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Back To The [Future](future.html)

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# I. Introduction - [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s ideal

In the beginning [HaShem](hashem.html) created the [heavens](heaven.html) and the Earth. [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s narrative goes on to describe the idyllic [world](worlds.html) which He created for the benefit of man. After this ideal [world](worlds.html) was created, [HaShem](hashem.html) placed man in His Garden which was planted eastward in Eden. The text goes to say that [HaShem](hashem.html) walked with [Adam](adam.html) and Eve in the [Garden of Eden](eden.html). This was [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s ideal:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:4-15*** *This is the account of the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the earth when they were created. When* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God made the earth and the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*-- And no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, But streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground--* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God formed the man from the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Now* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God had planted a garden in the* [*east*](east.html)*, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for* [*food*](food.html)*. In the middle of the garden were the* [*tree of life*](eternal.html) *and the tree of the* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into* [*four*](four.html) *headwaters. The* [*name*](name.html) *of the* [*first*](one.html) *is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The* [*name*](name.html) *of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The* [*name*](name.html) *of the* [*third*](three.html) *river is the Tigris; it runs along the* [*east*](east.html) *side of Asshur. And the* [*fourth*](four.html) *river is the Euphrates.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *God took the man and put him in the* [*Garden of Eden*](eden.html) *to work it and take care of it.*

How did HaShem create the world?

Rashi teaches us that the world was created using words of the Hebrew language.

**Rashi’s Commentary for: ‎ Bereshit (Genesis) 2:23 - This one shall be called ishah because, from ish** One expression coincides with the other [i.e., the words אִישׁ and words אִשָּׁה have the same root]. **From here is derived that the world was created with the Holy Tongue.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Rashi understood the world was created with the holy tongue, i.e. Hebrew, from the following midrash:

***Midrash Rabbah - Genesis XVIII:4*** *BONE OF MY BONES, AND FLESH OF MY FLESH. R. Tanhuma said: When a man takes one of his relations to wife, of him it is said, BONE OF MY BONES, AND FLESH OF MY FLESH. SHE SHALL BE CALLED, WOMAN (ISHAH), BECAUSE SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF MAN (ISH). From this you learn that the Torah was given in the Holy Tongue.[[2]](#footnote-2) R. Phinehas and R. Helkiah in R. Simon's name said: Just as it was given in the Holy Tongue, so was the world created with the Holy Tongues.[[3]](#footnote-3) Have you ever heard one say, gini, ginia; itha, ittha; antropi, antropia; gabra, gabretha?[[4]](#footnote-4) But ish and ishah [are used]: why? because one form corresponds to the other.[[5]](#footnote-5)*

This was the perfect [world](worlds.html) made exactly the way that [HaShem](hashem.html) wanted. At this point man sinned and changed the ideal, perfect [world](worlds.html) into something less. The Torah then goes on to describe the process and the people that [HaShem](hashem.html) will use to restore the ideal and to end the suffering of His [creation](bara.html). The suffering of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s [creation](bara.html) is described in:

***Romans 8:18-2*** *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The* [*creation*](bara.html) *waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the* [*creation*](bara.html) *was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the* [*one*](one.html) *who subjected it, in hope that the* [*creation*](bara.html) *itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious* [*freedom*](freedom.html) *of the children of God. We* [*know*](daat.html) *that the whole* [*creation*](bara.html) *has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present* [*time*](time.html)*. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the* [*redemption*](redemption.html) *of our* [*bodies*](body.html)*.*

This state of decay is the result of [sin](sin.html). The Tanach (the so called Old Testament) records [HaShem](hashem.html)’s plan to bring His people and [creation](bara.html) back to the ideal state in which they were created. Lets explore some of the aspects of [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s ideal. Let’s start by looking at the language that [Adam](adam.html) and Eve [spoke](mashal.html):

# II. Hebrew - The original language

Our Sages [teach](teacher.html) that the Hebrew Alef Bet was used to create the [world](worlds.html):

***Berachoth 55a*** *Rab Judah said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of Rab: Bezalel* [*knew*](daat.html) *how to combine the* [*letters*](letters.html) *by which the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and earth were created.[[6]](#footnote-6) It is written here, And He hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, and in* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html)*,[[7]](#footnote-7) and it is written elsewhere, The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*,[[8]](#footnote-8) and it is also written, By His* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *the depths were broken up.*

Because Hebrew was used to create the [world](worlds.html), we [know](daat.html) that [Adam](adam.html) and Eve both [spoke](mashal.html) Hebrew.

