

The Wondrous Feat of Yaakov Avinu Gathering Twelve Stones that Miraculously Transformed into One

In this week's parsha, parshas Vayeitzei, we read (Bereishis 28, 10): "ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה, ויפגע במקום וילך שם כי בא -- והוא" and **Yaakov departed from Be'er Sheva and went to Charan. He encountered the place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; he took from the stones of the place and he put them around his head, and lay down in that place.** Rashi comments: **He arranged them like a gutter-pipe around his head, because he feared the presence of wild animals. The stones began to quarrel with one another. This one would say, "Upon me shall the tzaddik lay his head"; and this one would say, "Upon me shall he lay his head." Immediately, HKB"H made them into one stone. This is implied by the words: "And he took the stone that he placed around his head."**

We can only imagine the magnificence of Yaakov Avinu's appearance, at the age of seventy-seven, as he poured out his heart to Hashem on Har HaMoriah. This miraculous event transpired 3,591 years ago, in the year 2185, counting from the creation of the world, at the precise location where his ancestors Avraham and Yitzchak prayed. This is where his grandfather Avraham bound his father Yitzchak on top of the mizbeiach; this is where his offspring, Yisrael, were destined to build the two Temples; this where the Melech HaMashiach will build the third Beis HaMikdash at the time of the future geulah.

This transpired after Yaakov returned from Charan in order to pray at the exact location that Avraham and Yitzchak had prayed. Immediately upon concluding his supplication, he asked permission to return to Charan to complete his journey and fulfill his mission. Yet, HKB"H delayed his return to Charan by causing the sun to set two hours prematurely. Enveloped by the

darkness of night, he was prevented from returning to Charan, as it is written: **"He spent the night there, because the sun had set."** We find the following elucidation from Chazal in the Gemara (Chullin 91b): "כד צלי בעי למיהדר, אמר הקב"ה צדיק זה בא לבית" -- **When he finished praying, he intended to return to Charan, but HKB"H intervened, saying, "This tzaddik has come to My lodging place; shall he depart without resting the night." Immediately, the sun set miraculously.**

How incredible it would be if we could see how Yaakov Avinu prepared his bed to sleep on Har HaMoriah that night! To see how he carefully chose from the stones in the area to form a protective structure around his head. To be able to hear the stones arguing heatedly with one another, each one arguing: **"Upon me shall he lay his head."** To witness how HKB"H ultimately intervened and miraculously transformed the twelve stones into one, which he placed beneath his head that night. To see how he woke up in the morning, erected the stone as a monument and anointed it with oil—to commemorate the great miracle that was performed on his behalf on Har HaMoriah.

Hence, it is only fitting that we examine Rashi's explanation as to why Yaakov took the stones to place around his head: **"He arranged them like a gutter-pipe around his head, because he feared the presence of wild animals."** We must endeavor to explain why he only saw fit to place the stones around his head and not around his entire body. Surely, wild animals do not distinguish between the head and the other bodily limbs. Additionally, why did HKB"H miraculously transform the twelve stones into a single stone? After all, it is an established principle that HKB"H does not perform a miracle, altering the laws of nature, for naught.

Furthermore, we should examine Yaakov Avinu's tefilah. After awaking from his slumber and from the incredible vision he saw in his dream, he formulates a vow (Bereishis 28, 20): "וידר יעקב נדר לאמר, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך, ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש, ושכתי בשלום אל בית אבי והיה ה' לי לאלקים-- Then Yaakov took a vow saying, "If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going; and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I will return in peace to my father's house, and Hashem will be a G-d to me. . ." Regarding the words "and Hashem will be a G-d to me," Rashi comments: "That His name will rest upon me from beginning to end, that no defect should be found in my offspring." At first glance, Rashi's comment appears enigmatic. Where do we find an allusion in the words "והיה ה' לי לאלקים" to the fact that he prayed that HKB"H's name would rest upon him from beginning to end and that no defect should be found in his offspring?

Yaakov Took Twelve Stones Corresponding to Twelve Tribes

We shall begin to shed some light on the subject by introducing Chazal's revelation regarding the stones that Yaakov gathered and the reason HKB"H transformed all of the stones miraculously into a single stone. Here is their elucidation in the Midrash (B.R. 68, 11):

"ויקח מאבני המקום, רבי יהודה אמר, שנים עשרה אבנים נטל, כך גזר הקב"ה שהוא [יעקב] מעמיד שנים עשר שבטים, אמר [יעקב], אברהם לא העמידו, יצחק לא העמידו, אני אם מתאחות הן שנים עשר אבנים זו לזו, יודע אני שאני מעמיד י"ב שבטים, כיון שנתאחו י"ב אבנים זו לזו ידע שהוא מעמיד י"ב שבטים."

