

Torah Focus

Introduction

Rabbi Akiva Tatz teaches that the opening chapters of Genesis cannot be taken as literal Peshat

- Therefore, when I approach [Gen 1:1-4:25](#) at minimum, I try to always take a So'odic perspective. But It's hard to get rid of the flesh-first mentality.

The Talmud² tells us that G-d created the physical world with the letter *hei* and the World to Come with the letter *yud*. The *yud* thus represents the judgment that will take place in the World to Come.

Menachot 29B Said Raba, “There are seven letters that require the use of three strokes in the writing of them: “*Shin, ayin, tet, nun, zayin, gimmel, and saddi.*”

Said R. Ashi, “I have noticed that the most meticulous scribes add a vertical stroke to the roof of the **het** and suspend the inner leg of the letter **H**. They add a vertical stroke to the roof of the letter **H**, with the sense, ‘**he lives in the heights of the world.**’

“They suspend the inner leg of the letter **H**, for the reason that will now be specified.”

R. Judah Nesiah asked **R. Ammi**, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, “*Trust in the Lord for ever, for in Yah, the Lord, is an everlasting rock*’ ([Is. 26:4](#))?”

He said to him, “*Whoever places his trust in the Holy One, blessed be he, lo, he has a refuge in this world and in the world to come.*”

He said to him, “No, this is what was difficult for me: How come the verse says, ‘in **Yah**,’ but not ‘**Yah**’?”

It is in accord with **R. Judah bar Ilai**’s exposition: “*This refers to the two worlds that the Holy One, blessed be he, one using the **H** of the Divine Name, the other the **Y** of the Divine Name. But I don’t know whether the world to come was with the **Y** and this world with the **H**, or the this world with **the Y and the world to come with the H.***”

“But when Scripture says, ‘These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created,’ do not read the word as though it were written, ‘when they were created,’ but rather, ‘with an **H** they were created,’ *on the basis of which I draw the conclusion that this world was made with the **H** of the Divine Name, and the world to come with the **Y.***”

Mystery of the Ten

Mystery of the Four

Mystery of the Seventy-Two

To summarize Menachot 29b while contextualizing the text:

Contextual Meaning of *Menachot*

The tractate *Menachot* is part of the Mishnah and Talmud, dealing with the offerings of flour (meal offerings) in the Temple. It often ventures into discussions of scriptural interpretation, symbolic meanings of Hebrew letters, and the intricate laws and customs surrounding offerings and sacred practices.

Summary of Menachot 29b (Highlighted Passage)

1. Structure and Writing of Letters:

- Raba begins by explaining the intricate method of writing certain Hebrew letters (*Shin, Ayin, Tet, Nun, Zayin, Gimel, Saddi*), emphasizing the need for three strokes.
- R. Ashi adds that meticulous scribes enhance the structure of the letters *Het* and *Hei*. They suspend the inner leg of the letter *Hei* as a reflection of its spiritual significance, alluding to the idea that "He lives in the heights of the world."

2. Exploration of Isaiah 26:4 ("Trust in the Lord forever..."):

- R. Judah Nesiah queries the meaning of this verse, particularly why it specifies "in Yah" (*B'Yah*) instead of simply "Yah."
- R. Ammi explains that placing trust in G-d secures refuge in both this world and the world to come.

3. The Divine Name and Creation:

- **R. Judah bar Ilai** expands on the verse, noting that the letters *Yud* and *Hei* of the Divine Name are linked to two worlds:
 - This world is associated with the *Hei* (referring to physical creation and revelation).
 - The world to come is associated with the *Yud* (symbolizing spiritual perfection and minimalism).
- The reasoning is based on Genesis 2:4, interpreting "when they were created" as "with the letter *Hei* they were created."

4. Conclusion on Divine Letters and Worlds:

- Through textual analysis, the sages derive that:
 - The *Hei* of G-d's Name represents the creation and sustenance of the physical world (*Olam HaZeh*).
 - The *Yud* signifies the spiritual realm of the world to come (*Olam HaBa*), pointing to its transcendent and perfected nature.

