

Parashat Devarim

אַחַד עֶשֶׂר יוֹם מִחֹרֵב דֶּרֶךְ הַר שֵׁעִיר עַד קַדְשׁ בַּרְנֵעַ.

*It takes eleven days from Horeb via Mt. Seir to Kadesh Barnea.*¹

In the beginning of *parashat Devarim*, Moses begins his farewell address to the Jewish people before his death. As part of this address, he rebukes them for having sinned. Although when they first left Egypt, G-d was rushing them through the desert in order to enter the land of Israel as quickly as possible, their sins caused Him to prolong their stay in the desert for forty years. A sign of how fast they were originally traveling is the fact that “it takes eleven days [to travel] from Horeb via Mt. Seir to Kadesh Barnea,” but they miraculously traversed this distance in three days.

The mystical interpretation of this verse is as follows:

לקוטי תורה, פרשת דברים אחד עשר יום מחורב. נגד ז' מלכין דמיתו, ודי אחורים דא"א,	ספר הלכותים, פרשת דברים כנגד ז' מלכים דמתים, ודי אחוריים דא"א.
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Sefer HaLikutim and Likutei Torah, parashat Devarim

These eleven days correspond to the seven primordial kings that died and the four backs of Abba and Ima.

As we know, the seven kings of Edom are the physical correlate to the seven lower *sefirot* of *Tohu* whose vessels shattered. This was the origin of evil, i.e., “separate”-consciousness as opposed to Divine consciousness. The lower worlds (*Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*) were constructed out of the fragments of these vessels, and thus are realms of increasingly non-Divine-oriented consciousness.

In the collapse of the world of *Tohu*, not only did the seven lower, emotional *sefirot* shatter. The *sefirot* of the intellect suffered a less drastic fall as well. As we have explained previously, the reason they did not shatter completely is because of the difference between intellect and emotion. Intellect, being more abstract, is not an experience of self-assertion as much as emotion is. The *sefirot* of the intellect therefore did not clash with each other to the extent that the *sefirot* of the emotions did. However, since the overall tone of the world of *Tohu* is one of self-assertion and self-orientation, the external, or “back” of the intellectual *sefirot* of *chochmah* and *binah* did clash somewhat and in the process lose some of their intensity, or “fall.” The reason why there are four “backs” of these two *sefirot* is because they exist both in their totally abstract forms (which evolve in the next world, *Atzilut*, into the *partzufim* of *Abba* and *Ima*) and their more “applied” forms (which in *Atzilut* into the *partzufim* of *Yisrael Saba* and *Tevunah*).

Thus, we have a total of eleven fallen elements: the four partial collapses of the intellect and the seven total collapses of the emotions.

והם י"א יום |

והם י"א יום,

These eleven fallen elements are the source of these eleven days.

The number eleven is especially significant because it is one more than ten. Ten signifies holiness, the complete functioning unit of the ten *sefirot*. The array of ten *sefirot* is perfectly balanced and

1. Deuteronomy 1:2; see Rashi *ad loc*.

when operating as intended is the channel for the transmission and distribution of holiness (God-consciousness) throughout reality.

Eleven, however, indicates an excess, a spillage, an over-doing or wasting of Divine energy. To explain this we will digress briefly from this text and quote another passage from the Arizal's teachings:²

עץ חיים, שער יא, פרק י
ענין י"א סמני הקטרת וענין י"א יריעות עזים וי"א ארורים בפי כי תבא

Eitz Chaim 11:10

The significance of the eleven ingredients of the incense, the eleven goat-skin overhangings of the Tabernacle, and the eleven curses in *parashat Tavo* is as follows:

הם י קליפות דנוגה

There are ten "shells" of *nogah*.

"Shells" are layers of evil. *Nogah* is the realm of evil that is "neutral," i.e., consciousness that is simply non-Divine as opposed to *anti*-Divine.

ויש בהם חיות דקדושה להחיותן

They possess holy life-force, which enlivens them.

