

Ayin Tovah Workshop Handouts
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A GESTURAL ALEF-BET

“Alef-Bet Meditation/A Guide to gesture and meaning of the Hebrew Letters”

The natural gesture of the hand is consistent with the meaning of the letter, and it is unfurling from front to back, out to the side and around the spine and out again and back to the heart. The Hebrew letters in hand projections are based on 12th Century Rashi-Nachmanides script.

“The hand functions to project gesture and meaning: the gesture has the potential to bear the meaning of a primordial or archetypal articulation of our conscious will. With the repetitions in the form of a moving meditation, the dance becomes a sacred experience - a personal journey of the Transcendent – a path to experiencing Spirituality.”

Stan Tenen, The Alphabet That Changed the World

Letters for *Ayin Tovah*, A Good Eye, or Focusing on the Good, עין טובה

Ayin, ע

Yud, י

Nun Sofit, ן

Tet, ט

Vav, ו

Vet, ב

Hey, ה

Sources:

The Alphabet That Changed the World, by Stan Tenen

The Book of Letters, a Mystical Alef-bait, by Lawrence Kushner

www.walkingkabbalah.com/hebrew-alphabet-letter-meanings/

Compiled by Idelle Packer, idellepacker@gmail.com; from Idelle Packer's Mighty Cheat Sheet 2020, course given on Gestural Alef-Bet, presented by embodiedjewishlearning.org.

AYIN, ע

Alef-Bet Letter # 16

Meaning:

The eye, sightline, insight. The source: the Nothingness out of which everything has emanated; relates to time - an aspect of the visionary - to see not just what is happening in front of us, but to envision beyond, to know one's direction. Ayin demands we open our eyes, to see beyond the physical. Ayin urges us to break through the walls of limitation in order to see what is not yet visible to us.

Number 70 - 10-fold of 7, a completion of seven.

"Ayin does not speak. It only sees. It is an eye (Ayin). Close your eyes. Open your mouth. Now try to see. That is the sound of Ayin." "It is the silent humility of serving, worshiping, emptying yourself so you can be filled with God." "Aytz Chaim...It is a tree of life for those who hold on to it." Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters

Gematria: 70

Hint/Gesture: Palms cupped, positioned at either side of eyes, like binoculars

Words for Ayin: Ayin (eye); Eitz/Eitzim (tree/trees); Eitz Chaim (Tree of Life); Oh-lam (world); L'olam va'ed (forever); Ah-tzor (stop); Ahm (nation); Anavah (humility); Avodah (worship/service); Avadim Ha-yinu (we were slaves); Ah-fi-fone (kite); Ee-parone (pencil).

YUD, ך

Alef-Bet Letter # 10

Meaning:

The Hand, initial point of light. Hand refers to self (#10 - fingers of the 2 hands). Symbol of power, of creative and directed energy that maintains individual existence - a primal vibration, the Creator, the single point from which all of creation emerges, and the Unity within multiplicity; the point of light out of which everything has emanated. Yud, as the smallest letter, also symbolizes humility, yet the foundation of all foundations, the hidden Divine spark which causes everything to be.

“Yud most often represents God’s name. And the Jewish people....Like a dove soaring beyond the heavens. A dove searching anxiously for a place to alight: God, the Jewish people, and the smallest letter.” Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters

Gematria: 10

Hint/Gesture: Palms/fingers toward collar bone/chest - gesture is self-referring

Words for Yud: Yad (hand); Yerushalayim (Jerusalem); Yeled (boy); Yaldah (girl); Yayin (wine); Yam (sea); Yafeh/Yafah (nice m/f); Yarey-ach (moon); Yanshoof (owl); Yichud (unity); Yaitsair (inclination); Yad Chazakah (strong hand); Yonah (Jonah); Ya-akov (Jacob).

NUN, נ NUN SOFIT, ן

Alef-Bet Letter # 14

Meaning:

The neck - connection of mind to heart. Nexus, universal life; an inner guide. Nun is the soul - a constant presence/humility - silent, bent, and humble, constantly giving light but staying hidden - a connection between the body (impermanent) and the soul (permanent). Nun teaches us about the nature of time and space; supple and flexible like the fish, changing continuously but always remaining the same, just like the flowing of water. Looking at its shape - to connect to our soul we must bend above and below. The number 50 - 50 gateways to consciousness/wisdom.

