

# THE HEBREW LETTERS

## Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to help all students who want to learn how to draw, and recognize the Hebrew letters. The various shapes of the letters are easily reproduced using modern calligraph pens. These instructions presume students are familiar with various types of graph paper and edged pens. Some students may be aware of other styles of drawing the letters. These particular examples were used for clarity and ease.

When this booklet refers to "families of letters," it is not alluding to the divisions familiar to students of Qabalah: the 3 mother, 7 double, and 12 simple letters. The groupings used are based on similarity and relation of shape. Much confusion and error frustrate beginning students because of slight but very important differences in appearance. Experience with this particular organization of the letters has helped many students, allowing them to draw nearly perfect letters in a very short period of time. Of course, all progress depends upon **correct** repetition.

The basic shape of each of the 22 letters is Yod. All others derive from it. Serious students will understand the profound import of this simple fact

# Table of Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Introduction .....  | iii |
| Family I: .....   | 1   |
| Yod, Zain, Teth   |     |
| Family II: .....  | 9   |
| Vav, Gimel, Lamed, Nun, Tzaddi Final, Nun Final           |     |
| Family III: .....   | 21  |
| Resh, Samekh, Kaph, Beth, Peh, Qoph, Mem Final, Peh Final |     |
| Family IV: .....  | 37  |
| Daleth, Tav, Cheth, Heh, Kaph Final                       |     |
| Family V: .....   | 47  |
| Aleph, Ayin, Tzaddi, Mem, Shin                            |     |
| Bibliography .....  | 59  |

# Family I:

## Yod, Zain, Teth

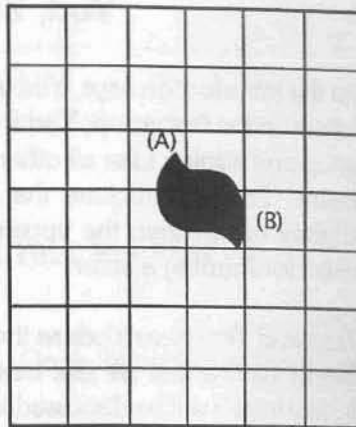
As the introduction says, Yod is the basic form of all the Hebrew letters. In the first group, Yod is the only letter that can be written with one stroke. Like all other letters, this one begins at the top point. Tradition dictates that the starting point for the Yod is slightly higher than the uppermost point on the imaginary grid used for framing a letter.

Zain and Teth have Yods as their tops. The bodies beneath each begin with a line **at the center** of the Yods, unlike the **Vav** family which will be discussed later. Again, students of Tarot and Qabalah will find much of value in these seemingly minor differences in letter construction.

## YOD

The letter name י means "HAND." The ancient pictographic form of this letter was a representation of the extended forefinger, a distinctly phallic emblem. The same idea of masculinity is applied to this letter in Qabalistic literature.

*The Book of Tokens, Paul Foster Case*



The letter י, a small suspended point, reveals the spark of essential good hidden within the letter א. Before creation...there remained within the empty void a single, potential point..."The secret of this point is the power of the Infinite to contain the finite phenomena within Himself and express them to apparent external reality."

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

י is the hand of God, a strong hand bringing us out of slavery. י is the hand a person uses so that he will not lose his place in the Torah....י is the tenth letter. A person has ten fingers. י is all that remained of Jacob, יעקב, after he wrestled with God and men to become Israel, ישראל. י is the tiny Spiritual Israel within each and every one of us.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

The Zohar tells us that "He who feels small is big and he who feels big is small." The *small one*, spelled א זעיר in Hebrew, is

the letter י, because it is the smallest in the alphabet. As the simplest, smallest, humblest and, in the sense of a series, the last letter in the alphabet, Yod signifies the essential spark of creation. It is unquestionably the most potent of the letters. The Ineffable chooses to do Its work with the simplest point. The lesson is clear.

*Liber Travail, Vol.IX:10*

The tenth letter of the Alef-Beit, י, is barely larger than a dot and it cannot be divided into component parts. It alludes to God, Who is One and Indivisible, for although his attributes seem to be numerous and even contradictory, they all flow from a unified purpose and existence.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

Rabbi Tzadok Ha-Kohen says that the letter י represents the single point from which it is possible to begin any letter. The smallness of the י also hints at humility.

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

י means the hand of man. It is the open hand, in contradistinction to א, the closed one, which follows it in the alphabet....In the religious symbolism of the world the open hand is everywhere and at all times a type of beneficence, and of the freedom of the Supreme Spirit.

*The Tarot, Paul Foster Case*

## Drawing the Yod

Begin at point to the far left and just above the top line of the grid, point (A). Finish the letter at point (B). As stated earlier, Yod is the smallest of the letters.

## ZAIN

The letter ז also means "weapon" or "sword," and this idea finds expression in the shape of the letter itself, which suggests a sword.

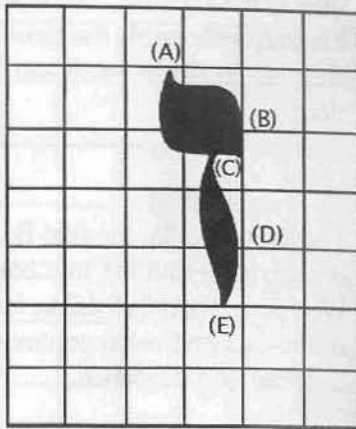
*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Matityahu Glazerson*

...it is no coincidence that the letter ז is the symbolic representative of both sustenance and armament. The two concepts are related to each other. The letter ז is shaped like a spear, indicating that man's sustenance is obtained by his struggle.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Michael Munk*

The form of the ז resembles both a golden scepter and the crown on the head of a king. The Maggid of Mezeritch, the successor of the Ba'al Shem Tov, teaches that the verse "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband" (Proverbs 12:4) alludes to the form of the letter ז. The previous letter, י, portrays the "straight light" descending from God into the worlds. The ז, whose form is similar to the י, reflects the "straight light" of the י, through the crown on top as "returning light."

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*



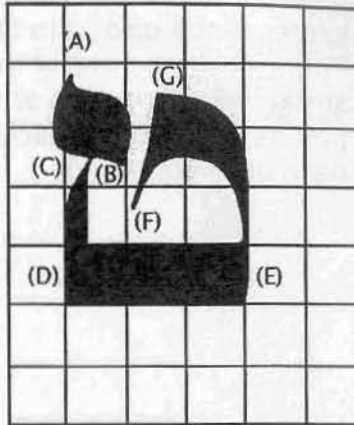
## Drawing the Zain (Zayin)

Repeat the instructions for drawing the Yod, only at the center of the grid (A to B).

Then, at the center of the Yod (C), begin a downward stroke with the point of the edged pen, flattening the pen as the stroke descends (D) then closing it at the base of the letter (E).

