

Section A

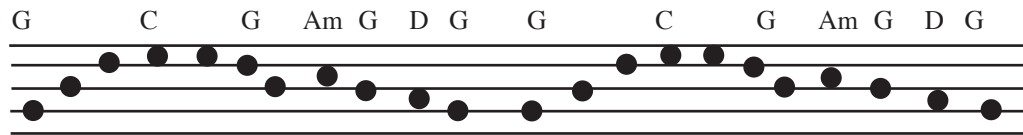


Alphabet And Vocabulary

HBRW

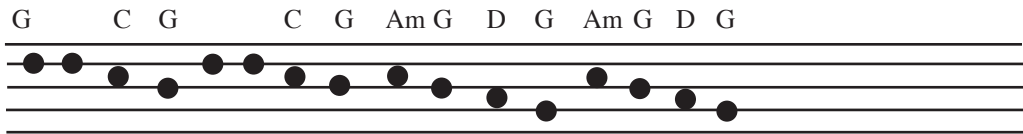
Th lphbt s hrd t mstr;
 Rdng bck t frnt's dsstr.
 Nlss h's rd the clssfds,
 whr trth, bbrvtd hds,
 th wld-b rdr f the Bbl,
 prsntd wth th txt, s lbl
 t trn nd rn wth shrks nd hwls-
 th Hbrw Scrptrs hv n vwls!

AN ALEPH-BET SONG



Aleph Bet Gimel Dalet, Hey Vav (*Hey Vav*), Zay'n Chet Tet, Yod Kaf Lamed, Mem Nun (*Mem Nun*)

א ב ג ד ה ו ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ מ נ



Samech Ay'n Pe, Tsade Qoph Resh, Shin Tav (*Shin Tav*) Shin Tav (*Shin Tav*).

ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת ש ת ש ת ש ת

Aleph Bet
 Gimmel Dalet,
 Hey Vav (*Hey Vav*),
 Zay'n Chet Tet,
 Yod Kaf Lamed,
 Mem Nun (*Mem Nun*)
 Samech Ay'n Pey,
 Tsade, Qoph, Resh,
 Shin Tav (*Shin Tav*)
 Shin Tav (*Shin Tav*).

BLF 1: The Hebrew Alphabet

Alphabet Chart:

| | Letter Name | Pronunciation | Print | Block | Script |
|----|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1 | Aleph | Silent letter | א | א | א |
| 2 | Bet | B as in Baal, V as in Vine | ב | ב | ב |
| 3 | Gimel | G as in Gehenna | ג | ג | ג |
| 4 | Dalet | D as in Delilah | ד | ד | ד |
| 5 | Hey | H as in Hallelujah | ה | ה | ה |
| 6 | Vav | V as in Vanity | ו | ו | ו |
| 7 | Zayin | Z as in Zion | ז | ז | ז |
| 8 | Chet | CH as in BaCH | ח | ח | ח |
| 9 | Tet | T as in Talent | ט | ט | ט |
| 10 | Yod | Y as in Yiddish | י | י | י |
| 11 | Kaf | K as in Kish CH as in BaCH | כ | כ | כ |
| 12 | Lamed | L as in Lord | ל | ל | ל |
| 13 | Mem | M as in Mary | מ | מ | מ |
| 14 | Nun | N as in Nazereth | נ | נ | נ |
| 15 | Samech | S as in Sun | ס | ס | ס |
| 16 | Ayin | Silent letter | ע | ע | ע |
| 17 | Pe | P as in Passion PH as in graPH | פ | פ | פ |
| 18 | Tsade | TS as in TSar | צ | צ | צ |
| 19 | Qoph | K as in Koran | ק | ק | ק |
| 20 | Resh | R as in Rabbi | ר | ר | ר |
| 21 | Shin | S as in Sin, SH as in SHade | ש | ש | ש |
| 22 | Tav | T as in Toil | ת | ת | ת |





Hebrew Full Vowels


| Name | Sign | Sounded As | |
|---------------------------------|------|------------------------------|-------|
| qamets (kamats) | | a as in yacht | LONG |
| tsere (tzere) | | e as in entree | |
| tsere with yod | | ey as in they | |
| chiriq gadol (chirik maleh) | | i as in brief | |
| shureq (shuruk) | | u as in blue | |
| cholem | | o as in go | SHORT |
| vav cholem | | o as in row | |
| | | | |
| qamets chatuf (kamats katan) | | o as in dog/ o as in more | |
| patach | | a as in yacht | |
| segol (seghol) | | e as in bed | |
| chiriq (chirik chaser) | | i as in bin | |
| qibbutts (qubbutts) | | u as in blue | |

NOTE: Sometimes ם is not a cholem but a vav-cholem and should be read as vō; cf. מְצוֹרֶת in Neh 9.14 and מְצוֹרֶת in Pro 10.8. The vav-cholem in the latter word is discerned by knowing the word, and by the fact that every syllable must begin with a consonant (the syllable םת cannot begin with an ō sound).

NOTE: The vowel signs consist of the marks in regular black tone. The grayed-out X is only provided to show the position of the vowel marks.

Hebrew Reduced Vowels

| Name | Sign | Pronunciation |
|--------------------|---|---|
| sheva (shva, shwa) |  | The reduced vowels (also called half-vowels, which include the sheva along with the compound shevas or <i>hateph</i> vowels) are all sounded as a very short [e], except for <i>sheva</i> when it is silent. Modern Israelis pronounce the three <i>hateph</i> vowels as <i>ah</i>, <i>eh</i>, and <i>oh</i> respectively. |
| hateph patach |  | |
| hateph segol |  | |
| hateph qamets |  | |

NOTE: The vowel signs consist of the marks in regular black tone. The grayed-out  is only provided to show the position of the vowel marks.

Other Phenomena

Daghesh Lene (Dagesh Kal)

The **daghesh lene** is a dot placed in the bosom of the six letters, **ת פ כ ד ג ב**, which signifies a retention of the hard pronunciation of the consonants. It changes “fricatives” into “stops.” These letters are often called “b^eged k^efet” letters (**בְּגֵד כְּפֵת** **בְּגֵד**). **Daghesh lene is never preceded immediately by a vowel sound** (it may be preceded by a *silent* sheva as in **מְדַבֵּר**).

Daghesh Forte (Dagesh Chazak)

The **daghesh forte** is a dot which may be placed in the bosom of any letter, except five guttural consonants, **א ע ה ח ק**. It serves to double the letter. **The daghesh forte may be distinguished from a daghesh lene in that the daghesh forte is always preceded immediately by a vowel, whereas daghesh lene is never preceded immediately by a vowel sound.**

Metheg, Mappik & Maqqeph













- A *metheg* (or *meteg* or *methegh* = “bridle”), also referred to as *ma’arik* (“lengthener”) and *ga’ya* (“raising”), is a secondary accent indicating a (very brief) pause. It appears as a small perpendicular stroke under the syllable, to the left of the vowel to be accented, as in מֵתֵגֶּ (in BHS it sometimes appears to the right of the vowel). The *metheg* should not be confused with the *sillûq*, which looks the same, but only appears under the last word of the verse.

The *metheg* is used with the *qamets* in any position to ensure that it will **not** be interpreted as a *qamets hatuph*. In these cases the *metheg* closes the syllable (keeping the syllable open and the vowel long), and indicates that the following *sheva* is vocal (as in קִמְטֵגֶּהּ).

The *metheg* appears with

- all vowels that precede a consonant with a *hateph* vowel,
 - with short vowels appearing anomalously in open syllables before the primary accent,
 - with all long vowels that precede a pretonic vocal *sheva*,
 - with *qamets* and *sere* in open pretonic or propretonic syllables where a *hateph* vowel normally appears,
 - with long vowels in a closed syllable that precedes a *maqqeph*,
 - and with a short vowel in what appears to be a closed syllable to indicate that the normal doubling of the following consonant has been dropped: הַמְרֵגֶלִים instead of הַמְרֵרְגֵלִים.
- A *mappik* is a dot sometimes placed in the letter ה (*hey*) when it is final, to indicate that the *hey* is to be treated as a consonant (guttural) and not as a silent vowel letter. E.g., נָבֵהּ.
 - A *maqqeph* is a small horizontal line used to join words which are connected in thought or utterance. E.g., כִּי־טוֹב.

