

## SECTION 1

## THE HEBREW ALPHABET

Numerical value	Transliteration	Pronunciation <sup>1</sup>	Form Final form	Name <sup>2</sup> ←
1	ʔ	silent/glottal stop	א	Áleph אָלֶף 1
2	b	b as in boy	ב	Bet בֵּית 2
	v	v as in voice	בּ	
3	g	g as in gate	ג/גּ	Gímel גִּמֶל 3
4	d	d as in door	ד/דּ	Dálet דָּלֶת 4
5	h	h as in head	ה	He הָא 5
6	w	v as in voice	ו	Vav וָו 6
7	z	z as in zero	ז	Záyin זָיִן 7
8	ħ	ch as in German Bach	ח	Chet חֵית 8
9	ṭ	t as in time	ט	Tet טֵית 9
10	y	y as in year	י	Yod יוֹד 10
20	k	k as in king	כ	Kaph כָּף 11
	x	ch as in German Bach	ך	
30	l	l as in life	ל	Lámed לָמֶד 12
40	m	m as in man	ם	Mem מֵים 13
50	n	n as in name	ן	Nun נוֹן 14
60	s	s as in son	ס	Sámech סָמֶךְ 15
70	ʕ	silent/glottal stop	ע	Áyin עָיִן 16
80	p	p as in peace	פ	Pe פֵּא 17
	f	ph as in phrase	ף	
90	ʃ	ts as in hearts	ץ	Tsádi צָדִי 18
100	q	q as in queen	ק	Qoph קוֹף 19
200	r	r as in road	ר	Resh רֵישׁ 20
300	ś	s as in son	ש	Sin שֵׁיִן 21
	š	sh as in shame	שׁ	Shin שִׁיִן
400	t	t as in time	ת/תּ	Tav תּוֹ 22

← א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ ף צ ק ר ש ש ת

<sup>1</sup> This reflects the normal pronunciation of modern Hebrew.

<sup>2</sup> For the pronunciation of vowels, see the table on p. 8.

Observe the following:

- 1 Hebrew is written and read from right to left.
- 2 All the letters represent consonants.<sup>3</sup>
- 3 There are no capital letters in Hebrew.
- 4 Five letters have a special form at the end of a word: ׀, ׁ, ׂ, ׃, ׄ.
- 5 The difference between the ordinary forms צ, פ, נ, כ and the final forms ׀, ׁ, ׂ, ׃ is that the lower horizontal stroke of the ordinary forms is written vertically and therefore extends below the line, for instance, ן /ch/ becomes ן and ן /n/ becomes ן.
- 6 An inner dot results in a different pronunciation in only three of the letters: ב /v/ – ב /b/, כ /ch/ – כ /k/, פ /f/ – פ /p/. The other letters have the same sound with or without the inner dot.<sup>4</sup>
- 7 Two Hebrew letters may share the same pronunciation, e.g., both ב and ׀ are pronounced /v/. This reflects the dissimilarity prevailing between sounds and spelling in Hebrew.

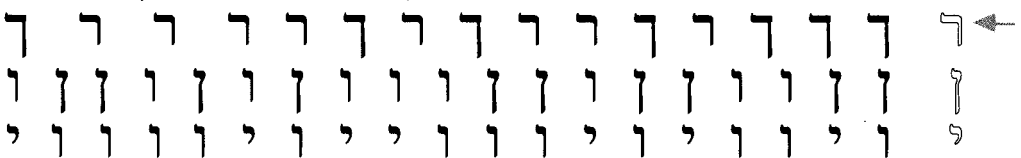
## EXERCISES

- 1.1 *Identify* the Hebrew letters. *Compare* the relative size and shape of the letters in each group. *Circle* the letters which are identical with the outlined letter in each line. *Pronounce* all the letters. *Note*:

- ◆ Certain letters *look alike* and can easily be confused. The following features will help you to distinguish between similar letters: the length of the vertical stroke, the presence, absence or position of a dot, the length of the horizontal stroke, the difference in the shape of a corner.

