

intro

There are twenty-four days between *Rosh Chodesh Kislev* and *Chanukah*. No big deal, right? *Wrong*. And not just because they lead up to *Chanukah*, but because they *are* the lead up to *Chanukah*, the only Jewish holiday to fall on the *twenty-fifth* day of a month.

The *Zohar* alludes to this here:

[The eighth *sefirah* of] *Hod* is the eight days of *Chanukah*, [which occurs after the] twenty-four days [of *Kislev* during which the *Chashmonaim* battled the Greeks]. They correspond to [the twenty-four letters of] *Boruch Shem kevod Malchuso l'olam va'ed*. (*Tikunei HaZohar* 29a)

That is a very insightful connection between the first

twenty-four days of *Kislev* and the second verse of the *Shema*, especially after knowing this:

Ya'akov had wanted to rectify [the *Malchus* below] *b'sod* the [lower] unity and established the [unity of the] twenty-four letters, which is, *Boruch Shem kevod Malchus l'olam va'ed*. He did not complete it with twenty-five letters [like the *Shema*] since the *Mishkan* had yet to be built. (*Zobar; Terumah* 139b)

When we say the *Shema* twice a day, we start with the *Shema* and then say *Boruch Shem*. But in *Kislev*, we reverse the order, at least conceptually. Instead, the first twenty-four days of *Kislev* correspond to *Boruch Shem*, and they lead to the twenty-fifth day, which corresponds to *Shema Yisroel*.

It makes sense. Each verse is considered a *yichud*, which causes and proclaims the unity of God, but with a very significant difference. The *Shema* is the *yichud* of *alma d'ila'a*—the upper world of angels and spiritual purity, and *Boruch Shem* is the *yichud* of *alma tita'a*, the lower, spiritually murky world of man.¹

This is why if you subtract the *gematria* of the first verse of *Shema* (1,118) from the *gematria* of the second verse of *Boruch Shem* (1,358), you are left with 240, the *gematria* of Amalek and *suffek*—doubt. It is the intellectual

¹ *Hakdamos uShe'arim, Sha'ar* 4, Ch. 5.

and spiritual doubt that resulted from eating from the *Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra* that transformed the world of man from one of angels to what it is today. Remove *Amalek/suffek* from the equation, and we return to the level of the clarity of the *Shema*.

That is the goal therefore of the first twenty-four days of *Kislev*, to get to the level of the *Shema*, which has twenty-five letters, by the twenty-fifth day of the month, and *Boruch Shem* is the key. It is the level of the *Ohr Ha-Ganuz*, the light which God created on the first day of Creation and subsequently hid from the evil of history:

God saw that the light was good, and God separated between the light and the darkness. (Bereishis 1:4)

He saw that the wicked were unworthy of using it, and therefore set it apart for the righteous in the Future Time. (*Rashi*)

This primordial light is also associated with the number *twenty-five*,² and it is said to be hidden in the *Ner Shel Chanukah*:

The original light of Creation was hidden in the thirty-

² The third verse of the Creation story says, *yehi obr*—let there be light. But it can also be read, *yehi is obr*, *yehi is light*, the *gematria* of *yehi* being *twenty-five*.

six candles of *Chanukah*. (*B'nei Yissachar, Kislev*)

The question is, what does it mean that the first twenty-four days of *Kislev* correspond to the twenty-four letters of *Boruch Shem*? In total, or literally letter-by-letter, so that the first day of *Kislev* corresponds to the *Bais* of *Boruch*, the second day to *Raish*, etc.?

No one says, which makes it difficult to use the twenty-four days in any specific way to prepare for *Chanukah*, other than cleaning your *chanukiah* and buying your wicks and oil. That is what millions of Jew have done now for millennia.

What follows is based upon the other approach, starting with the *Bais* of *Boruch* on *Rosh Chodesh Kislev*, and ending with the *Dalet* of *va'ed* on the twenty-fourth day of the month. At the very least this will help a person to prepare for *Chanukah* and greatly enhance their appreciation of the key to the final redemption.