BeGeD KeFeT Letters

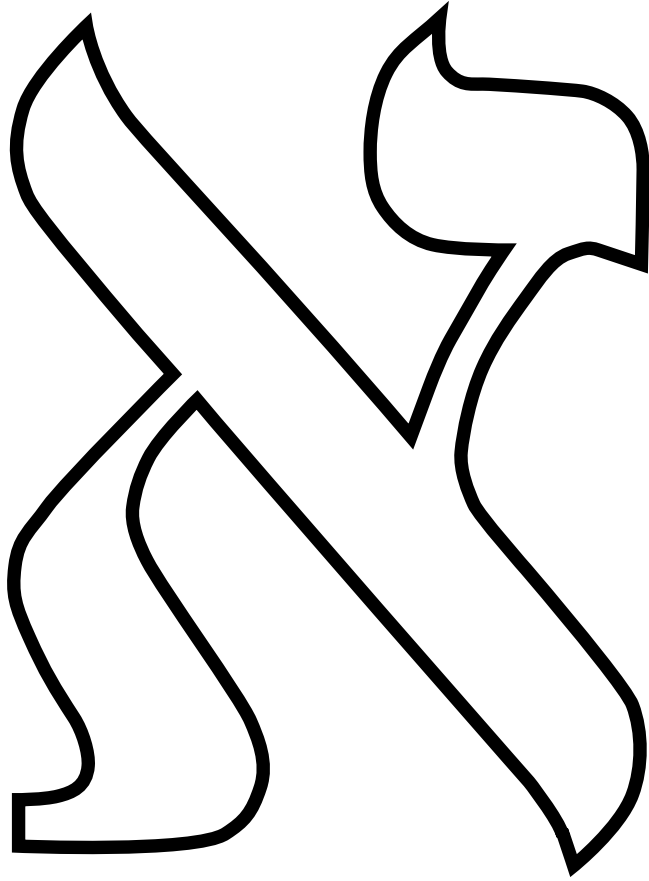
| Stops | Fricatives |
|--|--|
|  B as in Boy |  V as in Vine |
|  G as in Girl |  Gh as in Ugh |
|  D as in Door |  Th as in There |
|  K as in Kitty |  Ch as in Bach |
|  P as in Pop |  Ph as in Phone |
|  T as in Tall |  Th as in Think |

NOTE: The **blue** letters above are the ones which still have a fricative variation in the pronunciation of modern Hebrew. The others have all become stops whether they have a dagesh or not.

Shin's Twin Letter Sin



Shin is pronounced *SH* when it is dotted on the upper right. It becomes a *Sin* and is pronounced as *S* when it is dotted on the upper left.



Aleph

Drawing steps:



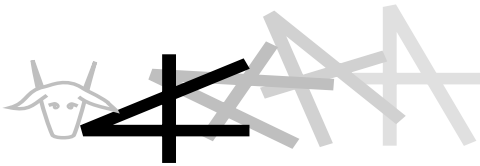
As the first letter of the alphabet, the aleph became the symbol for the number one, and, with the dieresis (¨), the number 1,000. (It is also the symbol for a famous Greek Bible manuscript, the Codex Sinaiticus.)

As the initial letter of the alphabet *and* as the letter having derived from the pictogram for an ox, the *letter* itself sometimes connotes *first, oneness, unity, uniqueness* or *strength*. Thus, it appears in such words as:

| Position | Printed Form | Sound |
|----------|--------------|--|
| 1 | | Silent. Serves as placeholder for attached vowel. |

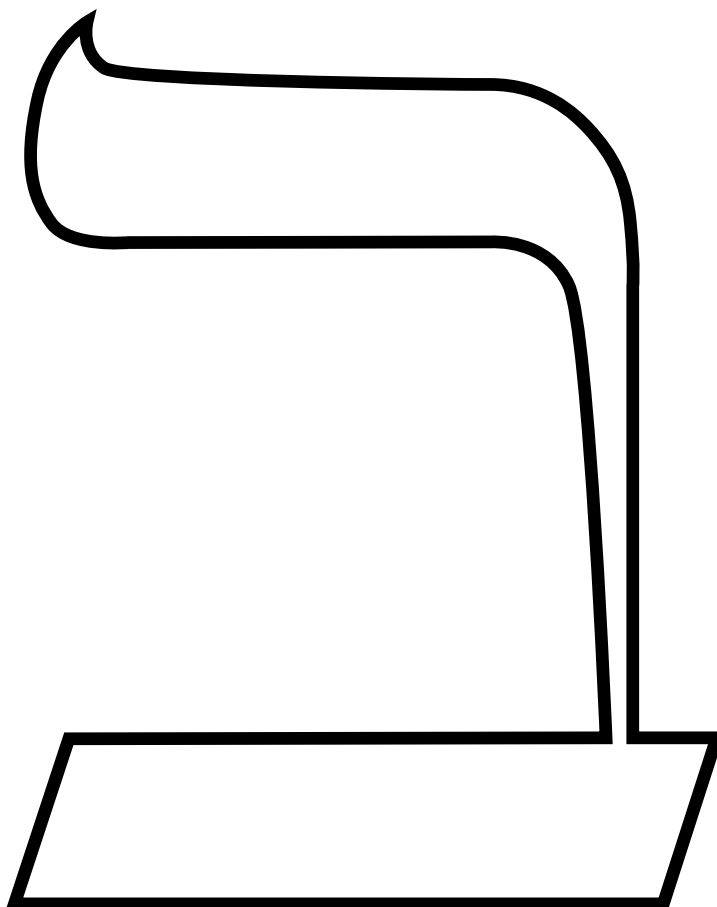
| | |
|-------|------|
| אל | God |
| אלהים | God |
| אדם | Adam |
| אדון | Lord |
| אחד | One |

Lore



Aleph is the old word for ox, and the aleph in paleo-Hebrew was a pictogram of an ox head with horns. Rotate the ancient pictogram to get our Greek α and Roman A both of which descended from it.

Though rarely heard now in spoken Hebrew, the aleph once indicated a glottal stop. If you've ever heard a child say *kitten* without the T's, you've heard a glottal stop where the T sounds should occur.: *ki'en*.



Bet

(Also Beit, Beth)

Drawing steps:



Bottom horizontal stroke protrudes to the right

As the second letter of the alphabet *Bet* became the symbol for the number two, and, with the dieresis (״), the number 2,000.

As the symbol for “house,” the *Bet* connotes *shelter, interior space*. In fact, ב, standing alone is the preposition *in*. It also appears in such words as:

- בְּבַהּ Pupil of eye
- בּוֹר Cistern
- בְּאֵר Well
- בֶּטֶן Womb

Interestingly, combining Aleph with Bet gives us “the man (אָדָם) of the house (בֵּית):”

אָב Father

Adding the preposition *to* (ל) to a doubled *Bet* points to the innermost part:

לֵב Mind, heart

Position



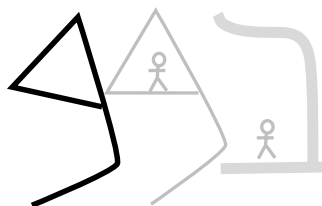
Sound



B as in *boy*,
V as in *vine*.

