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

The word hham appears as וים in its original pictographic script. The letter י is a picture of a wall which “separates” one side from another1, and the letter מ is a picture of “water”2. 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 הימ hham [H:2525].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>הים hheymet [H:2573]</th>
<th>skin-bag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>הים hheymah [H:2529]</td>
<td>cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הים hhammah [H:2535]</td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>הים hhamas [H:2554]</td>
<td>to shake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 The name of the letter י is hhets (hhet in Modern Hebrew) and is derived from the word יײ hheys [H:2434] meaning a wall.

2 The name of the letter מ is mem and is derived from the word מים mayim [H:4325] meaning water.
While we can plainly see the root הָמָד (hhamad)\(^3\) 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 (עַמַּד) milk was placed in a skin-bag (דָּמָא) that was set out in the heat (כָּלָה) of the sun (שָׂמָיִם) and shaken (נָשָׁה). The natural enzymes in the skin-bag causes the “water to separate” (דָּמָא) from the milk forming the delicacy (דָּמָא) cheese (כָּלָה).

So, what does all of this have to do with wisdom? First, הָמָד is the root of the Hebrew word הָמָד 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

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\(^3\) The ה and מ are both the same letter “mem.” The form מ 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 הָהֵמָה hheymah [H:2529] (cheese) and a חָכָם hhakham [H:2450], a person who is able to separate from the good and the bad, a wise man.

> And he will eat cheese (hheymah) and dates\(^4\) 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.

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\(^4\) The Hebrew word שֶבֶשׂ devash [H:1706] can mean dates or honey.