## TETH

To this transformation of man by himself is addressed what is called the Great Work. It is accomplished by the recognition of the law typified in Key 8. That law is also symbolized by the Hebrew letter **ט**, whose shape suggests what its name signifies--a serpent. The law in question is the law of vibration and transformation, which the ancients represented by the serpent symbol.



*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order, Paul Foster Case*

The form of **ט** is "inverted," thus symbolizing hidden, inverted good--as expressed in the Zohar, "its good is hidden within it." The form of the letter **ט** symbolizes the union of the groom and bride consummating with conception. The secret of the **ט** (numerically equivalent to nine, the nine months of pregnancy) is the power of the mother to carry her inner, concealed good--the fetus--through the period of pregnancy.

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The first **ט** that appears in the Torah is in the word *טוב*, **טוב**, from Genesis 1:4: "And God saw that the light was good." This shows that **ט** is a general symbol for goodness.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

## Drawing the Teth

Begin by drawing the letter Yod (A to B) on the left side of the grid. Make a downward stroke beginning at the center of the Yod (C) curving and widening outward to the a point at the base of the letter (D). Continue the widened stroke horizontally to the right edge of the letter (E).

Just below the bottom point of the initial Yod (F) and to the point (G), begin a curved and narrowing stroke ending at (E).

It is very important to keep a space between the initial Yod (A-B) and the final descending stroke starting at (F-G) and ending at (E). Teth is an "open" letter.

Grouping the Tet

The Tet is a group of four letters: Vav, Gimel, Lamed, and Nun. These letters are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod. In the Tet, the letters are arranged in a specific order: Vav, Gimel, Lamed, and Nun. The Tet is a group of four letters that are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod. The Tet is a group of four letters that are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod. The Tet is a group of four letters that are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod.

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Family II:

Vav, Gimel, Lamed, Nun,  
Tzaddi Final and Nun Final

Unlike the previous family, every letter in this group descends from the **end** or **tail** of the Yod. Also, letters in this group sometimes extend above or below the base line.



The Tet is a group of four letters: Vav, Gimel, Lamed, and Nun. These letters are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod. In the Tet, the letters are arranged in a specific order: Vav, Gimel, Lamed, and Nun. The Tet is a group of four letters that are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod. The Tet is a group of four letters that are all descended from the end or tail of the Yod.

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## VAV

"The ׀ is a vertical line representing a pillar or a man standing upright...pillars hold Creation together..."

*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

This is the work of ׀: to join us all into a myriad of constellations each remaining different, each bound to the other.

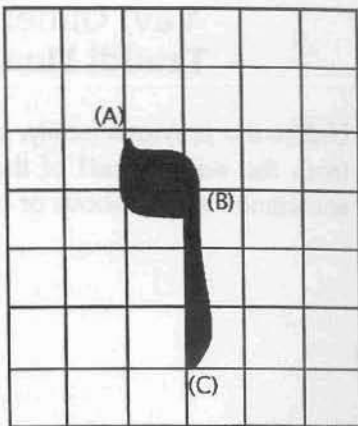
*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

The Zohar says that all is contained in the mystery of ׀, and thereby all is revealed. The same Qabalistic authority connects ׀ with the Son of David, and this is interpreted as a reference to the Christos.

*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order, Paul Foster Case*

The Zohar also calls the ׀ the letter of truth, אמת. Indeed, the straight and upright stance of this letter suggests honesty and truth.

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Matityahu Glazerson*



## Drawing the Vav

The Vav is essentially an extended Yod. This fact has inspired generations of serious students. The letter begins at the top and center of the grid (A) and descends past the usual ending point of a Yod (B) to the base of the grid (C).



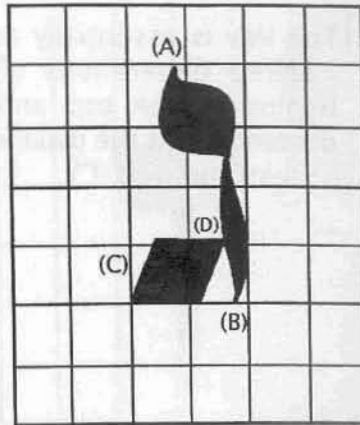
## GIMEL

The ג is composed of a י, representing an erect man, with a lower י, a foot in motion....Our sages teach (Shabbat 104a) that the ג symbolizes a rich man running after a poor man, the ד, to give him charity.

*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

...for each one of us there is a deed which cannot be asked which we must nevertheless offer. That is the only way. Striving to complete the work, גמרא, GEMARA, completion...that is the only reason to leave your house and go. And so ג is great, גדול, GADOL, and mighty, גבור, GIBOR.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner*



## Drawing the Gimel

Gimel begins with a Yod commencing at point (A) and like a Vav, continuing to point (B) at the base of the grid. Note that this part of the letter is very much like a Vav, but it is slightly curved to the right.

After this "curved Vav" is drawn, a parallelogram is added at the left of the base. It begins at (C) and ends at (D), using the wide edge of the drawing pen.



## LAMED

Rabbi Yose likened the ל to a town watchman who stands on a high lookout and calls out his warning....ל, Oh so beautiful ל. Tall and elegant like a palm branch (לולב) waved high....the ל is actually composed of two separate letters....it is the י perched on the roof of the כ.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

The form of ל is unique in that it is the only letter of the alphabet that ascends above the "upper bound" line of the script of the letters. For this reason, our Sages refer to it as "a tower soaring in the air." The ל is composed of three letters: a downward looking י which forms the head of a v which stands, in turn, erect upon a כ.

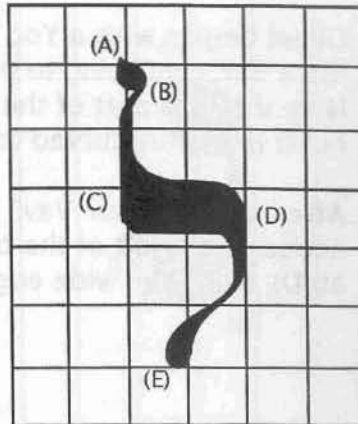
*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The ל is a majestic letter, towering above the other letters from its position in the center of the *Aleph-Beis*. Thus it symbolizes the King of Kings, the Supreme Ruler. With the two letters around it, מ, כ, one can spell מלך, *Melek*, the King.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

The letter ל stands for *laib*, לב, heart. Like the form of ל, the heart is almost at the center of the body but slightly to the left...just like the position of ל in the alphabet.

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*



The 12th letter of the Alef-Beit allows the Father, י, to descend into the law, כ, thus providing genuine justice for all of Creation.