- a Letters are distinguished by the *length of the vertical stroke*:

ך /r/ – ך final /ch/; ׀ /v/ – ׀ final /n/; ׁ /y/ – ׀ /v/.



- b Letters are distinguished by the *presence, absence or position of a dot*:

פ /p/ – פ /f/; שׁ /sh/ – שׁ /s/; ב /b/ – ב /v/; כ /k/ – כ /ch/.



<sup>3</sup> י, ׀, ׁ function as vowel letters as well, see Section 2:3.

<sup>4</sup> Except ׀, see below Hebrew vowels, p. 8.

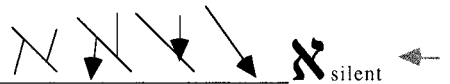


## 1.3 Write the following Hebrew letters.

You may choose between two sets of letters, a set of simplified *print letters* and a set of *script letters* (used normally in handwriting).

**Simplified form of print letters**

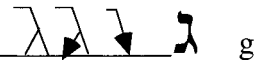
Fill in each line with the Hebrew letters. The arrows indicate the starting point and direction. Follow the arrows step by step before writing the whole letter. Pronounce each letter as you write it.



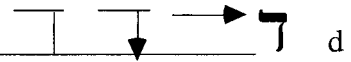
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



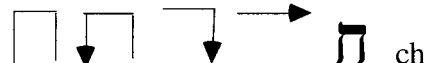
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



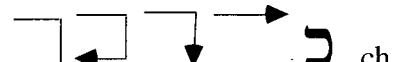
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_



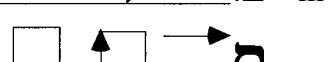
\_\_\_\_\_



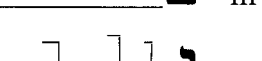
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_






\_\_\_\_\_























































\_\_\_\_\_



**Script letters**

Arrows indicate where to start when you write each letter. *Observe* that all the letters begin either with the form , , or  but the size and position of these forms vary.

			silent 
			v
			g
			d
			h
			v
			z
			ch
			t
			y
			ch
			ch
			l
			m
			m
			n
			n

SECTION 1

	ס	ס	s
	ע	ע	silent
	פ	פ	f
	ף	ף	f
	צ	צ	ts
	ץ	ץ	ts
	ק	ק	q
	ר	ר	r
	ש	ש	s
	שׁ	שׁ	sh
	ת	ת	t

ק ר ש ת

ק ר ש ת

1.5 Write the following transliterated words with Hebrew letters. Remember:

◆ Five letters have a special form at the end of a word: כ – ך /ch/, מ – ם /m/, נ – ן /n/, פ – ף /f/, צ – ץ /ts/.

- 1 nḥwm, yrwšlym, ʔmn, ʔmrm, šlm, švʔwt, ywxvd, ywsf, khn, yhwntn, yhwšft, qbwš, pth tqwh, bʔl, ḥvrwn, ʔhymlx, ʔzh, rʔš pnh.
- 2 hllwyh, ʔmnwʔl, ʔvryh, šlwm, ʔfrym, bʔr švʔ, hr syny, mšnh, ḥzqyh, šwmrwn, tlmwd, ʔzyh, yʔl, yhwdyt, kfr nḥwm, hvh ngylh, byt ḥsdʔ.
- 3 yšy, ʔl ʔl, yzrʔʔl, yrdn, lwy, bryt mylh, lḥym, mswrh, bt švʔ, yhwddh ʔyš qrywt, šdh bwqr, bny bryt, br mšwh, glglt (glgtʔ), lmh ʔzvtny.

THE HEBREW VOWEL SIGNS AND THEIR PRONUNCIATION<sup>5</sup>

Vowel sound	Vowel sign (with the letter כּ, pronounced /ch/)
1) /a/ as in Bathsheba	ָ/ֶ/ֵ/ִ
2) /e/ as in Israel	ֶ/ֵ/ִ/ִ/ִ
3) /i/ as in Israel	ִ/ִ
4) /o/ as in Joshua	ֹ/ֹ/ חוּ/חַ
5) /u/ as in Joshua	וּ/חוּ
no-vowel, zero	ְ

