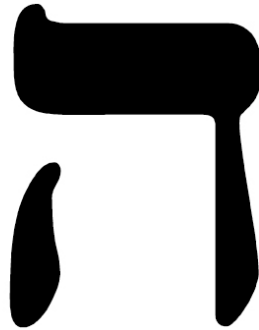


# The Hebrew Alphabet - Part 2:

## — — — — — The Letter Heh — — — — —



1. The Talmud explains that Hashem used the letter “Yud” to create the World to Come” and “Heh” to create this world.
2. The sound of the Heh is a mere exhalation of breath - it requires little effort, no movement of lip, tongue or mouth. This effortless enunciation symbolizes the effortless creation of the world, as king David says: “By the word of Hashem the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their hosts.”
3. The barely heard Heh alludes to Hashem, Who manifests Himself in quiet tranquility.
4. Hashem did not create the world as a purely physical entity, but also imbued with the Divine.
5. **Maharal:** The letter Heh consists of a Dalet and a Yud. The vertical and horizontal lines of the dalet represent the physical world that is measured in its expanding width and height, whereas the yud represents the World to Come, spirituality. The Heh teaches us to imbue our lives with sanctity; to combine the physical with the spiritual.
6. Avraham was the first person to perceive that nature is subservient to the will and power of a Higher being. His recognition of this truth contained in the letter ה made him understand that there is but One creator of heaven and earth, Avraham was rewarded with an addition of a ה to his original name Avram - אברם thus giving him the new name Avraham - אברהם.
7. The soft - sounding letter Heh indicates the feminine form of a noun. The Torah uses just one letter, Heh, to illustrate the distinct characteristics of a woman: femininity, chastity, and gentleness. ( ילד , boy; ילדה , girl)
8. Sarai's name שרי (“my princes”) was changed to Sarah שרה ( princess). The newly given Heh at the end of Sarah implies an increase in her femininity, and also indicates her elevated role. She was no longer only Avraham's wife, but a Matriarch (princess) of the entire world. She was no longer to be called - in the masculine form - Sarai, the superior one, for she was Sarah, whose delicate feminine feelings and practices set the tone for all time.
9. Heh, with which this world was created, stands for freedom of choice. The Talmud says that the Heh looks like a lobby with three walls, but with one side completely open. This indicates that Hashem does not confine man to a life of Torah's observance, but allows him free choice. He is free to obey or disobey Hashem's will, but if he chooses to leave the safety of the Torah's spiritual and moral boundaries, he loses his foothold and slips, as it were, through the open space on the Heh into the abyss.
10. Simultaneously, the Heh symbolizes Hashem's readiness to forgive those who do Teshuva. Hashem created the opportunity for the sinner to do Teshuva. That is why the left leg of the heh is not attached to the letter's roof. A small opening is left near the top, symbolizing that space always remains through which a repentant sinner can return and be drawn into Hashem again.

11. The world Teshuva תשובה consists of two parts תשוב ה - return to ה. The heh refers to the degree of repentance represented by the last letter of Hashem's four letter name.
12. The Talmud teaches that הו is the name of Hashem. Either it is a name by itself or an abbreviated form of the Ineffable four letter name.
13. The gematriya of the letter Heh is 5.

### — — — — — The Letter Vav — — — — —



1. **Maharal:** The sixth letter has a gematriya of 6, a number which denotes physical completion. The physical world was created in six days and a complete self-contained object consists of six dimensions: above and below, right and left, before and after.
2. The Jewish nation is complete, self-contained, and unique. The census of the Jewish people at the Exodus and the Giving of the Torah was 600,000 - corresponding to the 600,000 letters of the Torah.
3. Hashem responded to the Egyptian persecution of the Jews by miraculously giving Jewish mothers 6 babies in each birth.
4. When Yisro יתרו embraced Judaism, the letter Vav denoting completeness was added to his name, and from that time onward he was called Yisro יתרו.
5. The Vav in the name of Eliyahu the prophet is a symbol of the complete inner harmony that will once more be Israel's in Messianic times. Eliyahu's name concludes with the letters הו which is a name of Hashem.
6. The letter Vav is the prefix of conjunction (Vav Hachibur); it unites manifold, and even opposing, concepts. It is the link connecting heaven and earth.
7. **Form:** is that of a hook, as indeed, its name וו means hook.
8. The Vav links words and phrases to form sentences; it joins sentences into paragraphs and chapters; it connects one chapter to another; and even unites books. The vav implies a close relationship between events and continuity between generations. The absence of a Vav at the beginning of a new chapter in the Torah indicates the beginning of a new era or subject.
9. When the letter Vav is prefixed to a verb in the Torah, it changes the tense from past to future. Thus, the vav implies timelessness, giving man nearer to an understanding of Hashem. To the infinite Creator there is neither past nor future; as everything is as accessible as the present to Him.