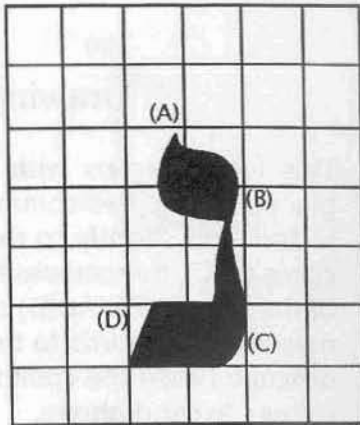
*Sephir Esh, XI:30*

## Drawing the Lamed

This letter begins with a smaller sized Yod (A to B) placed above the common upper margin of the other letters and slightly to the left. It descends with a small curve to (C), then moves horizontally with the wide edge of the pen to (D). At (D) the letter curves to the left and narrows downwards to the point (E). The letter does **not** descend below the common margin of the other letters. It does ascend above.

## NUN

Before and after Numbers 10:35-36 there are two upside down נ's. No one knows why. Numbers 10:35-36: *When the Ark was to set out, Moses would say: Advance O Lord! (יהוה) May Your enemies be scattered, and may Your foes flee before You! And when it halted, he would say: Return O Lord, You who are Israel's myriads of thousands!*



*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

The bent over form of the נ, “the bent over faithful one” (from Rashi’s commentaries), indicates a sense of poverty and need to receive. This bent over form is the most fundamental (simple) “vessel” form amongst the letters of the *alef-beit*. In the form of the letter נ we envision a vessel filled by (pregnant with) “introverted” light, whereas נ is a vessel alone.

*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

...an erudite reader of the manifestos [Fama Fratemitatis and The Confessio] would have noticed that the Founder of the Fraternity is said to have lived 106 years and that he was born in the year 1378. The first of these numbers is significant because 106 is the value of the letter name נון, as ordinarily reckoned...

*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order, Paul Foster Case*

The letter נ symbolizes the power of submission and humbleness....it represents the fifty days during which the Jewish people (Spiritual Israel) ascended from the lowly status of their Egyptian bondage to stand at the foot of Mount Sinai and receive the Torah. They achieved this exalted privilege through submitting and subjugating themselves to God and his law...

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

## Drawing the Nun

The letter Nun begins with a central Yod placed at the top of the grid (A to B). It then descends with a widening curve to the bottom of the grid (C).

From the point (C), the wide edge of the pen is used to make a broad stroke ending at the point (D).

Please review the instructions and shape of the letter Gimel. Gimel and Nun are similar, but there are distinct differences in the bottom stroke. Those differences provide accurate recognition.

## FINALS

### Tzaddi Final

There are five “final” letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each will be presented as part of the appropriate letter family. Following are some insightful quotations which apply to all the final letter forms.

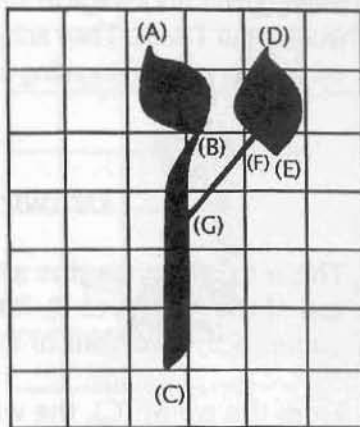
Rabbi Eliezer taught that the five letters which have final forms: ךּ ם ן ף ץ, carry with them the “secret of redemption” by which the night of redemption was known beforehand to our fathers....It happened once that

the teachers didn't come to the house of study. The children who were there said: “Let us study the letters without them. Why do the letters כמנפצ have final forms? To teach us that the Law was transmitted: ם “saying by saying” (מאמר) *Ma-awar*; ן “the faithful to the faithful” (נאמן) *Neh-emar*; ף “the righteous to the righteous” (צדצק) *Tzadik*; ף “from mouth to mouth” (פה) *Peh*; and ךּ “from hand to hand” (כה) *Kaf*.”

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

God's open hand ךּ, created the water ם, wherein the fish ן, swims; providing us with nourishment; that we may speak ף, of his Glory; and be strengthened in meditation ץ.

*Simple Stories From the Heart, Rabbi Kardia*



After his death, a צדק (Tzaddik) ascends from one level to another, higher and higher, until he becomes first a sacred letter, then a sacred thought, and finally a sacred name.

*Rabbi Pinhas of Koretz*

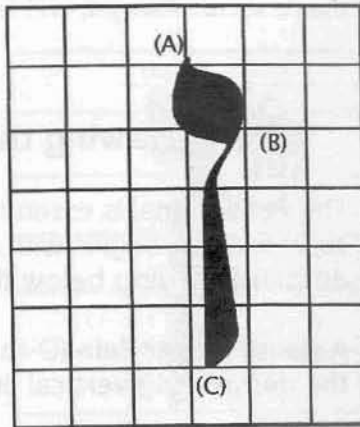
### Drawing the Tzaddi Final

The Tzaddi Final is essentially an elongated and slightly curved Vav. It begins with a Yod (A to B) then curves and descends ending below the common margin (C).

A slanted letter Zain (D to E and F to G) is connected to the descending vertical line (B to C) of Tzaddi Final.

## Drawing the Nun Final

The Nun Final is also essentially an elongated and slightly curved Vav. Beginning with a Yod (A to B) it then curves and descends, and ends below the common margin (C).



The curve and extension below the margin distinguish the Final Nun from the Vav. Accurate identification can be assured if these characteristics are recognized and drawn.

## Family III:

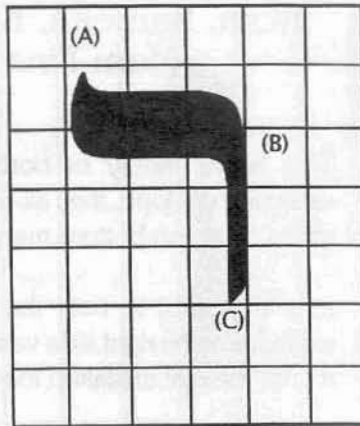
### Resh, Samekh, Kaph, Beth, Peh, Qoph, Mem Final, and Peh Final

This is the family of horizontally extended Yods. With the exception of Qoph, they all end at the common right margin and at the common bottom margin.

It is important to note that the upper horizontal lines do not extend past the right side vertical ones. Knowing this will prevent a great deal of mistaken identity.

## RESH

Man is the synthesis of all cosmic activities. Human intelligence gathers together all the various threads of the Life Power's self-manifestation and carries that manifestation beyond anything that could come into existence apart from Man and human intelligence. This doctrine is based on the Qabalistic meaning of the Hebrew letter ר, to which is attributed the "Collective Intelligence."



*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order, Paul Foster Case*

The ר, whose meaning is "head," profiles, in its form, the head of man. Its horizontal top depicts the head facing left, facing the next letter ש, bent over. Its downward extension to its right depicts the beginning of the spinal column, the "backbone," the support of the head...one of the meanings of ר is "poor man" (ש ר)...this is opposite the strength of conviction and determination of the previous letter, ק...the poor man is actually a lower manifestation of ר included in the previous letter, ק. Physical poverty weakens one's conviction and "backbone."

