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# Parshas Vayishlach

## Kislev- Binyamin

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## *Kislev – Binyamin*

### *The Month of Kislev Corresponds to the Tribe of Binyamin*

The month of Kislev, according to the *Raavad* and the *Gra*, corresponds to the tribe of Binyamin, the youngest of the twelve brothers, who completed the twelve tribes.

### *The Unique Aspects of Binyamin*

When Binyamin was born, his mother Rachel named him “*Ben Oni*”, “son of my suffering”, for Binyamin was born amidst the fatal childbirth that took his mother’s life. Later, his father Yaakov gave him the name Binyamin, from the words “*ben yamin*”, “son of my right”.

Binyamin was different from the rest of the tribes in many different ways:

1. Binyamin caused all of the brothers to reunite with each other, when they all had to save him from imprisonment.
2. He was the only brother who did not take part in the sale of Yosef.
3. He was the only brother who did not bow to the wicked Esav [for he wasn’t born yet], and in this merit, the *Gemara* says that Mordechai, who descended from Binyamin, also did not bow to Haman.<sup>1</sup>

4. Binyamin was the only of the brothers who was born with two twin sisters.
5. He was one of the four people who died completely free from sin, and who died solely because of the “effect of the Serpent” on mankind.<sup>2</sup>

### *Rachel Imeinu’s Soul In Binyamin*

Every man is connected with two women who are in his life: his mother, and his wife. The Torah says, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*”.<sup>3</sup> At first one is connected to his mother, and then he must reserve his primary connection for his wife. Every person starts out as a fetus in his mother, where he is only connected with his mother and to one else. He must listen to his mother’s Torah when he is a child, as it is written, “*And the Torah of your mother, do not abandon*.”<sup>4</sup> But eventually, he must marry and leave his mother, and cleave to his wife, and to become “one” with her, as the Torah says: “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*.” When a person is still connected with his mother, he is not yet connected to a wife. Once he leaves his mother and he becomes connected with his

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<sup>2</sup> *Shabbos 55b* (The four who never sinned were: Binyamin, Amram (father of Moshe), Yishai (father of Dovid HaMelech), and Kilav (a son of Dovid HaMelech).

<sup>3</sup> *Beraishis 2:24*

<sup>4</sup> *Mishlei 6:20*

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<sup>1</sup> *Yalkut Shimeoni 1054*

wife, he is no longer connected with his mother, for now he has a wife.

With Binyamin, though, this was not the case. Chazal state that as Binyamin was being born, his mother Rachel gave her soul to him.<sup>5</sup> Binyamin's mother Rachel remained hidden in his soul, escorting him throughout his life. Chazal also state that Binyamin married the twin sisters he was born with.<sup>6</sup> The depth of the fact that Binyamin was born with two twin sisters was because he was able to be connected to two women at once. Since Rachel's soul lived on in Binyamin, it is as if he was connected with two women at once – his mother, and his wife.

Chazal state that when a person sins, “it is upon his mother to clean up his mess”. A person sins only because he has a physical body that was taken from the earth. After Adam sinned, he separated afterwards from Chavah for 130 years. During that time, there was no woman in his life. He was no longer connected with his wife for this time, and he returned to his “mother”, the earth he came from. Since Binyamin represents the concept of being ‘connected’ to two women at once, Binyamin was a rectification of Adam's sin, for Adam could not be connected with two women at once, whereas Binyamin could.

Normally, a man is either connected to his mother or to his wife, but he cannot be connected with both at once. But Binyamin was connected with his mother and his wife at the same time. Binyamin was also not connected with any sin, because he was one of the four people who never sinned, and he only

died because of the Serpent's effect on mankind.

Rachel's soul in Binyamin enabled him to be connected with two women at once: to his mother (Rachel) and to his wife (the twin sisters he married). Therefore, on a deep level, it was not a coincidence that Rachel was buried in Bethlehem and she could not be buried with Yaakov. It was really because Rachel lived on in Binyamin, because she gave her soul to him, and that is why she could not be ‘buried’ with Yaakov – it was because she continued to remain alive, in her son Binyamin! That is also why she was buried in Bethlehem, the place where Binyamin was born – it was a hint that she continued to live on through Binyamin's birth, in Binyamin's soul.