According to the Midrash, Yaakov took specifically twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes that HKB"H decreed that he would establish. Neither Avraham nor Yitzchak established the twelve tribes. If the stones united to form one single stone, Yaakov would know that he was destined to successfully establish the twelve tribes.

We learn from this Midrash that these stones were no ordinary stones. Yaakov Avinu took great care in selecting these twelve stones. They were meant to correspond to the future twelve tribes that would constitute the foundation of the nation of Yisrael for the remainder of time. Moreover, he established a sign and a test for himself: If the twelve stones joined together as one, he would know that he was the one destined to establish the twelve tribes. Accordingly, HKB"H granted his request; thus,

notifying him that he would indeed be the one to establish the twelve tribes.

This enlightens us as to the quarrel that ensued among the twelve stones. For, they represented all the future neshamot of Yisrael that would be divided up among the twelve tribes. As such, each would have its own unique way of serving Hashem. Here is how our great luminary, the Chatam Sofer (Shoftim), expresses this phenomenon:

"ידוע מהאר"י ("שער הכונות" בדרוש עלינו לשבח דף נ טור ד ד"ה ואמנם) די"ב שערים יש בשמים למנהגי י"ב שבטי ישראל, שעולה תפלתם שם כל אחד אל שעריו, והנה כן הוא הורדת ההשפעה ושכל העיוני בחלקי התורה, יש לכל שבט שערו וצינורו להורדת שפעו על דרך ותן חלקנו בתורתך."

We know from the Ar"i that there are twelve heavenly gates for the customs of the twelve tribes of Yisrael. Each one's tefilah ascends through its particular gate. Likewise, divine influence and speculative knowledge associated with Torah-study descend through these gates. Each tribe has its own gate and conduit for bringing down its divine influence, in keeping with the notion of "and grant us our portion in Your Torah" (from the middle berachah of the Shabbas tefilah).

Therefore, each of the twelve stones, corresponding to one of the twelve tribes, yearned for the tzaddik to rest his head upon it specifically. In other words, each one wanted Yaakov Avinu, the head and holy source from which the twelve tribes would emerge, to rest his head and thoughts upon it—accepting its methodology and philosophy regarding Torah-study and the service of Hashem. In addition, they wished to be extracted from the house of Lavan HaArami, where the neshamot of Yisrael were concealed and trapped. To accomplish this feat, Yaakov would have to go and marry Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, who would give birth to the twelve tribes that Yaakov would take out of Lavan's house.

Notwithstanding, Yaakov realized by means of "ruach hakodesh" that the ideal was for the twelve tribes to unite as one in the service of the one true G-d—regardless of their unique paths and philosophies. The Torah expresses this fact as follows (Bamidbar 15, 16): "תורה אחת ומשפט אחד יהיה לכם"—**one Torah and one judgment will apply to you.** Therefore, he established a sign for himself: If the twelve stones united as one, he would know that he was destined to establish the twelve tribes. For, it is fitting for the offspring of Yisrael to unite and serve the one true G-d.

Yaakov's Stone Was the Foundation Stone for the Beis HaMikdash

Now, let us examine some of the amazing things that transpired with this special stone that Yaakov placed beneath his head. We shall begin with the fact that Yaakov chose to set it up as a monument and establish it as **“בית אלקים”**—**the house of G-d**. For, it is written (Bereishis 28, 18):

“וישכם יעקב כבוקר ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשותיו וישם אותה מצבה ויצוק שמן על ראשה... וידר יעקב נדר לאמר, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש, ושבתו בשלום אל בית אבי והיה ה' לי לאלקים, והאבן הזאת אשר שמתו מצבה יהיה בית אלקים, וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך.”

Yaakov arose early in the morning and took the stone that he had placed around his head and set it up as a monument; and he poured oil on its top ... Then Yaakov took a vow, saying, “If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going; and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I will return in peace to my father’s house, and Hashem will be a G-d to me—then this stone which I have set up as a monument shall become a house of G-d, and whatever You will give me, I shall surely tithe to you.”