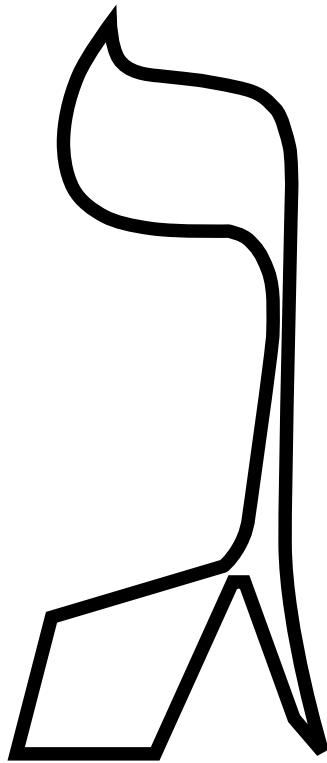


Lore



Bet (בֵּית) is the word for *house, tent, place*, as in *Bethlehem = house of bread*. In paleo-Hebrew, *bet* looks like a tent and the living space in front of it.

A BeGeD KeFeT letter. SEE p. 7! To indicate the B (stop) sound rather than the V (fricative) sound requires adding a dot (בּ) inside the *Bet*.



Gimel

(Also Gimmel)

Drawing steps:



The *Gimel* became the symbol for the number three, and, with the dieresis (״), the number 3,000.

The letter *Gimel* is a guttural and is associated with the throat, and by extension with pipes, channels, conduits, and agency. Thus,

גְּבִיִּם Trenches, ditches

גֵּן Watered garden

גֹּאֵל Agent of redemption

Position

Printed Form

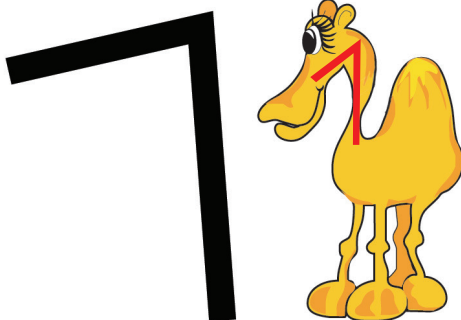
Sound

3



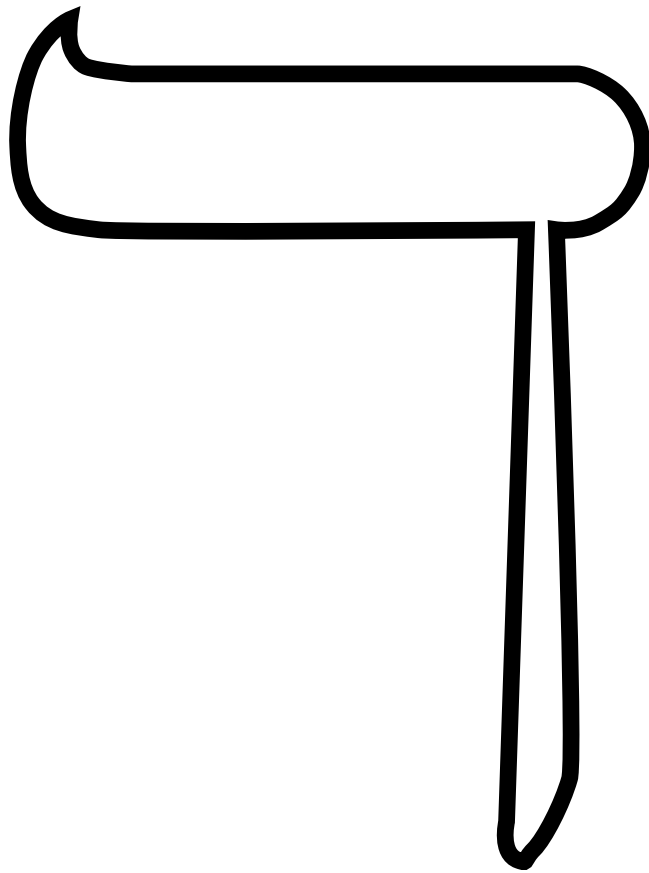
G as in *garden*

Lore



Gimel means *camel* (גִּמְלָה). In paleo-Hebrew, the letter *gimmel* looks like the neck/throat of a camel. (It also reminds me of the camel's hump!)

The letter *gimel* is a BeGeD KeFeT letter, though it no longer has a fricative pronunciation in spoken Hebrew. See p. 7!



Dalet

Drawing steps:



Top horizontal stroke protrudes to the right to distinguish *Dalet* from *Resh*.

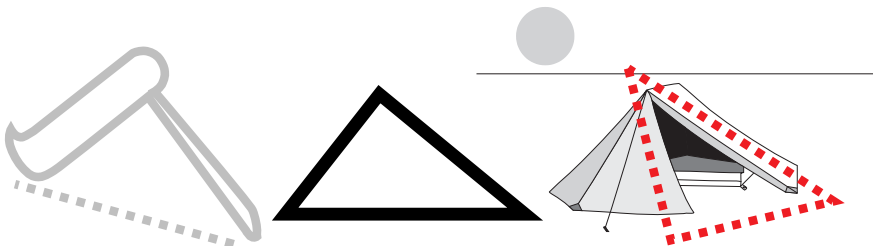
The *Dalet* became the symbol for the number four, and, with the dieresis (¨), the number 4,000.

As a letter signifying a door, *Dalet* appears in words having to do with home, family, and procreation. Thus,

- דָּם Blood
- דוּר Loved one, uncle
- דָּבַק Keep close
- דוּר Dwell
- דָּבַר Speak
- דָּן Judge

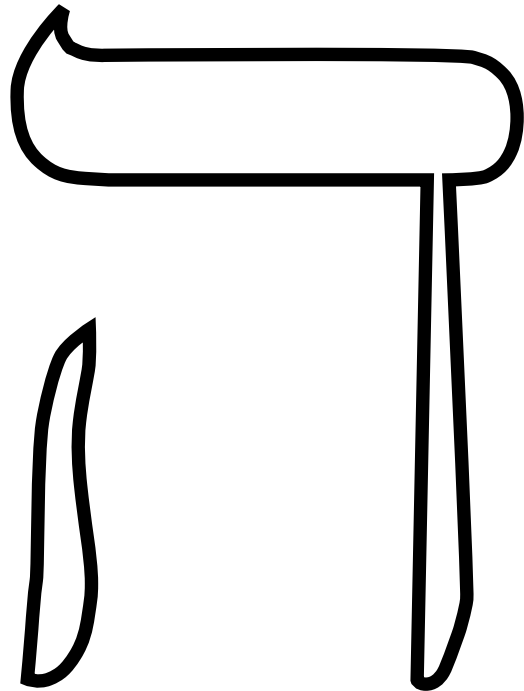
| Position | Printed Form | Sound |
|----------|--------------|--------------|
| 4 | | D as in Door |

Lore



Dalet means *door* (דָּלֶת). In paleo-Hebrew, *dalet* looks like a tent door. It is a triangle from which evolved the Greek *delta* and our D.

The letter *dalet* is a BeGeD KeFeT letter, though it no longer has a fricative pronunciation in spoken Hebrew. See p. 7!



Hey

Drawing steps:



The left leg of the *Hey* does not connect to the horizontal top stroke. This distinguishes the *Hey* from the *Chet*.

In post-biblical times, *hey* came to stand for the numeral 5.

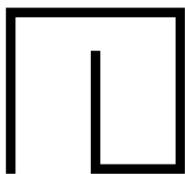
There are competing theories as to the significance of the Paleo-Hebrew pictogram for the letter *Hey*. On the theory that it evolved from the Egyptian hieroglyphic and subsequent Hieratic symbol for *hall, habitation*, it would make sense that *Hey* would appear in words having to do with buildings, like,

הֵיכָל Temple (house for all?).

