

BIBLICAL HEBREW WITH MOREH EZRA · CHART

The Hebrew alphabet

All twenty-two letters in their order, read from right to left, with the five final forms. Transliteration as in the course; “said” is how to say it.

1	א	alef	'	silent: it carries a vowel
2	ב	בּ ב	v b	bet	b · v
3	ג	gimel	g		
4	ד	dalet	d		
5	ה	he	h	usually silent at the end of a word
6	ו	וּ וֹ	û ô	vav	w	said v
7	ז	zayin	z		
8	ח	ḥet	ḥ	ch as in “loch”
9	ט	ṭet	ṭ	said t
10	י	yod	y	as in “yes”
11	כ	ך כּ	final k	kaf	k · kh	kh: ch as in “loch”
12	ל	lamed	l		
13	מ	ם	final	mem	m
14	נ	ן	final	nun	n
15	ס	samekh	s		
16	ע	ayin	'	silent today
17	פ	ף פּ	final p	pe	p · f
18	צ	ץ	final	tsade	ṣ	ts as in “cats”
19	ק	qof	q	said k
20	ר	resh	r		
21	שׁ	שׂ שׁ	ś š	shin · sin	š · ś	said sh · said s
22	ת	tav	t		

FIVE FINAL FORMS

Used only at the end of a word. Their names make one memory word, **kamnefets**:

ץ ף ז ם ר

Hard and soft: begadkefat

Six letters, בּ גּ דּ כּ פּ תּ, are hard with a dot and soft without. A begadkefat letter goes soft right after a vowel sound; at the start of a word, or after a consonant with no vowel, it is hard: בָּרָא bārā', but אָב 'āv. Only three sound different today: **b/v, k/kh, p/f**.

LETTER	HARD, WITH THE DOT	SOFT, WITHOUT
ב bet	בּ b	ב v
ג gimel	גּ g	ג g
ד dalet	דּ d	ד d
כ kaf	כּ k	כ kh, as in "loch"
פ pe	פּ p	פ f
ת tav	תּ t	ת t

The five final forms

Four drop a tail below the line; mem closes into a box. Same letter, same sound, a different shape at the end of a word.

NORMAL	FINAL	EXAMPLE
כ kaf	ך	מֶלֶךְ mélekh "king"
מ mem	ם	שָׁלוֹם šālôm "peace"
נ nun	ן	בֵּן bēn "son"
פ pe	ף	כֶּסֶף késef "silver"
צ tsade	ץ	אֶרֶץ 'éreṣ "earth"

Letters that look alike

LETTERS	HOW TO TELL THEM APART
ב bet · כ kaf	bet has a square corner and a foot sticking out; kaf is rounded
ד dalet · ר resh	dalet has a sharp corner with a little overhang; resh is one smooth curve
ה he · ח ḥet · ת tav	he has a gap at the top left; ḥet is shut; tav has a foot
ו vav · ז zayin · ן final nun	vav is plain; zayin wears a hat; final nun drops below the line
ס samekh · ם final mem	samekh is round; final mem has corners
ע ayin · צ tsade	ayin's arms meet at the bottom; tsade has a bent back and a base
ג gimel · נ nun	gimel has a foot kicking out; nun has a flat base

Letters that sound alike

Three pairs sound the same today, though they were once different: כ and ק are both **k**, ת and ט are both **t**, ס and שׂ are both **s**. Alef א and ayin ע are both silent. The spelling still matters: it is how you find a word in the dictionary.

Letters from the throat

א ה ח ע, the **gutturals**, often joined by ר. They are not doubled, they take a hurried vowel instead of a vocal shewa (אֱלֹהִים 'ĕlōhîm), and they like the vowel **a**: at the end of a word ח and ע take a patach said before them, רוּחַ rûaḥ.

> Psalm 119 gives eight verses to every letter, in this order, 176 in all. One verse holds all twenty-two letters and all five final forms: Zephaniah 3:8.