We must endeavor to understand Yaakov’s declaration that the stone he set up as a monument would be **“a house of G-d”**—**“Beis Elokim.”** How can a slab of stone without a single room be considered **“a house of G-d”**? The Ohr HaChaim hakadosh provides us with an answer: **“והאבן הזאת אשר שמתו מצבה יהיה בית אלקים—it turns out that this was the foundation stone, which they summoned for the Mikdash.** He is referring to the stone we learned about in the Mishnah (Yoma 53b): **“אבן היתה שם מימות נביאים ראשונים ושתייה: a stone was there from the days of the early prophets, and it was called “Shesiyah” (foundation).** It was located under the Aron in the Kodesh HaKodashim. The Gemara explains (ibid. 54b): **“תנא שממנה הושתת העולם: a Baraita taught: Because from it the world was founded.**

With this understanding, the Ohr HaChaim explains that HKB”H summoned the foundation stone—the **“Even HaShesiyah”**—for Yaakov to sleep upon in the location of the Mikdash. Subsequently, this very same stone was set in the Kodesh HaKodashim. The commentaries point out that this fact is stated explicitly in the Zohar hakadosh (Noach 72a): **“והאבן הזאת אשר שמתו מצבה יהיה בית אלקים, דדא אבן שתיה.”**

In truth, this statement is somewhat perplexing. How can we claim that Yaakov’s stone was none other than the **“Even Shesiyah”** that was in the Kodesh HaKodashim? Its name derives from the fact that the world was founded from it. This implies that this stone was already there from the day the world was created—long before Yaakov established it as a monument. The Zohar actually senses this difficulty and proposes a solution based on mystical principles.

HKB”H Submerged the Stone in the Depths of the Abyss

Notwithstanding, in the Radal’s commentary on the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (35, 69), he resolves the difficulty posed by the Zohar in a very reasonable manner. Both the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (ibid.) and the Midrash Shochar Tov (Tehillim 91) concur with the Zohar hakadosh that Yaakov’s stone became the **“Even Shesiyah.”** However, the matter is explained in the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer at greater length:

“לקח יעקב שתים עשרה אבנים מאבני המזבח שנעקד עליו יצחק אביו, וישם אותם מראשותיו באותו מקום, להודיעו שעתידין לעמוד ממנו שנים עשר שבטים, ונעשו כולן אבן אחת להודיעו שכולם עתידיים להיות גוי אחד בארץ, שנאמר (דברי הימים א יז כא) ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ... וישב יעקב ללקוט את האבנים ומצא אותם כולם אבן אחת, וישם אותה מצבה בתוך המקום, וירד לו שמן מן השמים ויצק עליה שנאמר ויצוק שמן על ראשה.”

מה עשה הקב”ה, נטה רגל ימינו וטבעה האבן עד עמקי תהומות, ועשה אותה סניף לארץ כאדם שעושה סניף לכיפה, לפיכך נקראת אבן השתיה, שמשם הוא טבור הארץ, ומשם נמתחה כל הארץ, ועליה היכל ה' עומד, שנאמר והאבן הזאת אשר שמתו מצבה יהיה בית אלקים, ונפל יעקב על פניו ארצה לפני אבן השתיה, והיה מתפלל לפני הקב”ה ואמר, רבון כל העולמים אם תשיבני למקום הזה בשלום, אזכחה לפניך זבחי תודות ועולות, שנאמר וידר יעקב נדר לאמר.”

Yaakov took twelve stones from the stones of the mizbeiach upon which his father Yitzchak was bound. He placed them around his head in that very same location to let him know whether or not twelve tribes were to be established from him. They all became one stone illustrating to him that they were all destined to become one nation in the land ... Yaakov returned to gather up the stones and he found that they were all part of a single stone. He placed it as a monument in that place. Oil descended from the heavens and he anointed it ...

What did HKB”H do? He took His right leg and submerged the stone in the depths of the abyss ...

Thus, it states explicitly that Yaakov’s “Even Shesiyah” does not sit exposed in the Kodesh HaKodashim. Rather, HKB”H submerged it in the depths of the abyss, inside the earth, at the source from where the world was formed. With this understanding, we can now interpret the Mishnah: **“A stone was there from the days of the early prophets, and it was called “Shesiyah.”** The Mishnah is teaching us that the prophets chose a stone and imparted it with great kedushah. They set it in the Kodesh HaKodashim in a location corresponding to where HKB”H submerged Yaakov Avinu’s “Even Shesiyah.” It was called the “Even Shesiyah,” because it corresponded to and marked the location from which the world was founded.

