



— — — — — The Letter Kaf (Chaf) — — — — —

Design:

1. The eleventh letter of the *alef-beis* is the *kaf*.
2. The design of the *kaf* looks as a pipe bent in two places. The concept of bending oneself represents submission to a greater force and entity—the King of all kings, Hashem.

Gematria:

1. The *gematria* of *kaf* is twenty. Twenty can be divided into ten and ten. The first ten represents the Ten Utterances with which G-d created the world. The second ten represents the Ten Commandments. Together, they become a *kaf*. In *Bamidbar 7:86* it states: כַּפֹּת זֶהב שְׁתֵּים-עָשָׂר מִלֵּאֵת קִטְרֹת עֵשָׂרָה עֵשָׂרָה הַכֹּף

Twelve gold spoons filled with incense; each spoon weighing ten [shekels]

2. If you take the word **עשרים** (*esrim*, the word “twenty” in Hebrew) and add up its letters, you arrive at 620: *ayin*=70, *shin*=300, *reish*=200, *yud*=10, *mem*=40. 620 is also the *gematria* of the word **כתר**, *kesser*: *kaf*=20, *tav*=400, *reish*=200. *Kesser* means crown. *Kesser* also reminds us of the 620 letters in the Ten Commandments. G-d crowned the Jewish nation by giving them the Torah. And it became the Jews’ purpose in life to follow the 613 commandments and the 7 Rabbinic laws—which together total 620. The first letter of *kesser* is *kaf* - **כתר**.
3. The *Sefirah* (or faculty) of *Kesser* represents a level that is beyond intellect. The crown is placed atop the head. Our head is the vessel that carries the brain, the seat of intellect and thought. But the crown rests *above* the head, beyond thought. - Desire (*ratzon*). Desire is a mighty force, inviting us to explore possibilities that rationality would show to be wrong or difficult.

4. There is another concept that even transcends desire, and that is pleasure (*ta'anug*). If a person derives pleasure from something he will automatically gravitate toward it, and will mobilize his intellect and devise a strategy to attain it.
5. *Kesser* is represented by the letter *kaf*—twenty—to teach us that there are two levels, or faculties, within the crown: desire and pleasure, with each faculty containing ten aspects. These aspects are also known as the ten *Sefiros* (spheres). The two faculties of the crown of *kaf*—pleasure and desire—twice encompass the three levels of intellect and seven levels of emotion for a total of twenty levels.
6. ***Talmud Kiddushin 40b***: the crown of Torah is *halachah*—law, because the purpose of Torah is that we carry out His law, i.e., that we fulfill G-d's desire and in so doing give Him pleasure.
7. *Talmud*: “Great is the study of Torah, for it brings to action.”
8. Like the crown, Torah's ultimate purpose is to go beyond the head, beyond the intellect, and propel us to act in accordance with G-d's will,

thus refining us as people and completing G-d's purpose in Creation.

Meaning:

1. One of the meanings of the letter *kaf* is “spoon.” The root of the word “spoon” is *kafaf* —to bend. The *kaf* is a letter that is bent. It represents the aspect of submitting oneself to a greater power.
2. This notion of submission—and humility—can be seen in the difference between the words *anochi* אֲנֹכִי and *ani* אֲנִי. Both mean “I.” When a person walks around all day and says, “I, I, I,” he has a problem with egotism. By adding a *kaf* to the אֲנִי (*ani*), the I, and transforming it into the אֲנֹכִי (*anochi*). When the “I” submits to G-d, when it recognizes and bends to the higher power through the *kaf*, it is no longer the egotistical I. Rather, אֲנֹכִי (*anochi*) is the “I” that serves as a channel to do G-d's will.
3. There are actually two *kafs*. There's the bent *kaf* (כּ), and the straight, or final, *kaf* (ך). Kesser has also been described as representing the internal and external aspects of the king. Internal refers to the king's relation to himself, while external is his relationship to the world,