Since they both [spoke](mashal.html) Hebrew, then Hebrew was the mother [tongue](spirit.html) until the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html). At the tower of [Babel](bavel.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) indicates that there was only [one](one.html) language:[[9]](#footnote-9)

***Bereshit (Genesis) 11:1-9*** *Now the whole* [*world*](worlds.html) *had* [*one*](one.html) *language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a* [*city*](city.html)*, with a tower that reaches to the* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, so that we may make a* [*name*](name.html) *for ourselves and not be scattered over the* [*face*](body.html) *of the whole earth.” But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came down to see the* [*city*](city.html) *and the tower that the men were building.* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, “If as* [*one*](one.html) *people* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” So* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the* [*city*](city.html)*. That is why it was called* [*Babel*](bavel.html)*--because there* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *confused the language of the whole* [*world*](worlds.html)*. From here* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *scattered them over the* [*face*](body.html) *of the whole earth.*

This is confirmed by Rashi who tells us that this universal language was Hebrew!

The Targum confirms this understanding:

**Targum Pseudo Jonathan for: Bereshit (Genesis) 11:1-32** 1. And all the earth was (of) [one](one.html) language, and [one](one.html) speech, and [one](one.html) counsel. In the holy language [spoke](mashal.html) they, that by which the [world](worlds.html) had been created at the beginning.

[[JERUSALEM](city.html). And all the inhabitants of the earth were (of) [one](one.html) language, and of [one](one.html) speech, and [one](one.html) counsel: for they [spoke](mashal.html) the holy language by which the [world](worlds.html) was created at the beginning:]

To understand where Hebrew originated, lets look at the definition of “Hebrew”. The [first](one.html) use of the word “Hebrew” is found in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 14:13***[*One*](one.html) *who had escaped came and reported this to* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *the Hebrew. Now* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were allied with* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*.*

“Hebrew”, here, is defined by Strong’s as:

5680 `Ibriy, ib-ree’; patron. from 5677; an Eberite (i.e. Hebrew) or desc. of **Eber**:-Hebrew (-ess, woman).

At this point we need to see who “Eber” is:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 11:14-26*** *When Shelah had lived* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *years, he became the father of* ***Eber****. And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters. When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters. When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters. When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters. When Serug had lived* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *years, he became the father of Nahor. And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters. When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of* [*Terah*](stages.html)*. And after he became the father of* [*Terah*](stages.html)*, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters. After* [*Terah*](stages.html) *had lived 70 years, he became the father of* [***Abram***](avraham.html)*, Nahor and Haran.*

Eber is a distant ancestor of [Abram](avraham.html). If the language of Eber was Hebrew, as evidenced by it’s etymology, then it is reasonable to understand that [Abram](avraham.html) would [speak](mashal.html) the language of his family. The tower of [Babel](bavel.html) will take place long after Eber, in the days of [Abram](avraham.html). This would indicate that Hebrew was the language of [Adam](adam.html) and Eve. We can nail this point by pointing out that [Avraham](avraham.html) was the [first](one.html) person called a Hebrew. This passage is also where we find the [first](one.html) use of the word Hebrew, hence the [creation](bara.html) of the concept of a Hebrew:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 14:13*** *And there came* [*one*](one.html) *that had escaped, and told* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with* [*Abram*](avraham.html)*.*

The [first](one.html) person to be called a *Hebrew* was [Avraham](avraham.html), and the [name](name.html) commonly refers to his descendants, [known](daat.html) as the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. The word for Hebrew used in the Bible is עברי (pronounced “Ivri”), meaning “of or pertaining to עבר-eber”. So what does “eber” mean?