In order for *anything* to exist, even evil, it must have some G-dly life-force in it, i.e., some will from G-d to keep it existing. The difference, then, between evil and holiness is as follows:

והנה בייס של הקדושה החיות שלהם נבלע או בתוכם ונחשבין ל"י בלבד

As regards the ten holy *sefirot*, the Divine life-force that enlivens them is absorbed within them, and thus they are counted only as ten.

Since holiness is G-d-consciousness, the holy *sefirot* are not an existential contradiction to G-d's will, so G-d's enlivening energy can become part of them.

אבל בקליפה אין החיות נבלע בתוכם כי אין קודש מתערב בחול אך עומד על ראשם ומשם מאיר להם ואז הם נחשבין ל"א

But with regard to the "shells," the Divine life-force enlivening them cannot be absorbed within them, because the holy does not mix with the profane. Rather, it hovers over their heads, and shines onto them from there. Together they are thus regarded as eleven entities.

Since evil is by definition antithetical to G-d-consciousness, it cannot "host" Divine life-force.

וזהו כל המוסיף גורע.

This is the mystical meaning of the statement of our sages: "whoever adds, detracts."³

2. *Eitz Chaim* 11:10.

3. *Sanhedrin* 29a.

We return now to our original texts.

והם דרך הר שעיר, בסוד מלכי אדום, | והם דרך הר שעיר הוא אדום, בסוד מלכי אדום,

These eleven days are “via Mt. Seir,” this being the mystery of the kings of Edom.

The eleven fallen levels produce, as we have noted, the existence of evil in the lower worlds (“lower” meaning “below *Atzilut*”). Mt. Seir is the abode of Esau, the wicked brother of Jacob, the progenitor of the kingdom of Edom. *Edom* in Hebrew means “red,” and is thus associated with bloodshed and bloodlust, just as Esau chose to be a hunter rather than a farmer. Edom eventually produced the nation of Rome, which destroyed the holy Temple, decimated the Jewish people, and exiled them from their land.

והם סוד י"א יריעות עזים. | והם י"א יריעות עזים.

These eleven fallen levels also give rise to the eleven overhangings of goat-skin.

The word *Seir* in Hebrew means “goat.” Although goats are kosher animals and are offered as sacrifices in the Temple, the Torah also makes reference to “goat-devils,”⁴ associating the goat with evil. Thus, the eleven goat-skin overhangings in the Tabernacle signify the “shell” nature of evil. The shell is the inedible part of the nut or fruit, and must be discarded. On the other hand, the shell performs a vital function in that it protects the nut or fruit while it is growing, just as ego and selfishness help a child develop a necessary sense of self before he graduates to a mature consciousness of selflessness. Thus, the goat, again, has its place in the Temple, both as an offering and as a protective covering.

וכדי שיאיר היום מתוך הלילה, שהוא הבירור שנעשה, | הוצרך החורבה.

Now, in order that the “day” shine out of the night—i.e., that the sparks of holiness inherent in evil be liberated through the process of separation accomplished by our proper use of physicality—the destruction had to take place.

The purpose of the creation of evil is so that these high-energy sparks of *Tohu* can be released from their non-holy context and made part of the holy order. Thus, holiness acquires an added energy and impetus that it does not possess otherwise. This is known as bringing “the lights of *Tohu* into the vessels of *Tikun*.”

Thus, any descent in level is ultimately for the purpose of a subsequent ascent, in order to capitalize on the latent energy implicit in the lower level and harness it for goodness and holiness.

וזה י"א יום מחורב שיצאו מסיגי החורבה, בסוד היה | בונה עולמות ומחריבן.

This is mystical meaning of this verse: There are eleven “days” from “Horeb,” i.e., that issued from the dregs of the destruction. As our sages said, G-d was building and destroying worlds before He created our world.

The word “Horeb” (*Chorev* in Hebrew) means “destruction.” The beginning of the verse thus means that the revelation (“days”) of Divinity we are striving to cause is made possible by the eleven fallen levels of the destroyed world of *Tohu*.

