

Beit Yosef script

This sheet is intended to be used in conjunction with the laws of letter forms as given by the Mishnah Berurah in *Mishnat Soferim*.



Verticals and horizontals: learn to make rectangles with clean lines and neat corners; four right-angles. Get a feel for the effect of pen angle on your rectangles. Get into the habit of pulling your pen, not pushing it.



Basic letter beit: joining vertical and horizontal strokes in a controlled way. Get a feel for letter proportion. Remember never to push your pen. Ever.



Curves. Reish: a smooth curve from a horizontal line to a vertical line. Straight khaf: same, but learn to control when you turn. Vav: learn to turn early and control when you stop.



In the ideal world, vav has an extra vertical stroke inside the leg, so that the outside of the corner is a curve and the inside is a right-angle.



Closed mem: an exercise in stopping. Learn to bring a horizontal into an existing vertical to make a neat join, without overshooting.



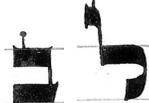
Upward curves; a smooth stroke from horizontal to vertical.



Bent khaf: joining a downward curve to an upward curve, as for closed mem; such that the join doesn't show. Samekh and straight peh: same idea, different configurations.



Fine lines. Learn to use the point of the nib, tipped up sideways, as a very small pen, to pull ink out of a letter while it is still wet and shape it into lines.



Now you can use this skill to give beit its two corners, its tag, and its heel. You can also attach a vav to a bent khaf and adorn the vav, to give lamed.



Fine lines also give you a method of making the curves on the right-hand sides of letters. You need it for yud; you may choose to use it also for bent khaf.



Tilted vav is made like a regular vav, but with the nib at a steep angle to the line, rather than perpendicular to it, and without the right-angle inside the corner.



Tilted vav, a sort of square-footed khaf, and a fine line will give you open mem.



Combining a neat rectangle, a neat vertical, a stroke starting at an angle to the line, a right-hand-side curve, and some fine lines gives you tet. Note the relative heights of the taggin: from left to right low, high, medium.



Parallelograms: symmetric legs. Pen angle is the key here. Symmetric leg skills give you zayin.



One can also make a symmetric leg with two strokes. This is useful for straight nun.



Zayin + fine lines = basic het.



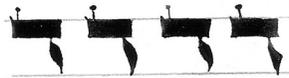
Ideally, het's top-right corner is rounded. This uses the same curve technique as for yud.



Bent khaf + zayin = kuf.



Asymmetric legs. There are several options for asymmetric legs. Choose one you like and use that. For instance, one can use a symmetric leg at an angle, use curve techniques to construct a less symmetric leg, or rotate the nib during the stroke to create a wedge.



Clearly, this gives dalet. A variety of dalets.



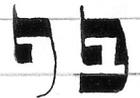
Which leads to hey and gimel.



Fine control: nun



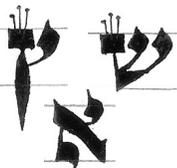
Similar technique: tav



More fine control: bent peh.



Tilted yud: shape with nib point.



In different configurations and with greater or lesser involvement of other skills, will give you straight tzaddi, shin and aleph.



Ayin's foot is made with at least two strokes. Start at the bottom and pull it upwards.



Superfine control: bent tzaddi.