

The Hebrew *Alef-Bet*

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet (*alef-bet*); five letters have two forms – one form if it appears at the beginning or middle of a word, and a different form when it is the final letter in the word.

(Remember that Hebrew was originally written without any punctuation, vowels or even spaces between the words – these five letters would give some “signposts” through that text to periodically identify the end of a word. Even today, Israeli newspapers have no punctuation nor vowels, although they do separate the words). Therefore, there are 27 unique letters in the Hebrew *alef-bet*.

Hebrew started as a picture language – the letters were pictures of the item or concept they stood for.

For example, the second letter “*bet*” ב was used to represent a house – and it looks like a lean-to

dwelling. The 18th letter “*tzaddi*” צ represents righteousness – and looks like a person kneeling in prayer.

Because of the pictorial origins of the *alef-bet*, each of the 22 letters has a specific meaning as shown below:

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| 1. א <i>Alef</i> - God is Creator & King | 12. ל <i>Lamed</i> - Teaching & Learning |
| 2. ב <i>Bet</i> -House or Temple | 13. מ <i>Mem</i> - Water, Revealed, Concealed |
| 3. ג <i>Gimel</i> –Loving Kindness,
Culmination | 14. נ <i>Nun</i> - Faithfulness, Soul,
Emergence, condemnation |
| 4. ד <i>Dalet</i> –Door, Path or Way | 15. ס <i>Samech</i> - Support, Divine
Presence |
| 5. ה <i>Hay</i> –Spirit, Breath of God | 16. ו <i>Ayin</i> - Sight, Insight |
| 6. ו <i>Vav</i> –Completion, Redemption | 17. פ <i>Peh</i> - Mouth, Speech |
| 7. ז <i>Zayin</i> –Focal point of Sustenance,
Struggle | 18. צ <i>Tzaddi</i> - Righteousness & Humility |
| 8. ח <i>Chet</i> –Transcendence, Life, Grace | 19. ק <i>Qoph</i> - Holiness, Growth Cycles |
| 9. ט <i>Tet</i> –Serpent, Objective Good | 20. ר <i>Resh</i> - Wicked, Wickedness |
| 10. י <i>Yod</i> –Creation, Metaphysical | 21. ש <i>Shin</i> - Divine Power, Provision |
| 11. כ <i>Kaf</i> –Crowning Accomplishment | 22. ת <i>Tav</i> - Truth and Perfection |
| 23. Final Kaf (Same as Kaf meaning) | 26. Final Peh (Same as Mem meaning) |
| 24. Final Nun (Same as Nun meaning) | 27. Final Tzaddi (Same as Tzaddi meaning) |
| 25. Final Mem (Same as Mem meaning) | |