In the Midrash, we are told that the fact that the Torah records that G-d pronounced this world

4. Leviticus 17:7; Isaiah 13:21.

“good” when He created it implies that He had been creating and destroying other “versions” of it before finally settling on this one, which He considered “good” relative to them. According to Kabbalah, this does not mean (G-d forbid) that G-d had to go through various “tries” until He got it right; rather, these previous versions of the world were the preparatory stages of creation (*Akudim*, *Nekudim*, *Tohu*, etc.) that were imperfect but necessary precursors to this world. They were created and then destroyed so that the ruins of their destruction would linger as the existential constituents of our present reality, giving it its potential for elevation to levels higher than its own origin.

ורמז שבהם תלוי גאולתינו, כנודע, שעד שיכלו נשמות
שבגוף זה של הקליפה, ועולים בכל יום לקדושה.

The verse alludes to the fact that our redemption is dependent upon the process of effecting these “days,” i.e., revelations caused by the elevation of the sparks, as is known. For the redemption will not occur until all the “souls” are released from the “body” of evil, and ascend every day into holiness.

Our sages state that “the son of David [i.e., the Messiah] will not come until all the souls have been emptied out of the Body,”⁵ referring to the celestial storehouse of souls. (This is one reason why religious Jews seek to have as many children as possible.) Here, this phrase is being used allegorically, the “souls” meaning the sparks of holiness hidden within the coarse “body” of evil.

וזה שרמז עד קדש, עד שעולים ומתקדשים לבוא
אחייכ בזה העולם, בסוד נשמות החול, כנודע.

This is alluded to by the words “until Kadesh,” meaning, until they ascend and become sanctified to come afterwards into this world as “weekday souls,” as is known.

Kadesh means “holiness.” [This sentence *may* mean that the sparks of holiness liberated by our involvement with the physical world become somehow embodied in the souls of the children conceived by marital relations conducted on weekdays (as opposed to on the Sabbath). But I have to verify this. —myw]

וסיים ברנע, דהיינו שהיו בר נע ונד, כל ימי הגלות,
עד סוף בירורם במהרה בימינו. ודו"ק.

The verse ends with the word “Barnea,” indicating that these sparks wander back and forth all throughout the exile until their final elevation and redemption, may it be speedily, in our days.

The word *Barnea* is here allegorically interpreted to mean “one who wanders” (*bar-na* [v'nad]).

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ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יִסַּף עֲלֵיכֶם כֶּכֶם אֱלֹהֵי פְעָמִים וַיִּבְרַךְ אֶתְכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
לְכֶם.

“May G-d, the G-d of your forefathers increase you a thousand fold.”⁶

5. *Yevamot* 62a.

6. Deuteronomy 1:11.

This was part of Moses' blessing to the Jewish people. To this, the Jewish people replied, "Moses! You are setting a limit to our blessing [by limiting it to a thousand fold increase]! The Holy One, blessed be He, has already promised Abraham: "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, meaning, if a person can count the dust of the earth, so will he be able to count your offspring."⁷ Moses replied, "What I said is my own blessing [i.e., the maximum extent to which I can bless you]. But as for G-d, He will indeed 'bless you as He spoke of you.'"⁸

<p style="text-align: center;">לקוטי תורה, פרשת דברים</p> <p>צריך שתדע שמשה הוא סודו בבריאי ובסוד אל שדי שהם שמות הבריאי ועולין כמנין משה</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">שער הפסוקים, פרשת דברים</p> <p>והענין הוא, כי משייה בגימטריא אייל שדיי,</p>
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Sha'ar HaPesukim and Likutei Torah, parashat Devarim

To understand this, let us note that the numerical value of Moses (Moshe, 345) is the same as that of the Divine Names *Kel Shakai*.

Moshe: mem-shin-hei = 40 + 300 + 5 = 345.

Kel Shakai: Alef-lamed Shin-dalet-yud = (1 + 30) + (300 + 4 + 10) = 345.

<p>וזה כשתמלא אל שדי עולי אלף</p>	<p>ובהיותם מליאים כזה, אליף למייד, שייין דלית יויד, עם הכולל, יעלו בגימטריא אלף,</p>
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When these Names are spelled out and the *kolel* is added, their numerical value is 1000.