The “Even Shesiyah” Represents the Unity of the Twelve Tribes

Based on what we have learned, this enlightens us as to why HKB”H chose to submerge Yaakov’s stone into the depths of the abyss in the exact location from which the world was formed. Let us introduce the explanation of the esteemed author of the Shevet Mussar and Midrash Talpiyos in his commentary V’lo Od Elah on the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (ibid.):

”יש לחקור מה כל החרדה הזאת על האבן זה, שטבעה הקב”ה עד עמקי תהומות וכל האמור. אמנם כיון שהאבן הזאת בא לרמוז על י”ב שבטים וכולם באחדות כמדובר לעיל, לכן עשה הקב”ה יסוד העולם לרמוז שבשבילם העולם עומד, ואם אין ישראל חס ושלום אין עולם, וכדברי רבותינו ז”ל במסכת חגיגה (דף יב:): על י”ב עמודים העולם עומד, דכתיב (דברים לב-ח) יצב גבולות עמים למספר בני ישראל.

וכן שהקב”ה ברא את העולם בשביל ישראל, כדברי רבותינו ז”ל (שמו”ר לא-ט) בראשית בשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית, ולכן כיון שהאבן הזאת הם י”ב אבנים שנתחברו למספר בני ישראל שבשבילם נברא העולם, הגיחה הקב”ה ביסוד העולם כאילו הם הסובלים את העולם בעמודים אלו שהבית נכון עליהם, ועליה היכל ה’, הטעם לכפר על איזה שאינו הגון אם יוצא מהם כדי שלא יתמוטט העולם.”

We should explore what all the commotion is concerning this stone that HKB”H submerged to the depths of the abyss. Seeing as this stone alludes to the twelve shevatim all united together, as described above, therefore HKB”H established it as the foundation of the world—alluding to the fact that the world exists for their sake. If there is no Yisrael, chas v’shalom, there is no world. Our blessed Rabbis express this fact as follows in Masechet Chagigah (12b): “The world stands on twelve pillars” . . .

Therefore, since this stone is actually twelve stones that joined together—corresponding to the number of Bnei Yisrael, for whom the world was created—HKB”H placed

it at the site of the foundation of the world. It is as if they are carrying the burden of the world as the pillars upon which the House is founded, and upon which the Sanctuary of Hashem stands. Thus, they can atone for any of their descendants who are not good, decent people, so that the world will not collapse.

Let us add an interesting point concerning the fact that HKB”H chose this particular stone--that was originally twelve separate stones and amalgamated into one miraculously--to place beneath the Kodesh HaKodashim. We have learned in the Gemara (Yoma 9b):

”מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב, מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו, עבודה זרה וגלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים... אבל מקדש שני שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצוות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב, מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם, ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות, עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים.”

We learn that the first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because the people were guilty of the three cardinal sins—avodah zarah, immorality and murder. These sins were not prevalent during the times of the second Beis HaMikdash; the people of that period engaged in Torah-study and performed mitzvot and acts of kindness. It was destroyed because of “sin’as chinam”—baseless hatred. This teaches us that “sin’as chinam” is equivalent to the three cardinal sins.

Thus, we have an explicit source stating that the continued existence of the Beis HaMikdash requires that unity and love prevail among the people of Yisrael. Precisely for this reason, HKB”H chose to take this stone that was formed from the union of twelve separate stones. HKB”H wished to illustrate that the people of Yisrael—comprised of twelve distinct shevatim—must exist harmoniously as one. He submerged the stone in the depths of the abyss beneath the Kodesh HaKodashim, in the location from which the world was founded; in this manner, He conveyed the message that the foundation and continued existence of the Beis HaMikdash are solely in the merit of unity—similar to Yaakov’s single amalgamated stone. Yet, when “sin’as chinam” erupted among the people of Yisrael, causing separation and estrangement between fellow Jews, the Beis HaMikdash could not continue to exist.

“From Tziyon the consummation of beauty G-d appeared”

Following this line of reasoning, let us now address Rashi’s comment: **“He took from the stones of the place and placed**

them around his head”: He arranged them like a gutter-pipe around his head, because he feared the presence of wild animals. We shall introduce the precious and enlightening words presented by the Yismach Moshe (Vayeitzei) in the name of the sefer Kevod Chachamim” on the allegories of the Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachos 4, 22), commenting on the passuk (Tehillim 50, 2): “מציון מכלול יופי הופיע אלקים”—**from Tziyon, the consummation of beauty, G-d (Elokim) appeared.** Why does this passuk employ the divine name of “din”—Elokim—with regards to Tziyon?