גימטריה

20 = כ

30 = ל

40 = מ

50 = נ

60 = ס

70 = ע

80 = פ

90 = צ

100 = ק

200 = ר

300 = ש

400 = ת

11 = יא

12 = יב

13 = יג

14 = יד

15 = טו

16 = טז

17 = יז

18 = יח

19 = יט

1 = א

2 = ב

3 = ג

4 = ד

5 = ה

6 = ו

7 = ז

8 = ח

9 = ט

10 = י

his kingdom. Regarding the king's internal aspect—he doesn't necessarily want to be king, under the ceaseless demands of his position. He wants to live within the boundaries of his own will, the internal world of study, erudition, spirituality, and family. The king's crown, however, also demands the straight *kaf*,

which unfurls to reach down to his subjects; the external level of the king's existence. He's required to interact, to be responsible and benevolent to his kingdom.

4. The bent *kaf* represents the introverted or inverted king—who remains isolated within his internalized world. The straight *kaf* (similar to the *vav*) represents the king who descends from his high level and reaches down to others in order to communicate with and rule his people.
5. By affixing the straight *kaf* as the suffix to a word, it adds the word “you” to the root. As it says: “I will exalt *You* (אָרוֹמַמְךָ) my G-d the King.” When you speak directly to a person, you say “you”: *lecha*, לְךָ, or *becha*, בְּךָ—spelled with a straight *kaf*: The final *kaf* thus *literally* unfolds to include the person to whom you are speaking. It represents the fact that the king has appeared to us and we are able to speak to him face to face.
6. The two letters of the full spelling of the *kaf*, are the initial letters of the two Hebrew words: *koach* (“potential”) and *poel* (“actual”), hinting at the power latent within the spiritual

realm of the potential to fully manifest itself in the physical realm of the actual. God must create the world continuously; otherwise Creation would instantaneously vanish. His potential is therefore actualized at each moment. This concept is referred to as “the power to actualize potential ever-present within the actualized.”

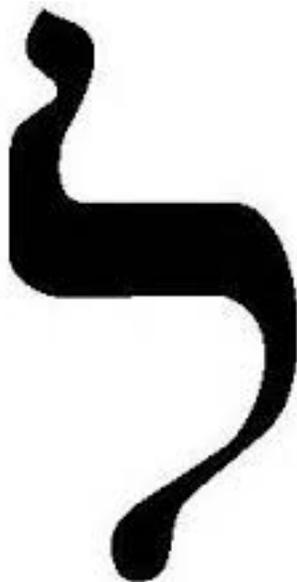
7. This should be one’s initial awareness upon awakening. Since the literal meaning of the letter kaf is “palm” – the place in the body where potential is actualized – this awareness is reflected in the custom of placing one palm on the other upon awakening, before reciting the Modeh Ani prayer: “I thank You, living and eternal King, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.”
8. Placing palm on palm is an act and sign of subjugation, similar to the act of bowing before a king.
9. Whereas in bowing one totally nullifies one’s consciousness in the presence of the King, in placing palm on palm one enters into a state of supplication and prayer to the King to reveal

new will from His supernal crown (Will) to His subjects.

10. Kaf is also the root of the word kipah (etymologically, the root of the word “cap” in English), the yarmulke. In reference to the creation of man it is said: “You have placed Your Palm [kaf] over me.” Our Sages refer to Adam as, “the formation of the Palms [kaf] of the Holy One, Blessed be He.” The awareness of the presence of the “Palms” of God over one’s head, in His ongoing creation of him, becomes the cap (kipah) on his head.
11. The very power to actualize potential manifest in His Palms, as it were, derives ultimately from His crown (the power of will) above His head (i.e. “superrational” Will.)
12. As a verb, kaf means to “subdue” or “coerce.” We are told in the Talmud that at the time of the giving of the Torah at Sinai, “He suspended the mountain over them as a barrel.”
13. Meaning that the Divine motivation manifest in this act was actually one of greatest love for Israel. So much love was revealed by all the tremendous revelations at Sinai that the people were “coerced,” as it were, to respond in

acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, in love. The mountain itself appeared to forcefully embrace the people.