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

How can one distinguish between the ר and the ר? The ר, which represents imagination, is composed of a י and a ר; whereas a ר, which represents regeneration, is composed of a י and a ר.

Imagination is the product of the discriminating power of the One Will. Regeneration is the product of the intuitive power of the One Will.

*Simple Stories From the Heart, Rabbi Kardia*

I AM the FACE which shineth ever,  
And before which the darkness hasteth away.  
I am the White Brilliance  
Of the Head which is not a Head.

I am the Profuse Giver of all abundance.

*The Book of Tokens, Paul Foster Case*

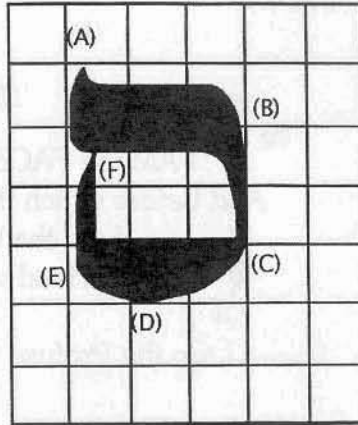
## Drawing the Resh

The letter Resh begins with a Yod that is extended with the flat edge of the pen to the edge of the right margin (A to B). It then descends with a narrow stroke along the right margin to the bottom of the common margin (C).

It is very important that the top section of the letter does not extend past the descending line (see the drawing of Daleth).

## SAMEKH

When you have been wandering for a long time and you come upon the mountain called **סִינַי**, SINAI, this is the shelter of **ס**. But why must all the shelters of **ס** appear so transient? Only to teach you that God's shelter is unlike man's. Only He who gave you life can keep you in life. For one who knows this there is no anxiety. The **ס** is all around him.



*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

Once the letter **ס** was interchangeable with the final form of the letter mem, **ם**, but after mankind left the Garden of Eden, he mistook temporary shelter for the final letter of the abode of perfection (**ם**?). Because of his error, the arm of the tent peg was bent.

*Codex Obliquitas, XIV:60.*

The form of the **ס** is a circle, often symbolizing a wedding ring....According to one tradition based upon the Kabbalah, the wedding ring placed by the groom on the pointing (index) finger of the bride, is in the form of a circle (**ס**) inside a square (final mem). The "pointing" finger of the bride points at the revelation of the future, the Future to Come within the coming world. (Note that the Bride (Malkuth) is connected to the Bridegroom (Tiphareth) on the Tree of Life, by the path of the letter **ס**).

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The **ס** is the only regular letter in the *Aleph-Beis* whose shape comprises two aspects: a rounded blank interior area, as well as an all-encompassing exterior framing outline....God is entirely spiritual in nature, without any physical form or characteristics, as symbolized by the blank inner area (*Sepher HaTemunah*). The round, closed frame of the **ס** alludes to the whole earth, which is filled with His Glory, so that wherever one is, he can be in contact with the Omnipresent Being (*Bahir*).

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

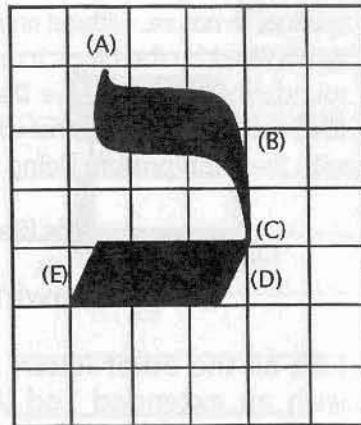
### Drawing Samekh

Like all the other letters in this family, Samekh begins with an extended Yod (A to B). It then descends and narrows slightly to the point (C).

There is a distinct curve at the right bottom of the letter (C). **This is a vital component of the letter Samekh!** It then widens and touches the bottom margin at (D) and proceeds along the base to the point (E). At that point the letter ascends to the bottom of the left side of the original Yod (F). This distinguishes it as a "hollow" or "enclosed" letter which completely encloses a space.

## KAPH

The כ is composed of three connected lines with rounded corners, forming the image of a crown lying on its side, as if resting on the head of the king while in a state of prostration or self-nullification...The literal meaning כ is palm...placing palm on palm is an act and sign of subjugation, similar to the act of bowing before a king. Whereas in bowing one totally nullifies one's consciousness in the presence of the King, in placing palm on palm one enters into a state of supplication and prayer to the King to reveal new will from His Supernal Crown (Will) to His subjects.



*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

כ, “a grasping hand,” is the name of the letter assigned to Key 10 in Tarot, which Key is a **SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF THE ACTUAL CONSTITUTION OF THE INVISIBLE ORDER.**

*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order, Paul Foster Case*

The form of כ resembles כ, and their natures are also similar; both represent powers of construction and production...the name כ also means “spoon,” an implement whose rounded shape resembles the palm of the hand...כ has dual symbolism. It stands

for the palm of the hand serving as a container and at the same time as the measure of what it holds.

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

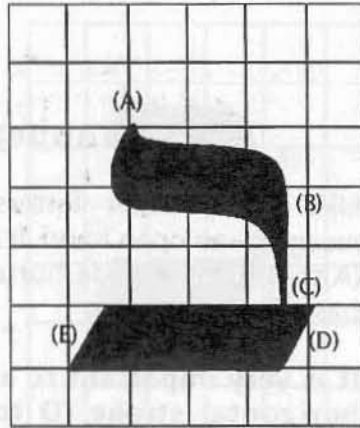
## Drawing the Kaph

Like many other letters, the Kaph resembles its meaning--an open hand. It begins with a shortened Resh (A to B to C). A wide horizontal stroke is added at the base (D to E).

**It is very important to avoid extending the bottom horizontal stroke (D to E) beyond the point (C).** Otherwise the letters Kaph and Beth are very easily confused.

## BETH

The **ב** is composed of three connected **ו**'s resembling a square, yet open on the left side. From the perspective of the Torah, the top line of the square faces east, the right side faces south and the bottom side faces west (*East--see Genesis 28:14; South--see Exodus 26:18, 35, 27:9, 36:23, 38:9, Numbers 2:10, 3:29, 10:6, Deuteronomy 3:27; West--see Genesis 28:14, Deuteronomy 34:2*). The open side faces north....in Kabbalah, the north corresponds to the property of **גבורה** [Geburah] (Zohar 1:26b).



*-The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

**ב** is drawn with two little points--one pointing above, the other pointing behind and toward the right. In this way when someone asks the **ב** "Who made you?," it points above, and if they ask, "What is his name?," it points toward the **א**, as if to say, "One is his name."

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner*

Why does the Torah begin with the letter **ב**, which corresponds to the number two? Because our Sages teach that God created not one world, but two. There is **עולם הזה**, this world, and **הבא** **עולם**, the world to come. Our life must always be lived with the awareness that the grave is not our end, but merely the second beginning.