He provides an answer based on the Gemara’s explanation that the stone in the Kodesh HaKodashim is called “Even Shesiyah,” **“because from it the world was founded.”** The Gemara explains that this reason agrees very nicely with the viewpoint that: “מציון נברא העולם, דתניא רבי אליעזר אומר עולם מאמצעיתו נברא”—**the world was created from Tziyon. For it has been taught in a Baraita: Rabbi Eliezer says: The world was created from its center.** In other words, the creation of the world began from the site of the Kodesh HaKodashim, which is the center-point of the world. From that central point, the creation spread and expanded to all corners of the universe. The Gemara substantiates its viewpoint from the passuk: “מציון מכלול יופי הופיע אלקים”—in other words, from the Beis HaMikdash located in Tziyon emanates the beauty of the world.

Now, we are familiar with Rashi’s comment (Bereishis 1, 1): “בראשית ברא אלקים, ולא אמר ברא ה’, שבתחילה עלה במחשבה לבראותו במדת הדין, וראה שאין העולם מתקיים, והקדים מדת הרחמים ושתפה למדת הדין, והיינו דתניב (שם ב-ד) ביום עשות ה’ אלקים ארץ ושמים.” The opening passuk of the Torah employs the name Elokim rather than Havaya; this indicates that the Creator initially intended to create the world based on the midah of “din.” He foresaw, however, that the world could not survive based on this strict standard. Therefore, he preferentially partnered the midah of “rachamim” with the midah of “din.” This partnership and preference for “midas harachamim” are evident in the passuk (ibid. 2, 4): “ביום עשות ה’ אלקים ארץ ושמים.” Note that in this passuk both divine names are employed, but the name of rachamim precedes the name of “din.” With this in mind, the Kevod Chachamim proposes a tremendous chiddush. He says that HKB”H’s initial plan to create the world based on the midah of “din” was not abandoned completely. For, we have a fundamental principle (Yeshayah 40, 8): “ודבר אלקינו יקום לעולם”—**the word of our G-d (Elokim) shall stand forever.**

This means that HKB”H’s initial thought to create the world based on “midas hadin” still exists and is in effect at the original point of creation—the site of the Mikdash. Subsequently, however, when creation then spread from there to the rest of the universe, HKB”H realized, so to speak, that this system was untenable. Hence, He partnered “midas harachamim” with “midas hadin,” as indicated by the passuk: “ביום עשות ה’ אלקים ארץ ושמים.”

This then is the meaning of the passuk: “מציון מכלול יופי הופיע אלקים.” In the Beis HaMikdash, the starting point of creation, the name Elokim—the name of “din”—yet appears. This is evident from the opening passuk of the Torah: **בראשית ברא אלקים.** This is also the implication of the passuk (Tehillim 68, 36): “נורא אלקים ממקדשיך”—in the place of the Mikdash, the starting point of creation, there the name Elokim, representing “midas hadin,” is dominant. This summarizes the words of the Kevod Chachamim.

In this manner, the Yismach Moshe goes on to explain the deeper meaning of the following pesukim in our parsha (Bereishis 28, 12): “ויהלום והנה סולם מצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה—**and he dreamt, and behold! A ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward; and behold—G-d’s malachim ascending and descending on it!** The Midrash (B.R. 68, 12) teaches us that in his dream, HKB”H showed Yaakov a vision of the Beis HaMikdash. Therefore, he saw how **“G-d’s malachim,”** the messengers of “midas hadin,” ascend and descend in the Beis HaMikdash. Despite the activity of these malachim, he witnessed a tremendous chiddush: “והנה—HKB”H stood over him with the name Havaya, “midas harachamim,” to protect him.

To convey this point, the passuk states (ibid. 16): “וייקץ יעקב—**Yaakov awoke from his sleep and proclaimed, “Surely Hashem is in this place!”** In other words, he was amazed that in the place of the Mikdash—the starting point of creation, where “midas hadin” prevails, as implied by the passuk: “נורא אלקים ממקדשיך”—to find the name Havaya, “midas harachamim,” also present. Notwithstanding, he was overwhelmed with fear and trepidation due the kedushah of the place: “ויירא ויאמר מה נורא המקום הזה אין זה כי אם בית אלקים”—**and he became frightened and he said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of G-d (Elokim).”** In other words, he perceived the dominance of the name Elokim representing “din.” Then Yaakov proceeds to explain the reason for this phenomenon: “וזה שער השמים”—**and this is the gate of heaven**—because here, in the place of the Mikdash, is the

gate and starting point of creation. Therefore, HKB”H’s initial thought to create the world with “midas hadin” predominates. This concludes the Yismach Moshe’s enlightening insight.