Thus, the depth of why Binyamin never sinned was because he was a rectification of the sin of Adam. After the sin, Adam could not be married to two women at once – he was separated from his wife Chavah and he returned to his “mother”, the earth, where his body came from. Binyamin rectified this, by being “married to two women” at once.

### ***Binyamin: The Point of No Sin Which Rectifies The Sin of Adam***

Chazal also state in the *Sifrei* that Binyamin is different than the other brothers because he was born in *Eretz Yisrael* – specifically, in Bethlehem - whereas the other brothers were born outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. The depth of this is that the other brothers were not connected to the holy of ‘ground’ (symbolized by the holy land of *Eretz Yisrael*), and that is why there were not born in *Eretz*

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<sup>5</sup> brought in the name of the Arizal

<sup>6</sup> Rashi Beraishis 35:17 (see also Gur Aryeh ibid)

*Yisrael*, whereas Binyamin is connected to a holy kind of ‘ground’, the point where there is no possibility of sin. That is the depth of why Binyamin was born in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Binyamin had no sins, and he did not deserve to die due to any sins, and he only died because of the Serpent’s effect on mankind. Therefore, Binyamin represents the point where there is no sin. The Sages state that “The air of *Eretz Yisrael* makes one wise”,<sup>7</sup> which means that the land of *Eretz Yisrael* represents a total removal from sin. Adam’s body was taken from Bavel and his head from *Eretz Yisrael*<sup>8</sup>, so he still had some connection to “death”, to unholy ground, to the possibility of sin. But Binyamin was born in *Eretz Yisrael*, so he was entirely from *Eretz Yisrael* - and therefore, Binyamin was connected to holy kind of “ground”: the point where there is no possibility of sin, where there is no curse of death upon man that results from sin.

Binyamin’s blessing from Moshe is that he is the “*yedid Hashem*”, the “friend of Hashem”<sup>9</sup>, and that he has a portion in the land of the *Beis HaMikdash*. How did he merit this? The *Gemara* says that a *retzuah*, a strip of land, crosses between Yehudah and Binyamin’s portion of land<sup>10</sup>, and the tribe of Binyamin was pained at the fact that he doesn’t have this portion of land, which contains the section of the *Beis HaMikdash* that housed the *Mizbeiach*. Due to this pain, Binyamin will merit that the third *Beis HaMikdash* in the future will be built in his portion of the land.

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<sup>7</sup> *Bava Basra* 158b

<sup>8</sup> *Sanhedrin* 38a

<sup>9</sup> *Devarim* 33:12

<sup>10</sup> *Zevachim* 118a

Elsewhere, we find a dispute in the Sages about who was the first to jump into the sea. According to one opinion in the *Gemara*<sup>11</sup>, it was not Nachshon ben Aminadav who first jumped into the sea, but the tribe of Binyamin, and therefore he merited a part of the *Beis HaMikdash* in his portion of land. The depth of this as follows. At first, the world was filled entirely with water, and then Hashem split the waters, forming the dry land. This original dry land became ruined from Adam’s sin, when the earth became contaminated from the sin. Thus, Binyamin fixed the ruined state of the earth - he rectified the sin of Adam - by jumping into the sea. The sea split into 12 paths, the root of the 12 tribes, which became 12 *kesarim* (crowns). Thus, the dry land by the splitting of the sea was, on a deeper level, a rectification of the sin of Adam which had ruined the earth.

This was similar to when the waters of the world were gathered together on the third day of Creation to form the dry land. The first to jump into the sea (Binyamin) revealed a new, rectified kind of dry land. Thus Binyamin merited the *Beis HaMikdash* in his portion, for Binyamin represents the rectified kind of “ground” that is free from sin, which is fitting to house the holy *Beis HaMikdash*.

### ***Binyamin & The Power of “Sleep” In Kislev***

The tribe of Binyamin corresponds to the month of Kislev, which contains the spiritual power called “sleep”.<sup>12</sup> What is the connection?

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<sup>11</sup> *Sotah* 17a

<sup>12</sup> *Sefer Yetzirah* 5:4

We find that the *Beis HaMikdash* is called the *cheder hamittos*, the “bedroom”, a place of sleep.<sup>13</sup> A hint to this is that the *tzaddik* Yaakov *Avinu* slept on the future site of the *Beis HaMikdash*. The depth behind this is as follows.