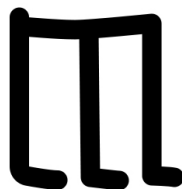
To have any confidence that *hey* still evokes ideas from its ancient pictograph, however, will require further research.

| Position | Printed Form | Sound |
|----------|--------------|---------------|
| 5 | | H as in House |

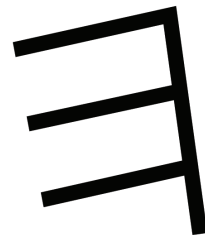
Lore



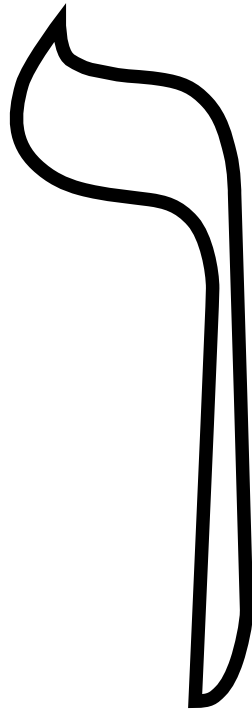
Hieroglyphic H,
sign for *hall, habitation*



Hieratic H,
sign for *hall, habitation*



Paleo-Hebrew Hey,
from which evolved
the Greek *epsilon*
and our letter E.



Vav

(Used to be called
Waw or *Wow*.)

Drawing steps: 

In post-biblical times, *vav* came to stand for the numeral 6.

As the letter that represents a hook, peg or nail, *vav* appears in Hebrew most often as the conjunction *and* (ו). This one-letter word not only joins substantives like “male *and* female” (זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, Gen 1.27), but also (redundantly to the American mind) narratives: “*And* (ו) God created man in His own image...” (Gen 1.27).

Position

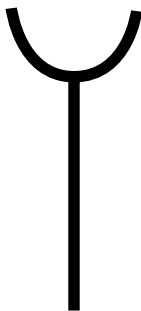


Pronunciation

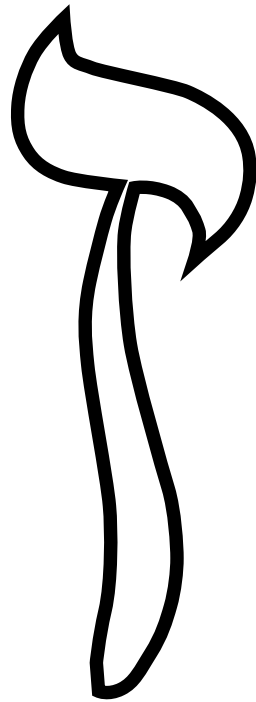


V as in Vine

Lore



The word *vav* (ו) means *hook*, *pin*, *peg* or *nail*. The modern Aramaic letter used in the Hebrew alphabet is just a simplified version of the paleo-Hebrew pictogram of a nail.



Zayin

Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *zayin* came to stand for the numeral 7.

The Hebrews made use of *zayin*'s ZZZ sound to form onomatopoeic words for things that buzzed or swished. Therefore, a *high* percentage of Hebrew words beginning with *zayin* have to do with motion or moving things. A few examples:

- זבב Move to and fro
- זבוב Fly (insect)
- זוב Flow, Gush
- זיו Moving things (beasts)
- זוע Tremble, Quake
- זחלת Crawling thing, Serpent
- זלג Glide (as an arrow)
- זלל Shake
- זרע Sow, Scatter seed
- זרע Seed, Offspring

| | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| 7 | | Z as in Zebra |

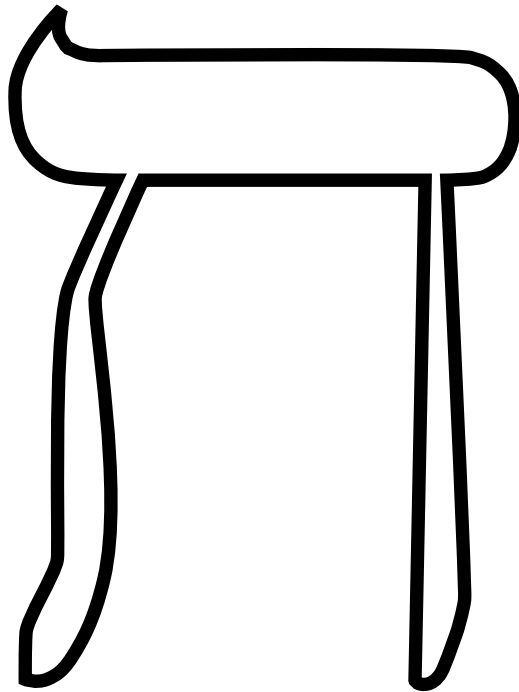
Lore



MNEMONICS: *Zayin* is the seventh consonant, and looks a bit like a 7. A 7 looks like a Z without its bottom stroke.

The pictograph for *zayin* is believed to have represented a weapon, perhaps of the kind indicated by the word *azen* (זֶן) which means *spade, paddle* or *weapon*. In the paleo-Hebrew form we see the prototype of our letter Z. It is interesting to note that the ancients weren't overly concerned about the orientation of their drawn letters. Even in modern Yemen, Jewish children were adept at reading Hebrew upside down because many would gather in a circle to simultaneously read a single rare Torah scroll.

Chet



Drawing steps:



No gap here, to distinguish *Chet* from *Hey*.

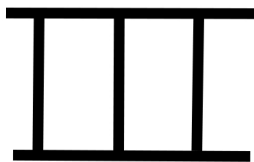
In post-biblical times, *chet* came to stand for the numeral 8.

Deriving from a pictogram of a fence, *chet* is readily used in words about dividing, connecting, joining, protecting, and hiding. A few examples:

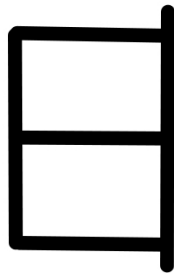
- חָבַר Unite, be joined
- חַג Festival gathering
- חָגַר Hinder, restrain
- חָדַר Surround, enclose
- חָגַע Make circle
- חֹמֶה Wall
- חָטַם Hold in, restrain
- חָצַץ Divide
- חֲצֵר Enclosure, court

| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 8 | | Guttural CH as in <u>Bach</u> |

Lore

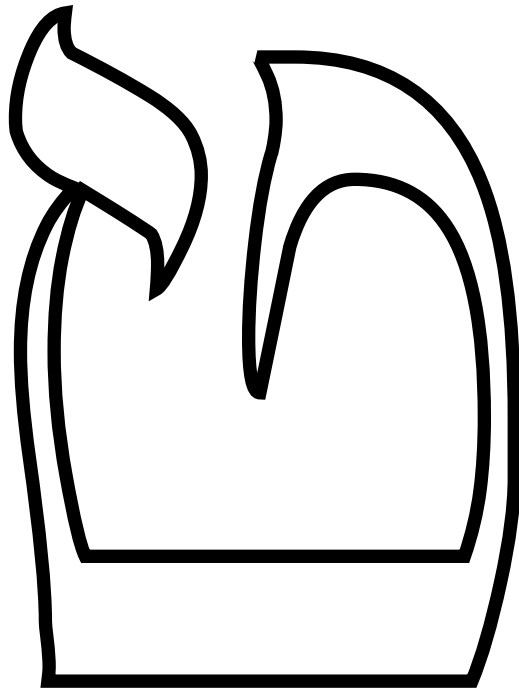


Proto-Sinaitic



Paleo-Hebrew

The paleo-Hebrew *chet* was derived from the paleo-Hebrew *hey* by adding a vertical stroke (see bottom of page 12). We can see in this paleo-Hebrew form of *chet* the beginnings of our letter H. The original pictogram for *chet* apparently represented a fence, more clearly seen in the orientation of the earlier proto-Sinaitic form.



Tet

Drawing steps:



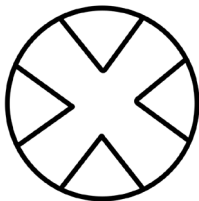
In post-biblical times, *tet* came to stand for the numeral 9.

