

## Lesson Two

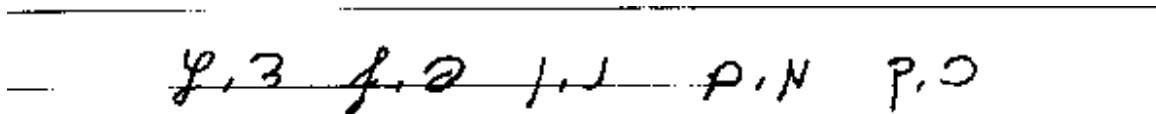
## 'b m's

### Alef-Bet Continued

Now that you can write almost all of the alef-bet characters perfectly in several forms, and have decided which one you will use for your lessons and assignments, we can go further.

Something you did not learn in the first lesson is that there final forms for certain Hebrew letters. At the end of words these letters look different. This might sound complicated, but is not really so difficult. For example of comparison, Arabic adds medial forms as well as final forms. Here are the letters with final forms:

Printed Square	Cursive	Practice	Practice
כ, ך	כ, ך		
מ, ם	מ, ם		
ן, ן	ן, ן		
פ, ף	פ, ף		
צ, ץ	צ, ץ		



You'll notice how wonderful my handwriting is compared to the cursive font in the table. Seriously, cursive is cursive handwriting and unique to the individual writing it. At the same time, getting too individual will leave something akin to my signature which no person can read. Write according to classic forms and also your personality.

### Alef-Bet: Names and Pronunciation

Hebrew is an ancient and living language used by Jews and others widely dispersed throughout the world. Because of this, Hebrew varies in pronunciation giving us a *yawd*, *yohd*, *yood*, and *yohdh*. But we will use a standard biblical Hebrew system of transliteration. You will see this many times throughout the lessons.

From this point do not expect to see cursive Hebrew although you will see several other forms of Hebrew characters. One is the Palaeo-Hebrew form featured in the table below.

H	Name	PH	T <sup>1</sup>	Phonology		H	Name	PH	T	Phonology
א	ā lef	·	כ	<i>Silent; takes vowel</i>		מ	mê m	m	m	<i>m</i>
ב	bê t <sup>2</sup>	b	ב	<i>v</i>		ם	mê m sô fît			
ג	gîmel	g	ג	<i>gh</i>		נ	nûn	ŋ	n	<i>n</i>
ד	dā let	d	ד	<i>dh</i>		ן	nûn sô fît			
ה	hê	j	ה	<i>h</i>		ס	sā mek	v	s	<i>s</i>
ו	wā w	w	ו	<i>w</i>		צ	āyin	·	c	<i>Hard glottal stop</i>
ז	zāyin	z	ז	<i>z</i>		פ	pê /fê	p	p	<i>p</i>
ח	ḥê t	h	ח	<i>loch</i>		פ		p	f	<i>f</i>
ט	ṭê t	=	ט	<i>Emphatic t</i>		ך	pê sô fît			
י	yô d	y	י	<i>yes</i>		ך	ṣā dē	x	ṣ	<i>hats</i>
כ	kā f	k	כ	<i>kh</i>		ץ	ṣā dē sô fît			
כ			כ	<i>k</i>		ק	qô f	q	q	<i>q</i>
ל	kā f sô fît					ר	rê š	r	r	<i>r (almost w)</i>
ל	lā meḏ	l	ל	<i>l</i>		ש	šîn	s	š	<i>sh</i>
						ש	/šîn	s	ś	<i>s</i>
sô fît indicates the final form of the character (i.e., the last letter of a word).						ת	tā w	t	t	<i>then</i>
						ת		t	t	<i>t</i>

Now is the time to learn what the Hebrew characters look like and to be able to write in either the square or cursive style. You will notice the similarity of several characters. This

is an important point that will be brought to bear later, and at that time you should be familiar enough with the square and Palaeo-Hebrew characters to benefit from the discussion.

For square script you will notice the likeness of ר to ד, נ to ג, ה to ח, ט to ב, ס to ם, and ן to ך. Look more carefully.

ר	ד	reš is always curved, while dāleṭ is two distinct strokes, a vertical topped by a horizontal stroke.
נ	ג	Again, two distinct strokes make the gîmel
ה	ח	hê <sup>ᶜ</sup> has an unconnected "leg" but the ḥêṭ has a top connected to both legs.
ט	ב	Two strokes for bêṭ.
ס	ם	sāmeḵ is a single rounded stroke while the mē m sô fîṭ is angular and will only be seen at a word's end.
ן	ך	zāyin has two strokes.
ך	ך	kā f sô fîṭ has a leg that descends other letters and it will be seen only at a word's end.

<sup>1</sup> One of the most confusing tasks for Hebraists and students is representing Hebrew through transliteration. The system given is an accepted standard of Hebraists used by Lambdin (who adds International Phonetic symbols also), Weingreen, LaSor and others. Get in the habit of using this system as opposed to others. The font can be obtained at <http://members.tripod.com/ebionite/fonts.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> These letters had, at one time and some still, both a "hard" and "soft" pronunciation. They are known by an acronym BeGaDKePaT. Seen in later Ashuri (or Square Script) Hebrew, these six letters could in cases appear with a dot "in its belly" called a *dāḡēš*. This hardened the pronunciation. (*dāḡēš qāl* [Latin=*dagesh lene*] "light dagesh," or *dāḡēš qāšyān* "hardening dagesh.") (To confuse things), another dagesh, *dāḡēš kālān*, doubles a consonant, including a BeGaDKePaT letter which is both doubled and hardened (*dāḡēš ḥāzāq*).