

# The Living Words

<http://thelivingwords.ancient-hebrew.org>

## ~~ Wisdom ~~

One aspect of the Hebrew language that fascinates me is its complex system of letters, roots, and words. The parent root **חמ** *hham* <sup>[H:2525]</sup>, meaning “heat,” and its derivatives demonstrate this unique system.

The word *hham* appears as **חמ** in its original pictographic script. The letter **ח** is a picture of a wall which “separates” one side from another<sup>1</sup>. and the letter **מ** is a picture of “water<sup>2</sup>.” Combined, these two letters literally mean “separate water.” When “heat” (*hham*) is applied to water, we have evaporation, or a “separating of water.”

The following Hebrew words are all derived from the parent root root **חמ** *hham* <sup>[H:2525]</sup>.

<b>חמת</b> <i>hhey met</i> <sup>[H:2573]</sup>	skin-bag
<b>חמה</b> <i>hhey mah</i> <sup>[H:2529]</sup>	cheese
<b>חמה</b> <i>hham mah</i> <sup>[H:2535]</sup>	sun
<b>חמס</b> <i>hham as</i> <sup>[H:2554]</sup>	to shake

---

<sup>1</sup> The name of the letter **ח** is hhets (hhet in Modern Hebrew) and is derived from the word **חיי** *hheys* <sup>[H:2434]</sup> meaning a wall.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the letter **מ** is mem and is derived from the word **מים** *mayim* <sup>[H:4325]</sup> meaning water.

חמד <i>hhamad</i> [H:2530]	to crave/desire
חמץ <i>hhamats</i> [H:2556]	to sour

While we can plainly see the root חמ (*hham*)<sup>3</sup> at the beginning of each of these words, what may not be as plainly seen is how the meanings of each of these words are related.

Soured (חמץ) milk was placed in a skin-bag (חמרת) that was set out in the heat (חם) of the sun (חמה) and shaken (חמס). The natural enzymes in the skin-bag causes the “water to separate” (חמ) from the milk forming the delicacy (חמד) cheese (חמה).

So, what does all of this have to do with wisdom? First, חמ is the root of the Hebrew word חכם *hhakham* [H:2450] and is, secondly, related to the idea of “separating,” as this word means “one who is able to separate between what is good and bad.” This one word can be translated as either “skill” when applied to a craftsman, or as “wise” when applied to a leader or counselor.

*and now send for me a man of **skill** (hhakham) to work in gold...*

2 Chronicles 2:7

*Provide for yourselves **wise** (hhakham) men and understanding and knowing for your tribes and I will set them as rulers over you.*

Deuteronomy 1:13

---

<sup>3</sup> The ח and ח are both the same letter “mem.” The form ח is used when it comes at the end of a word.

A verse found in the book of Isaiah has a very interesting connection between **חמיה** *hheyimah* <sup>[H:2529]</sup> (cheese) and a **חכם** *hhakham* <sup>[H:2450]</sup>, a person who is able to separate from the good and the bad, a wise man.

*And he will eat cheese (hheyimah) and dates<sup>4</sup> to know to reject the bad and choose the good.*

Isaiah 7:15

There appears to be a physical connection between cheese and wisdom as this passage indicates that eating cheese can bring about wisdom.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word **דבש** *devash* <sup>[H:1706]</sup> can mean dates or honey.