The paleo-Hebrew *tet* is thought to have been derived from the Egyptian hieroglyphic for *city* or *town*. *Tet* does not appear in the Hebrew word for city, though. It does appear in a number of words that have to do with covering or things that cover (like an encampment covers the ground and becomes a city?). Here are some examples:

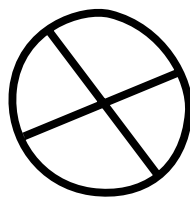
| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|---------------|
| 9 | | T as in Tall |

- טָבַל Dip (cover in water)
- טְבוּל Turban (head cover)
- טָבַע Sink down
- טוּחַ Over-spread, coat
- טִיט Mud, mire, clay
- טִירָה Encampment
- טָהַח Be besmeared
- טָל Dew
- טָמַן Hide, conceal

Lore

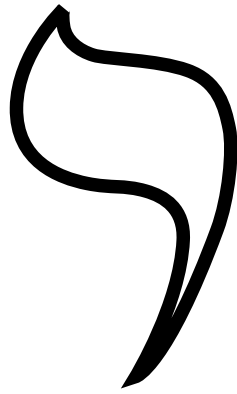


Hieroglyphic for *city* or *town*



Paleo-Hebrew *tet*

The relationship between *tet* and *tav* is seen in paleo-Hebrew: *Tet* is a *tav* enclosed. (The paleo-Hebrew *tet* reminds me of a ball of potter's clay (טיט) with a *mark*, i.e., a *tav* inscribed on it.) You can also see how the paleo-Hebrew *tet* evolved into the Greek *theta*.



Yod

Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *Yod* came to stand for the numeral 10, such that י"א = 11, י"ב = 12, etc.

As connected to the idea of *hand*, יד, it does not surprise us to see *yod* in words relating to manual actions. Here are some examples:

יָבֵל Carry away, be led

יָגַב Till (the ground)

יָגַע Toil

יָזָה Throw, cast

יָהַב Give

יָמַש Touch

יָסַר Discipline, chasten

יָצַר Form, fashion

יָזָה Throw, shoot

Position

Printed Form

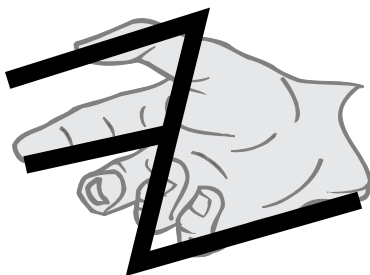
Pronunciation

10



Y as in Yum!

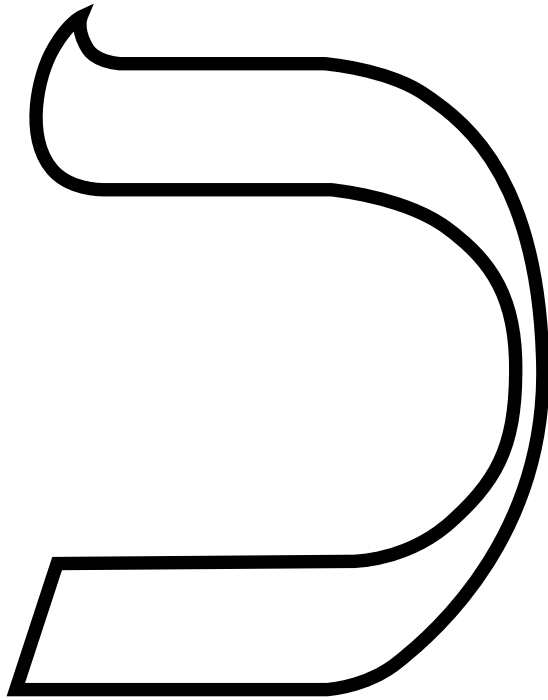
Lore



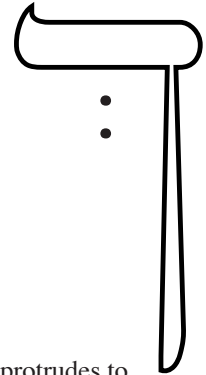
The paleo-Hebrew *Yod* developed from a pictogram representing a *hand* (יָד). The letter name *yod* evolved into the Greek letter name, *iota*. The letter name *iota* became our noun *jot* signifying a tiny bit or tiny mark.

Kaf

Kaf is the first letter with both a medial and a final form.



Drawing steps:



Drawing steps:



Top horizontal stroke protrudes to the right, helping to distinguish the final *kaf* from a *resh*.

The letter *kaf* has an elongated final form (that normally carries a raised silent *sheva*) when it appears at the end of a word. The lengthened vertical stroke (and raised *sheva*) distinguishes the final *kaf* from a *dalet*.

In post-biblical times, *Kaf* came to stand for the numeral 20.

See a faint allusion to the palm of a hand in words like:

- כָּרַב Basket-saddle
- כִּיר Pot, basin
- כַּפּוֹר Bowl
- כָּתַב Write

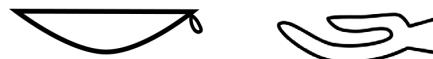
| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 11 | | K as in Kaaren, CH as in Bach |

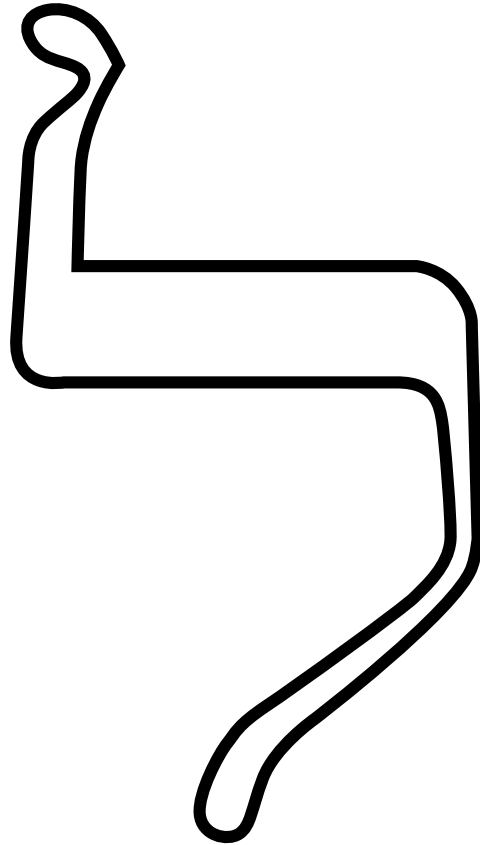
Lore



A **BeGeD KeFeT** letter. **SEE p. 7!** To indicate the K (stop) sound rather than the CH (fricative) sound requires adding a dot (כּ) inside the *kaf*.

The paleo-Hebrew *kaf* developed from a pictogram representing the *palm of a hand* (כַּף). The later Aramaic block letter above (used in Hebrew printed texts today) seems to have a closer graphic connection than the paleo-Hebrew pictogram (at left) to the Egyptian hieroglyphic signs for K (a bowl) and for palm:





Lamed

Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *Lamed* came to stand for the numeral 30.

The paleo-Hebrew *lamed* is thought to be a pictogram of an *ox-goad* (מִלְמָד), or a shepherd's crook, but may have developed from the Hieratic (simplified Egyptian hieroglyphic) for *lion*. Whether *lamed* carries any particular allusions into words that employ it is not readily apparent.