*The Secrets of Hebrew Words, Rabbi Benjamin Blech*

## Drawing the Beth

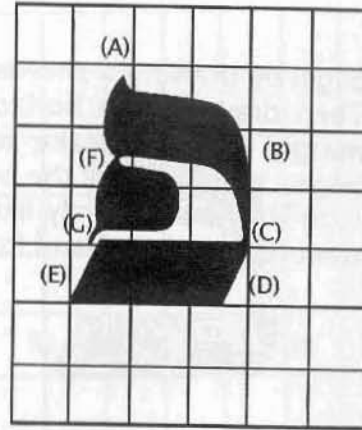
Begin by drawing a shortened letter Resh (A to B to C). Then draw a wide horizontal stroke on the bottom margin (D to E). Make sure that the bottom stroke begins to the right of the point (C); otherwise, the letter Beth would be exactly like the letter Kaph. You don't want to mistake a hand for a house, do you?





## PEH

י may be an eye which has no mouth, but פ is a mouth which has no eyes. At first, because פ has no eyes, everything seems simple (פ ש מ). Whatever your mouth first says without looking beyond...But nothing is simple. Just as everything conceals a myriad of layers and contradictions and meanings, so it is with פ.



*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

I AM the MOUTH whence issueth the breath of Life;  
I am the all-devouring one  
Whereunto all things return.

*The Book of Tokens, Paul Foster Case*

The פ resembles a mouth with a tooth emerging from its upper jaw and inverting into its cavity. It is similar to a מ on its side....The white space within the פ forms a hidden נ. Phonetically, the פ and the נ are interchangeable....In the name "Pharaoh" (פֶּרְעֹה), who is the king of darkness and the subjugator of Spiritual Israel, the outside letters spell "mouth" (פֶּה), while the inside letters spell "evil" (רַע). Thus the Pharaoh is the evil mouth.

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The פ consists of a מ with a י suspended inside it; the מ stands for practical action, while the י represents wisdom. Thus, the

letter פ represents a spiritual quality (wisdom) contained within the proper vessel for its practical realization.. It also denotes productivity and accomplishment, which result through mental or physical efforts, unlike י, which stands for "hand" indicating power and possession.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

Why is the letter פ assigned to "the function of speech," and מ to "the mouth as the organ of speech?" Words that originate in the mouth can never protect, and only exhibit the negative side of Mars, aggression. Words that originate from the Divine use the mouth to excite grace.

*Simple Stories From the Heart, Rabbi Kardia*

## Drawing the Peh

The letter begins with a shortened Resh (A to B to C), then descends to the point (C). A wide horizontal stroke is added at the base (D to E).

**It is very important to avoid extending the bottom horizontal stroke (D to E) beyond the point (C).**

Then a Yod is added which begins at the bottom (F) of the left upper stroke (A to B) and ends at the point (G).

Make sure to leave a gap between the points (G and E). This is **not** an "enclosed" letter.

## QOPH

The ancient form of the letter ק looks like a knot tied in a cord.

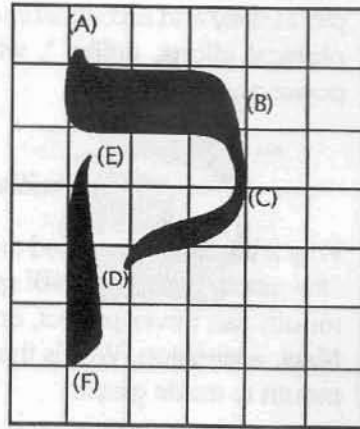
*The Book of Tokens, Paul Foster Case*

The bottom of the ק is a man calling "Holy" (קדוש) *Kadosh*, so that he can join himself to his Creator. The top line, sheltering and reaching down, is the Holy One....ק is one of the letters made by two marks. ה is the other. The lower mark of the ק is man calling God. With the upper mark of the ק HE whispers very softly to see if you are really listening.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

The Will of God hovers above the soul in its source, and decrees upon it to descend, against its own initial will, into a physical body. The soul's mission below requires it to become totally involved in the process of the rectification, clarification, of its body and "portion" in the world. [Note: the letter ק is assigned to the Corporeal Intelligence.] Two letters combine to form the ק, a ה above and a ך below the line on the left. The ה hovers, as an aura, above the descending ך.

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*



The form of the letter ק can be considered as made from the combination of a ה and a ך. This shows that man is linked to Divine Law on both the physical and spiritual levels.

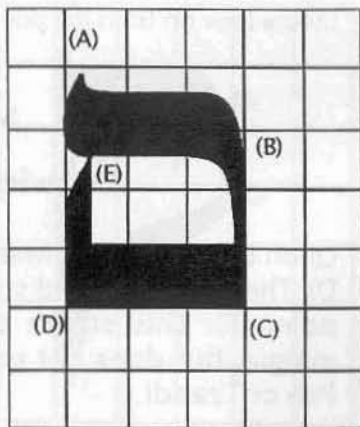
*Simple Stories From the Heart, Rabbi Kardia*

## Drawing the Qoph

Qoph begins with a inwardly curved Resh (A to B to C to D). Then an elongated stroke is added from point (E) to point (F). This stroke descends **below** the common margin, but does not extend as far as the Final Kaph, Peh or Tzaddi.

## Drawing the Mem Final

The final form of the letter Mem begins with a Resh (A to B to C). It then moves with the widened edge of the pen to (D). **There is no curve at the right bottom of the Mem Final.** It has a perfectly flat base, unlike the Samekh.

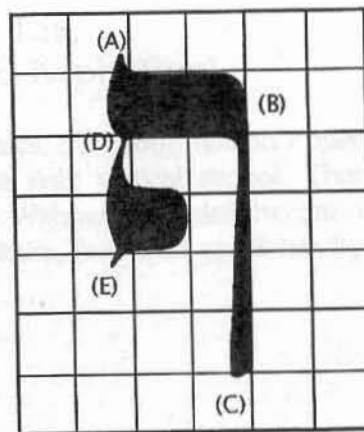


The base of the letter moves to the point (D), then ascends in a narrower form to (E). Please note that the point (E) actually touches the bottom edge of the top of the letter.

**Important Note:** Like Samekh, Mem Final is an enclosed letter.

## Drawing the Peh Final

The Peh final is an downward extended Resh that is drawn from (A) to (B) to (C). Note that (C) is below the common bottom margin. Recall that the letter Peh has a Yod like form at the center left of the letter.



The final form of Peh also has a Yod-like form similarly positioned (D to E). This small "tongue" is vitally needed in order to distinguish the final Peh from the final Kaph.

Family IV:

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The letters of this family are distinguished by their long horizontal strokes that extend beyond the vertical strokes on the right side. This is a crucial feature for their recognition. Without this extension, the letters would be confused with other characters in the alphabet. For example, a Daled without the extension would look like a Resh, and a Kaph without it would look like a Mem.