The [Midrash](orallaw.html)[[10]](#footnote-10) quotes [three](three.html) opinions as to where this [name](name.html) comes from:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XLII:8*** *AND TOLD* [*ABRAM*](avraham.html) *THE HEBREW (HA -’ IBRI). R. Judah said: [HA – ‘ IBRI signifies that] the whole* [*world*](worlds.html) *was on* [*one*](one.html) *side (’eber) while he was on the other side (’eber).[[11]](#footnote-11) R. Nehemiah said: [It denotes] that he was descended from Eber. The Rabbis said: It means that he came from across the river[[12]](#footnote-12); further, that he* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *in the language of the dwellers across the river.*

1. Rabbi Yehuda [taught](teacher.html) that the word “eber” means “opposite side”. [Avraham](avraham.html) believed in [one](one.html) G‑d, and the rest of the [world](worlds.html) worshipped man-made gods. Thus, “[Abraham](avraham.html) stood on [one](one.html) side, and the entire [world](worlds.html) stood on the other side”.
2. Rabbi Nechemiah opined that it is a reference to Ever, great-great-grandson of [Noah](noachide.html) (usually Anglicized as “Eber”), ancestor of [Abraham](avraham.html). Eber was [one](one.html) of the bearers of the monotheistic tradition which he had learned from his ancestors Shem and [Noah](noachide.html) and passed on to his grandson [Avraham](avraham.html). Since [Avraham](avraham.html) was a descendant and disciple of his, he is called an Ivri.
3. Our Rabbis held that the word is a reference to the fact that [Avraham](avraham.html) came from the other side of the river and was not a native Canaanite. “Ivri” also refers to the fact that [Avraham](avraham.html) [spoke](mashal.html) the Hebrew language, thus named because of its ancient origins, preceding the development of the other languages current at that [time](time.html).

So, if Hebrew was in the beginning, then we would expect that it will be the language of the [future](future.html). There is a reference to this in:

***Zephaniah 3:8-10*** *Therefore wait ye upon me, saith* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination [is] to* [*gather*](gather.html) *the* [*nations*](nations.html)*, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, [even] all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the* [*fire*](fire.html) *of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, to serve him with* [*one*](one.html) *consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, [even] the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine* [*offering*](korbanot)*.*

Since [Abram](avraham.html) was [forty](forty.html)-[eight](eight.html) years old at the [time](time.html) of the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html); and since [Abram](avraham.html) did not participate in the [sin](sin.html) of [Babel](bavel.html), it is reasonable to conclude that [Abram](avraham.html)‘s language was not as confused. We find this conclusion also, in the [Talmud](orallaw.html):

***Avodah Zarah 19a*** *R. Simeon b. Pazi expounded [that verse as follows]: ‘Happy is the man that hath not walked‘ — i.e., to theatres and circuses of idolaters ‘nor stood in the way of sinners’ — that is he who does not attend contests of wild beasts;[[13]](#footnote-13) ‘nor sat in the seat of the scornful’ — that is he who does not participate in [evil] plannings. And lest* [*one*](one.html) *say, ‘Since I do not go to theatres or circuses nor attend contests of wild animals, I will go and indulge in* [*sleep*](mashal.html)*.’ Scripture therefore continues, ‘And in His* [*Law*](law.html) *doth He meditate day and night.’ Said R. Samuel b. Nahmani in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Jonathan: Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *— that is our father* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *who did not follow the counsel of the men of the* [*Generation*](toldot.html) *of the Division[[14]](#footnote-14) who were* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*, as it is said, Come, let us build us a* [*city*](city.html)*, and a tower, with its top in* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*,’[[15]](#footnote-15) nor stood in the way of sinners — for he did not take up the stand of the Sodomites, who were sinful, as it is said, Now the men of Sodom were* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *and sinful against the Lord exceedingly;[[16]](#footnote-16) nor sat in the seat of the scornful — for he did not sit in the company of the Philistines, because they were scoffers; as it is said, And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said: Call for Samson that he may make us sport.[[17]](#footnote-17)*

**Therefore, the language of Eden had now been passed to** [**Abram**](avraham.html) **and his family on an exclusive basis. This explains how Hebrew could, seemingly, originate with** [**Abram**](avraham.html)**. Hebrew, by definition, means “beyond the river”, referring to** [**Abram**](avraham.html) **who was beyond the Euphrates river.**

According to the [Midrash](orallaw.html), [Abram](avraham.html) was 48 when the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) was built. He was an adult who consciously chose not to participate in the endeavor. And as a reward, when the other clans were given their own languages, causing them to spread out and become separate [nations](nations.html), [Abram](avraham.html) was not so punished, and still [spoke](mashal.html) and thought in Hebrew. It is worth noting that the primary confusion of the languages was that even those who [spoke](mashal.html) Hebrew could no longer accurately communicate with words. The thoughts in the speaker’s [head](body.html) were not the thoughts in the listener’s [head](body.html). Prior to [Babel](bavel.html), the speaker and the listener had exactly the same thoughts.