## — — — — — The Letter Zayin — — — — —



1. The letter zayin looks quite similar to its neighbor, the letter vav. Tall and straight, a simple vertical line, the vav (equivalent to the number six) represents the visible world (corresponding to six sides: front, back, right, left, up and down).
2. **Shape #1:** The zayin, which looks like a crowned vav, has the numerical value of seven and represents, according to Kabbalah, the natural order.
3. **Shape #2:** like a sword and is the symbol of spirit, sustenance, and struggle.
4. It represents the 7th day of Shabbos, the day of rest and spirituality, which completes the process of the 6 days of creation. It includes the six days and six directions of physical reality, but also stands as a unique 7th principle or energy, the spirit which activates the physical. One way of understanding the power of seven is to imagine a box. A box has six sides including the top and the bottom, the seventh “dimension” of a box is the empty matter inside.
5. **Sense:** The Zayin is the source of all movement. It is an impregnating principle, which activates the creation.
6. Zayin is drawn with a Vav with a crown on top of it. The Vav is related to the Ohr Yashar, the direct light of the Creator coming down into the created world.
7. The Zayin relates to the Ohr Hozer, the returning light, which follows the path of the vav to return and then spreads out when it reaches the crown. The Zayin impregnates all of life and allows the Vav to spread, opening the field of every possibility
8. Shaped like a sword, the Zayin represents all movement. It represents the struggle between opposites, the struggle for existence, the struggle for sustenance (מִזּוֹן). It is the struggle between Yaakov and the angel.
9. It is the power within a person that causes them to speak, initiate, live.
10. Zayin is also the source of rest. It teaches us to harmonize between the spirit and perfection related to the 7th day of rest, and the matter of the 6 days of work
11. Seven represents the natural order as represented by the seven days of creation.
12. As a representative of nature, zayin is the first letter of the word zera, seed. A seed represents ultimate completion in nature, for everything a plant needs to grow is already contained within it.
13. It is also the first letter of the word זֶן - **zan**, which means **sustainer** and is a reference to God who provides the world with grain for food.
14. **Shape #3:** The letter zayin is so closely tied to nature that it even **looks like a flower** newly sprouted from the ground.
15. The Hebrew noun zayin, however, actually translates as זֶיִן — **weapon**, reminding the world that since the curse of Adam, it is natural for humankind to “struggle” for his/her sustenance.
16. **Shape #4:** constructed from vav with a crown on its head. A crown of a husband is a woman of valor. Is considered a feminine energy. Number 7 refers to Shabbat...the bride/queen.
17. The letter zayin means: sword, sceptre of king, and after eating we bless Hashem who provides all things.
18. 7 days of celebration in the chuppa – honeymoon suite.
19. 7<sup>th</sup> year of rest for the land and forgiveness of debts.
20. Our work in this world is to return light from above in order to fix and rectify all of creation.

21. It's a sword and a plow..."they shall beat their swords into plowshares"...during the 1000 year reign or rest period prior to Moshiach.
22. **Talmud Shabbos 104a:** *alef Beis* [means] 'learn wisdom [*alef Binah*]; *Gimmel Daled*, show kindness to the Poor [*Gemol Dallim*]. ..*Heh, Vav*, that is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; *Zayin, Ches, Tes, Yud, Chaf, Lamed*: [this sequence teaches,] and if you do this, the Holy One, blessed be He, will sustain [*Zan*] you, be gracious [*Chen*] unto you, show goodness [*meTiv*] to you, give you a heritage [*Yerushah*], and bind a crown [*Keser*] on you in the world to come.
23. All the traditional foods that we eat on Shabbosz, all have a numerical value of 7, [when adding the numbers]:
- Wine = Yayin =Yud [10], Yud [10], Nun [50] = 70 [7+0=7]
  - Challah = Ches [8], Lamed [30], Hei [5] = 43 [4 +3 =7]
  - Fish = Dag = Daled [4], Gimel [3] = 7
  - Soup = Marak = Mem [40], Reish [200]. Koof [100] = 340 [3+4+0=7]
  - Meat = Basar = Beis [2], Sin [300], Reish [200] = 502 [5+0+2=7]
  - Lamp = Ner= Nun [50], Reish [200] = 250 [2+5+0=7]