The letter *lamed* is used for the Hebrew preposition that means *to* or *for*. It is called an inseparable preposition because it is always attached to the beginning of other words. Thus,

מֶלֶךְ King
 לְמֶלֶךְ For the king

Position

Printed Form

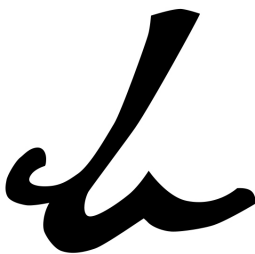
Pronunciation

12



L as in Look

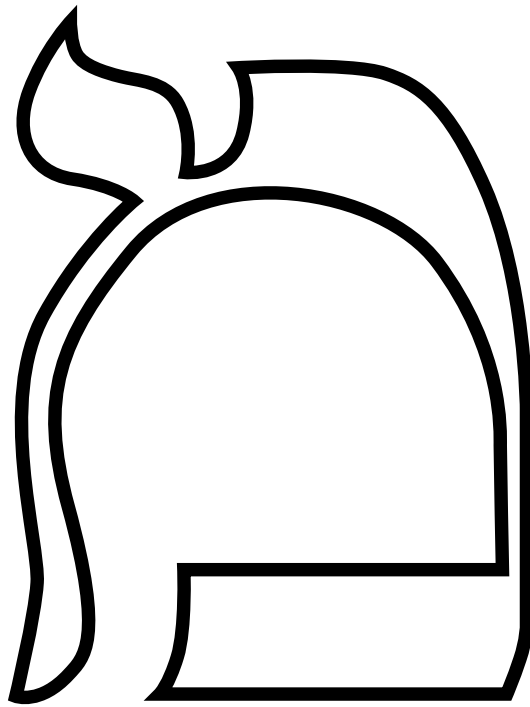
Lore



Hieratic for *lion*



Paleo-Hebrew *lamed*

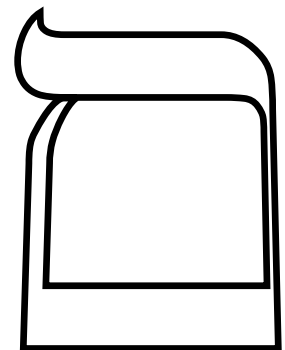


Mem

Drawing steps:



Mem has a squared-off final form when it appears at the end of a word. Top horizontal stroke protrudes to the left and each corner is square



Drawing steps:



| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|----------------|
| 13 | | M as in Mother |

In post-biblical times, *mem* came to stand for the numeral 40.

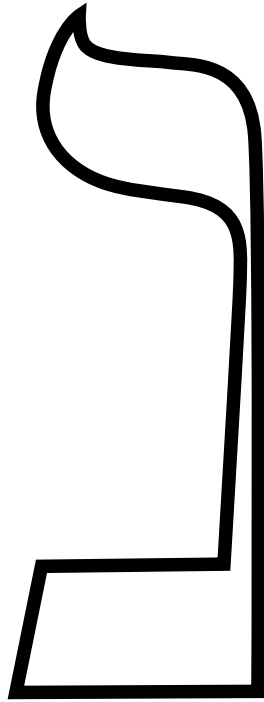
As derived from the pictogram for water, it does not surprise us to find *mem* in words having to do with liquid and flowing. Here are some examples:

Lore

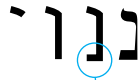


The paleo-Hebrew *Mem* is a pictogram showing waves of water (מים). The wave pattern provides the basis for our English M, and survives in the ripples at the top of the modern *Mem*.

- מָאָס Flow, run
- מָדוּ Cloth garment
- מָטַר Rain (verb)
- מַיִם Waters
- מָלַט Slip away, escape
- מָלַץ Be slippery
- מָסָה Melt, liquefy
- מָצַץ Drain out



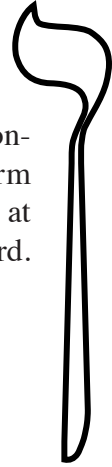
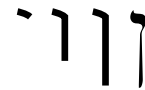
Drawing steps:



This horizontal stroke distinguishes *nun* from *vav*.

Nun

Nun has an elongated final form when it appears at the end of a word.
Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *Nun* came to stand for the numeral 50.

Because the ancient significance of the letter *nun* is uncertain, any attempts to trace the carrying of its meaning into words using *nun* are highly speculative. Therefore, I provide below some important *nun* words that have no particular connection to one another:

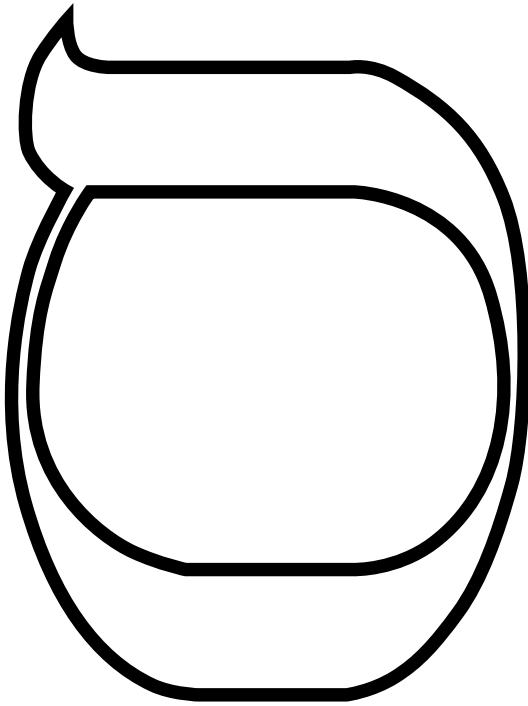
| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|---------------|
| 14 | | N as in Noon |

Lore



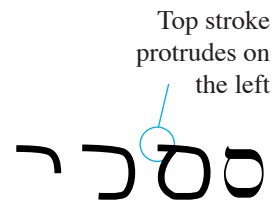
The paleo-Hebrew pictograph for *nun* has been thought to represent a fish, because *nun* means “fish” in Aramaic. Some, however, have interpreted the pictogram as representing a serpent, נחש.

| | |
|--------|---------------------|
| נָאֵם | Declaration |
| נָבִיא | Prophet |
| נָבֵל | Foolish, fool |
| נָגַב | South-country |
| נִוַן | Propagate, increase |
| נָפַל | Fall, lie down |
| נָשָׂא | Lift, carry, take |
| נָתַן | Give, put, set |



Samech

Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *Samech* came to stand for the numeral 60.

Uncertainty about the meaning of the original hieroglyphics and pictograms for *samech* make it highly speculative to trace any allusions of the letter in the words that employ it. Here are some random *samech* words:

Position

15

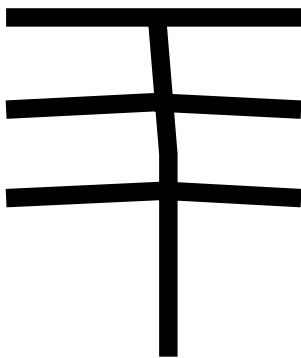
Pronunciation



S as in Sun

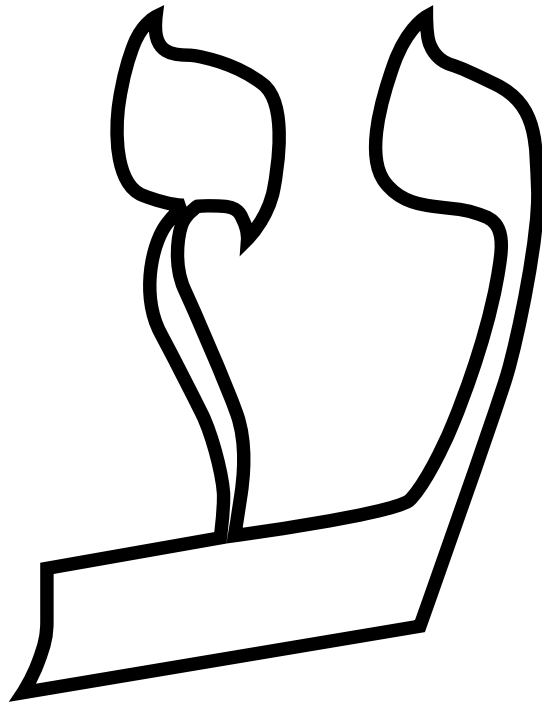
- סוס Horse
- סָחַר Travel about
- סָעַד Support (verb)
- סָפַן Cover (verb)
- סָתַר Hide, conceal

Lore



The paleo-Hebrew *samech* may represent a *support* of some kind (a spine with ribs, perhaps?).

The verb סָמַךְ means *to support, sustain*.