The gift of [speaking](mashal.html) Hebrew, then, is no small thing. It’s not just exposure to a holier mode of speech. Hebrew gives us the tools to organize our concepts in the way [HaShem](hashem.html) intended. Instead of asking whether Judaism is a race or a religion, with the connotation of those words, we can look at the Children of Israel, and the meaning given those terms by the Torah.

Since the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) was given exclusively in Hebrew, it stands to reason that those who [know](daat.html) Hebrew, [know](daat.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) better than those who do not [speak](mashal.html) Hebrew. Since the [wicked](wicked.html) of [Babel](bavel.html) were conspiring against [HaShem](hashem.html), therefore [HaShem](hashem.html) took away their Hebrew. The [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[18]](#footnote-18) and the [Zohar](orallaw.html) [teach](teacher.html) that this was just [one](one.html) of many punishments which [HaShem](hashem.html) meted out to the tower-builders. Why then does the Torah single this out?

Rav Yoel Teitelbaum (the Satmar Rav) zatz’l explains that taking away these people’s ability to [speak](mashal.html) Hebrew was not a punishment; it was [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s mechanism for stopping their plans. He explains: When people cooperate and work out their plans in the Hebrew language, miracles will occur for them. For that very reason, sinners cannot be permitted to conspire in Hebrew.[[19]](#footnote-19)

How do words from foreign languages crop up in the Torah which is written in the Holy [Tongue](spirit.html)? The answer lies in the Torah account of the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html) which begins with the passage:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 11:1*** *“The whole earth was of* [*one*](one.html) *language”*

Which our Sages tell was the Holy [Tongue](spirit.html) of Hebrew. Even when [HaShem](hashem.html) confounded their language by introducing so many different [tongues](spirit.html) in order to disperse them, some traces of Hebrew remained in the [new](new.html) languages. We therefore find our Sages turning to foreign languages (an example is the word “hadar” used by the Torah for the etrog because it requires so much “hydra” - Greek for water - to nourish its growth) to reveal the meaning of an unusual word. The similarity of a foreign word to the mysterious Hebrew word is an indication that it is a survivor of that [nation](nations.html)‘s original use of Hebrew.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Ok, at this point we see that the [one](one.html) language, Hebrew, became many languages at the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html). I believe that this incident took place on the [sixth](six.html) day of the [third](three.html) month, [Sivan](feasts.html) 6, which is the [feast of Weeks](shavuot.html), Hag [Shavuot](shavuot.html).

The sages understood that the Torah was delivered, at Mount [Sinai](stages.html), in [seventy](seventy.html) languages to all of the [nations](nations.html). They understood that the Spirit of [HaShem](hashem.html) appeared as a [tongue](spirit.html) of [fire](fire.html) which went out from the stone tablets to each of the children of Israel and asked if they would accept this [covenant](covenant.html). When the answer was “yes” the [tongue](spirit.html) went back and helped carve the [ten](ten.html) words. In [Exodus](exodus.html) Rabbah we read:

[***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***Rabbah 5:9*** *When* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *gave the Torah on* [*Sinai*](stages.html)*, He displayed untold marvels to Israel with His voice. What happened?* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *and the Voice reverberated throughout the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. ....it says, And all the people witnessed the thunderings (*[*Exodus*](exodus.html) *18:15). Note that it does not say “the thunder”, but “the thunderings”, wherefore, R. Johanan said that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s voice, as it was uttered, split up into* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *voices, in* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *languages, so that all the* [*nations*](nations.html) *should understand. When each* [*nation*](nations.html) *heard the Voice in their own vernacular, their souls departed,* [*save*](salvation.html) *Israel, who heard but were not hurt.*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also records something similar:

*On the occasion of matan (the giving of the) Torah, the Bnai Israel (the children of Israel) not only heard* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s Voice but actually saw the sound waves as they emerged from* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s* [*mouth*](body.html)*. They visualized them as a fiery substance. Each* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *that left* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*‘s* [*mouth*](body.html) *traveled around the entire* [*camp*](stages.html) *and then came back to every* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *individually, asking him, “Do you accept upon yourself this* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *with all halachot pertaining to it?” Every* [*Jew*](gen-jew.html) *answered, “Yes”, after each* [*commandment*](cmds613.html)*. Finally, the fiery substance which they saw, engraved itself on the luchot (stone tablets).[[21]](#footnote-21)*

Does this remind you of II Luqas (Acts) chapter 2?