14. Here the secret of the kaf is the “much” revealed from the “little” point of the yud.
15. The palm of one’s hand is also known as a *kaf*. Whereas the letter *yud* represented the complete *yad* (hand, including the fingers), the *kaf*, palm of the hand, is that which forms a cup and is able to contain things.
16. The Jewish word for hand is **י** = fourteen. There are 14 parts to a hand. When 2 Jews greet each other and shake each other’s hands, the Gematriya of both hands is 28 = **כ** - which means strength / power.



— — — — — The Letter Lamed — — — — —

Design:

1. The twelfth letter of the *alef-beis* is the *lamed*. The design of the *lamed* is two letters merged together: the *vav* and the *kaf*.
2. **Zohar:** the letter *lamed* is compared to a tower flying in the air.

Gematria:

1. The *gematria* of *lamed* is thirty.
2. **Pirkei Avos:** “When one reaches the age of thirty, he reaches the age of full strength.” We find in the Torah that when the Jewish people were in the desert, the Levites who carried the heavy vessels had to be between the ages of thirty to fifty, for these are the mightiest years of man.
3. The power to begin transforming the world in earnest begins when we turn thirty. Up until that point we are in training.
4. *Midrash Shmuel* states that one has the ability to guide and influence others for good at the age of thirty. Until then, he is simply laying his foundation.

5. Both the *alef* (in the form of the word *ulfana*) and the *lamed* (as in *lameid*) represent G-d as a teacher. The design of the *alef* is comprised of two *yuds* and a *vav*: 10 and 10 and 6=26. The *lamed* is comprised of a *kaf* and a *vav*: 20 and 6=26. Twenty-six is the *gematria* of G-d's name, *Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei*.
6. There is a marked difference between the teaching styles of the *alef* and the *lamed*. The *alef* is more theoretical while the *lamed* is more practical. For example, the *alef* represents the Written Law of Torah while the *lamed* focuses on the Oral Law (how to practically apply these concepts in one's day-to-day behavior).
7. The *kaf* of the *lamed* represents the human being, which is comprised of a G-dly soul and animal soul, each of which is comprised of ten faculties (equaling twenty). The *vav* represents G-d dwelling between them. The numerical value of the *kaf* is twenty. When G-d dwells between them, He adds His Ten *Sefiros*, or G-dly energies, making thirty, which is *lamed*.
8. This is why the *Zohar* calls the *lamed* a tower flying in the air. The *vav* of the *lamed* represents G-dliness, spirituality, found high up "in the air."

The *vav*, which is a chute, draws this G-dliness down from the spiritual realms into the physical world, until it is internalized into the *kaf*, the human being. This merging of spiritual and physical imbues the *lamed* with the ability to teach very lofty concepts in a practical way.

Meaning:

1. *Lamed* לָמַד means to learn and to teach—found in the daily prayers with the phrase *lilmod u'lameid*. The word *lamed*, the commandment to teach, is a directive for every individual. Every person can influence his or her friend or student, and every parent has the obligation to teach his or her children the knowledge of G-d, good deeds and ethics.
2. “You shall teach your children and talk to them about these things” (i.e., the Torah’s commandments and responsibilities).
3. **Rambam:** this is the premise for the *mitzvah* of *talmud Torah*, Torah study; that through the commandment to teach our children, we know of our own obligation to study the Torah. For how can we teach our children the Torah if we haven’t learned it ourselves?

4. **Question:** Why do we have to learn about this commandment indirectly? Why didn't Hashem just say, "Learn Torah!"
5. **Answer:** When it comes to studying Torah, a person is *always* a child, and thus the commandment to "teach your children" can also apply to us.
6. The word *lev* לב, which means heart, begins with a *lamed*. When the Hebrew letters are lined up, the *lamed* is the middle letter, the "heart" לב of the Hebrew alphabet. Just as the heart sustains the body, so does heartfelt learning of Torah sustain the spirit.
7. The *lamed* is also the tallest letter of the *aleph-bet*, making it a visual focal point. This implies that this quality of learning and teaching is man's greatest gift from Hashem.
8. The teaching and studying of the Torah is the central focus of Jewish life and those who immerse themselves in studying the Torah are meant to be the central figures in Jewish society, those to whom we turn for leadership.