### ----- The Letter Ches -----



1. Gematriya = 8. The number seven symbolizes the complete purpose of human existence, combining the spiritual level of the Shabbos with the physical effort of the week. Going beyond 7, the number 8 symbolizes man's ability to transcend the limitations of physical existence.
2. Ches stands for that which is on a plane above nature, the metaphysical Divine.
3. The number eight is involved in various aspects of the Temple service & in other Mitzvos, which all illustrate the symbolic means in the life of every Jew by which he can raise himself towards the Divine:
  - 8 holy vestments of the Kohen Gadol
  - 8 varieties of spices for the oil of anointment (4) and for the incense (4).
  - 8 poles for carrying the Ark, Table, Golden Alter, & Copper Alter.
  - 8 Musical instruments
  - Animals can be offered as sacrifices from the eighth day of birth.
  - 8 days of preparation until the Mishkan was inaugurated.
  - Circumcision is on the eighth day.
  - 8 threads of Tzitzis
  - Shmini Atzeres

4. Ches starts the word "Chein" — חן — which means grace or favor. ( cognate with חנם - free - Hashem is the gracious One, Who favours man with His kindness, even at times and in situations where man's merits are inadequate.
5. Ches stands for חיים (chayim) - life. It is written in the Torah with its roof rising to a point; symbolizing both Hashem (who is called the living G-d who dwells on high) and the righteous (who continue to live on after death, by virtue of their spiritual heritage they bequeath to prosperity.)
6. Ches is phonetically similar to Cheit - sin - חטא. If sinner does Teshuva, he will be able to live again.
7. According to the Beis Yosef, the Cheis consists of 2 spear-shaped Zayin's side by side with a roof over them (according to the Arizal it consists of a Zayin and a Vav). It is called Ches from Chas - חס - meaning distorted; since the shape appears as if the two spear-shaped Zayin's have been distorted at the top to form a combining bridge.
8. Halacha of Shabbos - removal of the roof from the Ches, is pushed for desecrating the shabbos, as it creates 2 letters.
9. Man has to balance the two Zayins: passive trust in the ין , sustainer of the world; and active enterprise, symbolized by יון, armament. The harmonious synthesis of these two seemingly antithetical positions is portrayed by the letter Ches, which combines within itself the 2 Zayin's, which unite to symbolize the living חי God Who dwells on high.
10. In conclusion, by dedicating himself to the service of God, man can resolve the contradiction between human endeavour and trust in Him. Thereby man can deserve to be graced with חן and חיים.
11. Based on the authority given to the Sages, some letters that are similarly enunciated are interchangeable under certain conditions. this is the case with Ches & Heh, which are both guttural letters.
12. The difference between the words Chometz חמץ and Matzah מצה is the small difference between a Ches ח and a Heh ה .
13. The *ches*, according to the *AriZal*, is a fusion of two letters: the *vav* and the *zayin*. On top of the *vav* and *zayin* is a bridge that unites the two. In essence, *vav* represents the male principle, the husband. *Zayin* represents the female principle, the wife. The bridge that links them is G-d. The Maggid of Mezritch illuminates the verse "The woman of valor is the crown of her husband" as: the *zayin*, the crown, signifies the position of the woman of valor safeguarding the man.
14. The *vav*, designed as a downward chute, alludes to the benefactor of the male. The gematriya of Zayin, seven alludes to the shabbos - the female - or recipient of the six previous days. "One who prepares food before shabbos, eats on the shabbos.
15. The design of the *ches* is representative of another type of bridge. If the relationship between *vav* (man) and *zayin* (woman) is to be complete, the two are united beneath a *chuppah*, a marriage canopy. The form of the *ches* looks like a marriage canopy. The word *chuppah*, חופה, even begins with a *ches*, for the word *chuppah* means *ches po—ches* (G-d, man and woman) is *po* (here). *Ches* is the heart of marriage. Man and woman are truly united only when they are joined beneath the *chuppah* with the third partner, which is G-d.