## Family IV: Daleth, Tav, Cheth, Heh and Kaph Final

Unlike the previous family of letters, this group has an upper stroke that extends **beyond** the right vertical strokes. That extension is crucial for recognition. Without it, a Daleth becomes a Resh. Venus is a wonderful lover, but don't upset her by mistaking her for the Sun.

The following are the Hebrew letters of Family IV: Daleth (ד), Tav (ט), Cheth (ח), Heh (ה), and Kaph Final (כּ). Each letter is shown in its standard form, highlighting the long horizontal stroke that extends to the right beyond the vertical stem. This extension is what gives these letters their unique identity and prevents confusion with other characters that lack this feature.

## DALETH

The ד, the poor man, receives charity from the rich man, the ג. The word דלת means "door." The door stands in the opening of the house, ג....The form of the ד, a man bent over, symbolizes the state of mind of *bitel*, *lvb*, "self-nullification."

*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

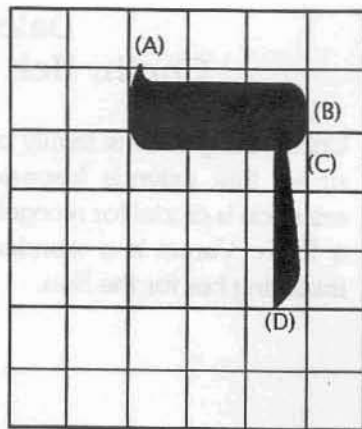
And why does the roof of the ד extend backwards a little to the right, in the direction of ג? To teach us that the poor man, ד, must make himself available to the ג, the one who would lend him money. Nevertheless, the face of ד is turned away--teaching that charity must be given in secret.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner*

[It is] the way of Abraham who, when he saw the three angels in human guise approaching him, *ran* to welcome them, *hastened* to ask Sarah to bake cakes, and *ran* to the herd to select a calf for the meal (Genesis 18). The deeds of the righteous are always performed expeditiously.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi M. L. Munk*

Look closely at ד ג ג. The ג transforms into a into a ד, and then into a ד. Serious students are referred to The Bahir. How can a camel become a door, and then a window? A camel is indisputably a means of exchange which cannot do other than



produce opportunity for those whose imaginations are fertile, thus enriching everyone's view of the world.

*Simple Stories From the Heart, Rabbi Kardia*

## Drawing the Daleth

The first stroke is an extended Yod with a rounded right side (A to B). Then a vertical line is drawn from (C) to the bottom margin (D).

**The beginning of the descending line (C) is inside the right margin.** The extended Yod (A to B) touches the right margin.

## TAV

The **ⲧ**, formed by joining a **Ⲛ** to a **ⲛ**, resembles a stamp or seal...The letter itself, the last of all the letters of the Alef-Beit, is actually the stamp and seal of all the previous letters. It possess nothing of its own (**Ⲛ**) and completes the nine "vessel" letters beginning with **ⲛ**.

*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The letter **ⲧ** is the seal of cosmic administration because it combines the imaginative powers of subconsciousness, **Ⲛ**, with the liberating power of change, **ⲛ**.

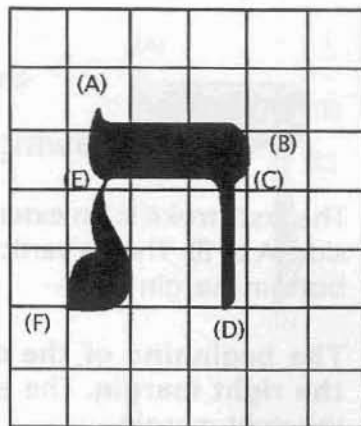
*Simple Stories from the Heart, Rabbi Kardia*

All form is limitation of the infinite energy of the Life Power. The primary cause of such limitation is the image-making power of the Universal Mind. Every act of human imagination is really a particular expression through a personal center of this image-making power of the Universal Mind. Hence, human imagination is in kind, though not in degree, the same as the universal image-making power.

*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order, Paul Foster Case*

As representing a signature, **ⲧ** implies security, guaranty, pledge, and so on. A signature is what makes business instruments valid. The letter **ⲧ** therefore indicates the final seal and witness to the completion of the Great Work of liberation.

*The Tarot, Paul Foster Case*



## Drawing the Tav

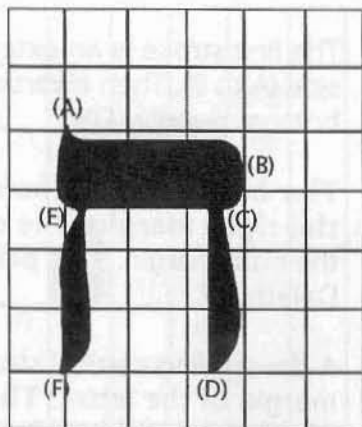
The first stroke is an extended Yod with a rounded right side (A to B). Then a vertical line is drawn from (C) to the bottom margin (D).

**The beginning of the descending line (C) is inside the right margin.** The extended Yod (A to B) touches the right margin. This part of the letter is the same as a Daleth.

A descending vertical stroke (E to F) is drawn on the left margin of the letter. **The point (E) begins inside the extended Yod (A to B).** The descending vertical stroke (E to F) widens into a "foot" or Yod at its base.

## CHETH

The form of the letter **ח** resembles a gateway. Through a gateway one enters and exits. One enters into an inner realm or chamber, a deeper state of awareness, a truer level of experience. One exits to return to one's previous, stable state of existence, infused with the light of one's new experience. [Also see Rabbi Ginsburgh's statement on the letter **ח**.]



*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The **ח** consists of two spear shaped **י**'s side by side with a roof over them....ever since man was banished from Eden, he has had to balance two **י**'s; passive trust in **י**, *the sustainer*, of the world; and active enterprise, symbolized by **י**, *armament*.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

The letter **ח** is similar in shape to the **ה**, except that the upper opening is closed. This suggests that if a person becomes steeped in sin and impurity, this can lead to the closing of the door to repentance....a person should always be in awe of his Creator; the "fear of God" should be upon him.

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Matityahu Glazerson*

At the end of a book of the **Torah** and at the beginning of something difficult we say **CHAZAK**, **חזק**, be strong! Learn from

what has gone before that strength is not of might and force but of endurance and balance.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

## Drawing the Cheth

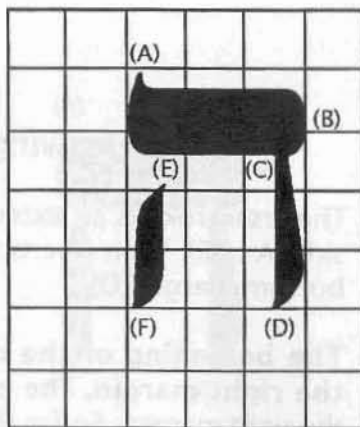
The first stroke is an extended Yod with a rounded right side (A to B). Then a vertical line is drawn from (C) to the bottom margin (D).