“Nun is the soulbird (n’shama) easily frightened and falls away silent....ecstatic with a melody on top of melody. Hurling herself through laughter and tears. Cascading waterfalls of wonder. You do not open your eyes to see Nun; you close them. Nun is what is holy in each person, a spark (nitzotz) in each of us. And then when you die, the nun, the soulbird, returns to G-d who warms her and blesses her and sends her out again.” Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters

Gematria: 50/700

Hint/Gesture: Arms reach up overhead, straight and parallel; palms facing one another

Words for Nun Sofit: Notain (gives); Ra-ah-shan (grogger); Afikomen (afikoman); Lashone (tongue); Adone (master); Ah-rone (closet/ark); Shulchan (table); Amen (amen); Melafifone (cucumber); Ayin (eye); Oh-zen (ear); Gefen (grapevine); Tzi-on (Zion); Beten (stomach).

TET, ט

Alef-Bet Letter # 9

Meaning:

Condensed energy, constriction, snake, complete; power like the moment of power - built up and contained - before the snake releases/strikes. Reminiscent of man's power from a build-up of spiritual awareness which when released creates heightened awareness reminding him of his divine origin. A basket or nest, container of the good in all creation - of Chesed (kindness and mercy); womb container. A feminine letter, its number 9 - 9 months of pregnancy.

"And God saw all that God had made and behold it was good 'tov.' Tet is good. It is good to be alive. Good to give thanks to the Lord." Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters.

Gematria: 9

Hint/Gesture: Arms reach forward at waist level, as if holding a big basket, palms facing one another.

Words for Tet: Tallit (tallit); Tu B'Shevat (Tu B'Shevat); Tevah (nature); Tal (dew); Taba-aht (ring); Tavas (peacock); Taleh (sheep); Tayas (pilot); Ta-ahm (taste); Taharah (purify).

VAV, ם

Alef-Bet Letter # 6

Meaning:

Integration. Pouring down head to spine. Spine, string of vertebrae; pin, nail or hook - bringing things together; the power to unite everything that is separated in creation; the vertical line extension of the Creator's perfection into the created world. Vav is related to the direct light of the Creator, entering the world; like Jacob's ladder; rooted in earth, with its head in the heavens; number 6 - represents the six days of creation of the world, as well as the six physical dimensions (right and left, front and back, up and down).

Vav was once a picture of a hook. "Vav is the sound of being joined. . And Vav is the sound of 'and.' One and another....That is the work of Vav; to join us all into a myriad of constellations, each remaining different, each bound to the other." Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters.

Gematria: 6

Hint/Gesture: Hands come up and over head, fingertips resting on the top of the head, pointing down the spine.

Words for Vav: Vav (hook); Vashti (Vashti); Vered/Varode (rose/pink); Veekuach (argument); Virtuali (virtual); Vi-doo-i (confession); Veetour (concede/give in); Vah-dee (wadi); V'/Vah' (and - prefix); Vah-ye-hi (and behold); V'shamru (and kept); Vayikrah (and called).

VET (BET), ב

Alef-Bet Letter # 2

Meaning:

Separating what is inside from what is outside. “The first distinction” - quote by Stan Tenen; break-out, birth; action; house; tent; dwelling, sanctuary; temple; container containing the light and the spirit. The number value, two, stands for a duality in creation - such as light/darkness; man/woman; good inclination (yetzer hatov)/evil inclination (yetzer hara). Vet-Bet’s literal meaning and form denote a house, and on a mystical and practical level, represents the concept of a vessel. Thus the spiritual is meant to be housed within the created world. So the dual world of Vet/Bet actually contains within it the Ultimate Oneness, though concealed.

Vet/Bet was once a picture of a house, a Bayit. It is “of the ground.” “A house firmly set upon the earth. The dot or dagesh represents one who lives within.” “You can walk into a Vet/Bet, and you are at home. The Holy One wants us to be at home in God’s world. So the Torah begins with a Vet/Bet, Beresheet - ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’” Vet/Bet is the house God visits. The world is a home for those who remember who built the house. For them it is filled with blessing, a Bracha.” Vet/Bet was chosen to commence the Torah to teach us that just as a Vet/Bet is closed on the top, the bottom and the right sides, but opens on the left - in the direction of reading (and going forward) - so too should we concern ourselves with the day the world was created and onward. Here and now.”

Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters.

Gematria: 2

Hint/Gesture: Arms start close to the body, folded inward from elbows up to shoulders. Gently open arms out forward - like a giving motion or an opening or unfolding motion - to waist level.

Words for Vait/Beit: Bikur (visit); Bayit (house); Bimah (bimah/stage); Barah (created); Breet (covenant); Bracha (blessing); Beitsa (egg); Besamim (spices); B’nei Mitzvah (B’nai Mitzvah); B’reisheet (Genesis - in the beginning); Beit Keneset (synagogue).

HEY, ה

Alef-Bet Letter # 5

Meaning:

Opening through which light enters us. Window by which the light from outside can reach us; the GOD; universal life; clarity; transcendental knowledge; transcendental wisdom; the breath of existence - to let in air and light - to breathe out and see. No effort to create the sound of Hey - no lip, tongue or mouth motion; the effortless creation of the world. "By the word of God the heavens were made and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts." Psalms 33:6. Composed of a Dalet and a Yud, the Dalet representing the physical world (planes of height and width) and Yud, representing the spiritual world. Hey imbues our lives with Sanctity combining the physical with the spiritual.

"Hey - the sound of breathing out. The most effortless noise a soul can make. That is why there is some of Hey in every word. And also, why Hey is so elusive, for it is the sound of being present - Hey." Lawrence Kushner, The Book of Letters.

Gematria: 5

Hint/Gesture: Each arm bent at elbow at shoulder height, open to each side (right and left) , each palm cupped downward, fingertips resting on shoulders.

Words for Hey: Haggadah (Haggadah); Hagbaha (Hagbaha - lifting the Torah); Hegeh (steering wheel); Hadas (myrtle); Haman (Haman); Havdalah (Havdalah ceremony); Halacha (Halacha - laws); Halleluyah (Halleluyah); Hineni (Here I am!); Hillel (Hillel); Ha' (the - prefix); Ha-yom (today); Ha-motzi (Hamotzi); Hatikvah (The Hope).

Idelle Packer/Mystical Secrets of a Gestural Aleph-Bet
October - December 2020

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AI Ayin Tovah Information

[Ayin tovah](#) (Hebrew for "good eye") is a *middah* (positive character trait) meaning to look at people and situations with kindness, generosity, and focusing on the good rather than the bad. For young children, it is the practice of finding something positive in everyone, sharing freely, and judging others favorably.

Key Concepts for Young Children:

- The "Good Eye" Glasses: Teach children to wear imaginary "good eye" glasses to look for the good in friends and siblings.
- Seeing Potential: Instead of seeing a broken toy, an Ayin Tovah approach sees an opportunity for a new building project.
- Generosity: A "good eye" is happy when others have good fortune (opposite of envy).
- Positive Speech: It involves focusing on virtues rather than defects.

Activities to Practice Ayin Tovah:

- "Something Good" Game: Before dinner, ask every family member to share one good thing they saw or did that day.
- Compliment Circle: Encourage children to give at least one compliment to a sibling or friend.
- Charity (Tzedakah): Frame giving to others as a way to use our "good eye" to help someone in need.
- Roleplaying: Practice finding the "good" in a tricky situation, such as having to share a favorite toy.

By practicing *Ayin Tovah*, children develop empathy, gratitude, and a positive outlook.

Having an **Ayin Tovah** (a "Good Eye") means choosing to see the world—and especially other people—in a positive, generous way. For young children, it's about learning to be a "good finder".

What is Ayin Tovah?

- **Seeing the Best:** It means looking at a friend and seeing their kindness or talent instead of their mistakes.
- **Happy for Others:** When a friend gets a new toy or wins a game, having an *Ayin Tovah* means being truly happy for them instead of feeling jealous.
- **Finding the Good:** Even when things are hard, it's about looking for the "sunny side" or something to be thankful for.