Ayin

Drawing steps:

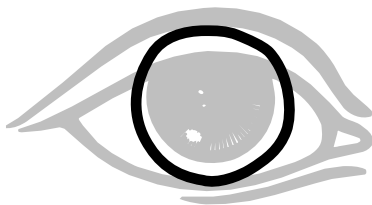


In post-biblical times, *ayin* came to stand for the numeral 70. Many *ayin* words have to do with flowing water, something passing *through* (as light or water), or with circularity or roundness:

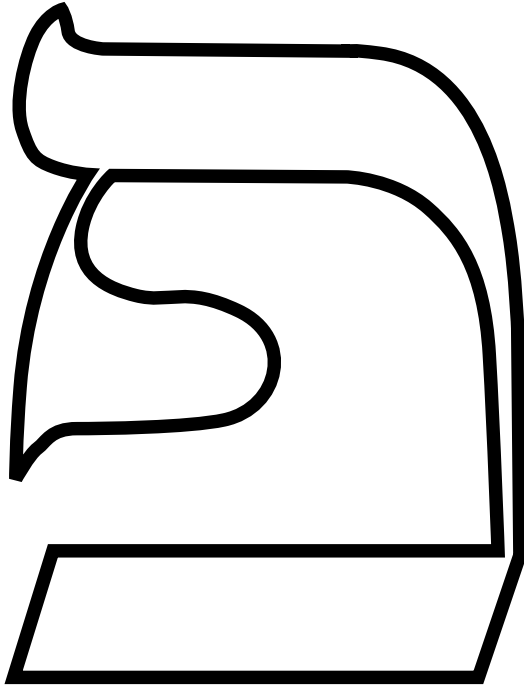
- עָבַר Pass over, through
- עֵדֶן Eden
- עָבַ Rain cloud
- עֲגָה Disc
- עוֹד Return, do again
- עָוַר Make blind
- עָזַק Dig about, surround
- עָטַר Surround
- עֵין Look at
- עִיר City, town
- עָבַד Bind around
- עָפַל Swell
- עָפַל Mound, hill

| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|--|
| 16 | | A glottal stop; for westerners a silent letter |

Lore



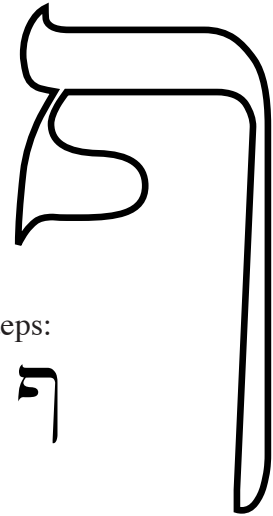
The paleo-Hebrew *Ayin* represents an eye (עֵין). The word עֵין not only means *eye*, but also an “eye” in the ground from which water flows, i.e. a *spring*.



Pe

Also *peh* or *pey*.

Drawing steps:



Drawing steps:



Position

17

Pronunciation



P as in Pop,
F as in Food

Pe has an elongated final form when it appears at the end of a word.

In post-biblical times, *pe* came to stand for the numeral 80.

Many *pe* words make faint allusions to the mouth, its appearance or its workings:

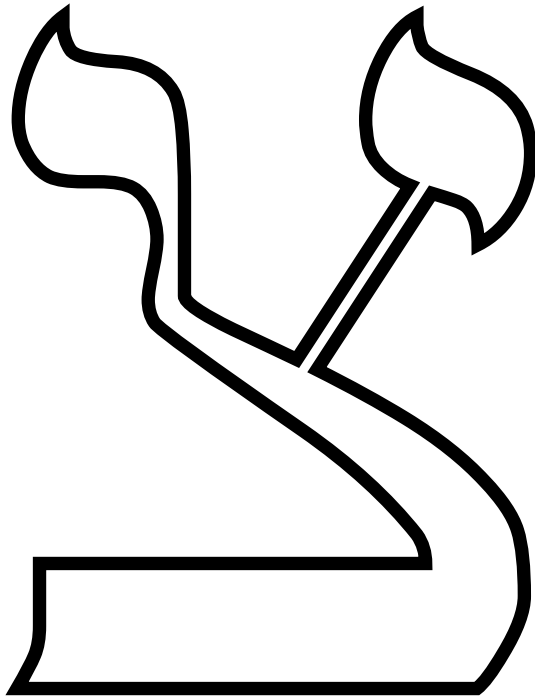
Lore

The letter *pe* is a BeGeD KeFeT letter. SEE p. 7!



The paleo-Hebrew pictogram for *pe* represents a mouth (פֶּה). The modern *Pey* has a tongue in it!

- פּוּחַ Breathe, blow
- פֶּחַת Pit
- פָּלַג Split, divide
- פָּעַר Open wide
- פָּצָה Part, open (verbs)
- פָּקַח Open eyes (verb)
- פָּרַר Divide, separate
- פָּתַח Open (verb)



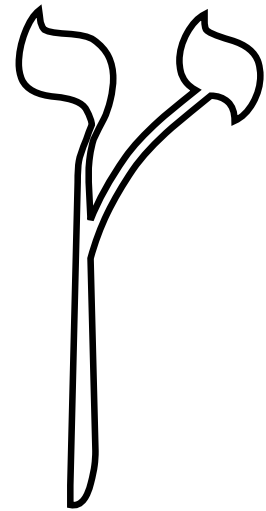
Tsade

(Also, Tsadi, Tsadik)

Drawing steps:



Drawing steps:



Position

Printed Form

Pronunciation

18



TS as in Tsar.

The letter *tsade* has an elongated final form when it appears at the end of a word.

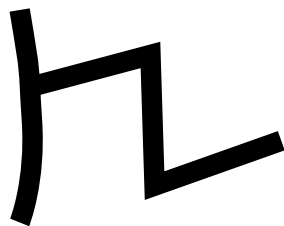
In post-biblical times, *tsade* came to stand for the numeral 90. Many *tsade* words have to do with hunting, fishing and warfare.

Lore

The Phoenician and paleo-Hebrew *tsades* are thought to represent a fishhook.

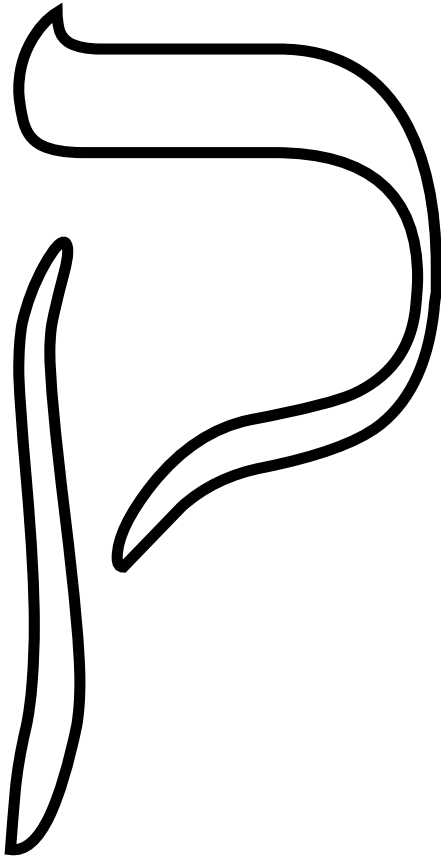


Phoenician



Paleo-Hebrew

- צָבָא Wage war
- צְבָאוֹת Army, host
- צָדָה Lie in wait
- צָדָה Lay waste
- צוּד Hunt (verb)
- צוּר Bind, besiege
- צָלַח Rush
- צִלְצֹל Spear, harpoon



Qoph

(Also Koph, Kof)

Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *qoph* came to stand for the numeral 100.

There are a number of *qoph* words that remind me of the antics of an *ape* (קוף), but to say that such words carry over allusions from the ancient pictogram would be speculative. Here is a sample of *qoph* words.

Position

Printed Form

19



K as in Kook

קוש Lay bait, lure

קטל Slay

קיר Wall (noun)

קלה Roast

קל Light, swift (adjs.)

