



The Torah begins with the *Bais* of *Bereishis*. Why not an *Aleph*? There are different answers given, such as just as the letter *Bais* is closed to what preceded it but open to what comes after it, likewise a person should not investigate what preceded Creation, but only what came after it. But that is *exactly* what interests *Kabbalah*, what came before physical Creation.

Another answer is more technical. The *Ohr Ain Sof*, the infinite light of God is exactly that, *infinite*. That means sublime, uniform light in every direction, *infinitely*, which means no boundaries or levels, etc. On such a level, only the light can exist without any possibility of something else existing.

But that was not what God had in mind. God wanted man to exist and to even have free will, which required a

world with many creations and tremendous diversity so that both good *and* evil could exist. It's still all *Ohr Ain Sof*, but after it has been constricted and divided countless times resulting in what *Kabbalah* calls *Olam HaPeirud*—World of Separation.

The letter *Bais* represents this transformation, which is why it is the first letter of *Boruch*. The concept of a *brochab* is to *increase* the flow of Divine light into our world so that something good can become even better. This is why a flowing stream is called a *breichab*, from the word *brochab*.

This is what *Chanukah* taps into. The *mesiras Nefesh* (self-sacrifice) of those who fought for God and Torah elevated additional holy sparks. This triggered *zivugim* (pairing of *sefiros*)<sup>1</sup> that resulted in a downward flow of light, empowering the Jewish army to defeat the overwhelming favored Greek army.

It wasn't just any light that the *Chashmonaim* drew down. The greater the sacrifice for Torah, the higher up the sparks reach in the *sefiros* and, the higher the level of light that gets drawn down. In this case, it was the *Ohr Ha-Ganuz* itself, which resulted in a supernatural reality and, most important of all, a greater revelation of God to mankind.

---

<sup>1</sup> Just as procreation requires the union of a man and woman, likewise new lights require a spiritual union of male and female *sefiros*, called a *zivug*, to conceive and give birth to the new lights.

It is interesting that the *mitzvah* is not to light the *Menorah* inside the house like we do *Shabbos* candles, but outside in front of the house, just as the letter *Aleph* precedes the letter *Bais*, which is spelled the same as *bayis*—house. This indicates that the miracle of *Chanukah* was not of this world to which the *Bais* refers, but of the world of *Aleph* that preceded and gave rise to it, which is the world of the *Ohr HaGanuz*.

This is why we light thirty-six candles over the eight days of *Chanukah*, in which the *Ohr HaGanuz* is said to be hidden.<sup>2</sup> Thirty-six is the number that indicates a revelation of *Ohr HaGanuz* has occurred, revealing the *Shechinah*. Hence, the *Ohr HaGanuz* was only hidden after illuminating the world for thirty-six hours, the twelve hours of *Erev Shabbos* and the twenty-four hours of *Shabbos* itself.<sup>3</sup>

*Kislev* itself is comprised of two parts, *Chof-Samech*, the word for *cover*, and *Lamed-Vav*, which has a *gematria* of thirty-six. *Chanukah* celebrates the revelation of the supernal light of Creation that, until the twenty-fifth of *Kislev*, is hidden. If the first twenty-four days of *Kislev* are used well, then a person becomes a fitting *keli*—vessel—for the light of the Messianic Era that breaks into our world for eight days, as it says:

He made a separation in the illumination of the light,

---

<sup>2</sup> *Bnei Yissachar, Kislev*.

<sup>3</sup> *Yerushalmi, Brochos* 8:5.

that it should not flow or give off light except for the righteous whose actions draw it down and give off light. The actions of the evil however block it which leaves them in [spiritual] darkness. This itself was the hiding of the light. (*Sefer HaKlallim, Klal 18, Anaf 8, Os 4*)