

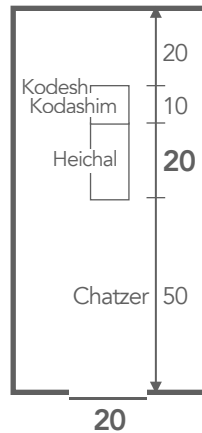
מלכותו לעולם ועד

Chof

Seventh of Kislev

The letter *Chof* appears three times in *Boruch Shem*, and there is certainly more to say about it, especially its role in the *Mishkan*. The veil across the opening of the *Mishkan* was twenty *amos* (about forty feet) wide, and the *Heichal*—Sanctuary—before the *Kodesh Kodashim* was twenty *amos* long. They were separated by the *Chatzer* (Courtyard) that was fifty *amos* by fifty *amos*.

This is interesting. The veil of twenty *amos* blocked a person's view of the *Mishkan* from the outside, and the miracles that occurred daily in and around it. But the *Heichal* of twenty *amos* was the place of the *Menorah*, the *Shulchan*, and *Mizbayach HaKetores* stood, all of which



involved great miracles on a daily basis. Why the big difference?

The *Gemora* says that the world was made with *nun sha'arei binah*—fifty gates of understanding.¹ There are different levels on which this idea is understood, but *kabbalistically*, it is talking about *sefiros*² and the role they played in the creation of our world.

There are six *sefiros* that are the spiritual basis of our world, *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tifferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, and *Yesod* (*Zehr Anpin*), being the “roots” of the six days of Creation and the six millennia that followed.³ They were created from the light from Chochmah after being filtered by *Binah*. Then the light was channeled to the levels below through fifty gates, additional filters that allow for different aspects of the light to be manifest.

These fifty gates, the *Nun Sha'arei Binah*, are the

¹ *Nedarim* 21b.

² Completely spiritual entities that God created to reduce His infinite light so that Creation can exist, and man can have free will. There are ten general *sefiros* (in descending levels of holiness): *Keser*, *Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tifferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, and *Malchus*.

³ Each one contains the light necessary for its corresponding millennium to occur and produce all that it does. The first three *sefiros*, *Keser*, *Chochmah*, and *Binah*, will be the basis of the years from 7000-10,000 in the World to Come. *Malchus* will ascend by 6000 and be the basis of the seventh millennium, the first stage of the World to Come. That leaves the six *sefiros* of *Chesed* through *Yesod* to be the basis of our six thousand years of history.

basis of Torah knowledge. It is the wisdom gained from the *Nun Sha'arei Binah* that enables a person to see past the *chitzoni* (external) world of their *physical* eyes, into the *penimi* (internal) world of their *mind's* eye. A person can have a high IQ, but without the *Nun Sha'arei Binah*, they will have difficulty seeing God in anything.

It's like going to medical school without a Torah background. The more a person learns about how the body works, the less they will see God's hand in life, or the miracles that occur each day to keep a person alive from moment to moment.

But a person who goes to medical school with a Torah background will be affected by the same information in a different way. Every technical aspect of the body's functioning will seem like miracle upon miracle upon miracle. Rather than become blasé to the miracle of life, they will be increasingly more awed by each additional piece of knowledge.

This is the difference between eating from the *Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra*, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, without first eating from the *Aitz HaChaim*, the Tree of Life. The knowledge of the *Aitz HaDa'as* is the *how* of Creation, which is just facts and technical details. The knowledge of the *Aitz HaChaim* is the *why*, the philosophy of life and Who gave it to us.

This is another level of the message of the *Chof*. The veil of twenty *amos* represented the knowledge of the *Aitz HaDa'as* *without* the knowledge of the *Aitz HaChaim*,

which kills, if not physically, then certainly spiritually. But traverse the *Chatzer*, that is, learn the knowledge of the *Aitz HaChaim*, the *Nun Sba'arei Binab* and Torah, and the knowledge of the *Aitz HaDa'as* not only doesn't block a person from God, it draws them closer to Him.

At that point, a person reaches the *Kodesh Kodaschim*, the Holy of Holies. That was the place of the *Aron HaKodesh* which, we are told, occupied more physical space than it had.⁴ In the physical *Mishkan*, this happened physically. But every Jew is a *Mishkan*, so the same thing can happen with each Jew as well.

And it did for the *Chashmonaim*. This is what led to the amazing miracles that occurred for them, military victory beyond physical limitations, and oil that burned beyond physical capacity.

⁴ *Megillah* 10b.