

Hebrew Letters

The Hebrew alphabet contains 22 consonants; the vowel pointing system, *nikud*, was added at a later date (AD 500-900). The pronunciation here represents the modern/Ashkenazi vocalization. In most cases there is a direct correspondence between Hebrew and Latin characters, however, the variations are noted in the transliterations below.

Symbol	Name	Pronounced	Translit.	Symbol	Name	Pronounced	Translit.
א	<i>Aleph</i>	<i>Guttural stop</i>	ʾ	ל	<i>Lamed</i>	l (line)	l
ב	<i>Bet</i>	b (boat)	b	מ	<i>Mem</i>	m (men)	m
בּ	<i>Vet</i>	v (vote)	<u>b</u>	נ	<i>Nun</i>	n (nun)	n
ג	<i>Gimmel</i>	g (gull)	g	ס	<i>Samex</i>	s (sun)	s
גּ	<i>Gimmel</i>	g (gull)	<u>g</u>	ע	<i>Ayin</i>	<i>Guttural stop</i>	ʿ
ד	<i>Dalet</i>	d (din)	d	פ	<i>Peh</i>	p (pin)	p
דּ	<i>Dalet</i>	d (din)	<u>d</u>	פּ	<i>Feh</i>	f (fun)	<u>p</u>
ה	<i>Heh</i>	h (house)	h	צ	<i>Tsadeh</i>	ts (bats)	ʒ
ו	<i>Vav</i>	v (vote)	w	ק	<i>Qoph</i>	k (kill)	q
ז	<i>Zayin</i>	z (zoo)	z	ר	<i>Resh</i>	r (run)	r
ח	<i>Chet</i>	ch (Bach)	ħ	ש	<i>Shin</i>	sh (shot)	ʃ
ט	<i>Tet</i>	t (tea)	ṭ	שׁ	<i>Sin</i>	s (sun)	ś
י	<i>Yod</i>	y (yes)	y	ת	<i>Tav</i>	t (tea)	t
כּ	<i>Kaph</i>	k (kill)	k	תּ	<i>Tav</i>	t (tea)	<u>t</u>
כּׁ	<i>Kaph</i>	ch (Bach)	<u>k</u>				

Observations

- The transliteration symbols are used to represent uniquely each letter of the Hebrew alphabet
- There are no capitals in Biblical Hebrew
- Certain letters have a final form, but there is no difference in their pronunciation. In the table above they have been placed on the same line, but separated with a “ / ” (final form/initial-medial form)
- The consonant א should not be confused with the English vowel “A”. Though it may occasionally quiesce at the end of certain words (e.g. אֶפֶס), it bears a consonantal value. *Aleph* represents a guttural stop, the sound of the glottis opening when pronouncing “apple”
- Six Hebrew consonants (תּ פּ דּ גּ בּ כּ) may appear with or without a dot, *dagesh*, inside of them. They are known as BeGaD KeFaT letter.
 - גּ (“g”) originally pronounced as a soft “g”, as in “gin”
 - דּ (d) historically a dull “th” sound, as in “that”
 - תּ (t) originally pronounced “th” as in “cloth”, hence the word “Bethlehem”.
- Of the 22 consonants, three sometimes represent vowels on certain occasions (ו \ י \ ה)
- ו was original pronounced like English “w”

- ן in Sephardic reading traditions is pronounced differently from the כּ, and more like the הּ with a forced constriction of the larynx.
- ן within Sephardic reading tradition, and most probably historically, was pronounced with a deeper guttural sound than the כּ.
- ן is traditionally a guttural sound that is rolled at the back of the throat
- ן and ן̣ are variants of the same letter, the diacritic point determines its pronunciation.