


Hebrew Language: Pictograms

The Hebrew language is very different from English in several, distinctive ways. Not only are the letters not roman, but many other differences cause it to be a very interesting language. Learning some or much Hebrew will prove to be very rewarding. Learning the pictogram form of the alef-bet will add to your vocabulary.






Reference: “The Ancient Hebrew Language and Alphabet,” by Jeff A Benner. 2004. ISBN 1-58939-534-4.

As a result of the Tower of Babel, man began to migrate in different directions from Mesopotamia, just as God planned. The Shemites¹, descendants of Shem, son of Noah, traveled west speaking Hebrew.

The ancient Hebrew letters did, and do, influence(d) the Hebrew language in a manner unknown to those of us whose mother tongue is English. In earliest form, each letter is pictographic, meaning it represents something. Each pictogram, or letter, also has a name, usually the Hebrew word for the item the pictogram represents.







For example, the pictogram  is named beyht, meaning house. The name provides insight into ancient Hebrew culture, where houses were made of tents. This pictogram is a perfect representation of the floor plan of the tent, illustrating the fact that the language of the ancient Hebrews is very closely related to their lifestyle. Other examples follow.




The idea that the form of a letter provides meaning is very foreign to those of us whose mother tongue is English. Here is the first major difference between Hebrew and most other languages.

Pictogram	Picture	Meaning	Background	Modern Letter
	Head of an ox	Strong, power, leader	The ox was the strongest animal among Hebrew livestock.	א, alef
	Tent	Family, house, in	Function of tent is to provide covering for the family.	ב, beyht
	Foot	Gather, walk, carry	Men and animals would walk, on foot, gathering at the nearest watering hole.	ג, gimel
	Tent door	Hang, enter, move	Door hangs down over opening of the tent.	ד, dalet
	Man with arms raised	Look, reveal	The man pointing out a wonderful sight says, “Look.” Can also mean sigh or breath.	ה, hey

1. Also called Semites, the Hebrews. Later cultures, e.g. Phoenicians, Canaanites, Akkadians, Moabites, Ammonites and Arameans sprouted out of the Hebrews and are also part of the S(h)emetic family.


Pictogram	Picture	Meaning	Background	Modern Letter
⚓	Tent peg	Secure, add, hook	A peg is used to secure the tent. Used to “nail” or add something to something else.	ו, vav
⚒	Mattock	Cut, food, weapon	Mattock is representative of tools used for cutting. Can also mean weapon, or food, which comes after working the ground with a mattock.	ז, zayin
⚧	Tent wall	Separate, divide, half	The purpose of a wall is to separate the two rooms of a tent. Can also mean outside (the walls).	ח, chet
⊗	Basket	Contain, surround, mud	A basket contains the food and possessions of the family.	ט, tet
✋	Closed hand	Work, throw, worship	The hand is the part of the body that does the work. Can also mean throw or worship, both actions of the hand.	י, yood
☞	Open palm	Bend, allow, tame	The palm is representative of anything that is bent.	כ, kaph
⚔	Shepherd staff	Authority, teach, yoke, to, bind	The staff is seen as the authority and protection of the shepherd over his flock.	ל, lamed
🌊	Water	Mighty, chaos, blood	The Hebrews saw the sea as a mighty and chaotic place because of storms and turbulent waters.	מ, mem
🌱	Sprouting seed	Continue, heir, son	The seed is the continuation of a new generation. Can also mean son or heir.	נ, nun
⚔	Thorn	Hold, grab, hate, protect	A thorn holds onto the skin or fur of animals. Also means to protect, as the shepherd protected his flock overnight by a corral of thorn bushes.	ס, samech
👁	Eye	See, watch, know, shade	The eye is for seeing.	ע, ayin


Pictogram	Picture	Meaning	Background	Modern Letter
	Open mouth	Open, blow, scatter, edge	The mouth is the opening into the body.	פ, pey
	Man on his side	Side, wait, chase, hunt	One lies down on his side. Can also mean to lie in wait, as for prey.	צ, tzade
	Sun at the horizon	Condense, circle, time	When the sun is at the horizon, the light is condensed at the horizon.	ק, quph
	Head of a man	Top, first, beginning	The head, as the top of the body, represents anything that is at the top, head or beginning.	ר, resh
	Two front teeth	Sharp, press, eat, two	The front teeth are sharp for cutting meat.	ש, shin
	Crossed sticks	Sign, mark, signature	A mark is used as a sign to identify someone or something.	ת, tav


Of course, each of these pictograms, or letters, is a word, which means something. Granted the conversation would be limited, but, for example, the sentence    could be interpreted, "Kill and eat."























To enlarge the vocabulary, using the rule that Hebrew is written from right to left, let's combine pairs of pictograms to make new words. Fill in the blanks to describe how the pictogram pair means the word on the left.

Yes, thinking outside the box (of English) and accepting a new paradigm will probably be necessary. But, you are a creative person! So use those God-given talents and enjoy, and learn, and experience so you can be a credit to your Creator.

father _____ *strong man of the house* _____ 

fire _____ *strong consumer* _____ 

garden _____ 

brother	_____	
nose	_____	
cloth	_____ <i>tent door</i> _____	
son of	_____	
son	_____	
blood	_____	
mountain	_____	
strange	_____	
sharp	_____	
festival	_____	
hand	_____	
sea	_____	
palm	_____	
jar	_____	
heart	_____	
all	_____	
manna	_____	
bitter	_____	
rest	_____	
cloud	_____	
awake	_____	
witness	_____	

nation	_____	מִשְׁכָּל
mouth	_____	פִּי
bull	_____	בָּקָר
easy	_____	קֶלֶד
poor	_____	עָנִי
bad	_____	רָע
friend	_____	רֵעַ
high	_____	גָּבֹהַ
tooth	_____	שֵׁן
name	_____	שֵׁם
officer	_____	צֹרֵף
sign	_____	אוֹת
nation	_____	מִשְׁכָּל

Joined to HaShem Ministries
P O Box 607
St Johns AZ 85936
www.joinedtohashem.org
928.337.3131