- There are five vowel sounds in Hebrew. As you can see in the table above there is no agreement between the number of the vowel sounds (five) and the number of vowel signs (seventeen above). Several vowel signs share the same pronunciation, for example, the /a/-vowel in **כָּתַב** *kataḅ* and the /e/-vowel in **עֵצֶר** *ʕezra*. Nevertheless, the vowel signs are not interchangeable.
- The vowel sign is placed below the letter (**הָגַר** *hagar*) except for וּ /u/ and חוּ /o/ which are placed after the letter (**קִבּוּץ** *qibbuṣ*, **יוֹסֵף** *yosef*) and the vowel – /o/ which is placed above and slightly left of the letter (**לֹמֵד** *lomed*).
- A vowel sign may be followed by the letter ם *Yod*. The presence of ם *Yod* does not affect the sound of the vowel:<sup>6</sup> **בֵּית אֵל** *bet ʔel*.
- The letter וּ *Vav* may be combined with a vowel sign. וּ *Vav* with an upper dot וּ is pronounced /o/ (not ‘vo’). וּ *Vav* with an inner dot וּ (without a following vowel sign) is pronounced /u/ (not ‘vu’): **רוּת** *rut*. The presence of וּ *Vav* does not affect the sound of the vowel, e.g., both **לוּט** and **לוּט** are pronounced ‘lot’.
- The letter הּ *He* at the end of a word is silent: **שָׂרָה** *sara*.
- The letter אַ *Áleph* without a following vowel sign is silent: **עֵזְרָא** *ʕezra*, **יִשְׁמָעֵאל** *yišmaʕel*.
- In Hebrew there is a sign for no-vowel (ְ) which is used when a vowelless letter occurs at the beginning or in the middle of a word: **שְׁמוּאֵל** *šmuʔel* (instead of **שְׁמוּאֵל**), **יִשְׂרָאֵל** *yišraʔel* (instead of **יִשְׂרָאֵל**). A vowelless letter at the end of a word is normally not marked. One exception is the final letter ךּ /ch/: **אַךְ** *ʔax*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This reflects the normal pronunciation of modern Hebrew.

<sup>6</sup> With a few exceptions which will be introduced later.

<sup>7</sup> Another exception is ךּ at the end of a word.



## EXERCISES

1.6 Read aloud. Combine letters (consonants)<sup>8</sup> and vowels into syllables. Note:

- ◆ A syllable must begin with a consonant and should include one vowel.
- ◆ The consonant is pronounced first, followed by the vowel. הַגֵּר is to be pronounced h+a+g+a+r.
- ◆ The main *stress* in Hebrew usually falls on the last syllable, but sometimes on the next-to-last syllable. Stress on the last syllable is not marked: שְׁלוֹם šalóm. Stress on the next-to-last syllable is marked by the sign ◻ above the stressed syllable: קָיִן qáyin.
- ◆ An *inner dot* in a letter does not change the pronunciation, except in בּ /b/, כּ /k/, פּ /p/ and וּ /u/ (when וּ is not followed by a vowel sign).
- ◆ אָ Áleph, הָ He and יָ Yod without a following vowel sign are silent.<sup>9</sup>
- ◆ אָ Áleph and עָ Áyin without a following vowel sign are not audible. When אָ Áleph and עָ Áyin are followed by a vowel, only the vowel is pronounced: אַב av.

a In this group of words only **the vowel /a/** is used.

הַר	תָּו	כָּף	וּו	דָּן	חַג	אָב	1 ←
שָׁנָה	נָתַן	רַב	נָא	יָד	גַּם	אָף	2
שָׁפָה	רָעַב	אָדָם	חָכָם	לָבָן	שָׂרָה	הָגָר	3
חָמָה	עָזָה	אָתָה	צָבָא	יָשָׁר	אָסָף	שִׁבְתָּ	4
חֲכָמָה	אֲדָמָה	חֲוָה	זָהָב	אָמָה	חָנָה	רָשָׁע	5
תַּחַת	שָׁעַר	בָּעַר	בָּעַל	יָחַד	חֲטָאת	אֲהַבָּה	6

b In this group of words **the vowels /a/ and /e/** are used.