Adam was put to sleep so that Chavah could be created from him. The first woman was formed from a state of sleep. In this state, Adam and Chavah were two beings in one unit. After the sin, when death came to the world, the state of sleep became a “sixtieth of death”. Now there would not only be sleep, but death - the result of sin - which causes a separation between man and woman. Through sleep, which is like death, the soul returns to its original source. Death returns the body to the earth and the soul to Heaven, and sleep is similar to this. Through sleep, a person is somewhat dead, because his body becomes still and silent, and his soul returns to Heaven. But in the original level of sleep, which is when Adam was put to sleep in order for Chavah to be created, Adam and Chavah were meant to remain connected as one unit. The sleep which came upon Adam was in order to enable Chavah and allow them to remain connected to each other, to be two beings that were one.

The *Beis HaMikdash* was a place that symbolizes the holy level of sleep. It was called the “gate of Heaven”,<sup>14</sup> a place where prayers would ascend and be heard, the place where the angels descended and ascended on Yaakov’s ladder that reached Heaven. It was where Yaakov’s head was placed on the ground: on a deeper level, this means that it was the connecting point between the physical

and the spiritual, the point where Heaven touched earth. Since it was in Binyamin’s portion, Binyamin represents the point where there is a connection between the body and the soul, between earth and Heaven.

### ***Binyamin’s Power Counters the Greek Evil***

Greek wisdom, which is the opposite of the Torah’s wisdom, is like the impaired level of “sleep”, where the brain isn’t functioning properly and the intellect is dulled. Greek wisdom is called the “fallen intellect” (*chochmah nefulah*). The *Gemara* says that the Greek ruler Hordos renovated the second *Beis HaMikdash* and made it look very beautiful, because he wanted it to be the most beautiful building in the world.<sup>15</sup> This is because the Greeks were solely interested in physical beauty.

Binyamin was born on the road, and the depth of this is because Binyamin connects the land of *Eretz Yisrael* with outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. In other words, through Binyamin, Heaven touches earth, just as the place where Heaven touches earth, the *Beis HaMikdash*, was contained in Binyamin’s portion of the land.

In the blessings of Yaakov, Binyamin is compared to the wolf.<sup>16</sup> The wolf kills its prey in the morning and divides it at night. The deeper meaning of this is that Binyamin connects the day and night together, which hints to how Binyamin is the connecting point between of all the dimensions of time, space, and soul . This is also the depth of why Binyamin is called the *yedid Hashem*, “friend

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<sup>13</sup> *Rashi Shir HaShirim 1:16*

<sup>14</sup> *Beraishis 28:17*

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<sup>15</sup> *Bava Basra 14a*

<sup>16</sup> *Beraishis 49:27*

of Hashem”, because his title of “*yedid*” connotes this connection.

Binyamin corresponds to the power of “sleep” in the month of Kislev, because sleep is a point where death and life are connected together, for sleep is a “sixtieth of death”, yet a person still remains alive when he sleeps. The body is somewhat dead when a person sleeps, because it becomes still, but the soul is kept alive. Binyamin corresponds to “sleep” because he represents the point where life and death are connected together. The *Beis HaMikdash* turned sins into merits, thus it turned death into life. This all took place in Binyamin’s portion, hence, Binyamin has the power of forming the complete “connection” (*yedid*): to connect life and death together. This is why Binyamin corresponds to sleep – a state where life and death are connected together.

The month of Kislev, which corresponds to Binyamin, is the time where there is a spiritual war between the Jewish people and

the Greek empire. It was the war of Greek wisdom, the “beauty of Yefes”, against the wisdom of the Torah. But the most beautiful place in *Eretz Yisrael*, the portion of the *Beis HaMikdash* which was in Binyamin’s part of the land of *Eretz Yisrael*, is what counters the superficial beauty of the Yefes\the Greek nation. Furthermore, the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (the Jerusalem Talmud) was composed in Yerushalayim, and it is the wisdom which comes from true and holy beauty, which counters the unholy beauty and wisdom of the Greeks.

Hence, Binyamin’s portion in *Eretz Yisrael*, which contained the first two *Batei Mikdash*, and which will contain the third *Beis HaMikdash* in the time of *Moshiach*, is the holy state of “sleep” that connects life and death together, which will be the state of the complete Redemption, may it come speedily in our days.

Translated from the hebrew shiur:  
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