**The beginning of the descending line (C) is inside the right margin.** The extended Yod (A to B) touches the right margin. So far the letter is shaped exactly like Daleth

A descending vertical stroke (E to F) is drawn on the left margin of the letter. **The point (E) begins inside the extended Yod (A to B).**

## HEH

The three lines of the ה correspond to the three dimensions of physical reality: breadth, height and depth...The experience of depth, the “third dimension,” on our physical plane of normative consciousness, should remind us that even in our physical world there is a dimension of reality beyond our initial sensory perception.



*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The ה looks like a lobby with three walls, but with one side completely open. This indicates that God allows man free choice. He is free to obey or disobey God's will, but if he chooses to leave the safety of the Torah's spiritual and moral boundaries, he loses his foothold and slips, as it were, through the open space of the ה into the abyss...however, ה symbolizes God's readiness to forgive...A small opening is left in the top left leg of the ה symbolizing that a space always remains through which a repentant sinner can return.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi M. L. Munk*

While everyone can say, “I am present”, not everyone can say הִנְנִי, *Henni!*, “Here I am.” For to answer הִנְנִי means that you no longer belong to yourself. To answer הִנְנִי means that you give the ה of your being over to the ONE who calls. That is why ה is the letter most often linked with God's name.

*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner*

## Drawing the Heh

The first stroke is an extended Yod with a rounded right side (A to B). Then a vertical line is drawn from (C) to the bottom margin (D). This is just like a Daleth.

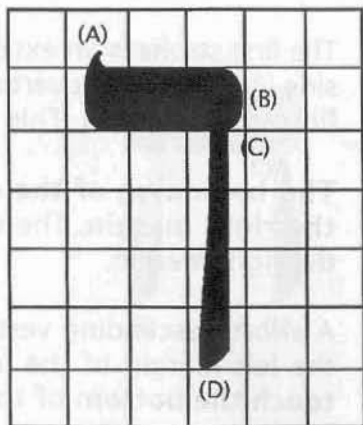
**The beginning of the descending line (C) is inside the right margin.** The extended Yod (A to B) touches the right margin.

A short descending vertical stroke (E to F) is drawn on the left margin of the letter. **The point (E) does not touch the bottom of the extended Yod (A to B).**



## Drawing the Kaph Final

The first stroke is an extended Yod with a rounded right side (A to B). Then a vertical line is drawn from (C) to (D).



**The beginning of the descending line (C) is inside the right margin.** The extended Yod (A to B) touches the right margin. The descending line (C to D) reaches below the bottom margin.

## Family V:

### Aleph, Ayin, Tzaddi, Mem, and Shin

This family of letters is unique in that each has its own peculiarities. They are a blend of several other letters.

Although they are not frequently confused with each other, they are the most difficult for the beginning student to draw.

## ALEPH

The union of higher reality, the upper ׀, with the lower reality, the lower ׀, by means of the connecting ׀, of Torah (the law), is the ultimate secret of the letter א.

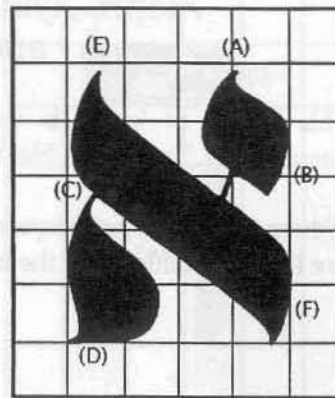
*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh*

For 26 generations the א complained before God: "I am the first of the letters yet You didn't create Your world with me!" "Don't worry", said God, "the world and all its fullness were created for the Torah alone. Tomorrow when I come to give My Torah at Sinai, the first word I say will begin with you."

*Rabbi Elazar bar Abina in Rabbi Aha's name  
Rabbi Lawrence Kushner's The Book of Letters*

Why does the Torah begin with the letter ב, the second letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, and not with the א? Because the א was granted a far nobler and important task. It would begin the Ten Commandments as the opening letter of the word אֱנֹכִי--I am the Lord, your God.

*The Secrets of Hebrew Words, Rabbi Benjamin Blech*



## Drawing the Aleph

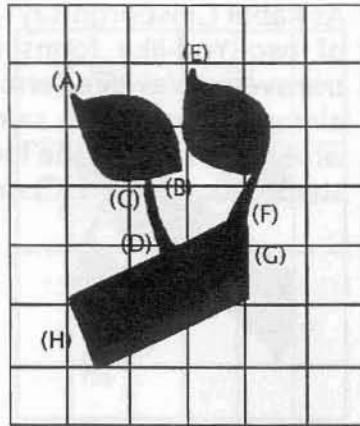
As Rabbi Ginsburgh says, the letter Aleph is composed of two Yod-like forms (A to B and C to D) and a transverse Vav-like form (E to F). The upper Yod has almost exactly the same shape as a regular Yod, whereas the lower one looks like it has "flowed into" its shape from a point (C) on the transverse Vav (E to F).

## AYIN

Every stroke in the Torah, even the tiniest, are vehicles for teaching us about God.

*Rabbi Akiba*

The letter א does not speak. It only sees. It is an eye, עין. Close your eyes. Open your mouth. Now try to see. That is the sound of א.



*The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

The form of the א, the consummated א--א א, according to the Arizal, enwedged into an elongated א--is the poor man receiving physical sustenance; the humble one receiving insight into the Law; the perfectly humble one (Moses) integrating the secrets of the Law. In addition, the form of the א depicts two eyes with connecting "optic nerves" entering the brain. The right eye is looking up at א and the left eye down at א....

*The Alef Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

Those who believe that their eyes (א) present all of reality are truly impoverished. They may become wealthy only by realizing their only support is from the Divine (א) and acting (א) on that knowledge.

*The Idiot Speaks, Caleb Follis*

The name of the letter עין when rearranged, spells "poor" עני. The letter א comes after א in the alphabet, to teach us that a man should "support" (א) the "poor" (ע) before poverty causes them to fall. In its shape also, the letter א, with its one curved leg,

suggests a person who has no firm basis; it is bending and unstable.

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

## Drawing the Ayin

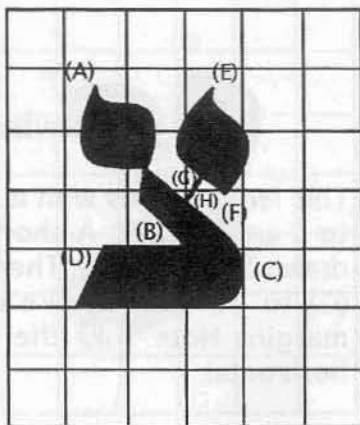
This letter begins with a shortened and curved Zain (A to B and C to D). A shortened and curved Vav is then drawn from (E) to (F). Then a broad stroke is made from (G) to (H). This stroke does not descend below the margin. Note that the last stroke (G to H) is **not** horizontal.