בֵּית	שֵׁם	שָׁלֵם	אָמֵן	בֵּן	תֵּל	עֵת	1 ←
אֵת	רִישׁ	פֵּא	מִים	טִית	חֵית	הָא	2
יָעַל	רַחַל	לָאָה	עָשׂוּ	פָּה	זָקֵן	עֵת	3
יָלַד	כֶּסֶף	כָּלָב	דָּלַת	בֵּית אֵל	אֵיכָה	אָמַת	4
רָגַל	הֶבֶל	סֹפֵר	יָפַת	אָבֵן	פֶּתַח	עֶבֶר	5
בֵּית לָחֶם	בַּת שֶׁבַע	לָמַד	דָּלַת	אָלָף	פֶּסַח	פֶּסַח	6

<sup>8</sup> The word 'consonant' indicates the sound of a written letter.

<sup>9</sup> There are a few exceptions for יָ, but none of these exceptions occur in this exercise.

c In this group of words the vowels /a/, /e/ and /i/ are used.

שִׁיר	עֵיר	מֵן	מִי	לִי	כִּי	בִּי	1 ←
דָּוִד	לֹוִי	הִיא	עִם	אִם	אִישׁ	סִיר	2
חַיִּים	מִיכָה	מִלָּה	מִלָּה	מִיכָאֵל	נָבִיא	אִשָּׁה	3
בַּיִת	אֵין	חֵיל	אֵלֶיהָ	אֲנָשִׁים	צְדִיקִים	צְדִיק	4

d In this group of words the vowels /a/, /e/, /i/ and /o/ are used. *Note:*

- ♦ The vowel sign  $\text{ָ}$  is to be pronounced /a/ throughout this section.
- ♦ The letter  $\text{שׁ}$  *Shin* shares its upper dot with a preceding /o/-vowel, e.g.,  $\text{מֹשֶׁה}$  *moše*, and the letter  $\text{שׂ}$  *Sin* with a following /o/-vowel:  $\text{שׂוֹנֵה}$  *šone*.

יֹוִד	דָּוִד	אֹוֶר	קוֹל	לוֹ	כֹּה	בוֹ	1 ←
חֶקֶק	כֹּל	דוֹרוֹת	עוֹד	טוֹב	לוֹט	קוֹף	2
יוֹם	אוֹרוֹת	קוֹלוֹת	מְקוֹם	שָׁלוֹם	קָטָן	טוֹבָה	3
אוֹתִי	אָדוֹן	מִשָּׁל	מִשָּׁךְ	שׁוֹפֵט	טוֹבִים	כּוֹכָב	4
כֶּהֱן	כְּבוֹד	קְדוֹשׁ	פֹּה	גְּדוֹל	יוֹנָה	תּוֹרָה	5
שִׁבְעַ	אֵין	עֵשֶׂק	אָנוּשׁ	אָמוּץ	יוֹחָנָן	רֹאשׁ	6

e In this group of words the vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/ are used.

גוֹר	כָּלָם	חֲקִים	כְּתוּב	תְּמוּז	שָׁאוֹל	צוֹר	1 ←
הוּא	פּוֹרִים	תְּנַכָּה	סְכוֹת	עַמְנוּאֵל	קְבוּץ	נְחוּם	2
לוֹ	אֲנַחְנוּ	כָּלָנוּ	אֵלֶיהוּ	יוֹם כְּפוֹר	שְׁבוּעוֹת	אֵלוֹל	3

1.7 Read aloud the following proper names (names of persons and places). *Note:*

- ♦ Since several Hebrew names are pronounced differently in English, the English counterparts of the Hebrew names are given in the Key.
- ♦ The vowel sign  $\text{ֶ}$  indicates no-vowel:  $\text{יִשְׂרָאֵל}$  *yisra'el*.

קֵין	שְׁמוּאֵל	יִשְׂרָאֵל	תְּוָה	דְּבוּרָה	יַעֲקֹב	אָדָם	1 ←
שֵׁם	שְׁמֵעוֹן	בֵּית אֵל	רְחֵל	הֶבֶל	אָסָף	לָאָה	2