<i>alef</i>	<i>alef-lamed-pei</i>	1 + 30 + 80	111
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lamed-mem-dalet</i>	30 + 40 + 4	74
<i>shin</i>	<i>shin-yud-nun</i>	300 + 10 + 50	360
<i>dalet</i>	<i>dalet-lamed-tav</i>	4 + 30 + 400	434
<i>yud</i>	<i>yud-vav-dalet</i>	10 + 6 + 4	20
			999

<p>והיא האליף של בינה, כי שם הם שני שמות הנוכר,</p>	<p>בסוד אלף בית אלף בינה.</p>
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This 1000 (*elef*) is the 1000 of *binah*, for these Divine Names are located there; this is the mystical meaning of the statement: "Alef-beit, alef-binah."

In the Talmud,⁹ the meanings of the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are interpreted as a sequence. "The Rabbis told Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: 'Children have come to the House of Study and said things the like of which was not said even in the days of Joshua the son of Nun: "*Alef beit* [means] 'learn understanding' [*alef binah*]. *Gimmel dalet*, [means] 'show kindness to the poor' [*gemol dalim*],'" and so on.

The phrase *alef-beit* is interpreted as "learn understanding" since the word *alef* also means "to learn," and the word for "understanding," *binah*, begins with the letter *beit*.

The word *alef* is spelled the same way as the word for "one thousand," *elef*. Thus, the phrase "*alef-binah*" may also be read "the thousand of *binah*," giving the relationship between the number 1000,

7. Genesis 13:16.

8. Deuteronomy, Ibid.; Rashi *ad loc*.

9. *Shabbat* 104a.

the numerical value of the spelling out of the Names *Kel Shakai*.

In the parallel passage in *Likutei Torah*, Moses and the Names *Kel Shakai* are described as being in the world of *Beriah* rather than in the *partzuf* of *Ima* (of *Atzilut*). This accords with the fact that the *partzuf* of *Ima* “nests” in the world of *Beriah*, i.e., that *binah* is the dominant consciousness of the world of *Beriah* (while *chochmah* is the dominant consciousness of *Atzilut*, the emotions are the dominant consciousness of *Yetzirah*, and *malchut* is the dominant consciousness of *Asiyah*).

בסוד אלף אלפים מארי תריסין דעלמא קדמא |
כנזכר, |

This is also the significance of the “one million shield-bearers of the first world,” mentioned in the *Zohar*.

In the *Zohar*,¹⁰ one of the appellations of the world of *Beriah* is “the one million shield-bearers.” One million is a thousand thousands, i.e., 1000 entities inter-included amongst themselves. This world is called “shield-bearers” since it is the first world in which the energy of holiness must be protected from the forces of evil, just as *binah* must be protected from the sensation of ego that accompanies understanding and integrating an insight of *chochmah*.

והנה כחו של משה היה עד אימא, ולכן ברכם באלף |
פעמים. |

Now, Moses’ power to bless reached only as far up as *Ima*; this is why he blessed them to increase only a thousand fold.

This is perhaps related to the idea that “a thousand lights” were detracted from Moses’ understanding of the Torah because of the sin of the Golden Calf are returned to his soul every Sabbath.¹¹

Evidently, since Moses’ task as to teach the Torah to the Jewish people, to make them understand it, he could only impart to them the spiritual potentials associated with *Ima*, the *partzuf* of *binah*, understanding.

וז״ש להם, ע״כ משלי, מכאן ואילך ויברך אתכם |
מבחי אבא עילאה. | אל שדי שהוא אלף וזהו משלי.

But as for G-d Himself, “He will bless you as He spoke concerning you,” i.e., infinitely, from the supernal *partzuf* of *Abba*.

G-d’s blessing transcends the limits of understanding, and is infinite, this being the experience of insight, or *chochmah*. Hence we see that intellectual understanding is a limited form of connection to G-d, and that our connection to Him must be predicated on assumptions and involvement that transcends intellect. In this way we can “access” His infinity as well, and produce an infinite “progeny” of shades of heightened Divine consciousness with which to “populate” reality.