## TZADDI

The letter ז means “fish-hook,” signifying that which draws the fish (ד) out of the water (ב).

### *The Tarot, Paul Foster Case*

In the form of the ז, a ך is enwedged in the upper right side of a bent over ד...In general the ך and the ד represent the two dimensions of form and matter, which are present simultaneously in all created reality. The point of the ך, pure form, shapes the ד of matter into its intended form. The “Just Man” or “Righteous One” (צדיק) *Tzadik*, in “touch” with the inner, pure form of all reality, is able to “shape” reality in accordance with his will.



### *The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The letter ב immediately precedes the letter ז in the alphabet. This is to teach that guarding one's mouth from slander, gossip, foul language, and so on, is the means by which one attains the level of the *tzadik*, the righteous one.

### *Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

The Talmud observes that the bent ד has already taught us the lesson of humbleness and asks why this lesson need be repeated with the ז? The Talmud answers: *the written form of the Aleph-Beis adds one symbol of humility upon another symbol of*

*humility to emphasize the importance of this trait. This teaches that the Torah was given amid very great humility.*

### *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

No one can be a *Tzadik* alone. There must be at least nine others. We are able to rise only by binding ourselves with others who could never make it alone. This is a congregation (צבור) *Tzibur*. Deeds of giving (צדקה) *ts'daka* are the only reason for a congregation.

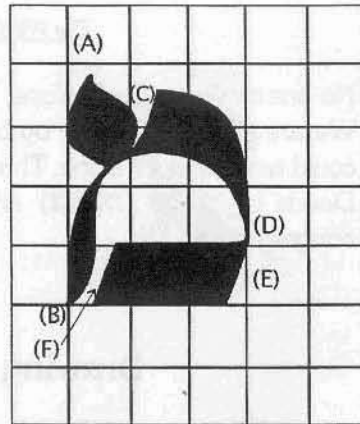
### *The Book of Letters, Rabbi Kushner*

## Drawing the Tzaddi

Tzaddi resembles its meaning--fish hook. It begins with a slanting Vav (A to B) that widens as it descends, then continues with a broad flat stroke from (C) to (D). An abbreviated Zain is added (E to F and G to H).

## MEM

The **מ**, whose name's primary meaning is "water," represents in its form as well as its name various bodies of water...it resembles a womb, which for the fetus is a "fountain of life." In Hebrew, the word **מֵן**, *mother*, also means "womb." Its essential consonant is the letter **מ**. In most languages **מ** is the basic sound of "mother." In general, the symbol of mother nature, Eve, "the mother of all life," is the womb of all (manifest) existence. This is after she ascends in aspiration--the secret of the letter **ל**--to receive from Adam the seed of life.



*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The open **מ** points to the obvious, openly revealed glory of God's actions. Figuratively, **מ** points upward to indicate God's sovereignty over us, while expressing through its otherwise bent posture our humble recognition of His Mercy, as if to say, in the words of King David: *For all is from You and from your hand it is given.* (I Chronicles 29:14)

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

*Rosh Millin* states that the letter **מ** consists of two parts. On the right is a curved component resembling the letters **ב** and **בּ**; these two letters allude to building and productivity. On the left is a

vertical stroke consisting of the letter **ל**, which is the letter of life. Thus the letter **מ** symbolizes constructive action and life.

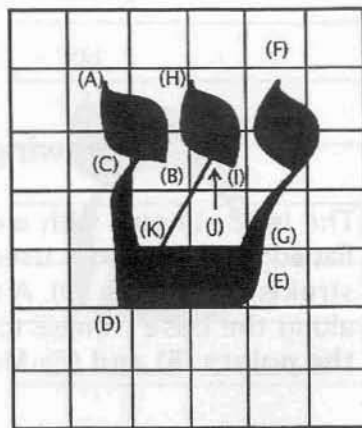
*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

## Drawing the Mem

The letter begins with a curved Vav (A to B). Then the flat edge of the pen is used to draw a narrowing curved stroke from (C) to (D). A wide flat stroke is then made along the base from (E) to (F). **A space is left between the points (B) and (F).** Mem is not an enclosed letter.

## SHIN

The **ש** is composed of three **י**'s, each with a **י** on its top, rising from a common base-point. The form of **ש** symbolizes symmetry at all levels....Its shape resembles flames of fire, as does its phonetic sound...In the Zohar, the **ש** is referred to as the "letter of the fathers." The three ascending **י**'s correspond to the three patriarchs, Abraham to the right (Chesed), Issac to the left (Geburah) and Jacob in the middle (Tiphareth).



*The Alef-Beit, Rabbi Ginsburgh*

The form of the letter **ש** reminds one of a mouth full of teeth. Unlike the letter **ד** which is turned to eat whatever it finds on its level, the **ש** is turned upwards to receive nourishment from on high. It is thus the higher octave of what is represented by **ד**.

*The Idiot Speaks, Caleb Folis*

HE caused the letter **ש** to reign in fire.

*Sephir Yetzirah*

According to the Zohar, the letter **ש** is called "the letter of truth." The three branches represent the three aspects of the truth about man: (1) he possesses a spiritual soul (*Neshamah*), (2) a spirit (*Ruach*), and (3) bodily soul (*Nefesh*).

*Letters of Fire, Rabbi Glazerson*

The form of the **ש** depicts natural phenomena that seem to surge heavenward, as if beseeching God for help and sustenance. These include a tree with its branches stretching to the sky, a bonfire with its flames shooting high, and a bed of flowers growing upward, longing to receive sustenance from above.

*The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, Rabbi Munk*

What is the meaning of the verse, "God is a man (**י**ש) of war?" Do not ask about something that is so simple. Listen to me and I will advise you...A King had a number of dwellings, and he gave each one a name. One was better than the other. He said, "I will give my son this dwelling whose name is **ש**. This one whose name is **י** is also good, as is this one whose name is **י**." What did he do then? He gathered all three together, and out of them he made a single name and a single house. He said, "How long will you continue to conceal your meaning?" The other replied: "My son, **ש** is the head. **י** is second to it. **ש** includes all the world."

*The Bahir*

## Drawing the Shin

The Shin is three Yods in a boat. It is also two Zains and a Vav connected at the base.

Begin by drawing a Zain on the left margin (A to B and C to D). Extend the base from (D) to (E). Then draw a curved Vav from (F) to (G).

The last segment of the letter is a Zain drawn from (H) to (I) from and (J) to (K).

Take care to leave adequate space between the top of the original Zain and the top of the Vav. This allows easy insertion of the slanted Zain which is added to complete the letter.

Some Qabalistic traditions teach that perfection comes or is represented by a four armed Shin.

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