

## MILA YOMIT 11: VE'CHOSECH

וַחֹשֶׁךְ

‘And darkness’

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OTIOT-Letters

ו VAV (V): and

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ח CHET (CH)

- This is the first appearance of a CHET. It is the eighth letter of the Alef Beit. It transferred into Greek as Eta and then English as H.

-It is the fourth of 12 elementals or simple letters

-Sefer Yetzira explains that it is dominant over sight and that it corresponds to the month of Tamuz; the Zodiac sign Sartan: The Crab (Cancer) and right hand in the soul. (Sefer Yetzira)


It is formed by two Zayins (previous letter in Alef Bet, not yet in Torah) bridged together and resembles a gateway

It is related to CHAIM-life and CHATAT- fear (Gen. 35,5) and also CHET which means sin.


-Its numeric value is 8 and it represents a bridge or a gate to the transcendent . The infinity sign is an 8 on its side.

Sefer Bahir explains that Chet represents the Sefira of Yesod-Foundation, which parallels the male organ. This organ contains two ducts, one for reproduction and one for discharging waste, and these are represented by the two legs of the CHET, one source of good, one source of evil (life or sin).



The primary concept of the CHET is that of an opening from below, and this is indicated by the form of the letter, which is actually

closed on three sides, and open on the bottom-  .The only open direction is the north, which corresponds to Gevurah-Strength. North is associated with evil in many places. It is said to be `open', since the existence of evil opens the door for free will. (Kaplan on Bahir, p. 110)

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 SHIN (S)- mother letter correspond to fire


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 Final CHAF (K)- This is the first appearance of the eleventh letter of the Aleph Bet. When it appears at the end of the word it is formed as we see above. When it is in the beginning or the middle of a word it is formed as : 





It transferred into Greek as Kappa and became the English K.

Sefer Yetzirah explains that it is the fourth of the 7 double letters, (pronounced kaf or chaf).

It is dominant over Life and its transposition is Death  
It corresponds to Wednesday in time, Venus in `universe', left eye in the soul.

In the seven lower Sefirot of the tree of life it corresponds to the Sefira of Netzach-Eternity, Victory. It is related to Koach- which means strength

As a final letter, it is one of the five `strengths`.

This refers to the five letters that have a distinct form when at the end of the word, along with -MEM, -NUN, -TZADI, and -PEH.

Mystically they are viewed as the five 'strengths' or 'limits' which are necessary to balance the expansion of the other letters that

express continuity and abundance.

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MEANING-

**חֹשֶׁךְ** -CHOSECH is a M. noun meaning 'darkness, obscurity'

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Words Contained Within and Related Words:

**חָשַׁךְ**- is a verb meaning 'to be dark' or 'to grow dark'.

**לְחַשֵּׁךְ**-LaCHshoCH - to withhold (see below)

**חָשֵׁךְ**-CHASHECH- is an adjective meaning 'dark, obscure'

**חַשׁ**- CHaSh - sensation, to feel (**לְחַשׁ**-Lachush) something non tangible

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CONCEPTUAL MEANING:

We are reaching the point out of which the creation as we experience it, is about to unfold.

Out of this state, creation develops.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch basing himself on etymological comparisons explains it as: "to be withdrawn...the condition in which beings are not exposed to the awakening influence of light...darkness gives opportunity for forces to penetrate and work internally by relaxing from stimulation...the root of a plant is a child of darkness...life germinates in the womb of obscure darkness." (p. 8-9).

**וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ**-see Genesis 22:16 Ve Lo Chashachta- And You Did Not Withhold (Your Only Son).This is from the Akeida-almost sacrifice of Isaac)

The Talmud comments that darkness is one of the things created on the first day. Therefore some commentators point out that darkness is not merely the absence of light, but it is a specific object of God's creation.

As in Isaiah 45:7 where God says of God

וַיְבֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ OoBoreh CHOSECH' : And Creates Darkness.

The Rambam and Ramban teach that CHOSECH refers to the elemental fire which is dark, 'for if it were red, it would redden the night for us'.

Interestingly enough (and indicative of the many faces of Torah understanding or grappling), Rabbi Bun is quoted in the Bahir using the same verse from Isaiah to reach an opposite conclusion.

"Darkness has no substance, and therefore with regard to it, the term "creation" is used...In the case of darkness there was no making, only separation and setting aside." (Bahir, p. 6-7)

Sefer Zohar/Book of Illumination teaches that :

At the head of the King's authority, the Creator cared out of the supernal luminescence a Lamp of Darkness. And there emerged out of the Hidden of Hidden-the Mystery of the Infinite.

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan explains that this refers to the Tzimtzum:Contraction which allowed a 'vacated place' that enabled the creation to manifest and experience itself independently. The 'Lamp' of Darkness' is 'darkness' to us, but with relation to God, it too is a lamp.

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From Breishit Rabbah, an early source of Midrash/Oral Teaching:

VE'CHOSECH-This is the generation of Enosh [beginning of idol worship], as it is written: 'And it was בַּחֹשֶׁךְ -in the darkness of their deeds, [they would hide their plans] and say, 'Who sees us ,

who takes note of us? (Isaiah 29:15)

VE'CHOSECH- This is the exile of Greece, which darkened the eyes of Israel with its decrees, ordering the Jews to write on the horn of an ox that they have no portion in the God of Israel.

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VE'CHOSECH:

The darkness is the primal fire that alludes to the withdrawal of the Divine Presence. It is that which holds the empty space in which life germinated.

But even the withdrawal is only apparently so.

The darkness in existence and in our lives is the gateway to greater light.

May we always know this in times of great darkness.

וְחֹשֶׁךְ