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וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהֵי אֵל תִּצַּר אֶת מוֹאָב וְאֵל תִּתְגַּר בָּם מִלְחָמָה....

*G-d said to me, “Do not vex Moab nor initiate war against them....”*¹²

10. 3:132a; see *Chasdei David* #118.

11. See our excerpt on *parashat VaEtchanan*.

12. Deuteronomy 2:9.

In the book of Genesis, G-d promises to Abraham the land of Canaan, which comprises the territory of ten nations: the Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizites, the Refaim,¹³ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.¹⁴ The first three were synonymous with the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.

In the time of Moses, however, whenever G-d lists the peoples of Canaan whose land He will give to the Jewish people, only the last seven of these ten are mentioned. Thus, our sages note, G-d only gave the latter seven nations to the Jews in the time of Moses, and we will inherit the land of the other three nations in the future, when *Mashiach* comes.¹⁵ The Jewish people are commanded to entirely wipe out these seven nations: "Of the cities of these peoples whom G-d is giving you to inherit, you shall leave no soul alive. Rather, you must wipe them out: the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, as G-d has commanded you."¹⁶

In *parashat Devarim*, Moses reviews the journeys on which he led the Jewish people on their way to the threshold of the land of Israel. They were told by G-d not to wage war against the descendants of Esau, who inhabited Mt. Seir,¹⁷ nor to wage war against Moab¹⁸ or Ammon.¹⁹ In contrast, they *were* commanded to fight and conquer the two Amorite kings, Sichon²⁰ and Og.²¹

ספר הלקוטים, פרשת דברים	לקוטי תורה, פרשת דברים
יש לדעת למה ב' עממין, צוה הקב"ה לא תחיה כל נשמה, ובשעיר ומואב ועמון צוה שלא להלחם בהם.	יש לדעת למה ב' עממין צוה הש"י לא תחיי כל נשמה, ובשעיר ומואב ועמון צוה שלא להלחם,

Likutei Torah and Sefer HaLikutim, parashat Devarim

We must understand why, with regard to the seven Canaanite nations, G-d commanded us "you shall leave no soul alive," whereas with regard to Seir, Moab, and Ammon, He commanded us not to attack them.

והענין הוא, כי ז' עממין, הם ז' קליפות של כלים הנשברים, ואז כבר יצא מהם כל הקדושה.	והענין כי ז' עממין הם ז' קליפות של כלים הנשברים ואז כבר יצא מהם הקדושי
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The explanation is that the seven nations are the earthly manifestations of the seven evils, i.e., the vessels which broke. Thus, all the holiness that was originally in them has left them.

In the world of *Tohu*, which collapsed, the full breakage of the vessels occurred only in the seven lower *sefirot*, from *chesed* to *malchut*. When the vessels of these *sefirot* broke, they could contain nothing of the holy "lights" that had been in them. These lights therefore left the vessels, and the broken vessels fell into the lower worlds, becoming the source of all the egocentricity and evil of these worlds.

אבל של ג"ר עדיין היה בהם קדושה, והם קני קניזי וקדמי והוא מה שלא נתברר מג"ר.	אבל של ג"ר עדיין היה בהם קדושה והם קני קניזי וקדמוני. והוא מה שנתברר מג"ר.
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Some of the holiness remained, however, in first three *sefirot*. The earthly manifestations of these *sefirot* were the Kenites, the Kenizites, and the

13. Elsewhere in the Torah, this people is called Hivites.

14. Genesis 15:19-21.

15. *Bereishit Rabbah* 44:23.

16. Deuteronomy 20:16-17. The Girgashite people is considered included in this list as well (see *Rashi ad loc.*).

17. *Ibid.* 2:2-8.

18. *Ibid.* 2:9.

19. *Ibid.* 2:17-19.

20. *Ibid.* 2:24-25, 31.

21. *Ibid.* 3:2.

Kadmonites.