This passage integrates Kabbalistic symbolism, linking the physical and spiritual worlds to the sacred letters of G-d's Name, underscoring the interplay between creation, trust, and Divine providence.

In Jewish mysticism, **the "Yod"** (the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the first letter of G-d's name) **is often associated with the concept of "Olam HaBa" (the World to Come) because it represents the divine spark within every individual, signifying the potential for spiritual ascension and connection to the divine in the afterlife;** essentially, the Yod is seen as the essence of life and the key to accessing the spiritual realm of Olam HaBa through righteous actions in this world. [[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#)]

Key points about this connection: [[1](#), [3](#), [6](#)]

- **Symbolic meaning of Yod:** As the first letter of God's name, the Yod represents the source of creation and the divine presence. [[1](#), [3](#), [6](#)]
- **Spiritual potential:** In Jewish mysticism, the Yod within each person is considered a spark of divinity that can be cultivated through ethical behavior and study of Torah. [[3](#), [4](#), [7](#)]
- **Olam HaBa as a spiritual realm:** "Olam HaBa" refers to the afterlife or the world to come, where the soul is believed to experience ultimate spiritual fulfillment. [[1](#), [2](#)]

How the Yod relates to Olam HaBa: [[1](#), [2](#), [7](#)]

- **Pathway to the divine:** By living a righteous life and focusing on spiritual development, one can "elevate" their Yod, allowing them to access the spiritual reality of Olam HaBa after death. [[1](#), [2](#), [7](#)]
- **Inner light:** The Yod is often visualized as a point of light within the soul, representing the potential for spiritual illumination and connection to the divine in the next world. [[1](#), [3](#), [7](#)]
- **Personal responsibility:** The concept of the Yod emphasizes the individual's agency in shaping their spiritual destiny and achieving a place in Olam HaBa through their actions in this life. [[1](#), [4](#), [7](#)]

[1] <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/olam-ha-ba>

[2] <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-world-to-come/>

[3] https://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/Aleph-Bet/Yod/yod.html

[4] <https://jewishclarity.com/difficulties-bereavement-and-comfort-2/understanding-olam-haba-the-world-to-come-pt1/>

[5] https://ohr.edu/ask_db/ask_main.php/25/q2/

[6] https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/364281/jewish/Intro-The-Journey-of-Life.htm

[7] <https://www.jewfaq.org/afterlife>

Heaven First

When G-d instructs Moshe to build the Mishkan, He begins with the instructions for the **Kodesh HaKodeshim** (Holy of Holies) and the furniture within it. This is evident in [Exodus 25](#), where G-d commands Moshe to construct the **Ark of the Covenant (Aron HaBrit)**, which resides in the Kodesh HaKodeshim, before discussing any other components of the Mishkan.

Order of Instructions

1. The Ark (Aron HaBrit):

- In [Exodus 25:10-22](#), the first instructions focus on the Ark, which would house the Tablets of the Covenant (*Luchot HaBrit*). The Ark symbolizes the Divine Presence and is the central focus of the Mishkan.

2. The Kaporet (Cover of the Ark) and Cherubim:

- G-d describes the Kaporet, the golden cover of the Ark with its two cherubim, emphasizing that this is where He will "meet" and "speak" to Moshe ([Exodus 25:17-22](#)).

3. The Table (Shulchan) and Menorah:

- After the Ark, the instructions shift to the other furnishings in the Sanctuary, such as the Table for the Bread of Presence ([Exodus 25:23-30](#)) and the Menorah ([Exodus 25:31-40](#)), which belong to the Kodesh (the Holy place, outside the Holy of Holies).

4. The Structure of the Mishkan:

- Following the details of the furnishings, G-d provides the instructions for the construction of the Mishkan itself, including its curtains, coverings, and walls ([Exodus 26](#)).