Twelve Stones Corresponding to the Twelve Permutations of the Name Havaya

Surprisingly, the Yismach Moshe does not tell us how exactly Yaakov realized that the name Havaya—“midas harachamim”—was also present in the place of the Mikdash, where the name Elokim—“midas hadin”—prevails. So, I would like to suggest an explanation based on an inspiration I had. Our holy sefarim explain over and over again that the number of the shevatim from the realm of kedushah—twelve—corresponds to the number of permutations of the sacred name Havaya. The source for this notion is the Sha’arei Orah (7): **“ולפי שיבה יעקב: זכה לצאת ממנו י”ב שבטים צדיקים, כנגד י”ב להיות שם הוי”ה נקרא עליו, זכה לצאת ממנו י”ב שבטים צדיקים, כנגד י”ב צירופים של שם הוי”ה—since Yaakov merited having the name Havaya associated with him, he was privileged to have twelve righteous tribes descend from him, corresponding to the twelve permutations of the name Havaya.**

Now, the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy”a, in Zera Kodesh (Bo and Beshalach), addresses the following passuk in parshas Vayechi (Bereishis 48, 8): **“וירא ישראל את בני יוסף ויאמר מי אלה [רש”י]: “מהיכן יצאו אלו שאינן ראויין לברכה”]**, ויאמר יוסף אל אביו בני הם אשר נתן **“and Yisrael saw Yosef’s sons and he said, “Who are these?”** (Rashi comments: “From where did these who are unfit for blessing emerge?”) **And Yosef said to his father, “They are my sons whom G-d has given me with this.” He said, “Bring them to me, if you please, and I will bless them.”**

Yaakov Avinu saw that “midas hadin” prevailed over Yosef’s two sons. Therefore, he said: **“מי אל”ה**, an anagram for the name of “din,” **אלהי”ם**. With his reply, Yosef attempted to mitigate the force of “din” associated with the name Elokim by invoking the twelve permutations of the name Havaya. Hence, he said: **“בני הם”** **“אשר נתן לי אלקים בזה”**—the force necessary to mitigate the “din” of Elokim is **“ז”ה**. The numerical value of these two letters is twelve, alluding to the twelve permutations of the name Havaya.

We can now rejoice at having gained a deeper appreciation of the exalted deed Yaakov Avinu performed that night at the site of the future Mikdash. He gathered twelve stones corresponding to the twelve shevatim, which correspond to the twelve permutations of the name Havaya. By doing so, he intended to diminish the force of “din,” which was dominant at that location. Therefore, HKB”H took the stone that had been formed from all twelve of the individual stones and submerged it in the abyss, opposite the Kodesh HaKodashim. He did so to diminish the “din” of the name Elokim at the site of the Mikdash by means of the twelve permutations of the name Havaya.

Hence, immediately after gathering the twelve stones, Yaakov saw in his dream two divergent themes. On the one hand: **“And behold—G-d’s malachim ascending and descending on it!”**—he witnessed the messengers of “midas hadin.” On the other hand, due to the protection of the twelve stones: **“והנה ה’ נצב עליו”**—the name Havaya stood over Yaakov with its twelve permutations to protect him.

At this point, it is extremely gratifying to have gained a better understanding of Yaakov’s tefilah: **“והיה ה’ לי לאלקים”**—**and Havaya will be Elokim for me**. He prayed that he would succeed in mitigating the “din” of the name Elokim with the twelve permutations of the name Havaya. This provides us with a wonderful understanding of Rashi’s comment: **“That His name will rest upon me from beginning to end, that no defect should be found in my offspring.”** According to Rashi, Yaakov prayed that the name Havaya, “midas harachamim,” would rest upon him **“from beginning to end”**—that all twelve permutations would prevail, from the first to the last. To that end, he added: **“That no defect should be found in my offspring”**—after all, the twelve shevatim correspond to the twelve permutations. Therefore, if one of them should be found lacking, chas v’shalom, the full complement of permutations would be lacking and invalid, making it impossible to diminish the force of “din.” As we know, Yaakov merited the establishment of the twelve tribes—all of them beloved, all of them pure—and in their merit, the “din” in the place of the Mikdash was diminished.

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