It is called Bet. It is from this [letter](letters.html) that we get our word, *both*. This [letter](letters.html) is the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of the Torah and of the book of Bereshit (Genesis). Like the [number](nchart.html) two, Bet stands for the beginning of man’s [*journey*](stages.html). If we look at the [number](nchart.html) two in a positive sense, it stands for man, his realm and all that was created by [HaShem](hashem.html) for man’s benefit. If we look at it in a negative light, two stands for all that is separate or opposed to [HaShem](hashem.html).

The [number](nchart.html) [*one*](one.html) implies that there exists but a single reality. It suggests absolute conformity. The [number](nchart.html) *two* represents separation, division, and disunity (the two items have undone that unity that existed when there was only [one](one.html) item). Two represents right and left, giving versus restraint. The [number](nchart.html) [*three*](three.html), however, finds an underlying unity between disparate entities. Thus the [thirteenth](thirteen.html) [hermeneutic rule](rules.html) of Ishmael expresses this resolution as: When two Biblical passages contradict each other the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a [third](three.html) passage.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin’s thoughts:

The [first](one.html) [time](time.html) a word occurs in Scripture provides deep [insight](insights.html), so we need to [know](daat.html) the [first](one.html) [time](time.html) the [number](nchart.html) two appears. ([Hebrew](hebrew.html) grammar causes earlier appearances of two to have variant forms.)

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***Bereshit (Genesis) 6:19*** *And of all that lives, of all flesh, two of each you shall bring into the* [*ark*](ark.html) *to keep alive with you,* [*male*](male+female.html) *and* [*female*](male+female.html) *they should be.*

This reveals that the fundamental "two-ness" in the universe is [male](male+female.html) and [female](male+female.html). Since the ultimate act of human creativity is creating a baby, we understand that two people can be far more creative than merely [one](one.html), particularly if there is a [male](male+female.html)/[female](male+female.html) dynamic. However, two men or two women can have a [male](male+female.html)/[female](male+female.html) dynamic as well, for example in brainstorming a business idea. At any given moment [one](one.html) of the participants, whether [male](male+female.html) or [female](male+female.html) biologically [speaking](mashal.html), is implanting the [seed](flower.html) of an idea while the other is absorbing it. A moment later they exchange roles as the conversation continues.

Another aspect of the [number](nchart.html) two is that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) root of two = tooth.

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Even the very sound of the English word "tooth" carries within itself the sound of the [number](nchart.html) two (2-th). This highlights the point that two things complement [one](one.html) another. We have both upper and lower [teeth](body.html) and we need them both. Having only upper [teeth](body.html) or only lower [teeth](body.html) is worse than having no [teeth](body.html) at all.

[One](one.html) of the best Biblical examples of two is the Two Tablets that God gave to Moses on Mount [Sinai](stages.html). The Bible rarely refers to the [**Ten**](ten.html)[**Commandments**](cmds613.html) but calls them the **Two Tablets** about [thirty](thirty.html) times. This is because the quality of two they possess is so important. The two tablets complement [one](one.html) another and make it possible for us to create our moral matrix by consulting them both.

Lastly, the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for two is the same as the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for years.

This informs us that there is some common feature linking the concept of two to the idea of years.

Each passing year naturally possesses similarities to its predecessor on both a global and very personal level. Nonetheless, nobody experiences two successive years as being identical.

Similarly, when we think of the power of two we think of two things close enough to be counted together, but not so identical as to be duplicates. Our spouses are incredibly close to us, we can often complete their sentences. But they are also sufficiently different to make the [connection](connection.html) meaningful. I may consult two books for guidance in repairing my plumbing. They will both be about the problem I am experiencing but, to be helpful, each should tackle the project in a different way.

We understand that if we wish to change our [oneness](oneness.html) into a two, whether in seeking a spouse or a business partner, we need to find someone close and similar but not identical.