***II Luqas (Acts) 2:1-11*** *When the day of* [*Pentecost*](shavuot.html) *came, they were all together in* [*one*](one.html) *place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *and filled the whole house where they were* [*sitting*](mashal.html)*. They saw what seemed to be* [*tongues*](spirit.html) *of* [*fire*](fire.html) *that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to* [*speak*](mashal.html) *in other* [*tongues*](spirit.html) *as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *God-fearing* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *from every* [*nation*](nations.html) *under* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each* [*one*](one.html) *heard them* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (Both* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own* [*tongues*](spirit.html)*!”*

They say [seventy](seventy.html) languages because:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 46:26-27*** *All those who went to Egypt with* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*--those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons’ wives--numbered sixty-*[*six*](six.html) *persons. With the* [*two*](two.html) *sons who had been born to* [*Joseph*](joseph.html) *in Egypt, the members of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*‘s family, which went to Egypt, were* [*seventy*](seventy.html) *in all.*

**and:**

***Devarim (Deuteronomy)******32:7-9*** *Remember the days of old; consider the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you. When the Most High gave the* [*nations*](nations.html) *their* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of the sons of Israel. For* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s portion is his people,* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *his allotted* [*inheritance*](inherit.html)*.*

It appears that [HaShem](hashem.html)‘s plan is to, [one](one.html) day, return to having all of His people [speak](mashal.html) [one](one.html) language, Hebrew. We will be returning to the language of the [Garden of Eden](eden.html). We will be going back to the [future](future.html)!

# III. The Hebrew Alphabet

Shlain[[22]](#footnote-22) makes a compelling argument that Hebrew was the very [first](one.html) alphabet ever used. He indicated that an alphabet is different from pictographs and hieroglyphs. He suggests that the Hebrew alphabet was invented at [Sinai](stages.html) in the days of Moses. This is an extremely intriguing thought because this indicates that Hebrew dramatically changed the whole [world](worlds.html)! With Hebrew, we have the ability to store words, thoughts, and communications. We have never had this ability previously. And what was the [first](one.html) thing stored? The [first](one.html) thing stored was The Word of [HaShem](hashem.html), in Hebrew! This is an extremely profound thought.

Thus we understand that Hebrew was the [first](one.html) spoken language and the [first](one.html) written language.

The Hebrew alphabet, detailed below, consists of [twenty](twenty.html)-[two](two.html) [letters](letters.html). All of these [letters](letters.html) are consonants. Vowels are indicated by small dots and marks surrounding the individual [letters](letters.html). [Four](four.html) of the [letters](letters.html) have a different form when they fall at the end of the word.

Each [letter](letters.html) has a meaning and a numeric value associated with it. The [letters](letters.html) are considered to be the building blocks of [creation](bara.html) (see *Sefer Yetzira* for more information on this subject).

Traditional kabbalists take the view that the Hebrew language is divinely inspired and that this was the only language existing prior to the Biblical story of the destruction of the Tower of [Babel](bavel.html).

The Hebrew [letters](letters.html) can be considered as expressions in a mathematical formula. Each [letter](letters.html) has a meaning and the combination of [letters](letters.html) used in a word can be seen as the embodiment of the component individual [letter](letters.html) meanings.

In many, if not all, mystical systems the importance of knowing an entity’s correct [name](name.html) is stressed. [Knowledge](knowledge.html) of a [name](name.html) confers power over the entity concerned.

# IV. Coincidences?

It is worth noting that Hebrew allows us to understand unknown words by simply adding up the meaning of each individual [letter](letters.html), taking into account its order in the word.

**א** – The [letter](letters.html) alef is a pointer to G-d. Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that the alef is composed of [two](two.html) yods separated by a vav. Thus the alef has a numerical value of [twenty](twenty.html)-[six](six.html), which is also the gematria of [HaShem](hashem.html) (יהוה). This [letter](letters.html) is so sublime that it does not have a sound. The alef appears as the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of a word in the word Elohim (אֱלהִים), which is normally translated as *G-d*.

