

Question About the Shapes & Meanings of the Hebrew Alphabets

By Pastor Ed Anderson

Concerning the shapes of the Hebrew letters...specifically the "pointy things" at the end of the letters...are those "tittles"? What is their purpose and meaning? Do straight lines and curves that form the shapes of the Hebrew letters have meaning and purpose?

Answer:

Yes — your question touches on something profound and beautiful in Hebrew! The **shapes, crowns, lines**, and even the smallest marks of the Hebrew letters are filled with **layers of spiritual meaning**, and yes, those “pointy things” have a name — **tittles** (in part) — and they carry **deep significance**, especially in biblical Hebrew and Jewish tradition.

What Are “Tittles”?

In **Matthew 5:18**, Jesus said:

“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” — *Matthew 5:18, KJV*

- **“Jot”** refers to the **Hebrew letter Yod** (י), the smallest letter.
- **“Tittle”** refers to **tiny strokes, crowns, or ornamental marks** on Hebrew letters.

These small marks are often called **“Tagin”** (תגי) in Jewish scribal tradition — and they are not decorative accidents; they are **intentional, tradition-rich markings** found on certain Hebrew letters in **Torah scrolls** and sacred texts.

Tagin: The Crowns or “Tittles”

- Tagin are **tiny crown-like strokes** placed on **seven specific Hebrew letters** known by the acronym **Sha’atnez Gatz** (שעטנז גץ):
- **Shin** (ש)
- **Ayin** (ע)
- **Tet** (ט)
- **Nun** (נ)
- **Zayin** (ז)

- **Gimel (ג)**
- **Tsade (צ)**

These “crowns” are **three small upward strokes** resembling miniature zayins placed on top of the letter.

Talmudic Insight:

According to Jewish tradition, God gave **Moses** not only the Torah but also the meanings behind **every letter**, including their **crowns and shapes**. Some rabbis even say that **every stroke of every letter contains spiritual insight** and legal implication.

Do the shapes of Hebrew letters have meaning?

Absolutely. The entire **Hebrew alphabet (Aleph-Bet)** is deeply symbolic — each letter is more than a sound; it is a **spiritual concept**, and the **shapes themselves are theological lessons**.

Examples:

- **Aleph (א)** is formed of **two Yods** (above and below) and a diagonal **Vav** in between. This shows:
 - Heaven (upper Yod), Earth (lower Yod), and the connecting line (Vav = connection, nail).
 - Aleph = unity of the divine and the earthly, a picture of **God manifesting in flesh** — pointing to **Jesus (Yeshua)** as **God-With-Us**.
- **Bet (ב)** is closed on three sides and open to the left (the direction Hebrew is read).
 - Symbolizes a **house** (bet means “house”).
 - Open toward the next letter, **inviting the Word in** — the vessel of the **indwelling Word**.
- **Dalet (ד)** has a rounded back — seen as a **humble posture**.
- Dalet means “door,” and is seen as the door of the poor — one who is dependent on **Gimel** (the benefactor) to bring **grace**.

Straight lines and curves:

- **Straight lines** often represent **firmness, structure, stability** — unyielding **truth**.
- **Curves** represent **grace, compassion, movement, or mystery**.
- Even the **direction** a line faces can carry symbolic meaning — whether it opens to the past or future, heaven or earth.

Why This Matters Spiritually:

Jesus Himself validated the significance of these tiny details when He said not even a “**jot or tittle**” would pass from the law. This affirms:

- God’s Word is **perfect** down to the **smallest stroke**.
- Every letter points to **Messiah** in some way.
- The **Torah is not a human book**, but a divine code with **layers of revelation** embedded even in its calligraphy.

Final Reflection:

What we often overlook as “ornamentation” or “pointy things” may actually be **echoes of heaven’s detail**, whispering truths too deep for casual reading. When you see a Torah scroll, or even a printed Hebrew Bible, you’re not just looking at words — you’re looking at a **spiritual architecture**, every curve and crown pointing to the **glory of the Word made flesh**.