In the first three *sefirot* of *Tohu*, the vessels were more spiritual than they were in the lower seven *sefirot*. This is simply because emotions—the lower seven *sefirot*—are much more subjective than intellect or super-intellect (the first three *sefirot*). Therefore, even though there was no inter-inclusion amongst the *sefirot* in the world of *Tohu* (this being the reason why the vessels broke, as we have explained previously), this was not so crucial in the case of the first three *sefirot*. Their essential natures were not as self-assertive and exclusive of other natures as were those of the seven lower *sefirot*.

Since the shattered fragments of the emotions (*midot*) of *Tohu* are embedded in our world, we can refine them and elevate them. This we do whenever we refine our animal natures, and the completion of this process will usher in the messianic era. Since, however, the intellect and super-intellect of *Tohu* did not break and did not become embedded in the existential fabric of our order of existence, we cannot refine it.

ולעתיד יגמור כל הקדושה לצאת ואז גם מהם לא | גם מהם לא נחיה כל נשמה.
תחיה כל נשמה

In the messianic future, the holiness will completely depart these *sefirot* as well, and thus we will then be commanded to “leave no soul alive” of them, as well.

The elevation and refinement of the intellect and super-intellect of *Tohu* will occur only in the messianic future, when we will be able to eliminate the negative aspects of these *sefirot* as well.

והם שעיר ועמון ומואב שעיר רמו לראשונה כד"א | והם שעיר עמון ומואב. שעיר רמו לראשונה, כד"א
משעיר מלכם | משעיר מלכם.

These three nations are synonymous with Seir, Ammon, and Moab. Seir alludes to the first *sefirah*, *keter*, as it is written, “and the he-goat (*se'ir*) is the king...”²²

Keter literally means “crown” and is thus the sign of kingship. Seir, the southernmost of the three kingdoms on the far side of the Jordan, thus signifies *keter*, or the super-intellect, of *Tohu*.

מואב אב חכמה | מואב, לשון אב בחכמה.

Moab means “from the father” (*mei-av*), and thus alludes to *chochmah*.

Lot’s daughter conceived her son by her own father. When she named him, she expressed this in the name she gave him, since Moab means “from the father.” The people of Moab descended from this incestuous union. *Abba* (“father”) is the *partzuf* of *chochmah*, and thus this nation alludes to the *chochmah* of *Tohu*. Moab was situated immediately north of the kingdom of Se’ir, and the Jewish people, traveling northward from the Sinai desert, encountered them immediately after their encounter with the Edomites in Se’ir

עמון נועם בינה מ"ל, | עמון, נועם בינה.

The name **Ammon** permutes to spell *no'am*, which means “pleasantness,” alluding to *binah*.

The insight of *chochmah*, since it is abstracted from any contextual relationship to the individual’s way of thinking, is not accompanied by any sense of conscious pleasure or joy. (There is a sublime,

22. Daniel 8:21. The phrase quoted in the Arizal’s writings is not exactly this one, but this is the closest verse I could find to it.

only semi-conscious sense of pleasure, but it is as abstract and ephemeral as the insight itself.) This occurs only when the insight is integrated into the existing mental structure, which is the function of *binah*. The new, higher perception of reality that is produced engenders a sensation of pleasure and happiness. In a similar fashion, we are taught that the liquid that corresponds to *chochmah* is water, while that which corresponds to *binah* is wine.

Ammon was situated immediately north of Moab, and the Jewish people passed by their land immediately after they passed by the kingdom of Moab.

ושעיר הוא אדום וזו מלכין שמלכו לשם אינו ממנו רק מלכו בארץ לכן כתיב בכ"א מהן שם ארצו שלא היו מאדום,	ושעיר הוא אדום. וזו מלכים שמלכו שם, אינם ממנו, רק מלכו בארץ. לכן כתיב בכל א' מהם שם ארצו, שלא היו מאדום.
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Now, Seir is Edom.²³ The seven kings who ruled there were not from that land, they just ruled over it. This is indicated by the fact that each one is mentioned together with the country he came from, since they themselves were not from Edom.