קלס Mock, scoff

קנה Get acquire

קנין Snare, net (nouns)

קצה Cut off

קצר Reap, harvest

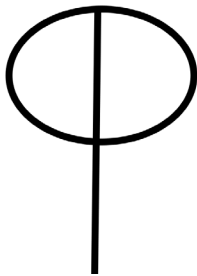
קרא Call, proclaim

קרן Horn

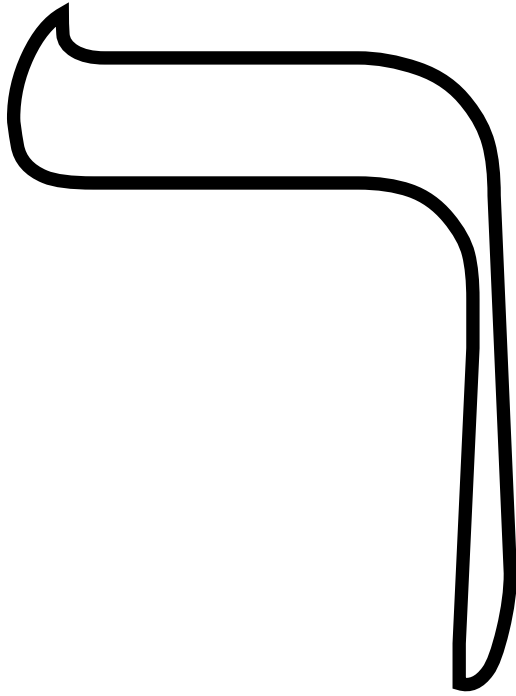
קרן Send out rays, shine

קרס Stoop, crouch

Lore



The paleo-Hebrew pictogram for *qoph* is thought to represent an *ape* (קוף).



Resh

Drawing steps:



In post-biblical times, *resh* came to stand for the numeral 200.

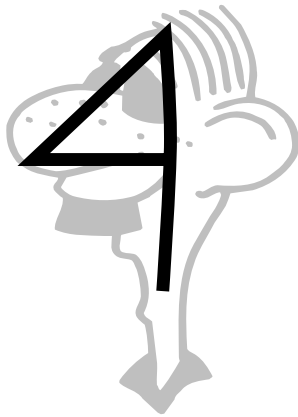
As employing the letter that alludes to a head, many *resh* words speak of functions associated with the human head, or of preeminence:

- רָאָה See
- רֹאשׁ Head, top, chief
- רֵאשִׁיָּהּ Beginning-time
- רֵאשִׁית Top
- רֵאשִׁוֹן Former, first
- רֵאשִׁית Beginning
- רָדָה Rule, dominate
- רָקַב Pride
- רָוַה Drink one's fill
- רוּחַ Breath, wind, spirit
- רוּם Be high, exalted
- רוּן Overcome
- רָחַף Hover, brood
- רָכַב Mount and ride
- רָמַם Be exalted
- רָעָה Shepherd (verb)
- רַע Bad, evil (adj.)
- רָעַע Be bad, evil (verbs)
- רָפָא Heal

Position Printed Form Pronunciation

| | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 20 | | R as in Rug |
|----|--|-------------|

Lore

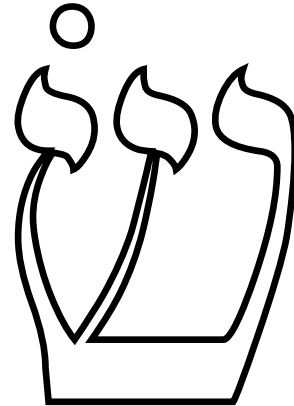


The paleo-Hebrew pictogram for *resh* represented a head (ראש).

Sin/Shin



Drawing steps:



As employing the letter that once alluded to teeth or sharpness, some *sin/shin* words still allude to oral or other functions of the mouth, or to the [destructive] power of the teeth.

Position

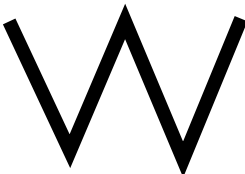
Printed Forms

21



S as in Sin,
SH as in SHade

Lore

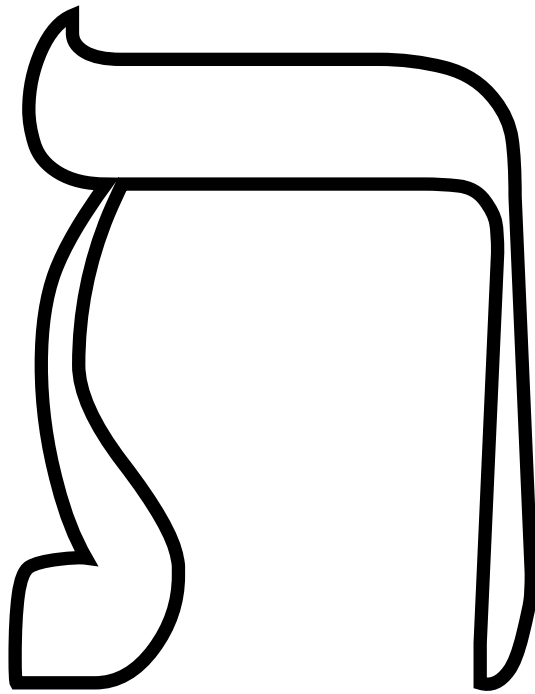


The paleo-Hebrew pictogram for *shin* clearly represents sharp teeth. The Hebrew word for tooth is שֵׁן. It comes from the word שָׁנַן, to *sharpen*.

Rotate the ancient pictogram clockwise 90° to get the Greek uppercase *sigma*, and the precursor of our Latin *S*.

The letter *shin* eventually became used for the number 300.

- שָׁפָה Lip, speech, edge
- שֶׁר Prince
- שָׁרָה Princess
- מְשָׁרָה Rule, dominion
- שָׁרַט Incise, scratch, write
- שָׂרַף Burn (verb), seraph
- שָׂאֵל Ask, inquire
- שָׂדֵי Almighty
- שׁוּב Return, repent
- שָׁנַע Cry out
- שִׁיר Sing
- שְׁלוֹם Completeness, peace



Tav

(Also *Tov, Tau, Taw*)

Drawing steps:

The horizontal stroke protrudes to the left



Don't forget this little foot to distinguish *tav* from *chet*.

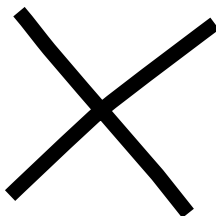
In post-biblical times, *tav* came to stand for the numeral 400.

As employing the letter that once signified a mark, some *tav* words still allude to marking (whether a person or a landscape), and to having boundaries or the lack of boundaries:

| Position | Printed Form | Pronunciation |
|----------|--------------|---------------|
| 22 | | T as in Torah |

- Mark, point out
- Formlessness
- Boundary
- Wound (verb)
- Mound (noun)
- Complete, perfect
- Wander, err

Lore



The word *tav* (תָּו) means *mark* or *signature* as in Job 31.35. Scholars were intrigued to find these cross shapes in the margins of the Dead Sea Scrolls, marking passages that had to do with the Messiah. Apparently scribes used the *tav* as a symbol of *salvation*, since in Ezekiel 9.3-6, God commands the slaughter of all in Jerusalem who do not have God's mark (תָּו).

The letter *tav* is a BeGeD KeFeT letter, though it no longer has a fricative pronunciation in spoken Hebrew. See p. 7!



Michelangelo's *Moses*

Photos by Roderick Graciano,
June 7, 2013, Rome, Italy



Horned Or Shining?

When Moses descended from Mt. Sinai with the tablets of the law, did his face *shine* (Ex 34.29-30, NASB), or was he *horned* (*cornuta*) as in the Latin Vulgate? The answer depends upon the vowels one chooses to go with the word קרן. The word קרן means “to send out rays,” but קרן means “horn.” Jerome apparently chose the latter (and more common) meaning of the Hebrew word, and translated it “horned” in what became the Vulgate version of the Bible that Michelangelo used.