

## "מה האבניים האלה לכם"

1. What is the message of the 12 **strong** stones **together** in a monument in the Yarden?
2. Why did the monument need to be visible to Bnai Yisrael?
3. What else would be in the same location as the 12 stone monument?
4. Why '12' stones?
5. What did they need the 12 stones for?
6. Who picked up the stones to carry out of the Yarden?
7. When did the men go and get the stones? Why then?
8. What were the miracles Hashem made with respect to the 12 stones?
9. Which part of the Yarden did the 12 stones come from?
10. Where did Bnai Yisrael have to bring the 12 stones, why?
11. Where and why did Yehoshua put up *another* 12 stone monument?
12. Why didn't Hashem just let Bnai Yisrael wade naturally over the Yarden?

**Answers:**

A. From under the Kohanim's feet who were carrying the aron.

A. The monument needed to be easily visible because there was a great danger that the nation would forget that it was only in the merit of Torah that they had conquered the land. Only through continual faithfulness to Hashem and to His Torah would they be worthy of remaining there. They could not do as they please and feel secure. If they did whatever they wanted, the land would be conquered from them.

A. He wanted the experience to be indelibly engraved upon the memories of Bnei Yisrael for all generations.

A. When Yaakov was running away from his brother, the midrash tells us that he stopped to sleep on Har HaMoriah. He found the mizbe'ach Avraham used to sacrifice the ram instead of Yitzchak. He took 12 stones from it and put them around his head to protect himself from wild animals. Miraculously, during the night, the 12 stones melded together to become one solid rock. This was a prediction that he would one day have 12 sons who would be the fathers of Bnai Yisrael. Therefore Hashem commanded Yehoshua to take 12 stones, for the 12 tribes, and build them together into a mizbe'ach.

A. Hashem already prepared the stones, they would not have to dig them up. Even though they were huge stones they were able to carry them.

A. Twelve men—one from each tribe.

A. The 12 stones were all equal in size and weight, just as each of the tribes played an equally important role in the eyes of Hashem. The 12 tribes would also be strong and hard as stones and would fight bravely and conquer Eretz Canaan. The message was that the 12 tribes would only be strong if they were united. As long as they lived together in peace they would be able to stand up to their enemies and defend their land. But if they would argue and fight amongst themselves, they would become divided, and their enemies would conquer them and they would be exiled.

A. The Mishkan would also be there (before it was erected in Shiloh).

A. Yehoshua also erected a twelve stone monument in the middle of the Yarden. These stones protruded above the water so that in case future generations forgot what the monument on land was, they would see two sets of 12 stones opposite each other and know it was no coincidence. They would remember that this is the place Hashem made the miracle for Bnai Yisrael while they crossed the Yarden.

A. Gilgal was where the monument was built because that was to be the camp of the Bnai Yisrael during the years of conquest. Only some of the people would go out and fight, the majority would remain in Gilgal for the duration.

A. To build a monument on which parts of the Torah would be written in 70 languages. When people saw the monument, they would understand the miracle Hashem performed by splitting the Yarden. The stones were also meant to be a witness to their children and grandchildren who would one day be curious and ask why the stones are there.

A. Once all of Bnei Yisrael crossed over, the twelve men went back onto the river bed and picked the twelve stones. The people could have picked up the stones when everyone was crossing, but Hashem wanted it to be memorable. So once everybody finished crossing, the men went back in. Everybody would take notice of the people going back in. It wasn't like: 'Oh do me a favor, while your crossing, it's on your way, pick up some stones'. They risked their lives going back. They had no idea when the waters would come crashing down. Hashem also enabled them to carry the heavy stones. Everybody watched and it was an experience that could not be easily forgotten.