Essentially, the [number](nchart.html) two speaks to the fundamental duality which is so much a part of life. ***Day / Night, Good / Evil, Man / Woman, Light / Darkness***, ***Plus / Minus, Hot / Cold.*** Yes, many things do exist on a spectrum, but they are easier to analyze and understand when we [know](daat.html) the two dualities that anchor the ends of the spectrum.

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The [number](nchart.html) two is expressed as the [female](male+female.html) dimension (she can double herself, thus all duplicated [organs](body.html) of the [body](body.html) are expressed in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) by a feminine gender), **the** [**number**](nchart.html) **two**, the left [hand](mashal.html); and is embodied in [Yitzchak](isaac.html) Abinu ([Isaac](isaac.html)).

Why did the Torah start with the second [letter](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) alphabet and not the [first](one.html)? In his masterwork “The Wisdom in the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Alphabet”, Rabbi M. L. Munk explains that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letter](letters.html) “BET” with its numerical value of *two*: Symbolizes our [world](worlds.html), since everything earthly is embedded in plurality. All that was created for man’s use came in *pairs*:

The Torah – WRITTEN and [ORAL](file:///D:\Word\Numbers\orallaw.html);

The [Commandments](cmds613.html) – ‘[Mitzvot](cmds613.html)‘ – POSITIVE and NEGATIVE precepts;

The Intermediaries – MOSES and AARON;

The [World](worlds.html) – [HEAVEN](heaven.html) and Earth;

The Luminaries – [SUN](hachama.html) and [MOON](chodesh.html);

Human – [MALE](male+female.html) / [ADAM](adam.html) and [FEMALE](male+female.html) / EVE;…

Two Tablets – BETWEEN MAN and GOD and BETWEEN MAN and his NEIGHBOR;…

Two Drives and Two Hearts – The EVIL Inclination and the GOOD Inclination;…

Two [Worlds](worlds.html) – THIS [WORLD](worlds.html) – ‘OLAM HAZEH’ and THE [WORLD](futures.html) TO COME – ‘[OLAM HABA](futures.html)H’

If you look at the way our own human [bodies](body.html) are constructed, on each side of the torso is an arm and leg. Two [arms](body.html), and two [hands](fourteen.html), and two [legs](body.html) with two [feet](heel.html) are attached to the central core. Even internally, most of the [organs](body.html) come on doubles: The lungs, [kidneys](body.html), and the inner chambers of the [heart](body.html) and the [brain](brain.html) spread on two sides. The [head](body.html) has two [eyes](body.html), [ears](body.html), and nostrils. Yet all are rooted in the [one](one.html), which brings the focus back on the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html), the *alef* which was the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) on the tablets of the [ten](ten.html) [commandments](cmds613.html) when [HaShem](hashem.html) states “anochi [HaShem](hashem.html) Elokeka]” – “I [am the Lord your God]. ([Exodus](exodus.html) 20:2).

The Maharal says that two:

1. Implies proliferation. No [number](nchart.html) so completely conveys proliferation as the [number](nchart.html) two, for it is the only [number](nchart.html) that has the plural ending. Hence, two implies bountifulness and blessing. Similarly, the higher orders of two, namely 20 and 200 also imply increase. These are the [letters](letters.html) בכר Bechor, meaning the firstborn who gets a double portion, and the [letters](letters.html) of ברך the root of ברכה beracha, meaning blessing.
2. Two, even together, are not a unified entity. Unlike other [numbers](nchart.html), two cannot be whole, just as two parts cannot link together to complete a closed, unified figure. Every other [number](nchart.html) can be whole: [one](one.html) is inherently whole.
3. Two hints at “dispute”. It takes two to argue.

Any [type](types.html) of change or growth always proceeds through the two phases of inspiration and integration. [First](one.html) there is the inspiration to a [new](new.html) realm of possibilities and then there is the effort to build these [insights](insights.html) into the [world](worlds.html).