We just identified Seir with *keter* of *Tohu*, which did not break. Yet the “seven kings of Edom” are always identified with the seven lower *sefirot* of *Tohu*, which did break. The Arizal solves this by saying that the “seven kings of Edom” ruled in that country but were not actually from it. Thus, Edom itself does indeed signify *keter* of *Tohu*. The fact that foreign kings occupied the territory of Edom before its kingdom was properly established would indicate the strong connection between the super-intellect (or subconscious) and the emotions. As we are taught in *Chassidut*, although the emotions are revealed and guided by the intellect, they possess their own roots and origins within the pre-conscious mind (i.e., *keter*).

Now, when the Torah describes how the Jewish people were not to wage war against Ammon and Moab, it points out that these lands were formerly occupied by the Refaim. Thus, it might be assumed that their territory was indeed part of that of the seven nations the Jews were meant to conquer in Moses’ time, since, as we pointed out above, the Refaim were one of these seven. The Torah, however, points out that this is not the case, and that G-d gave these territories of the Refaim to other parts of Abraham’s family, i.e., the nations descended from the sons of Lot (Ammon and Moab).

In the course of this discussion, the Torah makes mention of the fact that the Refaim who formerly occupied the land of Moab were also called Eimites,²⁴ and those who formerly occupied the land of Ammon were also called Zamzumites.²⁵

והזמזומים הן מבירור חכמה אל מחשבי כד"א אשר זמם אשר זמם וכיו. ומאלו היו ערב רב, וכל מי שיש הרהור ומחשבות רעות, הוא מהם.	והזמזומים, הם מבירור חכמה, לשון מחשבה, כמשייה ומחשבות רעות, הוא מהם.
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The Zamzumites personified the evil portion of *chochmah* of *Tohu* that was removed, as it is written, “as he schemed” (*zamam*).²⁶ The mixed multitude is spiritually derived from them, as well as anyone who has evil thoughts or fancies.

The name “Zamzumites” is etymologically related to the word for “scheme” [*zamam*]. They thus personified the fallen, corrupt version or use of insight, i.e., scheming and plotting evil.

23. See Genesis 32:4, 36:9; Deuteronomy 2:5.

24. Deuteronomy 2:10-11.

25. Deuteronomy 2:20.

26. Deuteronomy 19:19.

We said above that Ammon signified the *binah* of *Tohu*. So, either the Arizal here means to include the Eimites together with his mention of the Zamzumites as former inhabitants of the lands associated with the intellect of *Tohu*, or he is referring to the process of how *chochmah* enters and informs *binah*, i.e., that the Zamzumites actually hail from *chochmah* but they settled the land of *binah*.

In any case, this perversion of intellect is the source of all evil thoughts and fancies, as well as of the distorted way of thinking associated with the “mixed multitude.” The “mixed multitude” were the Egyptian converts that accompanied the Jewish people on their exodus from Egypt. Since their motives for conversion were not pure (they were impressed by the victory of the Jews over the Egyptians rather than the merits of monotheism over idolatry), they were the cause of much of the suffering the Jews underwent in their desert trek. The first and most heinous of these instances was that of the Golden Calf, which was in essence a warped vision of the role of Moses as the intermediate between G-d and Israel.

The fact that these nations (Edom, Moab, and Ammon) were not to be engaged in conflict indicates, as we said, that until *Mashiach* comes we do not possess the power to rectify the wild, unrectified intellect and super-intellect of *Tohu*. We are thus taught in *Chassidut* that when untoward thoughts enter our minds, we must not attempt to elevate them or refine them, but simply push them away and bypass them, just as we passed by the lands of these nations without engaging in any conflict. We are bidden to rectify our emotions, however (as signified by the seven Canaanite nations), by utilizing our intellects to meditate and contemplate life in such a way that engenders proper emotions and emotional responses.

The Arizal now turns to discuss the two nations that Moses and the Jewish people were allowed and even bidden to conquer. These were actually two branches of one kingdom, that of the Amorites, which, as we saw above, were one of the seven nations.

וסיחון לשון סיח ועגל והוא קליפת חמור והוא ערלה | סיחון, לשון סייחין ועגלים. והוא קליפת חמור, והוא
שעל הברית | סוד ערלה שעל הברית.