**ה** – The [letter](letters.html) ***hei*** has the meaning of fertility or pregnancy. *Pregnancy* is the power to bring the potential to actualization. Adding this [letter](letters.html) to the end of many words will change the word from masculine to feminine.

[Abraham](avraham.html) saw in the [stars](mazaroth.html) that he would have no children, but that changed after [HaShem](hashem.html) promised him that a son would be born to him and Sarah. At that [time](time.html) he also changed his [name](name.html) from [*Abram*](avraham.html) to [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*,* and *Sarai* to *Sarah*, by adding the [letter](letters.html) ***hei*** to their names. The [number](nchart.html) [five](five.html) and the [letter](letters.html) ***hei*** are therefore connected to change of *mazal* and **fertility**. And not only that, but it is said regarding the [letter](letters.html) ***hei***: “Then [Joseph](joseph.html) said to the people, ‘Behold I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh; lo, *here* [in Hebrew, “***hei***”] is [seed](flower.html) for you”, and you shall plant the land.” (Gen. 47:23) This means that it through the [letter](letters.html) ***hei*** that you will have [**seed**](flower.html).

**פ** – This [letter](letters.html) is also the word for [*mouth*](body.html) – pey.

The word for *coin* [in Hebrew, “*perutah*”]to be made up of [two](two.html) [letter](letters.html)-groups: *pei-reish-tet* and *vav-hei*. ***Pey*** represents segregation, division, partition, disarray, loss of meaning. Metaphorically, pey represents the outward expression, through the [mouth](body.html), of the thoughts or feelings of the [head](body.html), as a stream of separate syllables, words, and sentences, which may be chaotic.

**ר** – This [letter](letters.html) sounds nearly like *rosh* ([head](body.html))[[23]](#footnote-23) and is found as the [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of a word in the Torah, in the word *reshit*. Although the [letter](letters.html) ***reish*** is situated close to the end of the alef-beit, its primary meaning is [*head*](body.html) or *beginning*.[[24]](#footnote-24) ***Reish*** is associated with features of wholeness, completeness, order, existence of meaning. Metaphorically, ***reish*** stands for products of the [head](body.html), like a thought or a feeling, which are experienced as a whole (as single indivisible units).

When **פ** and **ר** are combined with a [third](three.html) [letter](letters.html) to form a root, we have the idea of an entity that was whole and has disintegrated into many parts. Something that was in order that was transformed into disarray. It has become part of a whole that has become separate. The following examples of Hebrew roots should demonstrate this:

פרא – Generates an adjective that implies *wild*, *savage*, *out of order*.

פרד – Generates words that mean *to separate* or *to depart*.

פרה – Is the source of words meaning *to become fruitful* or *pregnant* ([one](one.html) made into [two](two.html) that eventually separate).

פרז – Generates words that mean *excessive* and *over-flowing*, as well as adjectives that describe a [city](city.html) with no boundaries (no dividing wall).

פרת – Means *to give details* but also to change a bank note into small coins.

פרם – Means *to take apart* (a cloth).

פרש – Means to slice into many parts (like slicing bread). It also means *to separate from* (as from a company or group).

פרע – Means *to inflict disorder* or *chaos*.

פרץ – Means *to break into* (like in a burglary) and also *to make a dent or a hole* (in a wall).

פרכ – This root means *to dismantle*.

רפא – Has the meaning of putting something which was out of order, into order – *to cure*. (This is the reverse of words that begin with פר).