Simple Ways to Teach It:

1. **The "Good Eye" Game:** At dinner, ask everyone to share one good thing they saw someone else do that day. This trains their "eyes" to look for the positive.
2. **The "Maybe" Story:** If a friend is grumpy, help your child think of a kind reason why. "Maybe they didn't sleep well" or "Maybe they're just having a tough morning." This is called *Dan l'Chaf Zechus* (judging favorably).
3. **Celebrating Wins:** Practice saying, "I'm so happy for you!" when someone else succeeds. Explain that Hashem has enough blessings for everyone, so a friend's good news doesn't take anything away from us.
4. **Gratitude Journal:** For kids who can draw or write, keep a "Gratitude Notebook" to list small things they appreciate each day.
5. **Smile First:** Start the day with a smile for ten seconds. It's a simple way to set a "good eye" for the rest of the day.

AI Key Meanings of Ayin Tovah

Ayin Tovah (Hebrew: עֵין טוֹבָה), literally translating to "**a good eye**," is a foundational Jewish ethical and spiritual concept. It represents a worldview centered on benevolence, optimism, and generosity toward others.

Here are its key meanings and practical applications:

1. The Good Eye vs. The Evil Eye

- **The Spiritual Counterpart:** It is the direct opposite of *Ayin Hara* (the evil eye), which stems from jealousy and ill will.
- **A Shield of Positivity:** Cultivating a "good eye" is traditionally viewed as a way to bring blessing into your life and shield yourself from negative spiritual energies.

2. Judging Others Favorably (*Dan L'chaf Zechut*)

- **Giving the Benefit of the Doubt:** Having an *Ayin Tovah* means actively choosing to interpret people's ambiguous actions in a positive light.
- **Assuming Good Intentions:** It requires looking past a person's external flaws to find their internal spark of goodness.

3. Joy in Others' Success

- **Overcoming Envy:** A person with a "good eye" feels genuine happiness when their friends, family, or colleagues succeed.
- **Abundance Mindset:** It operates on the belief that another person's blessings do not diminish your own resources or potential.

4. Radical Generosity

- **Magnanimous Giving:** In classical Jewish texts (like the Mishnah), a person who gives charity with an *Ayin Tovah* gives with an open hand and a cheerful countenance.

- **Exceeding the Minimum:** It refers to someone who contributes more than what is strictly required, whether in money, time, or emotional support.

5. Deep Gratitude and Optimism

- **Focusing on Blessings:** On a personal level, it means looking at your own life circumstances and focusing on what you have rather than what you lack.
 - **Reframing Challenges:** It helps individuals find silver linings and opportunities for growth, even during difficult times.
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What are some practices to cultivate Ayin Tovah?

Cultivating an **Ayin Tovah** requires shifting your default mental programming from criticism to appreciation.

Here are practical actions you can take daily to build this mindset:

1. The Three Favorable Reasons Exercise

- **Pause Your Judgment:** Stop when someone's behavior annoys you.
- **Brainstorm Positives:** Force yourself to think of three plausible, positive reasons for their actions.
- **Shift Context:** If a driver cuts you off, assume they are rushing to an emergency.

2. Radical Celebration (*Simcha*)

- **Identify a Rival:** Pick someone who triggers envy in you.

- **Praise Out Loud:** Congratulate them or praise their success to a third party.
- **Action Beats Feeling:** Speaking highly of others eventually aligns your emotions with your words.

3. Compliment a Hidden Flaw

- **Look Deeper:** Look past someone's obvious mistakes or rough exterior.
- **Find One Spark:** Identify a single positive character trait they possess.
- **Voice It:** Tell them directly what you appreciate about that specific trait.

4. Oversized Giving

- **Stretch Your Comfort:** Give slightly more than you initially intended when donating money or time.
- **Smile While Giving:** Ensure your facial expression matches your open hand.
- **Check Your Intent:** Focus entirely on the recipient's benefit rather than your recognition.

5. Morning and Evening Tracking

- **Scan Your Day:** Review your day every morning or evening.
- **Catch Negative Eyes:** Identify moments where you looked at someone with cynicism or jealousy.
- **Reframe the Moment:** Mentally replay that specific interaction through a lens of compassion.