1. The [first](one.html) [**Beit HaMikdash**](mikdash.html) *with* the Shechinah.
2. The second [**Beit HaMikdash**](mikdash.html) *without* the Shechinah. It was much bigger and more beautiful, yet it did not have the Presence of [HaShem](hashem.html). It was here, though, that the [Light](file:///D:\Word\Numbers\lights.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) was kindled. (The [third](three.html) [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) will be an eternal structure that reconciles these two.)
3. The [first](one.html) set of **Luchot** (tablets) which contained the Word of [HaShem](hashem.html), both written and [oral](file:///D:\Word\Numbers\orallaw.html), were carved and written by [HaShem](hashem.html). This set of tablets were broken because of the [sin of the golden calf](sin.html).
4. The second set of **Luchot** were carved by men and engraved by [HaShem](hashem.html). These were preserved in the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html).
5. The [**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **ben** [**Yosef**](joseph.html). He brought [atonement](atonemen.html) for the [sin](sin.html) of the [Goyim](gen-jew.html), but He died in the process.
6. The [**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **ben** [**David**](fathers.html). He will endure.
7. [**Adam**](adam.html) HaRishon (the [first](one.html) [Adam](adam.html)) was perfect, but he sinned and crashed the [world](worlds.html).
8. [**Adam**](adam.html) HaSheni (the second [Adam](adam.html)) rebuilt and corrected that which crashed.
9. The **kingship of Shaul** which did not endure.
10. The **kingship of** [**David**](fathers.html) which will endure.
11. The **soul** before being put into a [body](body.html) is perfect, yet it has nothing of its own.
12. The **soul** after being put in a [body](body.html) is no longer perfect, but it now owns what it has created.
13. A **person in the** [**womb**](thebirth.html) is [taught](teacher.html) the whole Torah and he can see from [one](one.html) end of the [world](worlds.html) to the other. As he is being born his Torah [knowledge](knowledge.html) is driven into him so that he cannot remember.
14. A **person outside the** [**womb**](thebirth.html) must struggle to learn and remember his Torah, but this Torah will endure.
15. A **man** contributes the [seed](flower.html), the memories to a child. But, without the woman to build, his [seed](flower.html) will not endure.
16. A **woman** builds that [seed](flower.html) into reality. She gives endurance to man’s [seed](flower.html).
17. **Torah** [**study**](study.html) without [mitzvot](cmds613.html) will not endure, but it is the [first](one.html) step.
18. [**Mitzvot**](cmds613.html) will endure, but they require Torah [study](study.html) in order to [know](daat.html) what [one](one.html) must do.
19. The **giving of the Torah** involved a stage of preparation that draws down and reveals the essence of the soul. This is accomplished through the census of the [Jewish people](gen-jew.html). (This is [Sivan](feasts.html) 6 - [Shavuot](shavuot.html).)
20. The **giving of the Torah** involved a stage of preparation involving the cultivation of our conscious powers, until they can serve as receptors for that essence. This is accomplished through the counting of the [omer](omer.html). (This is the fiftieth day.)

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The concept of a *blessing* is to increase the lot of that being blessed. This is why, our Hakhamim [teach](teacher.html), that the word *baruch* (bless) begins with the [letter](letters.html) *bet*, which represents the [number](nchart.html) two, and the concept of increasing something. To be blessed is to have at least enough, and, to seek a blessing, is to seek more than [one](one.html)’s present lot in life.

*times.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

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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 Malchut. Tens correspond to the angelic realm Yetzirah, the Sefirat Tiferet. Hundreds correspond to the Neshama realm Beriah, the Sefirat Binah, Ima. Being that hundreds emanate from the realm of Ima; they are the source of blessing. Therefore, all offerings are the rectification of 100% of the produce offered.

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Finally, two is the minimum [number](nchart.html) of witnesses for a legal [event](feasts.html). Thus even here we have division.

Why do we need witnesses?

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1. # The Sacred Letters As a Guide to Jewish Deed and Thought, by Michael L. Munk

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)