**Bibliography:**

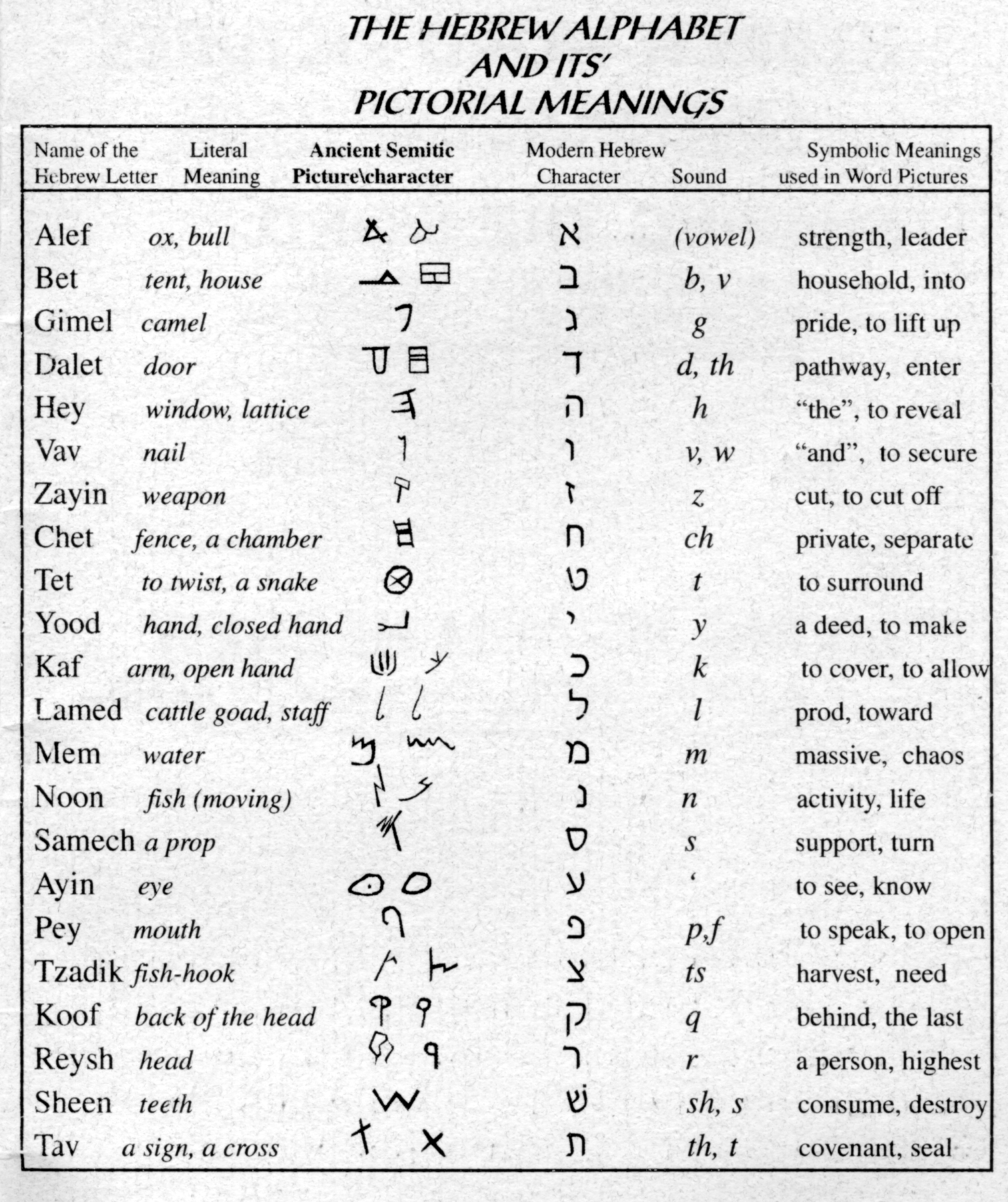
*Coincidences in the Bible and in Biblical Hebrew*, by Haim Shore

**Recommended Reading:**

1. *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet* - Rabbi [Michael](angels.html) L. Munk - Mesorah Publications, ltd
2. [*Letters*](letters.html) *of* [*Fire*](fire.html) - Matityahu Glazerson - Feldheim Publishers
3. *Power of Aleph Beth* (Vols I and 2) - Dr.Philip S Berg - The Research Centre of Kabbalah