The name **Sichon** is etymologically related to the word for “young donkey” (*sayach*).²⁷ He personified the type of evil identified with the donkey, which is also identified with the foreskin over the organ of circumcision.

The Hebrew word for “donkey” (*chamor*) is related to the word for “material” (*chomer*) and “materialism” (*chumriut*). Sichon is thus the personification of gross materialism, or the desire for sensual gratification.

The *mitzvah* of circumcision is intended to sever the Jew from his egocentric, material orientation and thereby prepare him and make his suitable for the pursuit of spirituality and Divinity. As is explained in *Chassidut*, the presence of the foreskin renders sexual relations more immediately personally gratifying, but desensitizes the individual to the experience of his wife. Sexual relations thus remain an essentially narcissistic experience. The removal of the foreskin puts the individual more directly in contact with his wife, and thus he shares her experience as well. This, of course, serves to spiritualize and therefore augment the sensual experience in ways not possible in the narrow, egocentric context.

The removal of the foreskin, i.e., the propensity toward gross, self-oriented materialism, thus sensitizes the individual to the presence of an other person, and ultimately, readies him for encounter with the ultimate Other, G-d.

27. See *Rosh HaShanah* 3a: “He was called Sichon because he was as like a young donkey in the desert.”

ועוג הוא עור הפריעה המעכב הברית וזה עג עוגה | ועוג, הוא סוד שני מלכי האמורי הוא היסוד, כמ"ש
 והוא קליפה קשה הגם כי היא דקה וקרוב יותר אל | עג עוגה, והיא קליפה קשה, הגם כי היא דקה יותר
 הקדושה | קרובה לקדושה.

Og, in contrast, personified the type of evil identified with the mucous membrane which covers the organ of circumcision. As it is written, "he drew a circle" (*ag uгах*).²⁸ This is a particularly difficult form of evil to deal with inasmuch as it is very close to holiness.

The name "Og" [*ayin-gimel*] is etymologically related to the root *ayin-vav-gimel* or *ayin-gimel-gimel*, which means, "to form a circle." Thus, it refers to the mucous membrane which encircles the glans of the penis underneath the foreskin, and which must also be peeled back as part of the rite of circumcision. The removal of the foreskin is called *milah* ("cutting") and the removal of the mucous membrane is called *periah* ("peeling" back).

This membrane is obviously much more subtle and delicate than the coarse foreskin. It therefore embodies a much more abstract, delicate form of evil that is therefore much more difficult to root out than the usual, coarse evil. In *Chassidut* it is explained that the foreskin signifies the evil that exists in the outer dimension of the heart, while the mucous membrane signifies the evil that exists in the inner dimension of the heart. The evil of the outer dimension of the heart is the individual's gross lust for material and sensual forms of pleasure and gratification.

ואלו הם ב' מלכי אמורי הוא היסוד כד"א שנים שלשה | ואלו הם סוד שני מלכי האמורי הוא היסוד, כמ"ש
 גרנרים בראש אמיר. | רז"ל ב' וגי גרנרים בראש אמיר.

These two kings were the kings of the Amorites. This kingdom personified the *sefirah* of *yesod*, as it is written, "two and three berries on the head of the uppermost bough."²⁹

The preceding phrase reads: "Only gleanings shall be left of it, as when one beats an olive tree: two or three berries on the topmost branch..." The olive tree signifies the *sefirah* of *yesod*. The condensed essence of any thing is considered the "oil" of that thing, and *yesod* is the condensed essence of the preceding five *sefirot*, as we have explained previously. *Yesod* is associated in human anatomy with the male organ of procreation, and man's vital seed is considered his condensed essence, capable of reproducing him. (The Hebrew word for "oil," *shemen*, is probably the origin of the English word "semen.")

Thus, the two Amorite kings, Sichon and Og, personify the two layers covering the *sefirah* of *yesod* that must be eliminated in order for the Jewish people (and the individual Jew) to reveal their innate sensitivity to each other as well as to G-d, and thus be prepared to enter the holy land of Israel.

28. *Ta'anit* 23a.

29. Isaiah 17:6; *Sanhedrin* 95b.