Significance of Starting with the Ark

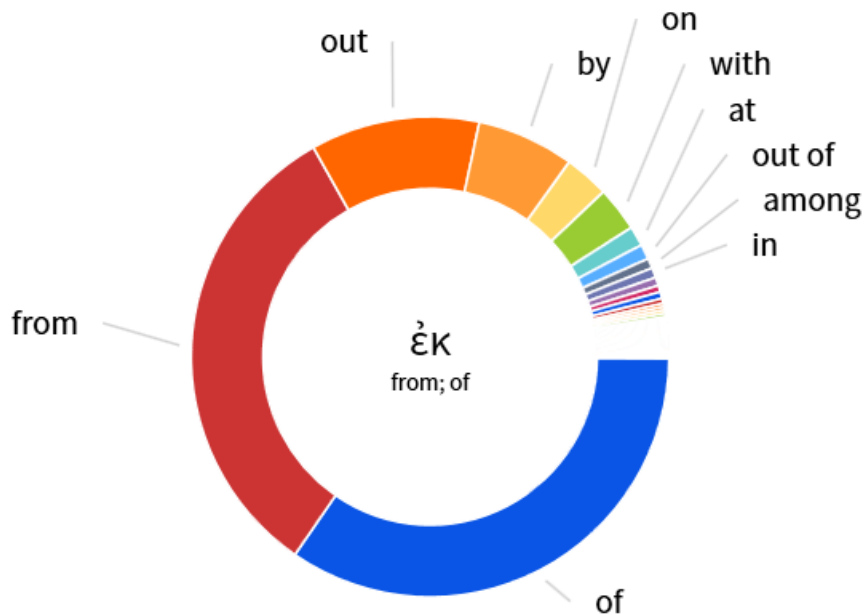
This order reflects a **theological focus** rather than a chronological or practical construction sequence. The Ark represents the spiritual core of the Mishkan, symbolizing G-d's covenant with Yisrael and the centrality of His Presence. By starting with the Ark, G-d emphasizes that the Mishkan is built around the purpose of creating a dwelling place for His Presence among the people ([Exodus 25:8](#)).

Actual Construction

When the Mishkan is constructed in [Exodus 36-40](#), the craftsmen begin with the physical structure and then proceed to the furnishings, as this is the logical order for assembly. However, G-d's instructions prioritize the spiritual essence before the physical.

Thus, a fundamental hermeneutic states that the Spiritual comes before the physical.

[Eph 1:4](#) - καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ, - He chose (had a conversation with) us in Him **before the foundation of the world**.



(II) To say, speak, discourse.

(A) Generally and construed (1) With an adjunct of the object, i.e., the words spoken, the thing or person spoken of.

(a) Followed by the words uttered ([Matt. 1:20](#); [Mark 6:2](#); [Luke 2:13](#); [12:54](#); [John 1:29,36](#); [Acts 4:16](#); [Rom. 9:25](#); [Heb. 1:6](#); [8:13](#); [James 2:23](#)); followed by *hóti* (3754), that, before the words quoted ([Matt. 9:18](#); [Mark 2:12](#); [3:21](#); [Luke 4:41](#); [23:5](#); [John 8:33](#); [Acts 2:13](#); [6:11](#); [Rom. 3:8](#)). In the part. *légōn* and the pl. *légontes*, saying, it is often put after other verbs or nouns implying speech and introducing the exact words, equivalent to “in these words” ([Matt. 5:2](#); [6:31](#); [9:30](#); [12:38](#); [16:7](#); [Mark 1:7,24](#); [11:31](#); [Luke 4:35,36](#); [7:39](#); [20:5](#); [John 4:31,51](#); [Acts 2:13,40](#); [24:2](#); [Heb. 12:26](#); [Rev. 6:10](#)). This is not found in the epistles of Paul.

[Eph 1:4](#) contextually - before the foundation of the world, i.e., the Olam Ha Zeh.