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Letter](letters.html) | [Name](name.html) | Sound | Numeric Value |
| א | aleph | No sound | 1 |
| ב | beth | b | 2 |
| ג | gimel | g | 3 |
| ד | daleth | d | 4 |
| ה | hey | h | 5 |
| ו | vau | v | 6 |
| ז | zayin | z | 7 |
| ח | cheth | ch | 8 |
| ט | teth | t | 9 |
| י | yod | y | 10 |
| כ | kaph | k | 20 |
| ל | lamed | l | 30 |
| מ | mem | m | 40 |
| נ | nun | n | 50 |
| ס | samekh | s | 60 |
| ע | ayin | o | 70 |
| פ | pe | p | 80 |
| צ | tzaddi | tz | 90 |
| ק | qof | q | 100 |
| ר | resh | r | 200 |
| ש | shin | sh | 300 |
| ת | tau | th | 400 |
| ך | kaph (final) | k | 500 |
| ם | mem (final) | m | 600 |
| ן | nun (final) | n | 700 |
| ף | pe (final) | p | 800 |
| ץ | tzaddi (final) | tz | 900 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Symbol** | **Sefardi** | **Ashkenazi** | **Meaning** | **Expanded Meaning** | **Value** | **Cursive** |  |
| א | alef | alef | oxen | *Elohim,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) | 1 | א |  |
| ב | bet, vet | beis, veis | house |  | 2 | ב |  |
| ג | gimel | gimmel | camel |  | 3 | ג |  |
| ד | dalet | doles | door |  | 4 | ד |  |
| ה | he | hei | window | *Fertility, pregnancy* | 5 | ה |  |
| ו | vav | vov/vof | hook |  | 6 | ו |  |
| ז | zayin | zayin | sword |  | 7 | ז |  |
| ח | khet | ches | Fence, hedge, chamber |  | 8 | ח |  |
| ט | tet | tes | serpent |  | 9 | ט |  |
| י | yod | yud | [hand](fourteen.html) |  | 10 | י |  |
| ך כ | kaf, khaf | kof, chof | palm |  | 20 | ך כ |  |
| ל | lamed | lomed | cattle goad |  | 30 | ל |  |
| ם מ | mem | mem | water |  | 40 | םמ |  |
| ן נ | nun | nun | fish |  | 50 | ןנ |  |
| ס | samekh | somech | A prop |  | 60 | ס |  |
| ע | ayin | ayin/oyin | eye |  | 70 | פ |  |
| ף פ | pe, fe | pei, fei | [mouth](body.html) | [*Mouth*](body.html) *– segregation, division, partition, disarray, loss of meaning* | 80 | ץפ |  |
| ץ צ | tsadi | tsodi/tsodik | fish hook |  | 90 | צץ |  |
| ק | kuf | kuf | [monkey](mashal.html) |  | 100 | ק |  |
| ר | resh | reish | [head](body.html) | [*Head*](body.html)*, beginning – wholeness, completeness, order, existence of meaning* | 200 | ר |  |
| ש | shin, [sin](sin.html) | shin, [sin](sin.html) | tooth |  | 300 | ש |  |
| ת | tav | tov/tof, sov/sof | [sign](signs.html) |  | 400 | ת |  |



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1. from Gen. Rabbah 18:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sc. Heb. ishah is grammatically the fem. of ish, and Adam's remark is unintelligible unless he spoke in Hebrew. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I.e. Hebrew was the first language to be used. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gini (<Gr.>) and antropi (an assumed form for <Gr.>) are woman and man respectively in Greek; ittha and gabra are the same in Aramaic. It is pointed out that these words lack the corresponding feminine or masculine forms, such as are seen in ish and ishah. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Pa'am is given a twofold significance: (i) a bell, connecting it with pa'amon; and (ii) trouble, connecting it with the verb pa'am, to trouble. disquiet.-The translation and interpretation follow Th. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Kabbalah assigns mystic powers to the [letters](letters.html) of the Hebrew alphabet. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. XXXV, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. prov. III, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. According to “The Jewish Encyclopedia”, volume 2, page 396, under “Babel” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Bereshit Rabbah 42:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. He alone of all mankind believed in the true God. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Yehoshua (Joshua) 24:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Contest of wild beasts with beasts or with men; hunt of animals. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The builders of the Tower of Babel. Abraham was a younger contemporary of Peleg in whose days was the earth divided. (Gen. X, 25.) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid. XI, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid. XIII, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Judges XVI, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Sanhedrin 109 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. VaYoel Moshe p.433 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Zevachim 37b [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “The [Midrash](orallaw.html) Says on Shemot”, Rabbi Moshe Weissman, Benei Yakov Publication (1980), page 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image*, by Leonard Shlain. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Sefer HaArachim Chabad*, *Osios*, letter ***reish***, p. 376. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh [↑](#footnote-ref-24)