



The *gematria* of *Ayin* is seventy, a well-known number for a number of reasons. First of all, the *mishnah* says that age seventy is fullness of years. Dovid *HaMelech* died at the age of seventy.

There is this:

God, Who has *seventy* names gave the Torah, which has *seventy* names, to the Jewish people who have *seventy* names which originated from the *seventy* souls that went down to Egypt with Ya'akov. They were chosen from among *seventy* nations to celebrate *seventy* holy days in the year.¹ The Torah was transmitted to *seventy* Elders. (*Midrash Yelamdeinu*)

¹ The 52 days of *Shabbos* and 18 days of *Yom Tov*, including *Chol HaMoed*.

And. . .

There are *seventy* facets to Torah. (*Zohar, Bereishis* 47b)

Clearly *Ayin* is connected to *Da'as*. The *Gemora* hints to that here as well:

One who becomes settled through wine has the *da'as*—knowledge of their Creator. . . the *da'as* of the *Seventy* Elders. Wine was given with *seventy* letters, and the secret was given with *seventy* letters. When wine goes in, secrets go out. (*Eiruvin* 65a)

Wine, or *yai'in* in Hebrew, does not have seventy letters, but its three letters, *Yud-Yud-Nun*, total seventy. Similarly, secret, or *sod*, also wasn't given with seventy letters, but its letters, *Samech-Vav-Dalet* also total seventy in *gematria*. Hence, the connection between wine and *da'as*, represented here by *Sod*.

And what does it mean, “when wine goes in, secrets go out”? Which secrets? Personal secrets? While often true, that usually has to do with a loss of *da'as*, not the gaining of it!

The starting point is wine itself, and its connection to the concept embodied by the number seventy and the letter *Ayin*. This is especially so when you consider that the *Gemora* says the following about the World to Come:

What is [this reward about which it is said]: “No eye has seen it” (*Yeshayabu* 64:3)? Rebi Yehoshua ben Levi said: That is the wine that has been preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation. (*Brochos* 34b)

Though grapes are delicious in their own right, they are not intoxicating like wine. And unlike wine, grapes get worse with time, not better. And the juice of a grape, like the oil of an olive, is not noticeable until the fruit is squeezed. They are the perfect analogies for the soul and the body, the former only becoming visible when the latter is “squeezed” through *mesiras Nefesh*—self-sacrifice—for good.²

It is also an analogy for how *Da’as* is hidden within all of us, taught to us by an angel while still in the womb.³ We forget it at birth so that we can use education as a means to recover it. Torah is the “wine” that goes in,⁴ and *Da’as* is the *sod* that comes out.

This is why Torah education is called *Chinuch*, from the word *chayn*. *Chayn* is usually translated as *grace* or similar, but its true meaning is the light people sense from us when our soul emerges to the outside. *Chinuch* is for teaching people how to access their own inner *chayn*.

² See my book, *The Art of Chayn*.

³ *Niddah* 30b.

⁴ *Ta’anis* 7a; *Sifri*, *Aikev* 48.

And not just their *chayn*, but the *chayn* of the world. Because as physical and limited as the natural world is, its core is *Obr Ain Sof*, the infinite light of God, the true source of *chayn* in Creation, and the two miracles of *Chanukah*, the holiday of *chayn*.

The end goal of *Chinuch* is to teach a person how to access the *Obr Ain Sof* within Creation, hidden there since Creation was made, represented by the *Ayin* and the number seventy. This is why the name Amalek can be read as *Ayin-malak*—severed seventy. As God says at the end of *Parashas Beshalach*, Amalek is the antithesis of this, and anyone who blocks passage to the *Obr Ain Sof* is Amalekian in nature.

Because, life is about vision, and vision is a matter of perception, how a person sees the world. That is not a function of the *physical* eye—*ayin*—per se, because it can easily be deceived. It is a function of the mind's eye—*Ayin*, because that is the most affected by *Da'as*, the one that we were given to see past the “grape” and into the spiritually intoxicating “wine” of *Da'as Elokim*.