



The *Bais* is also a repeated letter. The *Midrash* says that when God decided to “write” the Torah, He had to first decide with which letter it should begin. There are different versions of what happened next, one of which is that each letter made its case before God, beginning with the *Aleph*.

In the end, the *Bais* won out because it told God that the whole world would bless God with it. The only question is, how does that benefit God if He is already perfect and never lacks anything? Humans can always use more of something, but not God. He gains nothing from anything we do.

The *Nefesh HaChaim* asks this question and answers it in *Sba’ar Bais* (how appropriate). He explains there that though God Himself lacks nothing, the amount of His light that He emanates into the world fluctuates, based on the

worthiness of man to receive and benefit from it.

When we make blessings, we help with that. What we are asking with, “Blessed are you, etc.,” is, that the revelation of God’s light should increase in the world. The light should continuously increase so that all doubt in God’s existence disappears, and all the evil is banished from history. With this will go all sickness and hardship resulting in the long-awaited Messianic Era, and the fulfillment of the purpose of Creation.

The *Bais* alludes to all of this, which is why it is so appropriate to begin the Torah with it. And since the completion of the Torah each year means we are ready to *lovingly* start all over again, the last letter of the Torah, a *Lamed*, joins together with the *Bais* to spell the word *leiv*—heart, what the Torah helps us to devote to God and the purpose of His world.

*Lamed-Bais* is also thirty-two in *gematria*, alluding to the *Lamed-Bais Nesivos Chochmah*, the thirty-two paths of wisdom. These are the thirty-two spiritual channels through which the light of *Chochmah* makes its way to the level of *Binah* so that Divine wisdom can be more accessible to us.

This is also why the Name *Elohim* is mentioned thirty-two times in the Creation story: it is the *sefirah* of *Chochmah* that makes the light of *Ayin* perceivable.<sup>1</sup> This is

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<sup>1</sup> *Chochmah* is to *Ayin* what our bodies are to our souls. Without our bodies our souls would be completely imperceptible.

also why the *Zobar* was given after the first thirty-two days of the *Omer* Count, to allow a person to develop the right kind of heart necessary to receive the teachings of the Rebi Shimon *bar* Yochai. The base of the *mizbayach* (altar) was thirty-two *amos* by thirty-two *amos*, because it corresponds to the heart of a person.

At the base of the *Bais* however is the concept of a house. A house is both a simple and deep idea. At first, a house may only be a form of shelter from the elements. But as a person lives in it and adapts it to their needs, a house goes beyond its four walls and roof and becomes a *home*, a more profound reality.

People do not become attached to houses. They become attached to homes. It's as if a house, over time, develops a life of its own making it capable of having a relationship with the people who live within it. People complain of separation anxiety when they move to another house after time, as if having lost a loved one.

If it wasn't such a big thing then Avraham *Avinu* would not be praised for having left his to follow God at the beginning of *Parashas Lech Lecha*. Our sense of personal security is based on having a solid and reliable home base, which is why children who lacked one have had a difficult time being secure as adults, something we need for strong and healthy relationships with others, especially God.

But as Avraham learned at that time, the ultimate home for a Jew is God Himself. A house without God in it

cannot be a home, and even a broken down home in which God's Presence dwells can be the best home in the world. . . a *Bais Knesses* in its own right. Hence, the *mezuzah* on all the doors. The letter *Bais* reminds us of all this too.