? What does it mean that G-d used the Yud to make the Olam HaBa? The Yud is finite. How can G-d begin the creation of the Olam Haba with something finite?

Gen 2:4 This is the genealogy of the Heavens (Heavenlies) and the Earth.

1. The Heavens - The Spiritual realms
2. The Earth - The world of Assiyah

How are we to understand this meaning from Rabbi Akiva Tatz's statement?

The Yud, a primordial Point. Contextually, it actually means a boundary. Therefore, it serves as the boundary of the finite realms and serves as a point where the Olam HaBa Begins and the temporal finite world ends.

Based on the discussion in *Menachot 29b*, where the letters of the Tetragrammaton (*Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey*) are associated with the creation of the worlds, the following assignments align with the realms of existence in Jewish mystical thought:

Adam Kadmon serves as a liminal space and the role of *Yud* as marking the boundary of differentiation. Here's how we can reinterpret the assignment of the letters from the Tetragrammaton (*Y-H-V-H*) to align with view of argument:

Assignments of the Letters to the Realms:

1. Adam Kadmon (Primordial Man):

- Beyond Differentiation, No Assigned Letter
- Reason: As a liminal, undifferentiated space, *Adam Kadmon* remains beyond the framework of the letters. It exists as a pure, indivisible potential and acts as the gateway to the infinite (*Ein Sof*) rather than being directly associated with differentiation or emanation. The lack of a letter emphasizes its unity and inaccessibility to structured reality.

2. Atzilut (Emanation):

- Letter: Yud (י)
- Reason: The *Yud*, the smallest letter, symbolizes the initial spark of differentiation and the essence of potential. Atzilut is where the Divine begins to emanate attributes (*Sefirot*) while still maintaining a profound closeness to the Infinite. The *Yud* marks the threshold between pure undifferentiated unity (*Adam Kadmon*) and the beginning of structured emanation.

3. Beriah (Creation):

- Letter: Hey (ה)
- Reason: The *Hey* represents expansion and delineation, making it suitable for *Beriah*, the realm where separation between Creator and creation begins. This world embodies the intellectual frameworks and archetypes of creation, where differentiation becomes evident.

4. Yetzirah (Formation):

- Letter: Vav (ו)
- Reason: The *Vav*, shaped like a vertical line, signifies connection and flow, fitting for *Yetzirah*, where emotions, symbols, and archetypes take on dynamic relationships. This is the realm of formation, bridging higher spiritual worlds with tangible frameworks.

5. Assiyah (Action):

- Letter: Hey (ה)
- Reason: The second *Hey* reflects further differentiation, corresponding to the physical, material world of *Assiyah*. The expansive nature of the *Hey* reflects the multiplicity of the physical realm while still being connected to the Divine through the structure of the Name.

Summary of Revised Assignments:

- **Adam Kadmon:** No assigned letter (undifferentiated, liminal space).
- **Atzilut:** Yud (י) (boundary of differentiation and first spark of emanation).
- **Beriah:** Hey (ה) (intellectual delineation of creation).
- **Yetzirah:** Vav (ו) (formation and flow).
- **Assiyah:** Hey (ה) (material differentiation and action).

Supporting Kabbalistic Logic:

- **Adam Kadmon as Liminal:** This space remains unstructured, beyond the framework of letters or differentiation. It aligns with Kabbalistic thought that no differentiation exists here, as it is purely the gateway to *Ein Sof*.
- **Atzilut as the Start of Differentiation:** The *Yud* now marks the boundary, as the Divine light begins to filter through the *Sefirot*. This interpretation respects the *Yud's* role as the smallest spark of revelation and its association with transcendence.
- **Hey and Vav in Lower Realms:** These letters reflect stages of expansion, flow, and eventual grounding in the physical realm.

This is my view of *Adam Kadmon* and appropriately places the *Yud* within the differentiation boundary in *Atzilut*.